

GOVETT



ON

ROMANS

Robert Govett

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Robert Govett (1813-1901). As a fellow of Worcester College, Oxford, he was quite well known for his intellectual gifts.

Mr. Govett's writing can be characterized in three ways. The first is logic. He was unequalled in ordered and sustained argument, and in pursuing a point to its rational conclusion. Secondly, he endeavored to keep a fresh approach to Scriptures; not always agreeing with the ordinary doctrines of the Post-reformation Protestantism. A third characteristic is the ordered arrangement of his teaching. He was a systematic theologian in every aspect of teaching God's Word. He endeavored to be clear and concise in his writing so that the most uneducated of men could understand God's Word.



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Publishers Comments

We feel it is a great privilege to be able to put this, a most glorious commentary on the Epistle of Romans, back into print. Mr. Govett sheds fresh light upon this epistle and does not retread old theological ground. His exposition of Romans will challenge all believers, and will leave with them a clearer understanding of Romans.

Conley & Schoettle

ROMANS

CHAPTERS	PAGE
ONE	1
TWO	18
THREE	36
FOUR	66
FIVE	125
SIX	179
SEVEN	239
EIGHT	281
NINE	386
TEN	421
ELEVEN	455
TWELVE	479
THIRTEEN	490
FOURTEEN	498
FIFTEEN	511
SIXTEEN	535

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD.

CHAPTER I.

1—4. "Paul, servant of Jesus Christ, called to be apostle, separated unto the Gospel of God (which He promised before by His prophets in holy writings), concerning His Son, who became of the seed of David according to the flesh; who was defined to be the Son of God, by the power (according to the Spirit of Holiness) of the select resurrection of the dead—Jesus Christ our Lord."

PAUL, before Christ was but the servant (slave). He had been bought by the Redeemer, to be used by Him at His pleasure. He was called on the road to Damascus, while engaged in persecuting the disciples. He was taken out from his former course of life, to devote himself to the proclamation of the Good News of God.

The Gospel was no sudden thought of God arising after the Fall; but a scheme for His own glory, gradually unfolded. He inspired men to write of His designs of goodness to the sons of men—some four thousand years before the Saviour appeared.

He did not leave His message to be uttered by words of mouth alone, but caused it to be written, to our great benefit.

The Scriptures are "*holy writings*." Herein they differ from the writings of the world. Why do men prefer a newspaper to the Scriptures? Because men's news are full of the spirit of the world; tidings of a fallen and condemned race. And men are interested in the things of men; but only God's people in the things of God.

The Gospel is then described in regard of its substance. It is "*concerning His Son*."

Sonship supposes that the father and the son are of the same nature. This Son is "the Only-begotten."

The Saviour was possessed of two natures, though His Person was but one. As a son of *man*, He was born of the line of David the King: according to the other nature, "God over all, blessed for evermore." He was really a man, possessed of flesh and blood, as others; no phantom, no mere spirit, as many errorists have affirmed: Rom. ix. 5. But He proved Himself by resurrection to be higher than any mere son of man. For four thousand years men had been going down among the dead. But none was able to free his soul from Hadees, and his body from the tomb.

There was no real resurrection from among the dead, till Christ came forth from the tomb. In those previously raised from among the dead there was only a prolongation of life; and they returned to the tomb, there to abide. Even angels sent down among the dead, because of their offences, were unable to free themselves from prison: 1 Pet. iii. 19, 20; Jude 6, 7.

The world's papers tell of birth, marriage, death; but God's book tells of the One Man, who as the Righteous One, came forth for ever from the tomb. Samson was mighty in the flesh, but he too went down among the dead; unable to force his way out from the gates of Hadees, though able to carry off the gates of Gaza.

But Christ, by the power of His resurrection, showed Himself possessed of another nature than the flesh. He went down among the dead; but the third day He came forth victorious, nevermore to enter the tomb.

His second nature is the Divine Nature. By that, "the spirit of holiness," He prevailed over death and against corruption. Men, as unholy, are detained prisoners below. He, as the Holy One, came forth in the power of indissoluble life, after serving in divine holiness during His previous course.

The power whereby He achieved this unique victory,

was "the power of the select resurrection of the dead." There are two resurrections; the first one, "the first fruits." Many will come out from the tombs, leaving the great majority detained in them. *They* will come forth, to enjoy, if approved, the glory of the kingdom of Christ, the kingdom of the thousand years. That is the hope set before the Christian: it is "the resurrection of the *righteous*," in which the wicked will not have part. The Saviour, by His Almighty power, came forth from among the dead. By the same Almighty energy, He will raise His faithful servants from the tomb.

"*Jesus Christ our Lord.*"

Here is the full title of this Son of God.

1. He is "*Jesus*," His name as Son of man, given by the angel.

2. He is "*Christ*." This distinguishes between Him and others who bore the name of Jesus. He was the Anointed by the Holy Ghost—a glory not given to Adam. Adam was the ruler of earth, but he lost his kingdom by sin. But on Jesus the second Adam, the Holy Ghost was poured in fullest measure.

3. He is "*our Lord*."

All things are by God to be subjected to Christ's feet. But Christians are already His willing servants. Jesus is not only Saviour, and bestower of blessing, but He has bought believers to be His obedient ones. David gathered to himself a band of six hundred men, over whom he became captain, and whose orders they obeyed. But the Son of David is Lord of all, anointed with a better oil than David. And "God has made that same Jesus, whom ye crucified, both *Lord* and *Christ*."

5. "By whom we received grace and apostleship with a view to obedience to the faith among all the nations, among whom are ye also, called ones of Jesus Christ: To all that are in Rome beloved by God, saints by call: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ."

Paul received his commission direct from Jesus Christ

Himself. He was sent to "the nations," with the message of grace. He gave the call generally, but only the elect accept it. It is "faith *among* all nations;" not all nations believing.

The receivers by faith of the message are to obey it. For with the gospel go forth commands. Faith is to show itself by obedience. And this obedience brings glory to the name of Jesus Christ. "Ye shall be witnesses to *Me*."

The apostle then directly addresses Christ's elect at Rome,—not the whole city,—as the beloved of God, and already saints by effectual call. Those who are Christ's are beloved as He is. The love of God and His choice among the sons of men make the difference between the saved and the lost. They were "beloved by God"—though hated by men, who sought to put them to death.

"Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

"First then, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, because your faith is spoken of in all the world; for God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the Gospel of His Son, how continually I make mention of you."

Paul's Gospel is 'the Gospel of the *Son of God*,'—not 'of modern thought,' but of God's ancient counsel. Not a 'Gospel according to the *sacraments*,' but according to the finished work of the Redeemer, received in faith.

"Always in my prayers entreating, if by any means I might be prospered by the will of God, to come to you. For I desire to see you, that I may bestow upon you some spiritual gift, that ye may be established; that is, that I may be comforted jointly by the mutual faith of you and me."

Paul committed to God his journeys, seeking by prayer to know the will of God, and asking for prosperity on the way.

What was his idea, in desiring to see the Roman

Christians? Paul was an apostle, sent to bestow on believers the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost (Acts xix; 1 Cor. xii.) by the laying on of hands.

This was the plan of the Lord whereby to edify and establish Christians. Constantine sought to establish the Church by money, houses, lands, honour. But acting thus he brought down the Church to the standing of the world.

13. "Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come to you (but was hindered hitherto), that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among the other nations. I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as far as I am concerned, I am ready to preach the Gospel to you that are at Rome also."

Many hindrances, both of work, and of persecution, had hitherto hindered the apostle's cherished design of preaching the Gospel in Rome. Did he expect by his miracles and instruction to convert the whole of Rome? No: only to gather "some fruit" there, even as he had in Asia and Macedonia.

16, 17. "For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of the Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every believer; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein the righteousness of God by faith is revealed to faith, as it is written: 'The righteous by faith shall live.'"

There was much to abash Paul in preaching. His doctrine concerning God and man was hated, and ridiculed. The Jews desired power, and God sent them a Messiah crucified in weakness. The Greeks sought after wisdom; and the Most High sent them the story of the cross. At Athens he was despised and ridiculed.

This shows that the Gospel is no device of man. Men do not understand, or accept it. Had it been of man, it would have been adjusted to please him.

It is "the Gospel of *the Christ*." It is the teaching concerning the person and work of the Son of God.

It is "*the power of God to save every BELIEVER*."

Not to the man who hears, carps at, and despises it; but the receiver of it. A phial of medicine will not cure of the ague any but him who takes it. Believing is not the preparation of medicine by the chemist, but the drinking it after it has been prepared. The Gospel is not our goodness presented to God, and accepted by Him. It is His grace presented to us, and accepted by us.

It is open to "every believer." How wide its extent beyond the LAW! a covenant made with the nation of Israel only. It can save the worst of men; the best of men is lost without it. It is herein unlike law, which enforces on each transgressor the deserts of his sin. "Lord, remember me, when Thou comest in Thy kingdom"—drew out at once—"To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." Salvation is not for the doer of good works, but for the receiver of the perfect righteousness of Another. Am I to build myself an ark, in order to escape the coming wrath? By no means! That were unbelief. I have entered into the ark of righteousness completed by the better Noah; and have passed through the waters of baptism, taking my stand on the Mount of God.

Both Jew and Gentile alike need this righteousness. The Jew had knowledge; but his knowledge only condemned him. The Gentile was the transgressor against conscience, condemned in his ignorance.

The Gospel is salvation, because of the righteousness of God which it reveals. What is righteousness? It is right conduct generally as measured by law.

What is "THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD"?

First, negatively. (1) It is not *the justice of God*. The justice of God can only condemn the sinner, not save him. (2) It is not the reward given by the Most High to Christ as the Obedient Sufferer. If that had been the meaning the whole course of the argument here must have been altered. (3) It is not a righteousness wrought by any fallen son of man. The object of

our epistle is to overthrow any trust in that: "There is *none righteous*, no, not one."

Secondly, positively. It is the righteousness of *God's providing for those that are unrighteous*. It becomes ours by *gift*, not by *purchase*. It is the righteousness of *faith*, not of *works*; *Another's* righteousness, completed on purpose to save us.

This meaning of the phrase—"the righteousness of God"—is confirmed by some like expressions. (1) So it was said to terrified Israel at the Red Sea: "Fear ye not, stand still, and see *the salvation of the Lord*, which He will show you to-day:" "The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace:" Ex. xiv. 13.

(2) "The bread of God"—is not that which God eats, but that which He provided for the hungry: John vi. 33; Ex. xvi. 32.

(3). "The armour of God"—is not armour which God wears, but that which He has provided for His soldiers: Eph. vi. 11—13.

It is *the obedience unto death of the Son of God*, the devising of the Father, applied by the Holy Spirit to each believer.

Some say, 'I would I had the merits of an unfallen angel.' This is unbelief. The Christian has the greater merits of the perfect Son of God.

In Romish countries, some, sensible of their sins, when they come to die, bargain that they shall be wrapped in a monk's dress, and be buried in it; that the merits of the order of St. Francis, or of St. Augustine may be imputed to them unto their salvation. That gives man's vain shadow of the true way of salvation, through the merits of Christ imputed to the believer.

"The righteousness of God"—is the merits of a man "made of a woman, made under the law, on purpose to redeem those under the law." It is the perfect obedience of the Son of God who alone has infinite merits, and ability to save the lost.

It is this view of "the Righteousness of God"

This expression—"the righteousness of God"—is the key to the argument of the epistle. Many are the opinions about it. There are two theories concerning it. I. Some affirm it to mean—'*the justice of God*,'—that divine perfection, which renders to each according to his works. But that attribute applied to man the sinner, instead of being salvation and life, as Paul here testifies, is only his condemnation, death, and destruction.

II. God's *justice* was revealed from the first. It was seen in the sentence on the guilty pair, and in a thousand ways, long before the Gospel came. But *this* was first known by the Gospel.

III. This "righteousness of God" is "by faith." Now the justice of God against the sinner turns not upon his *faith*, but upon his *actions*. But he who by faith is righteous with the righteousness of God, the prophet says, shall live.

The righteousness of God, which is the Gospel, is the righteousness provided by God in the work of Christ. It comes in just in the order of the apostle's argument. He shows (1) the *need* of righteousness before God the Judge. (2) He proves next, the *absence* of the righteousness required. And then (3) the *supply* of the needed righteousness, through the compassion, the wisdom, and the love of God in Christ. This can save: this does save. This has saved multitudes uncounted.

1. It is swift in its application: able to save a confessing guilty robber, who was that very day to die. He was in the jaws of death: but believed in Christ, and that day was ushered as a saved soul among the righteous in Paradise. It was revealed to his faith; and while law said 'Die,' the Redeemer opened to him a life beyond death, which shall be his for evermore.

2. It is 'God's power to *salvation*,' to every receiver of it. For the Most High will not save any against the demands of His righteousness, or of His truth.

Compassion to the guilty will not make Him change the sentence of His law. So that salvation can only come, when justice and mercy are reconciled. David spared Absalom after the murder of his brother; but it was a guilty compassion, that nearly cost him his life and throne. And, after all, Jehovah executed his sentence of death on him, in spite of his father's careful precautions to keep him alive.

3. The difficulties in the way of saving the sinner were so great, that no man could remove them. Only when law had received its full satisfaction, could the Judge of all bring life to him that had earned by his works, death. Even to the spotless Redeemer, how long was the time required to produce the full obedience to law; and how heavy the endurance of the threatened penalty of sin! The righteousness of God then revealed in the Gospel, is the obedience and death of Jesus Christ; it is "the righteousness of Christ."

But difficulties spring up in quarters where you least expect them. Some of those who believe in pardon through the blood of the Saviour, deny that his life of obedience has anything to do with "the righteousness of God" under the Gospel: nay, that the expression 'the righteousness of Christ,' is not to be found in Scripture. Let me refute this.

1. You will find the very expression in 2 Peter i. 1. "Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained a like precious faith with us in *the righteousness of our God* and Saviour *Jesus Christ*" (Revised Version).

2. I believe I find it also in the opening of Peter's first epistle. "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers . . . elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto the *obedience* and *sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ*, grace unto you and peace be multiplied:" 1 Peter i. 1.

Here is the work of each Person of the Blessed

Godhead, in our salvation—and hence the obedience and death of Christ, which together make up ‘the righteousness of Christ,’ are here named together. Further on in his epistle he presents to us the ark of Noah, as the refuge wrought at God’s command, to save the favoured eight. And he adds, that our salvation comes to us in the same manner as to Noah. Then the ark means the righteousness wrought by Christ, whom he calls “the Righteous:” (v. 18,) “for (us) the unrighteous.” And we enter it by faith: then believing, we pass through the waters of baptism, and are secure. For “he that *believeth*, and is *baptized*, shall be *saved*.”

3. As this matter is of prime moment to the understanding of the epistle, I will add some more evidence.

Take then Philip. iii. 9. Herein Paul, who had devoted his life to procuring himself a righteousness by law, and who thought himself possessed of it, at length gives up all his gains, and casts them to the ground to take instead—“being found in Him, not having mine own righteousness which is out of law, but that which is by faith in Christ,—the righteousness which is *from* God *on* faith.”

This passage decisively overthrows the doctrine, that “the righteousness of God” means ‘the justice of the Most High.’ That righteousness is an attribute which ever dwells *in* the Lord the Judge. This is a righteousness proceeding *from* Him. That ‘justice of God,’ if it could be in any way made over to us, would not justify us, nor take away our sins. But the one which Paul took, after his own formal surrender of all hope from himself and his deserts of good, was the righteousness of Christ which was “*on*” himself as the man of faith, and as such saved. Paul’s righteousness was sought for by his own efforts under law: the righteousness here was one which was complete at once; and once put on, he was saved thereby.

If this were the only passage, I should esteem the case proved. To any candid Greek scholar this would

suffice to overturn the false explanation I am assailing. It is a righteousness (1) not “*in*” God, but outside Him; coming *out from* God, and (2) resting *upon*, and covering the guilty, by God’s own ordinance. Thus the blood of the passover-lamb sprinkled *on* the door of the house made it at once safe from the sword of judgment.

4. Take as a last instance of the meaning of “the Righteousness of God.”—

“What shall we say then? That Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because *they sought it* not by faith, but as by the works of the law. For they stumbled at the stumblingstone; As it is written, ‘Behold I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.’ Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law unto righteousness to every one that believeth:” Rom. ix. 30—x. 4.

The apostle notices, that the seekers after righteousness in no case found it, even though they were God’s own people of Israel: while ignorant and ungodly Gentiles found it. How did this happen? The losers sought it in the wrong way, by their deserts under law. The gainers accepted it as the finished work of Christ provided by God for that purpose. Both results, Israel’s stumbling through pride, and the Gentiles’ salvation by faith in Christ, the Stone of God’s foundation, were already foretold. (1) At the Saviour’s death at

Jerusalem, Israel stumbled. But there was the bright side also. 'The believer on Christ as the Lord his Righteousness, should not be ashamed in the day of judgment, but be righteous, God Himself justifying.'

The apostle then goes on to testify concerning Israel's zeal for God, but not that taught by their Scriptures. "For they being ignorant of the *righteousness of God*,"—that supplied by Him, and accepted by the Gentile believer,—would not "submit themselves" to the humiliating truth, that they, God's circumcised people, had no righteousness of their own to present; but must, if they would be saved, be thankful to receive a righteousness provided for them as lost sinners, by Jehovah.

This struggle of their pride is clearly depicted for us, though briefly. They attempted to establish *their own* righteousness, as Paul did. But, unlike Paul, they could not submit to own that their righteousness could not stand the judgment of God, and that the righteousness of the rejected Jesus was the only one that could avail.

"*For Christ is the end of law unto righteousness to every one that believeth.*" Here is the righteousness approved by God. It is the righteousness wrought by Christ, pushing aside their vain attempts, which could only issue in their condemnation. They however were content to toil on vainly under law and its curse, coming out unrighteous at the close of all their efforts. But the righteousness of Christ led the believer out from law and its slavery, to become sons of God. The righteousness of Christ provided by God became their righteousness by faith.

18. "For the wrath of God from heaven is revealed on all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold (back) the truth in unrighteousness."

"The wrath of God." This it is which gives such force to the Gospel. As God loves what is holy and

righteous, so He hates and must ever hate what is evil. "The wrath of a king (says Solomon) is as the roaring of a lion; but a wise man will pacify it." It was a strong test of the faith of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, that with the threat of the king and the fire kindled before them, they refused to worship his golden idol.

Observe, the revelation of God's righteousness unto salvation takes place in the Gospel; that of His wrath in open facts of destruction. That wicked wrath of the Gentile king, made powerless against the servants of the Lord, was a burst soon quelled.

But the wrath of *God* is as abiding and eternal as Himself. Here is a musician keenly alive to melody and harmony. How he enjoys that Hallelujah Chorus, so beautifully executed in time and tune! But now let the piece be performed by those who sing out of time and out of tune! How he is pained! He runs away, and stops his ears! How long will those feelings last? As long, and as often as the music is ill performed, as long as his love of music in its perfection lasts.

How much more is this principle true of God! As He loves holiness and righteousness, so He hates iniquity and impiety. So He *must* hate them for ever. For His perfections, as He is the eternal God, cannot alter. How long must He punish! *As long as the evil continues; and that is for ever.* Man hates God even now, while surrounded by mercy, and while the message of God's grace sounds in his ears. But when once he is handed over to the vengeance on sin, his hatred increases, and he never repents. Neither then can God repent of the punishment which, as the Righteous One, He inflicts.

The wrath of man, especially of one in power, is terrible. But the Saviour teaches us how much more to be feared is the wrath of God, who ever lives, who ever is righteous to render to each according to his work. He will repay His enemies and those who

hate Him to their face! How long? Till they cease to hate Him! Till they confess their transgressions and their hatred, and turn to *love Him!* When will that be? Never, while they are enduring His flames and suffering under His deserved sentence of the curse, the Almighty wrath of One who will keep to His word! As the word *eternal* is applied to God, so is it to the punishment of the lost. "By commandment of the *everlasting God*:" xvi. 26.

"These shall go away into *everlasting punishment*."
 "The *everlasting fire* prepared for the devil and his angels." "Suffering the vengeance of *eternal fire*."
 "Mercy unto *eternal life*:" Jude 7, 24. "*Everlasting destruction*." "*Everlasting consolation*."

Are the life of the saved and his joy, eternal? So is the answering portion of the lost in the lake of fire.

"The righteous by faith shall *live*." "The unrighteous by his works, his unbelief and hatred, shall *die*." And after this first death comes an eternal dwelling in "the Second Death, the lake of fire."

The revelation of this wrath of God comes from heaven, the dwelling-place of God. (1) When the world had arrived at its height of violence and impiety, the Holy One opened the windows of heaven, and poured out from on high the flood that drowned the world of the ungodly. (2) When the iniquity of the cities of the plain had passed beyond the bounds of God's patience, "then the Lord *rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah fire and brimstone from the Lord out of heaven*:" Gen. xix. 24.

When Pharaoh declared that he knew not who Jehovah was, and would not let Israel go, Moses was directed to cast toward heaven ashes of the furnace, and the land of Egypt was stricken with boils and blains. When Moses' hand was lifted up toward heaven again, darkness settled over the land, a darkness that might be felt; and evil angels moved amidst the darkness for three days. Earth became like hell.

The wrath of God is "*upon* all ungodliness and unrighteousness of man." We have "against," and that is indeed the sense, but the true rendering is 'upon,' and so it is in agreement with the same word as applied to the righteous. "The righteousness of God is *upon* all that believe:" iii. 22. "Blessedness *on* the circumcision and the uncircumcision." "All these things (of woe) shall come *on* this generation." "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth *on* him:" John iii. 36. "The righteousness which is from God *on* faith:" Phil. iii.

This wrath comes on two main divisions of sin.
 1. "Ungodliness," or sin against *God*. This is put first, as the chief sin, although man does not think it so. It is either sin of omission; the man never prays to God or gives Him praise; takes His mercies, but gives the Giver no thanks. This is enough to condemn.

2. But there is sin also of commission; swearing, blasphemy, ridicule of God's word and His truth.

And Paul especially singles out idolatry, which is coming fast into this land, the worshipping as God things which man's own hand has made; and worshipping the creature instead of the Creator.

This is a sin deserving of eternal woe. And it is put forward, because it is the source of many other sins, as Paul goes on to say. Man having dishonoured God by making Him like to man, birds, beasts, creeping things, God dishonours man in return. So that wherever there is worship of images, there God blinds the eyes and heart, in His just wrath—and men sin yet more against Him.

Awful is the catalogue of sins which the Holy Ghost yet further unrolls. But on them I will not dwell. The doers are worthy of *death*. They will receive it too. Hence the blessing of the Gospel: "The righteous by faith shall *live*."

CHAPTER II.

1. "Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest; for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself, for thou that judgest doest the same things."

KNOWLEDGE of what is right, and condemnation of what is evil are not enough. Judgment at last will be according to works. The apostle now commences convicting the Jew of his sinfulness, and exposure to the wrath of God. He could quite agree with all that Paul said against 'those wicked idolaters, the Gentiles.' But the Holy Ghost now shows him to be under the same penalty and wrath of God, because he was guilty of the same transgressions which had been specified in the former chapter.

2. "But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against them that do such things."

Justice must sweep the whole circle of sin, or it is not justice. Vainly do men hope that somehow there shall be an exception in their case. Men who so reckon on God's injustice will find themselves awfully deceived at last.

God judges "according to truth" against those that so act. Men would have the Great Judge to spare certain faces, and not to strike according to the naked state of the facts. But it may not be. The Most High has declared that He "will bring every work into judgment" and condemnation against those that do such things. "The soul that sins shall die." As God has so said and written, as the God of truth He cannot go back from His word. Israel wished

and hoped, that Jehovah would spare them when they offended. But Moses was directed to tell them that their God was not a respecter of faces, nor would take a bribe to let off the offender, as many unjust judges of men would. "For the Lord your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward:" Deut. x. 17.

3. "But thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them that do such things, and doest the same, that THOU shalt escape the judgment of God?"

This shows us that God is not love alone, but righteous also. The very epistle that is relied on for its saying '*God is love*,' is disregarded when it testifies that '*God is righteous*.' "If ye know that *He (God) is righteous*, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is begotten of Him:" 1 John ii. 29. "Little children, let none deceive you, he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as *He (God) is righteous*. He that committeth sin is of the devil:" iii. 7. "Whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, nor he that loveth not his brother:" ver. 10.

What mischief has not the misuse of that—'God is love'—wrought, when applied beyond its bearing, as given by John!

You find men now asking, if God's not electing all men is love? And if it is love to punish the wicked in eternal fire? And we should answer: 'No, friend! Have you been led to imagine that God is only love? Does not Scripture tell us of the justice of the Most High, and of His rendering at last to each *according to his works*? What mean sin and death? What the judgment in Eden on the first offence? What the world cut off by the Flood, and Sodom by fire?'

God, to those that receive His message, is love. It is to them alone that the word is spoken. But

what to the unbeliever, and the enemy? His wrath of righteousness is eternal. This chapter and the former one are proofs that judgment is coming. God would not be true, if He did not smite the transgressor. 'A God all mercy, were a God unjust.'

There are four chances of escape to the man that offends against human laws. (1) That his offence shall not be known. (2) That if known, he may get beyond the bounds of the jurisdiction. He who has sinned in England will escape to France. (3) Some failure in the process of judgment after he has been arrested. The indictment was faulty; his counsel was so eloquent he moved the minds of the jury against the infliction of the penalty; or a heavy bribe was accepted. (4) Or when committed, he might break prison, and hide himself from the police.

But none of these things will avail against the judgment of God. With Him there is no lack of knowledge, or power, or will to perform what He says.

God will judge individuals after their works. He values His holy character too much to allow any evil-doer to escape.

4. "Or despisest thou the riches of His goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God is leading thee to repentance."

How great God's goodness, in sending the Gospel of His Son! How long,—well nigh two thousand years,—He has put off the destruction which the world of the ungodly deserves! How patient with each individual, despite his refusal of His calls of mercy. Some are allowed to go on in their unbelief and wilful transgression for seventy or eighty years; each year becoming harder in sin, and more careless of the wrath of God! Just compare such grace and patience with the same qualities in men! How many times would you allow a man to cheat you to your face?

Or to speak evil of you? Or, as a servant, to disobey you? Estimate, then, the goodness of God toward yourself hereby!

What is God's intent, in thus putting off the final stroke of judgment? He is graciously giving opportunity of repentance. That is God's meaning in the matter. But men deceive themselves by the thought—that since the Lord has not stricken them down He does not care what they do; that the future judgment is a fable designed to keep society in order. Thus men shut up their hearts against God's commands to them to repent, till at length, "he that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, is suddenly cut off, and that without remedy."

How we should admire the God of greatness and majesty, quite independent of His creature man, and able in a moment to destroy, that He is thus long-suffering to the guilty. Repent now! or to-morrow the long-delayed vengeance may strike. Repent! There is pardon now to those who turn; but none after death.

5. "But according to thy hardness and impenitent heart art treasuring to thyself wrath for the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to each according to his works."

The grace of God refused hardens the heart, and often leads to contempt of the goodness of God. That being set aside, the man goes on the more boldly to provoke the Lord by his sins. Now he forgets his daily constant transgressions, but the Most High does not. And vainly does man forget, if God remembers, and will punish for each sin. Each added sin will bring increase of wrath. And the heaps stored within, the treasures of each man's life, will be recompensed at the great day.

A special day of mercy is running on now. A special day of God's indignation is coming. Wonderful has been His patience in bearing with an evil world that

slew His Son! Wonderful will be the outpouring of His justice on the guilty, when mercy is over! God is righteous, though He is not showing it now. It would interfere with the gracious proclamation of the Gospel. But He will in that day already fixed by Him, make manifest His justice—to each according to his works; according to their number, and their weight of guiltiness. What He now testifies, in order that men may believe and repent, He will then exhibit to view.

Two views are given of that great day: one here, and another in verse 16. Now it is man's day. He is allowed to do as he pleases, with but slight check. But then God will show, that He was not careless when men sinned. The coming day will be God manifested as the Recompenser of good and of evil. The treasures of sin under God's keeping now will then turn to awful woe: while the good deeds of Christ's obedient people will be brought forth to their glory and recompence in that day.

"According to works." This is the proper principle of justice. Only there is no balancing at last of good deeds of the ungodly against their bad ones; as if by alms, and prayers, and so on, a man might blot out his former sins. For though many deeds look well to man's eye, yet while a man is ungodly, no deed of his is good, so long as he is at enmity with the Most High.

The recompence will be to *each*: and different measures of misery will be inflicted according to the sins of each.

7. "To them who by patient continuance in well doing are seeking for glory, honour, and incorruptibility—eternal life."

Here is a word to believers: this is the sowing time. According to the quantity and quality of the seed sown will be the harvest. Christ calls then His disciples to fill up this day with good works. But it is not enough to begin well, to start off with great zeal, and then to cool and flag, nay, even to turn back! It must be

'patient continuance in well doing.' So says the Saviour. The seed on the good ground "are they, who in an honest and good heart having heard the word, keep it, and *bring forth fruit with patience*." Luke viii. 15.

For there are many things to lure our feet aside. There are troubles arising out of the faith, and many covet to have their good things at once. There are many disappointments. There are many things in the world which sparkle to the eye of fallen nature, and turn aside even believers. Satan offered the Lord Jesus all the glory of the world in vain. But very much less than all is a snare, effectual to entrap many of the Lord's people.

Here is a refutation of the principle of some, that we are to do what is right, *without looking for reward*. That is "not according to Christ." The Saviour teaches us to seek first the glory of His kingdom of reward. "He that soweth bounteously shall reap also bountifully; and he that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly." "Let us not be weary in well doing, 'for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.'" "God becometh *the rewarder* of those that diligently seek Him." "To him that worketh righteousness shall be *a sure reward*." "Each shall receive *his own reward* according to his own labour." "Look to yourselves, that we lose not the things that we have wrought, but that we receive *a full reward*." "My *reward* is with Me, to give to each as his work shall be."

To the servant, winner of ten pounds, ten cities are given; to the man of five, five cities; while to him who sleeps and works not, there is the casting into darkness outside.

God's prize shall more than repay the difficulties and troubles of service. But many believers are doing nought for the Christ, and only living to themselves.

What is to be sought?

1. "*Glory*."—This refers to the day of the first resurrection. 'Glory' means brightness:—and "the righteous* shall *shine as the sun* in the kingdom of their Father." "As star differeth from star in glory, so also is the resurrection of the dead."

2. "*Honour*."—The Lord will promote in His millennial kingdom those who are steadily obedient. 'The servant found employed in Christ's service at His coming, shall be made ruler over all that he hath.' "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him."

3. "*Incorruptibility*."—It means the deathless body of the risen saint. It is not "immortality." Annihilationists seized upon the wrong rendering, to prove, that immortality did not belong to every son of man, but was a discovery first made under the Gospel.

What we are here taught is, that the believer should seek for resurrection—the first resurrection. *Now* corruption seizes on the body as soon as the soul has gone forth from it. And it is called a slavery, "the bondage of corruption," which we cannot break. But Christ came forth from the tomb without seeing corruption. "And this corruptible must put on incorruption." For there shall be no more death to the risen from among the dead. Body and soul shall be knit together, no more to be forced asunder. In that Great Day of the Saviour's kingdom God will bestow eternal life on those whom He shall approve. Eternal life will, to the rewarded, begin a thousand years earlier than for others.

8, 9. "But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, trouble and anguish on every soul of man that doeth evil."

These are workers of evil, and they may be found even among believers. There are those who cavil

* It is not said—'the *believer*.' There is no passage, so far as I am aware, which declares that all *believers* shall attain the millennial kingdom.

against God, and raise up parties amongst believers. There are those who resist the truth of God, in spite of the evidence that it is His. How many fight against the immersion of believers, in spite of the command to obey, and the many reasons assigned for it in the New Testament. Truth stands in their way: they bow not. But while they will not obey God's truth, they do walk after unrighteousness. Some one must be obeyed: if not Christ, then His enemy.

Four forms of God's displeasure are noted—

1. "*Indignation*."—The feelings of the Most High rise against those who will not obey Him the Sovereign Ruler, the Creator and Benefactor of His creatures.

2. "*Wrath*."—The penalty threatened by law: proofs of Divine displeasure, both within and without.

3. "*Trouble*."—Various forms of misery.

4. "*Anguish*."—Literally taken, the Greek word would import the closest imprisonment, the misery of body and soul. How dread is God's power to punish, when even the single nerve of one tooth can fill with pain, and make unfit for employment!

Then a word concerning the extent of this recompence—"On every soul of man, that doeth evil."

Many would deny that any such effects can touch a believer. But there are three points to be observed—

1. This is spoken of the millennial day, when God means, He says, to exhibit the *impartiality of His displeasure against the doers of evil, without respect of faces*.

2. Are there no believers who answer to the description here given? I suppose we shall all agree that there are some.

3. Then if so, as they are doers of evil, and possessed, like others, of a soul, this solemn word shall take effect on them. It is to fall "on every soul of man that doeth evil."

And that in proportion to light. "Of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile."

Three classes seem to be supposed here. The first in verse 7; the second in verses 8 and 9; and the third in verse 10. And three classes have been implied by the apostle.

1. The *Church*, or the Assembly of God, "the beloved of God, called to be saints:" i. 7.

2. The *Gentiles*, whose sins the apostle has been setting before us in the first chapter; and

3. The *Jews*, whom he is about to condemn as guilty. It is in these three compartments that God is now at work—"the Jews, the Gentiles, and the Church of God:" 1 Cor. x. 32.

At verse 11 a long parenthesis comes in from verse 11 to verse 15, so that verse 16* joins on to verse 10.

7. "To them, indeed, who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honour, and incorruptibility, God will give eternal life."

This first class respects, I believe, the Church of Christ. It is characterised by—"Seeking for" certain blessings, the last of which is resurrection, or an immortal body arising out of the tomb. This supposes intelligence of God's mind about the objects proper to be now pursued. And Christ sets His disciples to pursue the three things named. "*Seek ye first the Kingdom of God:*" Matt. vi. 33; Luke xii. 31. But the bodies of saints, whether of the living or the dead, are unfit for the first resurrection, or the kingdom of God. Hence a change must pass over both: 1 Cor. xv. 50—54. Not till the appearing of the Saviour was the doctrine of an incorruptible body brought in: 2 Tim. i. 10. Not till then was the difference between the earthly calling of Israel, and the heavenly calling of the Church known. It was shown first in the Second Adam.

*Grammatically the three classes are distinguished from one another by *μεν*, verse 7; *δε*, verse 8; and a second *δε*, verse 19.

Moreover, the Church in the Great Day to come is judged, before Israel, or the Gentiles. Eternal life is awarded in that morning of the first resurrection to those "accounted worthy to attain that age, and the resurrection from among the dead." Then will be the time of "glory" and "honour." "The righteous shall *shine as the sun* in the kingdom of their Father." The Saviour instructs His disciples not to seek glory from men, and now; but from our Heavenly Father in the Day to come: Matt. vi. He would have us take the lowest place now, that we may be bid to go up higher by Himself when He comes. "Then shalt thou have glory in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee:" Luke xiv. 10 (Greek); John v. 44.

Of the second class it is written—

8. "But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile."

This may be described as a transition-class.

The captiousness, which is the first characteristic, answers well to the conduct and words of the Jews of our Lord's and the apostle's days. How oft Christ endured the contradictions of sinners against Himself! And at Antioch the Jews, jealous of Gentiles accepting the Gospel, "spoke against the things which were spoken by Paul *contradicting and blaspheming*." The refusal of "the truth" of the Gospel, and the practice of unrighteousness, answer well to the character of the latter-day apostates. "They received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved." "That they all might be damned, who *believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness:*" 2 Thess. ii.; 2 Tim. ii. 25, 26.

But these words include many beside Jews—many who call themselves Christians: 2 Cor. xii. 20, 21; Phil. i. 16.

The third class are thus described—

10. "But glory, honour, and peace to every one that worketh good; to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile. 16. In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my Gospel."

This resembles the first class; but differs from it in three especial points.

1. There is not the intelligence found in 'the Church.' They are not *seeking* glory and honour. But glory and honour befall them, as the result of their well-doing.

2. In the first class nought is said about "Jew or Gentile," for the Assembly of God is taken out of both these parties.

3. Instead of incorruptibility, they get "Peace." Resurrection is not theirs, but enjoyment of earth. Now 'Peace' on earth is not to be expected by the Assembly of God; and when the great and terrible Day of the Lord comes, wars are to characterise it. "No flesh shall have peace." God's trumpets sound war against the sinners of earth.

"Think not that I am come to send *peace* on earth, I came not to send peace, but a sword:" Matt. x. 34. "In the world ye shall have tribulation."

But after the enemies of the Lord are cut off, great is the peace of earth. "I will give *peace* in the land, (earth,) and ye shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid:" Lev. xxvi. 6. "In his days shall the righteous flourish, and *abundance of peace*, so long as the moon endureth:" Psalm lxxii. 7; Ezra xxxiv. 25; xxxvii. 26, etc.

The whole description answers to the sheep of the last parable of the Prophecy on Olivet. They are doers of good. Jesus owns their kindnesses to His least brethren of Israel, as done to Himself. These are the elect out of the living nations of earth. They have so little intelligence that they cannot under-

stand how the acts of kindness which they have performed can have been done to the Great King of Kings, seated on the throne of His glory. But they obtain 'glory and honour,' and that for ever! But Paul instructs us, that there are two kinds of glory, 'the celestial' and 'the terrestrial;' though both meet in the kingdom of the Son of man. And in that day the distinction between Jew and Gentile, now in abeyance, comes once more to the front.

Lastly, the sentences are pronounced by Jesus Christ, as Paul's Gospel tells us.

10. "But glory, honour, and peace to every one that worketh good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."

This gives us an expanded view of what is meant by the 'eternal life' of verse 7. The doctrine is taken up anew in chap. vi. The Christian is not under law, but under grace. May he not then live as he pleases? Whereon the apostle says in effect, 'Your pay at last will be according to the Master you serve.' If it be Christ, He will repay you good. If it be unrighteousness, you will get "the wages of sin." For "his servants ye are whom ye obey."

"Glory and honour" have the same sense here as in verse 7. But instead of 'incorruptibility' we have, as the third blessing, "*peace*." God's feelings towards us will not be of indignation, but of peace. And peace around us will match the peace within. The days of warfare and of evil will be over. 'Tis the evil day now of battle; and of alarms. The Christian must be the soldier armed *cap-a-piè*. But that will be the day of peace.

How great difference God made in His Providence toward David and Solomon after their transgressions! "From henceforth," said the prophet to David, "thou shalt have *wars*." And against Solomon, the king of *peace*, as soon as he raised up temples to idol-gods in

Jehovah's very presence at Jerusalem, the Lord raised up enemies in the most remarkable manner : 1 Kings xi.

11. "For there is no respect of faces with God."

The Lord of all is not swayed by the place which men occupy in society, as labourers or emperors ; nor in their refinement, as savage or educated ; it is to their *acts* that He looks. David was swayed by the love of his handsome son Absalom, to spare him from the law which demanded his death, because of the murder of his brother. But that was unjust and evil in the sight of God.

Some read this truth, as though it taught that there cannot therefore be any such thing as election. Why, this epistle, a few chapters onward, is the strongest defence of election, and asserts its forming part of God's counsel for His own glory ! Can any doubt whether or no God gives to all alike ? or whether He varies His favours in the things of time, just as He pleases ? To one man He grants to live a hundred years : another He cuts off at twenty. One has ten thousand a year : another knows not whence he shall get his next meal. Where then lies their mistake ? They look on God as the *just Judge* only ; and forget that He is the *gracious Giver* of what is His, just as He pleases.

This verse refers only to what God is when He is *seated on the throne as the Judge*. Paul is now delivering the rule of God's judgment in the day of judgment. And *then* the Most High passes sentence without respect to the question, whether the man is a Hottentot, or an Englishman. But both before and after the day of judgment, He is "the Giver of every good and perfect gift." And those gifts He may distribute at His good pleasure : none has any claim for them.

Take a passage or two in proof of this distinction. (1) "Ye shall do no unrighteousness *in judgment* : thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honour

the person of the mighty : *but* in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour." Lev. xix. 15. (2) "I charged your judges at that time, Ye shall not respect faces *in judgment*." Deut. i. 16, 17 ; so also x. 17, 18.

12. "For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law ; and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law."

A further view of the principles of that great day of judgment is now given. The apostle has declared *even* the Gentile to be inexcusable ; and much more the Jew. But as they stand on a different footing before God, in that the Gentile had no written law, while the Jews possess one, this makes a difference in the rule of administering judgment. The Gentile then will not be judged, as if he knew the Scriptures of the Old Testament. It would not be righteous. But what difference does this make in the judgment ? Will the Gentile sinner escape wrath ? By no means ! As without written law he sinned, without it he 'shall *perish* !' His sin is not quite as heavy as the Jew's, but sin it is ; and shall have a sentence accordingly.

This shows us how necessary it is to send the Gospel to heathen nations. All are sinners, 'all on their way to perish.' Here is the only escape. Tell them then of the Great Redeemer ! Here is the refutation of those who would, and do, say—'Leave the heathen to themselves ; don't introduce any new religious system to these children of nature. You only make them more heavily responsible, if you tell them of Christ.' Friend, we speak of the Redeemer, because they are sinners deserving destruction, and they will perish in their sins unless they believe. Here alone is the salvation of God.

At verse 13 in your bibles, comes in a long parenthesis, lasting to the 16th verse. I think it should rather begin at verse 11. Then it will run—"God will

render to each according to his works'—to the righteous, one award; to the wicked, another—

“In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my Gospel.”

This is the day of mercy, and of the patience of God, who waits to see if men will turn and obey. But another day, in the interests of justice, has been fixed on, when the One Judge, both God and man, shall pass sentence. In verse 5 it was spoken of, as the day when God shall make known His justice. So will He make it known, that each shall experience the effects of it in the final state. Jesus Christ is the judge—appointed by the Father—He is a *man*, and justice requires that the offender should be judged by his peers. He is one who has passed through life, tempted as we are, but unspotted by sin. But how could a mere man know the histories of millions untold? How pass sentence on them? and execute the awards he has given? Only God is competent thereto. And the Father will not judge; He has committed all to the Son: both the resurrection, in order to the judgment; and the rewards and punishments which follow. This He has done that all may honour the Son as much as the Father: John v. 21—29.

The things to be judged are “the secrets of *men*.” It is not said, ‘of the *wicked*.’ It will take effect on both the elect and the non-elect: to each according to their works. “*Every* work shall come into judgment, whether it be good or evil.”

Herein it will differ from previous judgments by the rulers of earth, whom God has set up. They can only treat with righteous judgment the offences that are known. And many crimes are unknown. But while the offenders escape wrath from man and now, they are reserved to the hearing of the great day by God. To Him there is no secret, and He has deter-

mined, that in that day all that is hidden shall come to light: Matt. x. 26. And until that is done, the perfect knowledge and righteousness of the Judge of all will not be known.

Now these “secrets of men” are of two kinds. (1) *Good* works done in secret, as Jesus bids His disciples. He tells us, that what is rewarded now gets here its recompence, and bids disciples seek for the future reward from God. (2) But also—and this is the most awful part of the award—deeds of *wickedness*, which escaped the knowledge and the penalties of law, but will then be requited with woe.

“*According to my Gospel.*”

The Gospel committed to Paul was that addressed specially to *the nations* of the world. Peter's Gospel, as you may see by comparing his sermons in the Acts with Paul's, respected the *people of Israel*. Judgment then, and the judgment of *all* men, is a part of Paul's Gospel. And judgment springs out of the righteousness or justice of God, as the Ruler of the universe.

Here then is the solemn reason, why all should listen to the Gospel. There is no way out from judgment into life eternal, but the one way provided by the Most High.

We may now take a glance at the parenthesis.

13. The Jews valued themselves as superior to the Gentiles, because the Law of God was read in their Synagogues. But the Scripture observes, that it is *doing* which the law requires. And sometimes Gentiles did right according to their conscience when Jews acted sinfully, both *against* their conscience and the Law.

Here the Holy Spirit assumes the possession of “*conscience*” as a property belonging to all men, whether Jew or Gentile. Our conscience is a witness to us that we are of the race of Adam, who stole, against warning, this faculty, which condemns every son of man. There is none who in all points has acted up to his conscience, or could be justified thereby.

The apostle then openly convicts the Jews as offenders against *law*. The Jew boasted in his knowledge of God and of His will, as the consequence of possessing the Scriptures. But the possession of the true rule and his knowledge did not keep him from breaking it. And these breaches of it would the more heavily condemn him. Paul instances three special transgressions. They are not offences against the ceremonial law, but against the moral part. And these offences of Israel stirred up the ungodly of the Gentiles to blaspheme God.

Vainly then did they boast of their circumcision, and trust to it, while they broke the law. If they offended against it, the Gentile who in this point or that acted rightly, would condemn them who broke through their circumcision. That engaged them to observe the whole law, and the very Scriptures which they held in their hands. So says our Lord in Matt. xii. 41, 42: "The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas *is* here. The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon *is* here."

The Jew's circumcision would only be his condemnation if he were a breaker of the Law. For the circumcised was a debtor to do the whole. Had he kept the law, the reality and the sign would have agreed together. But the circumcised transgressor was doubly guilty, against his engagement to obey, and God's command to him to do so. If a Gentile should keep the law, the great thing—the want of circumcision, the mere sign of obedience to the law, should be overlooked. But to have the sign of obedience and the reality of *disobedience*, took away all glory from the Jew; and set him under the wrath of God, as more guilty than the ignorant Gentile. For God judges not

according to appearances, as men do, but according to the reality; and He values everything according to its real importance.

The Jew then who had nothing more than the shadow and the sign, would, in the day of judgment, be condemned as a transgressor. Law therefore brought to Israel no justification by works. They trusted indeed in Moses and his law; but Moses, as the Saviour said, condemned them. They boasted of Jehovah as their covenant God. But His covenant they kept not. They valued themselves above the Gentiles, and considered themselves as able to instruct them. But they did not so use their power. They satisfied themselves with the opinions and the praise of men: they did not look onward to the day of God's judgment according to works.

CHAPTER III.

"What advantage then has the Jew? or what is the profit of circumcision? Much, every way: foremost indeed, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God."

If the Jews, God's sealed people, were, as transgressors, only the more guilty than the Gentiles before God, how was there any advantage in the favours bestowed on Israel?

The Jew's position had many advantages; but the apostle will only insist on the possession of Scripture. This is called, "the oracles of God." 'Oracles were originally answers given by the gods of the heathen to questions asked by their worshippers.' Their kings and rich men sent to enquire what they should think or do, in cases where they were in doubt what should be done. 'Shall I make war with the Lydians? What will be the effect of it?'

The answer was given by priest or priestess, professedly inspired by one of their gods. What was uttered was taken down: that was the reply of the god.

But the oracles of God are not flattering and deceptive, as were oft those of men. King Cræsus asked advice about going to war. The reply was: 'Cræsus, by crossing the river Halys, will overthrow a great empire.' He understood it of *his* gaining the victory. But the empire that was overthrown was his own.

The answer to another king going to war with Rome, was: 'I say that thou, O son of Æacus, mayest conquer the Romans.' He was defeated. But the same words may be equally well construed: "I say, son of Æacus, that the Romans may conquer thee." An oracle admitting two opposite meanings, was only fitted to deceive.

Scripture is the collection of the utterances of the true God. The Scripture then is inspired; a collection of inspired words, specially about the salvation that was to spring from Messiah. This was the matter of chief moment from the first. In various ways was the Great Deliverer set forth as about to come and to save, and by Christ's words now should we be led.

But how many are trusting in their being sprinkled in infancy and confirmed; while both of these are traditions of men, uncommanded of God! Even one immersed, if without faith, will be damned. God asks the reality of the heart, and will not accept the sign without the thing signified.

3. "For what if some did not believe? Shall their unbelief make the faithfulness of God of no effect?"

But the Jew had not believed these oracles about Messiah, as was shown by their rejection of Jesus Christ when He came. Where then was the advantage of having these prophecies?

First, the unbelief was not universal; and the oracles believed were salvation to the receivers. Secondly, while many had disbelieved God's words, their truthfulness was not thereby shaken. God's oracles, whether believed or not, must be fulfilled at last.

But what if it were said, 'that the Jews still believe their Scriptures, and expect their fulfilment: the only thing they denied being, the fulfilment of the prophecies in the person of Christ Jesus.'

The Saviour embodied and fulfilled in His life and death so many Scriptures, that none are excusable, who refuse the evidence arising therefrom. The truth is shown too by contrast. Never did a false Christ arise among the Jews, though destitute of all miraculous power, and of all fulfilment of prophecy in his case—but many followed him. And very observable is it, that the Gentiles who believed in Christ were not

carried away by the pretensions of these impostors; while the Jews were. It was the revolt of Israel's *heart*, that led them to reject Christ, His resurrection, and the coming of the Holy Ghost.

But after all their sins against God and His Christ, Jehovah will at last fulfil His promises, as He has declared. He is proving now Israel's ill desert.

4. "God forbid: yea, let God be true, and every man a liar; as it is written, 'That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.'"

The privileges of the Jew issued indeed only in his condemnation, because of their unbelief. But God was sincere and true. If any rested in their unbelief of the words of God, that was due not to His insincerity, but to their wickedness. Jehovah is always to be believed in His sayings, however much man may bring against them. The Fall and the Flood are to be credited, though scientists from time to time may discredit *them*, and allege evidences destructive of them, as they think. What, in such a case, are we to think and say? That if the science and testimony of all men is against the Scripture, the Scripture is to be believed, and the counter-testimony of man to be rejected.

David, in Psalm li., in his repentance confesses that he was guilty; and however much he might have thought God's testimonies about the sinfulness of man to be overdrawn, yet he acknowledged that the statements of Scripture against him were true.

Men judge God now, and are often open blasphemers. He allows them to show their enmity against Him. They accuse His sayings as beyond the truth, or even as lies. But a day is coming in which Jehovah will judge these blasphemers. And then it will be apparent that His words were true, and He will win the day against His calumniators. His oracles will be found at last to be correct.

For instance, how much is made by infidels, of the sins of David. How much is God accused, because of His grace to such an one!

But we must remember that the Lord's testimonies have two very different aspects; and if David, Abraham, Solomon, and others, had not had their sins recorded, it would have been alleged, that the declarations about the universal and entire sinfulness of man were unfounded. And these eminent men would have been pointed out, as having disproved the accusations of Holy Writ against *all* the sons of men as sinful.

But now that the records of the offences of the best of men are given, the unbeliever turns round, and assails the Most High from the opposite direction; as if He found pleasure in these transgressions. Let all then who accuse and blaspheme God, remember the coming day, when the Most High will put in His answer to the libels of sinners. His enemies shall then be found liars to Him; and the truth and justice of His sayings shall be seen and owned.

5. "But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man). Far be it! for how then shall God judge the world?"

Another objection against the coming judgment is here taken up. 'Is it righteous in God to visit with penalty and wrath sins which bring Him glory?' One might ask, 'Did the sinner design to glorify God?' The evil comes from man; the good comes by the Almighty's counterworking of the mischief.

'If the value of the righteousness provided for sinners is by my unrighteousness made more evident—for it is thus proved suitable and necessary, and God's grace in giving it is more conspicuous—can God justly take vengeance on such sin?' It is implied, that this objection is so strong, that no reply can be given to it.

Paul does not make the objection his own; on the contrary, he implies the hardness of men's hearts in not giving God His due, even in their speech. And now, as the day of blasphemy comes on, these daring speeches against the Lord of all wax more common, and go to farther and farther lengths of libel. So some say—'If election and predestination are the doctrines of the New Testament, men are not to be blamed for rejecting the Gospel.'

It was a first principle in the Gospel of Paul, that God shall judge the world, both the Jew and the Gentile. He testified this at Athens. "The times of *ignorance* (that was spoken of to philosophers, who thought themselves so *wise*, and Paul only a babbler) God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent: Because He hath appointed a day in which He will judge the habitable earth in righteousness by a man whom He hath appointed; whereof He hath given assurance to all in that He raised Him from the dead:" Acts xvii. 31. But this decree of God to judge the world had been before testified in the Psalms.

"Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad . . . before the Lord; for He cometh, for He cometh to judge the earth; He *shall judge the world in righteousness*, and the peoples with His truth:" Psalm xcvi. 11—13. And again, two Psalms onward: "Let the floods (rivers) clap their hands: let the mountains be joyful together before the Lord; for He cometh to judge the earth: *with righteousness shall He judge the world*, and the nations with equity."

Some may object to this, that God's coming and judgment in these passages seem to be an occasion of joy, rather than of *terror*. To the animal creation the Saviour's return shall be joy. The whole creation is waiting for it, and for the manifestation of the sons of God in the coming Kingdom of the glory of the Son. But to the guilty sons of men that coming is

woe. "Behold, He cometh with the clouds; and every eye shall see Him; and they also which pierced Him to death; and all *tribes of the earth shall wail because of Him*. Even so, Amen:" Rev. i. 7. For until judgment has cleared the earth of the wicked, the happy days foretold cannot come. And so we see in the Apocalypse. Before the millennial day, the Saviour comes to battle with the hosts of heaven against the armies of earth mustered against Him; and only when they are destroyed, and their three leaders imprisoned, does the day of glory and of joy beam upon earth: Rev. xix., xx.

The apostle then gives a specimen of the way in which, if their excuse were adopted, all judgment of the guilty must cease.

7, 8. "For if the truth of God by my lie hath more abounded to God's glory, why am I too still judged as a sinner? And (why) not (as we are slandered, and as some affirm, that we say) 'Let us do evil that good may come'? Whose judgment is just."

This is a difficult passage, owing to its extreme condensation. I shall open it to you best, perhaps, by treating it in another order than is given in the text.

1. In it there is a *slander* against Paul, which he summarily denounces. His adversaries alleged against him, that one of his doctrines was, that 'We men were to do evil, that God might be wrought upon to counterwork it, and to bring good out of it.' In another form it appears again in chapter vi. "What shall we say then? shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" And there too he puts in his denial—"God forbid,"—far be it! Paul adds here his assurance by inspiration, that such slanderers, who sought to hinder the Gospel of God by blackening Christ's ambassadors, would justly be damned. Even as our Lord, summing up the iniquities and condemnation of

the Pharisees, says, "Ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, nor suffer ye those that were entering to go in." And then he adds the terrible words—"Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, *how can ye escape the damnation of hell?*" Matt. xxiii. 13, 33.

2. Now even if Paul had taught so (as he had *not*), yet the principle which they put forward in order to escape God's judgment, would avail to defend *Paul* against *them*.

Their principle was, that 'If sin glorified God, He would have no right to judge the sinner.' 'Apply then this to the matter between you and me. You call my doctrine 'my lie.' But it is a lie that glorifies God, by its contrast with the grace and truth of God; which, as you know, I always magnify. Then I affirm, says Paul, that you are guilty in condemning me as a sinner, and persecuting me.'

3. 'Let us suppose, then, that your principle will stand before God, and prevent His judgment of your sins. By the same rule you must judge me too guiltless in my proclamation of the Gospel to the Gentiles, which you so vehemently assail; and you must condemn yourselves, as violating your own principle of excuse. If you stand excused before God despite your sin, I may well stand still more excused before you.'

'But if you will go on maligning and condemning me, though protected by your principle, then you prove that you really do not believe in the goodness of your excuse before God. And God will judge you as slanderers, hinderers of His Gospel, and evil doers, and your "damnation will be just." The apostle then having demolished this wicked excuse, goes on with the testimony concerning the coming judgment of God, as given in Scripture.

Roman Catholic authorities have long maintained that evil may be done, if good thereby accrue to the Church of Rome. That it is not necessary to keep

oaths made to heretics, and so on. "*Doctrines of Popery Examined*," in a course of Lectures by ministers in Glasgow. Lecture IX, by Dr. Willis. Blakeney's, St. Alphonsus Liguori, 1852. Murder, perjury, and other crimes are allowed, if the results and intention are good: pp. 72—77.

9. "What then? are we better (than they)?* No, in no wise; for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth (God), there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes."

Can any words more fully or more clearly declare the universal wickedness of every son and daughter of Adam? Repeated assertions given both negatively and positively! 'No, not one!' Yet so hateful is the testimony, that learned men have denied, that all alike are here condemned. It is another proof of the wickedness of those who enjoy an honourable reputation among men.

All are by nature "under sin"—always—as the blackamoor ever dwells under his swarthy skin. Man is under sin too, as a breaker of law; under the penalty and the power of it.

But some have by regeneration passed out from it to be "under grace."

The apostle is showing the need of righteousness before God the Judge, and the universal absence of righteousness among the fallen. This is the preparation for discovering to us the supply of righteousness by God, to save the condemned by justice.

* Some would render it—"Have we any defence?"

Men think little of the sins of *word*. But in God's accusation, four classes of words are evil. The throat, the tongue, the lips, the mouth, are used to evil. He accuses men of corrupt and corrupting speech, of flattery, of slander, of cursing and swearing. How apt are many to curse, whenever anything goes wrong!

Men know not peace with God: and very often have not peace with one another. Though they own the existence of their Almighty Maker, and the threats He utters against them and their ways, they fear Him not. Hence the Great King and Judge of all will have to prove by the flames of hell engulfing the offenders, that He is to be feared. God intends to "show His wrath, and to make His power known."

19. "Now we know that whatsoever the law saith, it saith to those under the law; in order that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God."

The apostle foresaw, that the Jew would say—'All that you have said applies to Gentile idolaters, and is perfectly true of *them*.' But the Holy Spirit makes answer, that God's oracles, of which Israel boasted, were specially addressed to Israel, and instead of distinguishing between the Gentiles as wicked, and Israel as holy; they accuse all the world as being on the same level of sin.

Four times in these two verses 19, 20, we have 'law' named; condemnation and justification are both the acts of a Judge according to law. Hence justification is sometimes said to be *forensic*, that is, it is something belonging to, and taking place in, a court of law and justice.

The judgment takes place "before God" as the Judge. *Now* many sinners have excuses enough. They will all be stopped at last. *Now* the guilty are often bold and impudent. Then every excuse will freeze upon the lips of the guilty. See to it, that you have now a ground on which you can meet God, and be accepted!

He offers you a perfect acceptance. Clothe yourself by faith with the robe of Christ's righteousness. Else in that day you will be like the man without a wedding garment. And to the enquiry—'How is it you are here without the robe of God?' you will be speechless. Falsehood will not shelter; for God knows all. "Every mouth will be stopped." Read John's account of the last judgment. It is a sentence according to the opened books of each man's life. "And all the world become guilty before God."

All the world now is guilty, as not believing God's testimony, that Jesus is His Only-begotten Son. *Already* condemned! It is not—'You *will be lost*, if you go on so'; but—'You are already condemned, and if cut off now, execution would be done upon you.' Jew and Gentile, those possessed of the Scripture, and those left only to the light of nature, all are alike guilty in thought, word, and deed. You have no righteousness before God, but unrighteousness in abundance. You are not subject to the law of God, neither indeed, while you are at enmity against God, can you be.

20. "Therefore by works of law shall no flesh be justified before Him; for by law is the recognition of sin."

'Before Him,' as the Judge. This supposes the sons of men gathered at the Last Great Assizes. The sea, Hades, and Death have delivered up the prisoners, the dead, up to that time lodged in them. Then takes place the great jail-delivery. The Judge is there seated on the Great White Throne. All are mustered before His eye. All are known to Him. All are sinners, judged by their works. Not one is pronounced righteous according to law. How can law pronounce righteous those who have broken it?

'No *flesh* shall be justified before God.' Are you a being of flesh and blood? Have you a heart that beats in your bosom? Then you are one of those whom law

must condemn. "The mind of the *flesh* is enmity against God."

"For by law is the recognition of sin."

Law demands righteousness, defines unrighteousness, and states the pains and penalties adjudged thereto. It is very strict, for it takes account of thoughts and feelings, as well as of words and deeds. Many things which men regard as mere trifles weigh heavy with God.

It makes out too the penalty for offences, and warns beforehand the transgressor.

The effect of it in every case, as applied to fallen man, is condemnation. The recognition is of *sin*, not of *salvation*. But there is one great exception, on which the Gospel rests. 'Tis the good news concerning the Christ, the second Adam. Was He guilty? No! in all things perfect. Was He condemned? Only when others' sins were laid on Him. And law says, "The doers of the law shall be justified." Did He recognise sin in Himself? He challenged His enemies—"Which of you convinceth Me of sin?"

Hence, while the Holy Ghost came down to convict of sin, He came also, to testify of "*righteousness*": the righteousness which was wrought by Jesus our Lord: wrought to save sinners.

21. "But now without law the righteousness of God is manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets."

Man, his deservings and his powers, have been summed up, and all lie under condemnation of justice.

But a new scene opens, through the mercy of God providing righteousness and salvation.

Law knows not of mercy, but speaks only of the deservings of each. Our salvation is founded on a mercy beyond law, outside our obedience alike and "*our unrighteousness*:" ver. 5. On this new principle our hope turns.

"The righteousness of God is manifested."

Man's *unrighteousness* established, and sentence passed, God's righteousness comes into view, and still abides before us. Now, by the Saviour's life and death of obedience and atonement, the righteousness provided by God is made known. This is "the Gospel of God concerning His Son, Christ Jesus," both man and God; *man* to obey; *God* to make His obedience *infinite in value and extent*. It is "the Gospel of the Christ." He stands distinguished from all other men as "*Jesus Christ the Righteous*:" 1 John ii. 1. 'He died, *the Righteous One* for *unrighteous ones*, to bring us to God:' 1 Peter iii. 18. In his work the Law can see a righteousness which is perfect. And on that perfectness it takes its stand for salvation. This righteousness is the devising of the *Father*, the work of the *Son*, the application of the *Holy Ghost*.

In view of the argument here, righteousness takes two aspects: (1) that of the *Judge*, and (2) that of the *prisoner at the bar*. For, as was observed, Righteous justification is the meeting of *two righteousnesses*; that of the Judge, and that of the prisoner. 1. *A righteous judge* must condemn the guilty, and *justify the righteous*. It is so stated: Deut. xxv. 1. "If there be a controversy between men, and they come into judgment (court) that the judges may judge them, then they shall *justify the righteous*, and *condemn the wicked*." And again—"He that (as the judge) *justifieth the wicked*, and he that condemneth the righteous, even they both are abomination to the Lord:" Prov. xvii. 15. The prisoner must be righteous; else the judge in justifying him will be himself *unrighteous*.

This righteousness of God, provided by His mercy, was a long while concealed; now it is "revealed." Man could not have found it out.

But inasmuch as this plan was devised of God from

all eternity, glimpses, hints, shadows of it were given, still increasing in clearness.

1. It was "*witnessed by the Law.*" Even when the sentence of justice was pronounced in Eden, there was a figure of the blest deliverance, in Jehovah's providing coats of skin for the culprits He had condemned.

2. It was made clearer yet under Moses in the High Priest and the sacrifices; specially in those of the Day of Atonement.

"*And the Prophets.*"

As the time drew on for Christ to appear, and as the ruin and unrighteousness of men became more and more evident, so the light became clearer and clearer.

1. Paul, so to speak, has taken his text from the words of Habakkuk—"The righteous by faith shall live."

2. The history of Jonah is declared by the New Testament to be typical of the Lord Jesus, specially His death and resurrection, and the message sent by Jonah to Nineveh, after his coming forth 'out of the belly of Hadees.'

3. The Psalms speak of it. David, asking pardon for his grievous sins, says—"Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, thou God of *my salvation*; and my tongue shall sing aloud of *Thy righteousness.*" The justice of God could but *destroy* David. But here is *God's* righteousness, which is the *salvation* of the guilty! That can only mean the righteousness wrought by Christ, and provided by God for the sinner.

4 There is a good deal in Isaiah about it. It is spoken of as *God's* creating, a promised thing, intended to *save* the guilty. God would bring it near, and *reveal* it for those that had none. "*Our* righteousnesses," says the prophet, "are as filthy rags." "*Their* righteousness," says God, "is *from Me.*" But Paul more fully takes up the subject in the history of Abraham and the words of David.

22, 23. "I mean the righteousness of God that is by means of faith in Jesus Christ, for all, and upon all that believe. For there is no difference; for all sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

Here is a further expansion of the righteousness of God. This verse gives it as it relates to the *prisoner*. The righteousness of the judge does not depend on *faith*. It is righteousness in *action* and *execution*. But the only righteousness for the guilty depends on the work of Another for him, testified by God, and believed by him. It comes just after Paul has summoned all before God, and pronounced all guilty.

Jesus Christ our Lord is the weaver of the robe of righteousness. He is the only Righteous One: "the Lord our Righteousness." Adam's unrighteousness came through unbelief in God. Now we become righteous by faith in the new testimony of God concerning His Son.

As it is righteousness for the prisoner, the Holy Ghost tells us how to make it *ours*. 'Tis first the righteousness of *Christ*, as the worker. It is *ours* next, handed on to all who will receive it.

"For all." As the *need* of righteousness is universal, so is the *offer* of it to all. Christ wrought His righteousness, not for Himself, but for us. As all are condemned under law, all may be saved by this grace. As all are lost by their unrighteousness, so all might be saved by the righteousness provided by God. Our qualification for it is *not* our being *good*, but *rebels condemned*.

It is "*on* all them that believe."

It is a robe laid before men. It is intended to be put on, and that takes place by faith. But not all that hear of it put it on. It does not profit us till put on.

That word "*on*" fits into the Scriptures which describe it as a robe to be worn. "He hath *clothed* me with the garments of salvation; He hath *covered* me

with the robe of righteousness:" Isa. lxi. 10. "I put on righteousness and it clothed me," says Job: xxix. 14. And Paul says: "Not having mine own righteousness which is out of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is *from* God *on* faith:" Phil. iii. 9. The clothing of the naked and guilty was God's first act of grace in Eden.

When we accept this righteousness of *God* it becomes *ours*, as the coat which I put on and which is on my shoulders is mine, and covers me. It ever abides on me, whether I sleep or wake. It cannot be changed, it cannot be sullied. Either *righteousness* is upon us from God, or *wrath* is.

"*For there is no difference.*"

All alike lack righteousness. "There is none righteous; no, not one." All alike need it, as their defence against the accusation of law. The apostle is justifying the word "all," which he has just used twice. There is one disease, and but one remedy.

'Are there no degrees of sin then?' Oh yes! Jesus speaks of the debtor of fifty pence, and of five hundred pence. But both are debtors; both unable to pay.

Here many stumble and go astray. They comfort themselves that they are so much better than others. But that will not avail them. All sinners will receive the eternal wrath of God, though some will suffer more severely than others. It will be small comfort, if any bear the everlasting flames of God's wrath, that there are others who suffer in fiercer ones.

"*For all sinned.*"

This refers to our fall in Adam. In his one transgression all fell, as the apostle goes on to teach more particularly in chapter v. This salvation, this righteousness is not for the good and true; there are none, where all are sinners; nor for those who are seeking to be saved by their works; nor for those who look on salvation, as something to be wrought partly by themselves, and partly by the merits of Christ.

"*And (all) come short of the Glory of God.*"

As "all sinned" looks back to Eden and the casting out thence, so this looks onward to the eternal lot of the sinner, as decided by his life on earth. Beside the sin of Adam imputed, each of his sons as he grows up adds his own transgressions against God. These make him unworthy of the heritage of the saved. Not the best of sinners ever earned for himself the title to eternal glory.

Scripture speaks first of righteousness, and then of the eternal portion of men. The Lord Jesus commissioning his servant Paul says: "I send thee to open men's eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they *may receive* (1) *forgiveness of sins*, and (2) *inheritance among them that are sanctified*, by faith that is in Me:" Acts xxvi. 18. See also Col. i. 12—14. "The glory of God" is the portion of the saved by God.

This view is confirmed by other passages, specially of this epistle. Eternal life and glory go together, as in chapter ii. 7. "To them who by patient continuance seek for *glory*, honour, and *incorruptibility, eternal life*." "*Glory*, honour, and peace," shall God give to "every one that worketh good:" Rom. ii. 7, 10. And again, as "*justified by faith* we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and *rejoice in hope of the glory of God*:" v. 1, 2, to Eph. i. 18.

This glory of God will partly appear in the *resurrection-bodies* of the saved—"They shall shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father:" Matt. xiii. For Christ shall "change the body of our humiliation, that it may be fashioned like to *the body of His Glory*:" Phil. iii. 21.

They will dwell in the New Jerusalem, the city which has "*the glory of God*,"—"the inheritance of the saints in light." The Saviour is just the one exception to (1) 'All sinned,' and (2) "come short of the

glory of God." He was "received up in *glory*." He was seen by Stephen there. "Full of the Holy Spirit, he looked steadfastly into heaven, and saw *the glory of God*, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God:" Acts vii. 55. See also Rom. viii. 18, 21; ix. 23.

24. "Being justified by way of gift by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

Justification is the blessed consequence of the righteousness of God, named in verses 21 and 22, as being *upon* them as believers. "Being justified"—a present thing granted us, not waiting till the day of judgment to be known. It is the blessed contrast to our place by nature as sinners.

This righteousness comes to us "freely"—that is by way of gift. We thus learn how it becomes ours "without law." Law demands *payment* in full of us. But so we can never attain righteousness. Therefore righteousness becomes ours, aye, "the righteousness of God," by our receiving another's work on our behalf. The principle of law is: "The *man* that *doeth* shall live." But here are *gift* and *grace*. We add nothing to this complete righteousness of Christ. Faith does not work, does not pay to God righteousness for its justification. But it works for God after justification has been received.

This is 'by God's *grace*.' Here is another great difference from law. Strict justice belongs to law. "And if a man cause a blemish in his neighbour; *as he hath done, so shall it be done to him*: breach for breach, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; as he hath caused a blemish in a man, so shall it be done to him again:" Lev. xxiv. 19, 20. "Thine eye shall *not pity*; but life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot:" Deut. xix. 21.

The Most High is not bound to show grace to the sinner: but His grace is free as soon as justice is satisfied. The grace of God rules the gifts of God.

"*Through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.*"

Righteousness and its blessed consequences are not ours till sin is taken away. Sinners are under debt to law, to suffer its penalty and curse. These debts they cannot discharge; but another may for them. Redemption is a buying out from penalty by a price paid. He who lies under the curse of law, as a sinner, cannot be 'blessed' till the curse is removed.

Law itself recognised this. The guilty proprietor of an ox that had slain a man should *be put to death*. "If there be laid on him a sum of money, then he shall give for *the ransom of his life* (soul) whatsoever is laid upon him:" Ex. xxi. 29, 30. From this penalty he might be bought out.

This "redemption" is "*in Christ Jesus*." We receive all without payment. But the Lord Jesus paid the ransom-price. Christ is "the Righteous One"—the Only Righteous One. Both the working out of perfect obedience, and the endurance of the penalty come from Him. They are ours, as we are united with Him. In a striking passage we have, "Ye are *justified in the name of the Lord Jesus*:" 1 Cor. vi. 11. There is no other name that is righteous: no other name whereby we must be saved. Both the perfection of works, and the perfection of suffering, are found in Him alone.

25. "Whom God set forth as a mercy-seat by means of faith in His blood, with a view to the discovery of His righteousness because of the passing by of the foregoing sins, in the forbearance of God."

"*Whom*." Christ's person is the centre of the two works necessary to our justification, (1) the pardon of sin; and the (2) presentation of a perfect righteousness.

The Greek word* which is translated "set forth," may have one of two significations. (1) God's *provision* of Christ before His appearing. "Behold the fire and the wood" (said Isaac), "but where is the lamb for a

* Προεθετο.

burnt-offering?" "My son, God will *provide* Himself a lamb for a burnt-offering:" Gen. xxii. "In the Mount the Lord will *provide*" (margin). The Greek word may refer either to (1) time or (2) place. There was the ram that was offered up in the stead of Isaac. God now at the Passover provides the Lamb of God. Who but He could do it?

(2) The other meaning is to "*set forth*," to *present before the eye*. Both senses apply to the transaction indicated. But it is the latter which best accords with the arguments. Typical of this was the presentation of the bullock and of the two goats on the day of Atonement: Lev. xvi. 6, 7.

"*Whom God brought forward.*"

Previously to the Saviour's appearing, there was concealment of God and of the Holiest. Jehovah hid Himself and His ark from the eyes of sinful men. 'God (as Darby well says) could not come *out*, and man might not go *in*.' And thus the Saviour was concealed on high in the Holiest above, in the bosom of the Father.

Men were guilty, and might not even behold their God, much less draw near Him.

The tense employed in the Greek denotes a special action completed.

There was indeed the necessity of the Saviour's previous incarnation, which was in itself a leaving of concealment. "God was manifest in the flesh." So was He to create by His obedience the righteousness necessary: John i. 30, 37; 1 Tim. iii. 16; Heb. ix. 26; 1 Pet. i. 19, 20.

And as the last Passover drew on, the Redeemer went through all the land, both to the East and to the West of Jordan, attracting increasing multitudes to the Passover in the Holy City.

There, at the appointed time, He is led, as the prisoner, first to Israel under Caiaphas; and then to the Romans under Pilate. Condemned by both, He is

presented to the eyes of both Jew and Gentile; as the criminal He is lifted up naked before heaven and earth. Thus we are brought into contact with former notices in this epistle. "For therein is the righteousness of God *revealed*." "Without law the righteousness of God is *manifested*, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets."

The Saviour's exposure on the tree was part of the trial of the cross. "They *gaped upon Me* with their mouths, as a ravening and roaring lion. I may tell all My bones, *they look, they stare upon Me*:" Psa. xxii. 13. That was the hour of Satan and of darkness. The Wicked One was bruising the heel of the Seed of the Woman. "As Moses lifted up the Serpent in the Wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up." "And sitting down, they *watched Him there*:" Matt. xxvii. 36; Luke xxiii. 35.

Speedily after that exhibition of the Saviour, while He is shown to some for forty days, He is concealed again; and there abides: Acts x. 40. When a second time He is manifested to earth, it is in judgment, cutting off His foes.

"*Whom God set forth as a mercy-seat.*"*

The meanings of 'propitiatory sacrifice' and 'mercy-seat' are both suitable here. Both meet in Christ.

The 'mercy-seat' was a part of *the ark*, its cover. The ark was the centre around which all the tabernacle was grouped. It was the appointed meeting-place between God and Israel. "Thou shalt put the *mercy-seat* above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put *the testimony* that I shall give thee. *And there will I meet with thee*, and will talk with thee from above the mercy-seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony:" Ex. xxv. 21, 22. In the Holiest, after the second veil, says Paul in Hebrews,

* Or 'a propitiatory sacrifice.' For God was justly angry: and by the work of Christ (His own plan), pardon and peace are come.

was "*the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had the manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant. And over it the cherubim of glory shadowing the mercy-seat :*" ix. 4, 5.

The ark then was both the place of meeting with Jehovah, and the means of propitiating His wrath. It was the type of Christ. It was composed of two materials, very different in value, wood and gold. So our Lord is both man and God.

Within it was "the testimony," as Moses says: or the two tables of the covenant. The original tables were broken by the Mediator, as soon as He saw Israel's flagrant idolatry. But the two tables are renewed in grace, and laid up before Jehovah in the Holiest. Man could not fulfil them; but Jehovah would send One who would observe them in their fulness. They were laid up in His Presence, and not forgotten. The Saviour was sent, who says: "I delight to do Thy will; *yea, Thy law is within My heart :*" Psa. xl. 8. In the same Psalm he tells of God's dissatisfaction with the sacrifices of Moses. He would offer Himself as the sacrifice instead.

Under the law the tables of the covenant were outside the man. But in the Law-fulfiller, the tables were *within the heart*. Righteousness, or Christ's obedience was to come first; then atonement, by Him in whom the Father was ever well pleased.

15. But what shall we say of the offences of Israel against the tables of the Covenant? They were met by the blood sprinkled above upon the ark-lid, the mercy-seat. "Without shedding of blood takes place no forgiveness:" Heb. ix. 22. So the Saviour, fixed upon the cross, bedewed each of its four horns with His atoning blood. Obedience and death met in the Great Mediator, and thus was complete satisfaction rendered to the Law-Giver. His wrath was removed; His favour shone out.

Against this it is objected, that the ark was concealed

in the Holiest before Jehovah. How then does it answer to the Saviour's sufferings and death before the multitudes at Jerusalem?

We reply, this is the very glory of the matter. The ark was hid, while the old tabernacle, its priests, and sacrifices, kept their standing. But when the fulness of the time was come; when Christ appeared, at once the sacrifice and the priest, the ark and the mercy-seat met in Him. Jehovah's hiding himself was due to the sinfulness of man and of Israel. He designed to show, that access to Himself could not be given through the shadowy arrangements of the Law. But when the true Priest and sacrifice had come, the veil of the Holiest which hid Himself and His ark was rent. The blood of the New Testament, shed before the Lord, availed to discover Him, as the God alike of righteousness and mercy. The peculiarities of the Mosaic covenant in its concealment, and fleshly priesthood were taken away, when propitiation was made for a world of sinners; and the word "set forth" tells of God's intended manifestation of Christ.

There was a designed reference to the Great Day of Atonement. On that day the High Priest of Israel alone might enter the House of Jehovah. He must be clad in his robes of humiliation, not in those of glory. He could only draw near with the cloud of incense, answering to the Saviour's *perfection of righteousness*. All Israel, both people and priests, must stand aloof as sinners needing redemption. He must put *the blood* on the ark before the Lord. Israel outside were not to be working, but afflicting themselves. If working, they would be cut off from their people. The true Priest and sacrifice are to be received, not by the worker; but by the believer, confessing his sins.

In the sacrifice presented to the God of Israel there must also be both *perfection* and the *shedding of blood*, the two conditions of satisfaction, which are found in the righteousness of God.

That satisfaction was given to the offended Jehovah by the death of Christ, was shown by the immediate results of the Redeemer's death. (1) The veil that hid God and His mercy-seat was permanently rent, and that by a hand from above. (2) Law, which could not show God's full glory, was set aside. (3) Tombs were opened by the breach of their walls. Out of the sentence and house of death has come the way of escape into life: and many of the tenants of the tombs came forth. (4) They went into Jerusalem, as the Holy City—the meeting-place, in the day to come, of the living and the risen.

The propitiation Godward comes through the blood of Christ. The propitiation manward comes through our faith in the testimony of God to that blood. What God has provided for us in the way of righteousness and atonement, faith accepts. Here is the turning-point for life and for death. It was so seen at the cross. The multitude was unbelieving, refusing both the Saviour's perfection of righteousness, and sacrifice of atonement. They sought by false witness to condemn Him to death as a transgressor. "Ah thou that destroyest the temple!" They take voluntarily on themselves the guilt of shedding the blood of the Holy One of Israel. The very robbers reproach him; though one at last confesses the Saviour. "Lord, remember me, when Thou comest in Thy kingdom." The centurion and his executioners acknowledge Him as righteous.

"With a view to the discovery of His righteousness, because of the passing by of the previous offences, through the forbearance of God."

Sins were 'passed by,' not pardoned, until the work of Christ was fulfilled. In David's penitential Psalm li., we have his prayer for pardon. 'Blot out my transgression.' 'Wash me.' 'Hide Thy face from my sins.' In Moses' Psalm xc., we have, "Thou hast set our

misdeeds before Thee, our secret sins in the light of Thy countenance." God passed them by, without saying they were forgiven. Thus when David has unwittingly pronounced sentence against himself,—*"As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die."* Nathan accuses—"Thou art the man." David responds—"I have sinned against the Lord." "And Nathan said unto David,—*"The Lord also hath put away thy sin, 'thou shalt not die.'*" 2. Sam. xii. How was it, that Aaron was spared, after his making the calf? and why were the idolaters of Sinai cut off? and Balaam?

This was not to be understood in that day. And thus a slur was cast on the character of God as the Judge. Could He be righteous, who thus smote one, and suffered another to escape? Was it not mere favouritism?

God was righteous then, and is so evermore. But how it could be, was not then discovered. It could not be shown, till the work of the Saviour was finished. Under law and its 'perfect' sacrifices there was *"a savour of rest:"* but not till after Christ's sacrifice had *rest come.*

26. "Unto the discovery of His righteousness in the present season, so that He is righteous even when justifying the man of faith in Jesus."

Twice, and so close together, have we "the discovery of *His righteousness.*" For "the righteousness of God" embraces at once the righteousness of the *Judge*, and the righteousness of the *prisoner*. The first time we have, I think, a preposition which tells of God's design so to manifest Himself; the second time, I think, we have the actual accomplishment of it.* Christ's obedience and atonement are the ground of righteousness both to the Judge, and to the criminal.

* Eis. II qos.

Was God unrighteous in justifying the unrighteous against His own commands to the judges, to condemn the guilty? No! for righteousness covering the guilty had come, and thus He might righteously justify.

"In the present season."

That is, since the obedience and death of Christ. How thankful should we be, that to us is known this joyful truth, so long concealed! The season is peculiar. It is "the day of salvation," "the acceptable year of the Lord." The Holy Ghost has come down from heaven to earth, to testify to us of the effect on high, and below, of the finished work of Christ. "Through this man is preached unto you *the forgiveness of sins*."

The Lord Himself has removed the cloud that cast a shadow over His Holiness, by this perfection and atonement of the True High Priest. Israel will not know this, till they *see* the Saviour come out from the Holiest above, in His robes of beauty and glory. But *we* know it already, by the testimony of the Spirit of truth, sent down from heaven.

The righteousness of the Saviour was attested to the Jew by the conduct of Caiaphas, tacitly owning that none of the accusations brought against our Lord were true; and to the Gentile, by the sayings of Pilate, "I find no fault in this man." "I am innocent of the blood of this *righteous* man."

Then came the shedding of His blood before all, as the ground of forgiveness, long shadowed forth under law. By the blood was the ransom paid; and sins were blotted out. By Jesus' righteousness imputed to the men of faith, justification is come. "The righteous by faith shall *live*." That is more powerful than the word of Law—"The soul that sins shall *die*," or than even the word to David—"Thou shalt *not die*."

At once on the Saviour's death the veil that hid God and His righteousness was rent. Justice is satisfied; mercy is free! Matt. xxvii. 51.

Faith is not in itself righteousness; it is not even

a substitute for righteousness. Faith is only righteousness when it is knit to Christ 'the Lord our Righteousness.' We are forgiven and "*pronounced righteous in the name of the Lord Jesus*:" 1 Cor. vi. 11.

"The man of faith in *Jesus*" stands opposed to the man of unrighteousness in *Adam*, and 'the man of works under *Moses*.'

As the Saviour is going down among the dead He promises pardon to the robber. So Hadees is no longer to the saved the thick darkness of the inner dungeon, but "Paradise." And speedily the Saviour's body and soul reunited prove the righteousness of Christ Jesus, with whom the believer is one. In Him are sins forgiven; in Him righteousness is come!

27. "Where is boasting then? It is shut out. By what law? Of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. 28. For we are reasoning, that a man is justified by faith without the works of the law."

Israel under law boasted of God, and of law; and rested in the law, making their boast of Jehovah as their God. But all boasting before God, whether of the Gentiles or Israel, is cut off. We are saved by the work of Another, after being condemned by our own. This stops boasting.

The original conditions of the law have been fulfilled by none. Yet the Law receives its demands. We are saved "*by the law of faith*"—a singular expression!*

It is so called, I judge, from the way of salvation being decreed by God on new terms, and a new principle. It is founded on the righteousness of God, in the obedience of Christ. Under Moses, works are necessary to righteousness and justification. Under Christ, faith is. This then marks what is essential: "Preach the Gospel in all the creation. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall

* We may compare with it—"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil *the law of Christ*:" Gal. vi. 2.

be damned." "This is His *commandment* that we should *believe* on the name of His Son Jesus Christ : " 1 John iii. 23.

The reading 'For' is better attested than "Therefore." The twenty-eighth verse is the justification of the expression—'the law of faith.' It needed explanation; for the apostle had said to the Galatians: "That none is justified by the law is evident: for 'The just by faith shall live.'" *And the law is not of faith*; but 'the man that *doeth* them shall live in them:' Gal. iii. The stress is on 'faith.' 'The law of faith,' I say; for we are reasoning, that by faith "a man is justified without the works of law." "A man,"—whether he be circumcised or uncircumcised, matters not.

Law demands entire obedience to its decrees, and the obedience of each individual. Now, *one* has wrought a righteousness, the salvation of *all the saved*. Salvation is without the works of man the sinner. Faith does not pay, but receives the assurance of the payment of the debt. "To him that *worketh not*, but *believeth*, his *faith* is imputed unto righteousness."

29, 30. "Is He the God of Jews alone? Is He not also of Gentiles? Yes, of Gentiles also: seeing it is one God who shall justify the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith."

Under the law of Sinai, Jehovah sends a message through Moses to 'the house of Jacob, the children of Israel.' They agree to His terms; the covenant is ratified; seventy of the elders go up: "*And they saw the God of Israel:*" Ex. xxiv. 10. The Levites are honoured by *the God of Israel* to draw near Himself and to serve the congregation: Num. xvi. How much greater the nearness and the service of the man of faith!

The tribes boast that Jehovah is not the God of the nations, but *their God*. The smitten Philistines trace

their woe to the ark of *the God of Israel*: 1 Sam. v. 10, 11. The men of Israel called themselves of the Holy City, and stayed themselves upon *the God of Israel*: Isa. xlviii. 2.

God was for a time waiting to see if that nation * would pay Him His just demands. But they only by their disobedience drew down His wrath.

God is now the God of individuals, not of nations; the God of the men of faith who accept His testimony to His Son.

There is one "Righteousness of God" devised for all; the old wall of separation is thrown down by the Author of the Law.

It is no longer the nation of Israel entering into covenant with Jehovah before the fiery mount: but Jew and Gentile set before the cross of Calvary. It is not the High Priest making atonement for the twelve tribes, but all set on one level before God as sinners to be saved by the One High Priest, and the perfect sacrifice.

"One God who *WILL* justify."

Three tenses stand connected with 'justify:' (1) a *present*, (2) a *past*, and (3) a *future* one.

III. The cases in which future justification is spoken of, stand related to the day of judgment.

"Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in *the day of judgment*. For by thy words thou *shalt be justified*:" Matt. xii. 36, 37. So in Romans ii. where Paul describes God's future award. "The doers of the law *shall be justified*:" ii. 13. "That every mouth may be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God." "By the works of the law *shall no flesh be justified* in His sight:" iii. 20.

* It is not 'the Jewish church' but 'nation.' 'What then, say you of Acts vii. 38?' It should have been "*congregation in the wilderness*." "How long shall I bear with this evil congregation?" "In this wilderness they shall be consumed:" Num. xiv.

"Now it was not written for his (Abraham's) sake alone, that it was imputed to him, but for us also to whom it *shall be* (is *about* to be) imputed, if we believe:" iv. 23, 24.

II. The *past* and *present* justification stand on much the same level with one another, and refer to time present.

(1) "In Him (Christ), every one that believeth *is justified*:" Acts xiii. 39.

(2) "*Being justified* by way of gift:" Rom. iii. 24.

(3) "To him that worketh not but believeth on Him that *justifieth* the ungodly, his faith is imputed unto righteousness:" Rom. iv. 5.

See also Rom. viii. 33, and Gal. iii. 8.

I. *Past* Justification.

(1) "*Having* therefore *been justified* by faith, we have peace with God:" Rom. v. 1.

(2) "Much more then, *having been justified* in His blood:" v. 9.

(3) "He that died (Christ) *hath been justified* from sin:" vi. 7.

As soon as we believe, we are justified without works, by faith. But we are yet to appear before God, before we enter on our inheritance in resurrection. And then faith without works will not avail to give us entry into reward. "*I will* render unto each of you according to *your works*." Rev. ii. 23; xxii. 12. Paul speaks of present justification by faith. James speaks of justification according to works in the day of judgment and reward, which looks on to the kingdom of glory. "Ye see then how that *by works* a man *is justified*, and not by faith only:" ii. 24.

31. "Do we then make void law by means of faith? Far be it: yea, we establish law."

In our justification does God's mercy push aside His justice? Is law made to accept faith as an equivalent

for obedience? By no means! Grace is not free to bestow justification, until law, set up by God Himself, has received all its dues at the hand of Christ. For God's law is good and just. And Christ upholds it. The fault is not in the Judge, or in His law; but in man.

In God's justification, the justified is one with Christ the Righteous, who has been accepted as righteous before Him. The proof is, that Jesus is not only risen, but ascended to the highest heaven.

We are saved by being *brought out from under law* and its penalties. Those must be met, before we are dismissed. But on all who abide unpardoned under law, its penalties must be inflicted. So law is established, both on the condemned and the justified.

CHAPTER IV.

1. "What therefore shall we say that Abraham our father hath found, in the way of the flesh?"

It is not affirmed here that Abraham is our 'father according to the flesh.' It would not be true. We are not Jews. It means, 'What did Abraham obtain by his merits?' and as the contrast to the grace of God towards the guilty. This is proved by the next verse: "For if Abraham were justified *by works*,"* as the Jews thought, 'he hath whereof to boast.'

The Spirit of God foresaw that Jews would be dissatisfied with the assertion that all men alike are sinners before God. They would point to Abraham as the exception to such doctrine, and as one justified by his obedience.

The answer to the question—"What hath he found?" then, is, 'Nothing!' understood; and out of this arises the 'For,' with which verse 2 begins.

2. "For if Abraham were justified by works, he has ground for boasting: but (he has) not before God."

This looks back to iii. 27. "Where is *boasting* then?" It is *excluded*. "The Scripture cannot be broken." Before *men* the patriarch may boast, as superior to them; but before *God*, the Judge, he cannot. He, too, is the guilty transgressor.

* In Galatians iii. 3—5 we have the confirmatory phrase: "by the works of law."

3. "For what saith the Scripture? 'Now Abraham believed God; and it was accounted to him unto righteousness.'"

When any difficult point is to be proved, or one contrary to men's thoughts, Paul brings forward the Scripture. That is inspired of God: it is decisive. On it we, too, must rely.

The passage is taken from Genesis xv. 6. He who would have a clear and firm hold of the argument of this chapter must study Genesis xv. and xvii. It is on them that Paul silently builds his argument.

"*Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him unto righteousness.*"

That is not the Law's way of attaining righteousness. It is "the man that *doeth*." Now faith is the opposite to doing. "The law is not of faith." The Law testifies that "*there is none righteous, no, not one.*"

"It was imputed to him *unto righteousness.*"

This grave matter is much perplexed, specially to an English reader, by the translation—"It was imputed for righteousness." At once such a one imagines, that the justified does not possess righteousness, but receives justification by the *merit of the grace of faith*. That is not true. Faith is not righteousness; it is the opposite to that working according to law, which is the law's way of becoming righteous. That view makes man to be *justified by faith as a work*. Scripture quite denies any such merit; it never makes faith equal to perfect obedience in the eye of the law. Faith lays hold on the perfect righteousness of Christ; and, as we are one with Christ, His work is our righteousness.

At once we are met by the question: 'Where do you find anything about Christ in the context?'

We find much about Him in the former chapter of Romans. We read of "*the righteousness of God which is by faith in Jesus Christ for all, and upon all that believe:*" ver. 22. Or if we turn to the Old Testament

we find in the context of Genesis what forms a solid foundation for our faith:—

1. The first passage we cite is, "The Lord appeared unto Abraham and said, '*Unto thy Seed* will I give this land:.'" xii. 7. The apostle tells us that the phrase '*thy Seed*' means Christ. "Now to Abraham the promises were spoken, and to *his Seed*. He saith not '*And to Seeds*,' as about *many*; but as about one—'*And to thy Seed*,' which is Christ:." Gal. iii. 16. That is, Paul owns, that in many passages of Genesis God speaks of Abraham's innumerable seeds. But in this case, and wherever the phrase '*Thy Seed*' stands alone, it means *Abraham's Single Heir, Christ*. "And this I say, that *the covenant* that was confirmed before by God *unto Christ*,* the Law which was four hundred and thirty years after cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect:." ver. 17.

2. The second passage is taken from the fourth verse of the same chapter, whence the apostle derives his proof. Abraham complains to God that he had *no heir*, and it seemed as if his steward Eliezer must be, at his death, possessor of all his property.

"And behold the word of the Lord 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*:'" ver. 4.

3. That is taken up by the Covenant made at the close of the chapter. "In the same day the Lord made a *covenant* with Abraham, saying—'*Unto thy Seed* have I *given* this land, from the river of Egypt [the Nile] to the great river, the river Euphrates:.'" Genesis xv. 18. "*Unto thy Seed*, which is *Christ*." Thus the previous testimony about the covenant being

* *Εἰς Χριστόν*. I am quite aware that some manuscripts omit the words '*unto Christ*,' and the reason is also plain. They did not understand them. The Scripture spoke of Christ's having the land of Palestine. So the easiest way of escape was to omit them.

made and ratified quite formally, by the sacrifices and the passing between them, is confirmed.

4. I doubt not, too, that the single '*Heifer*' named as the first and chief of the sacrifices to be presented to God, represented Christ. Abraham's much-desired Heir was there, and among the sacrifices the principal sacrifice is *one*, while the remaining four are double.

The righteousness, then, whereby Abraham was justified was Christ's; and Christ is several times referred to in the context, both of the Old Testament and of the New; and our Lord observes to the self-righteous Jews, who in consequence rejected Him—"*Your father Abraham rejoiced* that he should see my [millennial] day; and he saw it, and was glad:." John viii. 56 (Greek).

