

AN OUTLINE ❄

OF THE

BOOKS OF THE BIBLE.

*JAMES H. BROOKES.*

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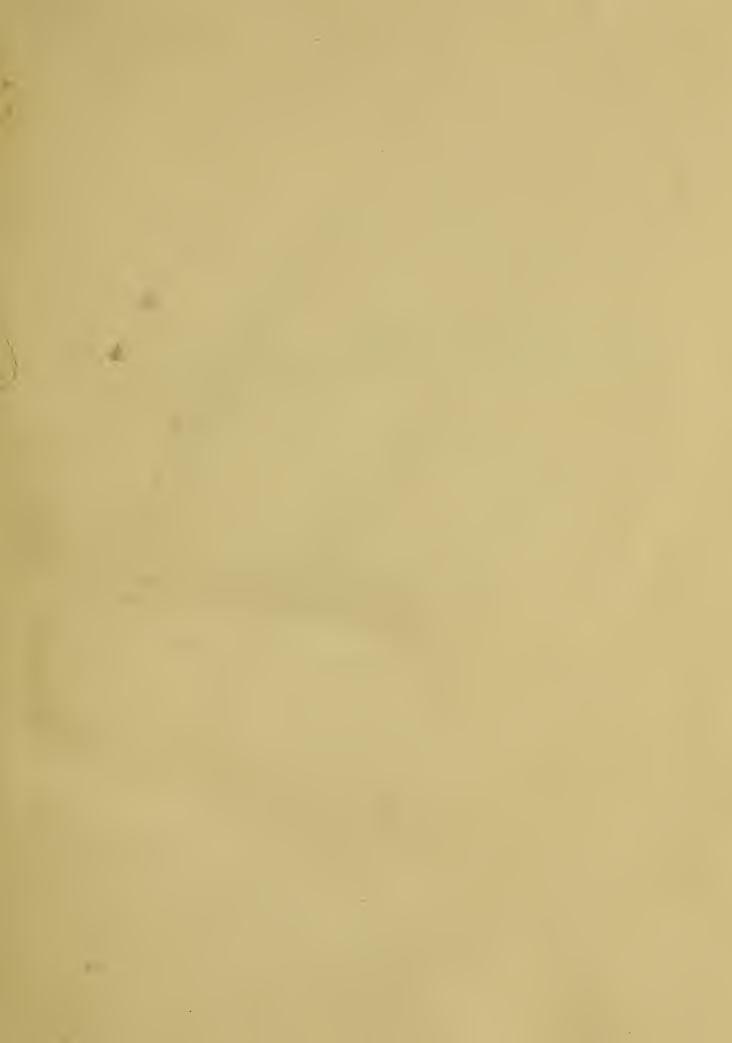
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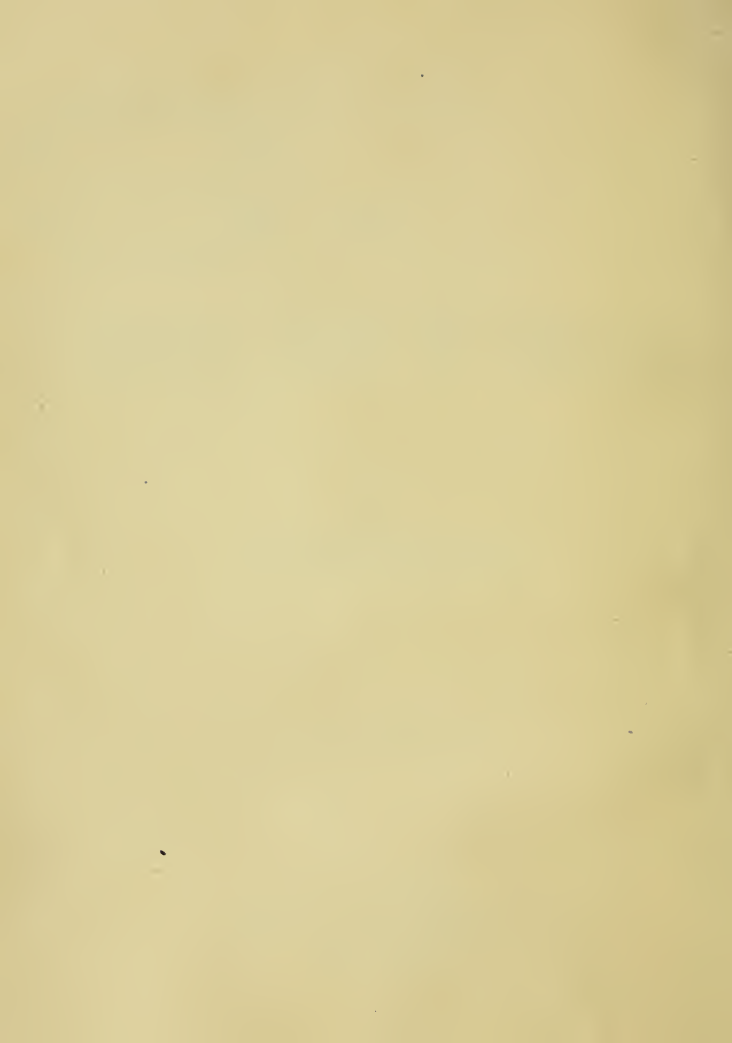
BY