Has Christ any righteousness? Yes! He perfectly kept the law. Is it anywhere spoken of in Scripture? Yes!

"Simon Peter, servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us *in the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ*:" 2 Peter i. 1 (Greek.) "For Christ is the end of law *unto righteousness to every one that believeth*:" Rom. x. 4.

1. Some imagine that the phrase—"Imputed to him *for righteousness*" means, that while faith is not righteousness, yet that by God, in grace, it is accepted as a *substitute for it*. Neither is that the meaning. "The righteousness of God" is righteousness in its fullest sense, meeting all the law's demands.

2. The true translation is—"It was imputed to him *unto righteousness*"—"to the obtaining of righteousness." That is, Abraham received by faith the righteousness of Christ, and it became *his*. God accepted him on that ground. He was righteous. "The righteous by faith shall live."

Righteousness is obedience to the law. It is needed by each as the beginning of God's favour. Righteousness has been accomplished by Christ for us. This meaning

is established by (1) "The Gospel of the Christ" is "the power of God *unto salvation* to every one that believeth." "Therein the righteousness of God by faith is revealed to faith." i. 16, 17. (2) And again—"With the heart man believeth *unto* [the attaining of] righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made *unto* [the attaining of] *salvation*." x. 10.

As soon as there is faith in Christ, there is righteousness, there is salvation. Righteousness is the robe woven by Christ; faith puts it on, and in it is saved.

"Imputed to him." Where regular payment is made the phrase is not used. We should have 'the bill *was paid*,' not 'the bill *was regarded as paid*.'

But there is another branch of the apostle's argument arising out of the other expression—"It was *imputed* to him."

This phrase would be improper where ordinary payment is made. I owe a baker twenty shillings, and lay down a sovereign. *I have paid*. It is not—"he imputes the debt as paid." It *is* paid, and must be crossed off his books, if he be honest. But the expression here shows that a difference occurs with God and the sinner. He is unrighteous in himself, and yet, possessed of Christ's righteousness, he is justified. God provided both the atonement and the obedience to law, in which he stands justified. It is because of our justification's being outside the normal justification by a man's own works, which law requires, that it was said, "It was *imputed* to him (by God) *unto righteousness*."

4. "Now to him that worketh is the reward not imputed by way of grace, but by way of debt."

This is another appeal to Genesis xv. "Fear not, Abraham, I am thy shield, thy exceeding great reward." ver. 1. How, then, did Abraham get that promise? Was it a claim which he made on Jehovah, as

having in all things obeyed? By no means! Abraham, though he left Ur, did not at once go on to the land that God promised to show him, but he stayed at Haran till his father's death. And the statement about his reward came from God of mere grace, after his giving up the wealth of Sodom. The Most High had not commanded its giving up (as he did afterwards to Israel concerning the wealth of Jericho), but He spoke the word as well pleased with Abraham's conduct, both in his rescue of Lot and in his refusal of the wealth which drew Lot aside.

The reward then would come to Abraham of grace, not of debt.

5. "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is imputed unto righteousness."

Abraham was justified not as the *worker*, but as the *receiver* of righteousness. He who has fulfilled his contract, may claim his pay. But the sinner's and the bankrupt's reception of justification takes place on another footing. He who *receives* righteousness as the gift of God, does not pay down righteousness to God. Abraham did not by working fulfil any contract, or make any claim. His justification came of grace and gift from God. He believed, and was accounted *righteous*.

He believed on God, "who justifies the *ungodly*." Here is the overturning of men's expectations. They will not believe, that God does not accept as righteous the good and honest man of nature, who pays him, if not all his dues, yet a large part of them. And where he fails, God's mercy, they think, will step in. But the God of perfection refuses such a mongrel method of justification, which is neither pure justice nor pure mercy. He "justifies the *ungodly*"—the man who has failed not only in trifles, but who has sinned in his relations with God Himself. The man deserves

to be condemned, and condemned he will be, unless he can present to God a spotless righteousness.

Abraham himself was "*ungodly*" till he was accepted by God on faith. He was an *idolater* among idolaters. "Your fathers," says Joshua, "dwelt on the other side of the river (Euphrates) in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor; 'and they served other gods.'" Josh. xxiv. 2.

Man comes to God as ungodly, receiving righteousness as the gift from God, who thereupon justifies him. His faith is in God, who through the work of Christ provides a perfect satisfaction.

God justifies: accepts as righteous. Justification is a *present* thing: it is a *constant* thing, for all who come to him through Christ. "Through this man (Jesus Christ) is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins. And from all things whereof ye could not by the law of Moses be justified, every one that believeth in Him is justified:" Acts xiii. 38, 39. And justification is salvation, and eternal life. "The righteous by faith shall live."

The justified comes to God "ungodly": but he does not remain so. His justification is also the beginning of his sanctification. The Holy Spirit produces in him faith; and sanctification is by faith, and the obedience of faith.

How Abraham was received as righteous by God, it was not necessary to his justification that he should know. But it is now taught to us of grace, and to our profit. (1) The type of it was shown in Eden, when the guilty, feeling themselves naked in spite of their fig-leaf covering, were afterwards, in mercy, clothed by God in skins.

(2) The subject was opened further under Law and its shadows. God had a class of Israelites who might draw nigh him, when others, attempting to do so would have been put to death. What made the difference? Blood of the sacrifices consecrated them,

and they were clothed in robes especially provided for them by God.

(3) Further light was thrown on the matter under the *Prophets*. God was about to bring in, and to bring near, a righteousness of His own *creation* and *revelation*. The possessor would find it "in the Lord." *Jehovah would be his righteousness*. It was intended for those far from righteousness. It should be salvation eternal to the receiver; a clothing of salvation wherein he should rejoice.*

(4) The full lustre of it beams forth, when Christ from heaven arrests the guilty Saul, the self-justifier, and sends him to open the eyes of Jew and Gentile, to turn them from Satan to God, "that they may receive (1) *forgiveness* of sins, and (2) *inheritance* among the sanctified (both of these blessings), *through faith in Me*:" Acts xxvi. 18.

His faith is imputed unto righteousness." This, as the leading and decisive word, is several times repeated.

1. Of Abraham "He believed God, and it was imputed to him *unto* righteousness:" ver. 3.

2. Our part in this blessing: "To him that worketh not, but believeth, his faith is imputed *unto* righteousness:" ver. 5.

3. David adds his testimony: "God *imputes* *righteousness* without (our) works:" ver. 6.

4. "We are saying, that faith was imputed to Abraham *unto* righteousness:" ver. 9.

5. "That righteousness might be imputed [not to

* The texts whereon these statements are founded, are Psa. li. 14, 16; Isa. xlv. 8, 24, 25; xlvii. 12, 13; li. 5, 6, 8; lxi. 10; Jer. xxiii. 6; Ezek. xviii. 20. The reader will do well to search out these passages and arrange them for himself. "*My righteousness is near to come, and my salvation to be revealed*:" Isa. lvi. 1. As the righteousness is *created* by God, it is not *wrought* by man. And how beautifully does the word that it is "*revealed*" by God, confirm Paul's word in the Gospel: "the righteousness of God, which is by faith *revealed* to faith;" and it is salvation: i. 16—18.

Abraham alone but] unto them (the uncircumcised believers) also:" ver. 11.

6. "The promise was not to Abraham or to his seed, through the law, but through *the righteousness of faith*:" ver. 13.

7. "Therefore it was imputed to him (Abraham) *unto righteousness*:" ver. 22.

So *seven times* in this one chapter, righteousness is declared to be the basis of the justification of Abraham, and of all believers.

6—8. "Just as David also speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God imputeth righteousness without works: 'Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.'"

Why is David introduced? (1) Paul had said,—
"The righteousness of God without Law is manifested, being witnessed by the *Law* and the *Prophets*:" iii. 21. He had adduced a passage from the first book of Moses; now he gives one from the Psalms.

(2) He takes the case of David, because of his great transgression; and shows, that even that great obstacle was removed from the justification of the man after God's own heart. And thus he gives us the *two sides of justification*. (1) Against Abraham no sin against law is alleged: and therefore he speaks of positive righteousness being imputed.

But how could David be pronounced righteous, after his great sins? Here then we have the justification by faith of the open *sinner*. Of course God had, in His grace, to provide for that, since He holds all guilty. But Abraham himself was a sinner, and justified as "ungodly."

"*David describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness without works.*"

The justification bestowed by God is possessed already.

"Imputes."

It is the effect of justification. God as the Judge of all, receives him as "Blessed." This is the word of the *Law* in justifying the righteous. "If thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God . . . all these blessings shall come on thee." . . . "Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and *blessed* shalt thou be in the field:" Deut. xxviii. 1—3.

God imputes to the justified, righteousness. He has righteousness *without works*—whether good or bad, whether moral or ceremonial—of his own doing. But he has "*the righteousness of faith*" in the work of Another. Christ's work is imputed to him, and it becomes his.

(1) "A seal of the *righteousness of faith* which he had:" ver. 11.

(2) "The promise" . . . was "to Abraham and his seed, not *by law*, but through *the righteousness of faith*:" ver. 13.

(3) "Gentiles which followed not after righteousness, *attained to righteousness*, even *the righteousness of faith*:" ix. 30.

(4) "Noah condemned the world, and became heir of *the righteousness which is according to faith*:" Heb. xi. 7.

(5) There is another passage strongly confirmatory of this, but the order of the Greek has been broken in our translation, and another sense arises. It should be: "For we by the Spirit (which comes) through *faith, are expecting the hope of righteousness*:" Gal. v. 5. These words show that the believer has already righteousness, but he is waiting in hope for the inheritance which is to spring out of it.

Law imputes righteousness *with works*. "It shall be our *righteousness*, if we observe to do all these commandments, before the Lord our God, as He hath commanded us:" Deut. vi. 25.

The quotation from Psa. xxxii. 1, 2, gives the negative aspect of justification—the *removal of sin*.

"Blessed are they *whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.*" Many fasten on this, and suppose that justification means *only the pardon of sins*. But that cannot be. The sinner perfectly pardoned would only be 'guiltless' or 'innocent.' But law does not bless the innocent, but the *obedient*: Ex. xxiii. 7; Job iv. 7.

"The righteousness of God," provided in Christ, bears at once to every one of the justified, not only pardon, but righteousness. These two parts are necessarily united. (1) Where there is righteousness, the guilt of sin must have been taken away. (2) Where pardon is found, there must be positive righteousness, to enable the judge to be just in justifying the prisoner. By faith we have the pardon of sin: by faith we obtain the righteousness of Christ.

"*Whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.*"

Law would say: 'Blessed is he who has always kept the commandments of God, and has never sinned.' But that belongs not to fallen man. The justification with which we are now engaged is the justification of "*the ungodly.*" That is confirmed by the fifty-first Psalm. David confesses his sin as ungodliness. "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight:" ver. 4. He sees that his offence is not to be removed by the sacrifices of the Law: ver. 16. He speaks of "the righteousness of God" in the sense of Paul: "Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God of *my salvation*; and my tongue shall sing aloud of *Thy righteousness.*:" ver. 14. Now God's righteousness, in the sense of His *justice*, would have been perdition to David; and not salvation. But he speaks of a righteousness provided for the transgressor, which would fill his mouth with praise.

After the prophet Nathan has brought his accusation against David, and heard the sentence of death which David pronounced unwittingly against himself, he

says: "The Lord also hath *put away thy sin*; thou shalt not *die.*:" 2 Sam. xii. 13.

While Law says, 'The soul that *sins* shall *die,*' here is a righteousness which can deliver. "The righteous by faith shall *live.*" And in the next chapter of Romans we have both parts of the Saviour's redemption put together. "Being now justified *by His blood*, we shall be saved from wrath through Him:" ver. 9. "*By the obedience of the One* the many shall be made righteous:" ver. 19.

8. "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin."

Righteousness is announced to sinners, both individually and generally. It was spoken of before as present; here as future. Two cases of justified sinners have been given, for "In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established." The blessedness named in this verse speaks of the time of the Saviour's return, and of the first resurrection. "*Blessed* and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection."

There are *two justifications* then; a present one, which is by *faith*; a future one, which is by *works*. Hereby Paul and James are reconciled. Paul speaks of Abraham's justification at once by faith, and of the *eternal* inheritance; James speaks of the *millennial* kingdom, and of Abraham's justification by his offering up of Isaac, on which came the oath of God in his favour.

9, 10. "This blessedness, then—is it on the circumcision (only), or on uncircumcision also? For * we are saying that to Abraham faith was imputed unto righteousness. How, then, was it imputed? When he was in circumcision or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision."

* The "For we are saying" here confirms the reading adopted in iii. 28. Instead of "*Therefore* we conclude"—we read, "*For* we are reasoning, that a man is justified by faith."

An objection might be taken to the apostle's argument as based on the cases of Abraham and of David. It might be said, 'Both were Jews; both circumcised. The extent, therefore, of the blessedness reaches not beyond those who were circumcised.'

He returns, therefore, to the case of Abraham, about which the enquiry arose. He was justified by faith, as the Scripture asserts. In what condition then was he? Circumcised or uncircumcised? This was the critical point; and as the answer was so important, it is stated both negatively and positively. "*Not* in circumcision, *but* in uncircumcision." Then the blessedness of which Scripture speaks may belong both to Gentile and to Jew.

11. "And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of faith which he had in uncircumcision, that he might be the father of all that believe while uncircumcised, that righteousness may be imputed even to them."

Abraham, in one point of view, "received" circumcision from God, though in the application of the command it was wrought by himself:—

1. It was a "*sign*." It was an *encouragement* from God. It recognised God's promise, that Messiah, Abraham's One Heir, was to be his son. And the signs being impressed on the eighth day, and that day alone, pointed to the righteousness of faith wrought and proved, by the resurrection of Christ on the day after the Sabbath, or the first day of another week.

2. It bore *instruction* to him and to us. It tacitly showed that while God owned him, there was still evil in him which he must put away. So is it a lesson also to the believer now. "I keep under my body and bring it into subjection; lest, after acting the herald to others, I myself should become rejected"—from the crown and reward which I am seeking. It was like the fringe of blue on the dress of an Israelite, reminding him to observe all the commands of the Lord.

3. And accordingly it carried a *reproof* with it. It pointed back to his walking after the flesh since his justification, by his taking Hagar as his concubine.

4. The sign in God's counsels of salvation is a thing in which the believer is to be active and obedient. He is after faith to seek immersion. To faith is to be added the obedience of faith.

By many it is asked, if we speak of any ordinance after justification, 'Where is the need of it? If salvation is obtained, what need we more?' That is to make man and his benefit the chief object, forgetting the glory of God.

But the Holy Spirit here instructs us in the use of rite after faith.

1. In regard of Abraham; it was a "*sign*" from God; it was also a "*seal*." It singled him out, as he was to be the pattern of the blessedness of justification to multitudes innumerable. They were to be blest, like David, after pardon of sins of the deepest dye. Abraham is the pattern of all believers; and even the circumcised Jew must arrive at justifying righteousness in the same way in which it was attained by his father Abraham before his circumcision. He must give up all hopes of self-justification by obedience under law, or perish. The principle is asserted by Peter, when the question of justification by law came up. "We believe to be saved by faith even as they"—the Gentiles, without circumcision: Acts xv.

In Abraham's day the '*sign*' and the '*seal*' were united. Circumcision was both the sign, and the abiding mark, by God's command set on the body. Now, under Christ, the sign and the seal are separated. (1) The *sign* is immersion; a matter of duty. (2) The *seal*, not now possessed, was the benefit which was to follow on baptism. It was the reception of the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost, by the laying on of apostles' hands: Acts ii.

Some, indeed, speak of baptism and the Lord's

Supper as 'sealing ordinances.' But they are *not*. Can you tell by looking at a believer whether he has been immersed? or whether he has sat down at the Table of the Lord?

Why was the change of the sign and the seal made? Because that is come to pass which was foreshown by Abraham's circumcision—'Messiah has come!' By his life, death, and resurrection, the One Heir of Abraham has fulfilled righteousness, and brought in salvation for all that believe.

"A seal of the righteousness of faith."

After the active sign, the abiding mark was left on the body. Abraham must die. But his body is to rise. His flesh is under the care of God, no less than his spirit. Abraham does not enter on his inheritance till his buried body is raised from among the dead. God shows Himself the God of Abraham, not while he is dead, but in resurrection. "God is not the God of the *dead*, but of the *living*." The body is an eternal portion of man. False systems at this point turn away, and assert the contrary.

What was it that circumcision sealed to Abraham? His "righteousness of faith." Does that mean that *faith is itself righteousness*? By no means! Righteousness is the *work* of law accomplished. Faith is God's acceptance of us *without work*. "Stand still, and see the *salvation of God*, which He will show you to-day:" Ex. xiv. 14. "By *faith* the children of Israel passed through the Red Sea." And, accordingly, faith is spoken of as being, not righteousness itself, but the way in which to acquire righteousness, even the righteousness provided by God. (1) "Gentiles, who followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness (which springs) *out of faith*:" Rom. ix. 30. "Moses describeth the righteousness which (springs) *out of law*,—that the man which doeth them shall live in them. But the righteousness which (*springs*) *out of faith* saith thus:" x. 5, 6.

Without that 'finished work of Christ' there could be no righteous justification of any. It is "the righteousness of faith," the righteousness which belongs to the believer. There is but *one* righteousness; and it is that of God's providing for the guilty.

Righteousness lays hold of the Saviour's provided robe of righteousness, and puts it on: *Christ is by God "made unto us righteousness;"* and righteousness justifies.

"The faith which he had while uncircumcised."

That was true of Abraham alone. Abraham was possessed of faith before he was circumcised. His seed was circumcised on the eighth day, before they possessed faith. Then circumcision to those who had not faith could not be to them a seal of faith; or of the righteousness which follows on faith. They were by circumcision bound to *law*; and were under the curse, because disobedient. "Behold, I, Paul, say unto you, that *if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing*. For I testify again to every one that is being circumcised, that *he is a debtor to do the whole law*. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are being justified by the law; *ye are fallen from grace*:" Gal. v. 2—4.

It is necessary to see clearly the unique place given to Abraham. He alone was husband of Sarah, and of Hagar, the typical women of the two covenants: Gal. iv. By each he had a son, and one only. Who but Abraham was (1) first believing, and justified in uncircumcision; and then (2) circumcised, remaining still the freeman of faith, sealed by God? In him uncircumcision and circumcision meet. Of Law and Gospel he is the father. Hence he becomes the father of Jew and Gentile believers; "the father of us all."

"That he might be the father of all that believe while uncircumcised."

The Holy Spirit sets before us the matter—(1) First

in reference to Abraham, (2) then its application to us. Abraham is 'father' in two senses.

(1) Literally; and (2) Spiritually.

"*The father of all that believe.*"

Abraham has three Seeds. (1) The Single Heir, Christ. (2) The multitudinous seed of his *flesh*—Israel, the Arabians, the sons of Keturah, and of the concubines. (3) The sons of Abraham by *faith*. To both his plural Seeds he is the pattern.

"Though uncircumcised, that righteousness may be imputed" even to *them*. Righteousness comes not from law and works, but of grace to those in Christ,—to the 'ungodly,' who have fled for refuge to Him.

To that great question—'*Which is to come first? Faith? or Ordinances?*' (generally now called 'sacraments')—Abraham's answer is clear.

To all that believe while uncircumcised, righteousness is imputed. That was the only class about which a doubt was raised. And if *they* had righteousness imputed to them, much more were circumcised believers justified.

Was Abraham first circumcised, and *did circumcision produce faith*? No! So then it is to act contrary to God's teaching, to give baptism, and the Supper of the Lord to the unbelieving, in order to produce in them faith, and to save them. It is a daring reversal of the order appointed by God. Fourteen years before the ordinance of circumcision was given to Abraham, he was accepted by God.

This argument, then, is, God's upturning of '*the Gospel according to the Sacraments.*' God's order is,—"*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not [whether baptized or no], shall be damned.*" In Abraham's case, circumcision was a mark set on one already possessed of righteousness and acceptance before God. The *red* signal on the railway-line does not *create* the danger, it only tells of danger already existent.

12. "And, father of circumcision, to those not possessed of circumcision merely, but also to those who walk in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham while uncircumcised."

Here we encounter a passage of much difficulty, because of its extreme condensation. It is a place, too, where adverse critics bring charges against the apostle; destructive, could they be proved, of the inspiration of the epistle. I purpose, then, refuting the views of Godet on this point, he being the most candid of the critics concerned.

The question then to be decided is,—*Does this verse speak of one class of persons, or of two?* Godet decides, that it speaks of but *one* class—the Jewish believers. Verse 11 settles the matter (he says) concerning *uncircumcised* believers: this verse therefore speaks of *Jewish* believers (vol. i. p. 293).

He admits, indeed, that it seems as if Paul were speaking, in the verse, of *two* classes. And some in past times, and Luther, believed that *two* classes were spoken of. But he concludes that this view must be given up; but *one* class is spoken of.

But *if so*, three charges lie against the apostle.

(1) His grammar is at fault. With but one class, there should have been but *one* article; and there are *two*.

(2) And here it is not merely negligence of style; his *logic* is at fault also.

(3) Lastly, he has placed the *negative incorrectly*. Instead of '*Not only* for those who belong to the circumcision,' he has it: '*For those who not only belong to it.*'

Now the question is settled at once to those who believe in the inspiration of Scripture. '*The Spirit of God making three mistakes in one verse—mistakes affecting not the style alone, but the meaning!*' Here then apply the words—"*Let God be true, and every man a liar!*"

It will be observed, that these charges lie against the apostle, on the theory,—*that in this verse he is speaking*

of but *one* class. If he is writing about *two* classes all is correct. O then, we may rest assured, that the *apparent* meaning is also the *true*.* Paul is treating of believers, *both Jew and Gentile*. A believing critic, in so plain a case, would have said—*'I must be wrong! I am imputing to the apostle what would not be overlooked by 'even an intelligent pupil,' and in general the apostle is accurate enough in his arguing and in his Greek. He knew without doubt the Greek language as well at least, as I do! And beside that, he was inspired. The fault, then, must be in me!'*

And so it is. Be it observed also (which is important) that in order to exonerate the apostle, it is not necessary to prove, that the defence *must* be true; it is enough, that it *may* be true.

The apostle's eye, in Romans, from the first has been turned upon the distinction between the Jew and the Gentile; adducing, first the sins of the uncircumcised, and then those of the Jew. After showing in the third chapter, God's way of pardon by the blood of Christ, he says: "Is He the God of Jews only? Is He not also of Gentiles? Yes; of Gentiles also: since one is the God, who shall justify *circumcision* by faith, and *uncircumcision* by means of faith:" iii. 29, 30.

'But what of Abraham? What did he not obtain by his merits? Was not he justified by works?' By no means; but by faith, as Genesis xv. asserts; a truth confirmed by David. 'But both of these were circumcised. May not justification, then, belong only to the circumcised?'

Not so! Abraham, it is true, was both uncircumcised and circumcised. In which of the two states was he when he was declared to be justified? He was un-

* I give Meyer's translation, showing how, on the theory of one class, the second *τοῖς* must be rejected. "Father of circumcision," i.e., father of circumcised persons, "for those who are not *merely* circumcised, but *also* walk in the footsteps," etc.

circumcised, not circumcised! Nor did circumcision, which came afterward, take him off his ground of faith. Circumcision was to him a testimony of his being owned by God as righteous by faith; and it was a witness to his *two* plural 'Seeds,' that faith was the way of justification for *them*, as well as *for himself*.

And here Godet admits that the *two* parties are spoken of.

"After what precedes, this term can only designate the patriarch's spiritual family,—all believers, *Jew, or Gentile*:" p. 300.

"That to them *also* the righteousness might be imputed." Some may think, that by the 'also' Abraham alone is meant. But cannot Abraham's circumcised sons be included? They received the Gospel news first, and only in after years were the claims of the Gentiles owned.

The apostle is declaring, that the way of salvation by faith is common to both: "Is He the God of *Jews only*? Is He not *also* of *Gentiles*? Yes, of *Gentiles also*; seeing the God is one and the same, who shall justify *circumcision by faith*, and *uncircumcision by means of faith*:" iii. 29, 30.

And the fatherhood of Abraham belongs to believers, both Jewish and Gentile.

(1) "What therefore shall we say, that *Abraham our father* found?" iv. 1.

(2) "That the promise might be sure to *all the seed*, not to that of the law only, but also to that of the faith of *Abraham, who is the father of us all*:" ver. 16. Here is the definite statement of Abraham being the father of all believers, whether circumcised or no.

One is the righteousness presented; one the way of receiving it; one the path in which, after justification, both seeds are to walk. The example of Abraham belongs to both seeds in both these aspects—(1) justification, and the (2) walk after it.

But there is a better rendering than 'also.' "That *even* to them might the righteousness be imputed." Here the inclusion of both Jew and Gentile is yet more clearly stated. It is intimated thus that Abraham's circumcised sons would be first thought of; and so it was in fact. But on the ground of faith believing Gentiles entered. And the word '*even*' cleaves closest to the New Testament history. Let us briefly look at the Scripture statements concerning the Gospel's passage from Jews to Gentiles.

At Pentecost Peter quotes from Joel, who speaks of the Holy Ghost being poured, not only on Israel, but on '*My* servants and *my* handmaidens.' This is taken up in Peter's answer to the enquirers. "The promise [of Joel] is (1) to you [Jews] and to your children, and (2) to *all that are afar off* [Gentiles], as many as the Lord our God shall call:" ii. 39.

Peter is to preach the Gospel to Gentiles. He is hard to be convinced, but goes at length to Cornelius, when the restraints of the law of Moses are, as he sees, removed by the Most High. But when he meets Cornelius, he names the scruples of his nation. "Ye know, that it is an unlawful thing for a Jew, to keep company, or to come unto one of another nation." He preaches the pardon of sins through Christ, and the Holy Spirit falls on all the hearers. Then "they of the circumcision [the six Jews] which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that *even upon the Gentiles* was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit:" ver 45.

The news travels to Jerusalem, and Peter on his return is rebuked by his fellow-disciples. "Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them." Peter explains. And their accusation falls to the ground. "They glorified God, saying: 'So then, *even to the Gentiles* hath God given repentance unto life!'" xi. 18. God had set believers both of Jews and of Gentiles on the same footing; and they submit.

Later on, there is an attempt to force on Gentile believers the observance of the law of Moses. It is resisted by Paul and Barnabas. The matter is referred to the apostles at Jerusalem. Peter notices, that God had cleansed the Gentiles without circumcision, by faith poured into their hearts. It was proved, by the Holy Ghost falling on them. And "by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ we believe that we are saved, *in the same manner as they*:" xv. 8—11.

Perhaps the matter may be better cleared by a shorter statement. "This blessedness, comes it on the *circumcision* or on the *uncircumcision* ALSO?" It was imputed to Abraham, not in *circumcision*, but in *uncircumcision*: "in order that righteousness might be imputed to *them also*." The '*also*' of verse 11 is rehearsing the '*also*' of verse 9. Righteousness is not for the Jew alone, but *also* for the Gentile.

Godet then helps his theory,—that *two* classes are named here, by means of an inadequate view stated by the former defenders of the truth.

"Theodoret, Luther, and others have applied the first words—'in respect of those who are not only of the circumcision'—to *Jewish* believers; and the following words—'in respect of those who walk in the footsteps of Abraham's faith'—to *Gentile* believers."

They did not see, that the apostle was really *announcing something common to BOTH Seeds*. After this inadequate defence made of old, Godet proceeds:—

"But why then return to the latter [the Gentiles], who had already been sufficiently designated and characterised in verse 11?"

Paul does not do so: verse 11 speaks of both Seeds, as well as verse 12. Godet proceeds:—

"And how, in speaking of Jewish believers, could Paul content himself with saying, that they are not of circumcision only, without expressly mentioning *faith* as the condition of their being children of Abraham?"

Paul puts the matter not only *negatively*—"not of circumcision only"—but also *positively*; as soon as it is perceived that the words which follow are intended to apply to *both the Seeds*. "But also to them that walk in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham, which he had yet being uncircumcised."

"All the seed of Abraham are so to walk."

This observation of Godet's is based upon a further misapprehension. He and others imagine that Paul is still treating of the *justification* of the believer. It is not so.

The lessons to be derived from Abraham's example are *two*, and very clearly are they asserted here.

Abraham is *doubly* the father of believers.

1. As it regards their *faith*, and their *justification*. That is granted, and no more needs be said.

2. But Abraham has a fatherhood of *circumcision*; and in regard to that also, he is to be a pattern to both classes. After justification comes the *walk* of the justified—"The obedience of faith." And here too Abraham is to be followed by *both* his Seeds. They *both* are to follow in the *steps* of Abraham's faith.

Further evidence on this point will be adduced when we come to the direct comment. At present we have to do with the removal of an obstacle to the truth presented.

'But what make you of the wrong place given by Paul to the negative? Instead of—'Not only for those who belong to the circumcision'—he should have written—'For those who not only belong to the circumcision.'

The objection arises out of the supposition, that but *one* class is being spoken of; and with the fall of *that*, *this* falls also. The fault of the critic here is his attaching the 'not only' to the *men* spoken of, instead of to the *rite*. Paul has written—"To those

not of *the circumcision only*," where it is clear, from the order of the Greek, that he is speaking of the bare rite.*

There are, then, two classes implied in both verses; and the errors imputed to Paul belong only to the 'one class' theory.

We proceed now to comment on the verse—"Father of circumcision."

When we speak of any command given after justification, many enquire—"What is the good of it, if peace is already obtained?" That is, their own salvation is to them of such moment, that they think it is *all*. But this is to leave God's glory out of sight, as well as our own good. Is it enough that a child is born? Is there not much to be done before he becomes a man, able to manage his estate?

"Father of circumcision" in this first occurrence of it in the verse, means 'father of the circumcised.' As in the former verse we had "father of all *those that believe*."

On its second occurrence, it means 'the mark in the flesh left by the rite.' Hence it is said, as applied to his sons circumcised at eight days old, that if the mark stood by itself, it did not avail to set them on the footing of their father Abraham. For he was the man of faith under grace, and they, as the circumcised, were men of

* If I mistake not, we have here another fault in the critics. Had their view been just, instead of the *μονον*, Paul must have written *μονοις*.

Where 'only' is in construction with a *thing*, the adverb is placed after the noun.

(1) "A staff *only*:" Mark vi. 8.

(2) "He found leaves *only*:" Matt. xxi. 19.

(3) "A cup of cold water *only*:" Matt. x. 42.

But where *persons* are spoken of, you have *μονος*.

(1) *Him alone* shalt thou worship:" Matt. iv. 10. *μονω*.

(2) "Between thee and him *alone*:" Matt. xviii. 15.

(3) "Not lawful, except for the priests *alone*:" Matt. xii. 4.

(4) "None knoweth, no not the angels of heaven, but My Father *alone*:" Matt. xxiv. 36.

flesh under law. To them circumcision was the sign and seal of their being bound to work out for themselves a righteousness under law—a righteousness never won. They resembled, indeed, Abraham in the mark on the body; but in spirit they were on the opposite foundation, under law and the curse.

Circumcision, nakedly regarded, makes none a son of Abraham. The Saviour denies it to the cavilling Jews. They lacked the vital point, the faith of Abraham, and were but slaves; soon to be turned out of Abraham's house, refusing, as they did, Abraham's true Son and Heir, who alone could make them free.

After justification comes the 'walk' or sanctification. The true walk is the obedience of the justified to the commands of God and his Christ. Obedience must be of the right kind, and that of the heart, as well as of the hand.

Circumcision in Paul's day was the sign of bondage to law. It was no longer a step of faith, as it was to Abraham. To Abraham, and *to him alone*, it signified that he was to be the progenitor, according to the flesh, of Messiah (Gen. xv. 4), and it told of Messiah yet to come. But when Paul wrote, Christ the Lord our Righteousness had appeared, and the righteousness by which Abraham was justified had come.

The Gentile who believed this was not then, as the Judaizers taught, to be circumcised. It was putting him under law, and was the attestation, that Messiah and his righteousness *had yet to come*.

The immediate step after the righteousness of faith was immersion, which speaks of the death, burial, and resurrection of the Christ completed, of our union with Him by faith, and of our hope of His future kingdom.

To both, then, of Abraham's posterities it was said—'Walk in the steps of the faith of Abraham the uncircumcised.' The Lord asks faith in the soul as the first thing; then, as the next, the surrender of the body to *burial* with Christ, that with Him you may

rise; *now*, to the life of faith within; *by and bye*, to the joint life of soul and body in the first resurrection. Circumcision attested to the Jew God's promise of the land of Palestine; but the Christian's true heritage is that of the heaven.

The doctrine of the Jewish zealots, who were for mingling together Law and Gospel, was plausible enough. 'Paul is right in instructing you to believe as did Abraham. But the next step, if you would truly have part in his heritage, is to add *circumcision* to your *faith*. Was not *Abraham circumcised after his faith*? So must you be.' It was one of the constant conflicts of the apostle to contend against this. For a Gentile to be circumcised was unbelief; it was a denial of Christ and His righteousness; a binding themselves to furnish one of their own by obedience under law: Gal. v.

Hence the Holy Spirit, when Abraham's act after faith is spoken of, changes the expression. It is not 'Abraham is the father of circumcision to those who *after faith like his are circumcised*.' No! That would have bound believers to law. So, then, instead, the true and spiritual meaning is given to circumcision, as being 'the first step of faith' under the new Testament of Messiah come and risen. God, in the justified, expects obedience, and obedience prompted by faith. And to the circumcised who first accepted Christ at the day of Pentecost Peter declared, that each was to be immersed as the token of the Lordship of Christ: Acts ii. 36, 38.; Matt. xxviii.; Mark xvi. 16.

As a sign of faith, immersion is greatly in advance of circumcision. Circumcision was the token that a portion of sin still abode in the justified, but it was by them to be removed. Immersion represents the flesh as wholly worthless—to be buried. "*We are the circumcision who worship God in the spirit, and boast in Christ Jesus (not in ourselves), and put no confidence in the flesh.*" Phil. iii. 3.

God said in effect to Abraham, after his fourteen years' justification: 'You are My servant, you alone; I set on you My mark in visible attestation of it. Now let your life show that you are Mine by your obedient walk, as in My presence.'

And the Most High says in effect the same to Abraham's sons under the Gospel, whether circumcised or not: 'You, O man of faith, immersed on faith* are not to imagine that all is over. Your immersion tells you of a new life toward God, as one risen from the dead. Christ (not Moses) is the Son, whose word you are to obey. The world is lying in unbelief, and therefore in disobedience. Do you prove your faith by your obedience! The world lives, as pleasing itself. Do you please Me!'

How necessary this word is, is shown by the multitudes of believers, who confess that immersion after faith is the command of the Lord Jesus, and yet on various pretexts put it aside. It is unpleasant to them, as a coming visibly and individually out from the world, which is thereby condemned as unbelieving. It is a confession of the need of a changed life, and the pursuit of better hopes than the world can furnish. It is not a rite to *produce* faith in those previously unbelievers. The sprinkling the face of an unrenewed infant is not the way to make him a Christian. Baptismal regeneration is rebuked here. Abraham was not *first circumcised*, and so made a man of faith; but first a *man of faith*, and then *marked as such*.

"The steps of the faith of our father Abraham while uncircumcised."

This is God's counsel to all the believing seed of Abraham, whether circumcised or uncircumcised.

(1) To resemble him in his *faith and justification*.

* It is remarkable, that close as we come in this verse to baptism, it is not named till further on, where the apostle treats of *Adam*. Abraham, the man of faith and of obedience, is the moral contrast to Adam, the man of unbelief and disobedience.

(2) Then to be like him in *obedience and sanctification*. Righteous are we now by faith, in the day of grace. Seek to be righteous by works, in the coming day of reward. Eternal life is the gift: the thousand years are the reward.

No doubt, to the Jew, that word concerning his circumcised father was startling. Abraham obtained his righteousness and acceptance with God before circumcision! What then was the circumcised Jew to do when he believed in Jesus Christ, the hated by his nation? He must go back to Abraham's uncircumcised days, to be like him by faith. Then would he be blest with Abraham his father. What of his own circumcision? By his transgressions of the law, the Jew's circumcision had become uncircumcision.

But "Is any man called being circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision? Let him not be circumcised! *Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing*, but the keeping of the commandments of God:" 1 Cor. vii. 18, 19. See also Gal. v. 6: vi 15.

If Abraham was to the believing Jew to be "father of circumcision," he must first possess the justifying faith which Abraham had before circumcision. If he had not, circumcision would not be to him what it was to Abraham, the sign and seal of the righteousness of faith. How could circumcision seal the righteousness of faith to those still under condemnation, as unrighteous by transgression, and men of unbelief in Messiah?

When troubled men of circumcision ask, What they must do to come out of their position as foes of Messiah? Peter bids them to bury their circumcision beneath the waters of baptism at the command of Christ, and to take the seal of the gift of the Holy Ghost. The Prophet like Moses had come! To Him must they be obedient in all things, or be cut off.

Thus the first clause of this twelfth verse takes up

the negative side. Naked circumcision did not make any a true son of Abraham. It was destitute of the vital principle,—Abraham's faith. What would a *heart of enmity* be to Jehovah, even if the *body* were marked as His? The rest of the verse takes up the positive side: there is to be a leaving of law and condemnation, and a confession of the change. Obedience without faith, and faith without obedience, are neither of them well pleasing to Him with whom we have to do. "With the *heart* man *believeth* unto righteousness; and with the *mouth confession* is made unto *salvation*:" Rom. x.

Abraham was both uncircumcised and circumcised, that he might be the father of a double seed: but both seeds must be men of faith. Gospel rite and ceremony before faith are not the mind of God. Faith, without the rites of Christ, and without open confession of Him, is not well-pleasing to God.

GENESIS XV. AND XVII.

Let me now give a view of Genesis xv. and xvii., the two chapters, on the understanding of which the import of so much of Romans iv. depends. Much might be said on the covenants of previous chapters: but I fear to expand the matter too much.

Abraham had prevailed over the confederate kings who had carried captive Sodom and Lot. He had refused the wealth of Sodom, and been blest by Melchizedec. Jehovah was well pleased with His servant Abram, and speaks encouragingly to him. He need not fear; God would shield him from any attack of the successors of the defeated kings. Nor would He overlook the needs of his posterity, though the seed of the serpent might bruise their heel.

"Exceeding great shall be thy *reward*." On this word is founded the passage Romans iv. 4.

Abraham complains of his being childless: Was his steward to be his heir? A second time he complains, that he had none of the numberless posterity which God had promised. God gives two replies of promise to his two lamentations.

(1) He should have *one Son his Heir*. "*He* that shall come forth of thine own bowels shall be *thine Heir*." This was primarily, in point of time, Isaac; in its fuller meaning, Christ. "This is *the Heir*," said the Pharisees, "come let us kill him." "God hath in these latter days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed Heir" (not of Abraham alone, but) of all things."

(2) In answer to the second complaint, the Lord brings him out of his tent by night, and says: "Look now toward heaven, and number the *stars*, if thou be able to number them;" and He said unto him: "So shall thy *seed* be." Jehovah had already (chapter xiii.) promised Abraham a seed innumerable as the *sands*. Here then in chapter xv. is the promise of a *heavenly seed*. It is put in close conjunction with the One Heir of Abraham. Christ is the One Heir of Israel, as He is Abraham's Son. He is Head of the Church, as the Risen and Ascended One. Of the seed like the stars, He is the chief, as He must be in all things. "I am the bright and *morning-star*." "One star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead." See also Daniel xii. 2, 3. There will be found among the risen, the saved of the Patriarchs of Israel, and of the Church of God. The *risen* seed of Abraham will be innumerable, as well as the *earthly*.

Immediately hereupon it is written: "And he believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him (not 'for,' but) unto righteousness." Better,—"It was imputed to him." Abraham, though unpossessed of a son, believed in God's testimony about the innumerability of his posterity, and specially the promise of the Single Heir. Thereupon he became possessor of the only

righteousness that can justify the sinner, the righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ.

As the next step the Lord tells him,—“I am the Lord, that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land (earth) to inherit it.” The justified by faith have an eternal heritage—the heaven and the earth. The promise is made first to Abram, then to his seed.

Abraham wishes the Most High to give him some ground of *certainly* in the matter. The Lord is graciously pleased to give that assurance in the rest of the chapter.

The residue of the chapter is divided accordingly into three parts:—(1) SACRIFICE, (2) PROPHECY, (3) COVENANT.

(1) In regard of the *Sacrifices*, God said: “Take Me an heifer of three years old, and a she-goat* of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtle-dove, and a young pigeon.”

“Take Me”—the sacrifices belong to God. “And he took unto Him all these.” They are Abraham’s also.

He divided the first three, but not the birds. The five sacrifices represent Abraham’s three seeds. (1) The single Heifer represents Isaac first, then Christ. (2) The goat and ram represent Abraham’s seeds, the circumcised and the uncircumcised, under law. They are types of the innumerable seed of earth.

Why were they all to be of “three years old”? I am not sure. Perhaps the third year of the cattle answers to the thirtieth year of man’s vigour: Luke iii. 23. As Christ was at first set in close contact with the risen and heavenly seed, so now by the words “three years old,” is He linked with the earthly seed.

“The turtle-dove and young pigeon” represent Abraham’s *heavenly* seed; believers from Jew and Gentile under the Gospel. The birds are creatures of *heaven*, as compared with the quadrupeds that walk the

* Gesenius renders simply ‘a goat’—not, ‘a she-goat.’

earth. They are smaller than the three which precede. The Christian is insignificant to the world’s eye. Their age is not given: how long they shall abide on earth, or when they shall be taken away, is unknown. The three former creatures have horns; *these* are defenceless. The Christian is not to resist the evil man. They were not divided: the Saviour desires the men of the Church to be one.*

As soon as these sacrifices are laid out, birds of prey (a different word from that in verse 10) come down to feast on them, but Abraham drives them away. Perhaps this signifies that the Lord’s people after death are not to be exposed to Satan’s angels, avengers having power over the ungodly: Eph. iv. 8—10; Col. ii. 15.

“As the sun is going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abraham, and lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him!” The time at which this occurred was the hour of evening sacrifice; the time when our Lord died on the cross.

At Gethsemane began the Saviour’s “hour.” “This is your *hour* and the power of darkness.” Then followed the darkness of three hours while our Lord was on the cross. This answers to what we find in the prophecy concerning the affliction of Abraham’s seed; and in the Covenant it answers to “the furnace of smoke.” If Abraham will know what is to befall him, he will find in it trouble. “Through many troubles we must enter the kingdom.”

“And He said to Abraham—‘Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs; and shall serve them, and they shall afflict them four hundred years. And also that nation whom they shall serve, will I judge; and afterwards they shall come out with great substance.’”

* It is worthy of note, that a *ram* was offered instead of Isaac: Gen. xxii. And when our Lord is presented in the temple, a “pair of turtle-doves, or two young pigeons” were offered in sacrifice: Luke ii.

Of course this prophecy refers to Israel's slavery in Egypt. It arose out of the enmity of the Serpent's seed against the seed of the Woman. The Serpent's seed were to be permitted to bruise the heel. But judgment and deliverance would come at length, and when they came out from bondage, they should not come out empty. They should *ask* (not 'borrow') the Egyptians for what they pleased, and should get it.

Abraham's heavenly seed have a time of much heavier affliction, and of much longer duration. They come out of the Great Tribulation, an innumerable company (Rev. vii. 9); when Israel's Trouble is just about to begin.

"*And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried * in a good old age.*"

"But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again; for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full."

Abraham was to die and be *buried* long before his descendants returned into the land of promise. Abraham then can only enjoy the heritage after resurrection. The land of Palestine belongs to Abraham, but he has never possessed it. Christians, baptized as the Saviour appointed, have *died* and been *buried* with Him, ready with Him to enjoy the land, if accounted worthy.

God is having patience with an evil world till its measure of iniquity is accomplished: then will come the strokes of judgment. O Christian, look not on the world as the place of rest or happiness. Its doom is destruction.

Last of all, comes the Covenant with Christ.

"And it came to pass, that when the sun went down

* The Greek Version of the Old Testament has become corrupted after (no doubt) being at first a correct rendering of the Hebrew. We have in this verse in the Greek *ταφεις* instead of *ταφεις*; and *φλοξ* instead of *νυξ*. So in chapter iii. *τηρησει* instead of *τειρησει*.

and it was dark, behold a furnace of smoke, and a torch of fire that passed between those pieces."

"In the same day the Lord made a *covenant* with Abram, saying, 'Unto thy Seed ["which is Christ"] have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates.'"

The sun went down; 'twas night. All the Seeds lay under death: the hopes of inheritance through the flesh were vain. Into this extremity of man God enters in grace.

The furnace of smoke represents the slavery in Egypt, that 'iron furnace:' Deut. iv. 20; Jer. xi. 4.

The torch * of fire represents the deliverance after the affliction. The fire means judgment; the light, joy: Esther viii. 16. "For Jerusalem's sake will I not rest till the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, *and the salvation thereof as a torch that burneth:*" Isa. lxii. 1. And thus the Lord led Israel out of Egypt by the pillar of *cloud* and of *fire*. The Saviour bears the suffering, before He enjoys the deliverance in resurrection: Heb. ii. 10, 14, 15. The Church likewise must suffer before its glory.

Abraham and the four sacrifices still lie under death; but God is the raiser of the dead. Jesus is risen. "To thy Seed have I given this land." Here is God 'calling the things that be not as though they were.'

The extent of the land covenanted is less apparently than in verse 7. It is all that territory which lies between the Nile † and the Euphrates. Jehovah called Abraham out from Mesopotamia, the land between Tigris and Euphrates. Here is a new Mesopotamia. Neither Israel nor Christ have yet received the land according to this unconditional covenant.

* *לפיד* Greek *λαμπος*.

† Some would make it El Arish. But El Arish is no river; only a torrent in winter. The nearest fulfilment of the words that has yet occurred is in 1 Kings iv. 21.

In Genesis xvi. we have unbelief attempting to fulfil the promise by the flesh. Sarah's gift of Hagar to Abraham was evil, as was that of Eve to Adam. Out of it arose Ishmael, the rejected by God from His covenant (Gal. iv.), and at last cast out of the house.

GENESIS XVII.

This is a covenant upon another principle than that of chapter xv. It is the principle of *reward according to works*; and it is in furtherance of God's mind concerning His justified ones. He would have those *righteous by faith* to be *bearers of fruit*. It is a good deal more difficult to understand than chapter xv. It treats especially of this life, and of the body. In it 'flesh' occurs seven times; in xv., not once. "Seed after thee" occurs here seven times; in xv., not once. In chapter xv. God is described as Lord, or Jehovah; in xvii. as (1) Jehovah, (2) El Shaddai, and (3) Elohim (or God).

Abraham's age is here mentioned; it is not named in chapter xv. The Most High reveals Himself by a special name.

"I am El Shaddai: walk before Me, and be perfect."

This is the Lord's gentle admonition concerning Abraham's conduct with regard to Sarah and Hagar. They had treated the affair as if it were a matter of family-arrangement alone. The Most High would have the *walk* of the justified regulated throughout by a chief reference to Himself and His will. If I mistake not, that is spiritual circumcision; not the walk of the flesh.

The Septuagint renders 'Be perfect' by 'Be blameless.' It is a word applying both to those under law and to those under grace. "May your whole spirit and body and soul be preserved *blameless* unto the

Presence of our Lord Jesus Christ:" 1 Thess. v. 23; iii. 13.

It is spoken of those under the law: "Zacharias and Elizabeth were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord *blameless*." And Paul could say of himself, as the Pharisee: "Touching the righteousness which is in the law, *blameless*."

2, 3. "And I will make My covenant between Me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. And Abraham fell on his face."

This is first a word concerning Abraham; the covenant is that of circumcision. It is taken up again in verse 7, in relation to Abraham's seed. "I will establish My covenant between Me and thee and thy seed *after thee in their generations*." The covenant with Christ was already made; and He is the single Seed of Abraham who was *before him*.

Abraham's posture, his lying on his face, is in the spirit of the covenant of Sinai—a spirit of bondage and fear: Ex. xix. So on the Mount of Transfiguration the three disciples at the voice of God fell on their faces, and were sore afraid.

3. "And God spake unto him, saying, Behold My covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations."

The rendering "And God *talked with him*" has misled some; as if the Most High were on more familiar terms with Abraham than on the former occasion. But it is only '*And God said*,' which occurs five or six times in this chapter.

*"Behold * My covenant is with thee."*

* We have here an example of a very common occurrence in the Hebrew text. The copyists, when they found two different readings, put them side by side. They were afterwards both supposed to be parts of the text; and all sorts of confusions have arisen out of it. הנה and ואני greatly resemble

Here is a reference to the previous unconditional covenant of chapter xv. 18. Hence it is spoken of as something existing already.

The arrangement in this and the next verse is peculiar.

1. "Behold, My covenant is with thee.
2. *And thou shalt be a father of many nations;*
3. Neither shall thy name any more be called *Abram*;
4. But thy name shall be *Abraham*.
5. *For a father of many nations have I made thee.*"

Here Abraham's name in its original, and afterwards in its enlarged form of honour, separates between the two promises to him, of fatherhood of the nations. I am apt to believe, that the first of the two promises relates to Abraham's seed after the flesh, and that the

one another in sound. They were probably bracketed together, the copyist not perceiving which was the true reading. Another example of the same error is seen in Ex. xviii. 5, 6. "And *he* (Jethro) said unto Moses, 'I thy father in law, Jethro, am come unto thee.'" Whereupon Moses goes out of the camp to meet Jethro! It should be, evidently, as the Greek and Syriac read: "And it was said to Moses, 'Behold, thy father Jethro is come unto thee.'" In Exodus i. 16 we have the confusion between אֲבוֹנִים and הַכִּנִּים, and an unintelligible passage is the result. "When ye do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, and see (*them*) on the stools"—nay, it is "And look on the stones."

Strike out the *N*, and the true reading appears. "Ye shall look upon the *children*; if it be a *son*, then ye shall kill him; but if it be a *daughter*, then she shall live." לָךְ and לָאֵל are pronounced alike; and many passages are unintelligible or false because of the confusion between 'to him' and 'not.' In Isaiah ix. 3 we have, "Thou hast multiplied the nation, and *not* increased the joy; they joy before Thee according to the joy in harvest." It should evidently be "and increased *its* joy; they joy, &c."

Sometimes the copyist has put the two together, and the rendering is strange: ("I had *fainted*) unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living:" Psal. xxvii. 13. The Greek has it: "I believe that I shall see the good things of the Lord." Apparently they read לָךְ at the close of the former verse.

second (from its employment by Paul in Rom. iv. 17) refers to his seed of *faith*.

In number two we have a fatherhood peculiar to Abraham, and it seems to refer to Abraham's sons by Keturah and the concubines, after the death of Sarah.

"Father of *many nations*," goes beyond the promises to Israel, the one circumcised nation. And it is a new style of promise, as compared with chapter xv.

I will just observe, in passing, that the addition to the name Abram is supposed to be derived from the first letter of the Hebrew word for multitude. Perhaps, that word in Daniel, touching the name of honour given to the prophet by the king, might suggest another origin. "At the last, Daniel came before me, whose name was Belteshazzar, according to the name of my God:" Dan. iv. 8.

"A father of many nations have I made thee."

Two senses, under different circumstances and connections, should be given to 'nations.' Sometimes it refers to the elect of this dispensation, and then we should read, 'many Gentiles,'—individuals out of all nations being meant, as we see in Revelation vii. 9. Abraham will behold both in the millennial day.

6—8. "And 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 to 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."

This takes up the seed of Abraham's flesh. It is the seed innumerable as the sand, in contrast with the single heir of chapter xv.

Jehovah's being a God to Abraham supposes his resurrection, as our Lord argues in His reply to the Sadducees: Matt. xxii. 31, 32. It supposes the resurrection of Abraham's seed also that shall be found in

the tombs at Christ's appearing. For we have immediately after, "And I will be *their God*." But the Most High will bless with temporal mercies those of Abraham's seed who shall be found alive on earth in that day.

"I will be their God," is a promise to Israel. "I will dwell among the children of Israel, and *will be their God*:" Ex. xxix. 45; Jer. xxxi. 33; Lev. xxvi. 45.

'But does not that word 'everlasting' prove that it cannot here refer to Israel?' No! 'Everlasting' is a word of promise continually occurring in the law.* And it seems to show, that the law will be observed by the 'nations' of the new earth. It will, indeed, not be their title to the inheritance. The Most High expressly says, that the old opening for man's sin shall be closed. "Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers," through which wrath came. But the new terms run—'*I will*,' and '*they shall*.' Blessed contrast to—'*Thou shalt not*,'—'*Thou shalt*,' of the old covenant!

"Their God" is a word of promise to Christians also. "Ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, 'I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and *I will be their God*, and they shall be My people:'" 2 Cor. vi. 16. "Now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called '*their God*:' for He hath prepared for them a city:" Heb. xi. 16.

9—14. "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 male among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you. And he that is eight days old

* It is found in Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy. See Ex. xii. 14, 17, 24, &c.

shall be circumcised among you, every male in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised male [of eight days old]* whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken My covenant."

Here we have evidently the conditional covenant of circumcision. It is law, and an offence against it would entail cutting off. The former covenant, as Paul argues, being already ratified to Christ, the One Heir of Abraham, could not be set aside by this covenant which came so long after, and which is made between different parties. It is a covenant with the flesh, and its sign was affixed to the flesh.

Still it is never to be forgotten, that the Most High is the God of the body as well as of the soul, and the inheritance of the saved comes not till the body and the soul are knit together again. The order of the Most High in this is, 'That the spirit shall first be His by faith.' It is not, 'Circumcise the flesh, and the spirit shall be renewed.' Much less is it, 'Administer the sacrament of baptism, and the infants shall thereby become regenerate.' '*The flesh profiteth nothing*.' "They which are *the children of the flesh*, these are not the children of God:" Rom. ix. 8.

Satan, in the brief day of his power, will act on God's principle. He presents his king to men; the king is assassinated; but he lives anew; and the world is astonished and worships: Rev. xiii. The *spirit* of the men of unbelief being thus gained over, he requires that each should mark his *body* with the sign of the Risen Wild Beast, the rival of God's King—the Lamb. Whoever does so, is at once set beyond repentance; a butt for the arrows of Jehovah: Rev. xiv., xvi.

Moses, though God's chosen deliverer for Israel,

* Attested by the Samaritan and Septuagint.

was once in imminent peril of life, because, through his wife's resistance, his son was not circumcised: Ex. iv.

The circumcision of the Christian is spiritual, wrought by no mortal hand, but by God Himself. It is the "putting off the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:" Col. ii. 11.

15, 16. "And God said unto Abraham, 'As for Sarah 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.'"

Sarah was a daughter of faith. She is now associated for blessing with Abraham. The servant's name alters, when the name of his God alters. Hagar's name does not once appear in the covenant. The promises to her and her seed were made by an angel. Sarah's name occurs again in connection with Abraham and the two seeds in Heb. xi. 11—16: "Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised. Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, *so many* as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable. These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of *them*, and embraced *them*, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that *country* from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better *country*, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He hath prepared for them a city." See also Gal. iv.

How was Abraham affected by this promise? He fell

on his face, and laughed. The thought, that at the age of a hundred he should have a son by Sarah, had not entered his mind. His affections revert to the son he had, and for him he pleads. "O that Ishmael might *live before Thee!*" This implies that he was *spiritually dead*, dead before God.

19—21. "And God said, 'Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed, and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him. And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation. But My covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year.'"

Here we have a threefold arrangement. 1. Sarah's son. 2. Ishmael. 3. Sarah's son. An angel gave Ishmael his name. God gives the name to Sarah's son. Isaac signifies 'laughter.' Abraham's laughter gives the first occasion to it. Then Sarah laughs when the promise is repeated: xviii. 12. And at Isaac's birth she says, "God hath made me to laugh, so that all who hear will laugh with me:" xxi. 6.

The promises made to Ishmael greatly resemble those made to Israel. And the history of the Arabians has greatly resembled, as Forster has shown, the history of Israel.

The two Seeds, of the flesh, and of faith are here separated. Very significantly is it added: "And He left off speaking to him, and God went up from Abraham." And so the last scene is of man's obedience in the flesh. But to us Christians it is said,—"*Lo, I am with you all the days, unto the end of the age:*" Matt. xxviii.

Abraham obeys the same day. Ishmael and the slaves of Abraham are circumcised. Ishmael is the example of the mere circumcision without Abraham's faith, of which Paul speaks.

We now return to Romans iv. 13 :—

13. "For not by law was the promise to Abraham or to his seed, that he should be heir of the world, but by the righteousness of faith."

The former verse had taught us, that Abraham was father, not to those possessed of the mere mark in the flesh, but to the justified by faith, walking according to the commands of God.

Jehovah now confirms the doctrine, but He alters the terms. Instead of 'not by *circumcision* only,' He says, "not by law." We learn then that circumcision is, in principle, law. So Paul argues in Galatians. So thought the Judaizers. The Gentiles, who believed were to be "circumcised, and to keep the law of Moses:" Acts xv. The covenant of Sarah is the Gospel. The covenant of Hagar is the Law. Both Law and Gospel meet in Abraham's history. He has two Seeds: (1) of the flesh and (2) of the spirit. The flesh is under law, and is to work out a righteousness for itself. The righteousness of law, and the righteousness of faith, are opposite.

In verse 12 we are taught concerning those possessed of *bare circumcision*. In verse 13 they are described as *men of Law*. Five times now we have 'the law' given as the equivalent of circumcision. Heritage is not by circumcision—that is, not by law, or the covenant of Genesis xvii., but by the previous covenant of Genesis xv.

"Not by law was the promise to Abraham or to his seed—that he should be heir of the world, but by the righteousness of faith."

That is to say,—'you will find the title of Abraham and of his seed to the eternal inheritance, not in Genesis xvii., but in Genesis xv.' So it is.

In Genesis xv. 6, you have Abraham's justification by faith. What says the next verse? "I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to

give thee this land (earth) to inherit it." That is the word to Abraham.

The inheritance to his Seed is to be found in the sacrifices which are offered as the ground of certainty. They are to lie under death, like Abraham, awhile, but to be raised from the dead by Jehovah, the God of resurrection.

All three seeds of Abraham are found in Genesis xv. (1) The Single Heir: ver. 4. (2) The Risen, or seed like the stars: ver. 5. (3) The people of Israel, and of the nations: Gen. xiii. 15; xv. 13. "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs by way of promise:" Gal. iii. 29.

'But the apostle speaks of Abraham and his seed as inheriting not the earth alone, but "*the world*."

By 'the world' is meant 'heaven and earth.' "In the beginning God created the *heaven* and the *earth*:" Gen. i. 1.; John i. 10. The *heaven* is to be the inheritance of the seed like the *stars*: the *earth*, by the seed like the *sand*: xiii. 15.

The only heritage to be obtained by the covenant of circumcision (Gen. xvii.) is "the land of *Canaan*," which is very far from being the inheritance even of the *earth*: xvii. 8. And so says Leviticus. "When ye be come into the *land of Canaan*, which I give to you for a possession:" Lev. xiv. 34. In Leviticus xii. is the law of circumcision on the eighth day: in the next two chapters, leprosy. Does not that seem to say—there is in the flesh uncleanness which law cannot remove, though it can discover and punish it.

The ruler of all God's works is to be Christ the Risen: Psa. viii. The rulers of the world are to be the obedient men of faith. "Do ye not know, that the *saints* shall judge the world? And if the *world* shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not, that we shall judge *angels*?" 1 Cor. vi. This glory is placed in a very significant context. It is preceded by the casting out

of an unsaintly person (1 Cor. v.), and the command to put out from the Church offenders of a like kind. Then, in the next chapter, those put out of the Church are to be excluded by God from the millennial reign: ver. 7—11.

The heritage then was not by law, or circumcision, "but by the righteousness of faith."

The apostle is steadily engaged in showing, that, while much of blessing was obtained by Abraham, it was not by his works under the flesh and law, but by faith in the promises of God. Abraham has never yet enjoyed the promises, but they shall be performed to him in resurrection. Not till then will he enter on the inheritance of heaven or of earth.

"*The righteousness of faith.*"

Sometimes we have—"the righteousness which is *out of faith.*" Here it is the simple genitive after righteousness. Faith is not righteousness, but it is the means of attaining it. "Gentiles which followed not after righteousness have *obtained righteousness* (not 'have their faith accepted as righteousness,' but) even the righteousness which is (out) of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness hath not attained to the law (the standard) of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as by the works of the law:" ix. 30, 31. "For with the heart, man *believeth unto (the attainment) of righteousness:*" x. 10. When righteousness by faith has been attained, law ends. "For *Christ is the end of law, unto righteousness, to every one that believeth.*"

The righteousness of *faith* is "the Righteousness of God," obtained by believing on Christ the risen. And "the righteous by faith shall live" for ever. "The righteousness of *faith*" is the opposite to the righteousness of *law* or of *works*. It was Israel's fatal mistake, that they sought to establish their own righteousness, and refused the offered righteousness of Another, even of the Lord Jesus Christ. "Not having

mine own righteousness which is (out) of *law*, but that which is by *faith in Christ*,—the righteousness which is *from God on faith:*" Phil. iii. The robe is woven by God, and sent to us: it rests on the shoulders of faith.

14. "For if the men of law are heirs, faith is made empty, and the promise of none effect."

The apostle is considering what would be the effect, if circumcision, nakedly taken, were able to attain the heritage. He had in verse 12 shut it out. But what would be the effect if it were to rule? What if the circumcised men of flesh and law, were to be the heirs of Abraham?

Here we are shown the difference between Abraham, the man of faith, and his seed, circumcised as infants. They were under circumcision as it is law, requiring of guilty sons of men a righteousness which is never rendered. Such are debtors to do the whole law; and as transgressors are under the curse.

"*Faith is made empty.*"

Genesis xv. is the leading covenant, the *chief* in God's estimation. It is that which decides and bestows the heirship of Abraham. God is determined to stop the boasting of the fallen. No flesh shall glory in His presence. "Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? Nay; but by the law of *faith!*"

Else the pride of man would say,—'I can buy the estate! I want no gift! I will be under obligation to none!' Now, "flesh profiteth nothing." Circumcision is nought, and uncircumcision is nought. Ishmael, far from winning the heritage of Abraham, is cast out.

"And this I say, that the covenant that was ratified before by God unto Christ, the law which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the *law*, it is no more of *promise*;

but God gave it to Abraham by promise:" Gal. iii. 17, 18.

In other words, *both* the covenants given to Abraham must be taken *together*, and in the *order* given by God; Paul is showing what would be the effect of taking Genesis xvii. or the covenant of circumcision, by itself. Can flesh, circumcised and under law, obtain righteousness and the heritage of Abraham? If so, Genesis xv. or the covenant of faith, the ruling covenant, is pushed aside, and made of no value. That would be to accuse God's wisdom of folly, and give to the guilty an opening for boasting. His plan is, that His promises should be accepted by faith on man's part. That shuts out boasting.

15. "For law worketh wrath; for where there is no law, there is no transgression."

"By the law is the knowledge of sin." It defines transgression, and annexes the penalty. Paul is alluding to the covenant of circumcision. "The uncircumcised male [of eight days] whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, *that soul shall be cut off from his people* [in the day of reward]: *he hath broken My covenant*:" xvii. 14. Neglect of this put Moses' self in peril.

Law brings transgression: transgression takes away heritage, and brings punishment instead. See Adam and his wife driven out from Paradise! At Sinai, three thousand are slain because of the idol. Israel is led out of the land of promise into captivity, as transgressor of the law.

"Where there is no law, there is no transgression."

Again there is a reference to Genesis xv. In it there is no law, and no transgression.

There is, indeed, a command given, but it was for the patriarch's assurance, and at his request alone. It was once for all fulfilled by Abraham, and so ended.

16. "Therefore it (the heritage) is from faith, in order that it might be by grace, that the promise might be sure to all the seed,—not to that which is of the law only, but to that which is from the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all."

Paul now, having treated of the negative part of verse 3, takes up the positive part. The heritage was to come, not from law or circumcision, "but from the righteousness of faith." For law cuts off from the inheritance.* Hence the heritage is made to depend on *the promise of God, embraced by the faith of man.*

The way to the heritage, like the way to justification, is by faith. The promise of the heritage is, "I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee *this land* to inherit it:" xv. 7. Thereupon Abraham asked God to give him some security of his enjoying it, and sacrifice was appointed.

Paul, having treated of the heritage, now proceeds to consider the *Seeds* that are to be its heirs. The heritage is to be *sure*. It is, therefore, the *eternal* inheritance, which is knit to faith. It is sure, for it rests on the word of God and His Almighty power, able to perform whatever He has said. "To *all* the *Seed*." That notices its twofoldness: (1) the seed of the *flesh*, whose heritage is on *earth*; and the seed of *faith*, whose inheritance is *heavenly*.

We have next a notice of the two Seeds. (1) That of the law, or the circumcised; and Paul associates himself here with both Jewish and Gentile believers. He owns circumcision as being of the law, where he presents to us his seven boasts of pearls won while under it; the first being, "Circumcised the eighth day."

* There is one beautiful exception, and it was guaranteed by God. When Moses was sent, God promised that the elders of Israel should "hearken to his voice:" Ex. iii. 18. Accordingly, when the testimony is given, and the miracles of his commission are wrought, we read: "*And the people believed*;" they "*bowed their heads and worshipped*:" iv. 31. But when Christ came, the elders disbelieved, hated, slew the Son. Hence Israel lies under the curse to this day.

"Touching the righteousness which is in the law blameless:" Phil. iii. 5, 6.

When Israel, as now, is standing on its own merits as under law, the word of the Saviour applied: "The children of the kingdom shall be cast out into the outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth:" Matt. viii. But when the new covenant is made with Israel, and the promises rest on God's performance, "Thy people shall be all righteous; they shall inherit the land *for ever*:" Isa. lx. 21. "Judah shall dwell *for ever*, and Jerusalem from generation to generation:" Joel iii. 20.

We have here the same two classes which appeared before in verses 11 and 12. They are (1) *the circumcised*; and while in general the circumcised were men of the flesh, condemned for unbelief, these, through the mercy of God, had come out from law and had taken the steps of faith, which brought them into the Church of God.

(2) The men possessed, in uncircumcision, of Abraham's faith, and therefore of righteousness, are on the way to the eternal inheritance; and are the true posterity of Abraham. To Paul Christ gave the commission, after taking him out from his former place as a man of Israel, to go to both Jew and Gentile "to open their eyes, that they might turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God; that they might receive *forgiveness of sins*, and *inheritance* among the sanctified, by *faith that is in Me*:" Acts xxvi. 18.

Both Seeds enter on their inheritance in the kingdom of God, while the sphere of their inheritance is different. "There are also *heavenly* bodies and bodies *earthly*, but the glory of the heavenly is one, and the glory of the earthly is another:" 1 Cor. xv. 40, 41.

"Abraham, who is the father of *us all*."

A second time the apostle uses the word 'all.' He is treating of the great essentials wherein God's two people are one.

Already is it true. "Who *is* the father." Paul here sets himself beside the uncircumcised Gentile of faith, and is not ashamed to do so. "Father of *us all*."

17. "As it is written,—'I have made thee father of many nations'—before Him whom he believed, even God, who giveth life to the dead, and calleth the things that are not as if they were."

The apostle's decisive proof is always—Scripture! So let it be ours!

The quotation here is taken from Genesis xvii. 5, or the Covenant of Circumcision. But it is quoted from the first part of the chapter, before circumcision has been named. And it applies to *Abraham* alone. Abraham was not put under law, even by the covenant of circumcision which set all others there. Hence there is a part of the chapter in which Gentile believers, occupying the place of Abraham, are directly interested.

"I have made thee father of *many nations*"—not only of the *one* circumcised nation. The apostle quotes it as referring to *us*; yea, I think, as including the two innumerable Seeds: (1) as the stars; and (2) as the sand. Already we are sons of Abraham, made free by Christ the Son, while the unbelieving are cast out: John viii. 36.

Abraham's fatherhood has two senses because of the great difference between the two Seeds: (1) of the *flesh*; and (2) of *faith*.

1. Abraham is father, according to the *letter*, of the seed of his *flesh*.

2. He is father, *spiritually*, of those who *believe*.

The "many nations" have two divisions: (1) Abraham was the *literal father* of many after the death of Sarah. He had sons by Keturah and by the concubines (Gen. xxv.), for he lived seventy-three years after the birth of Isaac.

(2) As applying to the spiritual Seed, the word 'nations' must be taken as the Jews use the word

Goyim; meaning thereby 'individual Gentiles;' for no nation now is a nation of believers; it is the day of election. The results of this day are shown us at last in the innumerable multitude "*out of all nations*, and kindred, and people, and tongues," who are found on high before the throne of God: Rev. vii. 9.

Already we, as men of faith living upon earth, are children of Abraham. "Know ye, therefore, that they which are of faith, the same are the sons of Abraham:" Gal. iii. 7. "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs by way of promise:" ver. 29.

When the words were spoken, Abraham was still a Gentile uncircumcised, though at the close of the chapter we read of his circumcision.

'But how was that word of God *true*? When it was spoken Abraham had no son recognised by God, much less a *nation*.'

It was true, not from man's point of view, but "before God." The Most High had then appeared to Abraham; and Abraham, as in His Presence, fell upon His face. "*Walk before Me*." So also Genesis xviii. 22.

Two Powers or Perfections of God are then appealed to, as the foundations on which the two covenants, yea, all the eight made with Abraham, repose.

God "*giveth life to the dead*."

We left Abraham and the three Seeds lying under death: xv. (1) But God raises the dead; and this power of His was put forth in two directions nearly allied. Abraham and Sarah were to possess a son of the flesh; but the bodies of both were, as to this, *dead*: 19. They were, therefore, called to believe in God's giving generative resurrection. They did so believe, and Isaac was born.

(2) But Jehovah spoke to Abraham also concerning a full resurrection after *death and burial*, until which he could not possess the land. Of that a shadow was given in Isaac laid on the altar, and rising from off that place of bonds and death: Heb. xi. But the reality

has been given in the resurrection of Christ, the Seed and Heir of Abraham, as noted in the last verses of this chapter.

We *shall be* Abraham's Seed in the full and final sense, when we and Abraham are together raised from the dead, and shine as the stars fixed in the heaven, our heritage. Not till the resurrection from among the dead does Abraham behold his two Seeds, or enter the heavenly city which he looked for: Heb. xi.

"*And calleth the things that are not, as though they were*." This refers to the words the Apostle has quoted.—

"*I have made thee father of many nations*." That is the style in which God the Creator speaks. Poor, feeble, halting, changeful man, must put in 'ifs' and 'buts' in his proposals and promises. Not so God! He effects by a word what He wills. And what He says He does, or He will do. You may reckon on a promise of His as fulfilled. 'Let light be! And it was.'

These two perfections are characteristic of God; and on them the covenants are founded.

1. God's *raising the dead*, supposes sin come in, and its penalty—death—enacted. But Jehovah is the God of redemption. Death, the sentence of justice, is not the final state of Abraham or of his Seed. God can, and will, take out from the prison and from corruption those justly set there. Yes! for as death came by the first Adam, so life comes by the Second. To refuse this testimony marks out a man as of the crooked generation of the serpent, and as heir of the Second Death. As God raises the dead, He has also a *heavenly* heritage for those raised by Him. As He is Creator of *earth*, He has a people who shall never see death. Jehovah shall be seen to be "Possessor of heaven and of earth," and the two Seeds of Abraham shall enjoy the heaven and earth that shall be.

2. These two powers of the God of Abraham bespeak Him both *Creator* and *Redeemer*. It has been the

counsel of Satan from early times to attempt to sever these two perfections of the Most High. 'The men of intelligence' of the early days of Christianity would not admit God's *creative power*. 'Matter was not *created*; it was *eternal*. God's power over it was merely the use of it, as the material for His works. And the ignorance or malevolence of the Workman was the cause of the sin, confusion, and death which we behold.' This deceit is coming up again. I have treated more fully of this in the comments on Ephesians and Colossians.

They taught also that the *Redeemer* was a different God from the *Creator*. Redemption was not to be from *sin*, but from *matter*; and from the power of *the Creator*.

Abraham believed in One God as both the Creator and the Redeemer. And Christ our Saviour, is the Creator, our Righteousness and our Sacrifice; coming to take His people out from the tomb, and to end sin in resurrection.

We, as believers living now on *earth*, belong to the 'many nations' given to Abraham in Genesis xvii. But we are moving on to the resurrection, and to our heritage on high, as stars of the *heaven*: xv.

There shall be a commencing fulfilment of the promises to Abraham in the millennium: Acts iii. 25.

But the full and final settlement of the two Seeds will be on the new earth.

1. The earthly Seed then become "*the nations*" of Revelation xxi., xxii.

2. The citizens of the New Jerusalem are the heavenly Seed, the risen from the dead. They are the heavenly kings of the nations who dwell outside the city, and who come up on pilgrimage to the temple and city of God; yea, and to the New Eden with its river of life, and its tree of life. On this I have enlarged in a former work. Of the two Seeds, one will be ever on *this side* of death; the other and the loftier, ever *beyond* it.

18. "Who against hope believed, in hope that he might become the father of many nations; according to that which was said (by God), 'So shall thy seed be.'"

Now we have a statement of the effect of the promise upon Abraham. 1. He believed, when all the hopes derivable from the flesh were gone. 2. He still held a hope arising out of the promise of the Most High. A son should be born to himself and Sarah when he was a hundred years old! This was the first step toward the fulfilment of nations being his literal posterity. We, too, have a hope as well as a faith. "We rejoice in hope of the [coming kingdom and] glory of God."

Had not Abraham so believed, he would not have received the honour of having 'many nations' as his seed.

The promise of a Seed like the stars did not depend on the state of Abraham's body: but *this* did. If he were to have sons of his flesh, his body and Sarah's must be revived. He believed in the power of the Creator over His own work.

The heirs of Abraham shall have a *redeemed body*, as well as a *ransomed soul*.

"According to that which was spoken, 'So shall thy seed be.'"

This was one of the words directly addressed to Abraham by God. The citation of these words from Genesis xv., after those about the 'nations,' taken from chapter xvii., seems to intimate, that the second promise must not be made to annul the former one. That is the strain of Paul's argument in Galatians iii. The Law (or circumcision) coming after the unconditional promise did not set aside the former one. Abraham is to have two Seeds: (1) one in the flesh, not to die, innumerable as the sands of earth; (2) the other risen from among the dead, to enjoy in resurrection the heritage of the heaven. And two different kinds of bodies, and two different glories

will be given, suited to the two Seeds respectively: 1 Cor. xv.

We believers appear first as of the 'nations' during our life; but we are moving on through death and resurrection to enter the heritage of the eternal city of God. Of this, immersion after faith is the sign. We are buried and rise: we believe in *Christ's* burial and resurrection, and in *our own*. Probably Abraham did not anticipate from the two promises of Seed (1) as the *sands*, and Seed (2) as the *stars*, that he would have *two* classes of posterity, and of kinds so different. But that was God's meaning. In the heavenly city, too, shall be found the three heavenly glories of resurrection, as the sun, moon, and stars: 1 Cor. xv. The raised of the patriarchs shall be as the *stars*; the accepted of the Law will be possessed of the glory of the *moon*; and the raised of the Church of the glory of the *sun*.

Abraham and Sarah, believing God's promises, and obedient to His commands, are the contrast to *Adam and Eve* disbelieving His threat, and therefore disobeying His command. While the guilty pair are driven out from the Eden of earth, the believing and obedient pair with their multitudinous Seeds will be ushered into the new earth, and through the gates of righteousness, will find an entry into the new and eternal Paradise; and into the City planned and built by God.

19—21. "And being not weak in faith he considered not* his own body now dead, when he was nearly a hundred years old, nor the deadness of Sarah's womb: Nor did he stagger through unbelief at the promise of God, but was strong in faith giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that what He had promised, He was able also to perform."

* Some copies omit the 'not' in verse 19. What are we to think of it? That such copies have been tampered with. So some omit the 'Not' in 1 Cor. xv. 51, "We shall *not* all sleep," and in other cases.

God's supreme power has been presented to our regard, and now we have the faith of Abraham laying hold of those powers. God purposely delayed accomplishing His promise, till the powers of the flesh were past. Abraham had made trial of the flesh, and Ishmael, the product of it, was by God set aside.

Abraham was tried in regard of his spirit. Can God's word be true? He was tried in regard of obedience. Would he submit to circumcision?

"The promise of God" here spoken of is a different one from that mentioned in verse 13. That related to the *inheritance*; this to the *Seeds*, that are to be the *heirs*. But he believed that God was able to do all things which were necessary to fulfil His word.

22. "Wherefore also it was imputed to him unto righteousness."

Abraham under this new trial of his faith still stood firm. His ground was not changed, even by circumcision, which set his natural posterity under law and works. As he believed, when the promise was given of a Seed like the stars; so did he believe the promise made of many nations as his posterity. As he was justified in the one case by faith (xv. 4, 5) so was he now in the other: xvii. 5.

23—25. "Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him, but for our sakes also, to whom it is about to be imputed, believing as we do, on Him that raised Jesus our Lord from among the dead, who was delivered up (to death) because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification."

Abraham is by God's design made to us the pattern of justification. Now Abraham is twice justified. (1) As the *ungodly*, he is justified by *faith* in the word of God: Gen. xv. 5. (2) As the *believer*, he is justified by the *works of faith*—by (1) circumcision, and (2) the sacrifice of Isaac.

So we are (1) already justified by faith. (2) But we are one day to be raised from the dead, and to appear in our new bodies, as the servants of Christ, before Him. And at that time we shall be judged according to works. How have we conducted ourselves, when and since we became Christ's servants? Matt. xxiv., xxv.

Then comes either our being accounted unworthy, with the dismissal to the darkness outside; or our being accounted worthy, and the entrance into the joy for a thousand years assured to our Lord Christ. Before Melchizedec *Abraham* is blessed. *Lot* is not named, either by Abraham, or by Melchizedec.

So there are two justifications for believers of this dispensation.

I. One we have. (1) "To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that *justifieth* the ungodly, his faith is *imputed* unto righteousness:" iv. 5. (2) "Therefore *having been justified by faith*, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ:" v. 1.

II. The other is *about to be* (*μελλει*). (1) "One is the God, who *shall justify* the circumcision through faith, and the uncircumcision by faith:" iii. 30. To this refers the word of David, quoted in our chapter. (2) "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord *will not impute sin*:" ver. 8. To us believers righteousness *shall be* imputed, when we put off our old bodies for our new ones; in order to enter on our inheritance above. Life has entered our souls already; it will then enter our bodies also.

For we believe in the resurrection after death, already accomplished on the Heir of Abraham. As Christ is risen, we too shall rise.

We believe in God, who raised our Lord from among the dead. God is seen taking the Supreme place all through the epistle, the Saviour coming into view as the Servant of the Father.

"Who was *given up* (to death) because of our transgressions; and was raised because of our justification."

Christ's obedience was in full perfection. And here we find the negative and positive sides of "the Righteousness of God" put together. (1) There is the Saviour's *death*, to blot out our sins. (2) There is His *resurrection*, because of our being justified. Both parts of our justification centre in Christ. His life of righteousness, His death of Atonement, are both needful for our full acceptance before God.

The Saviour was the *Righteous One*, and therefore He could not be detained in the prison of the *unrighteous*. The Father raised Him.

Here we have an advance on chapter iii. There we have the blotting out of sin, by the *blood* of the Redeemer's death. But here we have His *coming forth of the tomb*, through His positive righteousness. "Thou art My Son; to-day have I begotten Thee."

There are seven twofoldnesses in this chapter, arising out of Abraham's two innumerable seeds: (1) the one of the flesh, or Israel; (2) the other of promise, or ourselves.

I. There are two justifications of Abraham. (1) By *faith*: Gen. xv. 5. (2) By works: xxii. 16—18.

II. There are two HERITAGES, (1) one of the earth, the (2) other of the heaven: Gen. xv. 7, 13.

III. Two are the COVENANTS; and their sons represented by Sarah and Hagar as the mothers: Gal. iv.

IV. Two are the SIGNS OF THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF FAITH, (1) to Abraham, circumcision; to us, (2) immersion.

V. Two are the SEALS of the Righteousness of Faith. (1) To Abraham, circumcision; (2) To believers of the first age, the miraculous gifts of the Spirit.

VI. In the words—"Father of many nations"—we must (1) first take the word '*Father*,' literally, of great bodies of living men; (2) then individually; of Abraham's being the pattern of many believing Gentiles.

VII. There are here two senses of RESURRECTION;

(1) the reviving of the bodies of Abraham and Sarah during life; and (2) the raising of Abraham and of his sons from the tomb.

To sum up, then, we have now the apostle's answer to the question with which he begins the chapter:—

'What did Abraham our father find in the way of the flesh?'

The supposed answer is—*Nothing!*

He gained much as the gifts of God to his faith: but from his supposed merits under law, he won nothing.

This is then opened out into the three or four points which might be alleged.

I. What did he win, as to RIGHTEOUSNESS, or JUSTIFICATION, which follows on righteousness?

Nothing! He received righteousness by imputation, as one ungodly: iv. 5; iii. 19, 20, 27.

II. What with regard to "THE INHERITANCE"?

It came by promise, not through the law, but through the righteousness which belongs to faith: iv. 13. Law cuts off from blessing and brings wrath from God: iv. 14—16; Gal. iii.

III. What with regard to Abraham's FATHERHOOD and his THREE SEEDS?

He obtained that place of privilege, not by the merit of his works.

He tried to obtain the promised Heir by the flesh. But Ishmael was rejected. And Isaac became his heir by promise, after the powers of the flesh had failed.

'But you have asserted that, Abraham at the close was justified by works.'

True; but there are two kinds of works; one, (1) works of the *flesh under law*; and the other (2) *works of faith under grace*. It was by the latter that Abraham was justified: not by the former.

CHAPTER V.

1. "Having been justified therefore by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

THE apostle had asserted in the last verse of the former chapter our justification, as implied in the resurrection of our Surety from among the dead. He now traces for us the *present* and *future* effects of this great act of God. Faith in Christ, the Righteous One, has been reckoned to us unto the attaining of righteousness before God. As righteous we are at peace with God.* All other men are at war with God, through the Fall, and because of their own offences.

He who has made peace, and *is* our Peace, is the Lord Jesus Christ. He has made peace, by His death for sin, and His resurrection because of righteousness. And He is "our Lord," whose commands we are to obey.

2. "By whom also we have approach by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

By law sinners are shut out from the presence of the Ruler.

1. Adam and his wife were driven out from the garden of God. Nor were they allowed to re-enter: the door is locked against them. To draw near was death.

2. Cain is driven away even from the sight of Eden, "and from Thy face shall I be hid."

* Some Manuscripts, which have been tampered with, read, *'let us keep peace with God.'* *εχωμεν*. Such various readings are to be found, where the grace of God is too strong in its statement for un-humbled hearts.

3. Israel under law shall see the Lord's descent in cloud; but the mount must be fenced off from their touch; they may not even draw near to gaze. To draw too near to the abode of God in the Tabernacle, was death. Their specially anointed and consecrated high priest had only access by special sacrifices once a year; even then in danger of death.

But we have been led out from law and its terrors, into grace. As sons we are permitted to draw near to God when we will. As made sons of God we may approach. "*Let us draw near* with a true heart in full assurance of faith." Under the shelter of grace "*we stand*," and there we are warned to abide. Sometimes we are tempted to forsake this secure covert. An oath would set us on our own deeds and merits before God; an oath welcomes His anger on us, if we fall short. Therefore the Saviour forbids oaths to Christians set under grace.

"*And rejoice (boast) in hope of the glory of God.*" This is the third present blessing of righteousness. (1) Peace, (2) Access, (3) Hope of glory. The glory of God under the law was terrible. The glory of the Lord on the top of the Mount was "*like devouring fire*:" Ex. xxiv. 17. Who could dwell with *that*? Who could desire *that* to draw near them?

The apostle's word relates to our eternal heritage. By nature, he has told us, "all have sinned, and (all) come short" of the heritage of the righteous. But here is One who shall lead His people into the city of God,—the abode of His glory,—to dwell there. As yet we are men in the flesh, and the flesh is mortal. But in resurrection is our hope. O Christian, rejoice, and be not cast down! All is moving for your profit!

3. "But not only so, we boast even in troubles, knowing that trouble works patience, and patience experience; and experience hope. Now that hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit that has been given to us."

Peace with God brings war with the Old Serpent, and with his seed. Trouble for the sake of the faith is the sure lot now of the true believer. The world is at enmity with God. It is hotly pursuing the things seen. It despises and hates those who run not with it in its pursuits. But these afflictions are not to cast us down, or turn us aside. So assured is our position, so certain its blissful end, that we can even boast of them. So does Paul in his Second Epistle to the Corinthians. The justified shall in due time be glorified. "*To do well and to suffer* for it," is our calling. Troubles for Christ's sake assure us that we are on the way to the heritage and glory of God. Men of faith will not fall out with God, because of the troubles that befall them.

Afflictions falling on the worldly produce reproaches and hatred of God. "Curse God, and die!" was the advice of Job's wife to the stricken patriarch. "I hate him"—this prophet of God—"because he doth not prophecy good concerning me, but evil." Under the vials of the coming Day of Wrath, men blaspheme God the Sender: Rev. xvi.

By nature the unbelieving heart is "enmity against God." The change to the love of God is effected by the regenerating Spirit of God. This the flesh under law gives not. The prophet Jonah is angry with God because of the loss of the gourd.

Love of God comes from the work of Christ, accepted on our behalf. Many speak of the '*influences of the Spirit*'—Scripture of the Spirit's *indwelling*—and His making our bodies *temples of God*. This is something vastly more definite and consolatory.

5. "And the hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is poured out in our hearts by the Holy Ghost who is given to us."

Many at last will be ashamed of their hope, as resting on their own fancies about God, and not on

His word. But he who trusts what God has said will not be ashamed: ix. 33; x. 11. "For the Scripture saith, whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed." What is your hope, reader? Whereon does it rest?

Here we have Paul's trinity of graces: (1) '*faith*:' ver. 1; (2) '*hope*:' ver. 2; (3) '*love*:' ver. 5.

"The love of God." This may take one of two senses: (1) *our* love to God; or (2) *God's* love to us. In the passage before us both views of the love of God appear. Here *our* love to God is in question. It is produced *in our heart* by the Holy Spirit. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are engaged to save us.

"*By the Holy Ghost that is given to us.*"

1. There are two givings of the Spirit. (1) The Holy Ghost as the *Indweller* in the hearts of the justified. (2) He is the earnest of our inheritance: 2 Cor. i. 22; v. 5.

2. There is the gift of supernatural power—"the manifestation of the Spirit:" 1 Cor. xii. 7; Acts v. 32; viii. 18, 19.

That hope is genuine, and will not deceive us, which springs out of faith and love!

The two agencies of the Holy Spirit are shown in close contact at Pentecost. Peter's hearers are pricked in heart by the Spirit, and seek to escape from their place as enemies of God and His Christ. The apostle therefore calls on them to repent, and be immersed in water according to the word in Joel, in order that they might receive, through apostles' hands, the gift of the Holy Ghost. The sign and the seal were both there.

The renewal and indwelling of the Spirit is the great advance on law, which left each, by his own powers of nature, to come out from evil, and to do good. The Holy Spirit dwells in believers as the benefit of Christ's work accepted on our behalf. By

Him we are strengthened to meet our foes. And He gives with it the assurance of our salvation.

6. "For when we were yet weak, in due season Christ died for the ungodly."

The Holy Spirit regenerates, imparting spiritual *life*. But where there is life, there is often much *weakness*. And in our conflict with the enemies of our salvation, we need not light alone, but strength. The Saviour, in Gethsemane, warned the apostles of their need of power in the conflict then close at hand.

"The Spirit indeed is willing, but the *flesh is weak*." But the Holy Spirit was to descend to impart power for witness to Christ: Acts i. 8. The Spirit's coming was the consequence of Christ's resurrection, and His petition for the descent of the Holy Ghost the Comforter.

The death of Christ took place "*at the fitting season*." We are apt to doubt this. Why was the Saviour's coming delayed four thousand years? For one reason, because men would not believe their weakness, and the inability of the best of mankind to gain justification by law and the flesh, till after centuries of trial and uniform want of success. And what multitudes, even in our days, are imagining man's power to keep the law, and to please God, by nature and its powers!

"*Christ died for the ungodly.*"

Ungodliness is our nature by birth. What shall turn our hearts to God to do His will? A sense of His love toward us, in giving up Christ for our sins. This is the object, outside ourselves, by which the Holy Ghost convinces us of our sinful enmity against the Most High.

Christ not only died to benefit us, but died *in our stead*, as the sacrifice to God. His death was not primarily to show us an example of how we ought to die, but to put away our sins. We are not only ignorant and slow of understanding spiritually, but alienated in heart from God.

7. "For with difficulty does any die for a righteous man; yet perhaps for the good man one would dare even to die."

The difference turns on the distinction between the man merely honest, and paying to each his due; and the generous and benevolent man who helps his neighbours. Men would be wrought upon to rescue one beloved from a sense of his worth. All would turn on the person's character borne before his fellow-men, as a man of honesty, or one of benevolence.

8. "But God recommends His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Here is the vast superiority of God's love toward us. His source of love arises in Himself. It is not aroused toward us by a view of our dutifulness, love, or faithful service to Him. Our position before Him is that of the '*ungodly*,' who find their pleasure anywhere but in Him; that of '*sinners*,' breaking His just and wholesome laws: and of '*enemies*,' who in their heart of hearts hate Him. All our past acts, all our present sentiments weighed against us, and called for wrath. Yet He pitied, and loved. This is the source of our salvation. He first loved us, or we had never loved Him.

"*God*" recommends His love. In it the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit co-operate. Nothing short of the love and power of the whole Godhead could save.

Men's highest love would be shown in self-sacrifice toward those in whom they should perceive some good qualities toward themselves, as honesty, or bountifulness. But God's love finds men at enmity with Himself, yet He gave up His Son to death to be our Deliverer!

He gave up Christ to death, not when men's hearts were softened towards Him, but when Jew and Gentile, High Priest and Governor, apostles and scribes, civilians and soldiers were seen at their worst. There was in

them, not goodness to attract favour; but injustice, envy, profaneness, unbelief, and scorn, to repel the grace of God.

9, 10. "Much more, therefore, having been now justified by His blood, we shall be saved by Him from wrath. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more after having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life."

The argument of the first part of this chapter hinges on the last verse of chapter iv., which tells us that God gave up His Son to death because of our trespasses, and raised Him from among the dead because of our justification. Then as justified we have peace with God through Christ. But the coming day of peace and love manifested towards us, will be the day of God's manifest indignation against His enemies. "*I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and will reward them that hate Me:*" Deut. xxxii. 41. "The hand of the Lord shall be known toward His servants, and His indignation toward His enemies:" Isa. lxvi. 14.

"*Justified by His blood.*" Without the shedding of blood, and that, blood of the perfect, no forgiveness takes place: Heb. ix. 24. This great truth is illustrated for us in the very first scene of worship. Abel's offering is accepted; Cain's is rejected. When Israel's firstborn are to be delivered, there must be atoning blood on the door.

The blood of Christ is the redemption-price. It is not the value of faith that saves, but its resting on the price accepted by God. Why did Christ die? Those who refuse to stoop as sinners before God, and declare that mercy alone dwells in the Most High, tell us that Jesus died to give us a perfect example of patience under suffering. But why is there suffering, if God be *mercy alone*? How could the agony of Gethsemane assail Christ the sinless, before a God all mercy? How was it that His prayer was wrung from Him with

anguish so great, and was not granted—if there be no justice of God—no wrath of any kind? How came it that His perfect prayer was not heard?

Scripture makes us see, if we will but listen, that God is wrath with sin, and will maintain His good laws, however terrible the endurance of the penalty by the transgressor.

Our Lord having now put away our sin by His death, our souls may be at peace concerning the future. The day of recompence must indeed come, as the second chapter of this epistle has shown; but its wrath will not fall on the justified. Theirs is the boon of eternal life, which law adjudges to the righteous.

This is illustrated for us by the history of Israel. God's people, justified by the blood of the Lamb, pass in safety through the sea that drowns their persecutors. We are so to escape the wrath of the coming day, that, if obedient, we shall not be upon the earth when it falls on unbelievers. We shall be caught away to heaven, and not be in the scene of vengeance: Rev. iii. 10.

If Rahab obeyed, and bound the scarlet line in her window, the rescued spies undertook to save her and her family harmless from the sword that devoured all others. So we, justified by Christ's blood, shall be saved by Him from the wrath about to fall on a wicked world, in the day of God's judgment on the living.

Men are not by birth '*sons of God*,' but '*enemies of God*.' And that day is to reward "indignation and anguish" to enemies, after the day of entreaties to be reconciled to God is past. "His enemies shall lick the dust." "A fire goeth before Him, and *burneth up His enemies* round about:" Psa. xcvi. 3. "For by fire and by His *sword* shall the Lord plead with all flesh, and the slain of the Lord shall be many." Be afraid of the Lord, you that are under sin! Be reconciled to Him at once!

With unbelievers and the disobedient God is justly

displeased, and the penalties of His law are ready to fall on them. They alone are at peace with Him who are justified by the Saviour's atonement.