JAMES H. BROOKES.



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## P R E F A C E .

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THIS little book had its origin in a desire to be helpful to young Christians, and to others who wish to know more of God's word. It is believed that there have been only two methods adopted of presenting a synopsis of that word. One is to give the leading thought of each chapter, section, or paragraph, which in fact is to write a commentary or exposition. While this is unquestionably the best plan if intelligently executed, it is open to the grave objection that it requires the production of so large a book, it is practically placed beyond the reach of many poor believers, who have no time for extended study.

The other plan seeks to embody in a single phrase the general meaning of each book, as when it is said that Genesis sets forth election, Exodus redemption, Leviticus priestly service and worship, Numbers our wilderness walk and warfare. But while these words may be suggestive as keynotes, it is obvious that they convey little instruction as to the real character and distinctive teachings of the various books.

An attempt is here made to avoid the two extremes, and to exhibit in outline in brief and cheap form the principal design of the books, viewed especially in the light of our Lord's declaration, "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye

have eternal life: and they are they which testify of ME," (John v. 39); and also in the light of the Holy Spirit's statement, "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope," (Rom. xv. 4).

It will be observed that the early books are treated quite briefly; but when the prophets were reached, it became absolutely necessary for the sake of clearness to enter a little more into detail. It is to be regretted that the same amount of space given to the prophets, and to the New Testament writers, was not assigned to the first books; and no one can be so painfully conscious as the writer of the utter failure of these outlines to show in an adequate manner the wonderful testimonies of the blessed Bible. But such as they are, they are sent forth with the prayer that they may be used in some little measure of loving service to exalt the precious name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

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## BOOKS OF THE BIBLE.

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### GENESIS.

**T**HERE is a sweet simplicity in the narratives of this first book that is very attractive to little children, and there is a depth in them that lies beyond the reach of the profoundest minds. It forms the preface of the entire Bible, for it contains the germ of all subsequent revelations, until we reach the Apocalypse, which is the equally striking conclusion of the inspired Scriptures. Hence there is a remarkable correspondence between the two books; the paradise of God, the tree of life, the river, the crown of sovereignty upon man's brow seen in the former, reappearing in the latter; and the blessings lost in the first Adam restored in the last Adam in the very order in which they disappeared. Thus the Holy Ghost at once exhibits the perfect unity of His word, and teaches us not only to "search the scriptures," but to search them until Christ is revealed to the heart in all the glory of His divine person, and in all the value of His finished work.

His opening book was called by the Jews *Bere-*

*shith*, "In the beginning;" but by the translators of the Septuagint Version *Genesis*, "Generation or Origination." It gives us the only true history of man for at least 2,300 years, and it centres about seven prominent persons in pairs, as types of the whole human race. First, Adam in connection with Eve, or human nature innocent, fallen, helpless, when the Lord God clothed them with coats of skins which He made; types of Christ and the Church. Second, Cain in connection with Abel, or the religion of culture opposed to redemption through the blood. Third, Enoch in connection with Noah, the former the type of the heavenly people translated before the judgments of the last days; the latter the type of the earthly saved remnant passing through the judgments. Fourth, Abraham in connection with Lot, or walking by faith, and walking by sight. Fifth, Ishmael and Isaac, or he that was born of the flesh persecuting him that was born of the Spirit; Isaac setting forth sonship. Sixth, Esau and Jacob, or the flesh disowned and hated, while he that was elected by God's sovereign grace represents service and discipline. Seventh, Joseph, rejected by his brethren, tells of suffering followed by glory in resurrection power, when the "Saviour of the world," as his Egyptian name signifies, received his Gentile bride, whose name means "Beauty."