Of what essential importance this work is, is shown by its fourfold mention in these few verses:—

1. "In due time *Christ died for the ungodly*:" ver. 6.
2. "While we were yet *sinners*, *Christ died for us*:" ver. 8.
3. "*Justified by His blood*, we shall be *saved*:" ver. 9.
4. "*Reconciled to God by the death of His Son*:" ver. 10.

Let my reader mark this, if he be one who is seeking forgiveness by his goodness. Christ is the only Aaron who can rescue from deserved wrath. Only the Son of God can deliver—only *the Perfect One*! Only the Son of God has value sufficient to pay the ransom of millions untold! Only the Son of God has power sufficient to call out from the tomb and dust of death unto everlasting life!

The apostle puts '*reconciled*' as nearly the same as '*justified*.' '*Justified*' means the setting of us guilty ones right with the law and its demands. '*Reconciled*' means that the alienated feelings of Ruler and subject are changed towards each other.

"*We shall be saved by his life*."

The lambs of Israel, by their blood on the door, defended the firstborn from the sword of the angel. Those lambs did not rise again after death. But the Lamb of God, when slain, rose from the tomb. In resurrection He has become the Protector and Leader of His people.

1. Joseph cast into the pit, yet taken out of it, becomes the preserver of his brethren in the time of dearth and death.

2. Samson's weakness and death destroyed more foes than did his life. Samson is buried in peace; but he does not rise the third day to deliver Israel. His judgeship of twenty years ceases at his death.

Christ's day of rule for a thousand years is yet to come. Our Lord in resurrection has beaten and carried captive our foes.

The Saviour, by His resurrection and ascension, has had all subjected to His feet by God; and that power shall He exert to deliver those He has saved. He ever lives to make intercession for us. And when the day of His kingdom is come His might will appear unto raising and glorifying His ransomed ones.

PARALLEL BETWEEN ADAM AND CHRIST.

We have now arrived at one of the most difficult places of Scripture, extending from the twelfth to the twenty-first verse. It is divided into three parts:—

1. In verses 12 to 14 we have Adam's sin and its results; with a general statement of the resemblance between Adam and Christ, before the law of Moses, and before the Gospel came in to modify the consequences.

2. In verses 15 to 17 we have the exceptions to the previously-announced parallelism—first in regard of the Gospel-day, then of the millennium.

3. In verses 18 to 21 we have the Gospel in regard of its universality of offer by God, and the limitation of its acceptance by men's unbelief. Lastly, we find *eternal life* as the effect of the Saviour's righteousness; beside the Second Death which is the end of the impenitent and refusers of grace.

Three great DISPENSATIONS are supposed.

1. ADAM is tried under law. He steals conscience, and receives judgment; and the penalty of his disobedience in death.

2. Then ensued a time of trial to others, his sons, founded on (1) law; (2) conscience; and (3) the

sentence of Eden. This ended in the *death* of all * those of that dispensation.

3. Then came '*the reign of death*' over all of that dispensation.

The reign of death is certainly to be distinguished from *death*. "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely *die*." But in the pronouncement of the sentence we find provision made for the *reign of death*, after the infliction of the *stroke of death*.† "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread *till thou return to the ground*; for out of it wast thou taken; *for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return*." Gen. iii. 19. Now the dead man does not at once return to dust. The flesh is a long while corrupting before it becomes dust; and the bones may last perhaps centuries before the word is fulfilled in them.

But beside this visible result, which alone is treated of in the sentence of Genesis, there is a further reign of death over the invisible parts of man. For death is the separation of *body* and *soul*. And death reigns over the *souls of the dead*.

The dead body is by man put into a region apart from the living. The unseen soul is placed by God apart from man's eye; and there is the prison in which the sinner is confined. The souls, then, of those who died 'from Adam up to Moses' were reigned over by death; and none was able to break the slavery of corruption, which decomposed the body; or to find an exit for the soul from the chambers of death. Nothing less than Almighty power was required to bring together again the union of body and soul in life.

II. 1. THE CHRIST came; He was tried during life;

* All but Enoch. And he is coming back to die with Elijah: Rev. xi.

† While the sentence runs 'thou,' the infliction of it is on all the sons of Adam, proving them to be one before God.

and the issue was *perfect righteousness*, and after His death for sin His soul and body were re-united by the power of God.

2. On the foundation of *Christ's righteousness*, proved by His resurrection, comes the present trial of men under the Gospel of grace. Righteousness is offered to all sons of men to whom the Gospel comes, with the assurance of everlasting life in resurrection to all receivers of the tidings. The results are twofold.

(1) The millennial day is coming, the day of 'reward according to works,' in which some, "*accounted worthy*," will reign with Christ a thousand years. Of that day the second chapter has given us a clear account.

(2) Then comes the final and complete entry of all, both the saved and the lost, on their eternal state. The end is either the reign of the justified in eternal life; or the casting of the wicked into the Second Death, the lake of fire.

III. There was also the entrance of *the Law of Moses* for Israel. But as it did not bring in righteousness, but only increased transgression, the apostle speedily dismisses the notice of it.

12. "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and by sin death; and so death passed through to all men, for that all sinned."

The apostle in the former context has been treating of salvation as proceeding from the sufferings and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Born under law, and set amidst sinners, He works out a perfect righteousness, and in resurrection passes out from law and its penalties into heaven and reward. Where others of the dead lie under the reign of death as sinners, He comes forth in "the power of an endless life." His death of atonement pacifies wrath, and puts away sin. His righteousness is the justification of those who believe. The whole of our salvation comes from Christ alone.

The Holy Ghost then brings into view the parallelism between (1) *sin and death from Adam*, and (2) *righteousness and life from Christ*. As death comes from one man, so life from One Man also.

"*Sin by one man entered into the world.*"

If 'the world' is a term, embracing, as I think it does, heaven and earth, a consequence of importance results. Probably the first sin in heaven, as well as the first sin on earth, arose through the one man. If the Most High, when He created man, informed the angels that the being they had just beheld would one day take a place above themselves, we can understand how Satan and others of the angels might, through pride, resent God's counsel. There was sin in the heart; and speedily one of the chiefs of angels sought to confound Jehovah's plan, by leading Adam to offend his Maker. Sin, then, thus began in earth through the one man. There was a breach of law, and the penalty threatened came into execution.

But death did not end with the decease of Adam and Eve. On the contrary, the line of Adam's posterity is traced for us, and we read of the death of each: Gen. v. From father to son death descended. No new sin is alleged against the patriarchs given in that list. Enoch is the one exception to the suffering death, and he is coming back to earth to die: Rev. xi.

Yea, not only those named in the Scripture died, but all, 'from Adam to Moses.' Tried under law, with stolen conscience as their guide, they were removed by death.

"*Because all sinned.*"

We may regard this as an inspired answer to an objection. 'Men did not die by transgression against law; for there was no law before Moses' day, and therefore no transgression.' Whereto the reply is: 'There was one *special law*, threatening death, given to Adam in Eden, long before the day of Moses.'

"All sinned" in the one act of Adam. If God be

true how do you explain the matter? I do not know. Many understand this as if it signified that all are in the habit of sinning. That is true. But that is not the sentiment here expressed. In the mistaken sense the tense used, and rightly used, is the *present*. This is spoken of the *past*, and it includes not only those who have been born and died, but those not yet born. We are to receive God's testimony as little children. Many of the proceedings of the Most High we cannot fathom; but the day is coming that will clear up our difficulties.

Paul from the *death* of men proves *sin*. From *sin* he proves the existence of *law*. Death is the stern penalty of law inflicted according to notice given.

13. "For until the Law sin was in the world; now sin is not reckoned, where there is no law."

This verse takes up the last word of the twelfth verse. 'They *sinned*.' For there was sin in all, as is proved by death; for *death* is the penalty of *sin*, and proves the existence and force of *law*.

'The Law' here means of course the Law of Moses. There was *the one transgression* by one man in Eden of the one law, bearing death as its penalty. There were *many sins*. 'Sin' is the lawlessness which refuses to obey God.

The Most High keeps the reckoning of offences. But He does not inflict the punishment of sin, unless there is a previous law. Now, till Moses came, only one law had been given, announcing death to all for the breach of it. That one law then was the cause of the death of all up to Moses. Men died, but it was not that each died because of his own proper sins; but because of the one trespass of Eden. Under the law of Moses we find that special trespasses were avenged by the cutting off at an earlier date: but the one sin of Eden was the fundamental one, cutting off each, before he had completed his day of a thousand years.

14. "But death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those that sinned not additionally in the likeness of the trespass of Adam; who is the figure of the future (Adam)."

We must distinguish between the (1) *stroke* of death, and the (2) *reign* of death. Death is the separation of body and soul. It is the man's removal from the world as made for the living. The body is removed from the sight and range of the living to the tomb. The soul departs to be in Hadees, among the souls of the dead. There the departed come under subjection to death as a ruler. The body moves downward to become dust. The soul is detained in custody, and is unable to come forth to its former abode. As soon as the *stroke* of death has taken effect, the *reign* of death commences. And it is a potent reign. Samson himself cannot break prison. This state of the dead abides. Arrest is the beginning of imprisonment.

But the apostle observes, concerning the extent of it, a point which we should not have noticed. The power of death prevailed to imprison in strict confinement Adam and his sons up to Moses. But over our Lord death did not reign. God's Holy One might not see corruption. And that turns on the difference between Adam and Christ. Adam came from the dust and was to return to it. But Christ came from heaven, and hence after death returned to heaven.

But the Holy Spirit notices that this strict and lasting confinement extended even to those who had not sinned knowingly, under the conditions of Adam's transgression.

Adam's trespass* was an offence against a positive law given by God, with penalty; and the law was understood by our first parent.

Israel, as breaking the law were more guilty than the patriarchs before it. What a blow was this for those who thought to be *saved by law*!

* There are two words used in the Greek *παραπτώμα* and *παραβάσις*.

Observe how Moses' name is linked with this. "Death reigned from *Adam* to *Moses*, even over them that sinned not after the likeness of *Adam's* transgression," 'who is the figure of *Christ*.' If we were to draw out the parallel, it would be something like this—'By one man *righteousness* came into the world, [*Adam* was innocent at his creation; but he never became righteous,] and by righteousness came *life*; and by faith life passed from *Christ* to those who believed, and believe in Him.' Not all the sons of *Adam* are sons of God.

It appears, then, that under those not sinning against law, as did *Adam*, is included the creation, as well as the men who lived from *Adam* to *Christ*. For the Second *Adam* shall bring glory to creation, as well as to men.

"Who is the figure of the FUTURE" *Adam*; that is, of *Christ*. Our translators give, "who was to come." For those who believe not in the millennial kingdom which is to appear with *Christ's* return, try to make out that things really appointed to be fulfilled in another and very different dispensation, are accomplished in *this*. See Matt. xi. 14.

The Greek word translated "future," applies to a number of things which are to appear at *Christ's* return. (1) The woeful times preceding *Christ's* coming. We are to pray to escape them: Luke xxi. 36. (2) Judgment, with its awards: Acts xvii. 31. (3) Resurrection, affecting both the righteous and the unrighteous: Acts xxiv. 15. (4) The believer's heavenly country and city: Heb. xiii. 14.

Paul at this point is treating only of the first dispensation after *Adam's* fall, which served as its basis. He observes that 'Death reigned over those who (1) lay under the imputation of *Adam's* sin only; and had (2) not knowingly and additionally offended against a law given by God.

Who are meant by the latter class? It is generally

supposed to refer to the case of *infants* and their death. That arises out of the idea, that the apostle is treating of *all mankind* up to the present day. But he has just before told us that he is now treating of *the men who lived during the 2500 years between Adam and Moses*. There was but one law, and one imputation during all that time. That dispensation is called "*The Transgression*."

But after that, the Most High was pleased to bring Israel, His nation, under a law of many commands devised by Himself, with threatened penalties. By that act the nation was placed in circumstances greatly resembling those of *Adam*. The six hundred and thirteen laws of *Moses* were to be obeyed at all times, by every one of the twelve tribes. Did they keep always every command? As far as possible from it. It was the intention of the Lord, in giving the Law, to make '*the (one) transgression of Adam to multiply*.' He would teach man, that by deeds of obedience to law no flesh can be saved. This, then, was additional sin beyond the first imputation of *Adam*. It was knowing violation, by individuals, of good laws given by God.

We find this far easier to understand, than that thousands should die through their unknowing participation in the sin of another.

This view is confirmed by the use of the *past* tense. The men of the first dispensation "*sinned*," not as *Adam*. It is not spoken of as now going on. Through the Law of *Moses* "*sin multiplied*," not '*is multiplying*.' "*The many died*." Not, '*all men are dying now*.' "*Law entered*." But Law has passed away, that the grace of the Gospel might come in for all. This view gives force to the expressions, "*even over them that sinned*,"—"*sinned additionally*,"—they added their individual sins to that of *Adam*. Before that day there was only the one broken law, and the general imputation of *Adam's* transgression.

What are now the main points of the parallel between Adam and Christ?

I. Paul makes prominent in Adam the arising of *sin* from him as the cause, and of *death* as the effect, both affecting all sons of men.

II. By Christ came obedience or *righteousness* as the cause of blessing, and *life* as the effect, under the better principle of grace.

How far have we arrived in the accomplishment of the parallel?

1. In Adam's case we have seen (1) *sin*, (2) *death*, (3) *the reign of death*.

2. In Christ have been fulfilled (1) *the working of righteousness*, (2) *the bearing of sin*, and (3) *His resurrection unto life from among the dead*.

Upon this foundation of *pardon and righteousness*, a dispensation of gospel-grace has been sent to all the world. This is the point reached in the parallel, as it stands related to Christ. But while the one righteousness of the One Man is offered to all, it is accepted by but few. For while the flesh knits us *all* to Adam, to sin, and to judgment; union with Christ takes place only by *faith*, which is wrought at the Holy Spirit's regeneration.

3. The third and greatest point of the parallel has yet to be enacted. As *sin* ends in *death*, so *righteousness* in *life*! *Spiritual* life is already begun in the soul by faith. But our body, whether found among the living, or among the dead, lies still under sentence of death. "If Christ be in you, the body indeed is *dead* because of *sin*; but the Spirit is *life*, because of *righteousness*:" viii. 10. We are "waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of *our body*."

Now is the time for obedience, the coming day is the day of *reward*; a day which is to affect creation in general for blessing, as Adam's sin drew down blight and vanity even over creatures that had no share in the guilt. Resurrection and reward cannot come, till Christ

leave the throne of the Father to render to each according to his works.

The main question now to each is—HAVE YOU *RIGHTEOUSNESS*? Not a good character, that has won you respect among your neighbours, but the righteousness provided by Christ's work for those condemned for their sins. This is needed by all; for God is to judge concerning life or death eternal.

If, reader, you have accepted by faith the eternal righteousness of God, yours is eternal life. If you are beside that a worker of righteousness through faith, a walker in newness of life, you are on the way to the first resurrection of blessedness.

If you are possessed by faith of the righteousness of God, you are already justified and spiritually alive. You are to look onward to the return of Christ the Righteous Judge.

"As by the transgression of one judgment came unto all men unto condemnation, so also by the righteousness of One, the Act of Grace came unto all men unto justification of life:" ver. 18.

To righteousness God has attached *justification*, and to *justification*, *life eternal*. Besides that comes "the reign *in life*" for those accounted worthy. And in the last verse of the chapter we have the knitting together of "resurrection and eternal life." "In order that as sin reigned in death, even so might grace reign *through righteousness* unto *eternal life* by Jesus Christ our Lord."

15. "But not as the Transgression so is the Act of Grace; for if by the transgression of the one, the many died; much more the grace of God, and the gift in grace, which are by the One Man, Jesus Christ, abounded for the many."

The apostle begins with *the exceptions* to the parallel between Adam and Christ. If the likeness had held throughout, we should have had—"As Adam brought sin and death on all his race, so Christ has brought righteousness and life unto all men." But now, while

all the sons of Adam fall under sin and the reign of death, not all accept Christ's offered righteousness, and the reign (or kingdom) of life.

The second half of the verse answers to Jehovah's goodness to Adam in Eden, in preparing abundance of trees for him, and his bestowal of Eve as an added gift.

'*The Transgression*'—the word now is altered from '*trespass*' in verse 14, because the apostle treats of the one sin of Adam as the basis of the dispensation of the trial of all men. This trial, under law and conscience, went on from Adam up to Moses. The name of that dispensation is '*The Transgression*.'

'*The Act of grace*.' Here the word in the Greek is used in a new sense to point out the *dispensation of Gospel-mercy*, which arose on the basis of Christ's righteousness accomplished, in order to try the sons of men; a trial which began at Pentecost, and is continuing now.

"*By the transgression of the one [even Adam] the many died.*" '*The many*' is generally taken to signify '*all men*.' But that is not the meaning, and it only introduces confusion. The apostle calls *those who lived between Adam and Moses, in the dispensation of trial, "the many."* He is comparing together the dispensation arising out of *Adam's sin*, with the Gospel-day, arising out of the *righteousness of Christ*.

"*The many died.*" Read through Genesis v. and mark, how after the notice of Adam's begetting a son after his own fallen image, while it testifies to the long lives of the patriarchs, it shows that none attained to a thousand years of age. "*For in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt die.*" "*And one day is with the Lord as a thousand years.*" Hence as the summing up of the patriarch's histories we have—"And he *died*."

What wrought their death? Their own individual sins? No! This is the point distinctly denied. It was their being by God included in Adam and his sin.

This is something to be received with the simplicity of faith.' God has said so. '*I believe!*'

'The many also that lived during the 2500 years after the early patriarchs up to Moses *'died'* as sinners; '*died*,' through the trespass of Adam. Their trial during life, discovered in them no righteousness which could be accepted by law; and no power to atone. '*They died!*'

But One, after Moses' day, arose from out of the prison of the dead, because He, and He alone, was "*the Righteous One*." '*The many*' is only a portion of the larger sum of "*all men*," which has been given in verse 12.

As—'*By the transgression of the one, the many died; so by the righteousness of the One shall the many live.*' But there is something further. By the Gospel founded on the righteousness of Christ, the grace of God, and the gifts of power by the Holy Ghost, were sent and are open to those living in Gospel times.

"*Much more the grace of God, and the gift in grace, which are by One Man, Jesus Christ.*"

'*The Transgression*' was, in one view, a dispensation founded on law, each standing on his own merits, and carried out on the principle of law. But with Christ, and His righteousness accomplished, God has sent out the Gospel of His grace and gift. These were not found under law as its principles.

'Grace' comes first, and bestows the righteousness of Christ, which brings justification. Then came '*Gift*' of the Holy Ghost. That was shown first in the Saviour's history, when God pronounced Him, not only '*Righteous*,' but '*His well beloved Son, in whom He was well pleased.*' The Holy Ghost came upon Him in His fulness, and Divine wonders and wisdom break forth from Him.

So, when the Gospel is opened to Israel at Pentecost, Peter tells first of the *grace of God*, forgiving sins in the name of Jesus Christ, and then adds—that the *gift*

of the Holy Ghost in power would be bestowed on those so pardoned. For "the promise" of Joel was intended for Israel and his posterity as soon as they should believe; and it was open too to Gentiles once afar off, that is, for as many as should be called by the Gospel.

So, in this epistle, Paul sends '*Grace and Peace*' from God, and desires to visit the Roman Christians that he might impart some *spiritual gift*: Rom. i. 5, 7, 11.

So, in Ephesians, Paul speaks of "the dispensation of the *grace* of God given him," and then he tells of the *gifts* from Christ in grace, bestowed (after His ascent on high) by the Spirit sent down: Eph. iii. 2; iv. 7. See also 1 Cor. i. 4, 7; Acts xiii. 43, 52.

We have the gift of the Holy Ghost in one sense, in His indwelling, as we have seen in the fifth verse of this chapter: 'The love of God *poured into* our hearts by "*the Holy Spirit given to us*:"' v. 5. See also 1 Thess. iv. 8.

Paul in Galatians iii. teaches us, that the bestowal of the Holy Spirit in gift and miracle was one of the superiorities of the Gospel above the Law. The immersion of the whole man in water was the *sign* of the washing away of sins; the baptism (or immersion) in the Holy Spirit was God's *seal* of power set on His accepted ones, through the laying on of apostles' hands: 2 Cor. i. 22.

Thus the dispensation of the Gospel is called "*the Act of Grace*," and it was shown, both by the pardon of sins, the indwelling of the Spirit, and the bestowal of supernatural gift, which itself is called in Greek '*charisma*:' Acts x. 45, 47; xi. 17, etc. The attempt of Simon, the magician, to purchase by money the powers of the Holy Ghost constituted his offence: Acts viii.

And these gifts were a testimony to the coming of the millennial kingdom of Christ. The casting out of demons told of the day when Satan and his angels, no longer at large as now, shall not have power over the

nations; and Christ shall take from Satan his throne: Rev. ii. 13; xiii. 2. The power over serpents was another aspect of the same day, when the might of death shall no longer be committed to Satan. And the healing of the sick testified of the power of Christ the Righteous One, to bring *life* instead of death to 'the many.'

"Much more" are these blessings bestowed. It does not mean that more are saved than are lost; but it means that with greater assurance we expect grace from the God of mercy than judgment and wrath, which are His strange work.

"Which are by One MAN, Jesus Christ."

Here Jesus is declared to be a *man* as Adam was, a statement of much moment to us when assailed by certain false doctrines. Jesus must be *man*, or He could not save *men* by His obedience and death. He must be *more than* man, or His work would not avail to deliver millions untold. He is "*our Lord*," which Adam never was. Grace and gift then belonged to Christ, and were to flow from Him for all of this dispensation.

"Abounded FOR the many."

The Greek preposition here used has two senses, according as the passage speaks of (1) '*offer*' or of (2) '*attainment*.' Where, as here, the apostle is treating of the Gospel and its *offers*, it should be rendered '*for*.' Where *attainment* is spoken of, it should be rendered '*unto*.'

"The many" here is a different 'many' from those spoken of in the first part of the verse before us. "The many died," refers, as has been shown, to those who lived between Adam and Moses. "The many" at the end of the verse here refers to those who live under the Gospel, from Pentecost to Christ's return.

Abounding grace flows from Christ for those who receive His righteousness. And the miraculous gifts which followed on baptism in the apostolic age were

the *seal* of the righteousness of faith, as circumcision of old was the seal of that righteousness to Abraham.

What then can befall those who will not believe (1) in their sinfulness and (2) in the righteousness provided by God in His grace? They can have only justice and wrath for evermore!

"Abounded for the many."

These words testify the *offer* (not necessarily the *acceptance* of grace and gift during this dispensation) to 'the many' who live in the Gospel day. The Gospel's extent of "grace" is here noticed. It is for *"all."* "The times of ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth *all men everywhere* to repent:" Acts xvii. 31. "Go into all the world; preach the Gospel in *all the creation.*" "*Whosoever will*, let him take of the water of life without price:" Rev. xxii.

"In one Spirit were we *all* immersed into one body, whether we are *Jews or Gentiles, whether bond or free*; and were all made to drink one Spirit:" 1 Cor. xii. 13.

On this free opening of grace and gift are founded the calls to believers to seek to abound in both. "Therefore, as ye *abound* in every thing, in faith, utterance, and all diligence, see that ye *abound* in this grace [of liberality] also:" 2 Cor. viii. 7. "And this I pray, that your love may *abound* yet more and more in knowledge, and in all judgment:" Phil. i. 9. "Follow after love, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy. Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may *abound* (not 'excel') to the edifying of the Church:" 1 Cor. xiv. 12, 13.

16. "And not, as by one that sinned, is the endowment,* for the judgment was by one (transgression) unto condemnation, but the Act of Grace is after many transgressions unto justification."

There are two common errors which must be removed before the truth on this subject can be clearly held. It is generally taught—

* *Δωρημα.*

1. That Adam was put under a '*covenant of works*' to obey on behalf of himself and his posterity. He was really set under *Law*. "And the Lord God *commanded* the man, saying . . . 'Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil *thou shalt not eat of it*, for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely *die*.'" Gen. ii. 16, 17. There is no notice of any covenant with Adam.

2. It is commonly imagined that Adam was possessed of a *conscience* at his first creation. This idea is clearly contrary to the Scripture account. Our first parents were *innocent*. "They were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed." That is noticed, because it could not be so now with their children, who are no longer innocent, but possessed of conscience since the Fall, and by means of it.

After eating the forbidden fruit an immediate change in this respect took place. "The *eyes* of them both were *opened* and they *knew that they were naked*." It made them at once uncomfortable in each other's presence, and they immediately seek to repair the newly-felt defect. "They sewed fig-leaves together, and made themselves aprons."

A new feeling also arises in their minds at the visit of God. When they hear the sound of the Lord's footsteps they are sensible of guilt and fear, and hide among the trees. When God calls, and Adam appears before Him, he begins to defend himself, as if his hiding needed to be explained. But his defence—"I was *afraid* because I was *naked*, and I hid myself"—only gave evidence of his sin, and God at once takes up his admission as the proof of the entrance of the new and forbidden faculty and power of conscience.

That was the source of his new and guilty feelings in the presence of God. The Most High at once quotes these words against him as proofs of his trespass. After the interview the Holy Trinity bears witness to this recent *endowment*. "And the Lord God said, '*Behold*, the man is become as one of us, to know good

and evil." This new feature of the manhood is transmitted to his sons. Adam "begat a son in his own likeness, after his own image:" Gen. v. 3. And this epistle assumes, that conscience now is possessed by all men, whether heathen or possessed of revelation. "Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, *their conscience also bearing witness*, and their thoughts in the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another:" Rom. ii. 15. "Ye (believers) must needs be subject not only for wrath, but also for *conscience' sake.*" xiii. 5.

This view accounts for the apostle's conciseness here, and for his not calling conscience a 'gift' or 'endowment,' while he names the indwelling and power of the Spirit of God an 'endowment.' For the conscience entered our race at a time when men consisted of the flesh only; and that endowment came by Adam's trespass. Paul is slow to call that a '*gift*' which was a *theft against the command of God.*

The Gospel has two great aspects: (1) In one, it is "THE ACT OF GRACE," as opposed to the law which preceded it. (2) In the second, it is an 'ENDOWMENT.' The sin of our first parents added to their posterity the new feature of 'conscience.' The possession of this by any of our race is the proof of our having part in the transgression of Adam.

These two aspects of the Gospel have been noticed in the verse just preceding: (1) "The *grace* of God, and (2) the *gift* by grace which are by one man—Christ Jesus."

From the '*grace*' brought by Christ the Gospel becomes *the Act of Grace.** From the gift which it affords, it is called '*The Endowment.*'† Verse 15 tells us of the offer of '*grace*' and '*gift*' to 'the many.' This assures us of the actual result—acceptance of both by some under the Gospel.

Now, upon this *gift* of Adam to his race, if we may

* Χάρις: χάρισμα.

† Δωρεά. δωρημα.

so call it, came at once the "*judgment*" of God. The possession of the new endowment caused Adam to be arraigned before the Lord, and drew down the condemnation and penalty of the law. While conscience condemned the culprits from *within*, the Judge condemned them from *without*.

Should we supply after—"The judgment was by one"—'man'? or 'trespass'? The close of the verse decides. "The Act of Grace was after *many *transgressions.*" Then we supply, after "one," the word '*transgression.*' What Adam won by his trespass is the condemnation of himself and his race. Herein lies one superiority of Gospel-grace over Eden-law. The grace of God founded on the righteousness of Christ accomplished, not only brings pardon of the one sin, but of multitudes of sins of the multitudes of the saved. Nor does the Lord after pardon say to us, 'Now go and win yourselves a righteousness by obedience to My law.' But He *gives justification* "after many transgressions." This is a proof of the law's having entered. Before Moses there was but one law and *one transgression.* Grace came after *evil works*, not in consequence of men's *good behaviour.* We are justified when clothed with the wedding garment—"the righteousness of God"—which is the righteousness provided by the second Adam, the King's Son. Our usual clothing is the proof of innocence gone, and conscience come in to condemn.

The justification brought by grace is the removal of the condemnation which enters by law. Condemnation is the opposite of justification. Justification is best understood as the opposite of condemnation. It is the effect of receiving the righteousness of Christ—His obedience, both active and passive.

The expression used in the Greek is not the usual one for justification; it probably intends 'the sentence of justification' as the opposite to 'the sentence of condemnation.'

* Εκ.

It is well to remark that at the close of this verse we have not "endowment" repeated, but "the Act of Grace" instead. "The *Act of Grace* is of many offences."

17. "For if, by the transgression of the one, Death reigned by the one, much more they who receive (take) the abundance of the grace and of the gift of the righteousness shall reign in life by the One, Jesus Christ."

In verses 12—14 we have first *death*, and then the *reign* of death, equally affecting two classes—both (1) those that were not condemned as sinning against conscience and law, and (2) those that did so sin. Where the imputation of Adam's sin alone was found, there was still found the full penalty of the reign which death held over the sons of men.

So also there are two classes belonging to Christ under 'the Act of Grace.'

1. There are those who by faith accept the righteousness of Christ, and are justified. Theirs is eternal life. Here is only imputation of the second Adam's merits.

2. But after *justification*, as we saw by Abraham's example, God expects *sanctification*, or obedience; the walking before Him in *the steps of faith*.

In the Day of Reward these two classes are separated. The millennial kingdom is bestowed 'according to works,' and where there are no good works such persons shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven: Matt. vii. 21. *Justification* by faith gives *eternal life*; *sanctification* is required for *reward*. It is not said 'All believers shall have part in the millennial kingdom,' but "*Unrighteous persons shall not inherit the Kingdom of God*:" 1 Cor. vi.

The present view is established by the further consideration, that this feature of 'the Act of Grace' is placed among the *exceptions to the likeness between Adam and Christ*.

The omission to notice this has led many astray in their interpretation here. They have assumed, that

this verse speaks of the reigning with Christ in glory as being the portion of *all believers*; the result, indeed, of their connection with Christ by faith. But while a justification is a *sine quâ non*, this verse shows that more is required. Faith brings us to the starting-post; but he who would wear the crown must run the race.

In God's sentence on the guilty pair it is not said "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread"—'till thy breath goeth forth, and thou dost *die*.' More than the stroke of death is contained in the sentence: it is, "Till thou *return to the dust*." And that is effected by slow degrees, and is the result of the reign of death over the body. While man is divided into body and soul death reigns over both parts. *While the body is in the tomb, the soul is in Hades*. That is the argument of the apostle Peter at Pentecost, and of Paul at Antioch of Pisidia. The degradation of the visible part of man is a witness of his invisible detention among the souls of the dead. Degradation was the effect of an unlawful attempt at raising himself by disobedience; while Christ humbled Himself from the throne of glory to obey, even unto the death of the cross, and therefore God hath highly exalted Him, as He degraded Adam.

The righteousness here can only be that of *Christ*. By His obedience life eternal shall reign. But there is more; there may be partaking of Christ's reward in His Day by the obedient.

The reign of death under Law seized and kept as its subjects and prisoners, both those of the imputed transgression, and trespassers against Moses. But the millennial reign of life makes a difference between those (1) merely justified, and those (2) obedient to Christ and His commands after their justification. "Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but *he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven*:" Matt. vii. 21. This passage proves the difference between 'eternal life' and the 'kingdom of God.' The one is obtained

without works, by faith alone; the other is obtained by reward according to works: Rev. xxii. 12.

The words, "by the transgression of the one death reigned by means of the one," rehearse the first parts of verses 15 and 16. Verse 15 speaks of the abundance of grace and gift available under the Gospel. Verse 16 of justification procured by Christ, and received by the class treated of.

"Much more those who receive (take) the abundance of the grace and of the gift of the righteousness."

Here is the description of those now under Gospel-grace who will be rewarded with entrance into the millennial kingdom. Justification comes first, and is the necessary previous gift. "Having been justified by His grace, we become heirs (in the way of hope) of eternal life:" Tit. iii. 7.

But while justification through faith in the righteousness of Christ precedes, it is not all. At the close there is to be a justification according to works. Christ will count some, in consequence, worthy of the kingdom; and others, as unworthy and unprofitable, will be shut out.

"Those who receive."

It may also be rendered, and I think better rendered, those who "take." It denotes knowledge and choice in the receiver. God offers in this day of salvation, grace and gift to those justified. These believers of set purpose 'take' of both, while others are content just to be saved; and sit still, instead of running in the race for "the prize" of their calling. The tense used is the present, because the trial of men under the day of grace is still going on. These workers, then, as God designs, accept the Gospel offers, and make them their own, with a view to "the prize," which is something beside and beyond "the gift." The two preceding verses have prepared the way for this announcement. Grace brings justification, and the justified are to go on to know and obey, as did Abraham.

What was the transgression? It was a *taking* and eating from the forbidden tree of knowledge. Eve "took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat." Large as was the variety of the trees set before them to enjoy, they would take of the one forbidden. And thereby was conscience entailed on all their posterity.

Now God bids us *take* of His righteousness, grace and gift, against our deserts. And under these altered circumstances, perverse man will *not* take what is salvation, though God bids him; and refuses the better gift of the Spirit.

The taking *then* was a sin against the law of God. But now God warrants us, and *bids us take* the abundance of the grace and gift of the Gospel. *Not* to take is evil. "Out of His fulness have all we *taken*, and grace for grace:" John i. 16. Peter says to Cornelius, "To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him *receiveth remission of sins*." Then the Holy Spirit fell on all the hearers. And Peter says, "Who can forbid the water, that these should not be immersed, who have *received* the Holy Spirit as well as we?" Acts x. Here are grace and gift received.

At the Supper the Saviour (in contrast with Eve's sin) says, "*Take, eat*; this is My body." And He who has a right to do so *gives* to His disciples: Matt. xxvi.; 1 Cor. xi. 23, 24. To the disciples the risen Redeemer says, "*Receive ye the Holy Ghost*," and He breathes on them: John xx. "Whosoever will, let him *take* of the water of life freely" (without payment): Rev. xxii. See also Rom. viii. 18; Acts i. 8, ii. 38, viii. 15—17, xix. 2.

Man is perverse. When Jehovah says, 'Take *not*' of one tree; while many are permitted to him, he *will* take: and the consequences we to this day feel. When God says, as now, '*Take*,' take out of the abundance of grace and gift, men will *not*. Any trifle of earth is preferred.

"*The abundance of the grace, and of the gift of the righteousness.*"

Without a perfect righteousness as the foundation, no justification can be pronounced by God. Hence, after stating that justification is the effect of the Act of Gospel Grace, he here brings out to notice "*the righteousness*" on which *justification* before God rests.

The abundance of Eden, furnished with many trees, a river, gold, and precious stones adjacent, will not bear comparison with "the riches of Christ" thrown open to us: Eph. i.; Col. i. Believers obedient are being educated for the glory of the kingdom. "Unto the Son he saith, 'Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated lawlessness; therefore, O God, Thy God hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows.'" Christ's conduct was the opposite to Adam's. If we wish to be adjudged "*fellows*" with the Christ, we too must love righteousness and hate lawlessness. God is so well pleased with the obedience of believers, as at last to give them the kingdom of the thousand years.

Law could not give grace, or the gift of the Spirit: Gal. iii. 2—5. Law could not give life: but grace bestows an eternal footing before God.

"Ye shall *know* good and evil," said Satan. But to *know*, and not to *do*, is condemnation and death. And this is the sad place of man. But the Holy Spirit grants not only the true knowledge of what is pleasing to God, but the inclination and power to do His will.

If it requires 'the *abundance* of the grace, and of the gift attached to the righteousness of Christ,' to obtain reign in life, *then not all believers will obtain it*. Many refuse baptism, the first step of obedience after faith. While to obedient Abraham God swore that he should have all the promises, as He said, "*because thou hast obeyed My voice,*" to his disobedient children in the wilderness He *swears*, that they shall *not* enter His rest. Adam in his defence before God puts together

two very different gifts. "The woman whom *Thou gavest* to be with me, she *gave me* of the tree, and I did eat."

The *literal* coat of skin of Eden answers now to the *spiritual* garment of Christ's righteousness. And God bestows it. "My soul shall be joyful in my God; for *He* hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, *He* hath covered me with the robe of righteousness" (Isa. lxi. 10), instead of my vain attempts at clothing myself. But ours is the robe of faith. It cannot be seen, like that of Eden.

The important sense of this remarkable phrase, with its three genitives, is generally missed.

We should read first,—"*Of the righteousness.*" There is but *one* righteousness of God: it is that of Christ. It is the opposite to that expression, which occurs more than once or twice here,—"*the transgression.*" "*The transgression*" is *Adam's*; "*the righteousness*" is *Christ's*. That righteousness must first remove the condemnation for Adam's trespass, before we can begin to seek after the prize. Men in jail cannot compete for the prize offered to the best rifleman.

Hence verse 16 ends in grace's bestowal of justification. But this verse carries on the matter; because more than justification is needed in order to enter among the company of those who will be first to rise from among the dead. We 'take,' or 'receive' "*the righteousness*" by faith; 'tis "*the righteousness of Christ.*"

"*The grace and the gift of the righteousness*" means, not '*righteousness the grace and gift,*' but '*the grace and gift which God has attached, by offer, to the possession of the righteousness of Christ.*' "Repent, and be immersed every one of you, on the name (authority) of Jesus Christ unto the *pardon of sins*, and ye shall receive *the gift* of the Holy Ghost; for the promise (in Joel, of prophecy, &c.) is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, as many as the Lord our God shall call:" Acts ii. 38.

Now it needs no proof that many who receive 'remission of sins' do not obey the command to be immersed after faith. And none now is possessed of the gifts miraculous bestowed then after baptism, by the laying on of apostles' hands. Many believe, but take not the Lord's Supper, nor obey the washing of feet: John xiii.

Many just believe on their dying pillow, and are buried. What reward shall they see? But even after these observations, the force of the expression we are considering has not been reached. For this better class of believers takes, not only the grace and gift, but '*the abundance*' of both.

The last word clearly speaks of something beyond justification. The same amount of righteousness is needed for justification of any. There is no peculiar abundance of *imputed* righteousness for one of the justified above another. But this speaks of some believers, as in abundant possession of grace and gift after and beyond justification. They, during this time of grace, are thus educating for the kingdom. They believe in the prize set before them, and pursue it with all their might, as did that "violent" man, the apostle Paul. They "seek first," as Christ commands, "the kingdom of God," in the way of obedience to the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount.

It is remarkable that neither of the two words of quantity occurring in this passage is found in connection with this class, either during the day of grace, or that of reward. Those who attain 'the reign in life,'—"the kingdom of God," are not said to be "*all*" believers, or even to be the "*many*" of the dispensation of grace. The numbers of those who at last enter the kingdom are much more limited than the offer in its breadth, as it comes from God. The parable of the Sower points out how the world, the flesh, and the devil thin the ranks of those who believe in the coming kingdom, and prevent its being attained by them.

"Shall reign in *life*." (1) Adam's transgression brought *death*; and (2) *degraded* him to the dust. He would exalt himself by disobedience, and he was abased. But obedience is the way to *life*; and the way to promotion,—yea, to a kingdom. Such shall be "accounted worthy" to attain that age, and the resurrection from among the dead: Luke xx. 36. Life, by eating of the tree of life, was shut out; but victory and life come by the Seed of the Woman.

We, as "righteous by faith," are on the way to eternal life: Rom. i. 17, 18; Prov. xii. 28; xi. 18. The coming resurrection is "the resurrection of the *righteous*" (justification). That leaves the mass of the dead still in custody, as the unrighteous. Not till the parts of man, divided, by way of punishment, into two, are re-united,—can dominion and life be his.

When shall the reign be? For six thousand years God has been at work in redemption. For the last, or seventh thousand, He will rest, and rejoice over those in whom He can take pleasure; and creation itself and Israel (the remnant) will rejoice. Few remark, how the close of Isaiah liii. and that of Psalm xxii. speak of the *kingdom*, as requiring the Saviour's sufferings.

The apostle in this place is designing chiefly to show the superiority of the Second Adam, and of the grace that flows from Him, than to discover the activities, the zeal, and the good works of Christ's servants. He has shown what we receive from Adam under law, and now what is received from Christ under grace, or may be received. For Christ has given to each of His servants work to be done for Him, and has promised rewards to the obedient. The servants that rightly render unto Him their accounts on His appearing, are praised, as "Good and faithful; and enter into the *joy of their Lord*," or the millennial kingdom, which is to be given to Christ: Matt. xxv.; Luke xix.

These "shall *reign in life*."

Let us begin with the statement concerning 'life.' Death is the wages of sin; to those already under sentence of death for sin, life must arise out of righteousness. And the greatest part perhaps of those here named, are already in the tomb. *Life* can be, to them who are already *spiritually alive*, only a coming forth out of their graves at the resurrection of the righteous. Life is the gift of God—in Jesus Christ His Son: 1 John v. 11, 12. The mind of the spirit is life and peace. "The body is already *dead*, because of *sin*; but the spirit is *life* because of *righteousness*." Rom. viii. 10. Those here spoken of will, as the righteous, come out from among the mass of the dead. They will be "counted worthy" to reign with the Christ a thousand years. It is an honour not attained by all believers. The Saviour, in His promises to the Churches, affixes the glory of the kingdom to the *overcomers* among them: Rev. ii. 26, 27. And to some of the churches He speaks in tones of threatening. So, after describing those who overcome, and their reign with Christ, John says: "But the rest of the dead *lived not* (came not to life) till the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he who hath part in the first resurrection; over such the Second Death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him the thousand years:" Rev. xx. 4—6; Lev. xii. 35, 38. The intelligent Christian is waiting for "the adoption, to wit, the redemption of *our body*:" Rom. viii. 23.

That is a resurrection out from the rest of the dead. Most expect only the resurrection of the whole mass of the dead together. But this is a special honour, designed by God for the obedient of the dispensation. The having a part in the millennial glory is more than once called "Life." Mark gives, as the words of our Lord: "It is better for thee to enter into *life* maimed, than having two hands to go into hell." And again: "It is better for thee to go into *the kingdom of God* with one eye than having two eyes to be cast into hell-

fire:" Mark ix. 43, 45, 47; Matt. xviii. 1, 3, 8; Luke xviii. 30. Paul bids Timothy teach the believing rich to lay "hold by good works on that which is *really life*:" 1 Tim. vi. 19 (the true reading). It is not said, "*Life shall reign over them*," as it is said of the wicked that "*death*" does. No; life dwells in them, and they, for ever free, reign over the nations: Rev. ii. 26, 27.

To Adam was given dominion over earth and its tribes; but sin lost him the proposed kingdom, and handed him over to the realm of death. That reign of Death began with sin, continues now, abides for ever.

But Christ has more than won back the lost dominion of Adam. To Him, the obedient unto death, God has given all things. All things are subjected to His feet as the Son of man. He returns, having received from the Father the appointed kingdom: Luke xix. 12, 15; xxii. 28, 30; 2 Tim. ii. 12.

There are *two reigns*, as there are *two resurrections*. The first is the temporary kingdom of the *millennium*. "They *lived* [came to life] and *reigned* with Christ *a thousand years*." Then comes the kingdom *eternal*. "The Lord God giveth them light; and they shall *reign for ever and ever*:" Rev. xxii. 5. The reign of reward was the mark at which Paul aimed. "*If by any means I might attain to the select resurrection from among the dead*:" Phil. iii.* This assures us, then, that not every believer will have part in that reward. If by imputation of one man's sin under law the reign of death came in, "*Much more*," under grace, will this class, by their obedient steps of faith, attain to the millennial kingdom. We know that God is more ready to exercise grace than to pour out wrath; and Christ has brought in the new principle of grace through righteousness. God delights to give joy to His obedient sons. So the Holy Ghost, with His "*much more*," warrants our expectation. It is fitting,

*. See Greek.

that in the day when God shall recompense each according to his work, a difference should be made between those who are like Paul, and those whom he rebuked as "carnal" or fleshly Christians: 1 Cor. iii. 1.

It is interesting to observe, how closely in this verse righteousness is joined to '*dominion*' and '*life*'; while in the context the connection between '*sin*' and '*death*' and '*the reign of death*' over the guilty has been some five times presented. Here we have, "They that take of the grace and of the gift of *righteousness* in *life* shall *reign*." And again, in the last verse of the chapter, "*Sin* reigned in *death*." God's counsel is that "grace should *reign* through *righteousness* unto eternal *life*."

"Through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Adam has brought in the *reign of Death*. Christ brings in the *reign of life*. His is the righteousness on which our dispensation of grace is founded. His the righteousness which alone can justify any of the fallen. They who reign with Him come with Him as His "*fellows*"* in "the loving of righteousness and hating lawlessness." On this ground God Himself anoints Christ: Heb. i. 8, 9. And again: "For we were made *fellows** of the Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end:" Heb. iii. 14. The coming day is "the Day of Christ," on which Paul throughout Philippians fixes his eye. It is the seventh thousand of years, the day of God's complacency and rest.

18. "Accordingly, therefore, as by one transgression (judgment came) unto all men unto condemnation (of death), so also by one righteousness (grace came) for all men, with a view to justification of life."

The apostle, having now finished stating the exceptions, gives the *direct resemblances between Adam and Christ*.

* Μετοχοι.

It will be well to notice the millennial thread which runs through the epistle.

Divs.	Chapters.	MILLENNIUM.
1	II. 7—16	God's Righteousness as Judge Reward to subjects as { righteous unrighteous
2	V. 17	Adam. Sin. Death. Christ, worker of righteousness { Grace. Reward to those { Gift of the fully Christ's { righteousness.
3	VI. 4, 5	Baptism. Coming out from Adam. Death, burial, resurrection, with Christ. The First Resurrection.
4	VIII. 12—14	After Justification. If life of flesh—Death. If life of Spirit—Life millennial.
5	VIII. 17—23	If suffer with Christ, glorified with Him. Creation and our Body delivered out of death.
6	XIV. 10—13	Appearing before Christ for judgment.
7	XV. 10—13	Christ, Minister of the Circumcision. Promises to fathers. Mercy to Gentiles. Our Hope!

He states the resemblances; in regard, first, (1) of the Gospel *offer*; and (2) then (ver. 19) in respect of the *result*. So we have first in verse 18 "all," "all." In verse 19 we have "the many," "the many."

The Authorized Version twice fails here, in giving *upon* as the rendering of the Greek preposition. "Judgment came *upon* all men unto condemnation." And again, Grace came "*upon* all men unto justification of life." If it were so, all men would be saved. Those on whom the righteousness of Christ rests as their clothing are saved. No doubt the translator thought to vary the sound: but the issue is mischievous. Not 'sound,' but 'sense' must be our aim.

Adam's transgression brought to *all* men condemnation and death. But the righteousness of the One Man, Christ, brings justification and eternal life *for* all. The Gospel received gives righteousness and life. "Righteousness" appears in this passage in three forms.*

1. The righteousness is that wrought by the second Adam; as the one act of transgression was committed by the first Adam. "Even so might grace reign through *righteousness* unto eternal life:" ver. 21.

2. In this verse (18) the righteousness is regarded as made up of many acts of obedience; the complete sum of them undoing the condemnation by Adam.

3. The third respects the effect before God, the justification of the believer: ver. 18.

"For *all men* FOR *justification of life*."

This gives us God's open offer of righteousness and eternal life to every one to whom the Gospel message comes. Under law, righteousness was to be wrought out by every one for himself. "And it shall be *our righteousness* if we observe to do all these commandments before the Lord our God, as He commanded us:" Deut. vi. 25.

"Unto *justification of life*."

* Δικαιοσύνη. Δικαιωμα. Δικαιωσις.

In verse 16 it was put nakedly, 'justification,' as the answer-in-law to the man's own offences, and to the imputation of Adam's sin. Here it is viewed positively, as giving entrance into eternal life and bliss.

This is the Judge's decision on the saved as righteous before Himself; *that* justification carrying with it eternal life. It is the opposite to "condemnation" (of death) or unto death; and to the reign of death.

Thus it runs parallel with 1 Tim. ii. 1—6. Paul calls on Christians to pray "*for all men*," that we believers may lead a peaceful life. For God is willing to have *all men* to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth. "For Christ gave Himself a ransom *for all*."

The effects of Adam's sin have been already reached, in the present reign of death over sinners. Hence the statements about the influences derived from him are given in the past. "Sin *entered*." "Death *passed* through to all!" "Death *reigned*."

But the grace flowing from Christ is partly in the past, partly in the present, and partly in the future. "Grace and gift *abounded*." "The act of gift *is* unto justification." "Receivers *shall* reign in life." "By the obedience of the One the many *shall* be set down as righteous."

If one of the two '*unto's*'* in the first clause of this verse were omitted, a very simple construction results. "By one transgression there was condemnation on all men." But if both '*unto's*' are to be retained (and there is no authority to omit them) an ellipse must be supplied from verse 16.

There are differences of opinion concerning the rendering of the Greek word answering in this verse to the word "righteousness." Some would make it the work of Christ on which the sentence of justification from God is based; some would translate it as signifying the sentence itself of the Judge. But the difference in result is but small.

* Εἰς. Four times in this verse.

This verse treats of the offer of salvation presented unto 'all men' during this Gospel-day. But in the next verse the '*all men*' of this clause become "*the many*" of the next verse. Believers have life of soul already through their justification and reconciliation with God. But the united life of soul and body, the complete result of the righteousness of Christ, has yet to appear.

19. "For just as by the disobedience of the one man the many were set down as sinners, so also by the obedience of the One Man the many shall be set down as righteous."

The eighteenth verse tells us how the two Great Heads affect all men during their lives on earth. This instructs us how each of those, characterised as 'The One Man,' affects those connected with them at the coming judgment, and for eternity. Here, too, Paul is treating of imputation, and of the practical issues of life.

Transgression is "disobedience." Obedience is righteousness, whether under Law or Gospel. "Thus it becometh us to *fulfil all righteousness*:" Matt. iii. 15.

"Seek first the kingdom of God *and His righteousness*:" vi. 33.

Justification springs from Christ's obedience, as condemnation from Adam's disobedience. For Adam's sin introduced into the soul of each conscience, which discerns the right; while flesh chooses the evil.

"*The many were set down as sinners.*"

The extent of the sentiment here is greatly limited from the "all men" of the previous verse. "*The many* were set down as sinners."

'The many' takes up 'those who lived between Adam and Moses,' the same body as that named in verses 14 and 15. Most of them were cut off in wrath at the Flood. They were set down as "sinners." The word in the original is a strong one; it appears to mark those whose characters are fixed and ready for condemnation, when the time of their trial is over.

Christ is coming to execute judgment on the ungodly for their deeds of disobedience, and for "their hard speeches which *ungodly sinners* have spoken against Him:" Jude 15; Matt. xxvi. 45; Luke xviii. 32. Those set under law and the imputation of Adam's disobedience, with conscience as their guide, hardened themselves into desert of final condemnation. "Sinners." (1) In *act*; for all sinned in Adam: (2) in *inward tendency*; for the flesh is not subject to God or His law, neither indeed can be (Rom. viii. 7): (3) sinners as bearing within them conscience, the faculty transmittted to them. Sinners in *law*, sinners in *fact* and character.

"Set down as sinners." For Christ, as the Second Adam, shall fix the judicial name, and as the consequence, the destiny of each. So will He resemble, though in a loftier field, the word concerning Adam. The Lord God brought to Adam the birds and beasts, "*to see what he would call them: and whatever Adam called every living creature that was the name thereof*:" Gen. ii. 19. So to the Lord Jesus will be brought His servants of the Church, and to two He says, "*Good and faithful servant*." But to the third, "*Wicked and slothful servant*." "Cast ye the unprofitable servant into the darkness outside." In the judgment of the Sheep and the Goats, or the living nations of earth, we have a like specimen of His decision. "Come, ye *blessed*!" The character is formed and fixed by the actions of life, whether for good or for evil.

"*So also by the obedience of the One, the many shall be set down as righteous.*"

The obedience of the Son of God, active and passive, is the Gospel's "righteousness of God," in which the believers shall at length stand before God. The grace offered to "all men" in the Gospel is accepted only by "the many." Multitudes refuse through enmity of heart. The Holy Spirit is now tracing the effect of imputation of the righteousness of Christ in the last

judgment. He has set in a class by themselves those who added obedience toward God to their justification by faith, who were consequently rewarded in the thousand years. But this verse treats of what follows on the millennium.

And for eternal life nothing avails but the imputation of the righteousness of Christ. The rewarded by reigning with Christ during the millennial day enter on the eternity of bliss solely through the imputed righteousness, or obedience, of the Christ. The one righteousness of the Christ justifies all the saved: while under law each was to fulfil a righteousness for himself. But under the Gospel, the King who makes a marriage feast for His Son, provides the wedding garment for each of the guests. And woe to him who dares to enter the Church of Christ, while refusing this gift of grace: Matt. xxii.

In order to be recorded as "righteous" in that great day, there must be the indwelling of the Spirit of God. "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His:" Rom. viii. 9. The naming any 'sinner' or 'righteous,' then, fixes his destiny for evil or for good.

1. "Then shall *the righteous* shine out as the sun in the kingdom of their Father:" Matt. xiii. 43.

2. So in the judgment of the living nations of earth. "Come, ye *blessed*." "Then shall *the righteous* answer Him." "The *righteous* shall go into *life eternal* when the wicked go away into the eternal punishment of eternal fire:" Matt. xxv.

There are two appointments; (1) *now*, of the gifts and opportunities of service; to one five talents, to another two, and to another one. This is the day in which the character of each as faithful or untrustworthy is being manifested; and in (2) the coming day the title and the appointment of each will be made.

The justified, by the work of *Christ outside them*, shall be fixed in holiness at last by the work of the *Spirit within*.

20. "Now law came in between, in order that the transgression might multiply; but where sin multiplied, grace super-abounded."

A Jew would be ready to observe, 'But, Paul, you have omitted *Moses' law*!' The apostle, then, here shows how subordinate that was in its effects; and how little it disturbed the previous moral landmarks.

Let me justify the translation, "Came in *between*." Some render, 'Came in *by the by*,' and that gives a good sense. But to me it seems clear, that the translation I have given fits best into the context.

The apostle, after stating generally the consequences of the Fall, proceeds to notice the effects of God's dispensations since that day. And he mentions three dispensations.

1. The one founded on Adam's transgression: or the time "from Adam to Moses:" ver. 14.

2. He then compares the Gospel of God's grace with the dispensation to Adam and his sons.

3. But in so doing he has left a gap of some two thousand years between Moses and Christ. This gap he now fills up.

The Greek preposition* means generally, 'alongside.' Now Paul has previously drawn two lines, parallel with one another. Adam's dispensation he has set parallel with that of Christ. He now sets Moses' dispensation alongside of the two, as related to both; that is, it 'comes in between,' and the gap is filled.

He has twice alluded to Moses' law, (1) in verse 14, where he contrasts the men of Adam's dispensation, who were overshadowed only by the imputation of Adam's trespass, with the men under the covenant of Sinai, who added to the imputation of the first transgression their own personal breaches of law. (2) He again alludes to it in verse 16. "The act of grace is after *many transgressions* unto justification." The coming in of Moses' law "*multiplied* the (first) transgression."

* Παρά.

The Gospel comes after the law.

1. Adam's dispensation of justice prepared for Christ's Gospel, by its settled reign of death appealing to the compassion of the Most High.

2. Moses' dispensation also prepared for Christ's grace, by proving to many that law, so disastrous to un-fallen Adam, cannot deliver from sin or from its penalty, the *fallen* sons of a transgressing father. Law prohibits evil lusts. Fallen man is full of them. To be set under law, then, is to lie under the curse from the first moment.

"In order that the transgression might multiply."

Law came not in to save the lost, but to show even to man's dull and perverted eye, the depths of sin which dwell in the fallen. This is testified again in the Galatians. "Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added *for the sake of the transgressions** of it, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made." "Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the Scripture shut up all together under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe:" Gal. iii. 19, 21, 22.

The history of Israel is a comment on the Scriptures. "By the law is *the knowledge of sin*." "The strength of sin is the law."

That "*the Transgression*" of Adam might "multiply." Up till Moses' day, there was but one law, given and broken by the one man. But when Moses' law came in, with upwards of six hundred new laws, to be perfectly observed by each individual of some two or three millions of Israelites, we see the force of the 'multiplying' of transgression. "Law worked wrath" during the two thousand years of its application to Israel. Not one could come forth from its myriads and say, 'I have wrought out righteousness in thought, word, deed, toward God, and toward my neighbour.'

* See Greek.

All went down to death (Elijah excepted, and he is coming back to earth to die), and all were kept within the walls and gates of death. "For in Death [the place] there is no remembrance of Thee; in Hadees who will give Thee thanks?" Psa. vi. 5.

Moses' law was a dispensation founded on justice, as was the former one of Adam. It differed only in extent of application. It did not remove the imputation of Adam's sin, nor the sentence of death, nor its reign. Each Israelite was set to win righteousness for himself, and each failing drew down a new curse on himself.

"But where sin multiplied grace superabounded."

Law multiplied sin, and the chosen city and temple of God in Israel was the centre of the chief sins of Israel, God's chosen people. There was seen the crucifixion of the Anointed One, the Son of God. Jew and Gentile joined in that great sin; and the Lord might have justly destroyed the world with its inhabitants.

But grace rose above the provocation, spared the world with its long accumulations of sin, and sent salvation through His Rejected Redeemer, the Lord of righteousness and life. Law showed the hopelessness of man's salvation by the promises and efforts of the flesh, and the need of the Deliverer. Grace sent the first offer of mercy to the chief sinners at Jerusalem!

21. "In order that, as sin reigned in death, so also might grace reign through righteousness, unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

This verse well winds up the subject by the statement of the final intentions of the Most High in regard of His dealings with the men of earth. (1) *Grace* shall take the place of *Law*; (2) *Righteousness* shall take the place of *sin*; and (3) *Eternal Life* shall dwell with the saved, instead of the reign of Death.

This view is of much importance in these days, when men are endeavouring to make out that finally all will be saved. It is not so. One portion of the

human race remains "sinners" under "condemnation." And "sin reigns in death."

It is not "*unto* death," but "*in* death;" and so the Revised Version gives it. That is much more awful; the confirmed sinner, sentenced by the Judge, abides in death. The Second Death, the lake of fire, is his abode; and as long as he remains a sinner, there will he abide. Finally, there is either the reign in life eternal, or the being reigned over by death, as the desert of the sinful. Here, then, is no opening given by God to 'the larger hope'—a hope larger than God's word. It is not 'All prisoners will at last be set free, and grace reign over all without exception.' Quite the reverse!

"*Sin reigned in death.*"

The course of sin under law is soon run. It is death, and the reign of death. That end had arrived before the two thousand first years of our globe's history had been completed. And the law of Moses, as bringing in fresh transgressions, but confirmed the same result, as the wages of sin. The Judge's sentence is "for ever," and the culprit continues for ever to deserve it. Thrice 'the *reign* of death' is named in this short passage. It began its reign in Adam's day, and seized even on those who had not broken, as the men of Moses did, God's spoken and written law.

But God's grace is (1) patient and long-suffering, not desiring that any should perish, but that all may come to repentance. It goes on still. (2) 'Death reigned by the one trespass of the one man,' says verse 17. (3) And now it appears a third time, when God's final intentions in regard to men are set before us.

"*So also might grace reign.*"

Grace is at work in this time of God's patience. But as yet the full results of grace have not arrived, else the saved would have put on their immortal and incorruptible bodies. Adam by transgression lost his dominion over the creatures of earth; but the kingdom, in far greater extent and glory, has been won by the

Second Adam. But One could deliver by His resurrection; but One can reconcile God to sinners, and sinners to God.

Only on the footing of grace can sinners attain eternal life. Even those adjudged worthy to reign with Christ during the millennium can only obtain eternal life by gift. "For the wages of sin is death; but *the gift of God is eternal life* in Jesus Christ our Lord." And this, I apprehend, is the meaning of that word descriptive of the Final Judgment. "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before the throne; and books were opened [of men's deeds], and another book was opened, which is *the book of life*." Those judged by the books of deeds are cast into the Second Death. But those found in the book of life become citizens of the eternal city of God: Rev. xx. 15; xxi. 27. This is the final settlement of the destiny of each son of man. It comes *after* the day of reward, both in the Apocalypse and here.

Thus there are three reigns—(1) The reign of *death*, ver. 14. (2) The reign *in life*, ver. 17. (3) The reign of *grace*—for those written in the book of life, and from this grace they shall never fall.

"*Through righteousness.*"

It is the righteousness of Christ, "the righteousness of God" provided, that sinners, who by their deeds deserved woe, might find justification and life. Sin can enter easily; it is the natural result in the case of creatures left to themselves to choose under law. But mercy can only come in through law satisfied in its just demands. God will not pardon and justify until His anger at sin has been appeased, and righteousness has been brought in. The plan is all His own.

But where can the righteous one be found, whose whole life shall give satisfaction to the Holy One? But One was there, 'the Son of man,' the Son of God, who could pass unchallenged and accepted. The righteousness provided for sinners is the one great theme of the epistle. On it faith lays its hand, and

"*The righteous by faith shall live.*" The effects of *righteousness* in giving *life* have yet to appear.

God can only act in the harmony of His perfections. Justice shall not be thrust aside by mercy: grace shall have her open field, only after law and truth have had their due. *Righteousness* there must be to satisfy *God*; *grace* to meet the need of *sinners* condemned for their transgressions. And so the everlasting city of God displays this truth. Grace is inscribed on its twelve foundations; righteousness is engraven on its twelve gates of entry.

"*Unto eternal life.*"

As 'sin' and 'death' are knit together with clamps of unrusting steel, so are 'righteousness' and 'life'. And as the 'righteousness' is eternal, so are the 'life' and the salvation. "Thy righteousness is an *everlasting* righteousness:" Psa. cxix. 142. "My *salvation* shall be *for ever*, and *My righteousness shall not be abolished*:" Isa. li. 6. "My *righteousness* shall be *for ever*, and *My salvation* from generation to generation:" ver. 8.

"Eternal" is here added to 'life,' and it is the result of grace; but in verse 17, where the subject is the reward of obedience, while life and a kingdom are promised, the word 'eternal' is not found. It relates to the millennium only. With justification, which belongs already to the believer, is certainly connected eternal life. Life is already begun in the soul of the believer. "The mind of the spirit is *life* and peace." But as yet life has not visited our body. "The body is *dead* because of sin; but the spirit is *life* because of righteousness:" Rom. viii. 10. "We are waiting for our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body:" ver. 23.

"*Through Jesus Christ our Lord.*"

Both the 'life,' and the righteousness on which that life depends, come from the Lord Jesus. "I give unto them (My sheep) eternal life, and they shall not perish for ever, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand:" John x.

And this Righteous One is "Lord of all." Satan and the world reject His claims; but this counsel of God must take effect at last. His enemies shall lick the dust. "To Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear."

Thus then there are two IMPUTATIONS, and two IMITATIONS supposed in this passage.

I. There is, on the one hand, (1) the imputation of *Adam's sin*; and on the other, (2) that of *Christ's righteousness* and obedience. II. There are two *imitations*—(1) *Israel's* transgressions under law resembled Adam's trespass in the garden. (2) There is also imitation of *Christ's obedience*, in those found worthy to reign with the Christ the thousand years.

At the twelfth verse of chapter v. a new view of God's salvation begins to appear. Up to that point the Holy Ghost had been treating of men's *acts of sin*, as theft, adultery, sacrilege, falsehood, slander, cursing, and so on. Now the guilt of these acts is removed by the blood of the Christ, and on our part by faith, without the works of the law: iii. 24—26. "Blessed are they whose *iniquities* are forgiven, and whose *sins* are covered:" iv. 7. And then comes the statement of the way in which they are taken away by Christ risen, "who was delivered up because of *our transgressions*, and raised again because of *our justification*:" iv. 25.

Then the apostle, after telling us the blessings of justification, goes on to the more difficult subject of our *sinfulness of nature*, which abides even after the forgiveness of our sins.

Pick all the sloes off the blackthorn, and the tree continues in nature such as it was. Let it alone another year, and it will again produce its crop of sloes. Sins are as the fruit of the tree. But while you may get rid of them, it is much harder to change *the nature of the tree*.

This last is called by Scripture, *sanctification*. And after justification is provided, the making holy within is needed still. Sins are removed by *the blood of Christ*

applied to us; and with His righteousness put upon us we are justified. But sanctification is wrought by *our union with Christ*, dead and risen, so that the Holy Ghost is free to work within us.

In chapter vi., Paul is treating of the sinfulness of the nature we derive from Adam, and the way in which we are made holy, and fit to live with God for ever. He sets before us the inward mischief arising out of the knowledge of right, and the doing of wrong.

"Shall we *continue in sin*?" opens the subject. This speaks of the *abiding internal state of sin*, and not the passing acts of sin. Then comes his answer, "*We lied to it.*" Not, 'We are doing our best to die to it.'

This subject may well be illustrated by the Passover.

1. Judgment was going forth that night: what could protect the firstborn from the angel's sword? Blood sprinkled on *the outside* of the house. At once the house was secure. That answers to the sinner's immediate safety through the blood of Christ, or "justification by His blood."

2. But then, at Jehovah's command, a new series of actions was to begin *inside the house*. The lamb was to be roasted and eaten. Leaven was not to be eaten: unleavened bread alone was lawful. Yea, all leaven found within was to be put outside. Else the disobedient were to be cut off from entering the land of promise,—the hope set before them.

To this last answers (in the sixth chapter of our epistle) the statement, that *if* we are fellow-plants with Christ in the likeness of His death, and abstain from the works of the old man, we shall be accounted worthy of the blessed resurrection.

1. Against our *acts* of sin, then, the *blood of Christ* sprinkled on us, avails to pardon our guilt.

2. But as it regards our *inward sinfulness*, the spring whence visible sins arise, we need to be rescued from law and set under grace, and the operation of the Holy Ghost, who attends on those that are united to Christ by faith.

A glance at the tabulated resemblances between Adam and Christ may make the argument clearer to some.

I. ADAM.	
I. PERSONALLY TRIED UNDER LAW.	
1. { One Transgression. Endowment—Conscience.	2. Sentence { Death. Corruption.
II. DISPENSATION OF TRIAL.	
Adam's Sons 2500 Years under Trial by Conscience.	
1. Sin imputed. 2. Settled Sinners. 3. Death.	
III. FINAL RESULTS.	
Reign of { Death, Hadees. Corruption, Tomb.	One saved from death. Not one arose out of death.
II. CHRIST.	
I. PERSONALLY TRIED UNDER LAW—OBEDIENCE.	
Anointed by Spirit.	
(1) Righteousness. (2) Resurrection.	
(3) Ascension { Grace. Spirit sent down.	
II. DISPENSATION OF TRIAL—TO ADAM'S SONS UNDER GRACE.	
One Righteousness—with Spirit's { Grace. Gifts.	
How accepted by men ?	
Some { 1. Believe (1) Justification; (2) Eternal Life.	Some { (1) Justification { (2) Life in reward. Life millennial.
Some { 2. Obey; by Works {	
III. FINAL RESULTS.	
Reign of Life { by grace. through righteousness of Christ. Life Eternal.	

We have here, then, in brief the difference of the Two Resurrections, as manifested in Rev. xx.

And the resemblances and differences between the Two Adams are given (1) now, in this dispensation of God's call in grace; and (2) hereafter, in the rewards and the gifts of the Coming Day.

CHAPTER VI.

1. "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, in order that grace may abound?"

THIS verse I call 'The Proposal.' The verses which follow contain its refutation.

It is divided into two parts:—

1. "*Shall we continue in sin?*"

No! God calls His obedient ones to "*patient continuance in well doing*:" ii. 7. For He will requite them with "glory, honour, and incorruptibility" in the coming day.

2. "*In order that grace may abound.*"

The present day is already *the time of grace*; and grace is the fertile soil of holiness. And the grace is abundant: ver. 15. If you sin, in order to win grace from God, you will earn for yourself wrath. For the coming day is *not* one of grace, but "*the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to each according to his deeds*:" ii. 5, 6.

This verse is connected with the close of the former chapter. Law but served to increase the original transgression. Yet the grace of God brought in the Gospel; something better far than law. Oft has His mercy stepped in, not only to put away vengeance, but to manifest the riches of His goodness, so that it is supposed we may ask, whether, by continuing in sin, we are not glorifying God, by giving Him an opportunity to open to us some yet higher plan of mercy?

The doctrine of justification, not by our own good works, but by the righteousness of another in full

perfection made over to us in grace, at once suggests the objection, 'But that opens the door to all sorts of sin!'

The objection was made in Paul's day; it is made in ours. That shows that, in the doctrine of faith, we have a true view of what Paul himself held and taught. Preach obedience to law as the way to be saved, and such an objection could not be started. That we are righteous before God by the righteousness of another imputed to us, and not for our own deeds and deservings was, and is, regarded as unfriendly to the holiness which must belong to the saved, if heaven is to be a place of happiness, and the Lord a holy God.

2. "God forbid: how shall we that died to sin, live any longer therein?"

At once the idea is refused. This is clear to all; even to those unable to follow the apostle's argument.

Observe that he says, not as some do, 'The thing is *impossible*; the renewed man cannot sin:' but, 'The thing is evil before God.'

The rendering, 'Are dead' is grammatically wrong. That the Christian, too, is not 'dead to sin' is certain, from the whole of the seventh chapter, and from the doctrine of the fifth of Galatians, that the flesh and the spirit are ever in conflict in the soul of the believer.

It should be, 'We who *died*.' A special act, completed at a definite time, is supposed. Yet many defend the rendering, and assert that the Christian is dead to sin. They *add* to the apostle's statement here, that we *profess* ourselves *already dead*, and *vow* that we *will* be dead; they speak of our solemn *obligations* to be dead to sin. Now that it is our duty to be dead to sin, is true enough. But, alas! the gap between conduct and duty is too wide and

too common to be unnoticed. But if the believer is, in fact, dead to sin, that is enough; other considerations are feeble beside *that*.

"We *died to sin*: how should we live any longer therein?"

How can those who *died* to sin exhort one another to *live* in it? Notice that God's guarantee is not our baptismal *vowing and professing* what we *will be* in the day to come; but He tells us that something as clear and absolute as death *has already passed upon us*, as men of faith in Christ.

This death to sin is true of the believer alone. The verse which follows answers the question:—"How do you prove the Christian's death to sin?"

3. "Know ye not, that as many of us as were immersed into Jesus Christ were immersed into His death?"

Notice the point at which baptism first appears. It is not named, till our justification by faith has been established. It is not said, as by multitudes it is taught, that baptism is the first and supreme thing, making any one at once a Christian. It gives no countenance to the awfully false doctrine that justification takes place by it. What statements have preceded it? "Being *justified* freely by His grace, through the *redemption that is in Christ Jesus*:" iii. 24. And: "Therefore having been justified *by faith*, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:" v. 1.

Baptism comes in as God's connecting link between *faith* and *works*, or *justification* by Christ's righteousness imputed to us; and *sanctification* made ours by the obedience of faith wrought by the Holy Ghost.

The apostle now explains the statement, so startling to those who were proposing continuance in sin, that *they had already died to it!* For were they not Christians? their side chosen already; and they themselves linked to Christ by visible obedience to His

command of immersion? This is a first principle of the faith; and ignorance of this is disgraceful. "Know ye not?"

You learned, O believers, where you stood as sinners from your youth, and lying under the sentence of God, and the reproaches of a guilty conscience. You were told of God's way of escape through the Son of God, slain and risen. You accepted the message of the Most High, and showed your obedience, to yourself and to others, whether of the Church or of the world, by your submission to the command of Christ the Lord. Now, therefore, the apostle unfolds to them the meaning of the rite which they had received.

In the Acts we learn the scheme of the Gospel of God. It is this. Let the word of the Lord be preached! Some believe. These are directed how they may receive forgiveness of sins by faith and baptism. The preachers of Christ seek to draw over to God the inner man first, by presenting His truth; then comes the dedication of the outer man.

'But if faith in Christ risen brings salvation, what need of immersion?' Because God cares for the salvation of *both soul and body*. Are Christ's people to be naked 'spirits' to all eternity? Did Christ rise as the 'glorified spirit,' leaving His body behind Him in the sepulchre? Neither, then, will you!

"So many of us as were immersed."

While apostles commanded and practised immersion, it is very possible that not all received the rite. The same expression appears again in Galatians iii. 26, 27. "Ye are *all* the sons of God by *faith* in Christ Jesus. For *as many as were immersed* into Christ put on Christ."

"As many as." This is virtually a prophecy of the Scripture, that, all through the dispensation of the Gospel, some believers would be unbelieving concerning momentous portions of Scripture testimony. The Holy Spirit at once distinguishes between the careless disciple,

who seeks to do for Christ as little as he can help, and the zealous and obedient one, who obeys in all points. Carelessness in this bespeaks want of love, and regardlessness of the prize set before him. The word of Christ is "Seek *first* the kingdom of God and His righteousness."

The unbaptized like not to be singular—refuse to come out from the level occupied by their neighbours 'dead in sin.' They are afraid of the laugh against those who are immersed. 'Am I going to be *dipped like a sheep?*' Yes! if you are one of Christ's obedient flock! But if any will not now come out, as Christ has appointed, from the crooked generation, when to do so is to suffer more or less for Christ, he will not be of those rewarded by rising out from among the dead at the first resurrection, to enjoy the thousand years of bliss.

While Christ is the Saviour of the soul, He is also Saviour of the *body*: Eph. v. 23. And the rite of baptism presents it to the eye. That which went down into the waters of death is come up from them, and there takes its lasting stand.

It is 'immersion *into Christ*,' and into "*His death*."

Christ is Resurrection and Life; and whatever belongs to Him by faith shall see life. Now this is true of believers alone. None but believers leave Adam for Christ. Apply baptism to infants, and it sets forth doctrine through which multitudes perish. Baptism is really a visible passing over from Adam and Moses, to Christ. The previous chapter has shown us our sad union by birth of the flesh with Adam the fallen, and its dark consequences to both soul and body. But the believer's immersion is his God-appointed, visible cutting off the entail of Adam's sin and of judgment. Adam disobeyed a positive command of the Creator. *Now* a new positive command is appointed in grace. Have you, reader, obeyed? If not, will you now obey?

If you are in faith immersed into Christ, you are no longer in Adam "*Immersed* into his death."

Into the general argument about the meaning of 'baptize' I do not now intend to enter. Those who wish to do so should consult Dr. Carson on Baptism.

But the evidence derivable from this passage seems to me sufficient for the candid.

In the act of immersion there are three points observable:—

1. The *going down* into the waters, which represents death: ver. 3.

2. The moment of *burial*, or the descent into death complete, but the rising not yet begun.

3. The *ascent* out of the waters, or resurrection in emblem.

These three points are found in the passage before us.

1. "We were *immersed into* Jesus Christ:" ver. 3.

2. "We were *buried with Him by the immersion*:" ver. 4.

3. "Christ was *raised from among the dead*:" ver. 4. And our hope is to be like Him.

The three points named are *not* found in sprinkling or pouring. There is in them no descent of the baptized into the water, no burial beneath it, no ascent out of it, all which are supposed here.

There is one preposition which is characteristic of the Christian's standing,—"*in* Christ." It is first found in verse 11 here: "Reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive unto God *in* (not 'through') Jesus Christ our Lord." And the last verse of the chapter: "The gift of God is eternal life *in* Jesus Christ our Lord." This is our final standing; and we are led to it by two previous steps.

(1) "We were immersed *into*:" ver. 3. (2) "We were buried *with* Him." "We were planted *with* Him." "Our old man was crucified *with* Him:" ver. 4, 5, 6. (3) After that we are said to be "*in* Him."

In the days of the Flood men fled *from* the waters of death and judgment, but were overtaken by them, and were at once drowned and buried. But Noah, taught of God, went *through* the waters to dwell on the new earth. And thus Christ bids those who are His to pass through death with Himself in the ark of His righteousness.

"We were immersed *into His death*."

While Christ was alive, He stood apart as the righteous Jew. He could be the Saviour of Jew and Gentile only in death and resurrection. This He stated when Gentiles wished to see Him, and He compared Himself to the grain of corn that abides alone, unless it fall into the ground and die. Then it arises and associates other grains with itself: John xii. 24.

Christ's death was a *real* one. Our death in baptism is one in *emblem*. It contains in itself the picture also of burial and *resurrection*. It is a death-in-law appointed us by God, in place of the death of sin and of the wrath of God, which we deserve.

"Immersed *into His death*."

All the force of the passage is included in that little word "*His*." By nature and practice we were heirs of Adam's death, and of the reign of death beyond it.

But grace knits us to Christ, in whom is righteousness, to whom belongs eternal life. "I am Resurrection and Life (said He), he that believeth in Me, though he shall have died, shall live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on Me shall not die for ever. Believest thou this?" John xi. 25, 26.

He stooped to death, that He might unite us to Himself as the Righteous One, and by His death and righteousness He lifts us out from the reign and grasp of Death, the last enemy. The immersion of faith, then (or baptism) is our visible passage from law, with its condemnation of us to death, into righteousness, grace, and eternal life with Jesus Christ. It is our

open confession of Christ as Lord, and our choice of Him after perceiving the condemnation of our previous union with Adam, and our belief in the testimony of God concerning Christ as our Saviour.

4. "We were buried therefore together with Him by the immersion unto death; in order that, just as Christ was raised from among the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also should walk in newness of life."

Circumcision showed what sign man was to set on his body under law, as the way to righteousness; and before the Second Adam and His righteousness had come. But *baptism* is the new sign of the righteousness of faith now that Christ has come, the Lord our Righteousness, and we made partakers of it by grace.

The previous verse had spoken of the death with the Christ implied in the believer's immersion. But after death there comes the act of *burial*—something quite distinct from *death*, carried out by others on the bodies of the dead at different times in different cases, sometimes burial being omitted altogether.

There is a peculiarity here in the *time* and *intent* of burial. Ordinarily, only the dead are buried; and burial is the proof of death having been suffered. But sometimes burial takes place as a *punishment*—the man is buried *alive*, in order to *produce death*. It is so in this case. A living man, sentenced to death, is put under the waters. The waters are the element of death, suffocating the living when put under them. The death of one covered by the waters is rapid.

But they are not only the *cause* of death, but the *place and means of burial*. (1) Thus was it in Noah's day. The waters were God's element of death. "I bring a flood of waters upon the earth to *destroy* all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall *die*." (2) Thus was it in Moses' day. Pharaoh and his host were living enemies pursuing God's people. The

waters rushed upon them and covered them; and the covering was both their *death* and their *burial*.

Believers baptized "were *buried with*" Christ. Death with Christ is *by faith*; but burial with Him takes place *only by immersion*. This needs insisting on, as many lose the force and significance of this passage, by supposing that it all refers to something wholly spiritual. But it is not so. While God begins with the *inner* man and invisibly, He claims also the *outer* man openly. His redemption shall include the body; and this is clearly taught here. "We were buried with Him *by the immersion into death*."

Burial in the case of Adam and his sons was the beginning of the reign of death visibly over the body. The soul that kept together the parts has departed, and the body begins to return to the dust, according to the sentence of the Lord in Eden. What was to become of the soul was not then disclosed. But Peter teaches by the examples of David and of Christ, that as long as the body of the departed is in the tomb, the soul is in Hades, the place of the dead.

"We were *buried*." In baptism the believer does not immerse himself, but is passive in the hands of another. And this passiveness runs through the passage! (1) "We were *immersed* into Jesus Christ." (2) "We were *immersed* into His death." (3) "We were *buried*." (4) "Christ was *raised* up from the dead." (5) "We were *planted* together." (6) "Our old man was *crucified*." And they are all in the *past* tense: for the Christian's immersion had already taken place, and Paul was expounding the meaning of this ceremony appointed of God; a ceremony never to be repeated; the prelude to something better yet to be.

"We shall be of the resurrection."

"We were buried *therefore*." This word affirms the necessary connection between the death, and the burial provided by God, in the rite of baptism, for His people.

Where the penalty of a broken law is money, the payment of the money by another suffices. But in the case of a murderer, another cannot take the suffering, without the consent of the ruler. The believer's case is that of a criminal. Christ dies, through His grace, as the sacrifice. And God appoints that the criminal *die and be buried with Christ, his sacrifice*.

It is not the usual burial *after* death. The baptismal immersion is the act of plunging the living man into the element of death that he may die. Any one covered by the waters dies in a few minutes, suffocated. But as soon as death has taken place, the covering waters become also the element of burial. And the act of plunging the baptized into the waters of death is at the same time both death and burial. So, offending Dathan and Abiram were cast into the opened jaws of death, and at once buried also. Thus has God in baptism necessarily connected death and burial, which are usually quite separate. Hence the word "therefore."

The Christian immersion binds together (1) *justification*, or the penalty of death suffered, and the man raised in a new life beyond it; and (2) *sanctification*, or our union with Christ for newness of life. Now faith is no likeness of death or of burial, while immersion is.

After the Saviour's burial He remained some time in the tomb before He arose. So before the immersed believer rises from among the dead, there is the interval of the waiting for Christ's return in order to raise him. That is to be employed in "newness of life." Now holiness is the spiritual resurrection of the inner man; and it is the preparation for resurrection proper, or the physical coming forth of the obedient believer, body and soul united, to the kingdom of glory.

"*We were buried with*" Christ.

This gives the whole its force. Burial with Adam

is the culprit's surrender to the sceptre of death. But as Christ, the Anointed Man, is Death's conqueror, so are we to be in Him.

The *burial* of Christ forms a part of the Gospel even in its briefest summary by Paul. "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that (1) Christ *died* for our sins according to the scriptures; and (2) *that He was buried*, and that He (3) *rose again* the third day according to the scriptures:" 1 Cor. xv. 1—4.

Now believers baptized have died with Christ, and been with Him buried. They have taken two steps out of the three, and are waiting in expectation of the third—the completion of the salvation brought by Christ. It will take place, too, on the third day; only the day will not be the third ordinary day of twenty-four hours; but reckoned according to the style which the Lord uses. "Beloved be not ignorant of this, that with the Lord a *thousand years* are as one day."

They who become members of Christ will receive of His blessings. He was proved to be the Son of God by the resurrection; the first to rise from among the dead.

We die first in spirit with Christ by *faith*. Then we are plunged into the waters of death, a confession of our desert to die. But, knit to Christ, we die and are buried to Adam and to Moses, in order to belong to Christ. While we are of Adam, we do not belong to Christ. But of such moment is the passage from flesh born of flesh, to spirit born of spirit, the passage into justification from condemnation, that God has appointed a ceremony to mark the passing out from Adam to Christ.

"*We were buried with Christ by the immersion into death.*"

We meet Christ, and He meets us, where Adam leaves us, *under death and judgment*. But with the Son of God we rise out from them.

The believer justified by faith is one with Christ in His death. But he is not buried with Him, or immersed with Him *by faith*. "We were *buried* with Him *by the immersion into death*." Death is one thing, and burial another. As burial is something after death, so *immersion* differs from *faith*, and is not included in it. Faith is an abiding thing of the spirit; baptism, a transient act on the body, at once complete. The spirit, as the ruler, goes first; the body follows as the inferior, but still an eternal part of the man. Do you desire *resurrection*? You cannot have it without *the body*. God has purchased both parts of the man, and claims both in the rite of immersion.

(1) Without *faith* of the soul there is no union with Christ: it is no baptism owned by God, even if immersion were used. Hence no infant baptism is of God. (2) Without *immersion of the body* there is no burial with Christ. Keep then both factors, and in their proper order as appointed by God. Neither baptism without faith, nor faith without baptism are well-pleasing to God.

"*In order that.*"

Here is the first of the two occurrences of the phrase in Paul's answer to the proposal. In the first verse of the chapter we had the evil Proposal. "Let us continue in sin, *in order that* grace may abound." Now that is hateful to God, as He testifies. But neither is it the counsel of the Most High, that burial should be the last scene of His ransomed. They are to come forth of the tomb to enjoy the resurrection of life.

"*Just as Christ was raised from among the dead by the glory of the Father.*"

Christ's resurrection was the first. The prophets and Moses foretold "That the Christ should suffer, and that He should be the *first to rise from among the dead*." Those brought out from death before Him were only released for awhile: to the tomb they

returned. But Christ was raised up by God, now no more to return to the place of corruption.

'The resurrection *from among the dead*' differs greatly from 'the resurrection *of the dead*.' Christ, our Lord, went down among the spirits of the departed; but when He came up, He left the unrighteous behind in the assembly of the dead, and their bodies in the tomb. Great was the honour thus set on the Righteous One.

It was effected "*by the glory of the Father.*"

We should have expected 'by the (1) *power of* (2) *God*.' But the expression used by the Holy Ghost conveys much more. It was not merely an act of power; the swallowing up of Dathan and Abiram was *that*; but it was an act of the glory of God.

There was indeed no intense brightness displayed, the token of the presence of God, as in the Wilderness, or at the Transfiguration. The glory was a *moral* glory. All the perfections of the Father were exhibited in giving up His Son to die, and then still more in raising Him up from among the dead. Resurrection is indeed a power peculiar to God, and so is glorifying to Him, as He is a God that raises the dead. But, in the case before us, His justice, His wisdom, His love, prompted the great act. The Saviour deserved not to tarry among the unrighteous dead, but to come forth as the Righteous One. The Son of God entreated to be delivered out of death; and it was joy to the Father to do so.

It was Abraham's glory, that at the call of God he surrendered his only son Isaac. He lifted his beloved son upon the altar, and the act was a great one. But how much greater the joy when the father, at the angel's call, lifted his son from the place of death, and the oath and promises of God were proclaimed over Isaac, raised from the dead in a figure.

But while God spared Abraham's son, He would not spare His own. At the baptism of our Lord, where

the shadow of death and resurrection fell on Him, the good pleasure of the Heavenly Father broke out in, "*Thou art My Son; in Thee I am well pleased.*" But how much greater the joy of the Father over His Son victorious in life and risen out from the tomb.

"*Even so we also should walk in newness of life.*"

This expresses God's design in regard of His people. The life of Christ raised from the dead in an incorruptible body was a new life no longer under law. "*Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee.*" It was God's intention that it should express His people's duty. They "*should walk in newness of life.*" The next step will be taken, when He puts forth His power on them, to raise them from the dead in honour and glory.

"We," the justified already as being regenerated, are already *in spirit raised from among the dead in sins.*

The Saviour's resurrection has thrown open the door for a dispensation of grace. Law brings out from man the fallen sin only, and death. But under grace, sanctification by the Holy Spirit blooms and fructifies.

We should have expected, as parallel to the former line, that 'as the Father raised the Son from among the dead, *so we also should by Him be raised.*' But the apostle, by the change he has introduced, gives force to the necessity for holiness, as the preparation for our coming forth from among the unrighteous souls who are left under death. The first resurrection is "the resurrection of the *just*" (or the righteous), and of the sons of God like the angels. Thus the plan of the God of holiness is shown to be opposed to the Proposal on which this chapter is a comment.

"*We should WALK.*"

Justification is the first thing; without that no deeds of the sons of Adam are good. But after that we are to walk before God, as said Jehovah to justified Abraham: Gen. xv., xvii. 'We should *walk.*' Not

that sin is '*impossible*' to the justified. The contrary is assumed throughout. But the motives to a holy life are given, and pressed on us. The new man raised from among the dead is to be active in service.

"*In newness of life.*"

There are two senses to the phrase.

1. It is spoken of the *spirit*. The original walk of the sons of Adam is in the oldness of the Fall. The reconciled and baptized are to save themselves from 'the crooked generation' of the seed of the Serpent. They are to resemble Christ. "*We also,*" as well as Christ, are "to walk in newness of life." 'Let us keep to the old life!' is the Proposal of the flesh. 'Walk in the Spirit,' is the command of God during the time of our trial under the Gospel.

2. But man is made up of *body*, as well as *soul*. And God's plan of new life is not complete, until *both* are ransomed from sin and death. New life while Christ is away refers to spiritual life. Newness of life, embracing body and soul, when Christ returns, will be granted in resurrection to those accounted worthy. We are to walk *like* Christ now, in newness of life. But the walking *with* Christ is at hand, for the obedient and holy. "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments; and *they shall walk with Me in white:* for they are worthy:" Rev. iii. 4.

Those are not ready for ascension to Christ who have not, with Christ, passed through *burial* and *resurrection*. For Christ is our Forerunner; and not till He had died and risen did He ascend to His Father.

5. "For if we became fellow-plants in the likeness of His death, why we shall be also [fellow-plants] of the resurrection."

The 'For' connects this verse closely with the former. It seems to take up the last words, "newness of life," and to assign a second reason for their employment.

The 'If' marks the resurrection to be the *prize* of our calling, not attained by all believers, but dependent on the holiness called for by God—the contrast to 'the continuance in sin' of the Proposal. It confirms strongly the view of the "*As many as were immersed,*" and the assurance that the prize is here in view. 'If' we fulfil the conditions, we shall receive the prize. It is further sustained by our Lord's words to Nicodemus upon the connection between the birth out of water, and the kingdom: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, '*Except a man be begotten out of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*'" Faith and baptism are essential conditions to entry into the coming kingdom.

This passage is so condensed that every word tells; and only when we see the force of each can we be sure that we have God's meaning fully.

1. Observe, then, Immersion is *death in emblem*—and so it is the *likeness* of Christ's *death*.

2. But "we were *planted together* in the likeness of Christ's death." And that, I believe, takes up the being "*buried* with Christ by the immersion into death." Burial is the fixing the place of the corpse in its sepulchre. Thus the immersed believer is traced to his being with Christ in the tomb, awaiting the resurrection of reward from among the dead.

Thus the Christian rite of immersion enters largely into the argument.

1. It shows that God's plan of justification and salvation is rootedly opposed to the continuance in sin. "Repent, and be immersed every one of you!" "Save yourselves from the crooked generation." "Then they that gladly received His word were immersed."

2. The believer who receives God's word expresses obedience to Him hereby, and especially is the formal acknowledgment of the *Lordship* of Christ: Acts ii. 38.

3. It is a visible passing over from Adam and Moses, to putting on Christ.

4. It looks onward in faith to the future day, and the hope of the resurrection of honour, held out to us as the prize of our calling.

How did believers become "*fellow-plants*" with Christ? By the baptism of which Paul is speaking. By it they were immersed into Christ, and buried with Him. Now the setting of a seed,—as the pip of an orange,—supposes a hole made in the earth, and the covering it over, or its burial.

(1) "*We became fellow-plants.*" We were passive in the act of immersion. Another baptized us, and we submitted to him. (2) "*We became fellow-plants.*" The act was past, and complete; so was baptism.

(3) It was something *visible*. It was our 'being planted in the *likeness* of Christ's death.' The body is regarded as the seed. All the saved must partake of Christ's *death*; but this is the *burial*, which is the likeness to Christ's death, and our joining with Him in it.

The sowing of seed is something seen, and to the seed it is something passive. Its burial is its sowing. It comes into close correspondence with the teaching of 1 Cor. xv. 42, concerning the kingdom, or the first resurrection. "So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is *sown* in corruption; it is *raised* in incorruption: it is *sown* in *dishonour*; it is *raised* in *glory*: it is *sown* an animal body; it is *raised* a spiritual body." It must die before it rises in new life. "That which thou *sowest* is not made alive except it *die*." ver. 35, 36. It looks on to the rising out of the earth, to take its stand as the tree. That is the intent of the sower. The vegetable world, then, is cited as a witness to the Christian's hope, as bound up with our union with the Redeemer; first, in the humiliation of immersion, then with the glory of the Saviour's

resurrection. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

"*Fellow-plants*" with Christ. Bury an acorn, and out of it will spring the chief of the forest. Put two acorns into the same hole of the earth, and if buried together, together will they shoot into the light. Bury us with Christ, and at Christ's voice we shall rise.

The death with Christ which takes place in the soul by faith is unseen. But the burial by the commanded immersion into death, is visible. By that, we have the visible likeness of Christ's death applied to our body. In burial, the body is *passive*—quite the contrast to the promises and boasts of the flesh under law. "All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient." But the activity of the flesh under law avails not to admit into the resurrection and kingdom of reward.

"*Why we shall be also (fellow-plants) of the resurrection.*"

The supplements given by our translators, "We shall be (*in the likeness*) of (*his*) resurrection" are not the true ones. For in *immersion* we have *the likeness*, not of death and burial only, but of *resurrection*, in the coming forth out of the waters. What we look for, what immersion tacitly promises, is the *reality* of resurrection. Not that even the immersion of the believer will of itself introduce into the millennial kingdom.

But the clause does not require any supplement. 'If we undergo the likeness of Christ's death—why *we shall belong to the resurrection of glory.*'

Thus the apostle fills up the omission which was noticed in verse 4.

We were buried with Christ by the immersion into death, in order that—as Christ was raised from among the dead by the Father'—(we expect the completion of the verse to be)—'*we also should by Him be raised from among the dead.*' Instead of that, we have—

"*even so we also should walk in newness of life*"—giving us thus the necessary condition preparatory to the resurrection of reward. Thus he furnishes a new argument against the Proposal, which is the text on which the chapter is made a comment of condemnation. As sin leads to the reign of death, so holiness to the coming forth out of death.

Resurrection is the re-union of soul and body, which were parted at death, the sentence on sin. Hence the rite of emblematic death takes place on *the body*, the visible object, without which resurrection cannot take place, nor any one be admitted to the kingdom. "Now this I say, that flesh and blood cannot have part in (inherit) the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption (the body of the dead believer) inherit incorruption:" 1 Cor. xv. 50. But the bodies both of the living and the dead must be changed, in order to enjoy the thousand years, and much more the eternity which ensues.