## EXODUS.

Called in the Hebrew canon from its initial words *ve-el leh shemoth*, "these are the names," but in the Greek *Exit*, or *Departure*. It embraces a period of 145 years, and treats of Redemption and the Relationship into which the redeemed are brought to God. First, the call of Moses, i.-vi. Second, judgments upon Egypt, types of judgments falling upon the world in the last days, predicted in the book of Revelation, vii.-xi. Third, Redemption through blood, xii.-xv. Fourth, Wilderness experience, xvi.-xix. Fifth, under law and the results, xx.-xxiv., xxxii., xxxiii. Sixth, the Tabernacle, (1) the ark with its tables of stone, or righteousness is the foundation of Jehovah's throne; (2) the Mercy-seat, or Christ the way of access to God; (3) the table of Shewbread, or Christ our Communion with God; (4) the golden Candlestick, or Christ and the Church the light of the world; (5) the golden altar of Incense, or Christ in His intercession; (6) the Laver, or Christ cleansing us from the defilements of the way; (7) the Brazen Altar, or Christ enduring the wrath of God in our stead, xxv.-xxvii., xxx., xxxi., xxxiv.-xl. Seventh, the garments for glory and for beauty, or Christ our high priest, xxviii., xxix. While only two chapters are occupied with the creation of the world,

fourteen chapters are taken up with the tabernacle, showing the estimate God places upon the work of redemption, and that Christ is the centre and object of the Holy Spirit's revelation.

### LEVITICUS.

Named in the Hebrew canon *vayikra*, "and He called," but in the Septuagint *Leviticus*, because it treats of priestly service and worship in connection with the tribe of Levi. It consists almost wholly of words spoken by Jehovah from the tabernacle, and comprises the transactions of not more than a month. First, we have the offerings, (1) the burnt-offering, Eph. v. 2; (2) the meat-offering, John iv. 34; (3) the peace-offering, Eph. ii. 14; (4) the sin-offering, showing what man is, 2 Cor. v. 21; (5) the trespass-offering, showing what man does, 1 Pet. ii. 24; (6) the heave-offering, Heb. ix. 12; (7) the wave-offering, Heb. xii. 24, i.-vii. Second, priestly consecration, viii.-x. Third, separation unto the Lord, xi., xii. Fourth, Sinners cleansed and consecrated, xiii., xiv. Fifth, "Be ye holy, for I am holy," xv.-xxii. Sixth, the feasts, (1) the Sabbath, Heb. iv. 9; (2) the Passover, 1 Cor. v. 7; (3) the First fruits, 1 Cor. xv. 23; (4) Pentecost, Acts ii., but evil present, Acts v. 1-10; (5) the Trumpets, Mark xvi. 15, 16; (6) the Atonement, Heb. ix. 22;



(7) the Tabernacles, Tit. ii. 13, xxiii. Seventh, looking on to the end, xxiv.-xxvii., the last three chapters having been spoken in Mount Sinai.

#### NUMBERS.

So called in the Septuagint and Vulgate from the double census of the Israelites, covering a period of 38 years. It is the wilderness book, recounting the trials, conflicts, and sins of the way, and it admits the following divisions. First, preparation for the journey, every man numbered, knowing his pedigree, having his place and work assigned, responsible to maintain holiness, separated unto the Lord, and presenting offerings, all seen in the light of the Sanctuary, and all needing the blood of the passover, and the guidance of the cloud, i.-ix. Second, on the march, but failure at every step, first of "the mixed multitude," then of God's people, then of the faith of Moses, then of Miriam and Aaron, then of the ten spies, then of the whole congregation, then of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, making the priesthood of Christ in resurrection fruitfulness very precious to God, x.-xviii. Third, provision for failure along the desert road, xix. Fourth, sin, the cross, and victory, xx.-xxiv. Fifth, mingling with the world and its consequences, xxv. Sixth, re-numbered,

Simeon losing heavily, and directions given for the possession of the land, xxvi.-xxxiv. Seventh, the wilderness book closes with the cities of refuge and a marriage, xxxv., xxxvi.