In the figure of the "planting" and the rising up of the seed, we may discern a reference to Isaiah lxi., the text on which our Lord preached at Nazareth. He had been just anointed with the Holy Ghost, and He then declares the fulfilment, in part, of that prophecy. He was anointed to proclaim the message of grace, and its duration in "the acceptable year of the Lord." There He suddenly broke off, after rolling up the scroll put into His hands. What follows this time of grace? "The *day of vengeance* of our God." Thus we have the confirmation of Rom. ii. 5—11. Then comes (in Isaiah) the comforting of the mourners,* the change of the conditions of earth for the glory and joy of the resurrection, "that they might be called *trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord*, that He might be glorified." "The planting of the Lord" in the order of fact comes before the resurrection of the tree.

* A reference again to the Sermon on the Mount: Matt. v. 4.

The words, "trees of righteousness," occur in the prophecy before "*the planting of the Lord*." For baptism to be according to God's mind, must be preceded by faith and justification. The planting of immersion must be the condition preceding the rising up of the tree. The trees must be 'trees of *righteousness*,' practically so, and baptism is thus again seen to be necessary to the kingdom. "For *thus* it becometh us to fulfil *all righteousness*," where the righteousness is *practical*. But the righteousness of *imputation* is found also in that memorable chapter of Isaiah. "My soul shall be joyful in my God, for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, *He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness*." So shall the Lord be glorified in the resurrection, the joy of His Son and His companions in the kingdom. So shall God be seen to be "*the Father of glory*." And Christ's resurrection from among the dead was "*by the glory of the Father*."

Between the time of the seed's burial in the earth and its appearing above ground as the tree, some interval must pass. That answers to the present scene of trial of the believer. He is not to expect his reward and glory here. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know, that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is:" 1 John iii. Creation is "waiting for the *manifestation* of the sons of God." As yet it is the time for obedience, a life unlike that of Adam. Here is our hope; we see not yet our day of glory, when we shall be "fellows" of the Christ, after holding firm to the end, our confidence of Christ's return and kingdom.

But how do you know *what* "resurrection" is spoken of?

It is the resurrection of the righteous, and of the obedient; "the prize of our calling," the being counted worthy of reward. It is the resurrection of *some* from among the dead, who not only believe, but

accept the fulness of the grace and gift attached to the righteousness of God which justifies us. It is the resurrection of *reward*. "This is the first resurrection. Blessed and *holy* is he that hath part in the first resurrection." It is partaking *with* Christ in the glory of His reign, after partaking with Him in rejection by the world.

The apostle has several times before in the epistle dropped hints of it.

1. He presents Jesus to us as proved to be the Son of God by His being the first to come out from the dead and the tomb: i. 1.

2. He tells us of the coming day, when, this time of grace having past, the Lord will render reward to each according to his work: ii. 5—11.

3. He bids us observe, that Abraham's inheritance came not by law, but by grace; and he notes his obedience to the commands of Jehovah.

4. Where he compares together Adam and Christ, he gives a glimpse of special glory provided for the receivers of the full grace and gift of the Gospel: v. 17.

5. In a passage we have not yet reached, he is far more express and full, showing how that day shall affect the whole creation, so long blighted—both in its vegetable and animal kingdoms—by the trespass of Adam. It shall then become full of blessing through the righteousness of the Second Adam.

On two, nay three, conditions turns the entrance into the glory of the kingdom of Christ and of glory. There must be (1) *faith* in the Son of God and His works, without which is no justification. *That* the apostle assumes to belong to all whom he is addressing. (2) Then must follow *baptism* (or immersion). For "except a man be born *out of water*, as well as of spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." But baptism is not by itself enough. Many who have been baptized are not so holy as many of the unimmersed. Not a few have gone back into the world after obeying

the command, which tells of our coming out from the evil generation. (3) There must be also *holiness*. Many who are holy will not stoop to the immersion after faith. Now "without holiness none shall see the Lord." Our God and Father is testing us. Are we disobedient sons of Adam? or obedient sons of Abraham? Do we wish to see Christ's face with joy? Believers, be baptized! Baptized ones, be obedient! "Blessed and holy is he who hath part in the first resurrection."

Let me just state the principles required rightly to understand the passage before us; and, alas! rejected in whole or in part, by most Christians.

1. *The immersion in water of the justified by faith.*

2. *Our being called by God out from Nature* (Adam), and *LAW* (Moses), to belong to *grace and Christ*.

3. God's setting two things before the Christian; (1) the *gift*, and (2) the *prize* of our calling.

4. Two justifications are supposed. (1) That which we have now by faith, during the present day of grace, and (2) the future one according to works, at the return of our Lord, in the day of judgment.

6. "Recognising this that our old man was crucified together with Him, in order that the body of sin should be disabled, that no longer should we serve sin."

This verse seems to me the answer to a possible objection, derived from what has gone before. 'Then holiness is needed only *by those who seek the reward of the kingdom*.' The apostle therefore shows, that for eternal life also, holiness is needed, and comes into God's scheme for all the justified.

Then he states the second likeness to the death of Christ, arising out of the Christian's being divided into (1) the new man, and (2) the old.

"Our old man was crucified."

Then all Christians bear about with them the remains of the old nature, or the flesh derived from the first

Adam. Paul had the old man, or 'the flesh,' as truly as any of us, and the Lord treated him on that ground; controlling him, where he was in danger of falling: 2 Cor. xii. The doctrine then of the present perfection of the believer while in the flesh, is not true. The like doctrine to this is also taught in Gal. v. 16—26.

"Our old man was crucified."

The mode in which our Lord was put to death on the tree was designed by God to yield us instruction.

(1) The crucified was passive. He was arrested by the nails driven through the hands and the feet. Motion was prevented both from place to place, and also the usual movements of the body. (2) It was besides a most painful and slow mode of dying, the crucified sometimes lingering on the cross for as many as nine days. It was applied to those under sentence of death. In these, and perhaps other points, the death of Christ by the cross is intended to minister instruction to the Christian.

Crucifixion, in the applied sense, belongs to all Christians. "*I am crucified with Christ*"; nevertheless I live:" Gal. ii. 20. "They that are Christ's crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts:" v. 24. "God forbid that I should glory (boast) save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom (or 'which') the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world:" vi. 14. While the new man is to move in the activities of service to God, the old man is to be fettered under death.

"Our old man was crucified." There is no 'if,' nor 'as many as were immersed,' as in the previous words about baptism. There is no mention made of any rite to be undergone, before the assertion could be made. Christianity has no ceremony exhibiting Christ's death by the cross. It is asserted that the affixing to the cross had been already effected; and as that was not done by man, we infer it to be by God. The literal act of crucifixion took place when our Lord

died. Our crucifixion with Him took place when we believed.

Christ's crucifixion was literally effected ; we have part in it spiritually and invisibly. The old man is no object of sight, but a spiritual thing.

It appears to me that this verse is linked to the former one by the (1) 'planting,' and (2) 'likeness to Christ's death.' There are two views of the *planting*: (1) the burial under water in baptism ; (2) the nailing the crucified to the tree of death, and then fixing the cross into the ground.

There are two resemblances to the death of Christ, in the case of the obedient Christian.

1. There are, first, the death, burial, and resurrection with Christ in baptism. The resemblance herein is past and complete. "*We were immersed,*" "*We were buried,*" "*That we might walk in a life beyond death.*" This way of putting off of Adam and putting on Christ is necessary, in order to have part with Christ in the first resurrection. "*For if we became planted together in the likeness of His death, why we shall be also of the resurrection.*"

2. But there is a second resemblance, in many points unlike the first, in the likeness to Christ crucified. The believer carries with him an old man under sentence of death, and under its execution now going on ; but it is still alive. Now the death of the cross was a slow death, and a death by enforced inaction. The old man of the believer is, then, to be kept on the way to death, until death is accomplished. That is a correspondence which is not seen. The old man is no object of sight. The progress towards death goes on during all the life of the Christian. The man *has* died, and is risen ; the old *must* die, before there can be entry on the kingdom of glory. It must die *and have no resurrection*. The Most High has laid obligation on the Christian to keep under the old man, for his movements are sin.

Our old man was crucified together with Christ, with the intent, on his part, that there should be no movement of evil allowed, even as there is no permission of movement to the limbs of the crucified.

"*That the body of sin might be disabled.*"

The Greek word does not mean the destruction of substance or of existence ; but the taking away of power. So the heavily-wounded officer must be borne off the field ; he can neither give orders, nor help in the combat with his sword.

"*The body of sin*" may be taken either literally or figuratively. We may regard the body as that in which sin dwells and rules ; or we may look on sin as figuratively possessed of a body, with its various limbs. So we read in Colossians. "*Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth ; fornication, &c.:*" Col. iii. 5. The old man is not to stir ; the new man is to "*walk.*"

"*In order that the body of sin might be disabled.*"

Some would tell us, that the Christian cannot sin. On the contrary, the whole argument here turns on the *doctrine* that sin is not only possible, but probable ; and that God has so arranged His plan as to lay obligation on His saved ones to abstain from it. Could not the Israelite, while his door was stained with blood, eat leavened bread with the lamb of the passover ?

"*In order that.*" Herein is seen *God's design* against the *Proposal* of the first verse. He is instructing us both to (1) work *good*, and to (2) abstain from *evil*. As saith Isaiah : "*Wash you, make you clean* [here is immersion of the whole man] ; (1) *cease to do evil ;* (2) *learn to do well.*" "*For if ye live after the flesh, ye are about to die ; but if through the Spirit mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live:*" Rom. viii. 13. Here are a new death and a new life, dependent on the course of life of the Christian.

The cross of Christ, and the crosses of those crucified

with Christ, are no longer seen; but the lessons derivable from the Gospel history are of force for the Christian. Both the crosses associated with Christ's were sad specimens of the old man; while one of the robbers turned to Christ in his last hour, and was forgiven and justified at once. But while he pleads for a place in the kingdom, he gets no promise of that; the Saviour's reply touches only on his entry upon the place assigned after death to the righteous dead.

The saved robber did not and could not crucify himself. The crucifixion was wrought by order of the judge. The spiritual crucifixion of the old man is wrought by God on every believer. The *maintenance* of that place is given over to each believer.

There are, then, for us two resemblances of Christ's death, by God's appointment.

1. The 'planting' and burial of the good *seed* are wrought in order to the new life that is to follow in the tree. The new man is to resemble Christ in death, burial, and *resurrection*.

2. The second resemblance is to Christ *before death*, but on *His way to it*. The old man is 'planted' on the tree of death; the tree of death is 'planted' in the ground. *Here is descent into a death without resurrection*; and such is God's treatment of the old man.

God has given illustrations of this (1) in the past, in the history of Noah. In Noah's day, the old man was suffocated, and buried in the waters. The new man, entering the ark, escaped through the waters, and entered on the renewed world.

(2) So in the history of Israel. The old man, represented by Pharaoh and his host, was drowned and buried in the sea. Israel, on the contrary, representing the new man, after being sheltered by the blood, and strengthened by feeding on the lamb, passed through the waters in safety.

Thus the believer is divided into two parts, opposed to one another: (1) one of the resemblances to Christ's

death is for the *new* man, which is after regeneration, the true 'I'; the other (2) for the *old* man, which is to drop off, that holiness may reign in us for ever.

"*That no longer we should serve sin.*"

"The doer of sin is the *slave of sin*," as its master. The Lord, then, has so planned His salvation as to show that He allows not either the commands of sin as the master, or the obedience to sin by man as the servant.

'Let us continue in sin,' was the Proposal, under Sin as 'the master.' Now man must either serve holiness or sin; and here God expresses His counsel about the Christian. He is to keep his "old man" on the cross: (1) "in order that the body of sin might be disabled; that (2) henceforth we should not serve sin." The crucified slave could not go where his master might command; he could not even stir hand or foot. Sin's rights as the master are gone; the slave's hands and feet cannot obey. The old man would hinder the new; therefore God puts on it the chain of crucifixion.

This second "*In order that*" (ver. 6) differs from the first (ver. 4). There is in it no word about any Christian rite appointed; nor any word about resurrection and reward. The first stood related to the *millennial day*; the second stands knit with *eternal life*. Thus are taught God's designed and commanded continuance in holiness, and cessation of service to sin. Here therefore is the keenest opposition to "*Let us continue in sin* that grace may abound."

There is opposition (1) both in regard of sin's working now, and (2) in regard of its dues in the coming day, and to all eternity.

(1) Enter on the new life of the new man and continue in it, that you may win the prize of faith and obedience at the first resurrection.

(2) Abstain from service for the evil master; it is impossible to serve at once sin and holiness.

7. "For He that died hath been justified from sin."

I must express my entire dissent from the interpretation usually given to this verse. It is supposed to be a general principle of law, applying to all who have suffered death because of their offences.

I. First, we should render the Greek words, not 'He that *is dead*,' but 'He that *died*.' "He that *is dead*" shuts out the true meaning; for, while Christ once *died*, He *is dead* no longer, but lives for evermore. Christ was not only nailed to the cross, but He died on it. Now our old man is *not yet dead*; but we are to keep watch over him, till he is dead.

II. It is not true that the malefactor, who has suffered death as the penalty of the law, is "justified from sin." He is not *justified*, either by God or by man; either in relation to this world, or to that which is to come; as the history of the Saviour's crucifixion shows. Law retained its hold upon the body of the malefactor after death. Joseph must first ask leave of Pilate before the body of Christ Himself could be taken down. In England, the bodies of felons were given to dissection.

Much less was the soul of the malefactor justified at death. If it were, how could God afterwards judge him as guilty? The men of Sodom are suffering after death the fire. The selfish rich man is no sooner dead, than in Hadees he lifts up his eyes, being in torment—in "the place of torment."

Death, on the contrary, in full force *reigns* over the dead. Christ Himself was not justified at the cross, but only on the third day after. The lost go down into the first Death, to abide for ever in the second: Rev. i. 18; xx. 6, 13, 14; xxi. 8. To escape that is the privilege of the conqueror: ii. 11.

That "He who died" means Christ, at once appears, if we compare the expression with the context. The comparison of the apostle in the fifth chapter regards the effect on men of Adam's sin, and of Christ's

righteousness. In the sixth chapter we have the effects of the Saviour's death on the men of *faith*. He is the One who affects the many unto salvation.

Observe how the next verse sustains the conclusion.

"He that died is justified from sin:" ver. 7.

"Now if *we* died with *Christ*, *we* believe that *we* shall also live with *Him*:" ver. 8.

"For in that *He* died, *He* died unto sin once for all; but in that *He* liveth *He* liveth unto God:" ver. 10.

Thus both the previous and the following context join to confirm this view.

'But may we not affirm with Mr. Darby, that the dead malefactor cannot with truth be charged with malice, or with sin generally in its internal power?'

You may say so, if you are referring to the *corpse*. But after death the *soul* is the *man*. And death in full force reigns over the guilty departed. Christ went and preached to the spirits in prison, who in their life-time were disobedient.

"*Hath been justified from sin.*"

'Is freed' does not well express the meaning. There was in our Lord no sin. But sin was imputed to Him—laid on Him by the Great Judge—"The Lord *laid on Him the iniquity* of us all." "He was once offered to *bear the sins* of many." "For He *made Him to be sin for us*, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him:" 2 Cor. v. 21. Under those sins He was condemned, died, and went down among the dead. He was laid in the tomb; but on the third day the stone was rolled away, the seal was broken, the guards smitten as with death by the heavenly court's undoing what the earthly court had misdone; and the prisoner came forth from the tomb and its grave-clothes.

The tense used here is the perfect. The justification was effected in the past; it abides now, and for ever. His justification by God's raising Him was louder than any words.

It is not true of the dead in general, that they are justified; either from (1) the *accusation*, or from (2) the *penalty*, of sin. The wicked are suffering now, and expecting worse to come in the day of judgment. Even the righteous have yet to be judged. "For the Lord shall *judge His people*:" Heb. x. 30. "So speak ye, and so do, as *they that shall be judged* by the law of liberty:" Jas. ii. 12. And in point of fact, as the seventh of Romans assures us, we are very far from being free from sin within.

But on Christ, tried to the uttermost, and risen, no stain of sin can lie henceforth; and, consequently, no atom of penalty.

8. "Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him."

We have in this returned back to the statement of verse 2. "*We died to sin*." Verses 3 to 5 then take up the effects produced by the obedience of faith to God's commanded immersion.

In verse 6 we have the work of God in grace on all Christians, whether baptized or not, affixing them to the cross of Christ.

'But does not this introduce contradiction? You said just now—'We had *not* died,' and now you say 'All Christians *have* died.'"

Distinguish, friend! The Christian is divided into two parts: (1) the old man, and (2) the new. (1) Of the *old* man it was said, that it had *not* died. But if believers have been obedient they *have died*, been buried, and risen in the baptism (or immersion) commanded. That is done in hope of the reward of the first resurrection.

(2) The old man, though sentenced to die and affixed to the cross, is still alive; or there would be no need of the exhortations to keep it under. We did die with Christ, being, as believers, one with Him. But neither

Christ's cross, nor the old man fixed to the cross with Christ, is visible.

"*We believe that we shall also live with Him*."

As Adam disbelieved God's threat of death—disbelieved and died—we, on the contrary, believe in a life out of death and beyond it. The apostle is now treating no longer of reward, but of *eternal life*, the *gift* of God to all believers. "The righteous by *faith* shall *live*." This is the blessed word which has superseded the promise of the law—"That the man that *doeth* (the commands of the law) shall *live* by them." For "He that believeth on the Son *hath everlasting life*." "I *give* unto them *eternal life*." "Because I live ye shall live also."

In another place we have the same distinction between reward and gift. "It is a faithful saying: For if we *died with* Him, we shall also *live* with Him: If we *suffer*, we shall also *reign* with Him:" 2 Tim. ii. 11, 12.

"*We shall also live with Him*."

The death of faith with Christ is past; the eternal life with Him has yet to come.

Death with Christ carries also life with Him. But burial with Christ in the baptism commanded means *resurrection with Christ from the dead*; or the first resurrection, occurring at a time when many believers have to tarry among the dead. *Burial*, we repeat, is something distinguished from *death*.

9. "Knowing that Christ, having been raised from among the dead, dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over Him."

This is a first principle with God, that only on *sin* follows the visitation of *death*.

In this verse and the context we see in the different Greek expressions the difference between the *stroke* of death and the *state* of the dead. (1) 'Christ *died*:'*

* Αποθνήσκω.

ver. 7, 9, 10. (2) As the consequence He went among the *dead*—those in custody in Hadees. But God raised Him “from among the *dead*.”* ver. 4, 9.

Twice this raising the Saviour has been named: ver. 4, 9.

But on this second occasion the illustriousness of the coming forth is left in the back-ground. In verse 4 He is said to have been raised (1) “by the *glory* (2) of the Father.” Here there is no mention made of Him who raised, or of the glory of so great a result.

After coming forth from custody, and from the dead, “He dieth no more.” God “raised Him from among the dead, *now no more to return to corruption*.” “Wherefore He saith also in another Psalm, ‘Thou shalt not suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption:’” Acts xiii. 34, 35. “Now *once* in the conjunction of the ages hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And as it is appointed to men once to die, but after that judgment, so the Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him unto salvation shall He appear the second time without *sin*.” Heb. ix. 25—28.

Christ “dieth no more.”

For as *sin* and *death* are linked together, so *righteousness* and *life*. Even in the Perfect Son imputed sin of others led Him into death, and He had need to be justified from sin; how much more, then, must the renewed keep from sin, and walk in righteousness?

The Saviour cannot suffer any more the stroke of death, or become the captive of Death, as the ruler over the dead. Death will have no power over His body to turn it into corruption, or over His soul to detain it among the dead.

10. “For in that He died, He died unto sin once for all; but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God.”

* *Νεκροί*.

This, then, tells us that the ‘He who died’ of verse 7 is Christ. He alone was justified, and is pronounced by the Judge clear from sin, and from all its consequences. Can sin not be imputed to the dead? “He that believeth not is condemned already.” “He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the *wrath of God abideth on him*.” John iii. 18, 36.

“For” assigns the reason of His being by the Judge absolved from sin. Sin once laid on Him has been put away by His death. He died to it. His life before death was indeed, also a perfect life, but a life under law; and, not beyond being tempted to sin or beyond the imputation of sin, and the suffering of death.

His life in resurrection is the life of a Son dismissed from law, after having perfectly honoured it by His obedience. And His life of perfection towards God can never cease.

Thus the assertion of verse 2 is proved.

1. “We died *to sin*.” ver. 2. For

2. “We died *with Christ*.” ver. 8.

3. “*Christ died to sin*.”

4. And then—“And ‘*in Christ*’ we died to sin:” ver. 11. And the proof is complete.

11. “So then do ye also reckon yourselves to be on the one hand, dead to sin; but on the other, alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Why does the apostle say—‘Do ye reckon yourselves’? and not—‘Let us reckon ourselves’? Is it not because Paul ever did so reckon? while the Proposal showed the need of exhortation to them, in order to their properly viewing the Christian’s attitude toward sin and holiness.

“So then,” as God’s counsel concerning us in Christ, and our duty to resemble the Saviour in death, and in life. Regard yourselves then as having taken Christ’s bearing, both as towards sin, and towards holiness.

‘*Reckon yourselves dead*.’ This is very different

from—'You *are* dead.' We have died in spirit to sin, by faith, and many have died and been buried with Christ in emblem; but there is a long step yet before actual deadness to sin is come. As unbelief was the beginning of sin, so is faith, in principle, its death. And God assures the believer, that sin will one day be ended in him. But as yet the old man, though fixed on the tree of death in pursuance of the Judge's sentence, is not dead. It is not said—'Be you dead;' but—'*Reckon yourselves dead.*' This reckoning often occurs in the world. When evidence, clear and conclusive, has been given against a prisoner as guilty of murder, one spectator may say to another—'He is a dead man,' assured that the judge will give sentence to that effect, and the execution will take place. A cobra di capello has bitten a huntsman. 'I am a dead man!' He knows of nought that can stay the speedy effect of the poison.

"Dead *indeed* unto sin."

This phrase is not to be taken as though it signified 'real death,' in opposition to 'death counterfeited,' or apparent only. Death is absolute; not something in which there are degrees. 'Indeed,' here is only a particle distinguishing this clause of the sentence from the next, ushered in by 'but.'

"But *alive unto God.*"

The Christian is called to assume the aspects which Christ holds, both toward sin, and toward righteousness.

The life to God now called for is spiritual life: it will be fully manifested in the new body of resurrection, such as that possessed by our Lord.

"*In Christ Jesus our Lord.*"

This spiritual death and life belong not to nature, nor are they found under Law, which is only the demand of payment from a bankrupt. But you, believer, are 'in Christ,' and those in Him are renewed in nature, and aided to obey.

Not sin, but Christ Jesus is "our Lord" now.

Our sin is not needed to impel God to grace: it is the day of grace already.

God's rooted aversion to sin appears at every point.

Let us briefly sum up the steps whereby the conclusion of verse 11 has been reached.

1. 'We died to sin:' ver. 2. If you are a Christian and mean to continue so, the matter is settled. 'But *how* did we die?' If you have been obedient to Christ's first command after justification, you have been baptized, (or immersed) into Christ. Some indeed have not obeyed this command; but of them we will not now speak. The objection is made against the holiness of God's plan of justification, and the answer must be gathered from the plan as given by God.

2. We stand as '*in Christ.*' This is first among the truths which a Christian ought to know. How did you get there? You were immersed *into Christ*, and the waters were those of death. Baptism is God's appointed death-in-law with Christ. But it is burial also, effected at one and the same time with death. We were buried with Christ. As with Him we were laid in the sepulchre, we look for the coming forth from it at the word of the Father, in order to partake of the resurrection from among the dead given to Christ by the Father.

3. Now in order to that, holiness is the first and principal requisite. Why do the dead remain under death? Because of their sins. Why did Christ come out from the tomb and the company of departed spirits? Because He was "the Righteous One." And we, while waiting for Christ's return, are to walk in holiness.

4. So, then, if to immersion with Christ holiness be added, you will attain to "the resurrection," or "the kingdom of God." For immersion, or burial in reference to the coming day, is the *planting of a seed*. Now a seed is planted with the design, that after its burial and death, it may rise in new life, and in a far more excellent form—the tree. So also is the resurrection of the dead;

weakness, dishonour, corruption, put away for power, glory, incorruptibility. For these honours we are to seek (chap. ii. 5—11.), by "patient continuance in well-doing." A change is needed of the bodies, both of the dead saints, and of the living ones, in order to enjoy that day. Flesh and blood are not fit for the kingdom of the thousand years, and much less for eternity: ver. 5.

5. But does not this demand for holiness then apply to those only who are seeking for the reward of the kingdom? By no means! There is a second likeness to Christ's death to be recognised by those that are His: one not visible, nor a matter of ceremony, but moral and spiritual, flowing from the manner of the Saviour's death: ver. 6.

(1) Immersion takes up resemblance to Christ in His burial, death, and speedy resurrection. But there is (2) to be a spiritual likeness to Christ, when on His way down to death by crucifixion. While immersion shows us set free to serve God in new life, the likeness to Christ as crucified teaches us God's design to be, that we should hold fallen nature arrested on its course of sin, till its death; on purpose that we should not serve sin, but obey God as our Master. For liberty given to the old man means sin.

6. The old man of nature is not dead as yet, even in Christ's regenerate and obedient ones. But our crucifixion is in conjunction with Christ, and that implies that our old man will at length die. Now our Lord was, on the third day, raised up by the Father, and, on the fortieth day, exalted to His own right hand, justified for ever. For never more can sin be laid upon Him, nor can any penalty or consequence of sin touch Him any more: ver. 7.

7. The eighth verse supposes that the sentence on the old man has been executed, and that we, as in Christ, after we are raised, shall live with Him for ever. Christ's life, as raised from among the dead, is as eternal as is His righteousness. Death can only

lay its arresting hand on sin; but Christ has been justified from sin once and for ever: ver. 8.

8. For the crucifixion of those justified in Christ is God's act of mercy toward such as He has chosen to eternal life. Our responsibility begins as soon as the old man is nailed to the cross, to keep him there, and not to serve our old master, sin, by giving flesh its freedom. It is for God, too, to put an end to the old man.

1. Thus we are (in one view) to be like Christ in the activity of new life, spiritually risen from the midst of the spiritually dead around.

2. In another view we are to regard 'the flesh of sin' as sentenced to the death of the cross; so that all attempts to set him free are unlawful. New life has come in; the old ruler of our lives is put down, and dead in law.

(1) The first of these likenesses to Christ's death is visible, and is an act of obedience in those who own Christ as Lord.

(2) The second respects eternal life, and in order to enter on *that*, there must be justification from sin. This is necessary to all members of the Christ.

Reward comes first, but its day is *temporary*. The eternity that follows is the gift of God's *grace* to those justified by faith in Christ. Thus pride is silenced. This is the order also given in the previous chapter; first the 'reign in life' to those rewarded; then "eternal life" by grace through the righteousness wrought out by Christ: v. 17, 21.

Death with Christ implies future life with Him, and that eternally.

'But is not this a contradiction?' By no means; the reconciliation turns on the division of the Christian into the old man, and the new. The old man is to be kept down until its death. The new man is set by God to work good, and to obtain His reward. Our assurance of life eternal in Christ rests on the Saviour's entire justification from sin.

12. "Let not therefore sin reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof."

This exhortation is manifestly opposed to the idea of present perfection in the believer. It supposes the existence of sin in him, and only calls on him not to let it *reign*. 'There is leaven in the house; only do not *eat* of it.' It would have run else somewhat in this strain: 'Rejoice, believer, for sin *ceases to exist* in you!' And then the conclusion might well be: 'It is *impossible* that you should offend. The fight against sin is past.'

'Continuance in sin' means 'the reign of sin' within you. But the promise to you, if obedient to the exhortation, is, not that you shall never sin, even in thought or word, but that: "*Sin shall not have dominion over you.*" For you are in Christ, and under the gracious energy of the Holy Ghost.

Great is the contrast, then, to the Proposal!

Let it "not reign in *your mortal body*."

Why has the apostle put 'your' instead of 'our'? Was it because of his regard to those who made the Proposal? They needed this exhortation. He did not.

But why does he speak of "*your mortal body*"?

1. As opposed to the Saviour's *immortal* one. As your body is under sentence of death, there may be a detaining of it in the tomb when others arise. It will be so, if sin reigns in it, as it is said more definitely in what follows; and in Galatians. "The works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery," &c. "Of which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall *not inherit the kingdom of God*:" v. 19.

It appears from this 'Do not let sin *reign* in your body *ready to die*'—that Paul is distinguishing you by two marks from Christ, (1) who has *died*, while you are only as yet '*mortal*;' and (2) by His being *justified from sin*, while you have yet to *render in your account* to the Lord at His return.

The old man is in us by birth of the flesh; the new man enters by the regeneration of the Holy Spirit. Then begins the strife of the two opposing natures. The old man cannot cast out the new; the new cannot get rid of the old. It is a sense of this that brings out the cry, "O wretched man that I am!"

2. And again, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his own flesh *shall out of the flesh reap corruption*:" vi. 7, 8. That is, those not counted worthy of the millennial kingdom abide in the corruption of the tomb during the thousand years.

By sin at the first came death; death is its wages. And death will show itself again as its result in the case of the wilful eaters of leaven. During the great day of recompence they will be cut off from the congregation of the living.

"*That ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.*"

'The reign of sin' is the call to obey the lusts of the flesh, met by the man's obedience. The king is Sin, who lays his plans and issues his commands; while he who obeys it is the subject. What the Spirit of God requires is, that the Christian should keep under the flesh. It will die; but crucifixion is a slow death.

13. "Nor yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin. But yield yourselves to God, as alive from among the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God."

The two views of the *Master* commanding, and of the *servant* rendering obedience, occur throughout the paragraph.

But the Master, if I apprehend it aright, is not some ruler *outside* the man, but the *head*, as the governing part of each. The reference is still to the crucified. While the limbs were nailed, the head was left comparatively free. Also the *crown* was placed on the Saviour's *head*, as owning that to be the kingly part of

man. Accordingly the Saviour, though unable to move His limbs, yet prayed, gave commands to John and to His mother, and dispensed pardon to the dying robber.

The *thorns*, as the constituents of the crown, were God's memento of the sinfulness of the head of the fallen, as well as of the hands and feet.

If the head rule, the limbs obey; the whole man is engaged in the service of sin.

"*But yield yourselves to God as those alive from among the dead.*"

God is your new Master. You were by nature among the dead in sins. By faith in Christ, and as regenerate by the Spirit, you have spiritually arisen from among the spiritually dead. And this spiritual resurrection of regeneration is the necessary preparative to the resurrection of the body also at the return of Christ. None but the spiritually alive will find life penetrate their body also during the millennial day. The Saviour will bid the workers of lawlessness to depart from Him, and not enter the kingdom in that day of award: Matt. vii. 23; Psa. v. 5.

The body and the spirit together make up the man. First comes the regeneration of the spirit; then God, in baptism, puts in His claim for the body. For our adoption is not fully attained, till we have received the redemption of the body.

What if the old man reign? There will be no part in the glory of the thousand years. With great solemnity Paul twice asserts this: Gal. v. 19. His soul shall abide in Hadees; his body in the tomb: Acts ii. Now is the sowing time; the coming day is the reaping. Such as is the seed sown, will be the harvest reaped: Gal. vi. 8. And a word of caution is added—not to cease sowing while the present brief opportunity lasts.

"*And your members as instruments of righteousness to God.*"

Are you justified by *righteousness imputed*? It is in order that you may work *practical righteousness* now. The blood put on the door outside, in making the house safe from the sword of the angel, was designed to furnish the occasion to put out the crumbs of leaven.

The good and faithful servants shall be pronounced worthy to enter the joy of their Lord.

14. "For sin shall not lord it over you; for ye are not under law, but under grace."

Lordship is imputed to the mighty three: (1) LAW; (2) SIN; (3) DEATH.

1. LAW hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth: vii. 1.

2. SIN lords it over the men of nature. This verse specifies the only exceptions.

3. DEATH. Death had dominion once over Christ Himself; over the sinful sons of men He *reigns*: v. 21. A threefold cord, not soon broken!

The promise here upholds the exhortation not to let sin reign. 'Let sin not *reign*!' Blessed is the answering promise: 'Sin shall not reign.' Many are seeking complete deliverance *now*! 'Tis vain, and has misled multitudes of believers.

"*For ye are not under law.*"

The men of Adam's fallen nature and the men of Moses lie under law. Law is excellent in itself; but, as applied to man the sinner, it can never retract its sentence of condemnation; *never sanctify*. Many who have got so far as to see that it cannot *justify*, yet think that it is to be *the rule of life* to the justified.

But law, demanding in justice the obedience of the flesh, gives no aid. Its sad effects, both under Adam and Moses, have been stated in the latter half of chapter v. "By the law is the knowledge [not of *salvation*, but] of *sin*." "Sin, taking occasion by the

commandment (the tenth), *wrought in me all manner of lust*. For without the law, *sin was dead*." "When the commandment came *sin revived, and I died*." Rom. vii. Paul knew, that while excellent in itself, as applied to the fallen, it was "*the strength of sin*." 1 Cor. xv. 56. How impossible, after these three assertions of God, that it should sanctify! Says Paul: "*I through law died to law, that I might live to God*." Law itself instructed the obedient Jew, that it could neither justify nor sanctify. Paul, therefore, died to it, and solemnly rebukes Peter for returning to its precepts. "God sent His Son, made under the law, to *redeem (to buy out) those under law, that we might receive the adoption of sons*." Gal. iv. 4, 5. Those under law have only the priests and sacrifices of Aaron's line, which can never take away sins.

"*But under grace*."

We are not by our sins to seek to arouse God's compassion, that He may send us grace. We are already under it. Righteousness, "*the righteousness of God*," has come in the work of Jesus Christ our Lord. And "*Christ is the end of the law unto righteousness to every one that believeth*." Rom. x. 4.

1. The righteousness of Christ once imputed to the believer, he is set free from the law of Moses to become a member of Christ, and to listen to the commands of the Son of God: Matt. xvii.

2. And the Holy Spirit dwells in those who are regenerated, and works in them the holiness desired by God. Grace is successful alike in justification and in sanctification, for it lands us in the fulness of Christ, instead of urging payment on the bankrupt.

15. "What, then, shall we sin because we are not under law, but under grace? God forbid."

This is a somewhat changed form of the Evil Proposal. At first it was, "Shall we *continue in sin*

that grace may abound?" That '*continuance*' is shown to be out of the question, because Christians by faith *died* to sin. And death cuts off continuance in the former standing, whether of Adam or of Moses. But the perverse heart of man seeks to get rid of God's claims of holiness, and turns aside the intent of the Most High in setting His justified ones under grace. As if the only reason why sin was to be given up was the fear of punishment! 'If we are not to be damned, let us sin against God!'

God has set His people of the Gospel under grace, with the full design that they may become holy; grace being the principle favourable to the love of God, and therefore to holiness.

How sharp the contrast! The Proposal was, 'Let us continue in *sin* that *grace* may abound!' God's plan is to put us '*under grace* that *sin* may not abound!'

But many Christians, in spite of all that Scripture can say, will not believe that there can be holiness save under law. The Ten Commandments in the Chancel, and the reading of them before the Communion Service of the Church of England, with the prayer to have the heart inclined to keep each of the ten, satisfies most, that there is to be a mixture of law and grace. Yet Galatians v. says,—"*Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage*." "Christ is become of no effect to you that are *being justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace*." Gal. v. 4. "We know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully. *Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient*." 1 Tim. i. 8, 9. And, "*If ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law*." Gal. v. 18.

The Christian is under the commands of the Son of God, delivered, not to the slaves of law, but to the sons of God. "This is My Beloved Son; **HEAR HIM!**"

16. "Know ye not, that to whom you yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are whom you obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?"

The question of the former verse supposes ignorance of a first truth, which it were disgraceful for a Christian not to know. If you will, because you are under grace, *sin* during this present day of grace, you have forgotten what is testified in the second chapter, that a day is coming in which God means to display His justice, by rendering to every soul of man recompence according to his works.

Now there are but two masters, of opposite principles, and the award you will get in the day to come depends on *which of the two you serve now*. "*He that committeth sin is the servant (slave) of sin.*" John viii. But "*death is the wages of sin.*" This will be the consequence to every believer that after his justification lives, as proposed, in sin.

'Believers live in *sin*, and get its wages—death!'—some may say.

'Yes! the apostle is arguing with the Roman believers, is he not?' "Shall *we* sin?" "Lest when I come again my God will humble me among you, and I shall bewail many which have *sinned already, and have not repented* of the uncleanness, and fornication, and lasciviousness, which they have committed:" 2 Cor. xii. 21. "I told you before, and foretell you, as if I were present the second time; and being absent now I write to *them that heretofore have sinned*, and to all others, that if I come again I will not spare:" xiii. 2. "Nay, *ye are doing wrong, and defrauding, and that your brethren*. Know ye not that unrighteous ones shall not inherit the kingdom of God?" 1 Cor. vi.

"*Whether of sin unto death.*"

What then are we to understand by '*death*'? Here is a difficulty, not to be surmounted without a truth not generally received by Christians. Some understand by it '*eternal death*,' or the portion of the lost. What then becomes of the election of God, and the per-

severance of the saints? The difficulty has arisen, out of the not believing in the millennial day of reward to works. The second chapter has very distinctly affirmed this: ver. 5—11.

'But how can *death* touch one who has *life* in Christ?'

What could affect with death those sheltered under the blood of the Lamb? *Eating the leaven!* "For whosoever eateth that which is leavened, even *that soul shall be cut off* from Israel, whether he be a stranger or born in the land:" Ex. xii. 15, 19.

Meyer says, that (1) 'Death is not the result of individual sin.' That is true; death comes to us from Adam. He says, too, (2) 'that death cannot be averted, even from the servant of righteousness.' That also is true. But ordinary death to the believer is only 'sleep.' The death here threatened is to be inflicted upon *servants*, as the sentence of Christ at His return. "Cast ye the unprofitable servant into the darkness that is outside; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." See also 1 Thess. iv. 3—7.

There are several other passages which in various forms affirm the same doctrine. "The end of those things is death." "*For the wages of sin is death:*" ver. 23. "For if ye live after the flesh, ye are about to *die*:" viii. 13. And *that*, in a day when the righteous will receive life, and come out from among the dead, at the first resurrection. "They who do such (evil) things shall not inherit (have part in) the kingdom of God." "For he that soweth to his own flesh, shall *out of the flesh reap corruption*; but he that soweth to the spirit, shall out of the spirit reap life (not only millennial but) everlasting:" Gal. v. 21; vi. 7, 8; Rom. v. 17; Rev. ii. 26; xx. 4—6.

"*Or of obedience unto righteousness.*"

Worthy of notice is it, that this alternative is not given just as the contrast to the former, as we should have expected. Then we should have had as the parallel,—"*or of righteousness unto life.*"

The 'righteousness' here named then is not the *imputed* righteousness of Christ, for that belongs to each, when he believes. It is therefore *practical* righteousness, which is founded upon the imputed, and comes after it.

It is in this sense that the Saviour uses the word to John Baptist concerning his immersion. "Thus it becometh us to *fulfil* all *righteousness*:" Matt. iii. 15. "Except *your righteousness* shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the (millennial) kingdom of heaven:" Matt. v. 20. "*Seek* ye first the kingdom of God and *His righteousness*:" vi. 33. We are already possessed of righteousness imputed. "He hath dispersed abroad; He hath given to the poor; *His righteousness* remaineth for ever." The Lord "increase the fruits of *your righteousness*:" 2 Cor. v. 9, 10; 1 Tim. vi. 11; Heb. xi. 33; 1 John ii. 29; iii. 7, 10; 2 John 8.

For entrance into the kingdom is not said to be given to *believers* as such, but to '*the righteous*,' or the saints: Rev. ii. 26, 27; iii. 4. "Then shall the *righteous* shine out as the sun in the kingdom of their Father:" Matt. xiii. 43, 49; x. 41; xxv. 37, 46; Luke xiv. 14; while those excluded the kingdom are '*the unrighteous*.' "Depart from Me, all ye *workers of lawlessness*:" Luke xiii. 27. "Know ye not that *unrighteous persons* shall not inherit (have part in) the kingdom of God?" 1 Cor. vi. 8—11.

17. "But thanks be to God, that ye were the slaves of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart the form of teaching unto which ye were handed over."

God is to be praised that the Romans, who were once the slaves of sin, were so no longer. The force then of the first part of the verse lies in the past tense. We have like passages in—"Such *were* some of you:" 1 Cor. vi. 11. And—"Ye *were* once darkness; but *now* are ye light in the Lord:" Eph. v. 8.

The figure here employed is taken from the foundry. Silver is found fixed in some form or other. It is broken up and melted by heat. While liquid it is poured into some mould prepared to receive it. And that mould is to give it a new and useful form. The mould controls and fixes it. So the Most High intends that the truth of Christ should give us a new and heavenly form, instead of the old which we received from Adam.

Each truth, each practice of Christ received, brings out some new feature in the Christian, well pleasing to God; as each doctrine or rite of Christ refused, leaves an answering defect to the eye of God.

But they had now been transferred from the service of sin to Christ. "They obeyed from the *heart*"—the new doctrine of Christ. Service of the *hand* without the *heart*, is not acceptable to God, or to man. But man must obey either God, or Satan. And obedience must be that of the heart. For religion is a thing of the affections, as well as of the intellect. First the heart, then the lip. If no *faith*, no Christian! They obeyed the type of doctrine which they had heard. All religion, whether true or false, has, beside its doctrines, also *rites*. The ceremonies of a religion make it take form to the eye. By the rites of Christ, His religion is distinguished from both heathenism and Judaism. And baptism is the step of the visible passing over from Adam and Moses, to Christ.

18. "Now having been made free from sin, ye became slaves of righteousness."

'Free from sin.'

Does not, then, this passage tell of Christian perfection? By no means!

There are two kinds of freedom. (1) Freedom from *outward force*. (2) Freedom from *evil inclination within*.

The Christian is free from compulsion from *without*. But the old man with his evil tendencies *within* abides

in him. Multitudes of freemen there are who are slaves of covetousness, or of drink.

"Ye became slaves of righteousness."

The Christian is not delivered from the slavery and curse of the law, in order that he may please himself. Man is not intended to be independent. Obedience is required; but to Christ, as the new Master.

The righteousness here named is practical righteousness, and obedience of heart and hand to Christ is the way of attaining it. The fourth chapter deals with *imputed* righteousness; this with *active* righteousness.

19. "I am speaking after the manner of men, because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye yielded your members servants to uncleanness, and to lawlessness unto lawlessness, even so yield your members servants to righteousness, unto holiness."

This is a sort of apology for the calling the service of God a slavery: ver. 18. As though he had said—"The figure I have used, is, I grant, a very strong one; but I use this comparison with which you are conversant purposely, for you need something very clear and very pungent in its application, to show you the evil of the proposals made in this matter."

"Because of the infirmity of your flesh."

1. 'The infirmity of the flesh' is of two kinds; that of the *understanding*, misrepresenting the state of the case. I wish you to see the contrariety of the spirit and commands of the two Masters, 'Sin' and 'God'; and the consequent impossibility of uniting the two services of masters so opposed.

2. 'The infirmity of the *heart* inclines us, as fallen, constantly to sin. I desire therefore to impress upon you your need, as the servants of God, to have nothing to do with the service of His enemy, sin. You know how little the lord of a slave would allow him to work for his enemy.'

Then the apostle glances at their former life under sin. It was a course of evil mainly in two forms,

(1) uncleanness, and (2) violence. This kind of life issued in producing the settled *character* of lawlessness: independence of God, and defiance of His commands and threatenings. The acting out in life of a sinful principle produces at last the fixed character of sin.

God has given you the righteousness of His Son by imputation. Now act on the practical rules of righteousness given by Christ, and that will issue in holiness, as your abiding character.

20. "For when ye were slaves of sin, ye were free from righteousness."

Your former service to sin was to it exclusively; you never worked at any moment for righteousness. Now that you have changed masters, work as exclusively for righteousness, and never serve sin.

We not unfrequently find young converts saying something quite like this—"When I was wicked, sir, the devil never had a more hearty servant; and now I mean to be as hearty a servant of Christ, as I have been of the Wicked One."

21. "What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death."

This appeal bids them cast an eye over their past life of service to sin. What abiding results of good, presentable to God as the Master, were to be found in it? Fruits are things serviceable and stored for use: Heb. vi. 7. They look onward to the day to come; the amount of good fruit defining the amount of the recompence. Thus the Holy Spirit stigmatises and condemns sins as "the *unfruitful* works of darkness." "For the *fruit of the light* is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth:" Eph. v. 9, 11. So Jude, describing the ways of the wicked, speaks of them as "trees whose *fruit withereth*, dying twice:" Jude 12. "Let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not *unfruitful*:" Tit. iii. 14.

This is a point of vast moment, recurring under various forms.

1. So the Saviour compares disciples to plants of wheat, some not bringing *fruit* to perfection; while the hearers in the good ground, who understand the word, "*bear fruit*, and bring forth, some an hundred-fold, some sixty, some thirty:" Matt. xiii. 23; Mark iv. 20; Luke viii. 15. Here they are ranged as good, according to the various amounts of their fruit.

2. John the Baptist and our Lord both speak of men, in view of the coming judgment, as trees: "Therefore every tree that bringeth not forth good *fruit* is hewn down and cast into the fire." So Peter bids the Christian add new graces to his faith. "For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye be neither idle (Greek) nor *unfruitful* in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." And these good works look onward to the disciple's admission into the kingdom of Christ's glory: 2 Peter i.

3. The same truth appears prominently in those parables of our Lord which regard men as servants of the Most High. In the parable of the Wicked Husbandmen, the proprietor of the vineyard sends servants to the husbandmen that they might receive of the *fruit* of it. Our Lord curses the barren fig tree, possessed of leaves alone.

So the Saviour in the Sermon on the Mount tells us of works which were designed to obtain reward here and now. These get at once their due. They do not look onward for reward from God as the Heavenly Father, nor will they receive any.

And where He is treating of His own servants, He notices the present as the time of service, and the day of appearing before Him as that of award in proportion to the amount gained. The successful servants in the Talents and the Pounds appear before Him in the order of the amount realised by them during the time of His absence. Ten cities are awarded to the gainer

of ten pounds; five cities to the winner of five pounds; and punishment is the sentence on the servant who through sloth had nought to present.

There would, then, be nothing good to present to God as the result of a life of sin. And the apostle stringently applies the same truth to believers, in that word—*"For land which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft on it, and bringeth forth herbs useful for those by whom it is also cultivated, receiveth blessing from God; but if it bear thorns and briars it is rejected, and is near to a curse; whose end is burning:"* (Greek) Heb. vi. After the work of life is ended, the retribution of the Master is coming.

"Those things of which you are now ashamed; for the end of those things is death."

Already the Christian is ashamed of his previous life of sin; but there is yet to be an award to the deeds done by means of the body. What then would be the issue in that day? To the seekers, in patient good works, after "*glory, honour, and incorruptibility*," there will be eternal life, beginning with the thousand years: ii. 7, 10. But to the doers of evil (1) *shame* and (2) *death*.

Sum up then the gains of the pleasures of sin for a season. They are shame and death, not glory and incorruptibility.

22. "But now having been made free from sin, but become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end eternal life."

This does not mean that the Christian has no sinful tendency within, but that he has been handed over entirely from the former service of sin to that of the new Master, God, as the contrast to the previous slavery to sin.

"Ye have your fruit unto holiness."

Again there arises the question concerning the results of the new life. Out of it spring good works,

fruit capable of being possessed, and presented at last. "Ye have" it. "I desire fruit that may *abound to your account*." For upon the work of the life will rest the Judge's award.

This fruit is "*unto holiness*."

If I rightly understand, this means, that beside the good works presented to the Master, there will be the abiding and eternal effect for *good on your own character*. A course of obedience to Christ will settle and fix your state as holy.

Sanctification is completed and the character fixed for holiness, by obedience to the commands of Christ in the spirit of faith. So the Saviour at the close of the Sermon on the Mount assures us, that those only who act out His words will be able to stand all assaults on their faith. Those who only admire the Saviour's teaching, as beautiful and heavenly, without obeying it, will not be able to bear the heavy onset about to assail the men of Christ.

"*But the end eternal life*." Δε.

Perhaps we should render 'but' instead of "and," for eternal life is not our merit, and therefore it were better not to link it on to the effect just named. It is the consequence of serving the better Master, God. Holiness is happiness, and it is the suited temper for enjoying the eternity of bliss in the presence and city of God.

So we may sum up the effects of the service of the better Master, God, as being (1) *Fruit*, as the consequence of the active service; (2) *Holiness*, as the abiding character; and (3) *Eternal Life*, as the promised destiny of such.

23. "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord."

Wages is something paid as the reward of work done. It is founded on the word of the Master. When the work is done, the reward is deserved and is

due. Sin appeals to God as the Just Governor, and to His word previously given. In the coming day God will display His righteousness in the award both to the doers of good, and to the doers of evil. That righteous judgment of God will embrace "*every soul of man that doeth evil*." Therefore it applies to the sins of believers if unrepented of, and found unforgiven at Christ's appearing. This appears in every account of the proceedings of that day. "The Lord shall *judge His people*:" Heb. x. 30. "Fornicators and adulterers God will *judge*:" xiii. 4. "The Lord is the *Avenger* of all such, as we have also forewarned you, and testified:" 1 Thess. iv. 6. These words just precede the description of Christ's Presence, descending to take up to Himself the living and the dead believers.

The first clause of this verse takes up the last of verse 21: "The end of those things is *death*." That is fully deserved; earned from God, as wages from a master for work done. That is not true of the Christian's good deeds. They do not, indeed, deserve eternal life. Eternal life is ours only of grace, and belongs to us only as we are one with Christ. Thus is the last clause of verse 22 resumed and confirmed. Thus we get a view of (1) the two *Masters*; (2) the two *Services*; (3) the *Work* achieved during life; and then (4) the final *Award* at the coming of Christ.

"We are receiving the due reward of our deeds," said the penitent robber. His life of sin was closing; justice had affixed him to the cross in execution of the Governor's sentence. But his faith rests on the Son of God, suffering for sins not His own. His enlightened eye sees in the Crucified One the coming King. He looks to Him, at whom the crowd were scoffing as absurdly calling Himself a King; and asks to be remembered in the day of His return and power.

But while the Saviour in grace bestows on him the gift of eternal life, He is silent about the kingdom. Grace and righteousness have each their own field.

Grace bestows eternal life against deserts; but righteousness bestows reward in the coming day, to obedience after faith. And to the crucified robber all hope of service was cut off.

And when we refer to the first resurrection, we find it written, "The rest of the dead lived not again till the thousand years were finished. This is the First Resurrection: *Blessed and holy* is he that hath part in the first resurrection: *over such the Second Death hath no power*, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him the thousand years."

Answerably hereto the Book of Life appears at the judgment of the dead before the Great White Throne. It bears the names of those not rewarded for their works, but saved by grace. At the close of the Day of Recompence comes in the reign of grace, which brings to the believer eternal life.

"*But the gift of God is eternal life.*"

Eternal life cannot be deserved by any, not even by an unfallen angel; how much less by any son of fallen Adam! But God of His sovereign mercy bestows it against desert on all who believe in Christ Jesus. Holiness after regeneration will receive, at God's decision, the reward of the thousand years; but after they are ended the saved enter on *eternal life*, as the result of Christ's *eternal righteousness*. Earth and heaven shall both pass away. "But" (says God) "*My salvation shall be for ever, and My righteousness shall not be abolished.*" Sinners may reproach and revile those justified by the righteousness of Christ, "*but My righteousness shall be for ever; and My salvation from generation to generation.*" Isa. li. 6—8; xxxii. 17; Dan. ix. 24.

And by eternal life is meant, not only endless existence, but the annexed blessings which make existence desirable.

"The wages of sin is death"—is a principle applying to believers. The question treated is—'What will be

the result to any believer, if, after faith and justification, he chooses to walk in disobedience to Christ?' as many Christians are doing.

And the reply is—'That sin, whether found among the worldly, or among believers, will have, if not pardoned now on repentance, its effect of death. Not of *eternal* death, as many say, when commenting on this and like passages; for grace bestows "*eternal life*," after the day of reward according to works. The reward due to the work of each is to be given in the coming day of "the revelation of the righteous judgment of God." It is to take effect "*on every soul of man that doeth evil.*" Are not many believers doing evil? and have they not human souls? Are there no believers put out of God's assemblies in obedience to His Word? Are there none who have died, while so put out?

"*In Jesus Christ our Lord.*"

We are thus knit to the second Great Head of mankind, "*the Righteous One.*" As the issue of a life of sin is endless punishment in the lake of fire,—"*the Second Death*";—so the blessed gift of God is eternal life in the everlasting city of God, the new Jerusalem.

While Jesus is our Saviour, He is also "*our Lord*," to issue commands, and to take account of obedience, or of disobedience among His servants. "Why call ye me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not the things that I say?"

We may regard this verse as the final and decisive answer to the Proposal made to the believer in the first verse.

1. "*Let us continue in sin.*" "Shall we *sin*, because we are not under law, but under grace?" "*The wages of sin is death.*"

2. "*That grace may abound.*" "*Grace shall reign through righteousness unto eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.*" "The gift of God is *eternal life* in Jesus Christ our Lord." How can any 'abounding of *grace*' go beyond "*eternal life*," and that "*in Christ Jesus our Lord*"?

Let a few remarks now be made about the knitting together of *justification* with *sanctification*.

1. By *justification* is meant the removal of the accusations of law against acts of disobedience; and the withdrawal of the penalty against them. But it supposes also the establishing of *positive righteousness*, or complete obedience to law, so that the party justified is possessed of the prize of righteousness, or eternal life. If this righteousness is obtained by the man's own obedience, the original contract is satisfied. But what if we are justified by grace, or through the righteousness of Another imputed to us? *May we not then live in sin after justification?*

2. By *sanctification* is meant the removal of sin as an inward principle of evil, unfitting us for dwelling, and that for ever, in the presence of God the Holy. How then has God knit Sanctification to Justification?

(1) By union to Christ the Justified, and the Holy. This is attested by the first rite of God commanded to Christians. *Baptism* (or immersion) represents the believer's being united to Christ in death to sin, in his burial, and then in his resurrection with Christ his Saviour, to newness of life. Christ is Surety, that believers justified shall at length be presented holy before God, either at His coming, or at the judgment of the Throne, after the first resurrection.

(2) By the principle of *grace* which God has chosen, in the place of law, to be the ruling one of His people's life after justification. Law had been tried, and it only increased trespasses, bringing in death, and the reign of death. Far from making the sinner holy, it is "the strength of *sin*," while the flesh is evermore weak. Both forms of law, (1) that under *Adam*, with the conscience as guide, and (2) that under *Moses*, with a body of written laws to direct the conduct, are set forth as having alike ruinously failed: v. 12—21.

(3) By appointing a day of a thousand years' duration;

during which rewards will be granted to the obedient, and punishments to the disobedient: ii. 5—11.

(4) By the discovery to us of the sad effects of one act of trespass in our first parents, entailing death and corruption, or the reign of death over soul and body.

(5) By the discovery to us of God's mind regarding the justified in the pattern-case of Abraham. He is first justified by grace through faith, and after long trial of his walk, he is justified by God for his works. Abraham, called to obey two difficult commands, at once obeyed; and received promises by oath, never to be withdrawn. 1. "*Because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, in blessing I will bless thee.*" 2. "*And in thy Seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed My voice.*" Gen. xxii. Here then is the blest contrast to *Adam*. Adam sins, and on all his posterity sentence of death falls: while only in the words of wrath on the serpent is 'the Seed of the Woman' named. But to Abraham and through Abraham's Seed (which is Christ) blessing shall flow and the Gospel of grace to all nations is the preparation for it.

What is the connection between the Seventh chapter, and the preceding? It is twofold.

1. The first is found in verses 14 and 15. "*For sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under law, but under grace.*" "*What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law, but under grace?*" Here we are shown the superiority of grace over law, in producing holiness.

2. The second bond and more immediate, is with the last three verses of the sixth chapter.

"Having then been made free from sin, but made servants to God, ye have (1) your fruit unto holiness, (2) but the end eternal life. *For the wages of sin is death*; but the gift of God is eternal life in Jesus

Christ our Lord." And only in Jesus Christ are there righteousness and eternal life.

These three benefits, (1) fruit to holiness now, (2) freedom from sin, and (3) eternal life at the close, suppose the deliverance from law. For he who is *under law is under sin and death*: as verse 14, just cited, declares. And the fruit of flesh under law is "*unto death*:" as is testified by vii. 6.

Chapter vi. witnessed to the need of the Christian's being delivered from *sin*. Now we have the necessity of being delivered from *law*. For to flesh, the Law is only "*the law of sin and death*." Neither justification nor sanctification are possible under it. "For the *strength of sin* is the *law*:" 1 Cor. xv. 56.

At this point the objection of the men of law would come in.

'You were slaves of sin; you now serve righteousness.' 'You were under the law of Moses and of Eden; you are now, you say, in Christ and under grace.' 'You have by your sins deserved death: how have you escaped the penalty threatened by law? To desert Moses for Christ is spiritual adultery.'

The answer is—'Not so! Law retains its hold only during the life of a *man*' (the word signifying merely a human being). Where the distinction of 'man' from 'woman' occurs (verses 2, 3), a different Greek word is used.

1. '*But law has died to us who believe*.' In passages afterwards to be adduced, the abolition of *law* is declared: v. 1—3.

2. '*We, too, have died to law*.' And on this, too, is founded our freedom from law: v. 4—6.

This twofoldness of death—(1) the death of the husband, and (2) the death of the wife, is of importance; if it be only to rescue the word of God from the supposed inconsecutiveness of Paul's reasoning here.

All the commentators that I have consulted assume that there is the death but of *one* only. Hence the

difficulties found in commenting are more or less supposed to be due to an oversight in the apostle's style.

1. Alford says—"It must be carefully borne in mind that we are freed, not (1) by *the law having died to us* (which matter here is not treated), but (2) by *our having died to the law*." He allows, then, only of the death of the *wife*.

2. Hodge says—"The apparent confusion in this passage arises from the apostle's not carrying the figure regularly through. As a woman is free from obligation to her husband by *his* death, so we are freed from the law by its death, is obviously the illustration intended." Hodge allows only of the death of the *husband*.

3. Godet says—"The idea of the whole passage is *not* that of the objective abolition of *the law* by the coming of Christ; the point in question is *the believer's* subjective *emancipation* from this external standard through faith in Christ's death."

Now in the first three verses of the chapter the supposed death is that of the *law*, or the *husband*. "*If the husband* have died, she (the wife) is loosed."

But in verses 4—6, the *wife* dies. "*Ye* were put to death to *the law*."

Both deaths, then, are to be owned; both are necessary to the apostle's argument.

1. The death of the law is, so to speak, a *natural* death, the result of old age and imbecility, "for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof." "In that He saith a new covenant, He hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away:" Heb. viii. 13. "*The law* and the prophets *were until John*; since that time the kingdom of God is being preached:" Luke xvi. 16.

This has already been assumed: "*Ye* are *not under law*, but under grace." It served its purpose till the coming of the Seed to whom the promises were made. The death of the husband then refutes any charge of spiritual adultery.

2. '*The wife also has died to the law*.' Here is the force of the word also—'*Ye also*'—that is, the *wife* has

died, as well as *the husband*. But the believer's death to law is not the death of nature, but the death of justice *inflicted on a criminal*. This takes up the other point brought forward in the preceding context. "The wages of *sin* is *death*." "*Ye were put to death*,"—is the answer.

The first view (in verses 1—3) asserts the lawfulness of a second marriage, because of the husband's death. But that does not pay the *wages of sin*. So the second view (verses 4—6) must come in. That shows death with Christ, and the law's demands met. But death with Christ takes us out from earth and law, that we may belong to Him, the risen. Law the injured husband, prosecutes his wife to death, and that is his infliction of divorce—much stronger than the old 'bill of divorce.' Grace is then free to visit us. Law itself, in its prosecuting you to death, has thrown you on Christ for rescue.

If it should be objected: 'But you have made law already dead; how then can he prosecute?' the answer is simple:—The prosecution takes place before the death.

CHAPTER VII.

1. "Know ye not, brethren, (for I am speaking to them that know law), that the law lords it over the man as long as he lives."

WE are made over from *Moses* to *Christ*. But how can that take place with the leave of *law*?

We see by the history of Paul at Antioch of Pisidia, how hostile were the men of law to the passage of any from Moses' law to grace. They "contradicted and blasphemed." And most probably they affirmed the turning from Moses to Christ to be spiritual adultery. 'Was it spiritual adultery in Israel to leave Jehovah for the worship of stocks and stones? It was no less spiritual adultery in the Christian to leave Jehovah for the worship and service of the man Christ.'

This was a powerful statement, likely to shake the faith of many. Here, then, we have the answer of the God of grace, who has devised our salvation in a way free from all righteous objection. 'You call this service of Christ, O Jews, a breach of the law of marriage. But the law of marriage is limited in its range and power to *this life*. Its bonds end with death.'

During life the law takes the place of the husband, and rules. It finds 'man,'* whether husband† or

* *ἄνθρωπος*.

† *ἄνθρωπος*. *הָאָדָם*. This change of the Greek word—the first marking the general term; the second, noticing the division into 'man' and 'woman,' is very remarkable, and reminds us of Genesis i. 26, 27:—"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them."

wife, opposed to God; (1) in spirit at enmity against Him: and (2) in *actions* also. The spirit is the tree; the actions, its fruit. The tree remaining the same, the fruit continues to be the same.

2. "For the woman who is under a husband is bound to the husband (man) while he is alive, by law; but if the husband have died, she is delivered from the law of the husband."

The Greek word here used * expresses the subjection of the wife to the husband. And this bond lasts for life, and is a principle of law. But it is broken by death—"Till death us do part."

3. "So then, if, while her husband is alive, she belong to another husband, she shall be called by God † an adulteress."

We are dealing now with the law of God, and adultery was divinely forbidden by the voice of Jehovah at Horeb. And it supposes the penalty of death, which is afterwards definitely stated: "The adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death:" Lev. xx. 10. Here lies the force of the Jews' plea, that the turning from Moses' law to Christ was adultery, to be visited by God with just punishment. The apostle's aim, therefore, is to show that death to the first husband, and transfer to the second, is owned by God's own law.

The expression "if *she belong to another husband* (man) is very observable. It is the expression used in the law of divorce. "When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes because he hath found some uncleanness in her, then let him write her a bill of divorce, and give it in her hand, and send her out

* *ῥαυδος*.

† *Χρηματίζω*. This word always means that the word spoken is *from God*. It is given as "warned of God"—in Matt. ii. 12, 22, and Acts x. 22. So it should be in xi. 26. Our name as 'Christians' is given by *God*.

of his house. And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and *belong to another man*." Deut. xxiv. The expression denotes, then, her subjection to, and union with, the second husband, and hints the further direction of the argument.

Thrice the expression appears here. In verse 3 twice; in verse 4 once.

"But if the husband have died, she is free from the law; so that she is no adulteress, though belonging to another husband."

The life or death of each of the married pair depends on God, and neither may move in the matter of a new marriage, till God have taken away the life of one of them. For the wife to slay the husband in order to set herself free from the bond, would be murder. So none under law might break away from obedience to law, till the Most High brought in grace by Christ. But the apostle's plea here is that Law, the original husband, has been slain and abolished by the Lord for us.

The apostle is arguing that God has to the believer annulled the law of Moses. *Law, the original husband of flesh, has died*. Let us look at some texts in proof: (1) The law is "the ministry of death, written and engraven in stones." It brings death, while the Holy Spirit, the life of the Gospel, brings *life*. "The ministry of *condemnation*" was contained in the two tables of the law, which Moses bore from Sinai to Israel, in spite of the glory which shone from his face. Much more, then, does the Gospel, which is the ministry of the *righteousness of Christ*, "exceed in glory." "For if *that which is done away* was glorious, much more *that which remaineth* is glorious."

(2) "We use great plainness of speech, and not as Moses, who put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of *that which is abolished*:" 2 Cor. iii. 7—13.

(3) "For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law:" Heb. vii. 12. He who belongs to law belongs also to the priesthood of Aaron, which cannot by the blood of bulls and goats take away sin.

(4) Christ "hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us (Jew and Gentile), having abolished* in His flesh the law of commandments contained in ordinances:" Eph. ii. 14, 15.

(5) God "having forgiven you all trespasses; having blotted out the handwriting (bond) of ordinances, which was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross:" Col. ii. 13, 14. "You died with Christ out from the elements of the world:" ver. 20.

Thus it is shown that God has taken away the life and force of the law. The woman, then, is set free, by the death of her first husband, to form an alliance with another. She is no adulteress in turning from Moses to Christ. She obtains her second marriage with leave of the law.

The law is not here said to be dead. The apostle observes the distinction between 'has died' and 'is dead.' And two different expressions in the Greek confirm the distinction.

Thrice the apostle has used the expression 'has died.'†

1. "But if the husband have died:" ver. 2.
2. "But if the husband have died:" ver. 3.
3. "Having died where we were held:" ver. 6.‡

And once:—

4. "We were put to death to law:" ver. 4.

Now in general it might seem a mere quibble to

* Καταργησας. "Removed its power of life."

† Αποθνήσκω. 'Is dead'—would be the verb εστι joined with νεκρος.

‡ Αποθανόντες. The true reading.

insist on the distinction between 'the man has died' and 'the man is dead.' But in the present case there are exceptions arising out of the entrance of resurrection after death. (1) Those who rose at the Saviour's coming forth from the tomb 'had died,' but they 'are dead' no longer.

(2) "If righteousness come by the law Christ died in vain." 'Is dead' is not true. He lives for evermore: Gal ii. 21.

So of us. 'We died to sin,' but we are not 'dead' to it.

In Galatians Paul says, not 'The law is dead,' but "I through law died to law." "Nevertheless I live."

May we say the law is dead? To the believer in Christ it has died. But to unbelievers, who are still guilty and under condemnation, law still subsists. If it were absolutely removed, "How, then, shall God judge the world?" Law is the standard of judgment to those under the law. "As many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law:" Rom. ii. 12. "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid! yea, we establish the law:" iii. 31. And the argument in this seventh chapter supposes the binding of the law on all who are still in the flesh, and not brought out by faith from law into the grace of Christ.

4. "So then, my brethren, ye also were put to death to law by means of the body of the Christ, so that we belong to another, to Him that has been raised from among the dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God."

"So then." This is the application of the argument. "My brethren." This is no mere formal word. It has occurred only once before this chapter: i. 13. Here it appears twice: ver. 1, 4.

"So, then"—(1) In order that you may be no longer under law. (2) In order that, after suffering the dues of law in Christ, we may belong to Christ,

and find in Him the gift of God, eternal life. For in order to your salvation, you need the removal of law, sin, and death. And in this way does God effect His gracious counsel towards us. "*Through law I died to law, that I might live to God.*"

The rendering "ye are become dead" is not an adequate one. The Greek word means "to put to death." That will translate it in its every occurrence. That is the translation given in Matthew and Mark, where the death of our Lord, which is the point of moment here, is related. (1) "Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to *put Him to death.*:" Matt. xxvi. 59. (2) "When the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus, to *put Him to death.*:" xxvii. 1. (3) "And the chief priests and all the council sought for witness against Jesus to *put Him to death.*:" Mark xiv. 55.

It is not natural death that is here in question. It is violent death, inflicted by law for some heavy crime. "The adulterer and the adulteress *shall surely be put to death.*"

Herein we have advanced beyond the former steps of the argument. We should have expected, as the consequence of the premises stated,—'So, then, Moses, your first husband, has died; and you are free to belong to Jesus Christ.' That would omit the wife's criminality, which is the special point in this case. But now we have the *death* of the wife: "*Ye were put to death.*" "*We were delivered from the law, having died.*:" ver. 6.

It is no longer, as under Moses, the wife's divorce by a writing. Why not? Because the Saviour has taught us that that permission, given by Moses, arose out of the hardness of the hearts of Israel; and it is now recalled. The Saviour brings this out strikingly

Luke xvi. God set up the law; but, by the sending His Son, He calls all away from Moses to Christ.

To the scoffing, self-justifying Pharisees Jesus announces the passing away of Moses and the prophets. "*The law and the prophets were until John*;" since that time *the Kingdom of God* is being preached." "But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tittle of the law to fail." He brings the matter to a test in the next verse—"Whoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery." That is, 'If you will refuse my warning, and assume that Moses' law is still in force, dismissing your wives when they displease you by a writ of divorce, I give you notice, that in the coming day it will be judged and punished as adultery:' Luke xvi. 14—18.

The God that gave the law has recalled it in favour of His Son's commands. Moses and Elijah are before God on the mount; but, "This is My Beloved Son: **HEAR HIM.**"

"*Ye were put to death to law.*"* You were transgressors of the law, under condemnation from it. You have now suffered its sentence. You were put to death *to law*. Law prosecuted you to death as guilty of transgression; and by death you have been set free to belong to Christ.

"*By means of the body of the Christ.*"

This answers the question—'How did your death to law take place?' "By means of *the body of the Christ.*"

The expression is a difficult one. But it means 'by the *death* of Christ on the cross.'

Let us just notice in passing the contradiction here given to two of the fundamental positions of Gnosticism. Christ was (1) a *man* possessed of a human body, and (2) He was really *slain*. His soul passed away from His body on the cross. This Mahomedans deny.

* On both sides the issue is particular and individual. 'Law has died to you.' 'You have died to law.'

"The *body* of the Christ."

Law, in capital punishment, takes effect on the *body* of the criminal. And "the *body*" here appears in connection with the capital punishment inflicted by the law.

Let us look at the occurrences of it in the Gospels:—

I. *Before* the Saviour's death.

II. *After* it; and

III. In relation to *burial*, or *its disposal after death*. In resurrection the whole man is free.

1. There was a supper at Bethany; ointment was poured on our Lord, and complaint was made of the waste. Jesus Christ defends the act. "For in that she hath poured this ointment on My *body*, she did it for My burial:" Matt. xxvi. 12.

2. The Saviour celebrates the last supper. "Take, eat, this is My *body*."

3. "The Jews therefore . . . that the *bodies* of the robbers should not remain on the cross on the sabbath day . . . besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away:" John xix. 31. Their bodies were now on the way to death.

But the chief force of the word seems to appear when death has taken place. The soul has departed; only its case—the *body*—remains.

4, 5. Joseph of Arimathæa "went to Pilate and begged the *body* of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the *body* to be delivered."

6. Next came the disposal of the *body* in Joseph's tomb.

"And when Joseph had taken the *body* he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth:" Matt. xxvii. 58, 59.

7. "The women also, which came with Him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how the *body* was laid:" Luke xxiii. 55.

8. After John the Baptist is beheaded, "his disciples

came, and took up the *body*, and buried it:" Matt. xiv. 12.

9. Dorcas has died. But Peter is sent for, and prays for her restoration to life; "then turning him to the *body*, he said, Tabitha, arise:" Acts ix. 40. Here, as in the former instance, "the *body*" means the *dead* body.

Let us look at some passages which use the word *after burial*.

10. Mary Magdalene at the Saviour's sepulchre "seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the *body* of Jesus had lain:" John xx. 12.

11. We have the company of women who visited the tomb bearing spices. They entered in, "but found not the *body* of the Lord Jesus."

12. The two on the way to Emmaus observe that the women "found not *His body*," but learned from angels that He had arisen: Luke xxiv. 3, 23.

By means of these passages we trace the presentation of the Saviour's *body* in its affixing to the cross, His *burial*, and *resurrection*.

By means of the Saviour's *body* nailed to the tree, there expiring, and buried, we, as well as Himself, were put to death. Christ was our substitute; and by means of law's infliction on Him we suffered death. Of our oneness with Him in death, burial, and resurrection, immersion is the visible testimony; and it is a matter of choice, and of obedience to the believer.

The payment of *debt* by another for us is simply the laying down of so much money. But ours is *crime* against law, and here God has devised the *criminal's dying along with His substitute*. The curse came on Him who is the Blessed One, that through that we might come forth into blessing.

"So that we belong to another."

The Greek may signify either, that this was done 'with a view to our belonging to another,' or that 'in

fact we so belong.' Both are true, but the latter lies closer to the argument. A wife so belongs to a man, that he is responsible for her debts.

In ordinary cases, the death of either of a married pair is unforeseen, and no movement toward freedom from the bond can lawfully be taken. But in this, all is arranged beforehand by God; both the removal of the first husband, and the provision of the substitute, in death, who becomes the second husband. His is the leading out from the world of flesh to the heavenly domain of resurrection. And all with a view to the final sanctification of the saved by Christ. The passage in the Acts which comes nearest to this, is, I think, Paul's word at Antioch. "Through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And from all things from which ye could not by the law of Moses be justified, *in Him* every believer is justified:" Acts xiii. 38, 39.

Ye belong to another, "*that has been raised from among the dead.*" Law, stern and exacting his dues, prosecuted you as malefactors unto death. But He to whom we belong in grace gave Himself up to be numbered with transgressors, in order to save us. He is worthy of our service and love. Law belongs to this life and this world. But He takes us beyond this life to the heaven of the risen.

So then (1) *law to you is dead.* And (2) *you have died and been put to death to law.* To Christ law is at an end. He has fulfilled and magnified it. And "*Christ is the end of law unto righteousness to every one that believeth.*" Rom. x. 4.

The death of Christ then has a double aspect, (1) Law put Christ to death; and (2) we were put to death with Him. With Christ's death law's power over us ended. But Moses' law also came to an end for us by the death of Christ. When He was judged, the garment of the High Priest was rent; when He expired, the veil of the temple was rent, earth shaken, and her

rocks rent; while the resurrection of some from the tombs showed that deliverance from the condemnation of the law had been brought in.

"*In order that we should bear fruit to God.*"

Here we have God's final intent in the previous arrangements, which is our sanctification and His good pleasure in us. He desires practical holiness. And law was an obstacle to that end in view, and was therefore removed. The good works following on faith and justification were, as it were, children, owned of the Most High.

5. "For when we were in the flesh, the passions of sins, which were (roused) by means of the law, used to work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death."

The defect is here pointed out which led God in His wisdom and goodness to do away with law as the ruling principle, and to substitute for it grace.

"*When we were in the flesh.*" What a change that supposes in our place before God! As begotten anew by the Holy Spirit, and, if obedient, born out of the water, we take our standing as sons of God under grace! The flesh is in us still; but it is subordinate, and not the ruling power. "Ye are *not* in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if the Spirit of God dwell in you." There is, through grace, a difference *within* us, as well as our being no longer ruled by law from *without*.

"*The passions of sins which were (roused) by means of the law.*"

At creation, flesh was set under law, and speedily sin arose. Law in itself is good, as the apostle goes on to teach in the second part of the chapter. But, as applied to man, the sinner, the effects were evil. And the Most High, in order to secure good fruit, removes law from being the ruling principle outside, and removes flesh from law's dominion within! Law, applied to the flesh, stirs up rebellious desires. Prohibition of a thing makes us desirous of it. Law forbid lusts, but

lusts dwell in the flesh, and draw out sin, while sin ends in death.

*"Used to work * in our members to bring forth fruit unto death."*

This was the constant course of things going on every day and every hour. Flesh demanded one thing, and law the opposite; and flesh was too strong for law. That was true of all times, dispensations, and individuals. It is so still, where the regeneration of the Holy Spirit has not been received.

The actions resulting were only worthy of death. Flesh is dead toward God; and law cannot give it life: Gal. iii. The works then of those under law, however fair to the eye of man, are evil before God. They are not right in the inward temper whence they spring, nor in the motive; for all acts are such as their motives are. To the Hebrews who were under Moses, the apostle writes, testifying that they needed the blood of Christ to cleanse their conscience from the "*dead works*" of which they boasted themselves: Heb. ix. 14. The works of those begotten again by the Holy Ghost and indwelt by Him are good before God, and only works of that kind are so.

6. "But now we have been delivered from the law, having died where we were held bound, so that we serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter."

Here again is testimony of the change effected in our standing, by faith in Christ. "Now" we stand on new ground. It is a Gospel word. The word for 'delivered,' was employed before in verse 2, where it applied to the husband. "But if her husband have died, she is *delivered* (not 'loosed') from the law of the husband." The removal of the law is deliverance. For flesh and law wedded together ever bring forth *death*; and it is a mercy to be delivered from death,

* Force of the imperfect tense.

as the penalty of law. We are not merely delivered from a part of the law, but from the whole of it. Law is a great whole; God has shown it, by declaring that every one is cursed, who keeps not every jot.

So, then, while we may for the convenience of study, divide law into—'moral, ceremonial, and judicial'—we must ever remember, that we have no permission in practice to sever it into parts, and to take one portion as our rule to the omission of another. If you take the Ten Commandments as your rule, you must be circumcised, and keep the seventh day (or Saturday), and put your trust in the priests and sacrifices of Aaron's line; or you are cursed, as not observing the whole.

The effect of death in sundering the marriage-bond is entire and absolute. The wife belonging to a second husband may not carry her first husband's commands into the new home. Christ is more than competent to rule His wife. We have died to law, and remain under death to it. The domain of its power is bounded by this life. We have in Christ risen to a new world.

"Having died, where we were held bound."

The Authorised Version gives it—"that being dead wherein we were held." But that reading is not the genuine one. It was adopted without manuscript authority. But the law in itself is not dead; though *we* have died to it. The death here is of the wife, who was held bound to her husband, but now is set free.

The marriage-bond to law is broken by our death. In the second verse of chapter vi. we were declared to have died to *sin*; here we are said to have died to *law*, which is "the strength of sin." And immersion is God's provided death-in-law, and burial to the old husband. But emersion tells us also, in a sign presented to the eye, that we belong to One who is risen from the dead. Faith in this truth concerning

Christ distinguishes us from the men of flesh and law : Rom. x.

"So that we serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter."

"We serve." Man is not to follow his own devices. He is to obey God. "Sin is lawlessness;" it begins with independence of God, whom he ought to serve as his Master.

"We serve." This is our present place and standing. Under law the motive of obedience was the *fear* of God : Ex. xx. 20. Israel was by their good deeds and obedience generally to escape the wrath of Jehovah, and to win life. But "there is no fear of God before the eyes" of the natural man : and speedily the terrors of the Lawgiver were forgotten, and the covenant of Sinai broken, while Jehovah and Moses were yet on "the Mount of the Covenant."

The true and supreme motive of the renewed man is love of God. For to us has been given by grace eternal life, which the man of law vainly seeks to win. From the regeneration of the Spirit springs the new man, which has the old enmity against God removed from him.

"And not in the oldness of the letter."

The old letter refers to the two tables of stone borne by Moses into the camp of Israel. But, as the apostle says, the letter was "condemnation" and "death." It is true that the Christian may do still many things which an Israelite was commanded to do. But he does them, as a free man, from a new and better motive, and with a higher object in view.

SECOND PART OF CHAPTER VII.

We have now arrived at another critical point in the epistle, on which there are many opinions. The internal history of some one is traced for us. *Who is*

the speaker? (1) Is it some unconverted man? (2) Or some regenerate person, but one under law? (3) Or is it Paul himself?

For myself, I am persuaded that it is Paul describing his own experience—past and present. This is what we naturally conclude from the current of the epistle. He has used 'I' and 'me' and 'my' to describe himself in the first chapter.

1. "I thank *my* God through Jesus Christ for you all:" i. 8. "God is *my* witness, whom *I* serve with *my* spirit:" ver. 9.

2. Sometimes he unites himself to Christians by 'we' and 'our.' "*We* have peace with God through *our* Lord Jesus Christ:" v. 1. "*We* have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand:" ver. 2. "Shall *we* continue in sin?" vi. 1. "How shall *we* that died to sin live in it?" ver. 2.

3. In the middle of the sixth chapter we find (ver. 11—23): "Likewise reckon *ye* also *yourselves* to be dead to sin." In verse 15 we read, "Shall we sin because *we* are not under the law?" But in the next verse he returns to the '*ye*,' which continues to the end of the chapter.

In chapter vii. we begin with '*ye*.' "Know *ye* not, brethren, for *I* am speaking to *them* that know law." "*Ye* also were put to death to law." But in the fifth verse he returns to common ground. "For when *we* were in the flesh . . . used to work in *our* members." In verse 6: "*We* were delivered;" "so that *we* serve." Then begins the passage in question: "What shall *we* say then?" "*I* had not known sin." "*I* had not known lust." Here, then, the apostle singles out himself from the body of Christians, to tell us his experience. And at the close of the seventh chapter, and the beginning of the eighth, we have the same person before us, even Paul.

It is plain, then, that an unconverted man is not being described. He who affirms the contrary must

point out to us at least where the new comer enters, and where the apostle gives us notice of such new speaker, and where he takes his leave of us.

"*When we were in the flesh*" is a striking declaration of himself and believers generally being no longer in that position.

But there is further evidence. The 'I' is in some verses of this chapter made emphatic by the personal pronoun being expressed in the Greek. It is not only implied, as usual, in the first person of the verb, but stands out distinctly in addition. In other like cases we at once conclude the speaker to be Paul. The gospel *I* preach is not after man. "For '*I*' neither received it of man:" Gal. i. 12. "For *I* [O Peter] through the law died to law:" ii. 19. "I live, yet not *I*:" ver. 20. Sometimes still more emphatic: "Behold, *I* Paul say unto you:" v. 2. "Whereof *I* Paul was made a minister:" Col. i. 23. This form does not occur in the seventh chapter of Romans. But we have another mode of expression, which is quite as forcible, which, I think, is used by the apostle only when speaking of himself. "So then with the mind *I* myself serve the law of God:" vii. 25. There is no doubt in the other two occurrences of the phrase that it marks out Paul the apostle. "*I* could wish that *myself* were accursed:" ix. 3. "And *I* myself also am persuaded of you:" xv. 14.

The speaker, then, is Paul. In his testimony there are two divisions: one, of the past; the other, of his state when writing. The *past* is found in verses 7—12. The present in verses 13—25.

II. Most decide the matter by the statements of the chapter before us. But there are previous roots of the doctrine; and these greatly confirm the present passage.

The first that I have observed is found in chapter vi. 6. "Knowing this, that *our old man* was crucified with Him." "*Our old man*." Does not that fully

sustain the statement here? Yes! Paul had an 'old man,' as truly as any of the disciples of Christ now. God after His manner, presents the most forcible or favourable case, when designing that *that* one shall decide all others.

1. So, when our Lord would teach the universal necessity of being begotten from on high, He fixes on Nicodemus the candid, the ruler, the aged, to enforce the truth: John iii. 3.

2. So, when Paul would instruct Christians to obey rulers, he utters the command when Nero was emperor.

3. If Peter may be rebuked when going astray, how much more others?

Here, then, the remainder of sin attaching to Paul makes it certain that sin is found in all others. Had not Paul the flesh? Yes! and he celebrates the mercy of God, who, when he was ready to be too lifted up by the abundance of revelations, fixed a thorn in *his flesh*, lest he should grow proud.

This paragraph is given us not to depict to us the experience of one under law. Paul was not under law; five times in the immediate context he has declared the Christian's freedom from law. He teaches here how law detects sin *within*, before it appears *in action* without.

The apostle discovers to us, by means of the law, the lusts of various kinds that dwell within each of the fallen, and by which all his hopes of being saved by obedience to law were ruined. But of that more presently.

The two parts of the regenerate man stand opposed in nature to one another. "The *flesh* lusts against the *spirit*; and the *spirit* against the *flesh*:" Gal. v.

Between chapter vii. 7, and viii. 4, there is no change of person. The Holy Spirit is showing us the remains of sin—the power of the old man—which acts in spite of the regeneration by the Holy Ghost.

Against this view it is alleged that the two accounts are so contradictory that they cannot be fulfilled in the same person. It is granted that the believer is never free from infirmity of the flesh, and even "*from the stain of sin.*" "But neither can he be truly said to be 'carnal, and sold under sin,' 'doing what he hates,' and 'brought into captivity to the law of sin in his members.'"

Here we differ; and the argument will come up when we arrive at the verses indicated.

7. "What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, except the law had said, 'Thou shalt not lust.'"

"Is the law sin?" This is a testing question. It throws full light on apostolic doctrine. It is a thought that never would arise on the mind of any who accepts the usual doctrine on the law.

It is generally taught, that while we are not to seek to justify ourselves by our obediences to the law, yet that we are to be under it as our *rule of life*. That is, it is to teach us the way of Christian holiness. That while we are not under the ceremonial law of Moses, and therefore have no need to be circumcised, and to keep the Jewish feasts; yet that we are under the ten commandments given from Sinai.

But from the apostle's doctrine about the law this question, 'Is the law sin?' naturally arises. He tells us, that law is unable and unfit to sanctify as well as to justify; that the law provokes the flesh to evil; and that if we are to be saved, we must be delivered from the *law* as well as from *sin*.

Suppose the guide-books for Wales to tell you, that in climbing up the mountain of Snowdon you have need of an experienced guide, because there is one spot of the ascent which is very perilous, for the pathway is very narrow, and a single false step would dash you to death, as there is a sheer descent of

five hundred feet below. One traveller mounts his mule, and rides without difficulty or danger to the top. The other sees the narrow pass, and carefully follows his guide. Which of the two is on the track pointed out by the guide-books?

The question 'Is the law sin?' arises naturally out of the apostle's doctrine, that, in order to be holy, we must be delivered from *law*. This affirmation, too, comes just upon the previous testimony of the need of our deliverance from *sin*. "Being, then, made *free from sin*:" vi. 18. "But now being made free from *sin*:" ver. 22. And now the same thing is said of the *law*. "Ye also were *put to death to law*:" vii. 4. "But now we are *delivered from the law*:" ver. 6.

It is, then, the apostle's aim to show, that the fault of sin lies not with the law, but in ourselves. So far from the law being sinful, it forbids sin, and threatens it with wrath.

"I had not known *sin*, but by the law; for I had not known lust except the law had said unto me 'Thou shalt not lust.'"

Here we have Paul before us.

1. "And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, 'Men and brethren, *I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day*:'" Acts xxiii. 1.

2. To the Philippians he says—speaking of his life before his conversion—"touching the *righteousness which is in the law, blameless*."

3. "I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with *pure conscience*:" 2 Tim. i. 3.

He could say, what scarcely another under the law could say, that none could justly accuse him of any act in breach of the law.

We are then introduced to that view of the law which laid low all his pretensions to righteousness. "I had not known *sin*." He was a sinner under law, but at first unaware of it, because he thought that Moses demanded of him only the rightfulness of his

actions. But the last of the Ten Commandments said 'Thou shalt not *lust*.' *

Law, then, required *right feelings within* the man; no less than *right actions* before his fellows. This, then, was the one commandment which convicted the apostle of sin.

8. "But sin, taking advantage by the commandment, wrought in me every kind of lust. For without the law sin was dead."

The evil desire of what the Lord God had forbidden, which arose in Eden, repeats itself incessantly in the fallen race, born after the image of Adam the rebellious.

"*Taking advantage by the commandment.*"

'The commandment' here is the tenth, which he has just specified. God's prohibition of the knowledge of right and wrong roused in our first parents the desire to possess it.

Forbid anything, and the desire of it arises. The reader has perhaps heard how this was once proved in the case of some, who, heavily blaming Adam for the Fall and its consequences, declared that had they been set in Paradise, sin would not have entered. The gentleman to whom this was made known invited the discontented to a feast. He would be absent; but they might eat of every dish with his full consent; one only, and that described to them by its appearance, was not to be eaten of, nor even looked into. Much did the guests enjoy the noble repast: but when their appetites were satisfied, wonder was expressed, why that one dish was forbidden, and they marvelled what it could contain. At length the cover was lifted, and out flew a number of sparrows. Great was the effort

* The force of this passage has been greatly obscured to an English reader from *three* different English words being used to translate *one* Greek word: (1) '*covet*,' (2) '*lust*,' (3) '*concupiscence*.'

to catch the birds, and vain the attempt. In the midst of the hurry and confusion thus caused the giver of the feast entered, and their conviction of the transgressing of his command was brought home to each of the guests.

Some teach 'that lust resisted is no sin.' The Holy Ghost here says that '*lusts flow from indwelling sin.*' See also James i. 13—15.

The flesh is the abode of lusts. "The *flesh lusteth against* the Spirit; and the Spirit against the flesh:" Gal. v. 17. The believer, by virtue of his union with Christ, "crucified the flesh with *the affections and lusts*:" ver. 24. The desires of the flesh do not cease, though conscience condemns them. They may never proceed to open act; but even while they do not so manifest themselves, they are evil before God. The flesh does not improve, even in the regenerate man; it is incurable, and is destined to death before the heritage of God's saved ones is entered.

"*For without the law sin was dead.*"

Sin dwelt in Paul, but was not perceived. It was like a slumbering serpent, not moving till a foot was set on it, then fiercely rising to inflict death.

9. "Now *I* was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin sprang into life, but *I* died."

The '*I*' here is both times emphatic. It is Paul. He tells us his own experience; and in some parts of it belongs to him almost alone.

"He was alive without the law once." He esteemed himself a righteous man on all points. He believed he was safe before God by the testimony of the law. '*This do, and thou shalt live.*' He thought he had *done* all that law could demand. He had never told a lie, or cursed, or stolen. Must he not, then, have the blessing of *life* awarded to the righteous by the terms of the law?

But this was living "*without the law.*" Law was intended to convict of sin; but that it had failed to do in his case, because of his oversight of the extent of its demands, as evidenced by the tenth commandment.

Perhaps we may say the same of Job. His confidence in his own righteousness is shown us in this:—that every week he offered sacrifice for his family, "For Job said, 'It may be that *my sons* have *sinned*, and cursed God in *their hearts*.'" But he offers no sacrifice *for himself*. He was righteous in his acts; he saw not the evil that lurked in his nature. God would bring it forth to light; and at length the patriarch confesses it.

"*But when the commandment came.*"

The apostle refers to the tenth, that forbade lust. The conviction came in a moment, as a flash of lightning. 'You have never stolen; but have you not lusted?' He could not deny it.

At once "*Sin sprang to life.*"

He became sensible of sin within; a sin forbidden by one of the ten foundations of the covenant on Horeb. His righteousness was overturned in a moment. "The soul that sinneth shall *die*." The doom of sin was upon him. He could not reverse it by any act of his own. The sin of evil thought lodged in his own bosom. Accusing thoughts of God arose within: evil thoughts against a law which none, even of the chosen tribes, could keep. He was a sinner as truly as the Gentiles, whom before this he had condemned.

This view of Paul's inward sin is divided into two seasons.

First we have the *past*. "*I was alive.*" "*Sin sprang.*" "*I died.*" This division continues up to verse 14.

Then follow a series of *present* tenses. "*I am fleshly.*" "*What I do, I allow not.*" "*What I hate, that do I.*"

He therefore does not speak of something that had ceased to be, when the grace of God entered his soul.

He still possessed the flesh, and where the flesh is there are also its lusts.

He saw that law forbids not only the *plant* of sin, as soon as it appears above ground, but also the *seed* of sin, whence the plant rises. Law says to men, whose flesh is full of lusts, 'Ye shall not *lust*.' *The lusts are there before the commandment comes. The lusts continue there, in spite of the disapproval of conscience and the prohibition of the Law.* Imagine the despair of the gardener, if his landlord demanded that he should have no seed of weeds in the acre he held! He might root up, by much diligence, each weed that should show itself above ground. But could he, by any diligence, remove the minute seeds with which the soil is peopled, as far down as spade can dig?

10. "And the commandment which was (designed) for life, was itself found by me to be unto death."

The prize proposed by the law was 'life' to the perfectly obedient: Lev. xviii. 5; Ez. iii. 21; xviii. 19. But, through defects in the soul and in the life, the consequence was universally the opposite to life, even death. Hence the necessity for God's new scheme. "*Hear, and your soul shall live:*" Isa. lv. 3. "The righteous by faith shall *live*."

11. "For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me."

This reminds us much of the original temptation of Eve by Satan. Only now, in the apostle's statement, sin is an evil inclination lodged *within*, and not a tempter from *without*.

In the eighth verse sin was said to take advantage by the commandment, to work within the man all manner of *lust*. Here it proceeds to deceive, till *sin slays*.

"Deceived me." Eve thus complains of the Tempter. "*The serpent* deceived me, and I did eat." In her case the deception was, the benefits that would flow from disobedience. Thereupon Eve believed Satan, broke the law, and fell under its sentence. Thus Paul also was slain by law, death being the penalty of disobedience. "Sin sprang to life, and I died."

We gather, then, that Paul's blindness to the demand of law was the effect of *sin*. For the command lay at the very first statement of law.

12. "So then the law indeed is holy, and the commandment is holy, and righteous, and good."

The whole body of the law is holy: it took its origin from God. "And the commandment *holy*." The commandment in view is the tenth, which, as the apostle has said, convicted him as the transgressor of law. Lust is evil in *God's* sight, and unholy. It is unrighteous in its bearings on *men*. It tends to depriving our neighbour of what we value ourselves, and seek to retain. Law, on the contrary, is "*good*," beneficial in its results, both as it regards God and man. If there were no covetousness, there would be no theft. If no thistle-seed, no thistle. If no egg of raven, no raven.

The prohibition by law of lust is good both for time and eternity. This last attribute of the commandment is taken up in the next verse, as if contradicted by its result of death to its transgressor. Three descriptions of the excellence of the tenth command are given, because it was the point that convicted Paul.

13. "That which is good then did it become to me death? God forbid. But sin (did it) that it might appear to be sin, working death by means of that which was good, that sin might become exceedingly sinful by means of the commandment."

'You say, that the tenth commandment is *beneficent*. But it produces *death* to me. Is *death* proof of its beneficence?' The reply is, that the prohibition of lusts is good; if law were everywhere observed there would be no sin. Accidentally it brings evil to those that earn its penalty, and deserve it. Where the good alone which the law desires is found, its benefits are beyond calculation.

But it discovers sin *within* the man. Paul traces sin to its root in the soul. The evil in us draws out the penalty to the transgressor. The law commanding good is accidentally to me an instrument of evil, through sin that dwells in me. It manifests the virulence and height of the evil within. Sin is evil, even where not seen to be sin, and where the law-giver has not distinctly forbidden and threatened it. 'I did not know it was evil,' avails as a plea *in mitigation*. But even there is sin, calling for sacrifice, that it might be pardoned. "If a soul *sin*, and commit any of these things which are forbidden to be done by the commandments of the Lord; *though he knew it not, he is guilty; and shall bear his iniquity*." Lev. v. 17, 18. And this principle is repeated by our Lord in the New Testament. "*But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes*." Luke xii. 48. The former verse (47) gives us the added guilt arising out of being aware of the lawgiver's prohibition and threatening. Such a one offending, even though a servant, "*shall be beaten with many stripes*." The man has broken through the hedge of thorns that was set to prevent his transgression.

14. "For we know that the law is spiritual; but I am fleshly, sold under sin."

"We know." Israel in general did not. Paul has given us an example of his ignorance in this respect: ver. 9. Christians were aware of it: they were instructed in this truth.

The apostle is now treating the question, 'What is the moral character of the law of Moses?' Not any longer, 'Is the Christian under it?'

"The Law is *spiritual*." It not only regards open acts of sin with displeasure, but the *inward feelings of evil*; it not only forbids lusts, but commands love to God and man, as the ever-abiding temper of those under it. Not the *act* alone is evil; but the *evil inclination* whence it springs. The seed is of the same quality as the plant. The egg of the raven contains the raven in essence.

"*But I am fleshly.*" Paul is telling us what he was even when renewed. "*I am fleshly.*"

Was that true of *Paul*? Certainly! He is not speaking now of the working of the Holy Spirit within him, whereby he was prevented from acting out the emotions of the flesh: but he teaches us, what is seldom taught, *that the flesh does not improve by the man's conversion.* A new principle is implanted; but the *old* is not renewed. The new and the old are at strife together. This is the picture of the conflict.

The gardener cuts off the head of the crab-tree, and grafts it with the scion of a good apple; but the old stock remains what it was before the grafting, and, if not attended to, shoots from the old stem will rise and hinder the progress of the graft.

What is the flesh? It is fallen human nature, as bequeathed to us by Adam. It is of two parts: (1) The animal nature, with its lusts. (2) The conscience which Adam gained by sin, which is now in all his sons, commanding what is good, but overborne by the lusts.

In the renewed man are found two principles opposed the one to the other. There is the flesh, begotten of the flesh; there is the spirit (or new nature), begotten by the Holy Spirit. Adam was originally created out of the dust, a living soul. And as there was, at first, no conscience within to

raise the question of right and wrong, the man and his wife were innocent. Then, against the command of God, he introduced conscience within, which inquires whether this or that act is lawful? and whether this or that temper is right? It is the entry into the man of this second principle, which gives rise to the conflict described. Just before the Flood, Jehovah says of men, and of the angels who fell in Noah's day by becoming men, that both were 'flesh:' Gen. vi. 3.

The meaning of the rite of circumcision, given to Abraham, was: 'Evil, Abraham, is in your flesh; put it away.' Flesh lusts against God, and is at enmity with Him. The law of Moses, as far as it is 'spiritual,' contends with the flesh; and the flesh against the law.

Paul, then, comparing his nature with the pure law of God, says: "*I am fleshly.*" He repeats, in principle, our Lord's words to Nicodemus, the circumcised Jew: "*That which is begotten of the flesh is flesh.*" And assuredly Paul was begotten of the flesh and bore its nature, as truly as he was begotten of the Spirit and was spirit. Flesh abides, even where the man is begotten of God. His plan of salvation is at last to *remove* the flesh; not gradually to improve it.

And Paul has to affirm of some who were regenerated by the Holy Spirit—"And I, brethren, could *not* speak unto you as unto *spiritual*, but as unto *carnal* (fleshly), as unto babes in Christ." They were "*in Christ*," and therefore renewed by the Holy Spirit; but the flesh made itself so conspicuous in their conduct that he refuses them the title of 'spiritual.' "For ye are *still carnal* (fleshly); for whereas there are among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not *carnal*, and walk as *men*?" 1 Cor. iii. 1—3. The calling any 'carnal,' then, is not of itself a proof that the person of whom it is affirmed is not a Christian.

"But the speaker says that he is "*sold under sin.*"

Neither does that prove that the person spoken of is a natural man. It is thought otherwise, probably because there is a reminiscence of passages describing some of the worst of men by a like phrase. But the phrases differ in a very important point. Let us see!

1. Ahab is rebuked by Elijah: "I have found thee; because *thou hast sold thyself* to work evil in the sight of the Lord." "There was none like unto Ahab which did *sell himself* to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord:" 1 Kings xxi. 20—25.

2. Jehovah sums up the sin of Israel, before they were led captive out of their land, by a like description: "They *sold themselves* to do evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke Him to anger:" 2 Kings xvii. 17.

3. "Thus saith the Lord, Where is the bill of your mother's divorcement, whom I have put away? or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you? Behold, for your iniquities ye have *sold yourselves*:" Isa. l. i.

Such descriptions assert the deliberate and continuous choice of sin, because of its "pleasures for a season." And those who do so are, beyond all doubt, evil to the core.

But the description here is manifestly different. The man is not said to '*sell himself*,' but he '*is sold*' by another.

Joseph was not guilty of selling himself into slavery; it was wrought by others: Psa. cv. 17; Esther vii. 4.

How, then, were we sold? By whom? and when? Here we touch the root of the matter.

When did this selling into slavery occur? As soon as Adam and Eve, transgressing the commandment, won, for themselves and their posterity, conscience. The ox and the lion are flesh, and have the lusts of the flesh, which in them are not evil, for they have no conscience. But if you could introduce conscience into the lion, his lust of blood would begin to trouble him. 'Is it lawful to take away life?'

"*Sold under sin.*"

The motions of the flesh within, even where they are kept under, are sinful: "For out of the *heart* proceed *evil thoughts*, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. *These are the things which defile a man.*" Matt. xv. 18—20. "The thought of foolishness is sin:" Prov. xxiv. 9.

What a contrast to the idea of some, that sin is only to be found where there is deliberate choice of evil. The only sins which the law could forgive by the priest and the sacrifice were *sins of ignorance*. For deliberate sin no sacrifice could avail: Num. xv. 27—30.

The meaning of the expression, then, is—Flesh has lusts; and these are forbidden by law as evil. I have flesh, and in me are these sinful lusts. Can I remove them by instruction, or by force? No! Or withdraw to a distance from them? No!

The passage, then, declares, that while the spirit and the will of the renewed man are firmly set against these evil lusts, he cannot by any effort deliver himself from them. Here is the *slavery*. I would gladly be delivered from these lusts; but the chains that bind me I cannot, despite my desire of freedom, break. I cannot flee beyond their reach. Go where I may, I carry them with me. The slave would gladly buy his freedom, but he is a bankrupt. He would run away, but cannot escape. He would by force win his liberty; but his master and his chains are too strong.

This, then, describes the believer. 'Law is good; my dissatisfaction is with myself; but still the lusts which law denounces abide with me.' The Gospel promises to the single-hearted that 'sin shall not *lord it* over him.' But the simple *possession* of lusts, even where they do not *rule*, even where by no sign without do they discover themselves, is condemned. Resistance to God's will is lawlessness, even though it is only a strife unseen and internal. Lawlessness is the essence of sin.

15. "For what I perform, I recognise not: for not what I wish, that do I effect, but what I hate that do I."

The words here describing action are varied, where the Established Version renders by one general English word. But regard must be had to their variation, if we would gain a true and clear apprehension of this difficult passage. Wisely were they chosen; though it is hard on our part to distinguish the delicate shades of meaning intended.

Paul is presenting the proof of his being, though renewed, fleshly. When reviewing his plans and hopes by the light of God's just demands he was so struck with the blighting effect of evil from within that he says, "What I perform I *recognise* not."

So a mother might not at first recognise in the wan, haggard, lame lad, of unkempt locks and ragged clothing, the sailor-boy; who but a year ago went away from home so ruddy, stalwart, handsome, and well dressed. So different is my performance from what I hoped and intended; so marred, not only by checks from without, but by evil from within. What the apostle sought for in his work was lacking; what displeased him was there. Ever as he himself advanced in knowledge and experience, his standard of perfection rose above his performance. A mixture of evil besmears and besmirches our best doings.

He is giving us the difference between his work as he designed it, and his work as he looked back on it after its completion. It was so far inferior to what he hoped, that he scarcely knew his own doing again. So the artist, who sets before him a high idea, and wishes to equal the chief of painters, when his picture is finished is painfully conscious how far he has fallen below his standard.

Now these spots and blemishes of which Paul was sensible, and of which he tells us, were due to the presence in him of the flesh and its lusts; or, as he calls it, *sin* dwelling in him.

Just look at the eleven apostles at Gethsemane. They are bid to watch and pray. They are told that a time of trouble is close at hand, and that that very night they would stumble. They are confident they will not. But they fall asleep, instead of watching and praying, and are caught in the first gust of the storm, and swept away by it. "Then all the disciples forsook Him, and fled." "The spirit indeed is willing; but the flesh is weak."

The present tenses employed teach us that this was the habitual course of things.

16. "Now if that which I wish not, that I do, I consent to the law that it is honourable."

Shall we take as an exemplification of this, a word of Paul in the Acts? He was brought before the Sanhedrim, after his narrow escape with life from the false report of his having defiled the temple. He perceives that the Council of his nation is nearly equally divided between Pharisees and Sadducees. He then declares—"I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question:" Acts xxiii. This introduced instant dissension among his persecutors, and was used by God effectually to deliver him from their midst. He is called again and accused before Felix the governor. He replies, "Or let these here say, if they found any act of injustice when I stood before the Council, *except it be for this one word, which I shouted while standing among them—'Touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question by you this day.'*" May we not guess, that perhaps the apostle was not wholly satisfied with that speech when he came to reflect on it. Was there not in it something of guile; something designed to set his enemies at variance among themselves?

"*I consent to the law that it is upright.*"

Here the Greek word for 'good' is different from that

so translated in verses 12 and 13. It regards what is right in itself, as distinct from the beneficial effects, which in practice flow from it.

Behold another perfection of the law! Far is it from being the cause of evil. So the speaker says in effect—"I admit the high and pure standard of the law, as reaching even the thought of the heart. The blots and blemishes in my thoughts, words, and deeds, come from myself. I discern them by the light of the law, just as the sunbeam admitted into the darkened chamber makes manifest the floating motes, which otherwise we perceive not. Or as the microscope discovers to us minute creatures dwelling in the water, whose presence we had not else discerned."

The Christian is a man divided within, into 'flesh' the old nature, and 'spirit,' the new. The flesh cannot drive out the spirit; the spirit cannot drive out the flesh, its lusts, and sin. The two are contrary one to the other; hence the perpetual conflict between them until the "adoption, that is, the redemption of our body." This is clearly stated in Galatians v. It is wholly destructive of the doctrine of sinless perfection now.

It shows us the difference between the Christian and the unregenerate man. The man of the flesh is wholly "*evil*." So our Lord calls him: Matt. xii. 34. "How can ye, *being evil, speak good things?*" The evil man is "*the flesh*,"—in the flesh dwells no good thing, but sin. When Paul says of *himself*, "In me dwelleth no good thing," he puts in a note of distinction—"When I say so, I am speaking of "*my flesh*," the old part of me; which I am obliged to acknowledge as forming still a part of me. But there is also, as I am regenerate, a new part, in which good dwells."

17. "Now, then, it is no longer I that perform it, but sin that dwelleth in me."

That which displeases the ruler is not his doing. Joab assassinates Abner, the general of David's antagonist, of the house of Saul. Some might be ready to suggest that that was done by David's counsel, to remove out of the way a foundation of his rival's throne. But when David cursed the murderer, wept, fasted, and followed the bier of the murdered man, any such suspicion was removed. "All the people, and all Israel understood that day, that it was not of the king to slay Abner the son of Ner:" 2 Sam. iii. 37. The guilt lay, not with the king, but with his lawless subordinate.

So now the evil in myself, and my work arises, not from the ruling power—the new 'I' introduced by regeneration—but flows from the insubordination of the flesh to the spirit.

"*Sin that dwells in me.*"

Mark the present tense. Not 'Sin that *used*, in my unconverted state, *to dwell with me*;' but sin that still *abides* in me, against my will. The power which hinders the good in me is sin. It is a force within which I cannot deny, yet cannot eject; from that comes the spoiling of my plans. It *dwells* in the believer, but it is not *his ruling principle*.

18. "For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good; for the will is present with me, but how to perform the good (honourable) I find not."

"I know." This is not true of the natural man; it is not the usual thought of many Christians. Then it is the knowledge of Paul given him by inspiration. He had said in verse 14, "*We know*." Now here is one of the party before spoken of, and it is Paul.

"*In me, that is, in my flesh.*"

This is a new view of himself—the 'me' is the old one of the flesh. It was still the visible part, though not the ruling one. The Christian is made up of two parts; the flesh and the spirit. These two are of

opposite origins and qualities, and hence the perpetual combat, until the flesh is, by God's power, removed. The apostle could not deny that the flesh formed part of him. And what was true of Paul is still true of all the regenerate.

No good dwells in 'the flesh,' or fallen nature, such as we receive it at birth. But evil does dwell there; lusts of various kinds, though they are forbidden by the law. Paul, then, is now regarding himself as possessor of the old nature—and 'the flesh' is the same in all.

Paul distinguishes between his intentions, with the plan he had formed, on the one hand; and the performance on the other.

The acts were Paul's; 'tis he who speaks. His deeds, as the renewed man, were not wicked; they were good. They were so good that he dares present them as praiseworthy, at his leave-taking at Ephesus; and he even bids us imitate himself: 2 Thess. iii. 7, 9; 1 Cor. iv. 16; xi. 1. But, as there were two opposing currents within his soul, he, though a careful pilot, was oft drifted out of the perfect line of steering for his port. His track across the sea was not one straight line, but with many bends, now this way, now that.

"To will is present with me."

Here is the better part, 'the spirit.' Now Christ judges a man by his will. And while the *wish* to do good may be found in the natural man, the *will* is not found. The drunkard wishes heartily he could give up drink. But he does not *choose* it; as soon as temptation comes, he succumbs.

Christ judged men by their *will*.

Hereby He condemns the ungodly. (1) "How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!" Matt. xxiii. 34.

(2) "Those Mine enemies, that would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them

before Me." "We *will not* have this man to reign over us:" Luke xix.

(3) "Ye *will not* come to Me, that ye might have life:" John v. 40.

(4) "Ye are of your father the devil; and the lusts of your father ye *will to do*:" viii. 44. See also Luke ix. 23, 24; 2 Tim. iii. 12.

The good will is not found in the man of nature. It is God that works it, together with the performance, of His good pleasure: Phil. ii. 13. "Whosoever *will*, let him take of the water of life" without payment: Rev. xxii. 17.

"But how to perform the good I find not."

The hindrance is felt, when the doing is on hand. Here is the result of sin indwelling. Now we have the present tense, "I *find not*." It is the abiding state of things, all through this day of our trial and education. Before it was "I *found*" the law to be to me death: ver. 10.

The apostle is speaking of the inward hindrances in performing good works. He is not speaking of the party described as doing works openly evil. He is adverting to the blemishes which affect our best works, confessed by Christians generally.

1. You are *singing* a hymn of thanks to God. But your thoughts turn away from the worship you would render, to your own voice, or to the beauty of the melody, or the good or poor voices of those who are singing with you. It is not, then, save in very small measure, the making "melody in your heart *to the Lord*."

2. You are *praying*; but something leads your mind away from the spiritual design to some outward annoyance, or some question of the world.

3. You are called on to *defend the truth*; you either shirk it, or you defend it with bitterness.

4. You *give alms*; but you do so with high thoughts of your own goodness; or you give grudgingly and inadequately.

19. "For the good that I wish, I do not; but the evil that I wish not, that I effect."

The finished act bears not the good that I designed. The evil that I would have kept out of it is there. This double marring of the result is due to 'the old man,' of whom we have not yet got rid.

20. "But if that which I wish not, that I do, it is no longer I that perform it, but sin that dwelleth in me."

A strong young man lies paralysed on his bed. Give him a cup of tea, and his hand shakes so, that in spite of his thirst, he spills part of the liquid which he desires to drink. What is it that mars his intention? The disease that has settled in his body, and made weak and inefficient the once strong arms.

"That I *do*." The defect abides, and is constant as long as I am alive in the flesh. The emphatic 'I' is expressed twice in the Greek here.

So the fault lies, not in the renewed spirit of the man, but in the unrenewed flesh. The magistrate's orders are good, but the non-completion of the orders lies in the carelessness or unwillingness of the servants of the court, and the police. But what I condemn belongs to the old 'I', which is one day to be dropped altogether.

"*Sin that dwells in me.*"

Twice this great hindrance is declared to be *dwelling in me*. It is not law's seizing me from the outside, and working in me lust and death. From that I have been made free. But this is from sin dwelling unbidden in me. How strong the natural inclination to disown this sad picture! We must not wonder that Perfectionists seek to divert the stress of this.

21. "I find then the law—that when I wish to do what is honourable, what is evil is present with me."

The distinctness of the two principles both dwelling

in the Christian and their constancy of opposition to one another, are in full view.

Here the word 'law' is used in a subordinate sense. The primary sense is found in a command written or spoken, given by a superior to do, or to forbear to do some act, under penalty on disobedience. So we call the commands given by Moses to Israel—'*the Law*.'

But men speak also of '*the laws of nature*'—certain invisible forces always at work in their sphere, and always producing certain effects. The apostle, then, calls the constant effect of indwelling sin, a 'law.'

1. There is the wish to do right in the renewed man. That is good (*καλον*).

2. But the opposite force of sin is in such case always present. Both forces dwell within me. And while the better is the ruling one, I am unable to improve, renew, or eject the other, though I am aware of its presence and force. Here is the force of the believer's being "*sold under sin*." Lest we should refuse to own the melancholy truth, Paul, the Saviour's chief disciple, confesses it. How deep the depravity of our nature, even in the regenerate!

22. "For I delight in the law of God according to the inner man."

Were this the only verse on the question, I should esteem it as decisive of the question, whether the experience here set forth is that of the natural man, or of the regenerate man.

The soul of nature loves not, nor delights itself in the law of God. The Psalmist, in Psalm cxix., declares his delight in it.

(1) "Make me to go in the path of Thy commandments; for *therein do I delight*:" ver. 35.

(2) "I will delight myself in Thy commandments, *which I have loved*:" ver. 46.

(3) Of the wicked he says—"Their heart is as fat as grease; but *I delight in Thy law*:" ver. 70.

This is the character of the testimony throughout the Psalm. The proud, the wicked err from the law, forsake it, deride the followers of it, and persecute them. They are "*far from Thy law.*" And Paul in the next chapter fully confirms the truth. "*Because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.*" "Behold, the word of the Lord is unto them a reproach; *they have no delight in it.*" Jer. vi. 10.

This word was true to its full extent, of Christ alone. "*I delight to do Thy will, O my God: yea, Thy law is within my heart.*" Ps. xl. 8. Of this the two tables of the covenant laid up before God in the ark, were a type.

"*According to the inner man.*"

The ungodly has no inner man in which dwells the law of good. He is 'the flesh,' and its lusts he obeys.

(1) "The lusts of your father (the devil) ye *will* do."

(2) "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh." 'Walk then in the flesh, and certainly ye shall obey its lusts.'

(3) "For we ourselves also (Paul includes himself in the number) were once foolish, disobedient, deceived, *serving divers lusts and pleasures*, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another:" Titus iii. 3.

In the one case, the city is taken by the rebels; but the citadel holds out for the king, though it is besieged.

In the other, the whole city is in the hand of the enemy; the citadel itself is taken, and held against the sovereign.

23. "But I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and making me captive to the law of sin that is in my members."

The conflict brings out into open opposition the two parts of the renewed man. The good side has been given in the verse just preceding. Now we have the

evil side; for the law is spiritual, and takes account of the inward evil of feeling, even where no open act of sin is seen.

'The law in my members' is always evil, even when no act of sin is beheld. 'The law of my mind,' is the constant disposition of "the spirit," or renewed man. These two opposite natures keep up continually two opposing currents, by one of which my boat is borne out of its straight course.

I am by the evil 'law' made prisoner of war, unwillingly overpowered, though resisting, and seeking deliverance. Thus we come upon a confirmation of the previous word—"I am *fleshly, sold under sin.*"

Now this division into partial good and partial evil is characteristic of the believer alone. Until he was begotten from on high he was only flesh. With regeneration came the new nature, 'the spirit,' opposed to the flesh. In the flesh is sin, and no good. All hopes of victory from the house divided against itself are gone. But the power of victory resides in God, and is shown us in the next chapter.

And, if it be so difficult now to the believer to walk in holiness, how impossible to the godless, when given up to flesh, and under the wrath and curse of God the Judge, while Christ and the Spirit have ceased to work, that ever he should be saved!

24. "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me out of this body of death?"

The features of wretchedness abide. (1) Perpetual discord and war between evil and good. (2) No power to rid one's self of the evil. The house is divided against itself: the struggle not to be stopped by the new nature.

This makes the besieged look out for some strong general outside, who shall raise the siege. The mode of deliverance is the taking out from the animal body into the spiritual one.

For it is not—'Who shall deliver me *from*'—that would suppose power from without, about to assail me. But it is—"Who shall deliver me *out of* this body of death?" 'I am *in* it already.' Deliverance must come in resurrection, which not only has not yet taken place, but is competent to an Almighty arm alone. But it is promised, and will surely be performed.

This deliverance is not promised to the natural man, nor is it expected or desired by him.

"The body of this *death*." We have had before 'the body of *sin*,' and its affixing to the cross: vi. 6. Now it is the 'body of *death*,' for sin ends in death, and the body is '*dead*'—under sentence of death, because of sin: viii. 10. But the redemption of the body shall yet be effected; for the spirit-state is not the final state of man: viii. 23.

25. "I thank God (He will deliver me) through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Some have affirmed that these words bespeak present deliverance, as the answer to the question of the preceding verse. But it is not so. The question relates to the *future*. 'Who *shall* deliver?' The answer must refer to the future, as there is no correction of the question. It is 'O wretched man that *I am*!' It is not 'I stand rescued! Every weight is taken off!' But, as a believer, I rest on God's promise of a victory to be wrought on my behalf. It will arrive only when Christ does, and when by His mighty power He assembles His people to Himself in resurrection. It was intimated before in chapter vi. 6, 7.

'I thank God'—An expression not unfrequent with Paul. "*I thank my God* through Jesus Christ for you all:" i. 8. "*I thank my God* always on your behalf:" 1 Cor. i. 4. "*I thank God* that I immersed none of you, save Crispus and Gaius; lest any should say that I immersed into my own name:" 1 Cor. i. 14.

This thankfulness to God is a mark of the believer. The ungodly are condemned as "*not thankful*." Nor do they confess Jesus as "*their Lord*"; nor do they expect Christ's return, and the resurrection of blessedness. Thus Paul is in several ways brought before our eye as the speaker throughout the previous discussion.

"So then with the mind indeed I myself serve the law of God."

The ruling part—'I myself'—is good; and is by God regarded as the man. This is a summing up of the experience just presented. The words are in the present tense. The two divisions of the man continue, and their opposition to each other abides.

Part of me serves God. That Paul had said at the opening of the epistle. "God is my witness, *whom I serve with my spirit* in the Gospel of His Son." And vii. 6, "We serve in newness of spirit." But here it is added, "I myself serve *the Law* of God." Does not *that* assert that though the person here set forth is a believer, yet he is in bondage, because under the law?

It was, indeed, intended originally that those should serve the law of God who were under it. But here it is not so. Paul has declared himself and God's people as free from the law, both before this, and he does declare it again at the opening of the next chapter.

(1) "Now we are (have been) *delivered from the law*:" vii. 6. That is before the experience is given.

(2) Then comes another view of it: "For *the law of the Spirit of life* in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and death." This bespeaks the believer. He alone is "*in Christ*," and is wrought in effectually by the Holy Ghost.

While, then, Paul sought to stand aloof from tempers forbidden by the law, and to cultivate what is commanded by it, yet he was not under it; "not under law, but under grace." A man may be under law, yet hate it. He may love it, yet not be under it.

"But with the flesh the law of sin."

Not till the flesh is removed from us does the law of sin remove. Only in my transference to a spiritual body is this blest result reached.

The *flesh* is *evil*; the body is *not*. As the body abides ever with Christ, so with the saved. His redemption of the body is what we look for.

The Experience after verse 14 divides into four parts.

1. THE CONFLICT. That does not attach to the man of nature. He may *wish* for better things, but that is all.

2. THE FUTURE DELIVERANCE. Will *that* be given to the unregenerate? None but a Universalist would say so. Nor does the man of nature thank God for such a hope, nor does he look for it through Christ.

3. THE CONFLICT CONTINUED. The same two opposite effects continue, to show that the deliverance has not yet arrived.

4. THE ACCEPTANCE BEFORE GOD, in spite of the inward conflict. Neither is that true of the flesh. 'The flesh cannot please God.'

This portion, then, is intended to teach us, that though the law of God is excellent, it can neither justify nor make us holy. Hence God delivered us from it. It gives no help to the struggling soul; it can only condemn, and never encourage, any one who owns that lusts dwell within him. Law shows what is good, and what is evil; but what I need is *power* to perform. So that, viewed as in myself, even though converted, I am condemned as imperfect, and therefore sinful, and unable to deliver myself from condemnation.

CHAPTER VIII.

1. "There is therefore now no condemnation to those in Christ Jesus." *

CHAPTER vii. is very closely knit to this chapter. In chapter vii. we have a view of the renewed man, hindered by sin indwelling: vii. 17, 18, 20. In this chapter we have a sketch of the counteracting forces that carry on sanctification, in spite of the inward obstacles.

The word "*therefore*" is a proof that the experience of chapter vii. is that of one in Christ. It builds on that experience, and urges it further. The 'therefore' is unwarranted and illogical, if the experience is not that of a believer, one 'in Christ.' How would it stand on the supposition that 'the experience' is that of an unregenerate man? '*The men of nature* feel and act thus and thus. *Therefore the men of faith*, so feeling and acting, are not condemned.'

"There is now therefore no condemnation *to those in Christ Jesus.*"

If, then, the experience is of one in Christ, there is no objection against supposing it to be *Paul's* experience; first, as an unregenerate man under law, condemned and slain thereby; and then, after verse 14, describing his own feelings as a Christian no longer under law.

If the experience in chapter vii., and that in chapter viii., refer to but one class, the argument holds

* The addition "who walk," &c, is not genuine. It is genuine in verse 4. But we may trace in several instances how the copyists put in or left out words where they thought the statements of inspiration were 'incautious' and 'unguarded' in their discoveries of grace: 1 Cor. ix. 20.

good. (1) If the experience be that of Paul, it encourages us, his inferiors in grace and knowledge, to continue the fight. (2) It is designed, too, to keep us *humble*, for sin dwells in us. (3) And to look upward, and onward to Christ, in whom we are set.

Then comes the full force of the "*now*."

The last chapter described the conflict within between 'spirit' and 'flesh.' It is, then, of the utmost moment to our spiritual peace to learn,—How do I stand before God, *while this war within is waging*? Do I thereby lose my justification? Am I put out among the condemned? Is there no advance in holiness possible till I am set in the new body of resurrection? And the blest answer is—"There is *no condemnation*" to me arising out of the presence of the law of sin in my members. The justification of God by faith in Christ abides. The leaven in the house does not lay the house open to the angel's sword. But *eating* of leavened bread draws down the penalty of exclusion from the ranks that enter the land of promise.

This word shuts out all unregenerate men. They are not uncondemned and 'in Christ'; they are under law, and condemned by it. The law of Moses, with its just requirement of love to God with all the heart and strength, would condemn any one owning the experience of chapter vii. We are not condemned, because we are '*in Christ*,' and Christ is not 'under law.' Jehovah owned Israel as His people in the fight against Amalek in Rephidim, though sometimes they gave ground against the enemy's assaults.

2. "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus set me free from the law of sin and death."

Here a new and better "law" breaks in upon our view than the two laws of the former chapter. "In Christ," or in Adam?—where are we? "*In Christ*"

is characteristic of the believer now. That is not true of any angel, nor of Israel, nor will it be true of Jew or Gentile in millennial days.

In this chapter we have the work of the *Holy Spirit* upon the regenerate, founded upon the work of *Christ*. On this our assurance of victory rests. The Holy Spirit is "*the Spirit of life*." He gives that spiritual life now possessed which law cannot give, and the absence of which renders all true observance of the law impossible. Through Him, too, life will one day flow into our mortal bodies.

The former chapter discovered the hopelessness of victory under present circumstances, even for the regenerate. The 'law of the Spirit of life' is not in any of the men of nature; but only in those in Christ.

"Set me free."

This fastens on to the '*me*' of the previous chapter. It is the same '*me*' that says—"To will is present with me, *but*"—"Bringing *me* into captivity"—"Who shall deliver *me*?" But it is a '*me*' that has been *set free from the law*. That refutes therefore the view of those who make the experience that of a Christian; one renewed, *but under law*. Both in chapter vii. and here the freedom from the law is stated. "Now we have been *delivered from the law*:" vii. 6.

Those who are unregenerate, and in the flesh, are under law, and condemned by the lusts within, forbidden by the law.

"*Freed me from the law of sin and death*."

What law is *that*? The law of the former chapter: the command—"Thou shalt not lust." "I had not known (recognised) lust, except *the law* had said—"Thou shalt not lust:" ver. 7. "*The law is holy*:" ver. 12. It is then the law of Moses.

'The law in my members' makes the law outside me run its short and dismal round of "*sin*" and "*death*:" now is the time of *sin*; in the future, the time of *death*, the penalty of law.

The Mosaic law is a "yoke," from which it is mercy to be "freed:" Acts xv. 10. In Galatians it is several times declared to be slavery. "We were in *bondage* under the elements of the world"—God sent Christ to set us free: Gal. iv. 3—5. The covenant from Sinai begets to bondage; and Jerusalem the earthly was under that bondage: ver. 23—25; v. 1.

In the previous Experience the law has been set forth as (1) the Law of *sin*: verses 7, 8, 13, 23. (2) And 'the Law of *death*:' verses 9, 10, 11, 13.

3. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God by sending His own Son, in the likeness of flesh of sin, and (as a sacrifice) for sin, condemned sin in the flesh."

In chapter vii. we find the law twice called "the Law of God." In the second verse of this chapter it is named "the Law of *sin and death*"—and here simply '*the Law*.' In the first instance its glory is presented to us, as it is in itself: now it is shown in its weakness and unprofitableness, which is traced to a cause outside itself, as Hebrews vii. 18 tells us. Its priesthood and sacrifices were so profitless, that God was obliged to remove them. We are further instructed, in Galatians, that its style of worship was weak and poor, unsuited to sons of God: iv. 9.

Law is strong to detect *sin*, and to award *death*. But it was unable to produce obedience, or to give life; though its apparent purpose was to raise up a nation, which, by its obedience to God should win life according to its terms. But as Paul assured us in the previous chapter, while it offers life, its terms, applied to the fallen, only brought in death. Salvation means *righteousness and life*; law brought in *sin and death*. If therefore the Most High would introduce salvation to lost man, *He must remove law*.

Then we have the reason of the uniform inability of the law to save men. It was the weakness of the

nature to which law was applied. The nails and screws of the wood-work were good and serviceable, but they would not hold; for they were driven into touchwood. The anchor was a good one, but it would not hold the vessel, because the bottom was sand. To this weakness of the flesh Jesus bore testimony, when Satan had obtained permission to sift the disciples, and they against warning, first fell asleep, and then fled.

But law was strong to award to the Lord Jesus its rewards in answer to His righteousness, and to His ability to stand against the temptations of Satan. 'The doer of the law was justified!' The Justified One was raised to eternal life.

Why have we the past tense—"It *was* weak"? Because we are set beyond it; having learned to despair of salvation through law, and having found both righteousness and life in the grace of God, which is in Jesus Christ our Lord.

"God, by sending His Own Son"—effected.

Here appears the Deliverer for whom Paul, despairing of victory from the flesh, was looking out. In Christ weakness and strength met. "He was crucified through *weakness*; He lives by the *power* of God:" 2 Cor. xiii. 4. Both the weakness and the power must be united, in order to win us righteousness and life. The original greatness of the Lord Jesus is here affirmed. He was from eternity God's own Son. His Person is the foundation of the work, that none other could achieve. Lest we should confound Him with created sons, the peculiarity of His Sonship is noted by the addition—"His Own Son." He is in other places called His "Dear Son," "the Only begotten," "the Beloved." He was 'Son' before He was sent: God's own Son by nature, not becoming Son by His mission: John v. 17, 18.

After the insufficiency of law and flesh has been shown, the work of God, *His Son*, and *Spirit* is presented to us. The Son of God was sent—

"In the likeness of flesh of sin."

The wisdom of these words is seen, if we only suppose two slight variations of the expression.

Had it been—"In flesh of sin," we should have been taught that sin dwelt in Christ, as it does in us. This is the error of *Irvingism*. Had it been said, "*in the likeness of flesh*," the false doctrine of the Phantomists would have received a firm foundation. The New Testament then would have taught that the Son was not "made flesh," but that men's eyes were deceived by an apparition. And if Jesus was not really a man, He could neither win righteousness for man, nor atone for sin.

But the expression actually employed instructs us that the Saviour was content to take human nature as it has been lowered and blighted in appearance and strength since the Fall. He took "flesh and blood" (Heb. ii. 14); but He took them together with the sinless infirmities of the body. This was foretold by Isaiah.

"He hath *no form nor comeliness*; and when we shall see Him there is *no beauty* that we should desire Him:" Isa. liii. 2. This is the more remarkable, as men expect that He should have been adorned with whatever could be granted to His appearance. What painter ever so represented our Lord as the prophet speaks of Him?

Thus the Saviour's two natures are supposed. He was ever the Son of God (1) in the form of God while in the bosom of the Father on high. (2) He was sent to earth in a body prepared for Him by the Father. He was Son of *God*, the Creator; He was "Son of *Man*," the creature. As the creature, He died; as the Son of God, He arose.

"*And for sin.*"

Let us look at the force of this expression as it is used in the law; for we are now learning how we, who belonged to the law, and under it stood evermore condemned, have been led out from condemnation into justification; and from law into grace.

This expression occurs continually where sin had been committed, but where the law admitted of pardon by the priest and the sin-offering. Thus we read, "The priest that offereth it *for sin* shall eat it:" Lev. vi. 26. Of Aaron's first sacrifice we read, "He brought the people's offering, and took the goat which was the sin-offering for the people, and slew it, and offered it *for sin*:" ix. 15.

Of the red heifer and its ashes, we read that they were to be kept "for a water of separation; it is a *purification for sin*:" Num. xix. 9.

Sin under law is the ground of death. Unless the condemnation thence arising be removed, the offender must perish. "Every man shall be put to death *for his own sin*:" Deut. xxiv. 16.

But let us come to the offences of individuals. For sins of ignorance atonement might be made by the sin-offering. "If any one of the common people sin through ignorance, while he doeth somewhat against any of the commandments of the Lord concerning things which ought not to be done, and be guilty; or if his sin, which he has sinned, come to his knowledge: then he shall bring his offering, a kid of the goats, a female *without blemish, for his sin which he hath sinned*:" Lev. iv. 27, 28. Its blood was to be shed: "and the priest shall make atonement *for him*, and it shall be forgiven him." "The priest shall make atonement *for his sin* that he hath committed, and it shall be forgiven him:" Lev. iv. 3, 14, 27, 31, 35; v. 6, 10.

This was the only revealed way of pardon. When Moses, after the idolatry of Israel, would bring peace with God for offending Israel, he says: "I will go up unto the Lord; peradventure I shall make atonement *for your sin*:" Ex. xxii. 30. But his proposed satisfaction was refused by Jehovah.

But in the Prophets we read of One to come, of whom it is said, "Thou shalt make His soul *an offering for sin*." And again, "He poured out His soul unto

death, and He was numbered with the transgressors, and He *bare the sin of many*, and made intercession for the transgressors :” Isa. liii. 10, 12.

Turn we now to the New Testament.

1. “*Christ died for our sins* according to the Scriptures :” 1 Cor. xv. 3.

2. “*Jesus Christ who gave Himself for our sins* :” Gal. i. 4.

3. “Christ also once *suffered for sins*, the Righteous One for unrighteous ones, that He might bring us to God :” 1 Pet. iii. 18.

4. In Hebrews the Saviour is spoken of as “made High Priest, in things pertaining to God, to make *atonement for the sins of the people* :” Heb. ii. 17.

5. In John we find it written of Christ—“He is the *propitiation for our sins* ; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world :” 1 John ii. 2.

6. Still more remarkably we have, on the last occasion in which the phrase occurs, “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and *sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins* :” iv. 10.

In the Epistle to the Hebrews we find the agreement of the New Testament sacrifice with the sacrifices of the law. There we read, “Every High Priest taken from among men is ordained (appointed) for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices *for sins*.” “He ought as for the people, so also for himself, *to offer for sins* :” v. 3. Christ “needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer *up sacrifice, first for His own sins*, and then *for the people’s* :” vii. 27. “Now where remission of these (offences) is there no more *offering for sin* ?” x. 18.

It appears, then, that the expression “*for sin*” is a sacrificial term, in constant conjunction with offerings to remove the condemnation attached thereto. And on one of the occasions Paul speaks of the two aspects of the chief sacrifice of the Day of Atonement, applying what is said there directly to the death of our Lord.

“We have an altar (the cross), whereof they have no right to eat who serve the tabernacle. For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the Holiest by the High Priest *for sin*, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people by His own blood, suffered without the gate :” Heb. xiii. 10—12.

I doubt not, then, that the Saviour sent from God “for sin” is thus described as the sin-offering. But instead of the law’s word to the sinner—“He shall *bring his offering for his sin* which he hath sinned,”—we have the grace of God under the Gospel, and *He sends His Own Son as the sin-offering*. The one offering of the Lamb of God pushes aside the many lambs of Israel’s flocks. In Him there was no blemish. He could say, “This is My blood of the New Testament, which is being shed for many *unto the forgiveness of sins*.” Before the apostle introduces this he makes confession of sin. But to draw out all the points of resemblance between the sin-offering of the law and the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus would detain us too long.

God “*Condemned sin in the flesh*” hereby.

The word “condemned” gives us the sentence of a Judge uttered against sin. The law condemned sin by its *words*. But in its *sacrifices for sin* it showed condemnation in *action*. The treatment of the sin-offering discloses to us the deserts of sin applying to the original offender. The substitute bears what was deserved by the sinner, and the sinner stands forgiven. “The priest shall make atonement for him, and he shall be forgiven.”

There are two constructions which may be given to this clause.

1. “*Condemned sin-in-the-flesh*.” That would suppose the atonement made for a special class of sins—those which dwelt within, but did not manifest themselves in action without. This does not seem to me the true sense.

But the sacrifice of Christ is needed to put away sins of all kinds. The sacrifices of the Day of Atonement were appointed "that ye may be clean from *all your sins* before the Lord." It was an atonement for the children of Israel "for all their sins once a year:" Lev. xvi. 30, 33, 34.

2. Then the second construction is better.

'God condemned in the flesh, sin.'

The great gap in the offerings of the Law, preventing them from ever really taking away sins was, that the bull or goat which gave up its life was not possessed of the nature that committed the offence against law.

But that defect is removed by the sacrifice of the Son of God, incarnate in the nature in which Adam's trespass was committed. Flesh sinned, and atonement was made in the flesh.

Some have objected to this view, that the apostle in the chapters which precede has settled the subject of justification, and here is treating of sanctification. But this is of no weight. For Paul has to show, that *sanctification is founded on justification*. And he is discovering to us, that holiness cannot be really produced under law; but that those who are to be sanctified must be transferred from law to grace; from Moses to Christ. This supposes, that the mode of the transfer by satisfaction made to law has been observed. He has declared our condemnation by law, both under Adam, and under Moses. He must tell us how that condemnation is removed. 'Tis by sacrifice. The heaven is to be put out of the house only after the blood has been put upon the door.

God *forgives acts* of sin; but on the *source* of sin within He set His *condemnation*, which Christ alone could put away.

4. "In order that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh, but according to the spirit."

There are two main views with regard to the sense of this passage. (1) Some would refer it to the imputation of Christ's work for us, in His full obedience to the law, and in His suffering the death it threatened to transgressors.

(2) Others regard the words as spoken of the obedience rendered to law by the regenerate and justified.

1. Now it is certain, that "the righteousness of God" is imputed to us unto justification through faith. The Saviour has paid all that law had a right to demand, either in the way of obedience, or of penalty. And we, who so believe, and live on His work and grace, are accepted by God.

2. Or this passage may refer to the *practical* righteousness of the justified, which follows on justification and regeneration. It is put in direct opposition to the thrice named "*sin*" of the former verse, and so is naturally taken to refer to practical righteousness. Paul is now treating of *sanctification*, or newness of life; the germ of which is presented in the very first ordinance of immersion—death and burial as the way to "newness of life" in our walk. Law could not produce that out of the flesh, but the grace of God in Christ, and the Holy Ghost can. Holiness is produced by Almighty power such (in measure) as law approves; while it cannot be reared in flesh under law. *Practical* righteousness reposes on the foundation of *imputed* righteousness. Still, as our obedience is imperfect, the entire fulfilment by Christ must precede.

"May be fulfilled in us."

How can righteousness be said to be 'fulfilled' in us? Is our walk perfect? In its details, *No!* In its principle, *Yes!* This same epistle testifies to it, Love has been poured into our hearts, by the Holy Spirit: v. 5. It has sprung out of God's love to us; and this is a perennial fountain. "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour; therefore love is the *fulfilling* of the law:" xiii. 10.

This love is fulfilled "*in us*." That word marks that inward holiness is in question. Justification is "*on us*." "The righteousness of God . . . is upon all them that believe:" iii. 22. "The righteousness which is from God *on faith*": (Greek) Phil. iii. 9.

God is determined that the saved shall be holy. He gives new life, He takes out from old law, in order that He may have a new *walk*. But the power to produce holiness in the fallen is His alone, and to Him be the glory.

"*Who walk, not according to the flesh, but according to the spirit.*"

As in the pattern-case of Abraham, the *walk* comes into view only after the *justification* has been settled. Condemnation is put away, before the acceptable newness of spirit is manifested. Law gets its due in the new principle bestowed and sustained by the Spirit in one regenerated by Him.

When one hears any tell of 'Baptismal vows'—one knows that such parties are walking after the flesh under law. They promise God how good they will be in the future, even as Israel did. Those under law are led by the flesh; and in the flesh dwell *sin* and *lusts*, which law cannot justify, but condemns.

Flesh under law yields but the blossoms of sin, and the fruit of death. But grace working in the renewed gives life first; and from life righteousness flows.

5. "For they that are according to the flesh mind the things of the flesh."

How does God estimate 'flesh?' and how does He judge of 'spirit?'

These two principles are here weighed, in their present value, and their future destiny before God.

The men of the flesh are occupied with the thoughts, plans, tempers, words, deeds, ways of the flesh. Its feelings, its movements, are of the world. There it seeks its satisfaction, there its rest, there its hiding away

from God. "Every imagination of the thoughts" of flesh is morally apart from Him to whom it owes all.

The whale dwells in the ocean, and is occupied about the things of ocean. The lion dwells on the land, and is engaged about the things of the land. As said the Saviour, "That which is begotten of the flesh is flesh." The old tree is evil before God in root and stem, in bark and sap, in flower and fruit.

"*They that are according to the spirit mind the things of the spirit.*"

By the spirit is meant the new man, begotten again by the Spirit of God. His new world is the things of God and of faith.

6. "For the mind of the flesh is death; but the mind of the spirit is life and peace."

The present spiritual state of the flesh is death—toward God. There is no movement of the heart toward God. It seeks its happiness away from God. It is a watch whose mainspring is broken. And after the period of its trial and of mercy is over, the spirit goes to an abode away from the dwelling-place of the Most High. It is borne to the region of *Death*, its suited portion. And after the sentence of the Great White Throne, its quarters are the *Second Death*, the lake of fire. "Death and Hadees were cast into the lake of fire. *This is the Second Death, the lake of fire.*" Rev. xx. 14.

"*But the mind of the spirit is life and peace.*"

This is the state before God of the man renewed by the Holy Ghost.

"That which is begotten by the Spirit is spirit." The movements of the renewed heart are toward the Lord. It has love towards God, and love is life. Before it is removed from its present abode on earth, it is spiritually alive.

But another point of much moment forms the connecting link with what follows. 'The flesh is

death,' 'But the mind of the spirit is life;'—then follows, "*and peace.*"

7. "Because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God; for to the law of God it is not in subjection, neither indeed can be."

The ordinary thought seems to be, that the wicked sometimes do *right*, and sometimes (though, of course, much the oftenest) commit sin. That is not the Scripture view. Scripture teaches, that the life of the unregenerate is *always evil, never good*. The Saviour compares man to a tree known by its fruit. Now a tree, both in summer and winter, is of one kind. The fig-tree is always good, always tending to produce its healthful figs. The upas-tree is always poisonous; in every climate, through spring, summer, autumn, and winter alike.

The mind of the flesh is, then, not mere indifference towards God, or the liking of other things better. But it is positive hatred. This was recognised even as early as Moses' day. "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth; and that *every* imagination of the thoughts of his heart was *only evil continually*:" Gen. vi. 5. After the Flood, and in those spared by it, it was the same. "The imagination of *man's heart is evil from his youth*:" viii. 21.

This temper is the opposite to "peace with God." Through hatred it is never at rest, but is compared to the waves of the sea, ever casting up mire and dirt. As love is peace, hatred is war, its heart fretting against God: Isa. lvii. 20.

Is this true? How awful! How contrary to the ideas of some, who say that God's character needs only to be presented clearly to the mind of man to be loved. That idea is in opposition, not only to this passage, but to facts constantly appearing. Is God the favourite subject of men's thoughts and conversation? Or would it not be reckoned a nuisance if He were introduced as

the subject for conversation? Do men delight to go and commune alone with God? Do they take pleasure in what makes for His glory? Do they do whatever they think will please Him? Do they love His book, His day, the society of His saints, the prayer-meeting? How is it, my reader, with you?

All the great perfections of God are hated by the mind of nature. Man loves sin; God requires and loves holiness. Conscience makes a man afraid of God's justice. Death is feared as introducing to his judgment. The mercy of God is hated—mercy is hated even when bestowing salvation—because it assumes that man is lost, and unable to recover himself. The testimony of God is hateful, because God is so strict, so full of condemnation of human guilt. Some do indeed seem to love God; but it is only because they have set up an image of God of their own manufacture, and not according to the Scripture. Theirs is a God of good-nature, that accepts all men alike as His sons, and pities, if some parts of their service, as idolatry, are displeasing.

Here, then, the Most High points out to us how it came to pass that all His schemes toward man have failed.

God is, by His divine nature, Creator, Ruler, Judge. He has a right to give forth His laws; they are also good for the regulation of His subjects. His law shows that He is to be obeyed. To every law belongs penalty. These penalties He is determined to enforce, whatever misery they may cause to His enemies.

But His law stands opposed to the lawlessness of the creature. He hates control; he regards God as opposed to, and seeking to do away with, his happiness. He would dethrone the Majesty of heaven, if he could. The coiner, the thief, the burglar, hate the policeman, the judge, the prison. This hatred is the ever-abiding condemnation of man. "All they that *hate Me, love death*:" Prov. viii. 36.

The enmity is so deeply rooted that no change of circumstances will remove it; both mercy and justice leave it still in possession of the heart. This is the eternal attitude at last of God and of the wicked, towards one another.

1. The sinner hates God. That hatred of the Perfect Ruler is the root-sin, deserving of all punishment. And the penalty of law, the Lord, as the Ruler, must inflict.

2. God justly hates the wicked. This is doubted now. So let the truth be set on the ground of Scripture, "*Thou hatest all workers of iniquity:*" Psa. v. 5. "*The wicked and him that loveth violence His soul (the Lord's) hateth:*" Psa. xi. 5; Prov. viii. 13.

This shows (1) that the experience of chapter vii. is that of a renewed man; for he delights in the law of God, and with his mind serves it: vii. 22, 25.

(2) It shows, too, that there is no hope of the salvation of any of the unregenerate, as soon as his trial in this life is over. He has got beyond mercy's call, and enmity alone, which is more and more exasperated by punishment, dwells within him. How shall he ever be brought to *love* God, and to submit to the law which has sentenced and cursed him? As long, too, as God is holy, He must hate not only the deeds of unholiness, but its *constant temper*; and, hating, He must punish as long as that sinfulness lasts.

8. "Now they that are in the flesh cannot please God."

Though this follows from what has gone before, yet it is not headed by a 'Therefore' or 'So then,' as we might expect.

The men of nature, then, at all times, and in all climes, are displeasing to God, even while under trial on earth, the trial of mercy. Yet the flesh has at times put forth the appearance of a desire to please God. The worship of Cain will give us an instructive view of the matter.

1. Cain came before Jehovah to present an offering to Him. Was not that good? Did it not please God? By no means! His offering refused to own the Fall. He would not come by the death of a substitute. Remonstrated with by God Himself, and the way of truly pleasing Him discovered, the heart of enmity grows angry; he murders, and covers up the murder with an impudent lie to God! The waters within the fountain are bitter; the stream that flows thence may sparkle, but it, too, is bitter.

9. "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you."

You were of the flesh by birth, and in the flesh. But now you are *in* the spirit, and though the flesh is still in you, yet the Spirit of God dwells within you. We can now do works acceptable to God. The difference between the original position of nature and that occupied by the regenerate, was by a preacher well illustrated thus:—Once you were a ship closed in by ice above and below, on the right hand and on the left. Stem and stern were alike fastened in the chains of cold, unable to stir.

But now the sun has melted the ice, and set free the imprisoned ship; only around the ship's ribs are pieces of ice, and between decks ice is to be seen.

The great advance that has been made has come from the work of the Spirit giving you new life, and dwelling within you. This is the Gospel's great improvement, too, upon the law. "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter that He may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of Truth." "Ye know Him; for He dwelleth *with* you, and *shall* be *in* you:" John xiv. 16, 17.

This is a necessity to peace with God, and membership with Christ. Whoever has not the Spirit of God indwelling, does not belong to Christ.

10. "Now if Christ is in you, the body indeed is dead, because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness."

Where the Spirit of Christ is, there is Christ. But the believer, in respect of *eternal life*, is divided; as he is divided also in respect of *holiness*. Part of him is alive, part dead. Part of him is holy; in part dwells sin.

Life in the spirit does not produce life in the body. "The body is *dead*," because of the sin of Adam. The sentence in Eden—"Dust thou art, and to dust shalt thou return"—still applies to the believer in respect of his body. The sin of Adam imputed to us produces this consequence. No special holiness on the part of the believer since his regeneration can prevent death. But as its sting is taken away, death is, to one in Christ, only sleep.

"The spirit is *life*." But it is not said that "the body is *death*," as if it laboured incurably under death, never to be afterwards visited by life. It is to be an abiding part of the man. It is, as a matter of judgment, under death; but will be delivered from under that sentence by the work of Christ. And baptism has already given us the pledge of our victory over it. While the first Adam has brought us down to death, the Second Adam is to give us the deliverance out of it.

Our body now is not the incorruptible body in which Christ shines. It is "this body of *death*." For there is yet sin dwelling in me. The body is not evil in itself. That is proved by Christ taking it up in resurrection, and appearing at God's right hand with it.

"*But the spirit is life because of righteousness.*"

Our spirit, as regenerate, is not merely 'alive,' but 'life.'

The "Spirit" here is not the Holy Ghost, but the new nature of the believer. That is apparent, for the Holy Spirit is not "the Spirit of *life*," because of

Christ's righteousness accomplished. The Holy Spirit was life, long before the Son of God took flesh. The righteousness here is that of Christ, wrought for us, and imputed to us. It is not a righteousness of our own creation, but the Gift of God; and is not like our righteousness, imperfect. As the death of the body comes from the sin of the first Adam, the life of the spirit comes from the righteousness of the Second Adam. Practical righteousness, too, is going on in every believer who is walking aright; but that is so imperfect, that it is not fitted to be the basis of eternal life.

11. "But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from among the dead dwell in you, He that raised up the Christ from among the dead shall give life even to your mortal bodies, because of His Spirit that is dwelling in you."

God raised Jesus from among the dead. The Spirit of God dwelt in Christ; the Spirit dwells in you.

Very many speak of 'the *influences* of the Spirit.' That is a thought very different from God's. The sun sends on us his 'influences' of light and heat from without, from a distance of millions of miles; but the sun does not *dwell in us*. God speaks of the Holy Spirit as *dwelling within us*.

"God raised *Jesus* from among the dead." It is not said that he raised "the Son." But the name of the Saviour as man is here given, to show how sure the promise is. We also are men, in whom the Spirit of God dwells. God the Father is sometimes said to raise the Son; sometimes the Son is said to raise Himself.

Christ's was a resurrection by itself—the first of its kind; the coming forth from among the assembly of the dead, because of His righteousness.

Us also shall God raise. He shall impart life to our bodies as well as our souls. Life shall possess us wholly. It is not said that He shall raise 'our *dead*

bodies,' because that would leave out the change of the living saints; while both the living and the departed shall have part in the coming kingdom. "*Mortal bodies*" describes the tendency of the bodies even of the living saints to go down to death. Because you belong to Christ, and the Spirit of God dwells in all that are Christ's, God shall restore the temple, if it have fallen into ruins; or shall prevent it from so falling, if the believer be still alive, when Christ returns.

This, then, is a promise which applies to all believers.

"*Because of His Spirit that is dwelling in you.*"

There is another reading—'*By means of His Spirit that is dwelling in you.*' But the other reading is far more profound, and better adapted to the argument. There were two previous examples of this sense in the verse just preceding:—

1. "The body is dead *because of sin.*"

2. "The spirit is life *because of righteousness.*"

And now the third occurrence completes the matter: 'You shall be raised *because of* the residence of the Spirit in you.'

This is the ground of the resurrection of believers before that of the ungodly. They rise before those who have never had the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in them.

The Holy Spirit's indwelling in the believer makes it certain that the body, as well as the spirit, shall be redeemed in fact.

It has been proposed to the Christian to live after the flesh. Some say, 'This is impossible.' Scripture does not say so. It declares that *sin still dwells in the flesh*: Rom. vii. 17, 20. That must make it possible to live after the flesh. But the Holy Spirit dissuades from such a course, by the view of the consequences that would overtake the offender. Sin will bring death in the day to come, as holiness will introduce

life, when recompence is given to works. The being led by the Spirit constitutes any a son of God.

12. "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh."

This word does not forbid a certain amount of care to be taken of the body. Meat, drink, clothing, sleep, shelter, are needed for its welfare, and for the man's performance of his work.

But the point forbidden is life devoted to it. It is to be treated as a servant, not as the ruler. It is to be fed as a sailor is, who must climb the masts, and handle the ropes. But it is not to become the captain of the ship, or the compass by which it is steered. The Christian's true life is the eternal one, and its interests are to take the foremost place.

Flesh is infirm, sin dwells in it, no good thing is in it; its mind, death; its feelings, enmity against God. Hence it is not only your duty to keep it under, but your interest also. A life to the flesh, even in the regenerate, will discover its sad character in the day to come in death during the day of recompence.

What will be the effect of disregarding this warning?

13. "For if ye live according to the flesh, ye are about to die: but if by the Spirit ye put to death the deeds of the body, ye shall live."

This is a more difficult and critical text than seems to be generally supposed.

1. Of whom does the verse speak? Of those who belong to Christ, in whom the Holy Spirit dwells, and who are raised from among the dead, because of the Spirit's indwelling: 9—11. This, then, sets aside the explanation of those who would make the passage refer to the wicked. See again: "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors." Here Paul calls the addressed his brethren, and associates himself with them as one of those to whom the words apply.

Life according to the flesh is a very extensive matter. It means living to satisfy the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. Against these the Sermon on the Mount protests. On many things allowed by the law, the Saviour now lays down a new legislation. Oaths, divorce, law, treasures on earth, and other things are by Him set aside.

"Ye are about to die."

What death is here threatened? Evidently not the death which seizes on all men, holy or wicked alike. That takes effect through Adam's transgression, and cannot be warded off by any holiness of life. Nor can it be the common death which visits alike the two classes of the regenerate,—(1) carnal Christians, and (2) spiritual ones. For the verse assures us, that the fleshly will be overcome by the death, while the spiritual receive the life promised.

It is a death which takes effect after the raising of the mortal body. Both the life and the death are recompences, after present life is ended, and as the result of conduct now. They come as the award of the future day foretold by the apostle, when God will show His righteous dealing: chapter ii.

They must take place, then, at Christ's appearing, for to Him all judgment has been handed over by the Father. They are the result, then, of the believer's appearing before the presence of Christ, to whom is our account.

Two objects are set before the Christian, where most see but one. (1) There is the *gift of eternal life* to faith: Rom. vi. 23. (2) But beside that a *prize* is set before us, towards obtaining which we are to put forth efforts. And this may be lost by carelessness, or by criminal disobedience. It is that of which our Lord said "If any will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life (soul) *shall lose it*; and whosoever will *lose his life (soul)* for My sake *shall find it*. For

what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and *be fined his soul* (Greek); or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His holy angels; and then shall He reward each according to his work:" Matt. xvi. 25—27.

The same sentiment has been more than once affirmed in our epistle. (1) "His servants ye are whom ye obey, whether of *sin unto death*, or of obedience unto righteousness:" vi. 16.

(2) "The end of those things *is death*:" ver. 21.

(3) "For the wages of sin *is death*."

Again, "For we must all be manifested before the judgment seat of the Christ, that each may receive the thing done *by means of the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad*:" 2 Cor. v. 10.

A large amount of confirmatory passages might be cited; but perhaps it will be best to take the statements of the first Epistle to the Corinthians.

The apostle begins by showing that the Christian is to accept God's wisdom, not the world's. He is to prepare for Christ's coming and day. The kings of present time will then have passed away; but those who serve God are on the way to bliss.

The apostle warns Christian teachers to take care with what materials of doctrine they build now. In the coming day fire from heaven will test the houses they have built; and if they have constructed them with inflammable substances their houses will be set on fire, themselves with difficulty escaping through the flames.

'If any defile the Assembly of God, God will defile him:' iii. The wisdom of man is not to be intruded into the things of Christ; let us be fools now in the world's eye, that we may be wise before God in the day to come.

CHAP. IV. The apostle estimated at a low value the opinions formed by others concerning his faithful-

ness. The Christ would decide on that in a day to come, and then would be reward to each according to his work.

Take not your exaltation on earth and from the world. Paul, the persecuted, was the example of what a Christian was to be.

CHAP. V. In chapter v. the apostle commands the putting out from the assembly one who had grossly offended. There was great danger lest the evil leaven should spread. The offender was to be put back into the world, whence he had been taken. Exclusion was designed for his ultimate benefit and salvation. A change has come since Israel was sent with sword and spear to destroy seven guilty nations in the land of Canaan. And if we compare this chapter with Joshua's treatment of Achan, we shall perceive how much more merciful is the dispensation of the Gospel. God will one day judge the outside world; but, for the present, believers are to judge only those of the Assembly of God, and to put out the offenders named.

CHAP. VI. But this exclusion from the church is a testimony to a greater exclusion from the millennial kingdom yet to take place. The Church of Christ is not to go to the world or its courts for the settlement of difficulties. Believers are God's intended judges of the world, and even of angels. The world is the company of the unrighteous; if believers become unrighteous they must take their place with the unrighteous of the world, outside the church. If they are found to be unrighteous in the day of Christ's appearing, they will have no part in the kingdom. The same offences which call during the Gospel Day for exclusion from the Assembly, will produce exclusion from the coming kingdom of glory. Fornication, a sin against the body, would be a sufficient ground of exclusion. See also 1 Thessalonians iv. 1—8.

CHAP. VIII. The partakers of idol-feasts would be

shut out from sitting down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom; after provoking Christ to cut them off.

CHAP. IX. Paul had a right to support from the church: but he gave up his right that he might help the Gospel, and obtain reward from Christ in the coming day. The Saviour had laid on him the obligation to preach the Gospel. But if he not only obeyed his commission, but gave up his rights, he would gain an additional reward.

The Gospel bears with it not a gift only, but a prize. And that was to be sought with zeal like that put forth by the candidates for corruptible crowns at the games of Greece. God's kingdom will confer crowns on the diligent, as truly as the Greek or Roman kingdom did. The seekers after the prizes of earth were obliged to use self-denial and much care in their course of training for the conflict. Like zeal and self-denial did Paul use in the pursuit after the crowns of the kingdom of Christ, fearing lest by any misconduct he might lose them.

CHAP. X. In chapter x. we have a view which condenses and sums up the whole of the teaching of the former chapters. Look at Jehovah's teaching of His former people Israel, by word and deeds. The Most High means His church to learn from His discipline of the tribes. The twelve tribes led by Him under Moses had some things answering both to baptism and the Lord's Supper. But in spite of their privileges they sinned. And He in His displeasure cut them off in the wilderness; and they lost the hope set before them. This history is designed to furnish instruction to His new people, the Assembly of God. Israelites were smitten to death, as (1) desiring evil things, as (2) idolaters, (3) fornicators, and because (4) they tempted the Lord, and murmured. Let the Corinthians beware of partaking in idol-feasts, when Christ had given them His Supper. If they would

provoke Him thus to jealousy, how could they resist the stroke of His indignation?

CHAP. XI. Women in their meetings were to be distinguished from men by the covered head.* Divisions in the Church of God were designed to show who were worthy of reward at the coming of Christ, and who would receive punishment.

Extreme offences at the Lord's Supper, had produced the death of some of the offenders. Let them beware of coming together for judgment.

CHAP. XII.—XIV. The Church (or Assembly) of God is a body made up of separate parts, and those parts were gifted with miraculous agencies, bestowed by the Holy Ghost. Love was the principle by which alone they could be rightly used.

CHAP. XV. The Gospel is Christ's death for our sins, and His resurrection carries with it the resurrection also of His people. Denial of the special resurrection from among the dead, while they admitted the resurrection of Christ, was folly.

The first Adam had brought to men death; the Second Adam, life in resurrection. To Christ is assigned by God the judgment of the saints in His presence, and before the glory of His kingdom. Baptism (immersion) is a testimony of the Christian's hope of rising from among the dead as Christ also did. We must have a new body, in order to enter on and enjoy the thousand years, and the eternal life after it. For the bodies both of the living and of the dead saints are alike unfit for both the millennium and for eternal life. Therefore God has provided a sudden change to both classes of the living, and of the sleeping saints. That will be the time of victory, as declared in the Old Testament Scriptures. Christ has brought us deliverance from sin, death, and law. Therefore let us

* Paul anticipates resistance to His commands here: xi. 16. This may remind us of Romans ii. 8, and of the consequences of such conduct in the Day of Reward.

be diligent, for the reward of labour for the Lord is sure.

To return to Romans.

The death to be inflicted on offending believers is not eternal. It would overthrow the Scriptural doctrine of the perseverance of God's elect, which is asserted so strongly, so triumphantly at the close of this chapter.

"Ye are about to die."*

The expression in the Greek is almost, one might say, *consecrated* to denoting the change in God's administration, which is to take place at the Saviour's return. Some eight times it is applied to this in the Hebrews.

"*Thou shalt surely die*,"—was the word to Adam. It was disbelieved, but the penalty came. "*Ye are about to die*," is a like word to Christians. But in how many cases this threat is disbelieved. Privileges set up by God are cited against it, but in vain. Privileges cannot do away responsibility.

In Israel's deliverance out of Egypt by the lamb of the Passover, two commands were given. (1) The blood on the door gave safety from the angel's sword. (2) But if any ate of leaven during the feast, they were to be cut off from their hope,—the entering into the land of promise. And Israel's history is thrice applied to warn and instruct the Christian church.

"*But if by the Spirit ye put to death the deeds of the body ye shall live*."

In what sense are we to take "by the Spirit" here?

Not, I think, primarily and directly, is it said of the Holy Spirit, though beyond doubt all sanctification rests ultimately on his work. But through the new nature, bestowed by Him in regeneration, the works of the old nature are to be kept under. Activity of the believer in the work of holiness is here called for. A new rule, affecting all our works, has been given under the Gospel. "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God:" 1 Cor. x. 31.

* Μελλετε.

The Sermon on the Mount gives us the main features of the life according to the flesh, or the actions of nature. It teaches us the opposite to self-sufficiency, war, oaths, divorce, treasures on earth, and so on.

Observe the Saviour's words, and
"Ye shall live."

What is the reason of the change of expression in the two results stated in this verse? (1) "*Ye are about to die.*" (2) "*Ye shall live.*" The first of the two modes of expression returns again in ver. 18. "*The glory about to be revealed unto us.*" The Greek word is continually used of the dispensation which is to take place at the coming of our Lord. At His return He will award glory to those who are approved, and death during the millennial day to those disapproved by Him.

What life is meant here? (1) Not present bodily life. *That* they were already enjoying. (2) Not the *inward life* of the regenerate. That, too, was already theirs. (3) Not *eternal life* after the millennium. That was theirs, as the gift of God.

It can then only refer to *millennial life*, 'or the enjoyment of the thousand years' reign of the Christ. Paul is speaking of the *prize* of our calling.

This life has been spoken of already as a life of reward to those who receive the abundance of the grace and of the gift attached to the righteousness of Christ: v. 17. It is also very distinctly pointed out on the page of prophecy, at the time when the Saviour has come, and Satan is chained. Three classes of the favoured are named, "*and they lived and reigned with the Christ a thousand years.*" But the rest of the dead *lived not again till the thousand years were finished:*" Rev. xx. "*They which shall be accounted worthy to attain that age, and the resurrection from among the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; for neither can they die any more; for they are equal unto the angels, and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection:*" Luke xx. (Greek.)

'But where is "*life*" ever used for the *millennial kingdom*?'

In more places than one.

1. "Except ye repent, and become as little children, ye shall not *enter into the kingdom of heaven*" (the millennial). "It is better for thee to *enter into life* halt or maimed:" Matt. xviii 3, 8.

2. "It is better for thee to *enter into life* maimed." "It is better for thee to *enter into life* halt." "It is better for thee to *enter into the kingdom of God* with one eye:" Mark ix. 43—47. See also Luke xviii. 29, 30. *

The history of Israel comes in here to throw light on this passage. Three times is this parallel, with the lessons from it, asserted as applying to believers now.

In the history of the favoured and chosen nation, we see the flesh appear in its various forms of evil, and the hand of the Lord smiting offenders to death. There we have idolatry, and three thousand cut off by the sword: the quails, and the graves of lust: the temptation to worship Baal-peor: and the cutting off of twenty-four thousand. Thereupon Moses reads the appropriate lesson—"Your eyes have seen what the Lord did, because of Baal-peor; for all the men that followed Baal-peor, the Lord thy God hath *destroyed* them from among you. But ye that did cleave unto the Lord your God are *alive* every one of you this day:" Deut. iv. 3, 4. The pride of life breaks out in Korah and Dathan. With the fire and the opened earth Jehovah avenges the wickedness. The next day the whole congregation murmur, and fourteen thousand seven hundred are slain by the pestilence.

These are types of the evils in the Church of Christ.

* I add some confirmatory texts, which the reader can look at as witnesses of the general doctrine here presented: Matt. xvi. 25; xxiv. 48—51; Luke vi. 20—26; Rom. xiv; Gal. v; vi. 7—10; Eph. v. 5, 6; Col. iii. 24, 25; 1 Thess. iv. 1—8; Heb. ii. 1—3; xii. 14—17; James ii. 12, 13.

And in Gal. v., vi. we are warned, that like conduct now will be followed in the day to come by like action on the part of God.

We see on the other hand light thrown on the words—"If ye by the Spirit put to death the deeds of the body, ye shall live."

Moses gives commandment to the seventy on the Mount of Horeb, to stay where they were, till he returned to them. But when Moses tarried beyond the time in which they expected him, they no longer maintained their obedience, and their elevation above the nation at the foot of the Mount. They came down to their tents again. And when Moses returns, only Joshua is waiting for him.

Again, Joshua and Caleb, when Israel is unbelieving through the report of the false spies, set themselves to persuade the tribes to trust their God. But they put themselves thereby in immediate peril of life from the perverse generation. They are rescued by the outshining of the glory of the Lord. Joshua lives when Moses dies. Joshua and Caleb, who ran counter to the flesh, behold and enjoy the land of promise.

14. "For as many as are being led by the Spirit of God; they are the sons of God."

Israel was constantly led in his journeys by God, through the visible direction of the cloud.* "And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt:" Ex. xiii. 17. "And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night:" ver. 21. We are being led by the unseen Spirit of God, if obedient.

* The unbelief of Israel and their rebellion is shown in their word—"Let us make us a captain, and return into Egypt."

Here, where the Holy Spirit is manifestly meant, we have no longer simply 'the spirit,' but "the Spirit of God." The Holy Spirit sustains the individual Christian against the current of the flesh. (1) Regeneration by Him constitutes the '*child** of God;' (2) obedience to His leadings together with suffering makes the '*son* of God.'

The truth of this leading is especially shown in Christ the Son of God. As soon as, at His baptism, the Father pronounced Him, 'Son of God'—"Then was Jesus led by the Spirit (not, 'into Eden,' but) into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil." What a contrast to the first Adam and the Paradise of beauty, fertility, water, and peace! How was He to find food or drink in the desert, with the wild beasts around? Satan points this out to Him. How could He be 'the Son of God'—with the burning sands alone around Him? But the Spirit of God, not vain presumption, led Him there; and there He is fed. "We walk by faith, not by sight."

Elijah is the contrast of this. Threatened by Jezebel, and afraid, he flees for his life. The Spirit of God did not lead him, but he escaped to save life, and to appeal to God as the Jehovah of the covenant, for vengeance, at Horeb, where it was made with Israel. The Lord asks him in effect, How he came there? It was not of His sending. He rests his defence upon Israel's unbelieving, disobedient course. Elijah was not the perfect son of God; though one of the best of God's servants under Law.

At Horeb he does not address God as "*Father*," but as "*Jehovah God of Armies*," and he receives a suitable reply. God makes him know something of His powers for judgment and destruction of the wicked in the Wind, Earthquake, Fire. But after these comes the small, still voice. While the main body of Israel was

* ΤΕΚΝΟΝ. ΤΙΟΣ.

corrupt, God had reserved to Himself seven thousand men of faith. The message he is to execute thereupon is one of preparing the avengers of the covenant.

How different the message of the Son of God, on His victorious return from the wilderness! The Spirit that led Him out, now brings Him back to proclaim in power the good news of the kingdom. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me . . . to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

He does not proclaim, what Elijah would have had proclaimed,—"*the day of vengeance of our God.*" At "that acceptable year of the Lord," He closed the book of Isaiah: Isa. lxi. Instead of anointing ministers of wrath to slay, Christ is himself seized, in order to be slain. But he extricates himself from them, and leaves the murderous city. He sends forth the twelve and the seventy, as messengers of peace. He addresses God as His Father: Matt. xi. 25, 26; xxvi. 29—53. The Holy Spirit and the Father witness to His Sonship. And as He is Son of God so is He "heir of all." "All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and *he* to whomsoever the Son will reveal *him*:" Matt. xi. 27; Heb. i.

The apostle evidently distinguishes between the two—the son, and the child. Nor he alone. Jesus our Lord is never called 'the *Child*' (τεκνον), but only 'the *Son*' (υιος). The difference between 'a son' and 'a daughter' is strongly brought out in Eastern life.

The sons of God will rise from among the dead, as our Lord also did, thus proving His sonship. And we are to be manifested as our Lord was, by the resurrection from among the dead. For the Holy Spirit is "the Spirit of *life*," and life is to show itself in coming forth from the abode of the dead. Millennial life is for those who are not only *indwelt* by the Spirit, but *led by Him*. "If led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law:" Gal. v.

This verse is the confirmation of the previous conditional doctrine: '*If ye live not to the flesh, ye shall live*' in the day of glory to come. It answers to the former conditional promise: "If by one man's transgression death reigned by the one; much more shall they who receive the abundance of the grace, and of the gift of the righteousness *reign in life* by the One, Jesus Christ:" v. 17. The Spirit is "the Spirit of *life*," and will show His power at the first resurrection—the resurrection from among the dead. 'Sons of God' are to enjoy that time of glory. "They which shall be 'accounted worthy' (hence the 'ifs') to obtain that age, and the resurrection from among the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: For neither can they die any more; for they are equal to the angels, and are *sons of God*, as *being sons* (not 'children') of the resurrection:" Luke xx. 36. "Then shall the righteous shine out as the sun *in the kingdom of their Father*:" Matt. xiii. 43. So Gal. v. 8.

How does the Spirit of God now lead the sons of God? Not by voices, not by visions, not by new revelations, but by the written word of God. "We walk by faith, not by sight." To what does He lead us? To obey the will of our God, to prayers, supplications, giving of thanks. To the assemblies of His people, to keeping the ordinances of Christ. In short, to the exercise of all the graces of faith, hope, and love.

15. "For ye received not the spirit of slavery again unto fear; but ye received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we shout, 'Abba, Father.'"

There are two kinds of fear: (1) the slavish fear of death; and (2) the filial fear of offending God our Father. The sons of God under the Gospel are to perfect holiness in the *fear of God*: 2 Cor. vii. 1. "Submitting yourselves one to another in the *fear of God*:" Eph. v. 21.

The word 'again' turns our eye to the history of Israel. The Lord bade them sanctify themselves, for He was coming to visit them. They did so; but when *Jehovah* came down on the Mount it was not as the Father, but as the great God, girt with terrors of justice, and ready to avenge any breach of law. In their fear they drew off from the mountain of the law. Under law the Holy Spirit wrought fear in God's elect. Said Moses, "I exceedingly *fear* and quake." Also Exodus xx. 20. They requested that not a word more might be spoken to them; so much had the voice of *Jehovah*, His trumpet, and His fire, that burned to the midst of heaven, terrified them. That was designed to keep them from breaking the covenant. "Ye were afraid by reason of the fire." "Now therefore (said they), why should we die? for this great fire will consume us: if we hear the voice of the Lord our God any more, then we shall die:" Deut. v. 5, 25. Moses comforts them; the awful spectacle presented to them was given "that *his fear* may be before your faces, that *ye sin not*:" Ex. xx. 20.

"*But ye received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we shout, Abba, Father.*"

When the Mediator appeals to *Jehovah* on behalf of Israel, *Abraham* is assumed by him to be *his father*. His petition to be allowed to see the land of promise is rejected off-hand, and the subject was never to be mentioned again: Deut. iii. 23—26.

This is an important testimony on the great question, 'Is it presumption in the believer to account himself a child of God, already saved?' Rome teaches, that none can know whether he is accepted by God till the day of judgment. It calls on all to doubt; it denounces the confidence of salvation as presumptuous and vain. And no wonder! For it puts each under law, to stand before God on the ground of his deserts. It paints to his eye how much *he is to furnish to God*, and how far short of it he comes.

But it leaves out of sight *what God has done for us*, which is the ground on which the believer stands. To tell of the Saviour's righteousness justifying us as soon as we believe, and of the Holy Spirit as regenerating us, and making us sons of God, would overthrow the false doctrine.

Law set men on their own goodness before God, to stand or fall by their deservings. But the *grace* of the gospel plants us as believers upon the work—the finished work—of Christ, and tells us, "By *grace were ye saved, through faith.*" Once ye were of the world, "but ye were *washed*, but *ye were sanctified*, ye were *justified* in the name of the *Lord Jesus*, and by the *Spirit of our God*:" 1 Cor. vi. 11. The apostle teaches us to draw near to the throne of God, not with trembling, but with *boldness*, because it is the throne of *grace*. "Let us draw near (not stand aloof, as under the law) with a true heart *in full assurance of faith*, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and the body bathed in pure water:" Heb. x. 22. And, with regard even to millennial reward, Paul bids us in well-doing show all diligence to the end, till we attain the "*full assurance of hope*:" vi. 11. At the close of his career he expresses his assurance of attaining millennial reward, which the Lord, the Righteous Judge, should give him in that day.

On how much loftier a platform than Moses are we set! The Spirit of life is the Spirit of adoption. For the Saviour has revealed to Christians the new name of the Father: John xvii. 25—27. The law begat to bondage: Gal. iv. 24. "*A Syrian ready to perish was my father*:" Deut. xxvi. 5. Our "Father," as we are in Christ, is God, "*the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*"

The Spirit is that "of adoption." Not all men are sons of God by natural birth. We belong to God's family only as begotten anew by the Holy Ghost. Law allowed war and the hatred of enemies. The

Saviour teaches, "Love your enemies." "That ye may become the sons of your Father which is in heaven:" Matt. v. (Greek.)

As yet we have only the *Spirit* of adoption. But we are waiting for our enrobing with the *body* of adoption, to be fit to be presented to our Father in heaven.

Look at the contrast to the principles here taught, found even in Moses, the man of God. Does he ever address God as Father? Never! He knew not the forgiveness of sins. "We are consumed by Thine anger, and by Thy wrath are we troubled. Thou hast set our iniquities before Thee; *our secret sins in the light of Thy countenance.*" He speaks only of the seventy years of life on earth, not of *eternal* life, which he had not earned by his deeds: Psa. xc. 7—10. Like this are the prayers of Ezra, and Nehemiah, and Daniel. But the Saviour still addresses God as His Father, even in the dark "hour." "*Abba, Father*, all things are possible unto Thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt:" Mark xiv. 36.

And He teaches disciples still to draw near to God as Father. Our sonship is a present thing. "Because *ye are sons*, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying *Abba, Father.*" Gal. iv. 6. In this place too, "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, *they are* the sons of God." *The Holy Spirit certifies it.* "The Spirit itself beareth witness with *our spirit* (notice the difference of the two Spirits) that *we are the children of God.*" The Holy Ghost gives us the enjoyment of our sonship, and raises in us feelings suited thereto.

Fallen Adam and his wife hid themselves from the God of law. We flee to the God of grace for aid. Our loftier spirit is the consequence of our justification and of our regeneration by the Holy Ghost.

The seventy elders received some of *the Spirit that*

was on Moses; the *Spirit of Christ dwells in believers now.*

It is asserted that no slave was allowed to call a free man 'Father.' We shout "Abba, Father," with the voice of sons. Israel shouted in the flesh at their idolatrous sports, when they forsook Jehovah for the calf, and made themselves naked. We are clothed: Ex. xxxii. 17. We shout, as taught by the Spirit. The slave before his master speaks in 'fear,' with 'bated breath.'

16. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are children of God."

How do *we* know we are children? By faith. John i. 11, 12; 1 John v. 1. It was fitting that the Holy Spirit should be distinguished from our spirit. Therefore the word 'itself' is added, to make the superiority of the Holy Spirit manifest. But our spirit is also named.

"That *we* are children of God."

The word "children" here used to describe the believer is the inferior one. It applies to all who are regenerated by the Holy Ghost. All sons are children; but not all children are sons. Neither Abraham, nor Moses, nor Joshua, are called '*sons of God*'; they were '*servants*.' In the early ages the miraculous gifts of the Spirit, imparted after immersion by the hands of apostles, set God's seal upon them as His sons.

17. "But if children, heirs also; heirs indeed of God, but joint-heirs with Christ, if we suffer with Him, in order that we may be also glorified together."

This applies to all believers. "If children, *heirs* also." God's chosen are not only forgiven, but shall be inheritors of mansions in the city which God has designed and built for them.

So the clear and continuous teaching of the passage is not the inculcation of doubt about our acceptance,

yea, our sonship, with God; but the very opposite. We are already sons; the Holy Spirit certifies to us our sonship. And the consequence of that sonship is inheritance. But the inheritance is up on high, only to be entered upon at a time as yet unknown; and through resurrection, or through the change of the living.

The grounds of the glory which shall be given to Christ are two: (1) Because of his *holiness*. "Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore, O God—" Heb. i. 8, 9; Phil. ii. 6—11.

(2) Because of His *sufferings unto death*. "He was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgression of My people was He stricken." "He poured out His soul unto death." "Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great; and He shall divide the spoil with the strong;" Isa. liii.; Psa. xxii. The same grounds apply to us: namely, (1) *holiness*, and (2) *suffering with Christ*. And these two terms are in this dispensation necessarily connected. For "All that wish to live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution;" 2 Tim. iii. 12; Acts xiv. 22; John xvii. 14.

"In order that we may be also glorified together."

That is, it is lawful for the Christian to seek for glory, if only we seek it, not from man and now, but from God, at the coming of Christ. "Being made conformable unto His death, *If by any means I might attain to the select resurrection from among the dead:*" Phil. iii.; Matt. xx. 20; Mark x. 35. This, then, we are to choose,—suffering with Christ now, in order to partake of His glory in the day of His return.

We become '*children of God*,' by His grace. We become '*sons of God*' by obedience. So in the Talents we have the gift first; and then the reckoning according to service done. Thereupon some have reward, and some disgrace.

There are two inheritances named in this verse; though by commentators the second is passed by. And all the saved, through Christ, are treated by them as if entirely on a level. This has been done, through overlooking two Greek particles, which clearly establish the point.

"Heirs *indeed* of God (are all believers); *but* we are joint-heirs with Christ, *if at all events* we suffer with Him, in order that we may also *be together glorified.*"

Scripture distinguishes the *prize* from the *gift*. While it acknowledges the *eternal* inheritance and the eternal kingdom which come to us of grace (Heb. ix. 15), it speaks also of the *temporary* heritage, or the reign with Christ, as "the *reward* of the inheritance:" Col. iii. 24. And it declares to some offending believers, that they 'shall have no part in the kingdom of the Christ and God:' Eph. v. 5.

So also there were two inheritances in Israel. There were the possessions of the tribes in the land of promise. But Levi had no part in them. "The Lord was their inheritance." They were chosen to draw near the Lord in His house. Others were to stand aloof; to draw near was death. The Head of Levi was the Chief Priest, empowered to enter into the Holiest once a year. Thus Christ is our High Priest, through whose atonement and righteousness we are welcome to enter into the Holiest above. The joint-heirship with Christ turns upon *suffering now with Him*. Some Christians do not so suffer. They gain honour and wealth, status in the world, a throne, and a palace. Hence comes the word "*if at all events* we suffer with Him." Many purposely turn aside from obedience to Christ, because of its being linked with ridicule and loss.

Now as early as Eden the Lord's witness was, that the Seed of the Woman who shall bruise the serpent's head, was to suffer first the *bruising of his own heel*. And Paul was so persuaded of the glory attaching to suffering with Christ, that he desired to suffer even

martyrdom, if only he might attain to the first resurrection: Phil. iii. That is the time of the kingdom of the Christ, when God sets Him over all the works of His hands. For the Most High has provided His Son a reward for His suffering unto death;—the contrast to Adam, who sought to exalt himself to likeness with God through disobedience to His law. Christ, by nature equal with God, became a man, and amongst men took the lowliest place. Therefore God hath highly exalted Him, and His supremacy shall be acknowledged by all in the coming day: Phil. i., ii.

Suffering was not by the law appointed to Israel, much less to the priests. But when Aaron was lying under the false accusation of Korah, the Lord gave him the shadow of the first resurrection, in the blossoming of his rod; while the rods of the other tribes remained dead. Here again we have an illustration of *the resurrection from among the dead*.

It is clear from several passages that there is in store for the Lord Jesus Christ a special kingdom of glory, bestowed with a specific object—even the restoring to order and peace revolted heaven and earth, preparatory to the eternal kingdom of God: 1 Cor. xv. 22—25. He must put down all foes.

It is called “the kingdom of the Son of man”—“the kingdom of *the Son of God’s love*.” The Father speaks of it. “Unto the Son He saith, ‘*Thy* throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of *Thy kingdom*. Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity: *therefore*, O God, Thy God hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows:’” Heb. i. Here is a kingdom of *reward*; and here, too, are Christ’s favoured ones, who partake of it with Him, as His “*fellows*.” It is the temporary kingdom of the thousand years.

He receives it as “the kingdom of *the Christ and God*,” and Paul warns us against losing a place therein: Eph. v. 5. The Saviour enters on it as

a sufferer, as He Himself implies to the two at Emmaus. “O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Ought not the Christ to *suffer* these things, and (then) to *enter His glory*?” Luke xxiv. 26. And so He speaks of it as “*My kingdom*.” When He celebrates the Passover as the Jew, He speaks to the twelve of the yet future “*kingdom of God*.” Luke xxii. 16, 18. But after He has instituted the Supper, which the disciples are to celebrate while He is away—“the New Testament in His blood”—He says, “I appoint unto you a *kingdom*, as My Father hath appointed to Me; that ye may eat and drink at *My table* in *My kingdom*, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel:” Luke xxii. 15—30. Later on He testifies it to Pilate. “*My kingdom* is not out of this world. If *My kingdom* were out of this world, then would My servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is *My kingdom* not from hence:” John xviii. 36.

18. “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present season are not worthy to be compared with the glory about to be revealed unto us.”

Paul’s estimation of any matter with which he was acquainted would be worthy of our attention. But as an inspired man it is our wisdom and our duty to take his estimate. “I will show him,” said our Lord, “how great things he must *suffer* for My sake.” But though great were his sufferings, he esteemed them light in comparison with the glory yet to be revealed in the day of recompence. It is only the heel of the saint that may be bruised *now*; but the head of the enemy shall be bruised *for ever*.

Suffering is God’s appointment to His people all through this present dispensation. “In the world ye shall have *tribulation*.” But the trouble shall be requited with a far greater weight of glory. The world, which sees not beyond this present scene of

things, thinks the sufferer for Christ a fool. But in the coming day, he alone will be manifested to be wise who has both wrought and suffered for Christ. "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory:" 2 Cor. iv. 17.

Previous suffering with Christ is the condition of enjoying this reward. It is something additional to faith. "To you it is given on behalf of Christ, *not only to believe on Him, but to suffer for His sake.*" Phil. i. 29. Indeed in Philippians the subject of suffering and reward is greatly developed. In the second chapter we have the lowliness of heart and endurance of Christ set before us, as the basis of the Saviour's present and future exaltation. In the third chapter, Paul, the great advocate of law, comes out from it, and tramples on his former gains, to take instead his part with Christ, in His righteousness, and in the sufferings connected therewith, having in view the recompence of the first resurrection. "To do *well*, and *suffer* for it," is, as Peter instructs us, our strange calling: 1 Pet. ii. 19—21. "I will show him how great things (not, 'he must *do*,' but), *suffer* for my name's sake:" Acts ix.

Now not all Christians suffer for, and with Christ. Many die as soon as they believe. Many shirk the cross of Christ, and so will lose the reward and glory. The Saviour, addressing His disciples, puts one part of them under blessing, and another under woe. "*Blessed* are ye when men shall hate you, and separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. *Rejoice* ye in that day, and leap for joy: for behold your reward is great in heaven: for in like manner did their fathers to the prophets." "*Woe* unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the *false* prophets:" Luke vi. 22, 23, 26. "*Woe* unto you *rich* ('disciples'), for ye are receiving your consolation:"

ver. 24 (Greek.) "If we *suffer*, we shall also *reign* with Him (Christ):" 2 Tim. ii. 12.

Paul comforts the Thessalonian Christians who were 'enduring persecutions and afflictions'—that it was "a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, *that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye even suffer.*:" 2 Thess. i. 5.

We may illustrate the principle by an example or two from the Old Testament:—

(1) Joseph was the sufferer at the hands of his brethren; and at the hands of his master. To Joseph, then, after the word of the Lord had tried him, was committed the honourable employment of ruling the whole land of Egypt, and of preserving the lives of very many. But his brethren who inflicted the suffering, while they are forgiven and fed, are not allowed to rule and feed. They are to continue shepherds. What a change came over Joseph personally, when he was lifted up from the dungeon to have a throne next the King's! What a change in his dress, chariot, mansion! The sun, the moon, and eleven stars bowed down to him, according to his dreams.

(2) Take, again, the case of David, persecuted by Saul, and a fugitive for his life, though he was the anointed of Jehovah. His warrior-band shared his alarms, privations, conflicts and wounds. They occupied, then, a very different position of nearness to the king, when compared with his subjects generally; and were worthy of reward.

(3) The Son of David, at the last supper, brings out forcibly this tie with Himself. "Ye are they which have *continued with Me in My temptations*. And I appoint unto you a *kingdom*, as My Father hath appointed unto Me, that ye may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel:" Luke xxii.

The tribulation is to last as long as the present dispensation of grace, which allows the Serpent and

his seed awhile to persecute the saints. But the period of grace may end at any hour, and the woe of both will then begin.

Christ's own glory proceeds from two sources: (1) *Obedience*; (2) *Suffering* for service to God.

(1) His obedience and its results are celebrated in Heb. i.; Phil. ii.

(2) His elevation as the amends for suffering, in Isa. liii.; Psa. xxii., lxix.

The connection of this passage within itself is very strict. At verse 12 we have, 'Therefore,' which gives its connection with what precedes. Verses 13, 14, 15, are connected with it by three 'Fors.'

So the verses 18, 19, 20, begin with three 'Fors,' while verse 21 begins with 'Because.'

The apostle's chain of argument is generally arranged in this manner. He says something in the last words or last clause of a verse, which he takes up in the next by 'For.'

To seize the connection, ask—'Why?'

'We must not live after the flesh:' ver. 12. Why? 'Because, if you do, death will be your portion in the coming day of award:' ver. 13.

'We choose suffering with Christ and glory with Him:' ver. 17. Why? 'Because the suffering is light and transient; but the glory is weighty and abiding.'

'The glory is great.' Why? 'Because when our glory is come, it pours blessing over creation also:' ver. 18, 19.

'Creation is earnestly on the outlook for our glory.' Why? 'For two reasons: because it desires to get rid of corruption, and of suffering during life:' ver. 20, 21. Now these benefits are to be bestowed when resurrection-glory is bestowed upon sons of God. Thus creation is looking for the *first* resurrection; and as the 'hope' is given by God, it must be fulfilled.

"The glory about to be revealed unto us."

It is wrongly translated "*in us*." The apostle is speaking of the glory of God and of His Christ, which

is to be revealed *to us*. Throughout this season of tribulation, that glory is concealed. But "the *glory* of the Lord shall be *revealed*, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." Christ has two glories: (1) His *original* glory as the Son of God; (2) His *acquired* glory, as the Son of man. We can have fellowship with Him only in the latter.

The first point is a glory to be manifested outside us,* beheld by us. "For the *grace of God* bringing salvation for all men hath appeared, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present age, waiting for the blessed hope, and *manifestation of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ*:" Titus ii. 11—13.

So *grace* paves the way for *glory* and power. Take, again, another passage or two. "The Son of man shall come in the *glory of His Father*, with *His holy angels*; and then shall He reward each according to his work:" Matt. xvi. "Father, I wish that those also whom thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am, that *they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me*:" John xvii. 24. It will be a lustre like that beheld on the Mount of Transfiguration. Then, the Saviour's glory burst out *from within*; unlike that of Moses, which lodged on the mediator's face from without. "Beloved, now are we the children of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that *whenever He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is*:" 1 John iii. That is, the glory *outside* of us shall kindle glory *in us*, a glory like that of Christ, whom we behold. "When

* So we read, that Old Testament prophets sought to understand some of their predictions. "*Unto whom it was revealed*:" 1 Peter i. 12. Not '*in whom*.' "If in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall *reveal* even this *unto you*:" Phil iii. 15. Not '*in you*.'

Christ, who is our life, *shall be manifested*, then shall ye also with Him *be manifested in glory*:" Col. iii. 4. Assuredly, our body will need a mighty change to sustain its place in life and enjoyment in so new, so rich, and wonderful a scene.

Here again the history of Israel lends us light. They were to get ready for Jehovah's visit by sanctifying themselves. On the appointed day Jehovah descended on the mount, in the midst of terrors. The heads of the tribes said to Moses, when the voice of the Lord out of the midst of the fire had ceased, "Behold the Lord our God hath showed us *His glory* and *His greatness*:" Deut. v. 24. And soon after the ratification of the covenant, when the glory had been six days veiled by the cloud, we read, "And *the glory* of the Lord tabernacled upon Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days." "And the appearance of *the glory* of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of the mount, to the eyes of the children of Israel"—a glory shown to them: Ex. xxiv.

After the sin of the Calf, Moses entreats to see the glory of Jehovah. He was allowed to behold a small portion; but flesh under law could not endure the overpowering lustre, or it must die. When the tabernacle was put together according to God's instructions by Moses the mediator, the Lord entered the pavilion spread for Him. But the cloud and the glory shut out Moses from entering.

Moses himself was glorified with a bright light streaming from his face, though it tarried not. When the appointed High Priest offered his first sacrifices, it was promised that Jehovah should manifest His glory to His people. Accordingly, when all the first sacrifices were offered, the glory of the Lord appeared to all the people. "And fire came out from the Lord, and consumed upon the altar the burnt-offering and the fat: which when all the people saw, they shouted, and fell on their faces:" Lev. ix.

But a part of the glory to be revealed unto us relates to our environment. There shall be new heavens and a new earth. The creatures, whether alive or raised from corruption, shall be glorified, though there will be a difference between the glory of those of the earth and those of the heaven: 1 Cor. xv. 40. The Great City of God, too,—the New Jerusalem—shall be the centre of glory. There shall be no night there. The city possesses the glory of God; and its luminary never ceases to shine. The city of God needs not sun or moon. "For the glory of God enlightened it, and the Lamb is the lamp thereof." The nations when they travel are guided through the moonless nights by its lustre: Rev. xxi. 11, 23, 24.

"Revealed to us," for we are distinct from creation—the favoured children of God, as chosen, regenerate, indwelt by the Spirit. *When* will this revelation take place? When the Son of God, now hid as an arrow in the quiver, shall be revealed. "Ye come behind in no gift, waiting for *the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ*:" 1 Cor. i. 7. "To you who are troubled relief with us, *when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven* with the angels of His might:" 2 Thess. i. 7. "Rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of *Christ's sufferings*; that *when His glory shall be revealed*, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy:" 1 Peter iv. 13.

19. "For the earnest outlook of the creation is waiting for the revelation of the sons of God."

This passage tells of the removal of the effects of Adam's sin, as it affects others beside men. It is, therefore, in connection with the like passage in chapter v. Only there the question is concerning men, and therefore concerning law, sin, and death. Here are the effects of the Fall, as lying on *creation*, which is not *guilty of sin*.

We enquire, then,—*What is CREATION?*

First, it does not mean men, whether good or bad.

1. It does not intend *wicked* men. (1) They are not earnestly looking out for the revelation of the sons of God. They believe neither in the present sonship of believers, nor in their future glory. (2) They suffer now, and will for ever, because of their *choice of sin*. (3) Nor will they have part in the *liberty of glory* for evermore, destined by God for the children of God. (4) God has not given to the wicked *the hope of deliverance* after death.

2. Nor does 'creation' mean 'the children of God.' The two are manifestly distinguished all through the passage. It is after the glory has visited the children of God, and in consequence of it, that like blessing is to descend on the creature. "Not only *it*, but *ourselves also*, who have (what creation has *not*) the firstfruits of the Spirit:" ver. 23.

Here it may be observed, that while our translators use here the two words 'creation' and 'creature,' the Greek has but one word.

By "creation" is meant man's environment, or surroundings. It intends land, sea, sky, the vegetable and the animal kingdoms. Sometimes in the passage before us "every living creature of all flesh" is specially meant. It refers to God's work in Genesis i.

Of Creation the apostle affirms, that it is with neck stretched out, and its back turned on its vanity and death, that it is looking for the revelation of the sons of God. The Greek expression is a remarkable one.*

It is used but once more, and by Paul in Phillipians, where he is describing his position of difficulty and peril as the prisoner of Christ at Rome, doubtful how the matter might end, but hopeful of good: Phil. i. 20.

* *Αποκαταδοκία*. By the *απο* I understand its turning away from the aspect of danger and trouble to the point whence deliverance is expected.

Its expectation rests not on any force possessed by itself, not on any development from within; but on the might of a Deliverer outside: Phil. iii. 20, 21.

It expects "the revelation of the sons of God." That is to take place by the glorification of the bodies of the saved. The sons of God are now veiled by the body of death. They are unknown to the world, even as the Son of God was. Their glory is to appear in resurrection, as did the full glory of the Lord Jesus. "Then shall the righteous shine out as the sun in the kingdom of their Father:" Matt. xiii. 43. Their body is "sown in corruption; it is *raised in incorruption*: it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in *glory*:" 1 Cor. xv. 42, 43. The body is now dead because of sin, even in the saints. It must be renewed before we can meet Christ, or dwell eternally with God. Before Joseph, down in the dungeon, can be presented to the king of Egypt, he must change his prison-dress for one suited to the royal presence. After his exaltation by the king as his prime minister, how different the sphere of brightness, honour, and power in which he moved! Such shall also, only far greater, be the change in the surroundings of God's loved ones. New heavens, new earth, and the city of God belong to the risen. And even during the transition-time of the millennium, there shall be a glory over both the city of God above, and over earth with the old Jerusalem below.

Does Scripture speak of any such new season for heaven and earth, and new joy? Oh, yes! in places not a few. Of the Son of man it is written: (1) "Thou madest Him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands: Thou *hast put all things under His feet*. All sheep and oxen, yea, and the (wild) beasts of the field; the fowl of the heaven, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the sea:" Ps. viii.

(2) "Let the heaven and earth praise Him, the seas,

and every thing that moveth therein. For God will save Zion, and build the cities of Judah; that they may dwell there and have it in possession:" Psa. lxix.; Isa. xlix. 13.

(3) "*Praise the Lord from the heavens: praise Him in the heights.*" "Praise Him, sun and moon; praise Him all ye stars of light." "*Praise the Lord from the earth, ye dragons, and all deeps; fire, and hail: snow, and vapours; stormy wind fulfilling His word: mountains and all hills; fruitful trees, and all cedars: beasts, and all cattle; creeping things, and flying fowl: kings of the earth, and all people; princes, and all judges of the earth: both young men, and maidens; old men, and children;* Let them praise the name of the Lord:" Psa. cxlviii. Also Isaiah xi. and many other Scriptures.

This difficult passage of Romans could not be understood in days not remote, because the prevailing idea was that Christ was coming to burn up the earth and all its creatures. Doddridge says—"To explain this as chiefly referring to the brutal or inanimate creation is insufferable; since the day of the redemption of our bodies will be attended *with the conflagration which will put an end to them*"—(animals and the inanimate creation).

That is also Rome's idea of prophecy. She owns but one resurrection, common to both the saved and the lost. Hence those who accepted that view were driven to devise some new and strange meaning for "creation."

A minister of the Gospel once said to me, 'This passage is so unintelligible, that Paul ought to be sent for out of his grave to interpret it.' And no wonder! He did not believe in the kingdom of the thousand years of Christ's return, or the first resurrection of bliss before earth's destruction by fire. He had, therefore, put up the shutters against the only window whence light could be thrown upon it.

Let us look at a passage or two confirming us in the view that the coming of Christ is for joy, not for destruction:—

(1) "Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad: let the sea roar and the fulness thereof. Let the field be joyful and all that is therein; then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord: for He cometh, for He cometh to judge the earth:" Psa. xcvi. And again:—

(2) "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the earth: make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise."

(3) "Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. Let the floods clap their hands: let the hills be joyful together before the Lord; for He cometh to judge (rule, as did the judges of Israel) the earth: with righteousness shall He judge the world, and the people with equity:" Psa. xcvi. Creation is not called on to rejoice, because Christ is coming to burn it up! That is the lot destined for Satan and his armies of wickedness, that come up to destroy Jerusalem, the metropolis of the Lord Jesus: Rev. xx.

Creation is described, both in the Old Testament and the New, as looking out for "the days of heaven upon the earth." It is a day, not of destruction, but of "regeneration," when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of His glory, and His apostles reign over the restored twelve tribes of Israel: Matt. xix. 28. It is the day of the restoration of all things, of which the prophets have spoken since the beginning: Acts iii. 21. "For the Lord will comfort Zion; He will comfort all her waste places; and He will make her wilderness like Eden; and her desert like the garden of the Lord: joy and gladness shall be found therein; thanksgiving, and the voice of melody:" Isa. li. 3; Ezek. xxxvi. 35.

"The sons of God!" How little did Satan expect such a refutation of his two calumnies against the Lord God in Eden?

1. 'He is not *gracious*.' 'What! put you in the garden of trees, and then forbid you to eat their fruit?'

2. 'He is not true.' 'He will never execute His threat. He means it only to frighten you away from what is your best interest. He is afraid lest you should come too near to Himself and His dignity.'

Is God not *good*? He gave the dearest gift He could to redeem us! Is He not *true*? That Son could not save us even by His perfect life, and His pathetic prayer! If He will rescue the lost, *die He must*!

Was God afraid, lest man should approach too near Him? He sent His Son to stoop in His goodness to our lost estate, that we might by Him be lifted up to be eternal companions of the Lord Jesus, to whom all glory, all possessions belong! He passed by angels, greater in standing, and unfallen, to bestow on saved rebels greater glory far than theirs!

A veil is indeed now upon sons of God; but they have the spirit of sonship; and the Most High will bestow the body of glory in which they shall dwell evermore. How dread a contrast to the wicked, left under the blackness of darkness, the worm that never dieth, fire and brimstone for ever!

"The *revelation* of the sons of God."

That is to take place, when the Son of God is revealed from heaven: 1 Cor. i. 7; 2 Thess. i. 7. That is the time when He shall dispense life or death to His disciples. How was it that Jesus was shown to be the Son of God? Note the opening of the epistle. "Paul, a *servant* of Jesus Christ, set apart for the *Gospel* of God, which he had before announced by his prophets in holy writings, concerning His Son, who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, that was defined to be the *Son of God by the power* (according to the Spirit of Holiness) of the *select resurrection from the dead*, Jesus Christ our *Lord*:" i. 1—4.

The good news of God is not confined to the proclamation of justification by the righteousness of

God. It goes on to tell of the *life* that attaches to the *righteousness*. The possessor of this righteousness has eternal life. But the Most High has set a special hope before those obedient after their justification, the partaking of the glory of the thousand years together with Christ. On this turns the difference between 'the *children* of God,' and 'the *sons* of God.' To Christ belongs eternal life as the Righteous One, on the terms of the Law. But special reward belongs to Him, as the sufferer unto death, in working out that righteousness. His is the glory of the reign over creation, in the day of reward, and the putting down the force of the Enemy and inflicting punishment, when the Serpent's head shall be bruised. As Son of *David*, His heel could be bruised; as Son of *God*, according to the power of the Godhead, He was the first to rise from among the dead: Acts xxvi. 23.

Here then is shown us the prize to be enjoyed by the sons of God, the partaking with the Son of God of a special recompence prepared by the Father, for His sufferings in the way of obedience; a suffering entailed by His redemption of those who lay under sentence for sin. Those, then, that, like Him obey and suffer, shall have the "*consolation*" of living and reigning with Him: Luke vi. 24. And for this, as the first manifestation of the victory over the Deceiver and his seed, creation is waiting. And the passage ends by describing the Conqueror as "Jesus Christ our *Lord*," who will restore, with great additions, the lost lordship and kingdom of Adam.

How and where does the Creation come into view in this passage? Not in verses 12—16, where the apostle is treating of the Spirit's indwelling and sanctification, for in this the creature has no part. Our depression through sin is greater far than theirs, for within the heart of the fallen dwells enmity against God. *That*, if we are to be saved, necessitates the operation of the Son of God, and of the Spirit of God.

But, completed, it raises us far higher than the creature, even to the fellowship of Sonship with Christ.

It is the purpose of God not to remove from us stolen conscience, but to make us obey it. For here was and is the gap concealed by Satan, when he tempted our first parents. 'Ye shall be like God,' said he, '*knowing* good and evil.' But the knowledge of right and wrong does not (alas!) carry with it the *doing* of right; but flesh with its impulses of wrong carries the day against our perceptions of duty.

20, 21. "For the creature was made subject to vanity, not by its own choice, but through Him who made it subject in hope. Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God."

Creation at first was subjected to man. By the Fall, Adam was subjected to sin and death, and his empire was forfeited. Now God has subjected all creation to Christ, and one day his kingdom shall appear. While on earth He gave tokens of it, (1) in the coin taken out of the fish's mouth; (2) in His riding the colt, whereon none ever before had sat; and (3) in the power He gave to disciples over scorpions and serpents: Luke x. 19.

What is the "*vanity*" to which the creation is subjected?

It is a state *not its original one*. When God created it, He surveyed all on the seventh day and found it "very good." "And God *blessed* them, and God said unto them—'Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it:'" Gen. i. 28. Man was the ruler of all, and the vegetable creation was the food of all living creatures.

Vanity is that which came in as God's judgment upon the sin of man. Creation animate was drawn under the sentence of God through Satan's incarnation in the serpent. "And the Lord God said unto the

serpent—Because thou hast done this, *thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field:*" Gen. iii. 14. The vegetable creation was brought under the sentence, through man's eating of *the forbidden tree*. "Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the *tree* of which I commanded thee, saying,—'Thou shalt not eat of it,'—*Cursed is the ground for thy sake.*" Moreover, the judgment which falls on Adam takes two aspects.

(1) "In sorrow shalt thou eat of it (the ground) *all the days of thy life.*" (2) "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat *bread* (produce of the herb, instead of the fruit of the tree) *until thou return to the ground:* for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return:" Gen. iii. 17—19.

Here then are two states marked out. (1) Sorrow and toil for *the living*; ending in death. (2) But the sentence goes beyond death. Indeed, death is not named in the sentence on the three criminals, though it was in the original law given to Adam. But after death corruption is to seize the body of the guilty, at length resolving it into the dust whence it was taken.

This is the key to the passage in Romans.

"Vanity" is the state of creation during *life*, or, as Paul calls it, "trouble in the flesh." By it is described the creature's want of rest and satisfaction, and its brevity of life. *Within* it suffers pain, disease, death. *Without*, ill usage from man, perhaps slaughter, perhaps devouring by birds or beasts of prey. Or drought and cold, famine and winter's snows oppress it. Under the law, and before it, uncounted thousands were offered in sacrifice. The Wise King again and again lifts up his voice about the *vanity* and vexation of spirit of which the world is full. "One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh; but the earth abideth for ever. The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he arose." "*All things are full of labour:* man cannot

utter it: *the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing.*" Eccles. i. 4—8. "*That which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them; as the one dieth, so dieth the other: yea, they have all one breath: so that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast: for all is vanity. All go to one place: all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again.*" iii. 19, 20.

The cherubim set at the gates of Eden after man's expulsion were, I believe, caused to tabernacle there to watch, not only against man's attempt to steal back to the tree of life; but also to watch over the interests of every living thing of all flesh, lest the creatures should be fastened down to eternal existence upon a cursed earth: Gen. iii. 22, 23.

Then was sent the Flood. But when God is saving some of mankind, He remembers the living creatures as well. "Of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee." So, then, on the new earth, after the destruction of the old, there shall be living creatures of various sorts. Noah, when the ground is dry, presents to God a sacrifice of every clean beast and bird. The Most High makes a covenant thereon with not man alone, but with the *birds*, the *cattle*, and the *wild beasts* of earth—reptiles alone being omitted.

By this covenant God delivers over the living creatures to be food for man, and puts fear of man into their hearts. It was not so at first. And methinks fear of man will be taken away from the living creature when it is no longer eaten, when the fruit of the tree as man's diet, and the fertility of the earth, are restored.

Who made the creature subject to vanity?

Some have strangely said—(1) Satan; some (2) Man. Now it is true that these were the offenders; but He who subjected every living creature to vanity and to dust was the Judge of all, who first pronounced sentence on the guilty, and then executed it. Both

man and Satan were themselves subjected to the curse. God is in other cases properly spoken of as the Great Disposer of all. "How long, O *Despot*, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood?" Rev. vi. 10; 2 Peter ii. 1; Jude 4.

He it is who hath subjected all things to the feet of Christ: Eph. i. 22. "For not to angels hath He put in subjection the habitable earth in its future state, of which we are speaking," but to the Son of man, under whose feet all things are given in dominion: Heb. ii. 5—8; 1 Cor. xv. 22, 27, 28.

The Most High justly altered more or less man's pleasant surroundings when he transgressed. The criminal is by the police taken away from freedom and his home, to be imprisoned in a cell.

"*Not willingly.*" Adam and his sons sinned. The creature did not. It was not under law; it has not a conscience. Hence the creatures are treated in some respects differently from man. God gave to the creature a hope of deliverance, when He spoke of "the Seed of the woman" as one day to bruise the head of the Serpent Deceiver. We see this hope bound up in the covenant of God with Israel. The cherubim, representatives of the chiefs of creation, are closely connected with the mercy-seat of the ark. Here is a great advance on their position under Noah. They are made of incorruptible gold; they are in the spot where God abides in glory.

We hear of '*the larger hope.*' Does God give the wicked a hope after death? Hear what He says: "The hope of the righteous shall be gladness; but *the expectation of the wicked shall perish.*" Prov. x. 28. "*The wicked is driven away in his wickedness: but the righteous hath hope in his death.*" xiv. 32.

The sentence on the Serpent and his seed is that its head is ever to be bruised. And what that means is told us in dread words at the close. The devil leads up against Christ and Jerusalem an army not to be

counted; but fire descends from heaven and consumes them. "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, *where the Wild Beast (the False Christ) and the False Prophet are, and they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever:*" Rev. xx. 10.

Observe—since the creature did not choose sin, therefore God gave it the *hope* of deliverance from corruption and its slavery, into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. Where, therefore, there is the wilful choice of sin, God gives no hope of deliverance. Man may warrant the hope; but it will be found a deceit. No liberty of glory among the children of God will be granted to those, who, after light has come into the world, prefer darkness, because their deeds are evil. No deliverance, but only condemnation, as the Saviour said, to those that believe not in the redemption sent by the Only-Begotten Son of God.

"*Because the creature itself also shall be set free from the bondage of corruption.*"

That word "*itself*" attached to the creature is full of emphasis. It denotes a decision of the Most High, which goes beyond our expectation. Men, when speaking of salvation, seldom think of any race beyond their own. But the Creator does not forget the creatures of His hand; and while He gives the first place to redeemed man, He means to extend eternal existence to the inferior creatures. "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father—:" Matt. x. 30. "Should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than six score thousand persons, that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?" Jonah iv. 11.

What was the word of the angel to perverse Balaam? "The ass saw me, and turned from me these three times:

unless she had turned from me, surely now also *I had slain thee, and saved her alive:*" Num. xxii. 33.

We may illustrate its use. Suppose we were to read that a grand banquet was given to Nelson and his officers after the victory of the Nile, at the Mansion House. And then we were to find added, '*But the common sailors themselves were not overlooked; but tables were spread for them in the town-hall of Portsmouth.*'

Let a few examples of the Creator's care for His creatures be given. As Redeemer of the lost sons of men, His eyes are mainly on them, but not solely. He saw once that creation was very good; and it shall be restored and lifted higher than it was at first. The four representatives of man and of the animals of the earth appear not only at the gates of Eden, but are bound up with the ark of Moses. That ark rehearses their former deliverance in the ark of Noah, and God's covenant of mercy with them and with man. When Moses arises, they are set in the Holiest of all. They are made of one piece with the mercy-seat. That tells us, that God's counsel is to deliver and set in eternal peace with Himself and one another, man and the living creatures. They are indeed veiled; for law cannot bring in salvation; but they shall be delivered through the Great High Priest and His sacrifice. They are seen, too, in the Holiest of the temple of heaven: Rev. iv. And they render worship to the Lamb when He takes the book: Rev. v. So the plot of Satan against man only at last lifts them to a higher and eternal platform above that which they occupied at first.

"*Shall be set free from the bondage of corruption.*"

In what sense are we to take "*corruption*"? It has two meanings: (1) a literal, and a (2) figurative one.

(1) The *literal* is the state which attaches to the corpse after death. "Lord, by this time he stinketh; for he hath been dead four days." "Thou wilt not

suffer Thine Holy One to see *corruption*." "David was laid unto his fathers, and saw *corruption*."

(2) The *figurative* sense of *moral* corruption, or actings and feelings against conscience, has no place here. For the creature never was under law, and never knew the difference between right and wrong.

Paul is referring to the sentence of Eden. "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: *for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.*" Gen. iii. 19.

This corruption is a "*bondage*." While it is hateful to man that the bodies of those whom he loved should dissolve and moulder, yet he is powerless against this decree of the Lord. The Egyptians did indeed embalm many of their dead; but they have, in spite of it, turned to dust, as the visitors of their tombs complain.

From this "slavery of corruption" the creature itself, inferior as it is to man, shall one day be delivered. They die and corrupt now as surely as man. They are subject physically to the "reign of death."

It is the detention of justice, or imprisonment without power to escape. It is so close a chaining, that the prisoners cannot move their limbs.

Since the depressions to which creation is subject are twofold, twofold relief is needed, and will be granted, in order to the perfection of God's new heavens and new earth. Instead of (1) death and (2) corruption there shall be a (1) return to life, and the bestowment of a (2) body of glory: a great advance on the creature's original state.

In 1 Thessalonians iv., we find that the benefit of Christ's return affects first (1) those who sleep in Him; (2) then both the departed and the living are caught up to Him in the air. Blessing is first granted to Christians; then to the creature. But the distinction of 'the dead' and of 'the living' applies to the

creature as truly as to Christians. And this is the basis of an eternal distinction between (1) the *risen* creature; and (2) the creatures that shall *never die*. And as on the dead creature a heavier stroke has fallen, since they suffered previously during life, and also the bondage of corruption, the greater will be the amends made to them. For while the living are to have a body free from the tendency to death, the dead are not only to be released from the dust, but their body shall be glorified. *Creation* sinned *not*; but *men* have sinned. What shall then be the lot of those who have heard of pardon, but will not accept the mercy of God in Christ?

In verses 14 and 16 we have passed beyond man and the sons of men, and are taught concerning "the children of *God*," and "the sons of *God*."

"The creature shall be set free into the liberty of the glory of the children of *God*."

While death and corruption ending in dust are a yoke, it shall one day be lifted off from the saved of mankind. But this word tells us, that the yoke shall be borne from off the neck, even of the dead of creation; and it shall be set free from death, and from "the dust of death." As the yoke was laid on man by sin, so the removal of it shall be by the grace and power of Christ's redemption.

But the liberty to be introduced is "a freedom of *glory*." Liberty tells of the dead creation being brought back out of the dust into life, and the freedom is deliverance from dying again. But the new body into which the creature is to be introduced is a body of *brightness*.

That is the sense of "*glory*" taken literally, as it must be here. On the Mount of Transfiguration the chosen disciples saw the glory of Christ, when His face shone as the sun: Luke ix. 32. "The children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for *the glory* of his countenance:" 2 Cor. iii. 7.

"I could not see," says Paul, "for the glory of that light." Acts xxii. 11.

'Glory' is the opposite, both morally and physically, to dishonour. The corpse "is sown in *dishonour*"; it is raised in *glory*." 1 Cor. xv. 40—43. 'Corruption' is proved to be physical, by 'glory' being set as the opposite to it. It is not the opposite to grace here. Creation is to enjoy the glory of the *children* of God. The word used here is the inferior one. Brightness will belong to all the saved risen from the dead, whether among (1) the patriarchs, (2) the men of Moses, or (3) those of Christ. Paul assures us, that among the heavenly glories of the risen there are three qualities of glory: that of the star, that of the moon, and that of the sun: 1 Cor. xv. It is a freedom of glory attaching to their bodies; the freedom of *grace* bestowed by the Holy Ghost on the spirit, the creature will not have.

There is no distinction now between the bodies of Abraham, or of Absalom. The spirits of the righteous are indeed in Paradise; but that is something unseen. But Christ is coming to make the mighty and eternal change. His own body of glory is the example after which the bodies of the righteous shall be fashioned.

What shall we say to this startling counsel of God?

1. First, herein lies the chief resemblance between the first Adam and the last. The first Adam is a type of the last. But this has yet to be shown in the day of His glory. Adam, as the consequence of his transgression, depressed not men alone to vanity and corruption; but the inferior creatures also. Christ shall lift up the depressed, not of mankind alone, but of the animal and vegetable creation also.

2. And should not we also receive this word with thanks? Should we like to dwell for ever, in a world where there was no song of bird, or sound of beast, or wing of butterfly? How many of mankind are employed among the animals? and how many find their pleasure

among their pets of beast and bird! We know, that the vegetable creation of God's city of the risen shall be expanded, and so marvellously developed, that its tree of life shall bear every year twelve crops of fruit, and of a new kind every month.

The apostle treats first of the *dead* creation; multitudes of which have been offered to God in sacrifice. He notices first the removal of the heaviest yoke, "the slavery of corruption." The sentence—"Dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return"—shall be undone for man by Christ who is—"Resurrection and Life." But this passage tells us that the chains shall be taken off from the dead of creation also.

The Holy Spirit gives first the order of nature.

1. "The creature was made subject to *vanity*." That takes place during *life*. So was it with Adam. The Lord God laid upon him the yoke of toil and *sorrow* "*all the days of his life*." But after that sentence he lived for nearly a thousand years.

2. "*The creature shall be made free from the bondage of corruption*." That takes place *after death*, both in man and beast. The act of dying does not, as some imagine, finish the sentence on Adam and his sons. That is the point at which begins the return—carried out through centuries—to dust.

22. "For we know that all the creation is groaning together and travailing in birth together till now."

This verse gives us the proof of the vanity experienced by the creature during life; and tells us how it shall be removed.

The *groans* of all creation testify of the *vanity* it feels. The "For" with which the verse begins takes us back to verses 19 and 20. 1. The *earnest outlook* of the creature respects both burthens, which were laid by God's sentence, first on man, and then through him, on the creature. 2. The *hope* also which God has given to creation embraces, (1) the removal of the

vanity from *living* creation; and (2) *corruption* from the creatures that are *dead*. "Slavery of corruption" is worse than "vanity."

(1) The resurrection of dead creation depends on the raising of the sons of God by the power of the Most High. That is something not now the object of sense. But the mouldering of dead creation is something well known. (2) The groans of living creation, too, are matter of observation to all.

The apostle having spoken of the breaking of the heavier yoke, now treats of the taking away of the trouble which lies on man and the creature during life. The vanity and the slavery here spoken of are both to be interpreted by God's sentence on the guilty three in Eden: Gen. iii.

"The *whole* creation groaneth."

That was not said before: ver. 20.

Not all of creation is dead. *Dead* creation does not groan. But the whole of *living* creation "groans *together*" through all its parts. In order to its perfection, this load must be lifted off it; and no arm but an Almighty One can effect it. Great are the changes needed in order to the regeneration and the restoration of all things, as foretold.

"It groaneth" continuously—'tis the present tense. It is its voice as the living creation. Groans arise from the slave: Exodus iii. 7, 9.

These groans testify to the vanity of the living creation. The judgments of the Great and Terrible Day will call forth groans in more abundant measure. The first trumpet casts hail and fire on the earth, "and the *third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up*:" Rev. viii. 7. Joel gives us the effect of this—"How do the beasts groan! the herds of cattle are perplexed, because they have no pasture; yea, the flocks of sheep are made desolate. O Lord, to Thee will I cry: for the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness; and the flame hath burned up all the trees

of the field:" Joel i. 18, 19. But great is the contrast when the eternal day has set in for man and beast. "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more *death*, neither sorrow nor crying; for the former things have passed away:" Rev. xxi. With the removal of the cause comes the removal of the effect.

4. The children of God, too, are seen much earlier than this before the throne, their former trouble removed, and standing in front of it they ascribe to God and the Lamb the salvation that is come: Rev. vii.

As at first creation was bound together with sympathy of joy; so now all groan together. "If one member suffer, all suffer with it." And at last all shall sympathise together in deliverance from death, and the dust of death.

"And travaileth in birth together."

The state of *dead* creatures is not one of pain or groaning. 'Tis *living* creation that groans. Only herein is couched the *hope* given of God to it. They are not the groans of the *dying*, but of one *travailing in birth*.

This figure the Saviour sustains by a word used in His prophecy on Olivet. Describing the series of signs which shall prepare Israel for His return, He says,— "Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes in places. All these are the beginning of the *throes of birth*:" Matt. xxiv. 7, 8; Mark xiii. 8. The Great Trouble such as never has been, and never will be save this once, is the crisis of birth.

From the figure used, we gather that a limit is set to the evil. But it will get worse till the great Day of Tribulation, and then will come the *birth*, out of which flows joy to the heaven and to the earth. "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto Me: for I have redeemed thee. Sing, O ye heavens; for the Lord hath done it; shout, ye lower parts of the earth:

break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein : for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified Himself in Israel :” Isa. xlv. 22, 23. “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me ; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek ; He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound ; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness ; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified. And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations :” Isa. lxi. 1, 3, 4.

As the ‘groaning together’ of creation rehearses the sentence of toil on the *man* ; so the travailing in birth takes up the sentence on the *woman* : “*In sorrow shalt thou bring forth children* :” Gen. iii.

What is the birth ? It is the coming forth of the sons of God from Hadees and the tomb. To this our Lord alludes : “Verily I say unto you, Among them that are *born of women* there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist : notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he :” Matt. xi. 11 ; Luke vii. 28.

Beside the natural birth of women, there is the *birth out of the tomb*, and into the millennial kingdom. Of this the immersion of believers is the token. To this birth, as fulfilled in our Lord Jesus Christ, belong those words of the second Psalm : “Thou art My Son ; *this day have I begotten Thee*.”

To this refers the scene in Revelation xii. We have there the *Woman* and the *Serpent*. The Woman is not then deceived, but is suffering in part from the enmity which the Lord God put between her and the

Destroyer ; in part she is receiving the trouble contained in the sentence of Eden. She is a *mystic Woman* ; and has a *Mystic Child*, whose heel has been bruised by the Serpent during its life, and who, in consequence, is about to bruise the Serpent’s head : ver. 11. The child is caught up to “Jerusalem above, which is our mother” (Gal. iv. 27), though *she* travails not in birth. Satan in his zeal to persecute the Child on high, delivers battle with Christ and His angels, loses it, and is for ever cast out of heaven. This occurs only three years and a half before his being cast into the pit (Rev. xx.), when Christ and His approved ones take the kingdom. There is joy in heaven over the Risen and Ascended Child ; while there is woe on earth, to which defeated Satan is cast down.

While, then, the Old Testament gives us the sorrows of the Mother,—the Saviour, in the New Testament, speaks of the joy beyond the sorrow : John xvi.

There is first *the opening of the tomb*. Of that we have the promise : “Behold, O My people, I will *open your graves*, and cause you to *come up out of your graves*, and bring you into the land of Israel :” Ezek. xxxvii. 12. A specimen of this was given at the Saviour’s death and resurrection. “And the tombs (not ‘graves’) were *opened*, and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the tombs after His resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many :” Matt. xxvii.

This opening is for freedom to the imprisoned inmates. “Take ye away the stone.” “Jesus shouted with loud voice, ‘Lazarus, come forth, come hither !’ And he that was dead came forth, *bound* hand and foot with the grave-clothes, and his face was *bound about* with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, ‘*Loose him, and let him go*’” back to the home of the living. Something of the bonds of the tomb were there, even when he

arose in life. But they are to be removed, and at once. And He, who opens and none shuts, has promised yet again to effect a like work, but a greater. "The hour is coming in which all that are in the tombs shall *hear His voice*, and shall *come forth*: they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of judgment:" John v. 28, 29.

"For we know." This verse is linked to the former two, by the God-given "hope," and by the setting free from sorrow and corruption into liberty and brightness. The need of it to the perfection of the creature is testified by its groans, which must be made to cease.

This gives additional light to verses 12 and 13 of our chapter. It tells us, that the life to be bestowed on the approved of the Lord Jesus is the enjoyment of the thousand years' reign with Christ; while "the rest of the dead lived not again till the thousand years were fulfilled:" Rev. xx. 4, 5.

It is at that time that both living and dead creation will rejoice; for 'tis the coming of the Second Adam, the Lord our Hope: *Psa. xcvi.; xcvi.*

This first and blest resurrection will remove from the sons of God the slavery of corruption, which lies upon dead believers; and "the trouble in the flesh" or vanity, which oppresses living saints and creation. The hope of God's giving, when fulfilled, will take away at once both yokes.

"Travails in birth until now."

These words tell us, that the birth has not yet taken place—an important testimony. For Paul testifies that there were some in his day who taught, that "the resurrection was past already," and were removing from believers the stimulus of hope which was set before them by the Lord Jesus.

God's previous dispensations have been directed to the redemption of the soul. The burthens that lie on saints and on creation through the mortal body, which

belongs to the old creation, have not been touched; though they must one day be lifted off, in order that the perfection of God's counsels for our joy may be reached.

Two are the burthens upon creation: (1) the *hated* one, the slavery of corruption, to be shaken off in resurrection; and (2) the *beloved* one, the living sons of God manifested at the birth out of the tomb—the sons of God shall come forth out of the depth.

Thus we have the co-operation of (1) the Father, whom we address as children; (2) of the Son, as the Second Adam, the Redeemer; and (3) of the Spirit, as indwelling and comforting.

The Gospel tells believers of the soul's redemption; but it has not brought the birth from the tomb, or the change of the living saint. The Gospel speaks of mercy: it ends when judgment is upon the world.

Our Lord in His parting words supposes, that during the Gospel proclamation of forgiveness the course of nature would go on as before. "These signs shall follow them that believe: In My name they shall cast out *demons* [Satan and his angels are still at large]: they shall speak with new tongues; *they shall take up serpents.*" Serpents are creatures of venom and of death still, and therein consists the sign. To the ungodly they are still creatures of death.

When the kingdom of God is come, and Jesus our Lord is reigning, power is put forth upon *the serpent*, and his venom is removed. The lion's instinct of blood is taken away, and he eats grass like the ox: *Isa. xi.* *Now* Christ's power is put forth on the *believer*, and not on the *serpent*.

When Jehovah created all things, man was the ruler of the animals; nor were they afraid of him. Both man and the creature fed on the vegetable creation. At the Fall, the Most High put enmity between man and the serpent. After the Flood, in the covenant with Noah and the "living creature of all

flesh," *fear* of man was laid upon them; and no wonder! for God gave them all to man to be his *food*. But in the final state man returns to the fruit of the tree as his diet; there is no more death, and doubtless fear of man is also taken away. *Risen* creation belongs to the *city* of God, the New Jerusalem. Creation still *alive* is suited to, and dwells with, the living "*nations*" outside the city; and all is peace, resting on the work and suretyship of the Son of God.

23. "But not (it) alone, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan in ourselves, waiting for adoption, the redemption of our body."

It is supposed here, that there will, in the coming day, be two parties in the festival: those princes of God whose coming creates the festival, and the *spectators* of these illustrious centres of the feast. Creation and Christians are both divided into two classes: (1) the dead; (2) the living. Here Paul treats of the living. When the Prince of Wales visited Norwich, he and his suite formed the great centre of the festival; but it was a time of joy also to the onlookers.

"We ourselves also."

Here again we have the emphasis of 'ourselves.' It denotes the superiority of the children of God above creation, but their present depression. "We," means the living saints; as in 1 Thess. iv.

"Who have the firstfruits of the Spirit."

In regard of this expression, I do not feel entirely clear. Does it designate solely those possessed of the miraculous gifts of Pentecost, which sealed then the believers in Christ? Or does it suffice that the Spirit indwells? The subject is again taken up in Romans xii. And the apostle speaks of gifts: (1) prophecy (a miraculous gift promised at Pentecost), (2) ministry, (3) teaching, (4) exhortation, (5) giving, (6) ruling, (7) showing mercy. But these are not called 'gifts of

the Spirit,' but only, and impliedly, gifts of '*God*.' ver. 3.

By possessing the Spirit's indwelling, we are superior to creation. The gifts were "powers of the coming age"—of the first resurrection. The Holy Spirit is the earnest of our inheritance, till the redemption by power of the purchased possession.

That, too, is our superiority above creation. This point answers to one of the two things named, viz.—"the travail in birth" ascribed to creation.

Travail in birth is not asserted of the children of God.

1. "The whole creation (1) *groaneth*, and (2) *travaieth* in birth."

2. (1) '*We groan*,' but have (2) "the firstfruits of the Spirit" instead of the *travailing*. Why? Because we are ourselves the Mystic Child that is to be born, and to give joy to creation, causing it to cease its moans.

The gifts are the Spirit's "*firstfruits*," because in the coming day the Lord will pour out His Spirit in fulness upon *Israel*, and "upon all flesh." "For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods on the dry ground: I will *pour My Spirit upon thy seed*, and My blessing upon thine offspring:" Isa. xlv. 3; Joel ii. 28.

"We also groan within ourselves."

Our Lord is recorded to have groaned. He took aside the deaf and dumb man of Decapolis—"And looking up to heaven, He *groaned*, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened:" Mark vii. 34.

The same Greek word is not used in the narrative of the resurrection of Lazarus; but we have something nearly resembling it. "Jesus therefore, when He saw her weeping, and the Jews that came with her weeping, *was roused in spirit, and troubled Himself*, and said, 'Where have ye laid him?'" "Jesus wept:" John xi.

The groaning named in verse 23 shows us that the apostle is speaking of the living saints and creation. No groans are heard even from the wicked dead; while to the righteous "to depart and to be with Christ is very far better:" Phil. i. 23: 2 Cor. v. What is the condition of the departed creature is not said.

The groans of creation are open and audible to all. They result from the present pressure on it. Our groans are within: partly spiritual, from a sense of the conflict between Satan and Christ, and the wickedness and woe of the world and of the Church. Groans are partly, too, natural; the effects of pain on our body and soul. But they are, in spite of all, blessed, and uttered in hope. "Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted"—in the coming kingdom of the glory of God. It is the jarring of a redeemed spirit against a world lying under sin and death, and dwelling in a body as yet unredeemed from the sentence on transgression.

Of creation are stated two things: (1) it groans; and (2) travails in birth. The first of these is true of us also; the second is not. We are distinct from creation, as the babe is from the mother. The saints, whether living or dead, are together to be caught away out of earth to the heaven which is their inheritance. And baptism is to us a witness of this: "Except a man be *born out of water* and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

This groaning seems at first inconsistent with our high present privileges. Are we not children of God? Does not the Spirit dwell in us? Have we not an eternal inheritance above? Are not all things moving together for our profit? We are enabled to rejoice because the Spirit, the Comforter, is with us; and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. "We rejoice in the Lord." "We shout, crying, Abba, Father."

It is not said that God's children groan '*in sympathy with creation*,' although a notice of the groans of the

creature has preceded. This omission seems designed to keep up the Spirit's view of their superiority to creation. "We groan *within ourselves*." A view of the sin and misery of the world, and of the refusal of the only redemption makes us groan.

"*Waiting for adoption, the redemption of our body.*"

Creation is waiting for the kindling of the beacon-fire, that shall tell of the coming of Christ the Deliverer, and our participation in the brightness of His glorious body. Our groans are to end with the putting on of the body of glory, when mortality is to be swallowed up by life: Phil. iii. 20, 21; Col. iii. 4.

We are expecting "adoption"—the full manifestation of our lot, when,—the redemption of the spirit already possessed, Christ shall effect the redemption of the body also. But creation cannot attain to sonship.

When is to be the victory? Not at death. But "when the *corruptible* (body of the dead saint) shall put on *incorruption*, and when the mortal body (of the living saint) shall put on *immortality*. Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written—'Death is swallowed up in victory:'" 1 Cor. xv. 54. For sin and law are then set aside together with death.

Our spirit is already redeemed. The price has been paid: the blood and soul of Christ: * Matt. xx. 28; Heb. ix. 12; Rom. iii. 24, 25. But the body is yet under slavery. Its deliverance is to come, because of God's indwelling Spirit. So the doctrine that the spirit-state is man's final condition is a falsehood, making void Christ's resurrection. His body and soul, for a brief time severed, came together again unto life, and thereupon He came forth from the place of corruption, the tomb. He came forth as our Forerunner: Heb. vi. 20. This distraction is the consequence of the division of the Christian into two parts; as testified before. "If Christ be in you, *the body is dead*, because of sin; but *the spirit is life*, because of righteousness:" ver. 10.

* $\Psi\chi\eta$. John x. 11, 15, 17; xv. 13; Acts ii. 27, 31.

The sentence of Eden leaves man, both body and spirit, under death. But the Son of God has come, the life-giving Spirit; He has brought life to our spirits; and as He raised His own body from the dead, so shall He raise ours.

By the *renewed spirit* we are linked with *life* and *heaven*; by the *unrenewed body* we are connected with *earth*, *death*, and the first Adam. While we bear our body unrenewed, we groan within ourselves. When shall the groaning cease? When "clothed upon with our house from heaven."* "For we that are in this tabernacle *groan*, being burthened: not that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon; that mortality might be swallowed up by *life*." Here again we have the key to the 'life' or 'death' awaiting us at Christ's return.

This discord will one day be removed. The Saviour, by His death and righteousness has removed us from the burthen of law and sin, with the sentence delivered thereupon by the payment of the *price*. We wait the redemption by His word of *power*: Phil. iii. 21.

In that day creation and ourselves shall be set free from death and dust into liberty and glory for ever. There shall be harmony within us, and harmony in the world outside us; and above all, sonship with God. These things are ours in promise now; but they await their fulfilment; and our part is with patience to wait.

We see, then, that the common ideas about Christians entering heaven as soon as they die, and as naked spirits, are not the mind of God. Jesus our Lord did not Himself enter heaven till after He had risen from the dead, and was seen by the disciples to ascend: John xx. 17; Acts i. Death *unclothes* the saint; but our hope is the resurrection, with its *clothing upon* from on high. That is the time and manner of the *revelation*

*The spiritual and moral is touched on here by Paul, as also in Rom. viii. 12, 13. "If, at least, even after our being clothed (by our resurrection body) we shall not be found naked" (of good works).

of the sons of God. Thus will our Lord also be revealed, by the glory of His body. "Waiting for the *revelation* of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Greek): 1 Cor. i. 7; 2 Thess. i. 7; 1 Pet. i. 7, 13; iv. 13.

And hence we have, "the redemption of *our body*." *The body is an abiding part of us*; and the coming of our Lord will fit it and us for the eternal kingdom of God. A new body is necessary, not only to the dead in Christ, but to the living.

Our adoption is not known to creation; it is a matter of revelation in God's word. But as soon as the righteous put on their bodies of glory, creation recognises that its signal of joy is come. That which is a *birth* in reference to creation, is to us "the *redemption of our body*" from death and the tomb. Creation is not the same as the *children of God*. It never was "*lost*" like sinful sons of men; it is not said to be '*redeemed*' or '*saved*,' as far as I recollect. So there are two hopes. (1) Ours is *glory*, after the salvation of the spirit is effected. (2) Theirs is the setting free of the *body* alone from death and corruption, with brightness given to it. It was this difference in regard of sin which made sheep and oxen, if they were not incapacitated by bodily defect, fit to be used as atoning sacrifices.

As God intends visibly to own us as His children, so He calls on us openly to own Him as our Father, and Jesus Christ as our Lord; by the commanded immersion, coming out from a world at enmity with Him.

SUMMARY.

Let me now give a summing up of the interesting passage, whose riches have detained us so long—verses 12—25.

The believer is regenerate; but the flesh is still in

him; and he may be led by, and may live according to the flesh, instead of the spirit. Now life after the flesh, ends in death, when resurrection comes; and that death lasts during the millennium.

The apostle then defines the walk of the saint. 1. As led by the Holy Spirit he is a son of God. 2. He approaches in prayer and praise to God as his Father, in the spirit of freedom. 3. The Holy Spirit indwelling assures him he is a child of the Most High, through the regeneration from above. 4. As a child of God he is an heir of God.

(1) There are two heritages—the *eternal* one, which is ours by gift when we believe. (2) The *temporary* one is the millennium. It is to be sought for, and may be lost. It is the time of the reward destined for Christ, as the Second Adam, the Redeemer by His humiliation and sufferings: Matt. xvi., xvii.; Heb. i.; Col. i. 21—23. It is destined also for the men of faith, and of the obedience of faith, as was shown in the life of Abraham (chap. iv.).

The terms on which it is to be obtained are two:—

(1) *Holiness* through the Spirit, as has just been declared. (2) But to that is added, *suffering with Christ*: v. 17; Phil. i. 29.

Christ suffered from two sources. (1) From *man*, as the Holy One of God, hated by the rebels who hated His Father. (2) From *God*, as having undertaken to redeem those under sentence of law. "It pleased the Lord to bruise Him: He hath put Him to grief." "The punishment of our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed:" Isa. liii. 10, 5 (Hebrew).

The Saviour's endurances were not because of His sinning, as are ours by nature; but because of His obedience to God. The Serpent and his seed bruised His sacred heel. He suffered unto death as the spotless Lamb of the Passover, to bring us safety, pardon, peace, through His blood.

And now the believer is called to suffering on the same lines. This was God's decree from the date of the sentence in Eden. Those who shall bruise the Serpent's head in the coming kingdom of glory must suffer now the bruising of the heel in this day of grace. For that is the *consolation* proposed here by God: Luke vi. 24.

Even under the law the prophets and others suffered *for righteousness*: Matt. v. 10. We are to suffer, if Christ's obedient disciples, *for Christ's sake*: ver. 11, 12.

This was the word to Paul, who is the example of a life accepted by God under this dispensation. "I will show him (says our Lord) how great things he must *suffer* for My name's sake:" Acts ix. 16; 2 Cor. i. 3—5; 2 Tim. i. 8—12; Rev. ii. 9—11. So says Peter: "For this is grace, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, *suffering* wrongfully. For what glory is it, if when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye take it patiently? but if, when ye *do well*, and *suffer for it*, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. *For even hereunto were ye called; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps.*" 1 Peter ii. 19—23; iv. 12—18. "If any man *suffer as a Christian*, let him not be ashamed; but let him *glorify God on this behalf.*"

For the glory to be given on account of endurance such as this, creation is waiting. The Son of God has yet to be revealed out of heaven in glory, and the sons of God to be revealed with Him. The kingdom of Christ is a compensation made Him for His obedience and self-denial. It is also to be enjoyed together with Him by those who act and suffer for Him.

The "For" with which verse 18 begins, arises out of the last statement of verse 17. Paul suffered with Christ *of set choice*, beholding in it the pledge that he should be glorified and reign with Christ. For God is

the rewarder of those that diligently seek Him. Moses, as the man of faith, pushed aside the worldly advantages in which the providence of God had set him, "*choosing* rather to suffer *affliction* with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he *had respect to the recompence of reward*:" Heb. xi. And when the sons of Zebedee sought the highest rewards of Messiah's kingdom, the Saviour gives them to understand that these were, by God's counsel, bound up with proportionate suffering now—a truth before unknown to them. And when the ten were angry at this petition of the two, the Saviour teaches them that the glories of the kingdom to come stand attached to humble service now: Matt. xx.

The glory is composed mainly of two elements: (1) the riches of Christ's purchased inheritance; and (2) the glory which is to clothe creation when Christ the Son of God is revealed from heaven, and the obedient sons of God with Him.

Notice also the point at which creation comes into view in this epistle. It is not named, while the sanctification of God's people is being treated of (verses 14—16), for the creature never having sinned, and become at enmity with God, as man has, receives not the inward work and blessing of the Holy Spirit. As it is not 'lost' by sin; so it is not said to be 'saved' by the work of Christ and the Holy Ghost.

But as soon as the subject of the *inheritance* is introduced, together with *present suffering* and *future glory*, then creation is treated of; for it is linked with our destiny in these respects. For creation is suffering not from its sin, as man is, by sentence of law from the Judge. Hence the trouble entailed upon it through man is only temporary, and under hope of the better things to come through the last Adam. The twofold burthen lying on it, hinges manifestly on the

sentence in Eden: (1) suffering in life, (2) putrefaction after death. These things befall also the Christian. But, by way of amends, creation is to be lifted loftily and for ever above the standing given to it at the first. Its blessings are also to be bestowed at the time when the Redeemer shall come, and the saved of men enter on their heritage. Slavery shall be exchanged for freedom, and corruption for glory exempt from the touch of death.

In verse 22 is taken up the uneasiness which affects living creation and ourselves. The previous dispensations under the patriarchs, the law, and the prophets, scarcely touched the condition of bird and beast. They were directed mainly to the salvation of man the transgressor, as needing a work of God within him. Here creation was not implicated. But when the apostle comes to treat of the final destiny of creation and man, then it is seen that the living creature is still to be knit to man, and to be partaker of the benefits brought to him by the Heavenly Deliverer. Creation is to form part of His kingdom, as Psalm viii. declares.

So that the chapters following on chapter v., and embracing chapter viii., are really an expansion and a manifestation of the meaning of those brief words of chapter v. "*Who (Adam) is the figure of the future*" Adam. The open results of Christ's work, as visibly affecting creation and man, have yet to appear.

We groan, but do not, as creation does, 'travail in birth.' For the creature is waiting for the freedom of another party; and that party is related to the creature, as the babe is to the mother. We who have the *spirit* of adoption are awaiting the *body* of adoption. And our freedom must come from "redemption"—the price laid down by our Lord Jesus Christ, and the power which shall knock off the shackles. This is a part of our Saviour's office. "He hath sent me to preach

deliverance to the captives (the dead), and recovering of sight to the blind (Israel), to set at liberty them that are *bruised*" (Luke iv.) by Satan's power over their heel.

In adoption, according to the Roman law, there were two parts,—a private one, and a public one. And thus it is in God's plan. Our adoption in *private* has already taken place; and the proof of it is our addressing from the heart God as our Father by the Spirit of grace. But, as we are here instructed, the *public* act of it—"the revelation of the sons of God"—has yet to be. It will be then that God shall openly own us, by clothing us with a new body suited to our new and eternal standing. And He requires of us now to own Him and His Son.

Our Lord was twice owned as the Son of God by the Father's voice, but in secret: at (1) His Baptism; (2) and His Transfiguration. A public owning of Him, such as was granted to Moses (Ex. xix. 9), was bestowed, just when He was about to be given up to death. The desire of the Gentiles to see this Jesus, of whom there was so much talk, was a notification to the Saviour of His death as close at hand. For as the living Jew He must stand apart from the unclean Gentile. Then came His word: "*Father, glorify Thy name:*" John xii. And with it came at once the reply: "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again."

Pharaoh's owning of Joseph was shown by the ring and the vestures of fine linen, by the chain of gold on his neck, and his riding in the king's second chariot: Gen. xli. 42, 43.

"*We are waiting for the adoption, that is, the redemption of our body.*"

We are not waiting for death, to be caught up to heaven the moment after it. Not till the new body is put on, are we presentable to God on high. Not till then are the traces of sin and death effaced. Not till resurrection did even our Lord ascend on high. Joseph,

taken out of the prison to appear before Pharaoh, must change his dress before he is admitted to the royal presence. Our "*body of this death*" is unfit for the presence of the God of *life*.

This corresponds with what the apostle says in chapter v. '*We were justified by the Saviour's blood; we shall be saved from wrath by Him.*' "*We were reconciled to God by the death of His Son; we shall be saved by His life.*" Not till our robes of incorruption and immortality are put on, is our salvation complete. The change of our body is not gradual, beginning with our conversion; but in an instant, in a time for which we are to wait.

24, 25. "For we were saved in hope; but hope that is seen is not hope; for what a man sees, why does he yet hope for? But if what we see not we hope for, we with patience wait for it."

"We were saved." This looks back to our past regeneration by the Holy Spirit, and to our immersion into Christ, the pledge of resurrection. The Gospel accepted is "*the power of God unto salvation.*" "*By grace ye were saved through faith:*" Eph. ii. 5. 'The story of the cross is to us, *the saved*, the power of God.' But the salvation is as yet only of the spirit. The body remains under death, sentenced or received.

In this respect we resemble Israel. Israel began their march by "*the salvation of God,*" wrought on their behalf: Exodus xiv. It delivered them at once from Egypt and their persecutors there. But it was not the *hope* held out to them; that was their entry on the land of promise. That hope they accepted, but it was not seen; and forty years elapsed before any enjoyed it.

Our hope will one day be seen. But we cannot bring it to pass. Its realisation depends on God. His almightiness alone can effect it. So we must wait patiently, till the time of His good pleasure is come. The interval is one of trial: but the troubles of the way bring glory at last.

26. "Moreover the Spirit helpeth our infirmities; for what we should pray for as we ought, we know not; but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings unutterable."

Faith and hope of the blessings promised help us patiently to wait. But we are so weak we need more. We should be overborne, but for the help of the Holy Spirit.

We need teaching, both as to the *matter* and the *form* of our prayers. We do not understand sufficiently our position, and the dangers, and the needs and duties of it. This is seen in the conduct of disciples at Gethsemane, and the opposite wisdom of Christ; with the opposite results, when the trouble came on both.

The Saviour Himself on one occasion paused a moment, when He was pressed by a sense of persecution unto death: John xii. 27. "Now is My soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour? But for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy name!"

'Helpeth'—The Greek word is taken from the cooperation of two, as in lifting and moving a burthen too great for one. As, for instance, when a piano is to be moved, one takes one side, the other the opposite.

"Groans unutterable."

Creation groans, we groan, the Holy Spirit groans in us—a threefold cord not soon broken, and all three are urging on the Most High to the deliverance from the burthen; so that it will surely come.

Prayer is not the mere utterance of words,—God looks for suited affections. There may be prayer, where there are no words: and no prayer, where there are many and fervent words, but no heart.

Our patience is to be maintained under weaknesses of various kinds. Hence we need the support of prayer in the Spirit. So great is our ignorance, that without instruction and divine aid, we should not know what to ask for, or the best mode of putting forward our wants. The nations, when they prayed to their

gods, generally sought almost entirely for things temporal from them. But here we are instructed in the Spirit's intercession for us on earth, and within us. How great a help and consolation!

Our supplications are to be made for the kingdom of God and spiritual blessings mainly; for the things seen are temporary, the things unseen eternal.

"But the Spirit Himself"—The Holy Ghost as distinguished thus from the Christian's renewed spirit. The appointing us so great an Intercessor displays God's kindness toward His children, and gives us the confidence that our prayers will be answered. As Christ intercedes for us, so the Spirit.

Our groanings for deliverance and those of creation are taken up by the Holy Spirit, and by Him made powerful. They are 'unutterable' and unheard by us; but they are hastening on the day when groanings shall cease, and the joy of the Lord be come.

27. "But He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because according to God He intercedes for saints."

God searches the heart. What does He find in ours? Enmity? or love?

What is taught by the Holy Spirit is contrary to the mind of the flesh, which is rejected by God.

"According to God"—This is the standard of what is right and good. The Spirit of God knows it, and pleads in that direction, and so is acceptable with God, and thence we derive answers of blessing. So Mordecai instructed Esther about her danger and that of her nation, and led her to ask of the king the overthrow of Haman, the Jews' enemy.

Here ends the notice about our *sufferings* with Christ begun in verse 17. After this Paul is engaged about the glories that are to follow.

The Holy Spirit is not pleading *against* God, as when friends plead with a ruler to remove his oppression of

one whom they love: as did Judah against the arrest of his brother Benjamin by Joseph.

Saints pray! What are those who do *not*? Unholy! led by the flesh, and living at enmity with the Creator and Redeemer. What must be the effect of temptations and trials on them? Only evil! they are led captive.

They lie under the wrath of God. Where are their consolations when earth is moving away from them, and they are moving away from their hopes and possessions? Where will the prayerless be found *in judgment*? Among those condemned before the Great White Throne, when their deeds appeal for punishment.

Searching the heart of the sons of men is an attribute of God. And this perfection is ascribed to both the Spirit and the Son: 1 Cor. ii. 10; Rev. ii. 23. That forms one of the proofs, that both the Son and Spirit are God.

The mind of the Spirit is rootedly different from that of the flesh, which is enmity against God.

The ignorance and infirmity of the child of God are thus remedied. The Holy Spirit knows what God desires, and groans in the renewed, asking according to God's mind. So the petition is not for what is hurtful, but what is good for them, and what the Lord is prepared to grant. The Holy Spirit will not lead believers to ask for a stone, or for a scorpion. His holy intercessions give efficacy to the prayers of the holy. By his contrariety to this, Peter knew that the heart of Simon the magician was unchanged.

28. "Now we know that to them that love God all things are working together for good; to those who are called according to His purpose."

This is the order of the sentence in the Greek. It sets in the foremost place love to God. This is the distinctive difference between the regenerate and the men of flesh. Love to God is by the Holy Spirit poured into the hearts of believers: v. 5. But, which

is better still, God loves them, as the verses that follow declare.

"All things are working—"

Many quote it, as if it were written—"All *shall* work—"

But no! 'All is working already'—that is better still. They are working "*together*." We must not single out one especial circumstance. Many are the Christian's enemies; but God disappoints their schemes by the current of events, which He directs for good.

Nor is it, as it is sometimes quoted, 'All things are working for good,' as though the words applied universally to all men. To the haters of God all things are moving for evil. The *mercies* they receive condemn them; for they are not grateful. The *troubles* that afflict them turn to their condemnation; for through them they murmur against God. In adversity they rebel; in prosperity they harden their hearts.

"Who are called according to His purpose."

God's effectual call is certainly connected with final glorification. "His counsel shall stand, and He will do all His pleasure." This is the second condition in the statement; but, in fact, it long precedes the other. God's purpose and choice of His elect were before the foundation of the world. While appeal is made to multitudes to hate evil, and to love God, the appeal is refused; save by those written in the Lamb's Book of Life. Love to God ensures the salvation of all that possess that grace.

God moves the current of time, and turns it aside from destroying His people. It is not the native result of events. It is not His people's desert. Even Balaam's being hired to curse Israel was turned into blessing.

(1) "*To lovers of God.*" Two conditions are named. It is not, all is working good to all men. But to those that love God. Do all love God? The contrary taught in this very chapter. Enmity against God

will never choose to love Him. This love to God, then, tells of the work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration. "We love Him, because He *first loved us*." If we love God, we were certainly chosen by Him from all eternity.

(2) "*To the called according to His purpose.*"

This calling is not the mere hearing of the Gospel, whereby men in general are called. It is the effectual inward calling, which opens the heart towards God, as revealed in Christ. Many comfort themselves that they love God, when they regard Him only as the author of nature, and only as the God of mercy, and Father of all men.

We may know our election by our effectual calling. It tells us that God has loved us, and will certainly bear us on to salvation and glory.

But Israel, as rejecting the calls of the Son, and men of law refusing the grace of God in Christ, were children of the wicked one, as the Saviour assured them: John viii.—x.

As the Omniscent and Omnipotent One, none of God's intentions can be baffled. Nor will His love to His elect change.

29. "For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be made like to the image of His Son, that he might be the Firstborn among many brethren."

This gives the reason why all is working for good to His people. For God has fixed the glorious end of all. Hence what happens by the way cannot set aside the result of God's choice. That which introduces us at last to the *brethren* of the Son of God can only be good.

It is not natural to man to glorify God as the Great Author of his salvation. He dislikes exceedingly the idea of *his destiny being decided for him by the Most High*. But when, after the long darkness of the middle ages, the Book of God was thrown open by the

Reformation, it was seen at once *that God attributes to Himself the salvation of every one that is saved*. And so the Harmony of the Confessions of the Reformed shows.

But now the wisdom of the nineteenth century is in its pride turning back to glorify human power and goodness, and God's election is little believed.

"God *foreknew*."

Some would make this to mean God's foresight of the good choice of the saved, arising from themselves.

But that is a thing that *could* not be seen by God, since 'in the flesh,' even of the regenerate, "*dwells no good thing*"; how much less, then, this saving choice. How should *enmity* against God choose to love Him?

The Word of God decides easily the question, for those who are willing to be guided by it.

(1) "No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw Him."

(2) "No man can come to Me, except it were given him by My Father:" John vi. 44, 65.

(3) "God, who is rich in mercy . . . even when we were dead in sins *gave us life together with Christ*."

By grace ye were "*conformed to the image of His Son*," that He might be the Firstborn among many brethren."

(1) This looks back to the creation of man. "Let us," said God, "make men *in Our image*, after Our likeness; and let them have dominion." And lo! Adam is moulded, dust of the ground, and becomes a living soul.

(2) From his place in the new system he fell. He transmitted his fallen nature to his sons. He "*begat a son in his own likeness, after his image*:" Gen. v. 3.

(3) But when the Son of God deigned to become incarnate, a *new man* arose—the *heavenly*. He is the Righteous, the Sinless, the Conqueror of Death, the

Ascended to the throne of God, never to die, shining in glory; Firstborn of creation, Firstborn from the tomb. And as we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly: 1 Cor. xv. 49. We are to partake the image of the Son, the Creator: Col. iii. 10. Christ is the image of God; we are to wear the image of Christ.

Adam was not even a servant of the Lord God, the Creator; much less was he His companion. But now God means to have a family of sons, beloved even as Christ is; and like Him in body, in spirit, in glory, in inheritance; dwelling as the Royal Family in the mansions Christ has gone before to prepare. How loftily does the Second Adam take His stand, together with His seed, above the first! Moses was not the companion of Jehovah; but we are brethren of the Son of God.

We are to be made like to the Son of God, both in spirit and in body. (1) In spirit we are to be sinless, and loving towards God and His redeemed ones.

(2) In body. We are wearing now the image of the earthly; we shall then wear the image of the heavenly. We are to resemble Christ as *the Risen One*. Such as He is seen by John in the first chapter of the Apocalypse. John saw Him as "a Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the breasts with a golden girdle. His head and hair white as snow; His eyes as a flame of fire; His feet like fine brass glowing with flame, and His voice as the sound of many waters; His countenance like the sun in his noonday glory." I suppose, too, that His companions will be able to walk the waters as did Christ, to pass through walls, to appear and disappear at will, and to ascend to the heaven whenever they please. Christ will be, nay, and *is*, the white ray of light, combining the seven colours in perfection; while His people will be clad with one or more of the seven colours.

Paul desired to become like Christ in a *martyr's death*, if only he might have the Saviour's resurrection *body of glory*, and the thousand years' reign: Phil. iii. 10, 21.

The old Adam is seen going down out of life to death and dust. The new Adam is seen in coming up from death and dust to life and glory eternal.

How different the mode of the old creation of man and of the new! "The Lord God moulded man out of the dust of the ground: and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." But Christ, raised silently from among the dead, came forth "*as the life-giving Spirit*." And therefore He will give life from the dead to multitudes innumerable. The Father raised the Son without any call; but the Son is to raise the slumberers "with a *shout*, with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God." A greater assembly shall at that sound assemble to Christ as their Head than was gathered to Sinai by "the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud." Then shall the Lord Jesus adjudge to each according to his work.

"*That He might be the Firstborn among many brethren.*"

This is God's final counsel, to give His Son a company out of the redeemed, to be His companions for ever. We are here again touching on the resemblance between Adam and Christ. "And the Lord God said—'It is not good, that the man should be *alone*; I will make a helper for him.' " But first the Lord showed, that of all creation, there was not one worthy or fit to share the dominion of Adam. Accordingly, three departments of living creatures are brought before him, the cattle, the birds of the heaven, the wild beasts of earth; and Adam gives them abiding names. But it was proved to Adam's satisfaction, that none of those he named could be suitable companions for him. Christ at His return pronounces some 'Blessed,' and some 'Cursed,' and such they abide for ever: Matt. v. 3—10; xxiv. 26; xxv. 34.

So in the case of the Son. (1) Angels were not deemed worthy and suitable. (2) The Gentile nations are found hostile to Christ. (3) Israel, as the nation, takes the part not of the helper, but of enemies. There is indeed a remnant of them whom Christ calls "elect," but they are not gathered till after the Saviour's appearing; they do not come with Him. And there were some saints, sleepers like Himself, who, after His resurrection, came forth out of the tombs; but they are not said to be His companions, and they went into the holy city of earth, while our Lord did not.

(4) A company is formed, elect out of Israel and the nations, whom Christ calls 'friends' and '*brethren*.' The latter name is given to them only after resurrection, but immediately after it. To the women Jesus says,— "Go tell *My brethren* that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see Me." To Mary Magdalen our Lord says,— "Go to *My brethren*, and say unto them, 'I ascend to My Father, and to your Father, and to My God, and to your God.'"

Adam, well pleased at the companion God had graciously given him, and comparing her with the birds of heaven and beasts of earth, says, as soon as she is presented to him,— "This is *this time bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh*; she shall be called 'Woman,' because she was taken out of man." And Paul manifestly expounds for us the application of this word to the antitype,— "For none ever yet hated his own flesh; but loveth it, and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church: *For we are members of His body, (taken) out of His flesh, and of His bones.* For this cause shall a man leave his father and his mother and shall be joined to his wife, and they twain shall be one flesh:" Eph. v.

Now is going on the building of the rib into the Woman. The presentation of the Church to Christ is to come after the millennial day of reward is past, when through grace there shall be the removal of spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.

Adam and his sons, after his fall, were known as going down under the sentence of God to death and to dust. Christ is known to be the Son of God by His coming out from the dead and the tomb, never to die again. Hence He takes the place of pre-eminence above those whom He so uplifts, and justly; all the saved will own it lovingly. 'Thou art worthy of this; we were worthy of perdition only.' Christ stands related to God as His Only-begotten Son. We, as being set in Him partake the sonship of Christ, though at first we were enemies of God, "hateful and hating one another." This will be our ballast for ever; preventing us, by the Spirit's gracious energy, from being upset by pride at our lofty station.

The last word of verse 30 gives a splendid finishing touch to this discovery of God's plan with regard to His saved ones of this dispensation. We are justified by God, in order that we may shine "*glorified*" with the glory of the Son of God: that brightness which struck Saul the persecutor to the ground. So our likeness to the Son of God will be twofold; *within*, resembling Him in love, joy, peace, and the graces of the Spirit; and *without*, bearing some of the glory of Christ. For thus it is written: "God is calling you to His own kingdom and *glory*." "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth. Whereunto He called you by our Gospel to the obtaining of the *glory of the Lord Jesus Christ*:" 1 Thess. ii. 12; 2 Thess. ii. 13, 14. This brightness will be the sign of our rank ever abiding.

Adam's companion was but a single female; the Saviour's companions are "*many brethren*." Moses led out of Egypt God's people of the earth: but the Saviour, the Slain, and now the Lamb in the midst of the throne, shall lead the Great Multitude, whom none can number, from the Tabernacle above to the Eternal City of God, where are the fountains of the water of life, and the restored tree of life.

Christ, as the righteous Jew, was "alone" till His death and resurrection. Then He was able, as the risen from the dead and outside of earth, to associate with Himself His elect of Jew and Gentile. "Verily, verily, I say unto you,—Except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and *die*, it abideth *alone*; but if it die, it bringeth forth *much fruit*:" John xii. 24.

Of these the Saviour is to be the "Firstborn." To the firstborn belongs a double portion. And our Lord is Firstborn, as the *Son of God*, before creation began. He is Firstborn too, as the *Risen and the Ascended*; the first to come forth out of the tomb, no more to re-enter it. (1) As Incarnate, He is "the Image of the invisible God, the Firstborn of *all creation*." (2) As the Risen from among the departed, "He is the beginning, the Firstborn *from among the dead*; that in all things He might have the pre-eminence:" Col. i. 15, 18.

To Adam was given dominion over earth and its creatures. This was lost by his transgression. But to Christ shall be visibly given the kingdom of the millennium over earth and heaven, "the kingdom of the Son." This He takes, as deserving of the first place in everything.

Those thus honoured to obtain the heavenly inheritance will be Abraham's seed, like the stars in their fixity and lustre on high. Their place is peculiar. The Church raised from the dead will neither increase nor diminish for ever. And fittingly so; there will be neither marriage for such, to increase it; nor death to diminish; as the Saviour says: "They that shall be accounted worthy to attain that age, and the resurrection from among the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: *for neither can they die any more*; but are equal to the angels; and are the sons of God, being the sons of the resurrection:" Luke xx.

The New Jerusalem abides ever of the same size, and the mansions Christ has gone to prepare for His elect

continue the same, so that the number of the "many brethren" of Christ remains fixed.

Not so is it with regard to "the nations," who dwell outside the city of God, possessed of the flesh. They may increase, and multiply indefinitely, and the risen will ever keep their place of superiority above those in the flesh.

"*For by grace were ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any should boast*:" Eph. ii. 4, 5, 8, 9. The primary choice is that of God, before the world began to be,—Man's choice of God follows on that. "We love God, because He *first* loved us."

This counsel of the Most High as it began in eternity looks on to an eternity of bliss with His Son, and to the glory and form of His Son, possessed by the saved of this dispensation. His elect of the Church are to enjoy the heritage of God, and to be possessed of the same glory as Christ. The body of our humiliation is to be exchanged for the body of His glory.

30. "But whom He predestined, them He also called, and whom He called, them He also justified; but those whom He justified, them He also glorified."

The two first are the spiritual steps; the last is the visible act and final one. Paul is speaking of the gift of eternal life.

As the choice of the persons of His elect belongs to God, so He decided their destiny long before they were born. He *gave them to His Son*; and none can pluck them out of His hand.

The perverse choice of the wicked God can and does foresee; and they are the authors of their own perdition. He has only to leave them to *their own choice*, and effectually they destroy themselves. But His chosen He effectually calls. He puts forth power on them to save them. He is *obliged* to do it. For without such power, they would perish. Left in the burning they

would, like other brands, turn to ashes. The stone rolling down-hill needs no aid to make it reach the bottom. But if it is to become a stone of the altar at the top of the Mount, it must be stayed in its downward career, and lifted contrary to the force of gravity, up the hill.

God, having fixed on His gracious and glorious end, is obliged to work to secure it. Father, Son, and Spirit, are in their several divine operations at work to effect the great scheme, without which it must have failed.

"Justified"—Eternal glory turns on that. The Lord finds us sinners under sentence, and at enmity with Himself. He gives us righteousness; a righteousness above angels that never fell. After the trial of four thousand years, none, either of Jew or Gentile, can show a righteousness of law. But to us is given "the righteousness of God"—a righteousness that is eternal; and that assures us, we shall never, like the angels, fall. 1. We were chosen *before* the world. 2. Called *out* of it. 3. Justified while *in* it. 4. We shall be glorified *beyond* it for evermore. We are to be stones of the heavenly temple, branches in the true vine, members of Christ, our names written in the book of life.

Some unbelievers will tell you—"You cannot know, till the sentence of the last judgment is passed, whether God loves you or not." This is unbelief. "To all that are in Rome, *beloved of God*, called to be saints:" Rom. i. 7. "We have known and *believed the love which* God hath to us." "We love Him because *He first loved us*." "What shall separate us from *the love of Christ*?" "I live by faith in the Son of God, *who loved me*, and gave Himself for me:" Gal. ii. 20. "More than conquerors through Him *that loved us*." "*Thou hast loved them*," says Jesus, "as *Thou hast loved Me*:" John xvii. 23.

Some of these golden links of salvation were in existence before time began. But effectual calling and

justification are taking place now, and justification is the happy privilege of many in this evil world.

But, if justified, they will also be glorified; so certain is the link of God's forming. So certain is it, that glorification, though not yet possessed, is spoken of as of the past. "He glorified."

A new view of the matter is now to be given. Before this, we have had God's power over the *inward man*, exerted to change us into dispositions suited to those who are called to dwell with Himself. Now we are to look at the course of *things outside us*, and to see the wisdom and power of God exerted on our behalf, against the various foes we have to encounter up to death, or beyond it. God *in* us, was the subject before; God *for* us, as the Ruler of all things, is the subject now. We are therefore to look at what *God is to us*; not our goodness or evil towards Him, and the difficulties arising out of our failures there.

Observe how contrary these statements to the loose and general ideas of most. It is not,—'God deals with *general laws*.' He cannot exercise power over *special persons*. He must not interfere with human freedom. 'He must not force the will.' Not 'force the will'? Certainly not! But may He not *heal* it when *diseased*? May He not *sustain* it when *weak*? Can He not convert the man from evil to good? What means *regeneration*? Change the *nature* from evil to good, and the *will* changes of itself. Change a tiger into a lamb. Will it then slay, and gorge itself with blood and flesh?

Here God is seen choosing, making His plans from all eternity, electing what persons He will save and glorify; and in spite of all obstacles, glorifying them. Against men's ideas of 'general laws,' and God unable to move beyond them, set—"Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall to the ground without your Father." And again—"But the hairs of your head are all numbered."

"Fear ye not therefore; ye are of more value than many sparrows."

31. "What therefore shall we say to these things? If God be for us, who shall be against us?"

The intentions of Almighty power and wisdom must needs be fulfilled. Satan with his angels and evil men are against us, and would gladly destroy. But all opposition of the enemy will not avail to frustrate the salvation of God's providing. The Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit, are engaged on our behalf. Here is our *security* that we shall enjoy eternal life.

In this text I feel an especial interest. It was the text with which I was met, when I first preached outside the Church of England. I had commenced in previous lectures on the Romans, and arrived up to that point. These words then gave me heart, and did not fail to strike the congregation who assembled to hear.

32. "He at least who spared not His own Son, but gave Him up for us all, how shall He not together with Him freely give us all things?"

The giving up of the Son of God was unto death. Die He could not, unless with the counsel and consent of His *Father*. But the *Son* also freely consented thereto; even as Isaac to his being sacrificed by his father. The Redeemer knowingly gave up Himself to death, being able to deliver Himself had He pleased, even when the band of enemies were just ready to lay hands on Him. This comes out yet more conspicuously in the Gospel of John, when Judas heads the hostile force, and the Saviour coming forth to meet them, asks, "Whom seek ye?" They reply, "Jesus the Nazarite." They fall to the ground, after walking backward. Again He raises the question, and again He learns that He is the object of their coming. Thereupon He puts in a claim that His disciples shall go free, if *He* is arrested: they make no objection, and the exchange takes place.

The same gracious self-sacrifice on our behalf engages twice the notice of the Holy Spirit in Ephesians. "Walk in love, as Christ also loved us, and *gave Himself up for us as an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour.*" But again the great surrender is set before us further on in the chapter: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and *gave Himself up for her.*" Eph. v. 2, 25. *Here* the reference seems to be to Jacob's love for Rachel, and his devoting himself to seven years' service in order to obtain her as his wife: Gen. xxx. 20.

The difficulties in the way of our salvation are many; but the apostle arrays them before us only to scatter them.

1. Powers of earth and of angels are against us. But Almighty power is for us. Any creature-hosts of foes—can they overcome in wisdom or might the Great Creator?

2. But, in order to accomplish our glorification, there is 'so much trouble' (as we should say) to be undergone, such sacrifices on God's part are called for; will He be content to go to such expense to complete His plan? Yes! God has *already made the greatest possible sacrifice*—the greatest possible even to Himself. He gave up His own Son to death! After *that*, what shall stagger Him? All beyond that is trifling in view of this great step. God is not like the hasty builders, the sons of men, who after much expenditure, are unable to afford what is necessary to the completion of their tower. None shall triumph over His folly, as men do over the inconsiderate—"This architect began to build, but was not able to finish."

"God spared not *His own Son.*"

The Saviour, then, is no figurative 'Son of God,' deriving His title from His mission to save the sons of men. He was the *own* Son, "the Only begotten." He was so called as possessed of all the eternal perfections of the Godhead. Isaac was Abraham's own son.

At the call of Jehovah, Abraham gave up Isaac to death. And the angel of the Most High testifies His good pleasure at His servant's obedience: "Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not spared * *thy son, thine only son, from me.*"

"Because thou hast done this thing, and *hast not spared* thy son, thine only son, in blessing I will bless thee." But Jehovah, in the most important sense to Abraham, spared his son from death, and accepted the ram instead of his Isaac. While in His grace He spared *not His own Son, He spared the son of Abraham His friend.* He gave Him up to death for us all; for that was the price of our redemption. "And now," says Paul, "I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself up for me:" Gal. ii. 20.

But if the *Son of God* were not spared to effect our salvation and glory, how shall not God in grace bestow all things else? The argument is good, only if Christ be so supremely above all beside, that weighed against Him, they are as nought. Yea, and as of more value to God, as the Beloved of His heart, than all creatures whatsoever. If, then, the greatest boon be granted, how should He withhold the least? How we learn here the truthfulness of God! Only through righteousness and death can life eternal come!

33. "Who shall bring accusation against the elect of God? It is God who justifieth; who is he that bringeth accusation?"

Satan now accuses the saints day and night before the throne of God: Rev. xii. But in the great day, Satan the liar shall be silenced before the Great Judge. God justifies; sins are blotted out, and Christ's atonement and righteousness shall silence all accusation.

The challenge of Paul's faith against the hindrances

* *φειδομαι* in the LXX., as well as here.

in the way of our salvation takes two or three chief forms.

1. The difficulties arising out of *law*, and *justice* against offenders. Are we not *sinners*? And in the Day of Judgment shall defaulters stand before the *accusations* to be laid against us? But who shall lay them? God has already justified His people. Who, after God's accounting righteous, will lay accusation? Accusation of *them* would be the accusing *God* as *unjust*. The names in the Book of Life are the names of the justified before the Great White Throne.

2. But if there be no accusation, can there be *condemnation*? No! For God is the Judge—not men or devils who hate us. Many accusations may be laid, and yet acquittal flow from the Righteous Judge. "The Jews from Jerusalem laid many and grievous complaints against Paul, which *they could not prove.*" Acts xxv. 7. But an unfounded charge recoils upon the accuser.

Against our proposed condemnation the apostle presents the work of Christ. We have sinned; but Christ died for our sins, and put them away. Law demands righteousness in the saved; and Christ has brought that righteousness, and it is already emblazoned in golden characters in the heaven. While the unrighteous are kept in the prison, Christ, committed to prison as bearing our sins, has come out from it as the Righteous One! And *His* righteousness is *ours* who are in Him! But He is not only righteous as the Risen on earth; He is so also as the Raised to the Right Hand of the Majesty in the heavens. And if any foe appear and any charge arise, He is there to plead on our behalf, and bring us off victorious.

34. "It is Christ that died, and still further, was raised again; who also is at the right hand of God, who also intercedeth for us."

Christ is on high engaged in intercession for us. Of this Joseph is the type.

He is found in the dungeon ; he is taken out thence, his prison clothes changed, and when presented before the king, he is made chief over all the land of Egypt, next to Pharaoh. The chief butler, comforted by Joseph in the prison, and besought by Joseph to use his influence for him with Pharaoh, forgot Joseph. Not so with Christ. "He makes intercession for us" continually ; even as Satan accuses us continually.

Esther, elevated to the throne, occupied the best position to intercede for her people ; yea, she identified herself with them in asking her life from the king. And before her the enemy was at once overthrown. Our victory, greater by far, tarries awhile.

But there is yet a formidable supposition. Foes may not be able to prevail against us in the judgment, and as pleading the penalties of law against us. But what if they see us not to be overcome there, may they not band *their forces* in hatred to shut us out of the glory God destines for us ? Forces of this world, or forces of the unseen world ? Rev. xii. Paul enumerates seven, and then defies 'every other creature' to break the tie of *God's love to us, and to His Son*. For here lies the impregnable force of our salvation. God has bound up our eternal glory with His Son's suffering and joy. Can any created arm tear asunder such links of love—links stronger than steel ?

"Nay ; in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us." God's love is the source of all the benefits (1) in His plan, and (2) in its working out during this day of trial, and in the eternity to come.

35, 36. "What shall separate us from the love of Christ ? Shall trouble, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or the sword ? As it is written, 'For Thy sake we are being killed all the day ; we were counted as sheep for the slaughter.'"

"The love of Christ"—does it mean (1) our love to Him ? or (2) His love to us ?

Who can doubt that has read the Scripture, and specially this epistle ? What says Eden ? where Adam fell away from God to Satan. What says *Sinai* ? The love of God for Israel and their fathers brought them out from the house and lash of slavery, swallowed up their foes, fed them, and gave them to drink. But what return did they make for benefits so gracious ? Let the golden calf, molten in the very presence of God on the mount, tell. If sinless Adam fell, how much more easily his fallen sons ! No ! Paul is celebrating our eternal security in the love and power of *the Godhead* ; and the stability of *His* love towards us, who is bent on making us companions of His Son.

Many are the trials by the way, various their forms. And Paul was the chief apostle in this view, as in his self-vindication he asserts. The sword comes last of the seven forms. By it the apostle himself was put to death, as were also James and John the Baptist. This was known also under the Law and the Prophets. The quotation is taken from Psalm xlv., which celebrates God's former rescue and enriching of Israel. But then the Psalmist brings before the Lord the perils of His people as a motive to God to bestir Himself for their deliverance. The Enemy, overlooking God's love for His people, saw in them only a powerlessness which made them in the armed hands of foes but as cattle kept for slaughter, to be put to death at any moment according to their will.

37. "Nay, but in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us."

God shall bring His saints safely through all these grim foes. They shall prove more than conquerors. Many a general, many a soldier, has won the battle, but died just as the victory was gained. We shall reap the fruits of the victory for ever. The very troubles of the way shall bring us a requital of joy.

This verse alone were sufficient to tell us whose is

the love that brings us off more than conquerors. It is the love of God towards us that Paul is glorifying, not ours to Him. Sufferings by the way shall only endear us to God; they will form a ground for rewarding us.

38, 39. "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

We may rest confidently on Paul's persuasion. He arrived at it after long and severe suffering; and his inspiration enabled him clearly to see the issue, while we are prevented from seeing what shall be on the morrow.

Ten creatures, divided into two groups of five, are here presented as possibly prevailing to hinder us from the glory of life eternal. But over them all the beloved by God shall prove victors, and more than victors.

Neither death nor life shall hinder. The apostle has taught us how at Christ's voice the dead shall awake, and both the living and the dead mount up to meet the Lord in the air: 1 Thess. iv.

Good angels minister to the heirs of salvation; evil spirits shall be overborne by them. The victory of Michael on high will cast down Satan and his angels to earth; and from earth they shall be cast out when the Lord Jesus wins the Great Day of God, against His foes embattled against Him.

'But consider how loftily Christ is exalted above us; He is gone through all heavens, and we are here down so low beneath Him, whether as the living on earth's face, or as the dead gone down to the deeps of earth.'

Reassure yourself! Neither *height* nor *depth* shall separate us from the love of God, when His good time

has come. Christ has been in the depths, and thence will He rescue both the living and the dead. That love which led the Father to give the Son, and the Son to give Himself up for us, will surely pluck us out from all straits and distances to dwell with Himself for ever. It is not human love, but love divine, which shall secure so glorious and eternal a triumph!

Here ends the main argument of the epistle. Its subject is the undoing by Christ, the Last Adam, of the effects of the transgression of the first Adam. Let the results be told in a few words:—

I. Adam brings in SIN on all; Christ atones for it. Christ brings in RIGHTEOUSNESS for all, and justification. Hereon is founded our Gospel Dispensation of grace and gift.

II. Adam's *transgression* introduced DEATH, and THE REIGN OF DEATH.

Christ's *Righteousness* introduces LIFE: (1) *Eternal Life*, as the gift to all believers. (2) The "reign in Life," or *Millennial Life*, breaking in upon the *Reign of Death* for those who receive the abundance of the grace and gift attached to the Righteousness.

III. Adam was set under LAW, which can neither justify nor sanctify.

Christ takes believers out from Law into GRACE, by faith and baptism. Under Grace, the Holy Spirit dwells and works within, giving peace with God and holiness.

IV. Adam's trespass brought in FLESH, which consists of the (1) *Animal instincts*, and (2) *Conscience*, the stolen endowment of all our race. These two forces abide, and, for the present, work contrary to one another. Christ's blood pacifies the conscience; and we are thenceforward to seek to maintain a good conscience towards God and man.

Christ will take us out of *Flesh* into RESURRECTION, or the new body, because of the Spirit's indwelling.

This will be the final state; but it begins for the obedient a thousand years before the disobedient obtain it.

We have now reached another *division of the epistle*, treating, in chapters ix., x., and xi., of a new subject.

The case of Israel as exhibiting God's sovereignty is set forth; and an answer is given to a difficulty which must often have been objected to Paul.

You say "*There is no difference*" between Jew and Gentile: iii. 22. What then say you to the *special promises*, both temporal and spiritual, which God from time to time made to *Israel*? They were all to be righteous, on all the Holy Spirit was to be poured, they were to inherit the Land of Promise, and the nations to be their servants, while Jerusalem and its temple were to be the centres of worship and of government to all nations.

To this it would not be enough to reply, 'that Israel's sins had caused them to forfeit the promises.' That would, indeed, fully apply to the covenant of Sinai, and their agreement to be dealt with according to their deserts.

But what of the *unconditional* promises made to Abraham and his seed? This, then, is the great subject treated of. And the gist of the answer given is to this effect: That a dispensation not revealed to the Prophets of Israel has come in, during which God is offering salvation through Christ on equal terms to Jew and Gentile. This dispensation is called 'The Mystery'—a discovery made to Paul, and called by him 'My Gospel': Rom. xvi. 25—27. After this especial day of grace is over, the Lord will fulfil His promises to Israel.

Chapter ix. gives us the setting aside of Israel's claims to be God's people now, and shows the right of God to dispose of them as well as other men, even as seems Him good. He is the righteous God, and cannot treat any unjustly. But man is fallen, and sinners have no

claim at God's hands for anything but justice, and justice in that case means wrath.

Chapter x. sets forth the open terms of salvation by faith in Christ, proclaimed to every one. It shows, too, that Israel prefers law to grace, and therefore must perish; a truth revealed to Old Testament prophets, as the apostle shows.

Chapter xi., after showing the accomplishment of the threatenings of the prophets against Israel, yet goes on to tell of a new dispensation, when Christ the Deliverer shall come, and Israel's sins be forgiven. Faith in Christ or unbelief is the severing principle now between Israel and the Church.

CHAPTER IX.

1—3. "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could have wished myself to be accursed from the Christ, to benefit my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh."

THE apostle concluded in triumphant style the last chapter, for there the power and grace of God and His Son came into view. But now he is to treat of those who to this day refuse the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. The contrast was oppressive. Their unbelief must bring perpetual wrath from God.

The solemnity of Paul's affirmation of his feelings of love towards his people shows us how clearly he saw their hatred of 'the apostate.' They would not believe, that he, as the messenger of the 'No difference' doctrine, could own their being God's people, valued greatly by Him and His apostle.

"Men of Israel, help! This is the man that teacheth all men every-where against the people [of Israel], and the Law, and this place [the Temple]." They supposed, that as they hated Paul with a deadly hatred, so he must return their enmity. It was not so. Their unbelief and perdition lay on his soul as a perpetual burthen.

Very carefully, then, and very strongly does he assert his love for his nation, his appreciation of the blessings given them by Jehovah.

"I say the truth in Christ."

There are three standings among men, (1) Adam, (2) Moses, (3) Christ. And the truth might be spoken in each of the three standings.

1. I may say the truth '*in Adam*.' I may speak truth, impelled by "the *pride of life*." 'I have been well brought up from a child. My parents were truthful people, who *scorned to tell a lie*. And I could never stoop to such meanness as to speak a falsehood: but would rather suffer any infliction, than be guilty in such wise.'

2. Or, I may speak the truth '*in Moses*.'

'Moses our master delivered to us the command,— "Thou shalt not bear false witness;" and I, as a child of the law, and mindful of my own obligations to Jehovah, and to the covenant of Sinai made with my fathers, speak truth.'

3. Or, I may speak the truth '*in Christ*.'

'I have been taken out from law to stand under *grace*. I do not trust *myself*, and the flesh. But the Holy Spirit has regenerated me, and given me a love for the truth, and a hatred of lying, so that I speak truth as "a man in Christ," a member of His Body, the Church.' Paul was "in Christ," and in that element he abode. Thence came his thoughts and feelings Godward.

Now the indwelling Spirit of God does not put aside the conscience, but enlightens it to see the true path, and strengthens it to bear true witness, suitable to the standing of a son of God.

Paul could not be convicted of telling a lie, even in his unconverted days, much less since his renewal by the Holy Spirit. Paul, Christ, and the Holy Ghost attested this word of the apostle.

His soul, then, was full of sorrow, which lay on him with a heavy burthen, because of his nation's unbelief and their rejection of the Son of God and of the Spirit of God.

To remove the weight of the curse lying upon them because of this, he would have been willing, if it were possible, himself to suffer the curse, if only Israel might be led into blessing. He knew, indeed, that God would not accept such an offer; but it showed the

depth of his love for his brethren according to the flesh.

Herein he discovered himself to be in no wise inferior to *Moses*. When Israel in their perverseness broke the covenant by making the Calf, God had well nigh cut off the whole nation, had not *Moses*, His chosen, stood before Him in the gap. His disinterestedness was shown, by his refusing the offer of his own exaltation at the expense of Israel. He offered himself to Jehovah as an atonement for the rebellious people. "Blot me out of Thy Book!" The spirit was noble, but the offer was refused. And Paul saw by this example, that his own similar thought would not be accepted by the Most High.

4, 5. "Who are Israelites; whose are the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the Law, and the service (of God), and the promises, and the Fathers; and out of whom was the Christ, according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen."

Here are eight privileges named by the apostle, as belonging to Israel.

1. Their name '*Israelites*' was obtained from Jacob their father, illustrious by his prevailing over the angel.

It is observable, also, that these honours are said, not to have passed away, but to be still theirs.

2. "*Whose is the Adoption.*"

There are therefore two adoptions: one is that of God's people of *earth*; one is of the people of *heaven*.

Israel is a *nation*, chosen by God from among the nations, and by *Moses*, at God's command, called "his firstborn:" Deut. xiv. 1, 2; Ex. iv. 22. It is not properly called a '*church*,' though in Acts vii. 38, the Greek word signifying 'Assembly' is applied to Israel in the wilderness. But it is in Hebrew the word which occurs so often concerning them in the Pentateuch. There it is translated 'Congregation,' or 'Assembly,' but never 'Church.' Israel is often called "*the Assembly of Jehovah*:" Deut. xxiii. 2, 3. The *Church* of Christ

is not any one nation, or any congregation of nations. It is an assembly gathered out from Israel and the nations, for the Father, the Son, and the Spirit.

Paul has already spoken of "*adoption*" as applying to believers; a far loftier one. It has already taken effect within, through the regeneration by the Holy Spirit, and His indwelling, teaching us to call on God individually as "our Father in heaven." This, Israel never did.

Of us, Paul says—"Ye have received the *Spirit* of adoption, whereby we shout—*Abba, Father*:" viii. 15. But our place as sons of God is not yet taken. There is no visible difference between us and the men of the world, or of Israel. But we are waiting for the change of our robes, yet to be given at the descent of our Lord from on high, when the dead of creation also are to be changed. Till then, as he says, "We groan within ourselves, waiting for *adoption, the redemption of our body*:" ver. 23.

Thus believers in Christ have another adoption than that of Israel. "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law, to redeem those who were under law, that we might receive *the adoption of sons*. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, *Abba, Father*:" Gal. iv. 4—6. Israel is the adopted people under law, and a people of the earth. *Moses* was their leader. Ours is the Son of God, who bought us out from under law, that we might receive the adoption of grace; and within us dwells the Holy Spirit. These things are peculiar to us. Again—"Having predestinated us unto the *adoption of children* to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved:" Eph. i. 5, 6. Here again are peculiarities in our adoption. Ours is the heavenly one, and the choice is that of God, before the world was created.

We are accepted in Christ the Beloved Son of God ; an honour never given to Israel.

3. "*And the glory.*"

This refers to the pillar of cloud and of fire, which went with Israel at their departure out of Egypt. Out of it, at times, burst the intense lustre of God's Presence, as at the Lord's remonstrance with Israel concerning the manna. When the Covenant had been made, the glory of Jehovah, like consuming fire, shone on the top of Sinai: Ex. xxiv. Thence the Lord descended to take possession of the Tabernacle. The Tabernacle was sanctified by His glory: Ex. xxix. 43. This was, in Moses' view, the chief privilege of Israel: Num. xiv. 14.

4. "*And the Covenants.*"

Some uncial copies read 'And the Covenant'—a manifest correction by the copyists. It was supposed that there was but one—that of Sinai.

Now there were eight made with Abraham alone, and those were divided on two principles: (1) the conditional; and the (2) unconditional.

The first covenant made with Israel was broken by the idolatry of the Calf. Then Jehovah made a new covenant with Moses alone: Ex. xxxiv. But Moses sinned at Kadesh-Barnea; and then the Most High, as Moses' end was near, made a further covenant with Israel, on new grounds: Deut. xxix., xxx.

5. "*And the Law-giving.*"

Jehovah condescended to come down on Sinai as the terrible God of Law, and at Horeb to pronounce the Ten Commands. The Two Tables of the Law were written by the finger of God. Great was the honour; and it was so stated by Moses, and so regarded by Israel. "He showed His word unto Jacob; His statutes and His judgments unto Israel. *He hath not dealt so with any nation*; and as for His judgments, they have not known them:" Psa. cxlvii. 19, 20.

6. "*And the service of God.*"

Israel alone knew the character of the true God, and how to serve and please Him. The apostle has already testified their superiority over the nations in this respect: ii. Theirs were the priesthood, and the sacrifices, and the Tabernacle, and the feasts of the Lord.

6. "*And the Promises.*"

These were many, relating to them both as individuals, and as a nation. They were partly temporal, partly spiritual. They related to their land, city, and temple, and their superiority above the nations. Their spiritual privileges relate principally to the happy days to come: Jer. xxxi.

7. "*Whose are the Fathers.*"

Now we come to the glory of *Persons*.

The fathers were the foundation of their greatness as a people. "*Because He loved thy fathers, therefore He chose their seed after them:*" Deut. iv. 37. Moses describes the greatness of Jehovah as the God of heaven and earth. "*Only the Lord had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and He chose their seed after them:*" x. 14. 15. How much more blessed is the case with ourselves! "For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or earth, (as there be gods many and lords many,) but to us there is but *one God, the Father*, of whom are all things, *and we in Him*; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, *and we by Him:*" 1 Cor. viii. 5, 6.

8. "*And out of whom (came) the Christ, according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed for ever.*"

'The fathers' were Jews: that was their whole nature. But Christ, while He was a Jew, was yet something more, something Divine.

Why is the phrase changed? Why have we not, as before, "*Whose is the Christ?*" Lest Israel should be confirmed in the idea that the Christ belonged to them, and to them *alone*. Also, because of the Majesty

of the Redeemer; to whom, as the Creator and Redeemer, all things belong.

But the Holy Spirit inserts a note of distinction and limitation. 'Out of the Jews' stock, "*as far as regards the flesh,*" the Christ came.' Why this? Because the Saviour possessed two natures; one of which He derived from Israel, while the other was the Divine Nature, which was His from all eternity.

Then comes immediately a clear testimony to the Saviour's Godhead. The highest glory of Israel comes last. That the Saviour of the world should, as to his human nature, spring from the Jews, was their highest honour.

This testimony highly displeases many, and various have been the attempts to turn aside its edge. Some would make the closing words a Doxology: "Blessed be God for ever!" But this will not stand, either grammatically, or in relation to the structure of the argument.

He is the "*God over all.*" Then His is no *figurative*, or *subordinate* Godhead. If He be "God over all" He is of the same substance and power with the Father; or else there are *two Gods*.

If He be God over all, there is no God more powerful. Christ is 'God over all.' Then He is to be worshipped, as men worship the Father: John iv. 22, 23. Does my reader worship Him? Has he ever praised and thanked the God over all, who in infinite love came to save us by His humiliation and death?

Men and demons may *curse* Christ; but it will be to their own destruction. "He is God, *blessed* for ever."

But here also we are superior to Israel. Is Israel of *one flesh* with the Christ? "But he that is joined to the Lord is *one spirit*:" 1 Cor. vi. 17. It was a favour, that God showed Himself awhile at 'the Bush.' But His dwelling in the flesh as a Son of Man, and in it

atoning and bringing pardon, was more wonderful and gracious by far. And then His ascension now to dwell in glory on our behalf above!

6, 7. "Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For not all that have (sprung) out of Israel, are Israel. Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children; but—"in Isaac shall thy seed be called."

'Israel' here, in its first occurrence, means *Jacob*. The name 'Israel,' "Prince of God," was given by Jehovah to His servant Jacob, on the night of his wrestling with Him. The sentiment then is,—that not all the natural descendants of Jacob are reckoned as Israel. They are of Jacob's flesh, but not sons of his faith.

The objection of the Jew was—"God's word of promise you make to fail, O Paul! Even if *we* have failed in duty to Jehovah, *He* ought not to fail in His promises, and some of them are unconditional."

The apostle's reply, then, in effect is—"God has not failed; but you have mistaken His promises. You think, that to be of the natural posterity of Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob, is enough to make you heirs of all the promises to Israel. But it is not so."

This principle would lead the Jew on to consequences which he would certainly refuse. 'If you rest on your being the seed of the flesh, then, since Ishmael and his posterity, Esau and his posterity, the Edomites, and the sons of Abraham by Keturah, are of the seed of Abraham, they *also are as truly the people of God as yourselves.*' Such consequences the Jews, so carefully observant of their sole honour herein, would certainly reject. But if so, they must own that there is an election among the seed of the patriarchs themselves.

The Most High in Abraham's own day, and to his face, twice asserted the principle. In the covenant of circumcision, after Abraham had besought God's blessing

on Ishmael, he receives the notice that Sarah's son was the accepted before God, though He would not shut Ishmael wholly out of blessings temporal: Gen. xvii. And again, when Ishmael had offended against Isaac, and Sarah bid Abraham cast out Hagar and her son; God Himself bids Abraham to obey herein. "In all that Sarah said to thee, hearken unto her voice; for *in Isaac shall thy seed be called*:" Gen. xxi. To be a son of Abraham's flesh is not enough for Jehovah.

John the Baptist in his day asserted the same principle to the Pharisees and Sadducees. "Think not to say within yourselves—*We have Abraham for our Father*." And when the captious Jews urged this plea upon our Lord, He also refused it. 'They were Abraham's seed; and had no need to be made free by Himself.' Jesus replies with this very distinction: "I know that ye be *Abraham's seed*, but ye seek to kill Me, because My word hath no place in you." They assert again,—"*Abraham is our father*." Jesus replies,—"*If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham*." "*Ye are of your father the devil*." John viii. "For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly."

8. "That is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted for the seed."

These words, then, upturn the foundation of infant baptism. That rests on the imagination that the children of Christians are themselves Christians, and so have a right to baptism. But the children of the most excellent Christians are only *children of the flesh*; and these are expressly set aside.

Or if it be said,—'But while not *born* Christians, they *become* so when baptized,'—we answer, that Abraham is given as our example for justification, and for the initial rite of it. Now Abraham was not justified till he believed; and circumcision was only given as a seal set upon him after faith: Rom. iv.

"*But the children of the promise are reckoned as the seed*."

We become children of God, as John has told us, by faith. "But as many as received Him, to them gave he power [the right] to *become* children of God, even to them *that believe on His name*; who were begotten (Greek) not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God:" i. 11, 12.

"*The children of the promise are reckoned as the seed*."

Thus does Paul testify to Gentiles, men of faith. "Now we, brethren, *as Isaac was*, are the children of promise:" Gal. iv. 28.

9. "For this is the word of promise,—'At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son.'"

Flesh and its powers were purposely put aside in the case of Abraham and Sarah, in order that the benefit might be manifestly due to the supernatural power of God: Gen. xviii. 9, 14. Accordingly,—"*The Lord visited Sarah, as He had said*:" xxi. 1.

10—13. "But not only (in this instance); but when Rebecca had conceived by one, even by Isaac our father; (for the children being not yet born, nor having done any good or evil, in order that the purpose of God in the way of election might stand, not by works, but by Him that calleth); it was said to her,—'The elder shall serve the younger.' As it is written,—'Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.'"

Against the first instance the Jew might object, that the reason of the difference made between Isaac and Ishmael was owing to the mother of the refused being a slave, while the mother of Isaac was the freewoman, the superior wife.

The apostle therefore takes a second instance ready to his hand, to show that God's choice of *individuals* is not according to their merits, but according to His own long previous choice.

He takes the case, then, in the family of Isaac, the son of Abraham, who had but one wife. God decides the matter in the persons of two sons of the same father and mother, born at the same time.*

Men generally revolt at the idea of God's decision about them. They would have God choose by the merits of each son of man. That is only death. Here the contrary view is given. The choice is God's, not man's. In the instance of Esau and Jacob, the decision was uttered before the children were born, or had done good or evil. It was decided and expressed, that it might be seen, that God's counsels should prevail. God had a purpose, a purpose toward each, which waited not for the growing up of the twins.

This is declared to be true, not only in respect of the pair before us. Paul had named it in the former chapter. "We know that all things are working together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *His purpose*:" viii. 28. So in Ephesians. "In whom (Christ) also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated *according to the purpose of Him* who worketh *all things* after the counsel of His own will:" i. 11. And again,—"*According to the eternal purpose*, which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:" iii. 11.

In another passage, the same declaration, that the choice is God's, not waiting on our choice, is given. "Be thou partaker of the afflictions of the Gospel, according to the power of God, who hath *saved us*, and called us with an holy calling, *not according to our works*, but *His own purpose and grace*, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began:" 2 Tim. i. 8, 9. To a candid mind this would be sufficient. The choice is of God, preceding the choice of man. The design, if we will trust the apostle's word, was to show that it is God's good and wise pleasure which rules all.

* "*Our father, Isaac.*" We who believe are reckoned as of Abraham's seed; children of the promise: Gal. iv.

'But,' says man, dissatisfied with the arrangement,—'*Might* not the choice turn on the good works of Jacob *foreseen*, though not accomplished?'

But if so, then all is arranged really by man, and not by God: which is just opposite to the doctrine here.

If God's decision was to be according to man's choice, must He not wait to choose till the works of each of the parties were visibly before Him? To this it may be replied, 'No; God foresees all events before they come to pass.'

It is true. But there could be no *good* works to be foreseen. For till a man is regenerate, he is only 'the flesh,' and "*in the flesh dwells no good thing.*"

It was said to Rebecca, "The elder shall serve the younger." This was a decision against the rule of nature, and against the spirit of the law, which required that a double portion should accrue to the firstborn.

"*The elder shall serve the younger.*"

This was accomplished in part in the day of David, who put garrisons in Edom, "and all they of Edom became *David's servants*:" 2 Sam. viii. 14; 1 Kings xi. 16.

"*As it is written, 'Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.'*"

Against the full sense of these words it is alleged that '*hated*' may only mean '*loved less.*' But then, the same principle will apply to the other statement, and God's *love* to Jacob may signify only, that He '*hated him less*' than He hated Esau.

Again it is objected that, 'The love and the hatred refer only to the portions of each in time; for the passage referred to by Paul says, "Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the Lord: yet I loved Jacob, And I hated Esau, and *laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness.*'" Mal. i. 2, 3.

This tells us, then, that God's manifestation of displeasure against Esau showed itself *even in this life*. For God is the Ruler of time, as well as of eternity.

And this word of Malachi appears of double force, when we compare it with Jehovah's grant to Jacob: "I am come down to deliver them (Israel) 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.*" Ex. iii. 8.

The difference of the heritages was the fruit of God's love to the one, and of His displeasure towards the other. But the citation made from Malachi does not by any means give the full mind of God about the matter. What say the two next verses? "Whereas Edom saith, 'We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places:' thus saith the Lord, They shall *build*, but I will *throw down*; and they shall call them '*The border of wickedness*,' and '*The people against whom the Lord hath indignation for ever.*'" Now what is said of Jacob? "And your eyes shall see, and ye shall say, *The Lord will be magnified from the border of Israel.*" "Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of My planting, the work of My hands, that I may be glorified:" Isa. lx. 21. These words, then, affect Esau and his posterity with wrath because of their sinfulness "*for ever.*" And Esau is, in the epistle to the Hebrews, spoken of as the profane, who sold for a trifle his God-given birthright (Heb. xii. 16), and was rejected, finding no room for repentance. If God hated Esau during his life, what must become of him after death?

The history of the people of Edom is like that of their father. They refused a passage to Israel through their land, when coming up from the wilderness: Num. xx. 21. They sought in some difficult crisis of Israel's history to destroy God's city, Jerusalem: Psa. cxxxvii. 7.

What will be the state of the land and of the people of Edom during the great and terrible Day of the Lord? "Egypt shall be a desolation, and *Edom shall be*

a desolate wilderness, for the violence against the children of Judah, because they have shed innocent blood in their land. But Judah shall dwell for ever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation:" Joel iii. 19, 20. See also Isaiah xxxiv., Ezekiel xxxv., and Jeremiah xlix., with Isaiah lxiii.

The word of God on this matter deals first with *individuals*, then with nations. At this point comes in one of the evasions proposed in order to get rid of the obnoxious doctrine of God's predestination unto eternal life.

It is supposed, that all that is meant is, that God provides for some nations rather than others the *means of grace*, which those who accept and use, are thereby saved. For it is imagined, that it must be unjust in God to make so conspicuous a difference as that, between the perdition and salvation of individuals.

But even if the view were allowed, this would not get rid of the difficulty. If God is unjust, unless, in relation to salvation, He puts all on an equal footing; then would injustice be clearly proved against Him by matters of fact everywhere visible around us.

The giving to some nations means of grace which were not granted to others, would only, at the utmost, be a *diminution* of the injustice.

But Scripture testifies distinctly to God's *choice of individuals to eternal life.*

"But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning *chosen you to salvation* through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:" 2 Thess. ii. 13. This is much more than a choice of *nation to the use of means.*

God blessed believers "with all spiritual blessings in Christ. According as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love." "*By grace ye were saved.*" Eph. i. 4; ii. 5—8.

Did the Most High find His reasons for *loving Jacob* in Jacob himself? By no means! He was a guilty rebel like Esau. Did He find reasons in the character and ways of Esau for *hating him*? Assuredly: was he not unfilial, and profane, in spirit the murderer of his brother? Here, then, are reasons more than sufficient. "Thou *hatest all workers of iniquity*:" Psa. v. 5.

14, 15. "What then shall we say? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For to Moses He saith, 'I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and take pity on whom I will take pity.'"

The objections made to a doctrine, forcibly tell us what is the doctrine that is being taught. Paul has been affirming, that God decides on the destiny of each: He loves one; He hates another. Now, if election were supposed to be on the ground of man's good works foreseen, *such an objection never would arise*. Then the apostle is treating of the personal election of individuals to eternal life, while others are left to perish in their sins.

'Is not this injustice?' is the question.

What, then, is injustice?

It is the violation of the rights of another, (1) either by withholding *good deserved*; or (2) by inflicting *evil undeserved*. (1) What *good* does man, the sentenced sinner, deserve from his Judge? None! (2) What *undeserved evil* does God inflict on him? None! All are sinners lost; all "by nature children of wrath." Their only claim on God is for perdition. There can be no unrighteousness in God's justly condemning; nor in graciously saving against desert.

'But Scripture teaches that "God is no respecter of persons."'

When does God not respect persons? *When He is sitting in judgment*. And this is His rule for human judges also: "I charged your judges at that time

. . . . Ye shall *not respect persons* (faces) *in judgment*:" Deut. i. 16, 17; Lev. xix. 15; 2 Chron. xix. 5—7; Rom. ii. 5—11; Prov. xvii. 15.

But the Lord is not only a Judge, but a Doer of Good, bestowing benefits where He wills, and in what proportion He pleases. That is a plain matter of fact, pressing on the attention of all. No two have the same amount of health, wealth, length of life, and intelligence, etc. In *giving*, God does as He pleases with what is His own; a thing which man also claims as his right.

"For to Moses He (God) saith."

'But is not this begging the question—to appeal to God's claims put forth by Himself?' No! Paul is arguing with those who confess Scripture to be the Word of God, and God to be possessor of all perfections. We know what God is spiritually, only by His revelation of Himself.

What God, then, claims as His right must be one of His perfections. He cannot, therefore, claim what is unworthy of Himself, and unrighteous.

"I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and take pity on whom I will take pity."

When was this divine claim made? At a crisis which fully established the right of Jehovah. It was after all Israel had broken the covenant, and were guilty of worshipping the Calf of gold, after they had thrice agreed to be treated by their God as they deserved. Their deserts, then, were perdition. Their only hope was in the sovereign mercy of God: Ex. xxxiii. 19. Then, as Most High, He would deal with the nation, and with the individuals of it, as He saw fit.

16. "So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy."

On whom, then, or on *what* does success depend? On man's clever plans and rapid exertions? No; but

on God and His compassion. This is true as a general principle.

But there is a direct and special reference to the (1) case of Esau and Jacob, which has just preceded ; and (2) to that of *Pharaoh* which follows.

1. Let us take, then, the story of Isaac's blessing his son before his death. Who, then, shall we say is meant by "him that willeth?" The word might apply to either of the two parties—(1) Isaac and Esau, (2) Rebecca and Jacob. Isaac, for one, must be meant, for with him the design originated.

2. And if so, "he who *runs*" will primarily and ordinarily be the huntsman, who must quicken his steps to take his venison. And if we decide that the runner is Esau, we find that the willer must be Isaac. Thus the designer and the executor of the design cohere.

There were in this matter two opposing plans, and two opposite executions. To which of these did the Most High give success? (1) *Isaac* formed one plan, and *Esau* diligently strove to fulfil it. For Isaac wished to give his elder son the chief blessing, in spite of the oracle of God to the contrary. Yea, and in spite also of the profane sale of the birthright, and of the oath that shut out repentance. (2) *Rebecca* and *Jacob* sought to obtain the birthright, which was Jacob's doubly. (1) By the decree of God already pronounced ; and (2) by the sale of Esau, to whom it had been first given by birth. How, then, did God decide the matter?

Did he regard the blessing as due to the cleverest plan, and the best performance of it? By no means!

God granted the blessing to Jacob because He loved him, and shut out Esau, because He hated him.

Was the Holy One pleased with either of the plans, or the execution? With neither. Both were wicked.

But the right of God to decide remained untouched, and He gave the birthright as He had said—"The elder shall serve the younger." God had compassion

on Jacob. But for *that*, the two might have met in the tent of Isaac and murder ensued. It was only when Jacob had just gone out, and the blessing bestowed, that Esau entered.

3. Then it will appear, that the counter-plan of Rebecca and Jacob takes effect, because they were persons receiving mercy and pity from God. Thus, too, we are carrying out the word—"Jacob I loved ; but Esau I hated." Rebecca and Jacob were the weaker pair ; and it seemed as if the birthright must be lost to Jacob, because of the suddenness of Isaac's plan, and the immediateness of the son's execution. But Isaac was blind, and Rebecca was made to overhear the scheme.

If at this critical moment God had not appeared to turn the blessing to Jacob, His love would have failed in that most important respect, and His decision that 'the elder should serve the younger,' have been set aside. But here God's hatred to Esau began to appear. Was it not indeed a most fitting season? Esau had sold his birthright profanely, to God's great displeasure. He had sold it under oath, welcoming God's wrath against himself, if he acted against the rights just conveyed to Jacob. Esau seems to have forgotten the transaction ; but vainly do *we forget*, if *God remembers*.

"*But of God that sheweth mercy.*"

In this struggle of man, God is overlooked by all the four. But His counsel shall stand. He gave in mercy the birthright to Jacob. Not that the success of Rebecca's scheme was deserved. Far from it ; there was in it much of evil. But the Lord in pity to Rebecca and Jacob, fulfilled their plan ; while He made both of them feel the wickedness of the means, by the trials all his life long sent on Jacob, and the enforced exile of Rebecca's favourite son. She died before he returned to the land.

2. It seems also, if I mistake not, that there is a reference to *Pharaoh's* plan of overtaking the Israelites whom he had dismissed, and bringing them back to

slavery. At once the design was energetically set on foot. "He took six hundred chosen chariots, and all the cavalry of Egypt, and pursued after the children of Israel." "And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh King of Egypt, so that he pursued after the children of Israel:" Ex. xiv. Here we have the "*running*," as the execution of the "*willing*." But God showed mercy to Israel; and the evil scheme of the foe was, through His love to the posterity of Jacob, defeated. So in these two instances we have, first individuals, then nations.

17. "For the Scripture saith to Pharaoh,—For this very purpose I raised thee up, that I might show in thee My power, and that My name might be announced in all the earth."

What is the sense of "I raised thee up?" It is generally spoken of God's setting up of official and eminent persons.

1. It is said of Abraham,—"*Who raised up the righteous man from the east?*" Isa. xli. 2. Of Cyrus: Isa. xlv. 13.

2. It is said of Christ,—"*The Lord thy God will raise up to thee a prophet from the midst of thee:*" Deut. xviii. 15, 18.

3. "*The Lord raised up judges which delivered them:*" Judges ii. 16, 18; iii. 9, 15.

God made Pharaoh a king of the chief nation of the world. He gave him a post of such eminence that the combat between them might be the more illustrious. He was born at the time and in the country where God was about to act. He was set on the throne, a man of such a proud and unbelieving spirit, as would require God to put forth power in delivering Israel.

We are still treating of *individuals*; though from their lofty position others may become affected by the blows delivered.

"That *in thee* I might show my power."

Great was the question raised. Jehovah, God of the

Hebrews, says,—"*Let My people go, that they may serve Me.*" "Jehovah, the God of the Hebrews hath called for us" (Hebrew).

"And Pharaoh said,—*Who is Jehovah*, that I should obey His voice, to let Israel go? *I know not Jehovah, neither will I let Israel go:*" Ex. v.

God then must show to Pharaoh, who is this Jehovah whom he so arrogantly ignores. He must make him set free His people. It was the fitting occasion to display His power over heaven, earth, the waters, animals, and man. Pharaoh, by his refusal, had made himself and his land the target for the Lord's arrows. This proud, unbelieving, murderous, treacherous king was a fit person to receive the blows of judgment from the Almighty. By him the Lord would show the weakness of the *gods worshipped by the Egyptians*; how unable they were to ward off from their worshippers the judgments of the God of Israel.

Jehovah must show, too, that He loves Israel, as well as hates Pharaoh. All the world must know, that this is the nation of God's choice; not Egypt, the learned, the rich, the most intelligent of the nations in the things of time. He had chosen the people of Israel, in His love for their fathers. He had put them for awhile in the power of Egypt, and Egypt had treated them as He had foretold; and now, as He said, He would judge the oppressors of His people.

This contest will one day be renewed in a yet more fearful form with the False Christ, who proclaims himself the only true God. This forms the occasion of 'the vials' of Revelation,—the Bowls of God's wrath poured out on the whole earth.

God had His own glory in view in this great war. The story of the great struggle and of its disastrous end for Pharaoh and his land, should run through all the earth. It troubled all the nations round about in that day; and three hundred and fifty years after, it causes fear in the Philistines in the days of Eli.

Even up to the present day the wonders then wrought are spoken of, and proclaim the folly of any who should attempt to take the same proud attitude of unbelief. And the baptism of faith, appointed by Christ, looks back, as the apostle tells us, to the baptism into Moses, and the freedom from Egypt thence ensuing: 1 Cor. x.

What a contrast is this view of God to that which would make us believe that laws of God's own making are too strong for the Most High!

18. "So then He pities whom He wills; and whom He wills, He hardens."

He showed His mercy toward Israel, in freeing the land of Goshen from some of the plagues which visited the rest of Egypt. He manifested it more conspicuously, by bringing His people safely through the Red Sea, while He drowned their haughty oppressors. "Jacob I loved."

"And whom He wills, He hardens."

In this statement lies the main difficulty of the apostle's argument. But the difficulty really arises out of a misapprehension of what is meant. Does it mean, that God makes *evil* one who was *good*, and then *punishes him*? Did Pharaoh wish and seek to obey God? while God hindered him? Just the contrary!

Was Pharaoh a gentle, kind king, disposed to do his duty both toward man and God? As contrary as possible to such an idea! He sought by murder to carry out his plans against Israel. When summoned to obey Jehovah, he lays more labour upon Israel, and when they are punished through no fault of theirs, he refuses to listen to their complaint.

When smarting under the plagues, he promises repentance; but when they are withdrawn, he goes on as before. Instead of bowing to the calls of God, he

hardened his heart; trusting that his gods and his magicians would bring him safely through the contest. Hence Jehovah, after much patience, hardened Pharaoh's heart, by way of punishment: Exodus ix. 12.

But again we must explain. *How* did God harden him?

1. It was not (1) by the positive sending of *evil* into his soul, but by the (2) withdrawal of restraining *mercy*: of which we have an example in the history of Abraham and Abimelech: Gen. xx. 6. We have also the prayer of the Psalmist, which comes in very appositely here. "*Keep back* also thy servant from *presumptuous sins*; let them not have dominion over me; then shall I be upright, and innocent from the great transgression:" Psal. xix. 13. "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted *by God*; for God is not tempted by evil, neither tempteth He any man; but every one is tempted when *he is drawn away by his own lusts*, and enticed:" James i. 13.

2. It was by *giving Pharaoh up to his own choice*. Of this we have an instance given in the life of Hezekiah. Great and good as he was, on one occasion he stumbled. How was that? "In the business of the ambassadors of Babylon, who sent unto him to enquire of the wonder that was done in the land, *God left him*, to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart:" 2 Chron. xxxii. 31.

Take again the sins of Israel in the wilderness. "My people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me. So *I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust*; and they walked in their own counsels:" Psal. lxxxii. 11, 12. And Stephen says of Israel after making the Calf,—"*So God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven*:" Acts vii. 42; Rom. i. 23—26.

Is there any injustice in allowing a man to choose as he pleases? None whatever! But every man, even the holiest, if left to himself, falls.

19. "Thou wilt say then unto me, Why then doth He still find fault? For who hath resisted His will?"

We have herein a proof that we are teaching and holding God's truth. The objections which Paul supposes, at once arise naturally to man out of the doctrine stated: "Whom He wills, He *hardens*." At once man seeks to throw the blame of the sin upon God; even as did Adam.

'God,' you say, 'meant to glorify Himself through Pharaoh; and He did so. Pharaoh's pride and disobedience drew out the power of God manifesting Himself and causing His name to be spread by the lips of the witnesses and hearers throughout earth. Why then, should God hold Pharaoh as guilty of sin, and worthy of destruction, when he but did what it was foretold he would in his hardness do?'

The same sort of argument had been stated by Paul before (iii. 5.), with the apology, "I speak as a man."

20, 21. "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing moulded say to Him that moulded it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter a right over the clay, out of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and one to dishonour?"

The Holy Spirit, before giving a direct answer to the objection, puts in a protest, first, against the proud and perverse *spirit* of man, out of which this objection and a multitude of like ones arise. 'God has spoken: but you are not satisfied. You reply, O man! 'tis the *creature's* reply against the *Creator*! That is something, which, in a like case, you do not allow against yourself. You, as a man, are not on a level with your Creator. You may be wiser than many of your fellows, and sometimes be bold in argument against them, because you see clearly their mistake. You are in the light, and can set right those who are in twilight or in darkness. But God is the Infinite in wisdom, holiness, and power. You have no right or power to bring any

action in the courts either of earth or of heaven, against your Supreme Ruler. He has all rights against you. Beside that, you are a *fallen* creature, ready to suffer His judgments; condemned already, if you believe not on His Son.

"*Shall the thing moulded say—?*"

This is a reference back to the description of man's *creation*: Gen. ii. 7. 'God *moulded* out of the dust the body of man, breathed into it the breath of life; and man became a living soul.' He then plants a garden as the abode of the man whom He had *moulded*: ver. 8. Twice in the Greek (the Jews' version) have we the same word as that used here by Paul. Had Adam any just claims against God for this proceeding of his Creator? Certainly not! The Creator has a right to frame creatures on any pattern He pleases, and how and for what use He pleases.

The potter's power over the clay is the nearest resemblance we have to the work of God in creation. And man, when he has materials under his hand, claims a right to make of them what use he pleases. He not only has the *power*, but the *right* to mould out of the same lump of clay what vessels he pleases. From his intelligence and power spring the shape, the colours, the uses of the vessel of clay. He has made it to suit his purpose. The perfections of the vessel that has been moulded, baked, painted, came from him. Yea, its very existence is due to him. How much more is this true of God! The vessel is the *property* of the potter. But for him it would have been but clay. Its beauty of shape, its use, all come from him. He may employ it at his pleasure. Observe, the question here is not about 'nations,' but *individuals*. "O man!"

The lessons here taught are not in detail the same as those drawn from the potter's art, in Jeremiah xviii. There God is pleading with Israel about His power over them as a *nation*, to mould them for use

and honour, according to their obedience to Him, or their disobedience. One main principle only is common to both—the right of the potter over the clay.

God must get glory out of the creatures He fashions, (1) either as friends and sons, by the glorious destiny which He bestows; or (2) over them as enemies, to utter to all warnings against disobedience and hatred. But the sin of the perverse creature remains the same. Pharaoh, by his pride and unbelief, did not seek to glorify God. Jehovah won glory out of him, in spite of all his contradiction. Judas fulfilled what was written of him in the psalm in regard of his betrayal of the Saviour; but he did it in unbelief to attain his own ends, and in spite of the warnings of grace. In a palace, vessels to dishonour are needful as truly as vessels to honour.

The potter's power and intelligence bestow on the clay (1) a certain shape and colour, according as he pleases. (2) But he thus gives it also its *use* and *destination*. *This* vessel is destined to stand on the table; out of it men drink. *That* is set in the cellar to hold wine-les, or to carry slops.

If God should have kept all His creatures by His grace from falling, He was at liberty to do so. But then much of His intelligence, wisdom, and power, would not have been seen. But now those that resist and hate Him shall glorify Him, by His present mercy, and His future and eternal wrath.

22, 23. "What if God, wishing to show His wrath, and to make known His power, endured with much longsuffering vessels of wrath fitted for destruction: And (sought) that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared before for glory."

Here we have the suggestion, how in the government of this world God will provide for His own glory, in regard of both the lost and the saved. The lost are His enemies, and on them He will rain fire and

brimstone, as their portion and cup. If all were obedient and saved, much of His character would not be seen. But He intends to show the terrors of His wrath against those who hate Him. It shall be seen that it is no light matter to quarrel with the Ruler of all.

His grace and patience are wonderful: so will His wrath be. The proud haters of God retain, after death, their hatred, and in spite of their endurance of the penalty. With Cain, and Pharaoh, and Esau, and many others, God showed much patience. Time and occasion to repent were given; but they would not turn. Ten plagues were sent to bring Pharaoh to obedience, before he was drowned. Ten provocations did the Lord endure at the hands of faithless Israel, before the sentence of exclusion from the land went forth against them. How great was Jehovah's patience with Jezebel! For forty years He allowed her to go on in her defiant wickedness, introducing and establishing in Israel the worship of Baal—slaying the prophets of God, threatening Elijah's life, and putting Naboth and his family to death. How much greater is the Lord's longsuffering than man's! So much greater will be His wrath; specially against those who refuse the wonderful mercy sent through the Son of God! There is no intimation of any further trial of the unbeliever than in this life.

The lost are "*vessels of wrath, fitted for destruction.*" Wrath fills them, as waterpots are filled with water. And they fit themselves for this terrible lot. Left to their own evil choice, they will reach destruction. They are rolling stones, running with increasing speed down the steep into the sea. Justice will preside over their dread condemnation. Salvation was open to them, was urged on many of them; and they would not accept it.

They are dead trees, fit only to be cut down for the fire. But the wrath on them will deter others from

the like career of sin. Fear will in the future keep multitudes from transgressing.

"And that He might make known the riches of His glory on vessels of mercy, which He had prepared before for glory."

It is at times fitting that the riches of a king should be shown. The Lord will display His riches of glory in "the kingdom of God." These riches will be no idle display, but will be borne to their joy by "vessels of mercy." While the vessels of wrath *fit themselves* for destruction, God is obliged to *work upon the vessels of mercy* to fit them for their eternal abode of glory. Saul must be stopped in his career of madness, and shown the awful doom on which he was rushing. The Saviour was obliged by His Spirit to change and fit him for the apostleship. The tendency, even in the renewed, is ever downward. If force is not continually applied, the stone rolls back. This is grace; and no creature has any claim; much less have fallen creatures any *claim for grace*. The *glory* reserved for the saved is *not* deserved. The *woe* experienced by the lost is deserved, and will be measured in proportion to knowledge, means of salvation, and actions of wickedness.

24. "Even us, whom He hath called not only from among Jews, but also from among Gentiles."

The called are those called efficaciously. They will not fail to attain eternal life. God's choice precedes man's. *His* took place before the foundation of the world. Paul the Israelite ranges himself among them. In Moses' day *all Israel* were called. Now it is an election both from Israel and the nations. It is a new body, selected from bodies before antagonistic to, and hating, one another. The results of the dispensation are shown us in the Great Multitude on high before the throne. They are gathered out from all nations and ascribe their salvation not to obedience to the law, but to the gift of God and to Christ.

25, 26. "As also in Hosea He saith, 'I will call that which is not My people, My people; and her that was not beloved, beloved.' And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said to them, 'Ye are not My people; there shall they be called Sons of the living God.'"

This treats of God's counsel to gather to Himself some of the Gentiles, and to give them a place and a standing loftier than that of Israel.

The 'calling her beloved that was not beloved' seems to refer to the Lord's typical dealings with Jacob and Leah: Gen. xxix. Leah bare sons to Jacob, while Rachel was barren. Leah says, "Surely the Lord hath looked upon my affliction; therefore will my husband love me."

The place where Gentiles were thrust away, as not God's people, was Jerusalem. When Ezra began to build the temple, the Gentiles near asked permission to build with them: Ezra iv. 2. They were put aside with "Ye have nothing to do with us to build an house unto our God." Also, Nehemiah says to them, "The God of heaven, He will prosper us; therefore we His Servants will arise and build; but *ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial in Jerusalem.*" Neh. ii. 20.

At Jerusalem, in the millennial day, those accounted worthy of that age and the *first resurrection* will take a stand above the Jews themselves. Nehemiah calls Israel and himself "*servants of the God of heaven.*" But these shall be called "*sons of the living God.*" The chosen of this dispensation own Jesus Christ as "*the Son of the living God,*" and are in turn owned by God as His sons. This, His decision, will then come forth to the light: "Blessed are the *peace-makers* [Ezra and Nehemiah were men of war]; for they *shall be called sons of God.*" Matt. v. 'I will make,' says our Lord, the false Jews "to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee."

27—29. "But Isaiah shouteth concerning Israel, 'Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, the remnant (only) shall be saved: for God shall finish and cut short the account in righteousness: for a short account shall the Lord make on the earth.'

"And as Isaiah had said before, 'Except the Lord of Hosts had left us a seed, we had been as Sodom, and should have been like Gomorrrha.'"

Here we have two, or perhaps three passages cited from Isaiah, to show the different style in which God speaks of Israel and the called of the Church.

Israel lies under the wrath of God for their sin, specially because of their rejection of His Son and of His Spirit. The idolatry of the Calf has yet to be avenged. Moses attempted to atone for it, but was refused: Ex. xxxii. 34.

On Israel, therefore, will fall the judgment of the great and terrible Day of the Lord; while the approved of the Church of Christ will be taken out of the earth, on which the desolating blows will fall: Rev. iii. 10.

So awful will be those judgments, that out of the millions of Israel, units only will be spared. The majority of the nation, as they refused the true Christ, shall fall into the hands of the False Christ, and be cut off as enemies of God. They will return to their old idolatries, and the curses of the law will be executed against them.

After Jehovah's long patience, the strokes of wrath will quickly follow one another. It will be the heaviest woe and destruction that have ever fallen on the sons of men. "And except those days were shortened, there *should no flesh be saved*. But for the elects' sake He hath shortened those days:" Matt. xxiv.

The first of the passages cited comes from Isaiah, chapter x. The other is taken from the first chapter, in which Jehovah expresses His displeasure at Israel, even for their services at the temple, in which they boasted themselves. In righteousness He would cut

off His enemies; in mercy He would spare the remnant. He never repents of His gifts and calling of Israel—therefore some shall survive.

This passage is closely connected with Isaiah vii., viii. Israel, in the days of wicked king Ahaz, feared that the sceptre was about to be wrested from the line of David. That would overthrow the counsels of Jehovah. Therefore to comfort Israel, and assure them of the certainty of the promises to David and his posterity, God bade the king—"Ask thee a sign from the Lord thy God: ask it either in the *depth*, or in the *height* above." The perverse monarch refused to do so. Then the Lord promised one of His own choosing. Messiah should be born of a virgin. But He gave beside, signs both in heaven and below the earth. Jesus went down into the abyss, and the heaven was dark, and the earth trembled: Eph. iv. 9. He rose, and earth trembled again, and tombs of the saints that slept were opened, and the sleepers awoke, and entered into the Holy City. But there was, again, another sign, when the Saviour *visibly ascended* from among His disciples to the height of heaven. His resurrection and ascension were the proof that the righteousness which He wrought as incarnate was complete. The Lord wrought both His deliverance from below, and His exaltation on high.

Their deservings were to be cut off, as were the guilty cities of the plain. Their lot would, however, be better, because of the mercy of God, which is exercised on whom He wills.

30—33. "What therefore shall we say? That Gentiles, who were not pursuing after righteousness, obtained righteousness, I mean the righteousness which is out of faith. But Israel, pursuing after the law of righteousness, attained not to the standard (law) of righteousness. Why? Because (they sought it) not out of faith, but as out works of law.

"For they stumbled at the stone of stumbling, as it is written, 'Behold I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling and rock of offence'; and, 'He that believeth on Him shall not be ashamed.'"

It should not be rendered '*the Gentiles*'; it was true, not of the nations generally, but of God's chosen among them. There are two great aspects of this, as of most matters: (1) one, the disposal of all things by God, according to His own counsels; (2) the other, the view of *man's choice*, which furnishes just ground for his condemnation. Ordinarily, those who seek find; but here the seekers find not—the non-seekers find. How was *that*? Because they sought a right thing in a wrong way.

Gentiles "*obtained righteousness*." It was not something *within them*, but something *outward*; made over to them, as a sum of money to a bankrupt. It was not something obtained by degrees, and by effort. Righteousness was theirs in a moment. What righteousness was it? "*The righteousness which is out of faith*." Faith is not righteousness; but it is the way in which the righteousness of Christ becomes ours. It is a perfect righteousness offered us, which we accept on God's word.

But Israel, as the nation, vainly pursued after righteousness, as a something to be won by their own deservings at the hand of the God of justice. The Most High, however, is determined that man, the sinner, shall have nothing to boast of before Him. All such attempts were unbelief, rebuked by the Law and the Prophets. The expression, 'pursuing after righteousness' comes from Deuteronomy: "*Righteousness, righteousness shalt thou follow, that thou mayest live, and inherit the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee*:" Deut. xvi. 20 (Hebrew).^{*} That was in Moses' day, when the Lord was proving man's inability to save himself by his obedience; or, 'the righteousness of the law.'

Israel, then, despite his efforts, came not up to the standard of righteousness set up by the law.

^{*} See also Isaiah li. 1; Proverbs xxi. 21.

They sought it by their works, and refused the one righteousness which can justify. It was as if Adam had preferred the apron of fig-leaves, refusing the coat of skin made for him by God. Such unbelief deserved to be rejected.

Now this conduct of theirs had long ago been foreseen, and foretold by God. Two passages from Isaiah are here put together. (1) 'The stone of stumbling and rock of offence' comes from Isaiah viii. 13, 14. (2) In Isaiah xxviii. 16, we have, "Thus saith the Lord God, '*Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation; he that believeth on Him shall not be ashamed*.'"^{*} "Sanctify the Lord of Hosts Himself; and let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread; And He shall be for a sanctuary; but for a *stone of stumbling, and for a rock of offence* to both the houses of Israel [the two tribes and the ten]; for a sin and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem,"—where the crucifixion took place, where the Holy Spirit descended, and was rejected in the martyrdom of Stephen.

As nothing in Scripture is without its meaning and force, I understand '*the Stone of Stumbling*' to refer to Christ during *life*, and the Jews' cavils at His appearance and doctrine. "The Rock of offence" refers, I believe, to the Saviour's glory as the Risen One, and to the *worship* then given Him abidingly by believers. It was at this that Saul took fire, and broke up the Church at Jerusalem. This truth is beautifully illustrated by the first occasion on which 'the Church' is named by our Lord. The Saviour drew from His apostles' lips the proof of Israel's unbelief in Himself. Then Peter declares Him to be 'Son of the living God.'

^{*} The reading found in the present Hebrew—"shall not *make haste*"—gives a sense neither true nor appropriate. It looks like a wilful alteration. The Jew's own translation gives it '*ashamed*'—*אֲשָׁמוּ*. So Romans x. 11. And Peter—1 Peter ii. 6—8. Thrice do apostles read "*ashamed*."

The Redeemer acknowledges His confession as a foundation-truth, revealed to Him by the Father. "And I also say to thee, that thou art Peter [a Stone], and upon *this Rock* [Christ Himself risen from the dead] I will build My Church [Assembly], and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it:" Matt. xvi. 'As surely as I came forth from amongst the dead, so shall believers in Me be made free.'*

"*I lay in Zion.*" Here is God's provision of the Righteousness of Christ unto salvation. If I mistake not, both the earthly and the heavenly Zion are intended. At the earthly Zion Jesus was offered up as the sacrifice; but He is now set by God in the heavenly Zion, in ascension.

*The context of the two passages of Isaiah beautifully confirms the quotations made by Paul. I can only give hints.

Isa. xxviii. 9—11. Israel refused to be '*weaned*' from the Law. They took the part of Ishmael, when the heir of Abraham was '*weaned*,' and they were cast out. They prefer '*the Sabbath*' to the '*rest*' brought by Christ: the manna to the bread from heaven, &c.

11. God would send the gift of tongues to arouse them: they would not believe. 12. '*He said*'—Jesus—*Jehovah* did: (1) '*I will give you rest*:' Matt. xi. 28—30. (2) '*Refreshing*:' Acts iii. 19—21. Compare Jer. xxxi. 13, 14, 25, 26.

13. '*The going backward and falling*,' when arresting our Lord: John xviii.

15. "We have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have hid ourselves." The Jewish Council set abroad a false tale, by bribes, denying the work of the Father's raising His Son: Matt. xxviii.

16. Christ is the Stone on whom we are to be builded. "Tried" in life; proved '*precious*' in coming forth from among the dead; '*corner stone*,' uniting Jew and Gentile. He is at rest at present on high: but is about to fall in judgment and power, on unbelievers: Matt. xxi. 42.

Isa. viii. 5—8. '*The waters of Shiloh refused*.' The testimony of Christ through the man blind from birth, to whom sight was given by the waters of Siloam—'*the Sent*:' John ix. In vengeance the Antichrist, leading on the Confederacy of kings and nations, shall seize on Palestine, and tread down Jerusalem: Rev. xi. Stand aloof from worldly confederacies, O Christian!

"Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be *ashamed*." Of what time is this spoken? Of the day of judgment, when the righteousness of each shall be tested: when "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake; some to *everlasting life*, and some to *shame and everlasting contempt*:" Dan. xii. 2.

I persuade myself that the figurative expression "pursuing after righteousness," is a continued reference to the history of Esau and Jacob. "Jacob have I loved, Esau have I hated" was quoted in verse 13. Then in verse 16—"So then it is not of him that willeth (Isaac) or of him that runneth (Esau, pursuing the deer), but of God that showeth mercy." For indeed God had much to forgive, in the conduct both of Rebecca, and of Jacob.

The happy and blessed Gentiles answer to Jacob, who wins the blessing. He does not go out to hunt, but receives the blessing by believing his mother's report of Isaac's intention, and obeying her. All is made ready for him; the savory dish is put into his hands, and he has only to present it, and to testify to his father, in order to win the prize he sought. His testimony was false, so that he might well be afraid of being ashamed before his father. But he escapes it by the contrivance of Rebecca. She directs her son what to do, takes on herself the curse, and clothes Jacob, her beloved son, partly (like God in Eden) with the skins of the slain goats, and more fully with raiment of his brother's. "See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed."

Esau goes forth with his knowledge, force, and weapons, as the cunning hunter (like the Jews, proud of their wisdom and strength), only to fail, and to be *ashamed*. He is here compared to a hunter at full speed stumbling over a stone in his way, while the prey escapes. Esau in his rage, declares his intention of slaying his brother. The Jews actually slay the true son of Abraham. They, like Esau, sold their birthright in order to procure the

death of the Lord Jesus at the hands of Pilate. 'Shall I crucify your King?' "*We have no king but Cæsar.*" They voluntarily, therefore, surrendered their God-given kingdom over the nations, which the prophets promised them : Isa. lx. lxi. At once Pilate delivers Jesus to their will.

Do any refuse this view because of the evil mixed up with the transaction? Now it is true that the points of unlikeness even to contrast, are clear : (1) God is not, like Isaac, blind. (2) The Saviour is not like Rebecca or like Jacob, deceitful or false. It was a sin in Jacob to say to his father—"I am thy son, thy first-born Esau : I have done according as thou badest me." But it was no sin in Christ to say—"I am the Son of God : " nor was He ashamed, when the Jews taunted Him with the folly of such a confession. He was declared to be the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from among the dead. "Thou art My Son ; this day have I begotten Thee." And the kingdom of the earth, greater than Cæsar's, shall be His. "Ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the nations for Thine inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for Thy possession."

CHAPTER X.

1—3 "Brethren, the desire of my heart and my prayer to God for them (Israel) is for their salvation. For I bear them witness, that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God."

THE apostle strongly desired and prayed for the salvation of Israel. It was 'salvation,' not in the sense of the Old Testament, but of the New. It turned on the possession of righteousness before God.

Paul could own their zeal for God. It was conspicuous in their acts against himself. The story goes abroad, that Paul has defiled the temple of God by introducing Gentiles into it. All Jerusalem is at once in an uproar. They begin to put him to death. He is scarcely delivered by the Roman soldiers. After his rescue, forty bind themselves under a great curse, not to eat or drink till they had killed Paul. Here is fiery zeal !

But it was not zeal taught by their Scriptures. They were bent on saving themselves by their own righteousness under law. Had they listened to John the Baptist, and to the Saviour, they would have owned themselves sinners, needing to be wholly washed. Moses had long before condemned them, as rebellious against Jehovah. Isaiah had condemned even their observance of the sacrifices and feasts.

It was the sacrifice of Cain and Abel over again. Cain would not own his sinfulness, and was refused together with his offering. Their ignorance was faulty and wilful. It was the ignorance of pride despising the light. They were unlike Abraham the man of

faith, and sought to win righteousness from God by their goodness: iv. 4, 5. They were a "perverse generation, children in whom was *no faith*:" Deut. xxxii.

They were ignorant of "*the righteousness of God*"—the righteousness of the subject,—a righteousness provided to save the guilty. The prophet Isaiah had foretold much concerning it. Let us look at his testimonies about it.

(1) God is a righteous God, and yet He saves the lost. Salvation is by a *look* at the Saviour. How completely in harmony with our Lord's words about the Serpent of brass: Isa. xlv. 21, 22.

(2) God brings *His* righteousness *near* to the ungodly. It is not His justice; for that would destroy the sinner. This righteousness carries salvation. The "*My* righteousness" of Isaiah, is the "*righteousness of God*" of the epistle: xvi. 12, 13.

(3) Israel was in pursuit of righteousness, but did not find it: Isa. li. "Look to Abraham!" He is the father and pattern of believers. How was he justified? He believed in God's word; and was reckoned righteous before God: ver. 5. "*My* righteousness is *near*." The righteousness is God's; yet it is our salvation: ver. 5, 6. An *eternal* righteousness, for those who receive *eternal life*: li. 1—8.

(4) In chapter liii. we have righteousness as it is effected by our Lord's bearing away our sins: ver. 11. "Being now justified by His blood," as Paul says.

(5) Here is a passage in sentiment strikingly like to Paul's: "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" God's servants obtain their righteousness *from the Lord*. It is His gift, as the first verse of the next chapter says: liv. 17.

(6) God's righteousness was near to be *revealed*. So Paul takes up the word in chapter i. 17. In the Gospel, the 'righteousness of God by faith is *revealed* to faith:' lvi. 1.

(7) The righteousness of the Gospel is a garment woven by God, offered to us, and put on our shoulders by the hand of faith: lxi. 10.

The righteousness spoken of by Isaiah is "*the Righteousness of God*," here proclaimed by Paul. There are only two Righteousnesses: one, of *man*; the other, of *God*. That of man is to be sought by works of obedience under law. That of God comes from His grace, and is received by faith.

It is here the Righteousness not of God the Ruler, but of man the subject of God, provided by Him. Neither Jew nor Gentile was possessed of righteousness, and judgment, sentencing the guilty, was coming.

Thus the expression—"The righteousness of God"—is in harmony with like phrases. (1) "*The salvation of God*"—not God's being saved, but the safety provided for Israel at the Red Sea: Ex. xiv. 13. So (2) "*the Lamb of God*" means the Saviour provided by the Most High, and setting aside the lambs of the old Covenant provided by men. (3) So we read of "*the armour of God*"—not armour which God wears, but that which He has provided for His soldiers: Eph. vi. So, again, "the peace of God," and "the bread of God."

But Israel was seeking to establish (or 'set up') their own righteousness, as the subjects of God. They were like Job: "*My righteousness* I hold fast, and will not let it go:" xxvii. 6.

There were two rival righteousnesses of the prisoner.*

(1) One of man's weaving, (2) one of God's. Israel stood up for their apron of fig-leaves, and refused Jehovah's provided coat of skin. How could such proud ones be saved?

"*They submitted not themselves to the righteousness of God.*"

* See my tract—"The Gospel's Righteousness of God is the Righteousness of Christ"—where this subject is established, against those who deny it.

The close of chapter ix. declared Israel to be without righteousness, as a *fact*. Here the *causes* of that fact are pointed out. They are (1) *ignorance*. "Ye do err, *not* knowing the Scriptures." And (2) *pride*. They would not confess themselves sinners, needing the repentance to which John the Baptist called them. They would not stoop to own their bankruptcy, and receive salvation as a gift, confessing their inability to save themselves, and that they occupied the same level with sinners of the Gentiles. He who receives "the Righteousness of God" bestowed on the ungodly, must give up his own righteousness. This Righteousness is not the righteousness of God as the Judge; for that can never be ours; and if put forth against us, it could only condemn. But it is so "the Righteousness of God," that is "*ours*" also

1. It is provided by God. "*I lay in Zion,*" and the believer on Him shall not be ashamed, but rejoice in salvation.

2. It is righteousness "*for all, and upon all that believe:*" iii. 22.

3. It is a garment of salvation which God puts on us. "*He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation; He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness:*" Isa. lxi. 10. Then it is not something *internal* (or 'inherent,' to use the technical term). It is the blessed contrast to our first parents' vain attempt. "They sewed fig-leaves together, and *made themselves aprons.*" But their garment left them naked—"I was afraid, because I was *naked.*" Then came the true raiment from God: "Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them:" ver. 21.

4. "*Their righteousness is from Me,* saith the Lord." It is not, then, the Righteousness of God the Judge; for that is the internal righteousness of God, and not separable from the Most High: Isa. liv. 17.

5. Christ Jesus, "who is made unto us wisdom from

God and righteousness:" 1 Cor. i. 30. Under law, each Israelite was to provide a righteousness for himself. "*The man that doeth them shall live in them.*" But under the Gospel, *Christ's one righteousness is for all*, even as Adam's one transgression covers all. "*By the righteousness of One* the Act of Grace came *unto all*, unto justification of life. For as by the disobedience of the one man, the many were constituted sinners, so also *by the obedience of the one*, shall the many be constituted righteous:" v. 18, 19.

6. "This is the name whereby He shall be called, '*Jehovah our Righteousness:*'" Jer. xxiii. 6.

7. Paul, once boasting of his righteousness as obedient under law, while dead in sins, when awakened by God, disclaimed all his former boasts: "*Not having mine own righteousness, which is out of law, but that which is by faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God on faith:*" Phil. iii. 9 (Greek). This passage alone would be enough for the candid disciple. It is not *internal* righteousness, but a righteousness *upon* him, clothing him. "The righteousness of the righteous shall be *upon* him:" Ezek. xviii. 20.

Some say, 'Would that I had *the righteousness of an unfallen angel!*' God presents to you a righteousness infinitely superior—the Righteousness of God; the obedience of the Second Adam, the Son of God.

Put together, then, a few of the characteristics of this Righteousness of God, and it is clear that it is the righteousness of the believer; not the justice of God the Judge.

It was a righteousness yet *future*, when Isaiah wrote; it was to be *created* and *revealed*: the righteousness of faith, not of works; a righteousness bringing salvation to the receiver. Until the Saviour's resurrection it was not complete. "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain: *Ye are yet in your sins:*" 1 Cor. xv. 17. And the Holy Spirit came down to testify to us concerning it.

4. "For the end of Law is Christ, unto righteousness to every one that believeth."

The "For" with which the verse begins, knits on to the declaration preceding: that the Jews' zeal for their own righteousness was "not according to knowledge." This is proved by citations from the prophets and from the Law.

The verse may be divided into two portions: which are taken up in turn by the argument which follows.

1. 'The end of Law is Christ.' That is the order of the Greek.

2. 'Unto righteousness to every one that believeth.'

1. Law demands 'doing' as the way to righteousness. But that way is death. One under law is under curse: Gal. iii. 10. But if so, why did God appoint law? To prove to man, what he is so slow to learn by centuries of failure, that he is a sinner lost. At the appropriate time, the Lord, by the prophets, spoke of a righteousness to be brought in by God; a righteousness at length fulfilled by Christ.

The way to righteousness and to life eternal is by believing in Christ. And when righteousness is obtained, we are dismissed from the bondage of law, and become sons and heirs of God.

When righteousness is obtained, there is an end of toiling and toiling in vain under law to get righteousness. And God has appointed the sign of immersion, to testify to ourselves and others, that we have died and been buried to Adam and to Moses, in order to belong to Christ in resurrection. If I belong to Christ, He has taken me out from law to be righteous with His righteousness. If I am under law, Christ has not delivered me, and I am still unrighteous and condemned. "Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are *not under law but under grace*:" Rom. vi. 14. If a fortune has been left me, I shall not continue slaving at the diggings to get gold dust.

"*Unto righteousness*."

It should not be rendered "*for* righteousness." That word "*for*" supposes only the *offer* of righteousness; not the *obtaining* of it. The Greek preposition * in relation to this matter has two senses.

I. *When an offer is presented*, the proper translation is "*For*."

1. "The righteousness of God which is by faith in Jesus Christ *for all*, and *upon* all that believe:" iii. 22.

2. "The grace of God, and the gift by grace abounded *for the many*."

3. "By the one righteousness the Act of Grace came *for all men*, *for* (with a view to) justification:" v. 15, 18.

II. But when the end in view is obtained, it should be rendered "*unto*."

1. "Smoking flax shall He not quench, till He send forth judgment (justice) *unto victory*:" Matt. xii. 20.

2. "It is the *power of God unto salvation* to every one that believeth."

3, 4. "For with the heart man believeth *unto righteousness* [so as to become righteous], and with the mouth confession is made *unto salvation*:" x. 10. [so as to obtain salvation.]

That righteousness is obtained by believing in Christ's finished work the apostle has already confirmed: ix. 30. And again in Acts,—"*In him all that believe are justified* from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the Law of Moses:" Acts. xiii. 39. They '*are justified*,' not, '*they shall be justified* in the day of judgment.'

There is only One Righteousness in heaven or earth that can save. That must be "the Righteousness of God." In it we have the the meeting of the two righteousnesses,—(1) of the *Judge* and Ruler; and (2) of the *Subject*. It is the work of Christ, the *God-man*. (1) It must be the righteousness of a *man*, or it would not avail to save men. (2) It must be the

righteousness of *God*, or it would not be perfect, and able to save a multitude without number.

Thrice in the Acts is our Lord called "the Righteous."

1. "Ye denied the Holy One and *the Righteous*:" iii. 14.

2. Your fathers slew "them which testified before of the coming of the Righteous One:" vii. 52.

3. The God of our fathers chose thee, that "thou shouldest *see the Righteous One*:" xxii. 14.

This righteousness belongs "*to every one that believeth*."

It is equally applicable to the man of law, the circumcised; and to the Gentile.

Thus are we in close agreement with two main characteristic passages which have preceded.

1. It is "the Gospel of *the Christ*," for it testifies what He has wrought to save us. It tells of "*the righteousness of God*," which is *salvation* "*to every believer*." "For the righteous by faith shall live:" i. 16, 17.

2. And again—"The righteousness of God," after Law has condemned all; a righteousness "*which is by faith* in Jesus Christ, *for all*, and *upon all that believe*:" iii. 21, 22. It is by faith only, for it is "without law," and without our works of obedience to it. Thus it answers to "*the end of law*." Paul shows it to be witnessed to by the Law and the prophets, in our context. It is ours, when we believe in Him who wrought it. It clothes all who believe, "the robe of righteousness, the garment of salvation."

'Why is it never called "the Righteousness of Christ?"'

1. It is so called once by Peter,—"*To them that have obtained like precious faith with us in the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ*:" 2 Pet. i. 1 (Greek)).

2. But the reason why Paul does not use it, is, I think, because he presents salvation as proceeding

primarily from the Father. So he gives the Son the subordinate place, which He occupies as Son of man.

(1) "We believe on *Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from among the dead*:" iv. 24.

(2) "Christ was raised up from the dead by *the glory of the Father*:" vi. 4. (3) "Paul separated unto the *Gospel of God* . . . concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord:" i. 1, 3.

(4) "I thank *my God through Jesus Christ* for you all:" i. 8. It runs thus throughout the epistle.

5. "For Moses describeth the righteousness that is out of law, that—"The man that doeth them, shall live in (by) them."

This third "For" is a continuation of the proof that Israel might have known better, had they listened to the Law and the Prophets. The apostle presents Moses as the witness, both to the original terms of the Law, and to the later plan of God, which brings in Christ in grace to end law.

1. He gives a specimen of the first terms made by law, from Leviticus xviii. 5.

2. He then brings a passage from Deuteronomy, thirtieth chapter, which to the eye of an inspired man tells of grace and Christ, after Law has ended its work on unbelieving Israel.

"Righteousness *out of law*." Here Law is supposed to be the field out of which the diligent worker could reap righteousness: or the mine out of which he could by diligence gather diamonds.

"*The man that doeth them shall live in them*."

"The man"—Each Israelite was to win righteousness for himself. It is the contrary to that under the Gospel, as has been observed. There is but one ark of God in which we can be saved, and we first enter it by faith, and then the Christian passes through the waters of death by baptism.

6—8. "But the righteousness which is out of faith saith thus—'Say not in thy heart—Who shall ascend into the heaven? (that is, to bring down Christ). Or—Who shall go down into the bottomless pit? (that is, to bring up Christ again from among the dead).'"

The man of law is a man of unbelief in Christ and His work. There were two main stages of unbelief in Israel.

1. The lowest was that of the man who saw nothing in the Scripture but *the original terms of Moses*.

2. But there were those who had got so far as to see that a righteousness, to be obtained by faith, was promised *in the Prophets*. He then would halt at the non-performance of the promised righteousness. 'What can be done to bring Messiah from heaven?' *to work a righteousness for us*. Or—'If He has come, He has died, and remains among the dead.' *How shall we bring Him up?* For unless He come forth, it is because He is not righteous.

There were those who stopped at this point. Apollos and the twelve at Ephesus had been led to see something in the prophets more than the condition—'Do, and live.' And yet they had not heard that Messiah had come, had finished the promised righteousness, and sent down the gifts of miracle, in proof of his ascent to the Hill of the Lord.

Paul then takes a passage out of the end of the Law, which gives hints of the coming of righteousness by grace, and through the Messiah.

'*The righteousness which is out of faith*' is supposed to speak. It is not simply '*faith*' speaking, but *one already righteous by faith*. He first rebukes the unbelief of the heart; he chides the Jew for halting at the Law and Prophets. The Christ and His righteousness, basis of the New Covenant, and setting aside the Old, *had come!*

The passage before us has more difficulties than one

or two. Let us look at the course of the covenants with Israel.

1. We have first the covenant made at Horeb,—Israel's thrice repeated promise to obey, ratified by the terrors and the sacrifices of the Mount: Ex. xix—xxiv. That was broken in forty days, by the idolatry of the Calf.

2. Jehovah then made a new covenant with Moses alone, as the representative of Israel: Ex. xxxiv. That was broken by the disobedience of Moses at Kadesh: Num. xx.

3. Then just before Moses' death, a further covenant is made with Israel: Deut. xxix. It tells of their blindness and evil heart, despite all the wonders shown them by God in Egypt and the desert.

They and their children were to keep that covenant. If they fell away to idolatry, wrath, miraculous and terrible, would be sent on the nation. Its land would become a volcano; its smiting would be like that of Sodom and Gomorrha. They would be carried captive into all lands. What could be done then? Far from their land, the temple, the priests, the sacrifices of God, what hope could there be for them? At this point comes in Deuteronomy, chapter thirty. It tells them that after the blessing and the curse* of the Law had been fulfilled, the Lord would remember His promises made to Abraham, and to their fathers, and would turn to them in grace, if they should repent. Stephen had, by inspiration, accused them of *uncircumcision of heart and ears*, in rejecting the Christ, and holding fast to law, which condemned them. But in the day to come, Moses promises that the Lord would *circumcise their heart*, and restore them to their land. Paul, in Rom. xi.,

* The *blessing* of the Law was fulfilled in the days of Solomon. The *Curse*, as described in Deuteronomy xxviii. and xxix.—has yet to come. Thrice does Abraham's name appear in the context. (1) As connected with law: xxix. 13. (2) With grace: xxx. 20; xxxiv. 4.

assures us, that God will graft in again the branches of Israel that have been broken off: xi. 23—27. *They are still to keep the Law*; but, as Jeremiah testifies, *Jehovah engages to put it into their heart to remember and obey His law.*

This will probably startle many. But this is, in fact, the basis of the millennial glory of Israel, and of their superiority to the nations. The distinction between Jew and Gentile returns again. It will not be, as in this dispensation, Jew and Gentile one in a Christ unseen, and themselves suffering for His sake. Our portion will, in consequence, be loftily above Israel's.

"The nation and kingdom that will not serve thee [Israel] shall perish: yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted:" Isa. lx. "*Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your plowmen, and your vinedressers.*" "*Ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves.*" See also Isaiah lxii., lxvi; Micah v. The *Passover* and *Circumcision* are to be restored.

"O Jerusalem, the holy city; henceforth there shall no more come into thee the *uncircumcised* and the *unclean*:" Isa. lii. 1. "No stranger, uncircumcised in heart or *uncircumcised in flesh*, shall enter into my sanctuary, of any stranger that is among the children of Israel:" Ezek. xlv. 9. The *passover* is to be restored. "In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, ye shall have the *passover*, a feast of seven days: unleavened bread shall be eaten:" Ezek. xlv. 21. And the Saviour Himself will celebrate it with His apostles risen from the dead. "With desire have I desired to eat *this passover* with you before I suffer; For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof till it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God:" Luke xxii. 15, 16.

Let me present the passage from Deuteronomy which gives occasion to these remarks: xxx. 11—13.

"For this *commandment* which I command thee this day, it is (1) not *hidden* from thee, (2) 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?'"

"Neither is it *beyond the sea*, that thou shouldest say—'Who shall go beyond the sea for us, and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?'"

"But the *word* is very nigh thee, in thy *mouth*, and in thy *heart*, that thou mayest do it."

This passage is a staggering one to many, because they look at the argument as *men* would, not as *believers*. When we have uninspired men to deal with, we expect, and rightly, that citations be verbally exact, if the person arguing with us would convince us. But will you not trust one inspired by the Spirit of truth, when he varies the words? Here you have Paul, not only an honest character, but a holy man speaking as moved by the Holy Ghost. Whether then—You can see clearly all the steps of the citation or of the argument, or no, you are to give him credit, that *that is the meaning of God in the verses alluded.*

Paul is treating of *Israel*. He is setting before us the future day, when the nation captive and among foreigners shall give up its trust in its own righteousness, and be accepted in the righteousness of Christ. It will first repent and turn to the Lord. Then will the new covenant be made with (1) Israel and (2) Judah; or (1) the ten tribes and (2) the two: Hebrews viii. 8—12. Then will Israel be *accepted as men of faith by Jehovah, and will keep the Law through the grace of His Spirit*. Then will Abraham have his two Seeds visibly manifested:—(1) the uncircumcised risen from the dead, and (2) the circumcised obeying the law while they live in the flesh upon earth.

This passage of Deuteronomy, then, is one of crisis. It embraces the two principles; both (1) of *law*, and (2) of *grace*.

1. We have "This *commandment*." "That we may *hear* it and *do* it!" 'Hearing' is characteristic of "faith," and "works" are characteristic of "law." "By the *works of law* or by the *hearing of faith*?" Gal. iii.

2. We have also *vicariousness*, or the work of another "for us," "*bringing down the word*" from heaven, and from the depth *unto us*, that we may *hear* it and *do* it. Heaven is "far off," and the depth is "hidden" from us.

The abyss* of which Paul speaks is the hidden realm of the dead. Christ has come down from the heaven, and come up from the dead *for us*. And Paul is sent, that we may *hear* the word of salvation. For "how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not *heard*? And how shall they *hear* without a *preacher*?" Paul, then, is the preacher; and the word about the righteousness promised is not only fulfilled, but is *brought to us*. Righteousness is come through the work and word of Christ.

We shall best see our further way out from the difficulties of the matter, by analysing Deuteronomy xxix. and part of xxx.

The twenty-ninth chapter, then, tells us that it contains a covenant additional to that at Horeb. It occupies the original ground of Israel's obedience under law.

They had seen God's miracles on Egypt and its king, they had conquered part of the land of promise; yet they were still blind in the things of God. They were to enter on the land, and retain it on the *ground of their obedience*, according to the covenant of circumcision made with Abraham: † ver. 8—13.

With whom was that covenant of Deuteronomy

* "The Abyss" is "beyond the sea." It lies in the deep interior of the earth, beyond 'the great deep,' which is placed below the crust of earth.

† Gen. xvii. 7.

made? With all then present—adults and little ones; and with those of the generations of Israel to come: ver. 14, 15.

They had seen the sins and folly of idolatry, both in Egypt and among the nations they had passed through. But there were among themselves persons inclining to idolatry, and purposing, when they arrived in the land of promise, to rush into drunkenness: ver. 16—19.

When those sins should be on them, Jehovah would send plagues on the land, and sicknesses on the inhabitants. Yea, He would smite the good land, and make it desolate by the outbursting of fire, like His vengeance on Sodom.

Gentiles would wonder at these awful visitations and their exile from their land, and would trace them to Israel's turning away from their covenant with Jehovah, and serving other gods (Matt. xii. 43—45).

Then comes verse 29, which furnishes the key to the difficulty. "The *secret things* belong unto the Lord our God; but the *things which are revealed* belong *unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all this law*."

1. So, then, what was revealed to Israel in the days of Moses was *law*, with Israel's promise to obey, and God's promise to bless them if obedient, in the land they were about to enter on. They were to seek righteousness in the way of keeping the whole law. But no righteousness of man resulted from this call. Yea, they were cast out of their land, and made to dwell as captives afar from it.

2. God then, began by His *Prophets* to promise them a *righteousness of His own providing*. Out of *that*, life and blessings of all kinds would flow.

Israel ought to have been on the outlook for this righteousness, and glad to accept it. But they knew not their own prophets, and trusted in their own righteousness.

3. Then came the Son of God down from heaven, obeyed the law, and suffered its penalty in death; yet came out again from the tomb, and ascended to heaven. The righteousness of God's promise was now complete. Paul was sent to testify of it, both to Jew and Gentile. It was "*revealed*" to him yet more fully than it was to Peter: Matt. xvi. 16, 17.

Paul was not ashamed of the Gospel, because it revealed this righteousness. And those to whom he was writing were in possession of it. Israel refused it, and in their blindness cleaved to law which condemned them: Deut. xxx.

But the day was coming when they would give up all hopes of righteousness by their own doing. After the blessing and the curse of the law had fallen on them they would repent, and the Lord would turn to them in mercy, restoring them to their land, and would regenerate them. The curse would fall on their foes; blessings on them.

Now to us is preached the Gospel of the uncircumcision, as given to Paul. Our heritage is not the earth, as it is promised to the circumcised. While here below we suffer with Christ, to be glorified when He comes, in a heritage which is heavenly.

The other apostles cleaved to Israel, and the believers who were circumcised were "all zealous for the law."

He who will look through the new covenant yet to be made with the twelve tribes will see, that *there* is found a mixture of blessings temporal with blessings spiritual: Jer. xxxi. They shall be restored to the land: in it shall be dances and songs, and vines full of grapes on the mountains of Samaria. They should come to Zion for wheat, wine, oil, and the young of the flock and herd. After that come the *spiritual* promises, which Paul quotes when addressing believers of the Hebrews: ver. 31—34.

Hence Deuteronomy xxx. 11—14, will take two

interpretations, according as we regard it: (1) as applying to Moses' day, (2) or to Paul's.

1. That which was revealed in *Moses' day* was *LAW*, and *obedience to it as the way to blessing*. Now law is *of the letter*, and hence the words are literally to be taken.

2. But *Paul* stood in the day when law was in abeyance, because the righteousness of God by Christ's work had come, and was revealed to all nations, that they might accept it. It was the revelation of *grace*, consequent on the fulfilment and proclamation of *the true righteousness of Christ*. Now, therefore, the words of xxx. 11—14 are to be construed in the *spirit* of the Gospel, as Paul does.

We return to Romans x. 7.

"*Who shall descend into the bottomless pit?* (that is, to bring Christ up from among the dead.)"

It is observable, that Mahometanism denies the two critical points of faith in Christ asserted here. 1. They deny Jesus' *Lordship* as Son of God. 2. They deny His being put to death. Judas was crucified instead of Christ; and therefore, of course, they deny His resurrection.

That the righteousness of *God* here spoken of is the righteousness of *Christ*, is easy to prove to the candid. Four times in this passage is the righteousness named connected with the work of Christ. (1), (2) Jew or Gentile are righteous, or unrighteous, according as they rest on Christ, or refuse Him: ix. 30—33. (3) The Jew, as setting up his own righteousness, and not submitting to that provided by God, is unrighteous. Now there is but one righteousness; and that is the righteousness of Christ provided by God.

(4) Each man's attempted righteousness, measured by law, is now compared with the one righteousness of faith, sufficient for all. And the point at which the righteousness of Christ began, and that at which His work of righteousness ended, are set forth: ver. 5—9.

8. "But what saith it? (the righteousness of faith). 'The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart;' that is, the word of faith which we preach. That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus (as) Lord, and believe in thy heart that God raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

It is not enough, that the righteousness of faith forbids the wrong way to become righteous. What is the *right* way? The positive side is now stated.

The difficulties of distance in regard of time and place are overcome. The righteousness is near, and speedily may be mine. "I bring *near* My righteousness; it shall *not* be *far off*, and My salvation shall *not tarry*." "My righteousness is *near*; My salvation is gone forth." The promises of the prophet are completely fulfilled in the work of the Lord Jesus. Verse 9 tells me on what simple conditions this righteousness of God may become mine.

The nearness is not to sight, but to faith. Noah's ark might be seen; and might be entered on foot. But the perfect work of Christ, the Christian's trust, is something only to be known on the testimony of God.

Mouth and *heart* are to be united in accepting this righteousness: and these two parts of the man, the visible and the hidden, are always near to each one. In place of the two proposals made concerning Christ supposed to be afar off, we have two right acts. 'Believe; confess!' And both parts of the man are to attain salvation, (1) body, and (2) soul. It is fitting that both should take their place in the sinner's turning from unrighteousness to salvation.

The Jews, men resting on their own righteousness, were foes to Christ, both in *mouth* and *heart*. 1. "They said—Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it, then, that He saith—'I came down from heaven'?" 2. "Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole Him away while we slept:" Matt. xxviii. Here is the denial of the two great

truths, (1) the descent from heaven; (2) the ascent from the tomb. Their heart was against Him. "Me it *hateth*." "Now have they both seen and *hated* both Me, and My Father."

On the cross especially, the tongues of all were unloosed. Out of the abundant hatred of the heart, the mouth spoke. When Israel, under Moses, believed, we read—"They bowed their heads and worshipped:" Exodus iv. But at Calvary—"They that passed by reviled Him, *wagging their heads*, and saying—'Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save Thyself! If Thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.'"

So then faith's *heart* and *mouth* must be on the side of Christ, from whom comes the righteousness which is salvation.

(1) The *mouth* must confess Jesus as "Lord." Twice had this name of God appeared in the passage which Peter quoted from Joel. "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord (Jehovah) come." "Whosoever shall *call on* the name of *Jehovah*, shall be saved." Jesus Christ is Lord in two ways.

1. By nature He is the Only-begotten Son of God: from all eternity dwelling in the bosom of the Father.

(2) He has been made "both *Lord* and *Christ*," by virtue of His work accomplished: Acts ii. 36.

Confession is different from *profession*, and is more difficult. *Profession* is made in the midst of those who sympathise. *Confession* takes place in the presence of foes.

The Lordship of Jesus was also to be confessed by baptism (or immersion). "They were baptised in the name of the *Lord Jesus*:" viii. 16. "He (Peter) commanded them (Cornelius and his friends) in the name of the *Lord* to be immersed:" x. 36.

"And shall believe in thy heart that God hath raised Him from the dead."

Into much of religious profession the heart enters not. "This people draweth nigh to Me with their *mouth*, and honoureth Me with their lips; but their *heart* is far from Me."

The Saviour descended to the dead, to bear away that great obstacle to righteousness—our sins. "Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of Death, because it was not possible that He should be holden by it." He has come up from the place of detention of the guilty, because of His righteousness.

"*Thou shalt be saved.*"

Here is the blessed difference between each being compelled to build an ark for himself, and the instant entering of the believer into God's ark finished.

Righteousness is needed. The man unpossessed of a wedding-garment is bound hand and foot, and cast outside into the darkness; "there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

The word of faith tells us of the work of Christ. "He is made by God *righteousness* unto us." The righteousness is His. He Himself, too, is "THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS."

The word of God brings the matter down to each individual,—"*Thou shalt be saved.*" Righteousness is salvation and life. "Righteousness (says Solomon) delivers from death." "The righteous by faith shall *live*." The life is eternal. "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

10. "For with the heart a man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

This gives the justification of 'mouth' and 'heart,' as used by Moses in Deuteronomy xxx., and as applied by the apostle.

God accepts not the *mouth* severed from the *heart*. This is very important. "Then Simon (the magician)

believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip." But when the apostles came to seal the men of faith with the gifts of the Holy Ghost, it was proved that he believed only with the *head*. "Thy *heart* is not right in the sight of God:" Acts. viii.

There is now a change made by the apostle in the order of 'mouth' and 'heart.' Why is that? In Deuteronomy the order is that of *the law* which is engaged primarily with the visible. But the *Gospel* puts the *heart* before the *mouth*. Hence infant sprinkling is condemned: it lacks *heart*. Here we have the true rendering, which should be the same wherever this expression occurs. "A man believes *unto righteousness*"—that is, the unrighteous becomes righteous, as soon as he believes with the heart.

Righteousness is the effect of believing in Christ and His work. Both the terms on which salvation is made to rest bring in *Christ*. (1) He is Lord. (2) He is risen.

"*With the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*"

That is, the *mouth* properly comes after the *heart*. Words of confession without faith are false. God asks the unity of the inward and the outward man. The Pharisees were as the whited walls of a sepulchre; beautiful outwardly, but within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. What do you do, if you sever these two parts?

1. The *mouth* without the *heart* makes a man a *hypocrite*.

2. The *heart* without the *mouth* makes a man a *coward*.

11. "For the Scripture saith, 'None that believeth on Him shall be ashamed.'"

Scripture is decisive authority. You may fearlessly lean on its assertions.

These words confirm the statement that faith is knit to righteousness, and confession to salvation.

Those destitute of righteousness shall be ashamed in the great day to come. They shall awake from the dust to shame and everlasting contempt. The lost one will be ashamed of his trusting himself, his rabbis, or his priests; and his unbelief in the Lord, the Son of God.

The apostle repeats part of the quotation given at the end of chapter ix. Christ is the righteousness of the believer. That is the reason of the repetition of the passage from Isaiah xxviii. Through Him Gentiles, not seeking after righteousness, "obtained righteousness, I mean the righteousness of faith." He who has righteousness now, and salvation in the day to come, will have no need to be ashamed; he will rejoice.

12. "For there is no difference between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord of all is rich to all that call upon Him."

This is the second time that the apostle uses the phrase, so strange to the ear of a Jew. '*No difference between Jew and Gentile!*' Is not Israel the people of the Lord, while the Gentiles are not? Are not the promises, and the fathers, and many other privileges theirs, in which Gentiles have no part?

Yes! but in the points mentioned by the apostle, both are alike. (1) "For there is no difference; *for all have sinned, and (all) come short of the glory of God.*" (2) But here, as men are on the same level of unrighteousness and perdition, the grace of God makes no difference in the bestowal of righteousness and salvation.

The word of Isaiah, "*Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed,*" excludes none, and so takes in Gentile as well as Jew. The apostle is now taking up the second part of verse 4: "For Christ is the end of law, *unto righteousness to every one that believeth.*"

"*For the same Lord of all is rich to all them that call upon Him.*"

We have here the confirmation of a previous word. "Of whom, as concerning the flesh, *the Christ* came, who is *over all*, God blessed for ever. Amen:" ix. 5.

Christ is Lord, in no inferior sense. He is to be addressed by prayer, and none but God should be so addressed.

Hence Peter to the Gentiles says, "God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ. *He is Lord of all.*" "Arise, and be immersed, and bathe away thy sins, *having called on the name of the Lord.*" Acts xxii. 16. "They stoned Stephen, praying and saying, *Lord Jesus*, receive my spirit:" vii. 59.

Christians are described as callers upon the name of the Lord Jesus. "Lord," says Ananias, Saul "hath authority from the chief priests to bind *all that call upon Thy name.*" "Is not this he that destroyed *them that called on this name* in Jerusalem?"

"Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place *call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.*" Hence Unitarians are not Christians.

His riches Christ bestows with free hand on all who apply. This is something beyond the power of the chief king of earth, an abundance belonging only to God.

He supplies with wedding garments the innumerable multitude out of all nations, who are then able to stand before the throne of God: Rev. vii.

13. "For whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

This is a cardinal text taken from Joel. On it rests Peter, when the question of salvation is before him; on it rests Paul. Ananias uses this to Paul when he is first led to faith. "Bathe away thy sins, *having called on the name of the Lord.*" Paul repeats this to the men of Jerusalem.

"Follow righteousness, faith, love, peace, with those that *call on the Lord* out of a pure heart:" 2 Tim. ii. 22.

It appears to me that Paul's enmity was first stirred

to persecution unto death by finding that Stephen, when dying, called upon the name of Jesus as his God. The story of Saul's bitterness and breaking up the church (or assembly) of Jerusalem, begins at that point: Acts vii. 59; viii. 1—4. But when he beholds the Christ, possessed of the glory of God, he is ashamed of his unbelief, and sees himself fighting against God. He calls on Christ himself, and preaches Him in the synagogue as the Son of God.

Who is your Lord? On whom do you call? These are questions of the utmost importance to each. The Romans called Cæsar, 'Lord.' Festus says, "When I found that he had done nothing worthy of death, and that he himself too appealed to the *Adorable One*, I decided to send him. Concerning whom I have no certain thing to write to THE LORD:" Acts xxv. 25, 26. The emperor had temples, and priests, and sacrifices set apart to him. A temple dedicated to him was called 'Sebastion.'

By this were Christians discriminated from the heathen, that they would not worship the emperor, or blaspheme Christ. Herod and Nikeetes meeting Polycarp, took him up into their chariot, and said, "What harm is there in saying '*Lord Cæsar*,' and in sacrificing, and thus saving your life? He, however, did not at first make any reply; but as they persevered, he said, 'I shall not do as you advise me.' Failing, therefore, to persuade him, they uttered dreadful language, and thrust him down from the car with great vehemence."—Eusebius.

In modern Italy, Romanists distinguish between themselves and Protestants by saying, 'You are *Jesus-worshippers*; we are *Mary-worshippers*.'

One who was a friend and helper of mine, once called to see a dying woman. He enquired whether she had peace in her soul, in prospect of death? She said—'No!' He enquired: 'Do you believe that Jesus is Lord?' She said, 'Yes, surely!' 'Do you believe

that God raised Him from the dead?' She said, 'Not a doubt of it!' 'Then,' said he, 'how strange it is, that you believe two things stated in one verse, and yet believe not the third thing, *the blessed consequence which God has made to follow from them.*' For Scripture says, (1) 'If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord'—that you have just done—(2) 'and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead'—in that truth you have just stated your faith. What, then, say the four last words of the verse?—"THOU SHALT BE SAVED."

She paused a moment; then, lifting up her hands and eyes, while tears streamed down her cheeks, she said, 'I see it! I see it! I see it!' 'What do you see?' said my friend. '*That I shall be saved*,' said she. And so in peace and joy she departed.

Here, then, is the simple ground given of God whereon each can take his stand of assurance unto eternal life. 1. 'Jesus is Lord.' I confess it. 2. 'God raised Him from the dead.' I believe it. As surely as God is true I shall be saved!

Or again, resting our souls on the thirteenth verse, we can say, 'I have called upon the name of the Lord for pardon and righteousness.' I shall be saved, as surely as God's word is steadfast.

We have now had presented to us Law in relation to I. ADAM; II. ABRAHAM; III. MOSES.

They are not set forth in the order of time; but we have Abraham in the fourth chapter, and Adam in the fifth. The main reason of this is, I believe, that in Abraham first appeared the acceptance of God, and out of that sprang his two Seeds—(1) that of Gentile believers, and (2) his circumcised sons of the flesh.

I. In the case of Abraham, we have righteousness imputed by God's grace unto his faith. He did not obtain righteousness by merit, nor inheritance. Desert measured by law would only bring wrath. Nor did he obtain his two Seeds by the flesh, but by faith.

II. In *Adam* we see one law given, then transgression; and the endowment of conscience thereby transmitted to all his sons. The atmosphere of the world thereafter was only sin, ending in death; and its reign took effect in the corruption of the tomb.

But we have also the Second Adam, and righteousness come by Him, together with grace and gift; putting all to the proof as to whom they will choose. At the close of this trial will come, as the effect of righteousness, Life.

(1) First *millennial life*, as the reward to those who have fully profited by the grace and gift attendant on the righteousness bestowed on them through faith: v. 17; viii. 13.

(2) Then *eternal life*, as the gift of God to the believer: ver. 21. The Saviour's righteousness and life will affect the creation, and the abode of man, for blessing; as Adam's transgression affected both for evil. Blessing from this source will first spring forth at the Saviour's return; it will abide, never to fail, in the new heavens and earth.

III. In *Moses* we have the reign of Law over Israel. But it only produced multiplied transgressions, and condemnation. It cannot sanctify; while grace brings fruit acceptable to God. Flesh, our fallen nature under conscience, is by itself opposed to law, and to God the Giver of it.

Moses, while enforcing on Israel the strict adherence to law, yet at the close of his book of Deuteronomy gives us a glimpse of grace, of Christ, and of the Gospel, as applied to Israel. The prophets foretold a righteousness to come; the Gospel declares that righteousness arrived, and available for each son of man. The Righteousness of God by Christ ends law, and gives life already to the spirit of the believer, while life will soon penetrate even the body, which lies at present under sentence of death.

A view of the occurrences of "Righteousness" in this epistle confirms much of what has been said, and further study of it will lead to further light.

Chapter.	RIGHTEOUSNESS.
I. 16, 17.	Righteousness needed. "God's Righteousness." Supply of Righteousness, the Gospel.
III. 5 III. 21 } 22 } 25 } 26 }	Objection of Jew to his condemnation by God. Justification { Not by Law. Righteousness of the { Foretold. Subject. How becomes ours? "Upon." Righteousness of Judge { Questioned. { Revealed.
ABRAHAM. IV.	IMPUTED. Righteousness through faith. { Ceremonial. { Without work. { Moral. Righteousness of Subject, verses 3, 4, 5, 6, 9. Circumcision, its Seal. Imputed righteousness meant for us also: ver. 11. Heritage. Righteousness of faith: ver. 13. Resurrection, faith in: ver. 22.
ADAM. V.	Partakers of grace and gift of the Righteousness, Life, and Kingdom. Grace comes on Righteous- } Adam's Sin imputed. ness. Eternal Life: 21 } Christ's Righteousness
CHRIST. VI.	ACTIVE. Righteousness. Sanctification. Baptism Passage out from Adam into { Lord, { Christ. Owns Christ { Risen. Obedience. Body, servant of righteousness.
VIII. 10. IX. 28.	Believer divided { Body dead. { Spirit life, because of Righteous- Judge's Righteousness of vengeance. { ness.
MOSES. IX. 30; X.	Righteousness by Law? { Gentiles righteous by { faith. Or by Faith? { Jews unrighteous by law. Israel's position. God's Righteousness rejected. Law's clung to. Christ ends law; gives righteousness. Moses witness of Christ's righteousness. Faith possesses righteousness.
XIV. 17.	The Kingdom. Righteousness, peace, joy.

14, 15. "How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How shall they believe on Him of whom they have not heard? How, too, shall they hear without a herald? But how shall they herald, except they are sent? as it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the good news of peace, that bring glad news of good things.'"

This argumentation is based upon the three repetitions of "call upon the name."

(1) Christ is the rich Lord, whose bountiful hand distributes to all who pray to Him, how many soever they may be.

(2) Such are warranted by Joel in addressing Christ as the Giver of salvation.

(3) Such calling on the Lord supposes faith. And faith implies the previous hearing and reception of the Gospel message.

They, then, who call upon Mary, and Peter, and the saints, own them as their gods, and offend against the true God.

Faith supposes previous teaching concerning the nature and character of Him to whom we pray.

A proclamation implies the herald who proclaims. And he is no true herald, who is not sent by the God to whom he testifies.

'But if so, how are uninspired men accredited by God?—men who have no miracles to point to as their credentials?'

Take Paul's words in the second Corinthians: "So then death worketh in us, but life in you. But, as we have the same spirit of faith, as it is written, '*I believed, therefore I spoke*'; we also believe, and therefore speak:" iv. 12, 13.

The citation in the fifteenth verse of this chapter may come from one of two passages; either from Isaiah lii; or from Nahum i. 15. Both passages seem to tell of peace brought by Christ's righteousness, and ending in the Saviour's kingdom of glory. "Thy God *reigneth*."

16, 17. "But not all have obeyed (listened to) the Gospel (the good news of peace). For Isaiah saith, 'Lord, who hath believed our report? (hearing).' So then faith comes from a report, and the report arises out of the word of God."

God has provided all these preliminaries. Whatever is needful to faith has been sent. 'But the issue is not universal belief.' Very true, but the unbelief rests as condemnation at the doors of those who believe not.

This was foreseen. In the very opening of the chapter of Isaiah, which tells of peace made by the sacrifice of Christ, is set the complaint, that the proclamation of God met with scarce any acceptance. "By His stripes we are healed." "By the knowledge of Him shall my Righteous Servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities." "*The punishment bringing our peace was upon Him*:" Isa. liii (Hebrew).

The proclamation of the prophet becomes "a report." In the Greek it is "a hearing," and thus is it knit to—"Faith comes from hearing" God's testimony. In some parts of England they say, after the relation of a piece of good news,—"*That is a good hearing*" (report). "*Our report*," implies the mission and testimony of more than one. And thus it harmonises with the next verse, "*their sound*," "*their words*."

18. "But I say—Have they not heard? Yes verily. 'Unto all the earth went forth their voice; and unto the ends of the habitable earth their words.'"

The message avails not, unless it is carried to those concerned. But that has been done in the present instance. The Saviour bade His apostles—"Travel into *all the world*, and *preach the Gospel in all the creation*." "*Travel ye*, therefore, and *teach all the nations*." So was it said to Paul by the Lord from heaven,—"*I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these*

things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee,—Taking thee out *from the people* (of Israel) and *from the nations, unto whom now I send thee* that they may receive (1) forgiveness of sins, and (2) inheritance among them that are sanctified, by faith that is in Me:” Acts xxvi. 16—18.

Why have we in this verse words taken from the nineteenth Psalm? I have not much light thereon. But I observe that the usual form of citation is not found before them. We have no—‘It is written,’ or, ‘the Scripture saith.’

It seems to be a confirmation and expansion of the former word,—that the Gospel message was sent as freely to all the earth as the light of the sun. If I mistake not, Paul is herein making his defence to the Jews about the preaching of the Gospel to all the Gentiles. The main stress of the argument is, that—“*Whosoever* shall call on Christ’s name shall be saved.” But ‘whosoever’ includes, not Israel alone, but the Gentiles also. Now the message of mercy will not avail unless delivered.

19. “But I say—Hath not Israel known? First Moses saith—‘I will provoke you to jealousy by those not a nation, by a nation without understanding I will rouse you to anger.’”

It seems to me, that verse 18 tells us, that the preaching of the Gospel would be as wide as the world: a better light than that of the sun. In this verse, we have the application of the general statement to Israel in particular. Could they say—‘We never heard that this proclamation was to be sent beyond ourselves?’ They could not so say with truth. For Moses in his leave-taking Song, tells them of their future sins against their God, and His just displeasure against them: Deut. xxxii. 21. He would thus avenge Himself for their provoking Him with idols. He would

take to Himself *another people*, as they had taken to themselves *other gods*.

Observe here, that the Holy Ghost declares the book of Deuteronomy to be written by *Moses*. This in opposition to cavilling objectors, who would gladly deprive us of the Word of God.

The Gentiles were not by the Jews regarded as nations rightly constituted, or as possessed of wisdom, since they were worshippers of idols. We now see the reason why Paul so expatiates, when describing the Jew, on his superiority to the Gentile. “Behold thou art called a *Jew*, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, and knowest His will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the Law, *and art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes*, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law:” ii. 17—20. By those, then, whom the Jew despised, God would provoke him to jealousy. He would send to the Gentiles the Gospel of His grace.

How forcibly is this brought out in the history of Paul’s last visit to Jerusalem! He narrates to the raging crowd of Israelites briefly his history, and his conversion by the glory of God, shown in the face of Jesus Christ from on high. He gives them to understand, why he did not exercise his ministry in his own nation. It was from no want of love toward them. But the Lord Jesus assured him that his testimony would not be received by them. “And He said—‘*Depart; for I will send thee forth to nations afar.*’” Now they were listening to him up to that word, but (then) lifted up their voice, saying—‘Away with such a fellow from the earth; for it is not fit that he should live!’” “They cried out, and cast off their clothes, and threw dust into the air,” in their indignation. They would not have the Gospel themselves; but were furious that God should send it to any but themselves.

20, 21. "But Isaiah is very daring, and saith—'I was found by those who were not seeking me, I became manifest to those that were not asking for me.' But to Israel he saith—'All the day I stretched forth my hands to a disobedient and contradicting people.'"

The two quotations are both from Isaiah lxxv: the first, a part of the first verse, the second, a part of the second verse. The citation is very much to the point. It is a comparison of the Jews in the latter days, with the Gentiles; to the disparagement of Israel. The rest of verse 1 is also to the same effect—"I said, *Behold me, behold me*, unto a nation that was not called by my name." Paul's eye was on this passage at Antioch of Pisidia, when the unbelief and malice of the Jews was stirred up by the zeal with which the Gentiles came to hear the Gospel. The whole description is strongly confirmatory of the passage before us. "The next sabbath-day, came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and *spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming*. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold and said,—It was necessary that the word of God should first be spoken to you: but since ye thrust it away, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For thus hath the Lord commanded us—'I have set thee as a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be unto salvation to the end of the earth.' But when the Gentiles heard it they rejoiced, and glorified the word of the Lord; and as many as were appointed unto eternal life, believed."

"I was found by those that sought me not."

This looks back to chapter ix. 30, 31. "What shall we say then? That Gentiles, that followed not after righteousness, obtained righteousness; I mean, the righteousness of faith. But Israel pursuing the law of righteousness, arrived not at the law (standard) of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it

not by faith, but as (attainable) by the works of law." He then who finds the righteousness of God in the Gospel finds God in Christ, and his salvation.

After speaking of the Gentile's finding the Lord and his salvation, Isaiah puts in contrast the unbelief and malice of Israel. That unbelief discovered itself in many ways during the life of our Lord, but especially in His closing days on earth. And I persuade myself, that the words—"I stretched forth my hands all day," refer to the cross of Christ. Unbelief and malice were then in full tide. Israel was manifestly the foe of Messiah. To be able to put Him to death they throw overboard their especial hopes. "Shall I crucify your King?" "We have no king but Cæsar."

The Saviour stretched forth His hands, for none could take away His life, save by His permission. They did it in malice; the Lord Jesus submitted in grace.

There is here a tacit comparison with Moses during the fight with Amalek. Israel prevailed, when Moses lifted up his hands. When Moses grew tired, Aaron and Hur lifted them up. But Israel at the cross was Amalek, fighting against the Seed of the Woman and their God-given hopes. They stretched out the Saviour's hands in malice and unbelief.

They were seen that day, as never before, to be the disobedient and contradicting nation. "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil." "Then answered all the people and said,—*'His blood be on us, and on our children'*!" "Thou shalt not offer the blood of My sacrifice with *leaven*." It was passover time; but while scrupulous about the letter, they were breaking the true meaning of God; they were offering, with Christ the sacrifice, the leaven of malice and wickedness.

They were a "contradicting people." Simeon, at the Saviour's presentation in the temple, foretold that He should be "a sign that should be *spoken against* (yea, a sword shall pierce through thine own soul also), that

the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed:" Luke ii. 34, 35. These things were especially true of the Redeemer lifted up, like the serpent of brass, on the cross.

In the Gospel of John we find especially drawn out for us, the contradiction of sinners against the Lord of life.

"Why seek ye to kill Me?" "The multitude answered and said—'Thou hast a demon: *who seeketh to kill Thee?*'" John vii. "Then said some of the men of Jerusalem—'Is not this *He whom they seek to kill?*'"

"Say we not well, that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a demon?" Jesus answered,—'I have not a demon; but I honour My Father, and ye dishonour Me.' "If a man keep My word, he shall never see death. Then said the Jews unto Him—'Now we know that Thou hast a demon. Abraham died, and the prophets, and Thou sayest—If any keep My word, he shall not taste death for ever.'"

And what bitter unbelief burst forth around the cross! "If Thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross." "If He be the King of Israel, let Him come down now from the cross, and we will believe Him! He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now, if He will have Him; for He said—'I am the Son of God:'" Matt. xxvii.

CHAPTER XI.

1—3. "I say therefore, Hath God cast away His people? Far be it! For I too am an Israelite of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away His people whom He foreknew. Know ye not what the Scripture saith in (the history of) Elijah? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, 'Lord, Thy prophets they have slain; Thine altars they have digged down; and I am left alone, and they are seeking my life.'"

THIS chapter presents, on the whole, the favourable view of the issue of God's dealings with Israel. They will not be restored during the Gospel-dispensation. That is the Mystery, during which the new people of God, the Church of Christ, God's elect, chosen out of both Jew and Gentile, are being taken out from a world lying under wickedness. During this dispensation Israel is, as a nation, cast off; having richly deserved the rebuke of the Most High. They are men of Moses, refusing salvation by grace. At the close of the last chapter their sins against the Messiah, the Son of God, are glanced at. They were the disobedient and contradicting people, addressed in vain with tears by Jehovah-Jesus.

Are they to continue evermore in that position of unbelief before God? By no means! Paul was a living proof to the contrary. He was one of the seed of Abraham, one of the favoured tribe of Benjamin. God had in Israel an elect people, and he was one of them.

The case of Israel under the Gospel resembled that which was seen in Ahab's reign, when the nation fell into the idolatries of Ahab and Jezebel. Elijah, shocked and indignant at the falling away from the true God, went to Horeb to arouse God's vengeance

against Israel, at the very mountain where the covenant had been entered into. He represented to God the open sins of His people against the covenant. The messages sent to them by the prophets, had been not only rejected, but the prophets themselves had been slain. He was the last, and his life had just been threatened. Must not, then, Jehovah step forward and avenge this wickedness?

4—6. "But what saith the oracle to him? 'I have reserved to Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed knee to Baal.' So also in the present season there exists a remnant according to the election of grace. But if of grace, it is not of works; else grace were no more grace. But if of works, it is no more grace; else work were no longer work."

The force of Jehovah's answer to His prophet's appeal lies in this,—that He had kept back judgment, because not all the people had fallen away to Baal. God's electing mercy in that day of apostasy had drawn away from the idolatry so hateful to Him, seven thousand men. For their sakes vengeance was delayed—the whole nation should not be cut off.

So was it also in the days of Paul. While the main body of Israel had refused Christ and the Holy Spirit, God had yet His elect remnant; and Paul was wiser and more graciously minded than Elijah. His prayers went up not only for God's elect, but for Israel; and for mercy to them, though they sought his life.

It was an election, not according to merit, as most of men's elections are. It was a choice *against* their deserts; for all are sinners. It was salvation by grace. And salvation by merit, and salvation by grace are two opposites, which cannot mingle.

7—10. "What then? What Israel is seeking after, *that* he has not attained; but the election hath attained it, while the rest were hardened. As it is written (1) 'God hath given them the spirit of slumber; eyes not to see, and ears not to hear unto this day.' And (2) David saith, 'Let their table become to them a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompence to them: let their eyes be darkened, that they see not, and their back continually bend Thou down.'"

Israel, as Paul has testified, was seeking after righteousness; and for salvation, as the result of righteousness. But they had not attained it, because they sought it in a wrong direction, as their own Scriptures might have taught them: ix. 31; x. 3. In their pride they refused to own the righteousness of Christ, which God had promised to send as salvation; and therefore they remained transgressors under law, and under the curse.

But God had opened the eyes of His elect of that day to see their need, and to behold in Christ the Lord their Righteousness and their salvation.

"And the rest were hardened."

The word for 'hardened' is a different one from that employed in the ninth chapter, but the sense is apparently the same. How is a man softened? By the Spirit of God! How is he hardened? By being left to his own choice. Is there any injustice in a man's being permitted to have his own way? None at all! But every one, so allowed to take his own choice, sins.

It is said of Israel and the quails, 'So they did eat, and were well filled; for He *gave them their own desire*; they were not estranged from their lust:" Ps. lxxviii. 29, 30. "But My people would not hearken to My voice: and Israel would none of Me. *So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust*; and they walked *in their own counsels*:" lxxxi. 11, 12. For idolatry—"God turned, and *gave them up* to worship the host of heaven:" Acts vii. 42. And so of the Gentiles. "For this cause (idolatry) *God gave them up* unto vile affections:" Romans i. 26. He withdrew His restraining hand; the consequence being, a resolved going after sin.

The apostle is now treating of the main body of Israel in his day. And their state had been foreseen, and foretold by Moses and the prophets.

"God hath given them the spirit of deep slumber."

That is Isaiah's testimony to Jerusalem, the city of David. "For the Lord hath poured upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes:" Isa. xxix. 10.

It had been foretold also by Moses, when, just before his death, he presented to Israel a new covenant, beside the one ratified at Sinai. "And Moses called all Israel, and said unto them, 'Ye have seen all that the Lord did before your eyes unto Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and unto all his land; the great temptations which thine eyes have seen, the signs, and those great miracles: Yet *the Lord hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear unto this day.*'" Deut. xxix. 2, 3. So the opened eye comes from God's grace; the closed eye from man's own choice.

Closely resembling these testimonies is that of Isaiah vi. 9, descriptive of Israel's blindness in the presence of Christ. They beheld Him, but saw not the Son of God. They heard Him, but did not understand His glory, and refused His words of wisdom.

To this, in his sixty-ninth Psalm, David adds his attestation. It is one of the imprecatory psalms, or psalms calling for judgment according to the law, upon the people who would abide under Moses, and would receive according to their deserts.

Many stumble at these imprecations. 'Are they written in a right spirit? Are they to be accepted as coming from God?'

Certainly! They are not '*Christian*,' if that is what you mean. But these sinners were *not Christians*; nor to be dealt with as men of *faith in Christ*. They of their own heart called down wrath upon themselves. "*His blood be on us, and on our children!*"

They were men who preferred law and Moses to Christ and salvation.

What, then, says God to these *men of law*?

"*Let their table become a snare and a trap, and*

a recompence unto them: let their eyes be darkened, that they see not."

Why was their table to become a *snare*, and a *recompence* to them? The psalm tells us—"They gave Me *gall* for My *meat*; and in My *thirst* they gave Me *vinegar* to drink."

This then was God's appropriate answer in law to their treatment of His Son. Here again, as in the last verse of chapter x., we are at the cross of the Redeemer; and God is taking notice of that their sin, and of its details of wickedness. Then be *their table* a snare to them and a recompence! How great a snare the Jews' table was and *is* to them, we can but feebly understand. But it served to keep them proudly aloof from the new people of God. It hampered even the twelve apostles from fulfilling their commission. It drew Peter into sin; and but for Paul's bold rebuke, he would have undone the freeness of the Gospel; and mixed up Christianity with Judaism.

Let a word be dropped here on the not unfrequent differences to be found between Old Testament Scriptures as cited by apostles; and the present Hebrew text, and Septuagint (or, the Jews' version of the Old Testament in Greek).

Most learned men, Germans especially, assume that the *Hebrew*, as we now have it, is correct, and hence cast a slur on Paul and the other writers, when his text differs from the Hebrew. Now the present text of the Hebrew is in places not a few unintelligible, or clearly corrupted. "*Thy mother is like a vine in thy blood:*" Ezek. xix. 10. "*Elhanan slew Goliath the Gittite:*" 2 Sam. xxi. 19. Compare James' citation of Amos ix. 11, 12, with the Hebrew—Acts xv. 16.

What shall we say then? That apostles have altered the text? or that the Jews have done so, either ignorantly or wilfully?

Are apostles inspired? If so,—"*Let God be true, and every man a liar.*" That they have wilfully perverted one

passage is confessed by themselves. Lest the disgrace should attach to Moses, of having his grandson an idolatrous priest, they have altered the name of 'Moses' into '*Manasseh*,' in Judges xviii. 30. Much more powerful would be their inclination to alter any passage that, when cited by apostles, pushed them hard, and declared their condemnation as men of the law.

We are bound, then, to assume that the Spirit of God has rightly quoted, and rightly explained the Scripture. In places not a few, the Septuagint gives the true meaning, and tells us what was the original reading.

"Bow down their back alway."

By way of recompence. They laid on the back of the Saviour, unjustly condemned, and twice scourged, the heavy cross. They saw that He was unable to bear it, and compelled Simon of Cyrene to carry it after Him. It is not unlikely that the Saviour may have fallen under the load, as tradition says. It would be a just recompence, then, if their back, too, were bowed down.

11. "I say therefore—Have they stumbled in order that they should fall? Far be it! But by their transgression, salvation is come to the Gentiles, to provoke them to jealousy."

'Their transgression' was the putting to death the Son of God. This is the accusation which the Holy Spirit by the mouth of Peter twice brings against them. "Ye denied the Holy One and the Righteous, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the Prince of life:" Acts iii. 14, 15; ii. 22, 23. This their trespass, opened the way for proclaiming the Gospel to the Gentiles.

But their stumbling, through God's mercy, was not intended to cut off the nation from blessing for ever. It was designed to subserve the purposes of God with regard to the Gentiles. But Israel shall not always lie under the wrath of God. Of this Paul himself was a type. He and his companions were struck to earth

by the glory of Christ. But he was bidden to arise, and he rose.

Mercy was designed for Israel, even in the mission of the Gospel to the nations. Rightly taken, it would have led them to receive the truth, when they saw the blessings which the Gospel brought to believing Gentiles.

12—15. "Now if their transgression is the riches of the world, and their diminution the riches of Gentiles, how much more shall their fulness? For to you I am speaking, the Gentiles, inasmuch as I am apostle to Gentiles, I glorify my service, if by any means I may rouse to jealousy my flesh, and save some of them. For if their casting away be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from among the dead?"

Wisely has God arranged the matter, and graciously, as appears by this verse. He would not have the Gentiles who believe, to think that it was to their interest to keep the Jews in their blindness, in order that the favour of God might rest on themselves. No! While the Jews' sin has opened to Gentiles the door of mercy; the restoration of Israel to their place as God's people of the earth, shall bring yet greater blessing. The diminution of the Jews is seen in Peter's second sermon: Acts iii. He calls on them to repent, that they might be forgiven, and the days of millennial blessing arrive, when Christ should return to earth. If they would obey Moses, in whom they boasted themselves, they would receive Christ as the prophet raised up from the dead: or else they must perish. No longer could they take their stand as the people of God, while they persevered in their unbelief. It was the day in which God was visiting with blessing the families of the earth by Christ, as the Seed of Abraham. But God was still showing to Israel mercy, in that He sent the Gospel-offer to them *first*.

That was the Lord's last effort to bring them to repentance during the Gospel-day. The Saviour showed His power by arresting Paul, His fiercest enemy, and

making him His messenger to the nations. Would Israel turn when they saw Gentiles welcoming with joy the salvation sent to them? It may remind us of the Saviour's words to the chief priests and elders, in application of the parable of the two sons. "The publicans and the harlots are going into the (future) kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not; *but the publicans and the harlots believed him; and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterwards, that ye might believe him.*" That would have been the genuine result. A chimney-sweep bowed to the king of France. The king bowed in return. A courtier asked him how he could stoop to acknowledge such an obeisance? 'What! (said he,) would you have me outdone in politeness by a chimney-sweep?'

The great import then of Paul's mission as it regarded the Jews was, to see if they would be wrought on to imitate the Gentiles, and outdo them in faith. That was Jehovah's last appeal in fulfilment of His word by Moses: Deut. xxxii. But while the jealousy of Israel was fiercely aroused, it did not lead them to repent, but rather to put to death the messenger of Christ, who brought to them a message they so much hated.

The apostle did not, by his mission and ministry, expect to 'convert the world.' He only looked to save some out of the mass.

God had cast away Israel from being His people through their sin. But they shall one day repent. And their repentance shall be the long-expected and joyful season of the resurrection from among the dead. That indeed is predicted by Isaiah xlix. On this fruitful topic only a few sentences must be ventured on. Of Christ, the prophet speaks thus:

"Thus saith the Lord—'In an *acceptable time* I have heard thee, and in the day of salvation have I helped thee; and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people [Israel], to establish the *earth*

[the whole globe], to cause to inherit the desolate heritages [the ruins of villages and towns of Palestine for ages lying in desolation]."

"That thou mayest say to the prisoners,—'Go forth' [from Hadees]; to them that are in darkness [in the under-world],—'Show yourselves.' They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be on all high places."

This flock of Christ is the Great Multitude shown to us in Rev. vii. 9. The gates of Hadees that had long prevailed to keep them prisoners, are by Christ opened. Very close is the correspondence here, between Isaiah and the Apocalypse. The Great Multitude before the throne and the Lamb shout—"Salvation unto our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." This is the better people of God; their appearance is not before the terrible Mount of Sinai, nor are their robes washed in water, as were Israel's; but "they have made them white in the blood of the Lamb." "They shall not hunger nor thirst (says Isaiah); neither shall heat or sun smite them." In Revelation we have, "Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple: and He that sitteth on the throne shall pitch tent over them. (Greek.) *They shall hunger no more, nor thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor heat.* For the Lamb *which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them and shall lead them to life's fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.*" In Isaiah we have—"For He that hath mercy on them shall guide them, even by the springs of water shall He guide them." That is—in Revelation vii. we see them first in the temple above as God's *priests*; but the Saviour, as the greater than Moses, shall lead on to the eternal city of God His risen flock, and there they shall possess the tree of life, and shall drink of the river of the water of life, which gushes out from the throne of God and the Lamb: Rev. xxii. Then follows the blessing for Israel and Zion: ver. 13—21.

Similar is the testimony of Zechariah ix. The Saviour, as foretold, enters Jerusalem on an ass. The city and its people are to rejoice. He shall bring peace to Israel and to the nations, and His kingdom extend over the earth. But the dead in Christ also shall rise. "As for thee also, by the blood of the covenant I have sent forth *thy prisoners* out of the pit wherein is no water:" ver. 11. See also Isa. xlii. 6, 7, and Psalm cxlvi. 7—10.

16. "Now if the firstfruit is holy, the lump also is holy; and if the root be holy, so are the branches."

The apostle is looking onward to the Great Day. The patriarchs were holy; they are a specimen of what the Great Harvest shall be. This is, I believe, a reference to the feasts of the Law given in Leviticus xxiii. There were two kinds of first-fruits noticed in that chapter. 1. The *sheaf* of first-fruits, in connection with the Passover. It was presentable by the priest to the Lord, with a male lamb for a sin-offering. 2. There was to be also, at the Pentecost following, an offering of two *loaves* baked with leaven. With them a sin-offering was to be offered. It was to be a day of a holy convocation. This represents, I believe, the Church as gathered out of both Jew and Gentile. God's people of these two origins was named by Peter on the day of the Holy Spirit's descent: Acts ii. 17, 18, 38, 39. This view refers, I think, to the heritage. The tree with root and branches represents, I believe, the two people of God, considered as His witnesses now on earth. Abraham is the root.

17, 18. "Now if some of the branches were broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; boast not against the branches. But if thou boastest, thou bearest not the root, but the root bears thee."

The branches broken off are the unbelieving of Israel, whom God will no longer allow to be called His people during the Gospel day. But believing Gentiles are taken out from the world of unbelief to be made sons of Abraham by faith, and to receive of the promises made to Abraham, and be made partakers of the Holy Ghost, the blessing of the Gospel: Gal. iii. 14. Gentiles, then, called by grace from the midst of idolaters, are not to exalt themselves above Israel, as if better than they. If they do glorify so themselves it is a bad sign; it is contrary to the position God has given them. The source of the river of blessing began long before: they are only partaking of the waters of life meant originally for others. As Paul says in another place to Gentiles, showing their insubordination and high-mindedness, "What! came the word of God *out from you?* Or came it *unto you alone?*" 1 Cor. xiv. 36. 'O Gentile believers, yours is not the primary standing before God; but only a subordinate one, in the day when God is not accepting the flesh even of Abraham, but only the spirit.'

19—21. "Thou wilt say therefore, 'The branches were broken off, in order that I might be grafted in.' Well; through unbelief they were broken off; but thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear. For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest He spare not thee also."

This is the plea of Gentile pride: 'God broke away branches of His tree, in order to give me their place.' True: but the breaking off of the original branches carries with it a solemn lesson to you. They were broken off because of unbelief. They were not true representatives of Abraham, the man of faith. He derived all his blessings from the grace of God, not from his own merits. But Israel presumed on his own merits under law, and refused the grace of the Lord Jesus. The Most High, therefore, took away their standing as His people. "Therefore say I unto you (says our

Lord), the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."

Ye Gentiles of the Church of God, "ye stand by faith!" "Be not highminded, but fear." This is explained by many as if it signified, that the Christian might, after all, perish. That is not the meaning. It tells us, that when the nations called Christian turn to unbelief in the Son of God, they also shall cease to be owned by God as His people; just as Israel before them has been removed from their place of acceptance and testimony. And lest any should think that in such a large scheme each has no responsibility, the warning is made individual. If for unbelief God broke off Israel from being owned as His nation on earth, God will not spare unbelieving Gentiles. But they shall be broken off from being "the nations upon whom My name is called, saith the Lord who doeth all these things:" Acts xv.

22. "Behold therefore the *goodness* and *severity* of God: on those indeed who fell, *severity*; but toward thee, *goodness*, if thou continuest in (His) goodness; else thou also shalt be cut off."

There are two great principles in God, seemingly opposed to one another: (1) goodness, arising out of His sovereign mercy: and (2) severity, arising out of His justice, as the Ruler of all.

His severity is seen in breaking off the unbelieving of Israel; His grace, in adopting as His earthly witnesses believers of the Gentiles. But it is not a matter of promise on God's part, that unbelievers shall, at all events, be counted as His. 'Desert His Gospel grace, and set up your own merits under law as did Israel, and you too shall be cut off.' Now Gentile Christianity has broadly and in the main turned back to flesh and law. It is acknowledged, that in the dark ages that which called itself 'the Church' set up men's works as the way of salvation. That was the desertion

of God's goodness and grace, and thus the breaking off must come.

'But you forget the Reformation!' First of all, there is no promise of renewed acceptance, if there be penitence. Secondly, the so-called 'Catholic' churches of Rome and Greece never gave up their trust in their goodness before God, instead of God's goodness toward them. Thirdly, the Reformers were far from accepting the full truth of the Gospel. Their religious bodies were mostly national, instead of being assemblies of believers only. Fourthly, Protestants are turning away from grace and Christ to human traditions and law. Righteously, therefore, will God break off Gentiles from being His witnesses on earth.

23, 24. "And they too, if they abide not in their unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again. For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree wild by nature, and contrary to nature wert grafted into the good olive tree, how much more shall these according to nature be grafted into their own olive tree?"

This gives us to understand, that at the next dispensation Israel shall again be God's people of the earth. Israel shall not remain in unbelief longer than till the gathering out of the elect of the Gentiles. Then God shall turn their hearts, according to His promises. "Thy people shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever."

"I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and give you an heart of flesh."

"My people shall never be ashamed."

This change is made to rest not on Israel's goodness, but on God's power. O, then, the *issue is certain!* Israel in the coming day shall be children, not of Abraham's flesh alone, but of his faith also. The promises to Abraham were first made to them. That Gentile nations should be God's witnesses during Israel's unbelief, was a mystery long concealed.'

25—27. "For I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that partial hardening has happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles has come in. And thus all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, 'Out of Zion shall arrive the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Israel. And this is the covenant from Me, when I shall take away their sins.'"

The theory that found favour during the ignorance of the Word of God, and of prophecy in especial, was—'That the Jewish prophets foretold *the glory of the Church* of Christ. Whatever of blessing and promise there was in them was intended for the Church; whatever of rebuke and of wrath was there, was destined to fall upon Israel.' And this idea is still accepted by very many; and it puffs them up. 'Israel is done with; God will restore them no more.' And with that came persecution of Jehovah's ancient people; nor has that persecution ceased. But when we turn to the testimony of the Apostle of the Gentiles, we see that 'the Church' is a secret of God's grace in the day of salvation and of election; while the patience of the Most High with Gentile unbelief is well-nigh exhausted. The Church is a heavenly body, the elect of this dispensation, soon to be taken out of the earth to its heritage in the heaven.

Then the nations will rebel, and abandon the very name of Christ. "*The nations were wroth, and thy wrath came, and the time of the deal, that they should be judged, and that Thou shouldest give the reward unto Thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear Thy name, and shouldest destroy them that destroy the earth.*" Rev. xi. Accordingly, Babylon is destroyed, and the Saviour, descending, finds the nations embattled against Him under Satan's King and False Prophet, and their hosts are slain: Rev. xvii.; xix.

The Gospel of the Christ is founded on Israel's failure, as well as on Adam's. But the hardening is

neither total nor eternal. It is to continue only "until *the fulness of the Gentiles* is come in."

What is the meaning of that phrase?

I suppose it is generally understood to mean, that all the nations or Gentiles will be converted, before the Lord turns to save the Jews. But that is certainly not the sense. The proclamation of the Gospel is indeed to go forth to all the world. But while "many are called; few are chosen." And only the chosen are saved at last. The body which God is forming now is an 'election'; it is called Ecclesia—'a calling out,' that is, from the world, which hears, indeed, God's message, but obeys it not. "Because ye are not of the world, but *I have chosen you out of the world*, therefore the world hateth you:" John xv. 19. James, in the council of Jerusalem, recognised God's intention in this dispensation to *gather "out from the Gentiles a people for His name"*—the so-called 'Christian nations'; but multitudes of them believe not. When the results of the Gospel dispensation are exhibited on high, it is only a "multitude *out of every nation*" that is found above: Rev. vii. 9. And when the earth is again presented to us, the nations are gathered in arms to tread down Jerusalem, and they slay there prophets of the Lord: xi. At the close, the armies of earth assemble under the False Christ and False Prophet, to fight against the Lord Jesus, and unnumbered thousands are slain: Rev. xix.

No. The sense of 'the fulness,' is, 'that which fills a gap'; as we see in the Saviour's brief parable of Matthew ix. "None putteth a patch of unfulled rag on an old garment; for *its fulness* (that which is put in to fill it up) taketh from the garment, and a worse rent takes place:" Mark ii. 21. And our Lord in His parable of the Wicked Husbandmen, and of the Wedding Garment, carries out the explanation. The Wicked Husbandmen would slay the Son; and what would the Master of the vineyard do? "Therefore

I say unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof:" Matt. xxi. 43. But the parable of the Wedding Garment goes much further. The king sends his servants to call Israel, his invited guests, to the feast made for his son. "*But they would not come.*" A second, and more urgent message is sent; but the attractions of the farm and of the shop prevail, and their learned men and rulers persecute and slay the messengers of God. The Romans are sent who slaughter Israel, and burn up Jerusalem.

Here, then, is the gap at the feast. The first set of guests refuse to come. Shall, then, the feast be brought to nought? No! Others shall supply their places. "Then saith he to his servants, 'The wedding-feast is ready, but they who were invited were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find bid to the marriage-feast.' So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: *and the wedding was furnished with guests.*:" Matt. xxii. The gap is filled up. "The fulness of the Gentiles," then, means the elect of this dispensation gathered out from the midst of the nations, to fill places left vacant through Israel's unbelief.

26, 27. "And so all Israel shall be saved, as it is written, 'There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Israel. For this is My covenant with them, when I shall take away their sins.'"

"And so"—after the rejection of Israel, and the ingathering of the elect Gentiles, "*All Israel shall be saved.*" This is doubted or denied by many; but is affirmed by many Scriptures. "*Thy people (Israel) shall be all righteous, they shall inherit the land forever*; the branch of My planting, the work of My hands, that I may be glorified:" Isa. lx. 21. "Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation; ye

shall not be ashamed or confounded, world without end." "In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory:" Isa. xlv. 17—25; Psa. cxxxv. 4—14; lxxii.; cxlix.

Take a passage or two from the New Testament. "The oath (says Zachariah) which He swore to our father Abraham, that He would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life:" Luke i. "Being High Priest that year, he (Caiaphas) prophesied *that Jesus should die for that nation.*:" John xi. 51.

Israel, in our Lord's day, supposed that all the saved of the Gentiles must be circumcised, and join them. Christians now generally suppose, that Jews who are saved must be baptized, and join the Christian Church; thus losing their nationality, and any distinctive promises to them as a nation. Both are mistaken. It is God's counsel to have two people; apart from one another in their standing and heritage. The seed of Abraham, as the dust of earth, and as the sand of the sea shore, shall inherit the land of Palestine, and His city of Jerusalem. But He has another people, not of the earth, but of the heaven; a people to rise from the dead, and to abide in heaven, fixed and shining like the stars, possessed of the city of God above, the New Jerusalem, which is our mother: Gal. iv.

"As it is written," in Isaiah lix. 20, "*Out of Zion shall arrive the Redeemer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. For this is My covenant with them when I shall take away their sins.*"

There seems to be here a putting together of two passages, the second one being Isaiah xxvii., as read by the LXX.

The Zion out of which the Redeemer shall come, must, it seems, be the heavenly one. For the Saviour is coming to dwell in Zion: Psa. cxxxii. 13, 14; Joel iii. 17.

Certain it is, that the Saviour is now in heaven, and is coming thence. "For our *city** is in heaven; *out of which* we are expecting as Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change the body of our humiliation, to be fashioned like the body of His glory:" Phil. iii. That there is a heavenly Mount Zion, on which the New Jerusalem stands, is proved by Hebrews xii. 22: "Ye drew near to *Mount Zion*, and to the city of the living God, *the heavenly Jerusalem*." And again, "And I saw, and lo! the Lamb stood on *Mount Zion*, and with Him a hundred and forty-four thousand." They are then in front of *the heavenly throne* with its living creatures and elders: Rev. xiv.

So Joseph went *out* from the presence of Pharaoh, after he had been appointed ruler of Egypt, to visit the land and inspect it.

"All Israel shall be *saved*." And the mode of the salvation is (1) by their being turned from ungodliness, and (2) by the forgiveness of their sins.

28. "As concerning the Gospel, they are enemies for your sakes; but concerning the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes."

While the Gospel of grace is preached, the Jews will retain their unbelief. Proud of their law, and of their supposed righteousness, they refuse the Son of God, and His righteousness. "His blood be on us!" Now this, their ungodliness, has been made to yield salvation to the Gentiles. Had they accepted Christ, they would have been accepted, either as the people of God on earth, or as the heavenly people.

"Concerning the election, beloved for the fathers' sakes."

* Some render πολιτευμα 'citizenship,' but it also signifies 'city,' and this gives it the best sense. To Roman colonists Rome was the Great City; but to believers it is the New Jerusalem.

There are two elections; one of Gentiles, during the Gospel-day; the other is an election of Jews, who shall resist and refuse the Great False Christ and his Prophet, and shall therefore escape the destroying wrath that shall fall on these enemies of God. Of His Jewish living elect, in danger of being cut off by the awful plagues on the earth, and in peril of being deceived by the False Christs and prophets of that day, the Saviour speaks in the Prophecy on Olivet: Matt. xxiv. 22, 24, 31. These will be still on the earth, when He descends, and will be gathered by angels and by trump of loud sound; while His elect of the Church have been previously and invisibly caught up to Him. Of this body the apostle has already spoken. "Though the number of Israel be as the sand of the sea, *the remnant* shall be saved. For He will finish the work, and *cut it short in righteousness*; because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth:" ix. 27, 28. This seed of God's election will be the basis of the nation during the millennium, and to all eternity.

Their standing is on a different foundation from ours. They are beloved as the posterity of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. We are beloved *children, chosen in the Beloved Son*: Eph. v. 1.

Israel was "beloved for the fathers' sakes." So Moses tells them. "*Because He loved thy fathers*, therefore He chose their seed after them, and brought thee out in His sight with His mighty power out of Egypt." And again—"The Lord did not set His love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people. But because the Lord loved you, and because He would keep the *oath which He had sworn unto your fathers*." "The Lord had *a delight in thy fathers to love them*, and He chose their seed after them, even you above all people, as it is this day:" Deut. iv. 37; vii. 6—8; x. 15.

29. "For the gifts and calling of God are unrepented of (by Him)."

The word for 'gifts' here is that which generally designates the miraculous gifts. And prophecy was bestowed upon Moses and the seventy elders. But God's gifts to Israel were not confined to that, but He gave them the land, the tabernacle, the priesthood, the sacrifices, the sabbath, the blood on the altar to make atonement for their souls.

The "calling" of God respects chiefly, I suppose, His choice of Israel to be His people. He gives two most gracious testimonies to that effect. "Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars by night, which divideth the sea, when the waves thereof roar; the Lord of Hosts is His name. If those ordinances depart from before Me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before Me for ever. Thus saith the Lord: If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the Lord:" Jer. xxxi. 35—37. "In a little wrath I hid My face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy upon thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer. For this is as the waters of Noah to Me; for as I have sworn, that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee:" Isa. liv. 8, 9.

'Will the sacrifices then of the Law be restored during the millennium?'

Yes, certainly: as testified by many passages of Scripture. 'But how can they ever find a place, after the one sacrifice of Christ?' They return, because of God's return to His arrangements under the Law. He has come down to dwell on earth in His temple. And Israel is to draw near Him *bodily*. And the

flesh of the living oft becomes ceremonially unclean. And to draw near to God as unclean, would be death: Lev. vii. 20, 21; xv. 31.

Now the sacrifices of the Old Testament *cleanse the flesh*, as Paul has declared. "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, *sanctify to the cleansing of the flesh*, how much more shall *the blood* of the Christ *cleanse your conscience?*" Heb. ix.

The Church of Christ needs no such sacrifices under the Gospel, because God is away in heaven, and we draw not near to Him in the flesh, but in the spirit. And when risen from the dead, the body is no longer subject to uncleanness, but is able to dwell in the presence of God for ever. But when Israel enters the restored temple where Jehovah abides, the two great defilements of the flesh about which so many precepts were given by Moses, return: Lev. xviii. ; xx. "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will sow the house of Israel, and the house of Judah with the seed of man, and with the seed of beast:" Jer. xxxi. And death does not wholly cease during the thousand years. But for those accounted worthy to put on their resurrection-body, we find the closing up of uncleanness. "And Jesus answering said unto them, 'The children of this age marry and are given in marriage. But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that age, and the resurrection from among the dead, neither *marry* nor are given in marriage. *For neither can they die any more*; for they are equal unto the angels, and are the sons of God, being sons of the resurrection:'" Luke xx. 34—36. So the risen, the citizens of the New Jerusalem, are neither increased by marriage, nor diminished by death from age to age.

30, 31. "For as ye also once disbelieved God, but now have received mercy through their disobedience; so these also have now disbelieved the mercy (shown) to you, in order that they also may be received to mercy."

The Gentiles were once unbelievers in the true God, and in His great work, in spite of the wonders of creation all around them. They did not credit the redemption-work of Jehovah, in leading Israel out from Egypt. But when Israel turned a deaf ear and heart of disobedience to their God, Gentiles were led into mercy.

But Israel refused to believe this counsel of God exhibited before their eyes; in the turning of Gentiles from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven. This was a mercy to the nations that Israel would not own. While then in the age to come all Israel shall be saved; they will not be able to present to Jehovah any claims for blessing founded on His justice, and on their obedience to His law. They can only enter on the promises made to them, on the footing of mercy.

32. "For God hath shut up all under disobedience, in order that He might have mercy on all."

1. Our first parents were set by the Lord God, under law and penalty, to obey the one command of Eden. With the breach of the law, came (1) conscience which condemns all; and (2) the threatened penalty.

2. After the Flood it was still Law, and threatened penalty on bloodshedding, that were laid on the Gentiles.

3. Israel, God's own chosen nation, are next placed under many laws and penalties; required to conduct themselves obediently, or to be dealt with according to their deserts. The effects were ruinous. Thus the Most High shut up all the world's inhabitants under disobedience.

4. But we of this dispensation have been set under mercy. That tells of God's goodness, and should be by us highly prized. God's strokes of justice wait for

the overt act of disobedience, which proceeds out from the heart of unbelief.

Israel at last shall be placed under a new Covenant of Mercy. "Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, because they continued not in My covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord." God hereon promises to take on Himself the responsibilities of the new covenant. "*I will*"—and "*they shall*"—is the tenor of the new engagement. And "*All shall know Me from the least to the greatest.*" Mercy and grace from Jehovah are the only safe footing for an eternity of bliss. And Israel, loathing themselves for their own and their fathers' iniquities in the past, shall confess their infinite and eternal indebtedness to their God.

33—35. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways not to be traced out! For who knew the mind of the Lord? Or who became His counsellor? Or who first gave to Him, and it shall be recompensed to him?"

God's plans and their execution are profoundly beyond us. The plan is laid in wisdom; it is executed in knowledge. Principles and measures of operation belong to our God in a fulness, which may well astonish us; and discover to us, that the rushlight will never equal the sun in lustre. There are, indeed, things in His judgments and His ways which we cannot reconcile with our views. But justice and mercy are His, however they may be at times hidden from our eye. He is the Giver to His creatures. None can communicate to Him any new light or gift. If they can, they have but to establish their claim, and recompence shall be made to them.

How easily can God meet both Jew and Gentile on the ground of grace! How unable are they to stand before Him, when their deserts in righteousness are in

question ! What must become of the sinner who rejects mercy, and so throws himself under the wheels of the chariot of righteousness ? And those, both Jew and Gentile, who are brought to God in the Day of Mercy, will take a standing, and an heritage, far above the men of law.

36. "For out of Him, and through Him, and unto Him are all things : to Him be glory for ever ! Amen."

God is the Creator of all things ; their Preserver, in whom they live and move ; and to Him, as the Proprietor of all things, glory must ever flow. "All Thy works praise Thee ; and Thy saints give Thee thanks."

CHAPTER XII.

1, 2. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service ! And be not conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may learn by experience what is the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God."

THE doctrinal principles of the Gospel have been laid down by the apostle ; now comes the application of them to practice. Life under grace is to differ greatly from life under law.

In the first two verses the apostle speaks of our duty, as believers, toward God : then of acting in grace toward the Church of Christ ; then, of conduct, as put in contact with men generally, whether those of the world, or of the Church. "Let us do good unto all ; specially to them that are of the household of faith."

"By the mercies of God."

This is the general aspect of the Gospel, and it has been expounded for us in the former chapters of the Epistle. God has chosen us ; He has provided for the unrighteous the righteousness of God : He has destined us to be companions of His Son. While Moses led Israel into law, Christ has led believers into grace.

"Present your bodies a living sacrifice."

To 'present' or 'bring near,' is the word in use under the law, to express the victim's being transferred from the original proprietor to the priest, for his examination and acceptance. This, as applying under the Gospel to us, has been already named in a general

way—in chapter vi. “*Yield yourselves* unto God, as those that are alive from among the dead.” “Now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness:” ver. 13, 19.

“Your *bodies*.” These are to form an eternal part of the saved. The resurrection of the body has greatly dropped out of sight of Christians. It has arisen out of the mistake of supposing, that at death believers ascend to the throne of God, and enjoy full salvation as ‘glorified spirits.’ This, of course, thrusts out of sight the true portion of the believer as glorified in resurrection. It has pushed backward greatly also, the resurrection of our Lord, as designed to show us what is prepared for the people of Christ. The Enemy, the Wicked One, who prevailed to lead man down to the dust shall be foiled at last. He shall not be allowed to triumph over a body left in the grasp of death. The body as well as the soul shall be rescued from him that had the power of death, even the devil.

“*A living sacrifice*.” Under the law the presented victim was to be slain, in order to take away sin. Sin being now pardoned, and yourselves owned in Christ, God can now accept your service. Then devote yourselves to Him.

“*Holy, acceptable to God, your reasonable service*.” You are now set apart to God in Christ, and so are holy. You are acknowledged as His children in spirit. Therefore to devote yourselves to Him as the saved by His grace, is the reasonable answer of love. Your actions now can please God; as, while you were in the flesh, and full of enmity, they could not.

The sacrifices of bulls and goats gave no pleasure to God. There was much of the service under the law, which needed explanation because of its singularity; the meaning of which could only be fully cleared up by the Gospel, and its One Perfect Sacrifice. But now no longer are irrational animals to be offered on the

altar, to put away sin. “By one sacrifice Christ has perfected for a continuance, them that are sanctified.” “Where remission of sins is, there is no more offering for sin:” Heb. x.

“*And be not conformed to this age*.”

For the course of this age is led by Satan, and is disagreeable to God: Eph. ii. The distinction between (1) this solid *earth*, and (2) the *course of time* * so manifest in the two different Greek words, should ever be kept up. A great day of glory and joy is coming: it is to be experienced on this earth, when the Son of man takes the sceptre.

While you were of the world you used to follow its course. It is the natural outcome of the heart of unbelief, that seeks to find its rest and satisfaction in a world under sentence of death. Men glory in being “abreast of the age”—“a man of the world,” of ‘advanced thought,’ and so on. Multitudes are seeking to be in the fashion, in their households, their families, their dress, their table. Science, the arts, politics, engage their souls. They are at full stretch after the prizes offered by the world. But this the Saviour has greatly altered for all those who will obey Him. He has forbidden the laying up of treasure, soldiership, oaths, and so on. The change from law to grace has altered very much in the Christian’s course of life, if he will listen to the Beloved Son.

“*But be transformed by the renewing of your mind*.” New hopes lead out into new ways. There is to be the unlearning of the old life after the flesh and law, and the putting on of what is new under grace. As born of the flesh, you have sought the things of earth. Now seek the things of heaven.

“*So that ye may prove by experience † what is the good and acceptable, and perfect will of God*.”

* Κοσμος. Αιων.

† Δοκιμαζω. Luke xiv. 19; Eph. v. 9; 1 Thess. v. 21.

Before conduct can be right, we must be in possession of right principles. And those principles must be of the Christ's teaching. "This is My Beloved Son; *hear Him.*" The teaching of the Sermon on the Mount contains the new principles: principles both of the Father, and of the Son. "Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth *the will of My Father which is in heaven.*" "Therefore whosoever heareth *these sayings of Mine*, and doeth them," etc.: Matt. vii. 21, 24.

The obedient to Christ as Lord, know by experience the will of God, in its threefold perfection.

1. It is "*good.*" By that is meant, 'gracious, benevolent,' in opposition to the tenor of law, which is simply what is just: Matt. v. 43—45; xx. 15.

2. It is "*acceptable.*" This new code suits God better than the old. As He was never satisfied with the sacrifices of the law, so neither with its ruling principle; which, as of justice, was on one level throughout. And the Christian has now to please God and Christ, and not men: Gal. i. "We walk by faith, not by sight." It causes us to resemble Christ. And that is ever grateful to the Father's eyes and heart

3. It is "*perfect.*" "Be ye therefore *perfect*, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect:" Matt. v. 48. That is, it is the perfection of the new principle, which is asked for. Justice (or righteousness) was the old principle of the law. But Christ has now filled the vessel to the brim. Justice, and requital now of evil with evil, are not God's mind now: Matt. xviii. 32, 33. As we are pardoned by grace, we are ourselves to pardon those who offend against us. The sentence on the unmerciful servant tells us the displeasure of the Most High, against those who refuse this reasonable claim.

The Saviour's claim upon the rich young man, went far beyond any claim of law. "If thou wilt (wishest to) be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to

the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come, follow Me:" Matt. xix. "For the law made *nothing perfect.*:" Heb. vii. 19; ix. 9; x. 1.

To that some may reply: 'But Scripture says—"The law of the Lord is *perfect.*:"' Psa. xix. 7. And we answer—"Both are true. The Law was perfect *for its day, and its purpose.*' But compared with the Gospel, and the words of the Son of God, it is imperfect and set aside.

3. "For I say, through the grace given to me, to every one that is among you, not to be high-minded above that ye ought to be minded, but to be minded so as to be sober-minded; as God hath given to each the measure of faith."

Paul, as inspired of God, was able to instruct, and was by God called to do so. His first lesson regarding our intercourse with believers, is to beware of pride. By it Satan fell. It is productive of strife, not only among the worldly, but among the renewed. The estimating ourselves too highly is a sign of the fall. "Boast not against the branches." "Be not high-minded, but fear." "I would not have you ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceit:" xi.

The aspiring to make a figure in the world, is one of the snares of the flesh. But the Christian, brought out from the world and its evil, is not to seek after fame of the world, but the glory that comes from God. We are to look to what God has given us, and keep to that as our line of things. And the standard is not money, nor learning, nor wealth, but the degree of faith, which faith is the gift of God! Faith is the limit of what is approved by Him. "For whatever is not of faith is sin."

4, 5. "For as in one body we have many members, but all the members have not the same use; so we, the many, are one body in Christ, but each members of the other."

Our natural body was designed to be the picture of the spiritual body. The unity of the Church is to consist

of many harmonious parts. This idea is only glanced at here; but it is developed in 1 Cor. xii. ; xiv.

Certain special powers were communicated to each of the members, in order that each might be in part dependent on others. It was not God's design that each saint should possess every gift, and be required for every use; but He bestows various gifts, suited to the perfection of the body. To one is given the power to address the ungodly, and warn them; to another, the building up of those who believe; to some, to care for the poor; to another, the speaking to individuals, or the distributing tracts, or the visitation of the sick. Various employments, but all designed to co-operate in harmony. Such a body would be a proof to the world of the mission of the Lord Jesus, and a contrast to the joltings and scuffles which are continually occurring in bodies where there is only the flesh.

It was not meant by the Lord that 'the Minister' should be the only speaker and actor; as if he were sufficient to overtake all the needs of the body. Far less, as in the scheme of Rome, one set apart as 'the Priest,' alone to draw near to God, alone to make atonement, and instruct. Yea, and his action fenced round with prohibition to any other to speak or act; as if he were of a class apart, and the only one owned of God. That is a return to Judaism and the flesh; and immediately comes the denial of pardon by God, and of the possession of righteousness, as the footing of believers.

The apostle's doctrine is, that each believer has an equal right to be in the body. None has a right to ask, 'By what *authority* do you pray, or teach?' The possession of divine and saving faith is the one foundation for those in the Church. There are, indeed, differences of the members as higher or lower, but each has his standing and use, if he will but keep to it. The perfection of each is the perfection of the whole: harmonious movement in humility and love.

6—8. "But having gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, (let us prophesy) according to the proportion of the faith; or service, let us wait on our service; or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that presideth, with diligence; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness."

In what sense are we to take the word "gifts"? There is here named only one of the gifts of inspiration communicated by the laying on of apostolic hands—the first, "prophecy." Some would suppose it to be merely *preaching*; but it never has that sense. It supposes the possession of inspiration: 2 Peter i. 20, 21.

The point of difference between this passage and the parallel one in 1 Corinthians xii. seems to be, that here the apostle is treating of Gifts of *God*, generally (verses 1—3), while in Corinthians 'gifts' are spoken of as especially from the *Holy Spirit*. "The manifestation of *the Spirit* is given to each (believer) to profit withal." "To one is given *by the Spirit* the word of wisdom."

'But if Rome, up to the date of Paul's epistle, had not been visited by any apostle, whence came the apostolic gift of prophecy?'

The answer is found in Acts ii. 10. Jews from all parts of the earth were present at Jerusalem at Pentecost; and among those present, we read of "strangers of *Rome*, both *Jews* and *Proselytes*," or Gentiles.

Prophets, then, were to prophesy "according to the proportion of *the faith*." They were not always to harp on one string; not so to expound and insist on one doctrine, as practically to thrust others out of their place. The presence of the article before faith tells us that the apostle is not speaking here, as in verse 3, of faith as an indwelling principle; but of '*the faith*,' or the system of Christian truth.

Men of thought and men of action were each to keep the post and sphere in which God had set them. The Master had given "to each his work."

9—16. "Let love be without dissembling; hating that which is evil, cleaving to that which is good: kindly affectionate to each other in brotherly love; in honour preferring one another. In zeal not slothful; in spirit fervent, serving the Lord.* In hope rejoicing; in affliction patient; in prayer persevering; ministering to the wants of the saints; given to hospitality. Bless those that persecute you; bless and curse not. Rejoice with the rejoicing, and weep with the weeping. Having the same mind one towards another, not occupied with things lofty, but condescending to the humble of lot. Become not wise in your own conceits."

Much might be said on these words of wisdom and of grace. But they call for little remark, in view of the present writer's design of explaining, if possible, what is difficult.

17—21. "Recompense to none evil for evil; providing things honest before all. If it be possible, as far as you are concerned, be at peace with all men. Avenge not yourselves, beloved, but rather give place for wrath; for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay,' saith the Lord. If therefore thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him to drink; for in doing thus thou wilt heap coals of fire upon his head. Be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil by good."

Twice in this paragraph the Christian is forbidden to avenge himself, or return evil for evil: ver. 17, 19.

This is a perfect contrast to the conduct commanded or permitted under law. Under Moses the Israelites were commanded to make judges in all their towns: Deut. xvi. 18. Their rule of judgment was to be strict justice, alike to rich and poor. 'Eye for eye,' 'life for life:' Ex. xxi. 22—25; Lev. xx. 17—22. In case of an offence committed, the transgressor was to be brought before the judges; oaths were to be taken, witnesses were to be heard; and sentences given according to evidence. They were to sentence, to assess damages; and to punish false witnesses: Deut. xix.

* Some read 'serving the opportunity,' or 'the season of grace of the Gospel.'

Now, under Christ and in the Sermon on the Mount, Christians are forbidden to act as judges and to pass sentence. They are not to take oaths: Matt. v. 33—37; vii. 1—5. For this is the day of mercy. You, as sons of God, are to imitate your Father, and He is treating men in grace. Christians are not to seek justice in the world's courts; but arbitration among themselves is permitted. However, to suffer injustice is preferable: 1 Cor. vi. A day is coming in which God's justice will act, both toward the Church and the world: Heb. xiii. 4; Lev. xix. 18; Eccl. xii. 14; 2 Tim. iv. 1; Rom. xiv. 10; 2 Cor. v. 10.

Let us apply these principles to the passage before us, "Avenge not yourselves"—(1) neither by your own hand, and at once: nor (2) by the ordered steps of law.

"But rather give room for wrath."

'You have been injured.' You are wroth. You may be angry, and yet not sin under such circumstances. But, if you avenge yourself in the day of mercy, you disobey God.

"For it is written,—'VENGEANCE IS MINE: I will repay,' saith the Lord."

By avenging yourself you are acting unsuitably to the day of grace. You are meddling with rights belonging to God. The words cited are taken from Deuteronomy xxxii. 35. They are also cited in Hebrews x. 30, as applying to God's people of the Church.

Now if you return a blow for a blow, you have 'taken the law into your own hands,' and there is no room for further vengeance on God's part.

20. "Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing, thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head."

What is your duty then? Christ has taught us in the Sermon on the Mount. Moses allowed war and

vengeance on enemies. It was the day of justice : Deut. xxiii. 6 ; xx. 10—14 ; xxv. 17—19. But our Lord says—"But I say unto *you*, '*Love your enemies.*'" Now love does good even to the unthankful and the evil. Then this is to be your path.

The passage quoted comes from Proverbs xxv. 21, 22. How are we to understand it? "Thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head." It is commonly taken to signify, that your kindness will soften, and subdue the offender, as coals heaped on metal make it melt. But that is something of which no trace is here given. And while in many cases, enemies have been made heartily ashamed of themselves even now—yet that is not promised in all cases. Nor is their being ashamed of themselves now God's taking up the matter in the day of wrath, of which the apostle has more than once spoken in this epistle. "For the *wrath of God* from heaven is revealed on all ungodliness and *unrighteousness of men.*" "The Day of Wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God" is coming, when He will render to each according to his deeds." "Is God unrighteous, who *inflicteth wrath?*" "God forbid : for how then shall God judge the world?"

And how dread will be His judgments then?

"On the wicked he shall rain coals of fire* and brimstone, and a horrible tempest : this shall be the portion of their cup." Psa. xi. 6 ; xviii. 7—14 ; cxi. 10.

So, if the enemy repent not, these will be the effects of his injustice in the great and terrible Day of the Lord. But to you as the obedient, blessing will flow. And that is taken up by the passage of Proverbs xxv.—"But the Lord shall *reward thee.*"

To return blow for blow is to be overcome by evil. It is to be possessed of the spirit of the flesh and of vengeance. But to return good for evil is to overcome

* See margin.

evil with good. Perhaps your grace may overcome the offender, and turn him to righteousness, and to peace with yourself.

What the wicked delight to do, is to provoke the Christian to wrath and vengeance ; if they can effect that, they consider it a triumph. 'The Christian is one of the same spirit with ourselves.'

CHAPTER XIII.

1—4. "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers: for there is no power save from God; the existing powers are appointed by God. So then he who opposes the power resists the appointment of God. But they who resist shall receive judgment to themselves. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil ones. Now wilt thou not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise from it. For it is the servant of God to thee for good. But if thou doest evil, be afraid, for not in vain beareth he the sword: for he is the servant of God, an avenger, an executioner of wrath on him who doeth evil."

How is this connected with what goes before?

It springs from the principle asserted in chapter xii. 1, that the Christian, on the ground of God's mercies to him, is to present his body to the service of God. In chapter xii. he is shown the bearing of this on his duty to himself personally before God; and then to the Church of Christ, and the world.

In chapter xiii. is shown conduct suited to the Christian, in relation to the world and its rulers. So the Saviour had said: "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's."

Why is so much said on this point to the Christians of Rome? Because there was danger, lest believers there should imagine, that because they were not of the world, they might consider themselves free from its rulers. The Saviour, in answer to a question put to Peter about the payment of the half shekel, had declared His freedom as the Son of God from impositions laid on sons of men. He had also set the disciple in this matter on the same footing as Himself. "Then are *the children* free." But He had commanded,

in order not to stumble the worldly, that the claim should be paid, and had wrought a miracle to procure the needed sum.

But there is another and very important ground for this treatment of the subject, in connection with Rome. For the Epistle to the Romans is a statement of Christian doctrine, in which the Holy Ghost, foreseeing the doctrines of Rome, has given beforehand His condemnation of them. The Spirit of God foresaw that Rome would declare the Pope to be superior to all rulers and kings, commissioned at his pleasure to absolve subjects from their obedience, and possessed of authority to take away the sceptre from kings.

The contrary doctrine is here most simply and forcibly proclaimed. "Every *soul*,"—it is not said 'every believer'—; the prohibition goes deeper,—is to obey the rulers of the earth.

And the clear and powerful reason is, that (1) there is no power save from God; and that (2) the ruling authority for the time being is to be regarded as appointed of God.

But to this it was foreseen that objection would be made. 'Are we to obey bad men, murderers, pagans, persecutors of the people of God?' And the answer is,—'Yes!' Who was ruling when Paul wrote this? The worst of men! If Nero, set on the throne of the Cæsars, is to be obeyed, surely all others are.

But are not Christians to look into the ruler's title to empire? and if they find that the throne has been obtained by deceit and force, against the better claims of others, may they not pronounce them unworthy to be obeyed, and so withhold their allegiance? By no means! Here the Lord cuts off the Christian from the necessity of studying politics, and searching history, with the view of deciding on the pretensions of those who rule. In order to see the force of this observe—

(1) That God has already told us the place which

the world occupies before Him. It is the company of unbelievers, and of the unrighteous; so that He does not expect that the titles to the empire of the world will be solid and good: 1 Cor. vi. "Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law *before the unjust*, and not before the saints?" "But brother goeth to law with brother, and that *before unbelievers*."

To proud and persecuting Pharaoh, Jehovah could say—"For this cause *I raised thee up*." God does not promise, that only good and trustworthy men should rule over earth in this dispensation. He tells us that *Satan* is the prince and ruler of the world! Jehovah makes use of the wicked among rulers, to execute His displeasure against the nations.

(2) Moreover, He has set the footing of the world and its rulers upon a most precarious foundation. They are to reign, only till the Lord Jesus returns to earth. And He may return at any moment. Therefore there is no promise, that any family shall be the stable possessors of any throne. "I will overturn, overturn, overturn it," "till He come whose right it is, and I will give it to Him:" Ezek. xxi. 27.

To the same effect says Peter,—“Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake: whether it be *to the king*, as supreme; or unto *governors*, as unto them that are sent by Him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well:” 1 Pet. ii. The apostle Paul repeats his exhortation in the epistle to Titus. “Put them in mind to be *subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates*, to be ready to every good work:” Tit. iii. 1. And when the Jewish rulers would have compelled the apostles at Jerusalem to speak no more concerning Christ, the exception made by apostles is stated, as the result of obedience to a higher power. “We ought to obey God, rather than men:” Acts v. 29.

Christians disobeying the rulers set up by God, will

receive judgment, as resisting the command of God. Whether that judgment should fall on them now through the ruler, or hereafter from Christ, is not said. Rulers are appointed in a world of sinners to restrain evil by punishment. He then, who does what is right, need not fear. For the ruler is provided with power to do good to the people of the Lord. How oft was Paul delivered from the hands of his enemies, by the civil rulers! And how much are Christians in this land indebted to the magistrates, who prevent the wicked from devouring the sheep of Christ!

But if the Christian does evil, he will not be shielded from the ruler’s power. God has given to him the right even of capital punishment, of which the sword is the sign. “Whoso sheddeth man’s blood by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God made He man:” Gen. ix. 6.

“*For he is the minister of God, an avenger to execute wrath on him that doeth evil.*”

“But if rulers are “ministers of God,”—and that is thrice repeated here, beside a second Greek word used to express their service;—may not Christians become rulers of the world?”

1. By no means! The ruler is an ‘*avenger to execute wrath.*’ And the Christian is not to ‘*avenge himself.*’ And lest it should be said—‘But may he not avenge others his brethren, though not himself?’ the matter is put very clearly in another form. “*Recompense to no man evil for evil:*” xii. 17. Again—“See that none render evil for evil to any:” 1 Thess. v. 15. And Peter adds his apostolic testimony. “Not rendering *evil for evil*, nor railing for railing, but, contrariwise, blessing:” 1 Peter iii. And our Lord forbade the same in the Sermon on the Mount. Moses set up judges, as soon as Israel were come out of Egypt, and they were to judge the people with righteous judgment. But our Lord said: “Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and

with what measure ye measure, it shall be measured to you again :” Matt. vii. 1, 2. The Sermon on the Mount is expressly the contrary to the justice set up by Moses as the principle of Law.

2. To take the office of a ruler now is self-exaltation out of due time, to be punished at the coming of the Kingdom of Christ. The Christian is to be patient, looking for honour at the appearing of the Lord Jesus. He is to wait, till in the millennial day “*judgment is given to him.*” When Christ reigns, and appoints him, he may rule ; but not till then.

3. ‘The world’ and ‘the church’ are different and opposite spheres. The rulers of earth are “servants of *God.*” But they are not called “servants of *Christ,*” which is the title given to those who rule and serve in the Church : 2 Cor. xi. 23 ; 2 Cor. iii. ; Col. i. 7 ; iv. 7 ; 1 Tim. iv. 7 ; Rom. xv. 16.

As the Christian is not to rule in the world, so neither is there any warrant that rulers of the world should rule in the Church of Christ.

5—7. “Wherefore we must be subject, not only because of the wrath, but also for conscience sake. For this cause also pay taxes ; for they are ministers of God, occupied on this very business. Pay therefore to all their dues : to him to whom taxes are due, taxes ; to whom customs, customs ; to him to whom fear, fear ; to whom honour, (pay) honour.”

The worldly are subject to rulers through fear. The Christian is to be subject for an additional reason—“for conscience sake.” Obedience to rulers is no longer a worldly matter. God’s discoveries to us here give us to know that He commands the payments. We know, not only the command, but the reasons of it.

One of the points of obedience is the payment of taxes. Rulers are God’s servants in this world, and they are to be paid for the trouble they take, and the services they render. Therefore, as said the Saviour

“Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.”

Verse 7 extends this principle to all dues of like kind. Christians are now subjects, but one day to rule. *They* make the best rulers at last, who, while *subjects*, have been humble, obedient, and faithful.

Taxes are due from persons ; customs are to be paid on goods. Many think it no wrong to cheat government in these matters. But ’tis evil in the sight of God.

Apostles give rulers their titles, though they were acting against God and His servants. When put on their trial before the Council, Peter addresses them as, “Ye rulers of the people and elders of Israel.” Luke begins his Gospel with calling Theophilus “most excellent,” or “noble.” And Paul, insulted by Festus, replied, “I am not mad, *most noble Festus.*”

8—10. “Owe nothing to any, except to love one another : for he who loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For that (word)—‘Thou shalt not murder,’ ‘thou shalt not steal,’* ‘thou shalt not covet,’ and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly summed up in the (word), ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.’ Love worketh no evil to his neighbour ; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.”

The Christian is not to run into debt. Many Christians do, even in their private affairs. Not a few borrow and never repay. That is a characteristic of the unrenewed. “*The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again.*” Psa. xxxvii. And that psalm is engaged in telling of the day of recompence, when the wicked will not obtain reward of good, but recompence of evil.

Many Christians, too, who may be honest in their private affairs, yet run into debt in regard of the building, and repairs, and enlarging of chapels and schools. They are impatient, and do not look to the

* “Thou shalt not bear false witness” is to be omitted here, as not found in the chief authorities. It is recognised, however, by “if there be any other commandment.”

Lord Jesus, to know whether they should build, nor do they pray continually that the funds may be given. They get what they seek, but without the Lord's blessing. They thus encumber themselves with much trouble, are led into difficulties, both temporal and spiritual, and often use wrong means to get quit of the debt, while the work of the Lord suffers.

But there is one debt ever paying, but never discharged. That is the debt of love, to God and to man. Daily it is being paid, but with each returning day the debt returns. Love is the temper which fulfils the law. The Ten Commandments are prohibitions of wrong feeling, or wrong doing. But love is the source of right feeling and right doing. It never falls into the evils forbidden. It dwells in the temper, whence good ever arises to our neighbour. It is the fulfilling of the law.

11—14. "And *that*, knowing the season, that it is already time for us to be awakened out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far advanced; but the day has drawn near. Let us put off therefore the works of the darkness, and put on the armour of the light. Let us walk in right fashion, as in the day-time; not in carousals and drunkenness; not in chambering and lasciviousness; not in strife and envy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh unto lusts."

These verses introduce a new and weighty consideration, arising out of the dispensation of mercy in which we stand, soon to merge into the day of judgment on the living and the dead. And in that day all will have to give account. As the time is brief, and to be accounted for, it is not to be passed in carelessness and slumber. The servants of Christ are to fulfil the work that He has set them. The time of Christ's return draws nearer and nearer. And its force on the Christian begins with the first day when he believed. To answer to this call we should be growing in diligence and obedience.

'Night' is the time of the absence of Christ, the Sun of righteousness, the Light of men. Night, then, is moving away, and the blessed day draws nearer continually. Therefore we should not be entangled in blameworthy sleep, against the command of Christ, like the disciples in Gethsemane. "Lest coming suddenly, He find you sleeping."

There are yet evils cleaving to us, natural to the fallen; these are to be put off. There are graces yet to be learned and won; these are to be put on. The children of light are, with the armour of light, to drive away the works of the darkness around. And as in the Lord Jesus all perfection abounds, and into His image we are to be wrought, therefore the exhortation is summed up by, 'Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and put away the flesh with its affections and lusts.'

CHAPTER XIV.

1—4. "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not unto discriminations of trains of reasoning. One believeth that he may eat all things: but the weak eateth vegetables [only]. He that eateth, let him not despise him that eateth not; and he that eateth not, let him not judge him who eats: for God hath received him. Who art thou that judgest the servant of another? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up; for God is able to make him stand."

THIS chapter discovers to us the law of love as applied to brethren in Christ. Among them there are those that are intelligent and firm in the principles of the Gospel; there are those, on the contrary, who are weak in understanding, in perception of the truth, and in firmness of holding it. Those erroneous in regard of some of the subordinate principles of the Gospel are the weak. Such were not to be thrust aside from the Lord's table, and the fellowship of believers. The apostle illustrates the matter, by giving two examples of what he means. There were diversities of judgments about articles of food; and about the observance of days.

The question has been raised—'Of what class were the weak who stumbled at eating flesh, and would only eat vegetables?'

Many imagine, that the apostle refers to Jews. But Jews were never confined to eating vegetables.

But might not it be that they feared to eat *flesh which had been offered to idols*? Had it been so, that restriction of the matter must have come out in the treatment of the subject. It is certain that it was not

so, from what the apostle says in verse 21: "It is good neither to eat *flesh*, nor to drink *wine*, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is scandalised, or is made weak." And again—"I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is *nothing unclean of itself*; but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean:" ver. 14.

From these passages it is clear, that the supposed scruples related, not to the eating of flesh, as defiled by idol-worship, but to the eating of flesh-meat in its usual state, as sold in the shambles. Now we know, that in all ages, there have been those who refused to partake both of animal food and of wine. This was one of the chief practices of the Gnostics, or 'Men of Intelligence.' The leader of false doctrine at Colossæ propounded this, as we gather from that word—"Let not then any one judge you in matters of *food* or *drink*:" Col. ii. 16.

The scruple therefore of the weak was—"Is it lawful to *kill animals, and to eat them*?"

Now such a question takes us at once to the Scripture. On what grounds do we slay and eat? The true answer, of course is, that God granted to Noah and his sons the whole animal creation to be their food, as at first He granted to Adam the whole vegetable creation. And the men of law, and those before the law, were warranted in eating flesh. The Saviour's example suffices to show that this was lawful.

The scrupulous, then, must have derived their hesitation from reasonings of men, philosophy, tradition. These scruples, however, were not to prevent the brethren who held them from being received as Christians. They were not to be kept away from the Lord's table. They were not to be received provisionally,—if they were willing to enter into the Church on the grounds on which Christians in general held and practised the eating of flesh.

This, I apprehend, is the meaning of the word—

"Receive him ; but not *unto discrimination of trains of argument.*" The church-leaders of that day, might have their minds set on having all in the Church of one mind on all subjects. Hence they might think, that such weak ones were to be set on a course of study in relation to this subject. Unity of belief on all points would be indeed an excellent thing. But controversy is not always the best way to attain unity. The solvent power of grace and love is better. The points in which the weak and strong were agreed were of vastly greater moment. It was on the ground of these that men were to be received as Christians.

Instances of the breach of this regulation are not difficult to find. In the second century the question arose concerning the right mode of celebrating Easter. Roman and Western Christians celebrated the festival in one way ; the Easterns in another. Which was right ? Neither ! The Eastern Christians affirmed, that they rested on the commands of the apostles John and Philip. The Western pleaded a tradition from St. Peter and St. *Paul* ! Paul, who wrote so strongly against *any* observance of the kind ! "Ye are observing *days* and months, and times and years. *I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.*" The difference was patched up for awhile ; but when Victor was bishop of Rome, he required the Asiatic churches to follow the Roman custom. The bishop of Ephesus in the name of the Asiatic churches refused. Hereupon Victor pronounced them unworthy to be called 'brethren,' and excommunicated them.

Mr. Darby in our days refused fellowship to any who did not condemn the conduct of Müller and Craik of Bristol. If any wished to be received by them, they must study the many pamphlets that were penned on different sides of this question,—a thorny, unprofitable, and much perplexed affair. Here, then, is an example of sending believers to discriminate opposite lines of reasoning ; and sad were the

effects to many. Was Christianity then a dry, contentious system, in which the chief thing was to be ecclesiastically right ?

5. "One indeed regardeth one day above another ; and one regardeth every day alike. Let each be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that esteemeth the day esteems it to the Lord, and he that esteems not the day, to the Lord he esteems it not. He that eateth, to the Lord he eateth, for he gives thanks to God ; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth thanks to God."

The apostle is pleading, that Christians should tolerate one another, on points indifferent. 'In things certain, let there be unity ; in things indifferent, liberty ; in all, love.' It does not take away the divine acceptance of the believer, that one observes one day as more holy than another ; nor from another, that he esteems all days as alike holy to God.

What is to be done in order to produce peace ? Is it ?—'Let every one submit himself, without discussion or delay, to the judgment of the universal Church !' There is no universal visible church on earth ; there is no decision of any question by it. Councils are against popes, and popes against councils. Does Paul bid us follow the canons of the Roman Church ? Does he say, that outside of that, and of obedience to her decisions, there is no salvation ? Quite the opposite ! To each of the contending parties he says,—"*LET EACH BE FULLY PERSUADED IN HIS OWN MIND !*" Why that is "*private judgment,*" not only permitted, but enforced by the Holy Ghost ! Scripture, candidly and prayerfully consulted, is to settle the matter for *each*.

As it regards the observance of 'the Sabbath,' or 'the Lord's Day,' there is still great difference of opinion among Christians. How different in this matter the conduct of the men of the law and of the Gospel ! "The seventh day there shall be to you a sabbath of rest to the Lord ; *whosoever doeth work thereon shall be put*

to death." Ex. xxxv. 2. But in what way the Lord's day should be observed is not laid down in the New Testament; much less is it a capital crime!

This, and a multitude of like questions, is to be decided by each as in the Lord's presence, and to His glory. And each believer is to respect the other, as a servant of the Lord Jesus. One of the reasons of the differences between believers was quaintly put by Berridge:—"Dear Brother,—The Lord has washed our hearts, and one day He will wash our brains."

To Christ each shall give account at last for himself. He ought, therefore, to decide for himself, as he thinks the Lord would have him act. "*To his own Master he standeth or falleth.*" Here is the same principle of private judgment! It is not, 'The Church to which you belong will save you harmless in that day, if you obey her.' The only point in which the local assembly is allowed to decide, is in the case of personal disagreement between two believers: Matt. xviii. It is not, 'The priest is God's living judge: he will decide the matter for you.' 'The priest' is a person unknown, not only to this epistle, but to the New Testament. The only atoning Priest* of the New Testament is the Lord Jesus: Heb. v. 6; x. 21. All believers, as washed in the blood of Christ, are "kings and priests:" Rev. i. 6; 1 Pet. ii. 5, 9. Not even a 'presbyter'† or 'elder' (sometimes mistranslated 'priest') is named in this Epistle to the Romans. The Assembly at Rome is not even once called 'a Church,' though other assemblies are. "A servant of the Church which is at Cenchrea." "To whom not only I give thanks, but all the churches of the Gentiles." "The churches of Christ (not 'the universal [or Catholic] church') salute you:" Rom. xvi. What an opposition to Rome's boast! "I acknowledge (says the creed of Pope Pius) the Holy Catholic and apostolic Roman Church to be

* ἱερεὺς.

† Πρεσβύτερος.

the mother and mistress of all churches."—Eleventh Article.

Regard to the mind of Christ is to direct each believer through all his life, and unto death. "None of us liveth to himself." He who lives to himself is ungodly. There is in the next clause a remarkable difference. "And none dieth to himself." The word '*us*' is omitted, and that makes the statement universal. Life and death are in God's hand. The Christian's death glorifies God. "Thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not." "This spake He (Jesus) signifying by what death he should glorify God:" John xxi. As the wicked live not to God's glory, their death is judgment, the cutting off the time of salvation. They will glorify God by manifesting His wrath.

Verse 8 returns to the Christian. In life or in death we belong to the Lord Jesus. This is of much value to us, as showing that death now is to the believer, not the penalty of law on its transgressor, nor a something which separates us from our Redeemer. He has plucked away its sting; it is to the Christian only a "falling asleep," yea, a departing "to be with Christ, for it is very far better." "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through Him that loved us."

9. "For this cause Christ both died and arose and came to life, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living."

The reading here is much contested. It should probably be, 'Christ both died and came to life,' omitting 'and rose again.' But this affects the sense but little.

The Saviour is our Forerunner; the path He has travelled we also shall follow. God the Father has determined that He shall be Lord of heaven, earth, and

Hadees. Like Joseph, He went down 'to the pit wherein is no water'; but He has come up to sit on the throne of the Father. Whether the Christian be alive, or among the departed, he is still under the care of his Redeemer, and shall come forth at last to glory eternal.

10—13. "But thou—why judgest thou thy brother? Or why dost thou too set at nought thy brother? For we shall all be set before the judgment seat of the Christ. For it is written, 'As I live, saith the Lord, unto Me every knee shall bend, and every tongue shall confess to God.' So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. Let us therefore no longer be judging one another; but judge this rather, that he lay not a stumbling-block or a scandal in his brother's way."

Here we have distinct appeals to the two classes now under the apostle's notice. He appeals to the weak not to *judge* the strong; and to the strong not to *despise* the weak. The reason is because both alike are to be judged by Christ. It is not fitting, that where both are to be judged, one should judge or despise the other.

Here there is again a contention whether we should read 'the judgment seat of *God*' or '*of Christ*.' It is not easy to decide; but it affects the sense but little. I prefer "the judgment seat of *Christ*." 'The judgment seat' supposes that both parties alike are known *subjects* of Christ. The rest of mankind will be judged for life or death before the Great White *Throne*, after the millennium.

The proof of the certainty of the coming judgment of all when Christ appears, is given from Isaiah xiv. 23. The Christ is Jehovah. All judgment is committed to Him, that all may honour the Son, even as they honour the Father who sent Him. He alone who is God could judge with perfect knowledge of the persons, and with perfect impartiality. He is the Righteous God, yet a Saviour: ver. 11, 12.

"Shall *confess* to God"* is much better than shall 'swear.' Christ has forbidden oaths in judgment: Matt. v.

The meaning of the passage cited is, that every one of the saved shall appear before Christ to give account. And every one shall confess that his salvation is of grace. The Great Multitude shout before the throne and the Lamb, "*Salvation* (be ascribed) *to our God* who sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

Then let Christians cease to judge one another: ver. 13. But rather judge that they will not throw any obstacle in a brother's way to glory. The word 'judge' is used the second time allusively to the previous employment of it. Othello is accused of 'witchcraft.' He says, that the only 'witchcraft' he has used, was the recital of his military adventures.

14, 15. "I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean of itself; but to him that reckoneth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean. But if by food thy brother is grieved, no longer art thou walking in the way of love. Destroy not by thy food him for whom Christ died."

The decision by inspiration, that no kind of food is of itself unclean, would have at once removed the scruple of the weak, if he accepted the testimony. It was an undoing of the law, which, for special reasons, prohibited certain kinds of meat to God's people after the flesh. That order is now repealed.

But what shall we say to the decree of the Council of Jerusalem? That its prohibition of "things offered to idols, of blood, and of things strangled, was confessedly only temporary, and designed to promote love and free fellowship between believing Jews and Gentiles:" Acts xv.

Love is the chief element of Christian life; and it will make surrender of its own rights, to keep up this

supreme principle. If circumstances required it, the Christian would "eat no flesh while the world standeth."

"Destroy not by thy meat him for whom Christ died." Here Paul is looking at the natural consequence of such conduct, and not at God's gracious overruling of all things for the salvation of those that belong to Christ. The natural effect of the conduct supposed, would be to lead the brother to eat what he judged unclean, and so to wound his conscience. But God's salvation turns on the making all a man's ways submissive to the calls of conscience, as supreme. And this offence would be laid in part at the door of him who tempted the brother to violate conscience.

16, 17. "Let not then your good be evil spoken of. For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

The freedom God has given to believers is good. Their acting according to their conscience is also good. But if their freedom were so employed as to wound a Christian brother, it was evil. And the sharp-sighted world would quickly learn the result, and take up its parable against them because of it. A passage from the first Corinthians gives the best comment on this point. "But take heed lest this liberty of yours become a stumbling-block to them that are weak. For if any man see thee which hast knowledge, sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols? And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? *But when ye sin so against the brethren and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ.* Wherefore if meat make my brother to stumble, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to stumble." 1 Cor. viii.

How are we to understand "the kingdom of God" in the next verse? It is 'the reign of God.' It is found

in two states—(1) the state of *mystery* now, while Christ is away, Satan at large, and the nations and Israel led by him. But the Lord Jesus is coming in power to put down His foes, and to reward His friends; then Satan shall be cast into the pit, and the nations rescued from his deceits, and Israel restored to their land, repentant for their own sins and their fathers', against Moses' law, and against Christ. (2) That will be the kingdom *in manifestation*, for which those rightly instructed are waiting.

This sentiment of verse 17 is applicable to both states of the kingdom. (1) The *Gospel* is not, as was the Law, a system regulating ceremonially, eating and drinking. Its aim is to introduce and enforce the greater principles and graces of the Holy Spirit.

(2) But when the millennial kingdom shall have come, the same will be true. The millennial day will manifest its great superiority above all former times, not in its eating and drinking, but in its spiritual characteristics manifested by men, and taught and upheld by the Holy Ghost.

How are we to understand "the righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" here spoken of?

1. Do they refer to the righteousness of Christ imputed? and to peace and joy the consequences of it?

2. Or do they refer to *practical* righteousness of the believer?

We can tell, by considering the context.

I. *Imputed righteousness* (or the obedience of Christ made ours by faith), is essentially connected with *justification* and *eternal life*, the *gift* of God.

(1) This is shown in Romans iii. "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even *the righteousness of God which is by faith in Jesus Christ* for all, and upon all that believe:" ver. 21, 22.

(2) To Abraham believing, righteousness was imputed. "Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was

imputed to him; but for us also, to *whom it shall be imputed*, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead: who was delivered up for our offences, and was *raised again for our justification*:" iv. 23—25.

(3) "Therefore, having been justified by faith we have *peace* with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and *rejoice* in hope of the *glory of God*."

(4) "Even so might *grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, through Jesus Christ* our Lord:" v. 1, 2, 21.

II. *Practical righteousness* stands connected with the *sanctification of the justified*, and with the offered *prize of the kingdom of God*. Their sanctification is by the Holy Spirit.

In the Romans, Paul assumes the *justification* of those to whom he is writing. They had received the righteousness of God by *faith in Christ*. And in this chapter he is treating of sanctification by the Holy Ghost; and of "*the kingdom of God*" in verse 17. He is teaching us the conduct which will win the prize, and the conduct which will lose it. And so in Galatians v. 19—22. Imputed righteousness is "*righteousness in Christ*."

It is then of *practical* righteousness that Paul is speaking here; it is of "*righteousness in the Holy Ghost*" he is treating, and the phrase intends the opposite to '*righteousness in the flesh*.' These three graces in exercise will constitute the superiority of God's coming kingdom of glory above all former kingdoms.

Not that there shall be no eating and drinking then. For there will be the sitting down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God: Matt. viii. 11; Luke xiii. 24—29; xii. 37. Said our Lord—"I will no more *eat of it* (the passover) until it be fulfilled (for Israel) in the kingdom of God." "I will not *drink of*

the produce of the vine [the vow of the Nazarite], until the (manifested) kingdom of God shall have come." "I appoint unto you a kingdom; as My Father hath appointed to Me, *that ye may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom*, and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel:" Luke xxii. 15—30.

18—21. "For he that in these things serveth the Christ, is well-pleasing to God, and acceptable to men. So then let us pursue the things of peace, and of edification one towards another. Do not for the sake of articles of food destroy the work of God. All things indeed are clean, but it is evil for him who eateth with stumbling. It is good, neither to eat flesh nor to drink wine nor any thing whereby thy brother trips, or stumbles, or is made weak."

This confirms the truth, that Paul is speaking of the inward graces of the justified.

Conduct, such as is here commanded is good, and is accepted both by God and by men. So that the Lord would not have the conduct of His people to stumble the worldly, but rather to attract them to the truth. Under the law, the same principle held good. "Keep therefore and do them (the statutes), for this is your wisdom and 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:'" Deut. iv. 6. Our pursuit, then, is to be directed to the promotion of peace among believers and their edification; while pride and strife bring in evil in many forms, and tend to scatter and weaken the Lord's people.

For your liberty to eat what you will, do not destroy 'God's work.' This may be taken in two senses. (1) The *believer*, the individual work of God raised up by His Spirit's regeneration. (2) Or the *wider work* of God, as manifested in the conversion or edification of many. This latter, I think, is the one in question. Mention had before been made of the ill effects on the individual believer.

Meats created by God are in themselves clean, but if any partake of them while doubting of the lawfulness of their use, he sins.

It is good rather to sacrifice our rights, and the liberty of faith, than to do spiritual mischief to a brother by asserting them to his injury: ver. 21.

22, 23. "Hast thou faith? Have it to thyself before God. Blessed is he who judgeth not himself in that which he approves. But he that doubteth, if he eat is condemned, because he eateth not of faith: now whatsoever is not of faith is sin."

This verse appears to be an address to the strong. Paul concedes to him the possession of faith, so that he may eat all things. That is true. And this principle is not given up by the conduct enjoined. He is only charged to keep it in abeyance under the circumstances specified. His liberty is not to be so flaunted in the face of his brother, as to cause him to stumble or fall. Not unfrequently out of the liberty given by God, condemnation arises to the possessor, through some failure in the use of it. But the weak brother must not eat, because he sees that the strong can do it, and be approved by God. The doubter should wait till he sees what is the view of God. For whatever cannot plead God's authority, is to the believer evil.

So there is danger both to the weak and to the strong.

CHAPTER XV.

1—3. "Now we the strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbour for good, to edification. For even the Christ pleased not Himself, but as it is written,—'The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me!'"

THE rule here is most gracious, and appropriate to the mercy of the Gospel. It is not—"The strong are clear-headed men who see their way in Scripture. These are to dictate to the weak, because they know what is Christ's mind. They can consequently impose terms of communion—and if the weak object to them, they are not to be admitted to communion, if they are outside the Church; or to be put out of communion, if they are within it."

The strong are to bear with the infirmities of the weak. The conscience of the weak is not to be overborne. 'If you observe the sprinkling of infants, you shall not sit down with believers at the Lord's Supper.' 'If you who have been immersed, will commune with the sprinklers of infants, you shall not sit at the Lord's table with us.'

Rome goes further. 'Obey the Articles of the Council of Trent; or, if we have the power, you shall be handed over to the magistrate for death. If you will not worship the consecrated wafer as Jesus Christ Himself, you shall be cursed and burn at the stake.'

Please your neighbour for his good, so as to build him up in the faith; but do not pull down what he owns of the truth.

Christ is our perfect example. Did He put any one to death, if He believed not in Himself as the Son of God? Nay, even when the men of Law would, if

they could, have forced Him to pass sentence of death on the offender against Moses' Law, He refused. "Neither do I *pass sentence* on thee; *go and sin no more.*" John viii.

The reproaches that fell on Christ arose, from His not pleasing Himself; but from His doing all that the Father would have Him do. The Jews regarded as a proud, impious, blaspheming man, the Beloved of the Father, who in all things pleased Him. His acceptance by God was proved by the many undeniable signs which He wrought.

The quotation in this verse is from Psalm lxi. 9. "For zeal for thine house hath devoured me; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me."

The first part of the quotation at once points to one of the first things at which the unbelieving Jews stumbled. The Saviour at the opening of His ministry cleansed the temple of its buyers and sellers. They arose in displeasure, to ask His authority for such an interference in the temple-arrangements. The Saviour's act in driving out the multitude of beasts and men, was not one that a man would venture on who pleased himself. The moving force was jealousy for the glory of God, and for the place of His worship at Jerusalem. It made Him many enemies; it was a reproach cast at Him on the cross. He was reproached too as a wine-bibber and a glutton, as a friend of publicans and sinners.

4-7. "For whatever things were written before, were written for our instruction; in order that through patience, and the comfort of the Scriptures, we might hold the hope. Now the God of that patience and comfort grant you to be like minded among yourselves according to Christ Jesus, that unanimously with one mouth ye may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

The observation with which this verse begins, sustains the quotation from the sixty-ninth Psalm, with which the former verse ended. The prophets

wrote of Christ; and His course across our world gives us the example of what is well-pleasing to God: ver. 4.

Are 'patience' and 'comfort' both to be construed with 'the Scriptures?' The answer much depends on whether these two prepositions, or but one are employed. There is a difference of reading herein; the second preposition seems to me added by some of the copyists, in order to dissolve the peculiarity of the phrase—'the patience and the comfort of the Scriptures.' If then we read it thus, as it is usually taken, it will signify, that the Scriptures accepted, produce in our minds the hope of God, and to teach us patiently to wait for its accomplishment, while its brightness and constancy give us comfort amidst the difficulties of the way. "There is *one hope* of our calling"—it is "the glory of God," which is to appear at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. It affects alike creation and the Church: viii. 20—24. Then Abraham's faith will receive its fulfilment. When he is raised from the dead he will greet his Seed after the flesh, and his Seed after the spirit: iv. 18. Then his other Seed, Christ, shall be seen as the Second Adam, undoing the woes brought on earth and man by the disobedience of the first Adam. For then, after the *grace of the Gospel*, will come the *glory of the kingdom*.

The God of patience and comfort who gave the Scriptures, desires His people to live in unity; an unity framed after the pattern of Christ. Lowliness and forbearance will generally preserve peace. And unity is needed in the Church, that our prayers be not hindered, by occasion given to Satan's accusations against us. Full of comfort is the title given to God—"the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ:" ver. 5, 6.

Unity, taken singly, is not a proof of truth. The Great False Christ and his ten kings shall be joined in one plan and one mind, though it be to fight against Christ: Rev. xvii. Christian unity is not a unity

enforced by a hierarchy; we do not read of either deacon or elder in this epistle.

The seventh verse is *the great canon of reception into the Church of Christ*. Believers whom Christ has received are to be received by His people. Our reception of Christians is made dependent on His previous one. If the *Master* have accepted, may the *servant* reject?

It is not—‘This person applying for communion follows with us: he accepts all our doctrines and observances.’ But, ‘he is accepted by the Son of God.’ He may require to learn much that he sees not now; or to put away many views he now holds. That is a work to be wrought in him by the Holy Spirit. But is he now resting on Christ and accepted by Him? The points we may and must demand in order to fellowship have been stated in chapter x. Each must be possessed, not of perfection under law, but of the righteousness which springs out of faith in the Son of God, as slain for sin, and raised because of our justification. He must be a worshipper, calling on the name of Christ as his Lord.

Reception of this kind is “to the glory of God.” It is by God appointed; and He upholds it. Unity is on a few essential points; unity of the heart is far more glorious to God, than intellectual unity in regard of a body of Articles, attested by the signature of the candidate.

8—12. “Now I say, that Jesus Christ became a minister of the circumcision on behalf of the truth of God, to confirm the promises (made) to the fathers; but that Gentiles might glorify God for mercy; as it is written—(1) ‘Because of this I will confess to thee among Gentiles, and sing with harp* to thy name.’ And again he saith, (2) ‘Rejoice, ye nations, with His people.’ And again, (3) ‘Praise the Lord all ye nations, and applaud Him, all ye people.’ And again, Isaiah saith, (4) ‘There shall be the root of Jesse, even He that shall be raised up to rule nations, on Him shall Gentiles hope.’”

*Ψαλλω—to play on a stringed instrument, usually accompanied with the voice.

The Saviour was sent in the first place to the house of Israel, not to the Gentiles; as He testified in His interview with the Gentile woman: Matt. xv. He *became*, by His incarnation, a man of Israel; and as such was circumcised. Israel had claims on God, because of His promises. And the Deliverer came as a prophet for Israel, like unto Moses, as foretold.

So the Saviour’s appearing was the effect of God’s truthful fulfilling of His promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and after that to the Jewish prophets.

He came to “confirm” the promises of the Old Testament. Many seem to think that Israel is done with, and that all the promises made to them are cancelled by their evil conduct. It is true, as the apostle has taught us, that the promises cannot be claimed by them as having done their part in the covenant. But chapter xi. has taught us, that they will be grafted in again through grace. Jesus came to “confirm;”—not to *fulfil* the promises. For God says, that unless man can bring back the waters of Noah, or change the arrangements of the heavenly bodies, His promises to Israel shall not fail: Jer. xxxi. 35—37; Psa. cxlviii. 6; Isa. liv. 9, 10.

When God would send Moses to Israel, we read—“I am come down to deliver them.” And to Moses He says—“I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth My people the Children of Israel out of Egypt:” Ex. iii. 8, 10.

But the nations had no such claims on God, as had Israel. They are to glorify God for *mercy*; a mercy abounding beyond the earthly promises to Israel. So the Saviour’s mission takes in both the circumcised and uncircumcised seeds of Abraham. We see the two different standings of Israel and believers, in the Saviour’s parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard. With the first class of labourers the householder makes an express agreement—a denarius the day. The last

class, called at the *last hour**, go into the vineyard, hoping in the householder's generosity. The word—"And whatever is just, ye shall receive," is to be omitted.

Both the claims of the Jew, and the grace to the Gentile, are shown in Paul's work in the Acts. At Antioch of Pisidia, he testifies in the synagogue to both Jews and Proselytes. The elect Gentiles listen, the Jews proudly refuse, contradict and blaspheme. Then the two apostles boldly say to the Jews—"We were called to present our message first to you; but as you reject it, we turn to the Gentiles:" Acts xiii. 46.

Of the two statements of the verse, the apostle considers that there is need to prove only the last.

(1) Christ confirmed the promises to Israel.

(2) But where was anything said about mercy to the Gentiles?

He therefore cites four passages of Old Testament Scripture, in proof; and very important is the testimony of each.

"For this cause will I give thanks to Thee among Gentiles, and will sing with harp to Thy name."

This passage is taken from the eighteenth Psalm. As the title tells us, it is David's thanksgiving 'after his deliverance out of the hand of all enemies, and out of the hand of *Saul*.' † Now the Hebrew word signifies Hadees, or the place of departed spirits. It looks onward, then, to resurrection; and to the kingdom, which appears at the first resurrection.

Let us just briefly run over its topics. It begins with praise: ver. 1—3. The speaker was once in Hadees and its prison of Death. But he prayed to the Lord, and was heard. Earth quaked: the Lord descended in power and majesty to deliver him. "He sent from above, He took me, He drew me out of many waters." "He brought me

* There seems to be a reference here to John's word. "Little children it is the *last hour*:" 1 John ii. 18.

† שׂאוֹל.

forth also into a large place:" ver. 4—19. This gives in part the deliverance of Christ, His resurrection from among the dead, and the earthquake at His rising. But it looks onward for its full completion to the Saviour's raising His people, at His future descent from heaven into air: 1 Thess. iv. Then comes reward to works: Psal. xviii. 20—27. Then war from heaven against the men of earth, and the victory of power over the rebellious: ver. 28—45. The victory makes Christ king of the nations: ver. 43. Then comes the passage cited by the apostle: ver. 49. And the kingdom is come to David and his Son: ver. 50. This is in entire accordance with Revelation, specially chapters xix. and xx.

Has the verse quoted by the apostle yet been fulfilled? Did Jesus ever give thanks among an assembly of Gentiles? No! Then it is yet to be accomplished, but the manner of it is described for us in the Apocalypse: chapter xiv. 1—5.

"And I saw, and behold the Lamb standing on the Mount Zion, and with Him a hundred and forty four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads. And I heard a sound out of the heaven, as the sound of many waters, and as the sound of great thunder; and the sound which I heard was as of harp-singers harping with their harps. And they are singing [as it were] a new song, in front of the throne, and in front of the four living creatures, and the elders; and none was able to learn the song, but the hundred and forty four thousand, who were redeemed from the earth. These are persons who were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they who follow the Lamb whithersoever He may go. These were redeemed from among men, firstfruits unto God and the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no falsehood; they are blameless."*

This takes up the points named in Psal. xviii. 49.

"I will give thanks."

The speaker is the Lord Jesus, He is on high, far above the place of the dead, far above earth

* The text here is given as from Tregelles.

also. Below, His foes are mustering their hosts. But He is the Conqueror, and His exaltation is sure. He is giving thanks to His Father, and "among Gentiles."* The hundred and forty-four thousand are "redeemed from the earth;" they were "redeemed from among men."

"They are firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb."

They are a wholly different body from the hundred and forty-four thousand of chapter vii. God has two peoples: and He has a firstfruits from each of them. Israel is His people of the earth; and He takes His portion out of each of the tribes of Israel, by an angel carrying "the seal of the living God," and marking them on the forehead, before the winds are let loose on earth, and before the locusts of the Woe-trumpet are sent to torment the unbelievers of mankind. They are God's "servants," to be spared amidst the judgments coming on the earth.

But these harp-singers are on the heavenly Mount Zion, and sing in front of the throne of God, with its cherubim, and the elders of the angelic hosts. "The last are first." They are companions of the Lamb, who in the day of His glory, follow Him wherever He may move through heaven or on earth, in His Royal Progress.

This is not one of the promises to the fathers, nor a glory promised by the Jewish prophets. The song is a new one.

To Abraham and his sons were promised a seed innumerable; and he was to have the earth and the land for his inheritance. But these are redeemed out of the earth, and from among men. Their glory is the opposite to that promised in the Old Testament. They are unmarried, as were our Lord and His beloved apostle

* A different signification is to be given to $\epsilon\theta\nu\eta$, according as it has the article, or has it not. With the article it signifies 'the nations.'—Without the article it is to be rendered 'Gentiles,' as it then refers to individuals from among the nations. See Romans ii. 14; iii. 29; iv. 17, 18; ix. 24, 30.

John, who writes this word. "They are virgins,"—is the explanation given of the scene. They wear the name of the Father, and of the Son.

Christ appears as one of the harp-singers. This I gather from the statement—"They are singing a new song (the ground of it is new), in front of the throne, and of the four living creatures, and of the elders." It is not said, that 'they sing before the Lamb;' but the hundred and forty-four thousand are joined to the Lamb as companions.

This is the priestly aspect of the matter. The kingly aspect is presented in type in the victory of king Jehoshaphat over the nations that came up to seize on the Land of Israel: 2 Chron. xx. He pleads the promise of Jehovah, giving Palestine to Israel, and asking deliverance. The Spirit of God comes upon a Levite, and victory is promised. As Moses said to Israel, pursued by Pharaoh and caught in front of the Red Sea,—'Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord'—so is it said to Jehoshaphat; and the king believes, and gives thanks with singing. At once the enemies of Israel fall out with one another, and the king and his singers find their foes slain, and much spoil in 'the Valley of Blessing.'

2. "And again he saith, Rejoice O nations,* with His people."

* The Hebrew, as it now stands, omitting the 'with,' reads, 'Praise, ye Gentiles, His people.' And the present fashion seems to be, to assume that the Hebrew is always correct. Against all evidence many assume the perfect integrity of the Hebrew text. One or two Hebrew MSS. possess the "with." It is the unchallenged reading of the Jews' own Greek translation.

That the 'with' is the true reading, is settled for all who hold the inspiration of Holy Scripture. "Let God be true, and every man a liar."

The effect of the omission of this is to make the apostle's argument void. He is teaching us that the Gentiles are called to glorify, not Israel for their goodness, but the Lord (Jesus) for mercy.

(1) Now the place where the passage occurs is a witness

The passage is taken from Deuteronomy xxxii. 43. It is not yet fulfilled. It testifies to the millennial day, when the wicked will be cut off, and only the spared remnant of Jew and Gentile will be left to people earth, and to enjoy the reign of Christ. During the Gospel-time, the Jews, as the apostle has told us, are enemies for our sakes.

to the depravation of the text. The Song of Moses is designed, as both God and Moses tell us, to humble Israel for their sin: Deut. xxxi. 24—30. And such is the tenor of the song. How, then, should the nations here be called on to *praise Israel*, the justly condemned, who only enter into millennial blessing through mercy?

(2) It is at this very point that the Jews were wrought on to corrupt the text. Jehovah threatens in the song to provoke them by favour to the Gentiles, because of their provocation of Him by their idols: v. 21. We know from Acts xxii. how great was the Jews' rage at Jerusalem, when Paul made known Christ's mission of mercy. And our text is very provoking to them, as telling of the day when the Gentiles will be blest as well as themselves.

It is certain that not a few places of the Jewish Scriptures have been corrupted; (1) some inadvertently, (2) some wilfully. There is one place of confessed wilful perversion: Judges xviii. 30. There *Moses'* name is changed into *Manasseh*, in order to spare the Great Lawgiver the disgrace of having his grandson an idolatrous priest. There is another omission in the same verse in Deuteronomy whence Paul has quoted—"And let all the angels of God worship Him"—which the apostle cites in Hebrews i. 6, as witnessing to the coming glory of Christ.

Of the inadvertent mistakes of the copyists, Dr. Kennicott, in his Two Dissertations, gave ample proof. And the present writer, in an article in Dr. Kitto's magazine, gave further evidence, derived from his own comparison of the MSS. cited in Kennicott's Hebrew Bible. Is it not clear, that when you read in a modern printed book, under a list of errata, "For 'pear,' read 'appear,'" that mistakes are owned? It is so in the Masora, or Jewish comment on the text.

(3) The matter must soon come to this point,—either *Jews* have corrupted the Scriptures, in places that bore hard upon them; or *apostles* have.

(4) Does not this call to the Gentiles to '*praise Jews*,' in a song written against them, carry on its front a decisive proof against them?

The speaker is Christ. It is His to lay the foundation of the thousand years of bliss. He tells us in the parable of the Prodigal Son, how the feast is interrupted by the father's expostulation with his proud Jewish son: Luke xv. 25—32. But *then* the grace of Christ, falling on the joy of a common deliverance, and enjoyment of the happy time, will take away the present enmity of Jew and Gentile. Then, too, will the enmity between the ten tribes and the two be taken away: Isa. xi. 13.

3. "*And again, 'Praise the Lord (Jehovah), all ye nations; and applaud Him, all ye peoples.'*"

This passage is taken from Psalm cxvii., and it is found in the last of the five books of the Psalms, which treats of the coming kingdom.

It tells us of the right feeling towards Christ, which will be shown in that day by all nations adoring Christ as Jehovah. The parable of the Sheep and Goats, treating of the same time, confirms this. The goats are those that hate Christ and His people; the sheep, those who love. In Revelations xix. we see the awful position of the unbelieving nations, and their destruction.

4. "*And again saith Esaias, 'There shall be the root of Jesse, and he that rises up to rule nations,—on Him shall Gentiles hope.'*"

This passage is taken from Isaiah xi. 10. It is, I believe, another of the places tampered with.

In the first verses of this chapter, Christ is described as "a Root out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch out of his roots." But in our passage He seems to be described as both God and man:—God, in that He is the *root* of Jesse; his Creator. Man, in that He is Jesse's *Son*. So in Revelation xxii. we have: "I am the Root and the *Offspring* of David." The rendering '*root-shoot*' is not admissible.

Some striking features are then given of the Saviour's former life on earth, and of the judgments He is about