#### DEUTERONOMY.

A book to which high honor is given by the inspired prophets, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost in the Epistles, was so named in the Septuagint, as meaning "the second," that is, repeated "Law." It is not, however, a mere repetition of the law, but rather an application of the principles of the law to Israel in view of their past failure, and entrance into the land, answering somewhat in general to the second Epistles of the New Testament. It embraces the history of five weeks, and may be divided as follows: First, a rehearsal of God's dealings with them during a journey of forty years, that ought to have been made in eleven days, i.-iv. Second, a rehearsal of the law, with added motives and earnest appeals to obedience, v.-xi. Third, the statutes and ordinances to be observed in the land, on all of which may be written, "Holiness to the Lord," xii.-xxv. Fourth, worship enjoined in connection with the beautiful service of offering the basket of first fruits, xxvi. Fifth, the blessings and curses to be

pronounced on Gerizim and Ebal, but the blessings significantly omitted, xxvii. Sixth, temporal mercies and judgments predicted, as suited to an earthly people, with the promise of ultimate restoration, xxviii.-xxx. Seventh, farewell words, celebrating the righteousness and grace of Jehovah in the history of Israel, from the flood to the second coming of Christ, xxxi.-xxxiv.

### JOSHUA,

“The Lord is salvation.” Here begins the second division of the inspired writings, comprising twelve books, and closing with Esther. The corresponding book in the New Testament is the Epistle to the Ephesians. The Red Sea shows what we are separated *from*, and answers to Rom. vi., vii.; the Jordan shows what we are separated *unto*, and answers to Eph. i., ii., in the heavenlies *now* in Christ Jesus. It contains the history of about twenty-five years, and gives First, Jehovah’s command and promise, i. Second, grace abounding, ii. Third, the Jordan crossed in the power of the ark, the reproach of Egypt rolled away, death to the flesh, the passover, and feeding upon the old corn of the land, before conflict began, iii.-v. Fourth, the conquest of the land, vi.-xii. Fifth, the distribution of the land, xiii.-xxi. Sixth, separation

of the two tribes and a half, portending evil, xxii. Seventh, Joshua's parting address, xxiii., xxiv. Jordan, according to Jerome, means "stream of judgment;" according to Augustine, "to come down;" but in either case it implies that death to self, through which every one must pass, in order to enter into present rest. The people could not enter the land until Moses was dead. It is not the law, but Joshua or Jesus, who leads through judgment, as we are linked to the blood-sprinkled mercy-seat.

#### JUDGES.

This book gives the history of Israel's apostacy for about 300 years, and the corresponding scripture in the New Testament is the second epistle to the Ephesians, Rev. ii. 1-7; the seven churches in Asia answering in general to the seven stages of declension described in Judges. Things went from bad to worse with interventions of sovereign grace resembling modern "revivals," that in themselves are signs of weakness, because the church should always be revived. There were seven periods of captivity, extending through 131 years which God does not count in His chronology, as He takes note of time only when Israel are in His land, and seven prominent Deliverers raised up to break the yoke of oppression:

*Oppressors.**Deliverers.*

Mesopotamians, "High, elevated, magnificent."	Othniel, "Lion of God."
Moabites, "Water, <i>i. e.</i> , progeny of the father."	Ehud, "Joining together, or oneness."
Philistines, "To roll oneself, to wallow, <i>i. e.</i> , in the dust."	Shamgar, son of Anath, "Answer <i>s. c.</i> , to prayer."
Canaanites, "To bring down, humble, subdue."	Deborah, "A bee," from the verb "to speak."
Midianites, "Strife, Contention."	Gideon, "Cutter, Feller."
Ammonites, "From the people," verb, "to hide."	Jephthah, "He will open," <i>i. e.</i> , "set free."
Philistines, "To wallow, <i>s. c.</i> , in the dust."	Samson, "Sunlike, or Splendid Sun."

The last five chapters contain an appendix, showing the wretched condition of Israel, even while Phinehas, the grandson of Aaron, was living, xx. 28.

## RUTH.

Israel having proved unfaithful, the book of Ruth follows like a lovely picture presenting the calling of the Gentile Church, and the final restoration of God's ancient people after the marriage supper of the Lamb. The corresponding scriptures are Acts xv. 14-17; Rom. xi. 25-32. There are seven principal characters: Elimelech, "My God is King;" Naomi, "Pleasantness;" Mahlon, "Sickness, Infirmary;" Chilion, "Pining, Wasting;" Orpah, "A Fawn;" Ruth, "Beauty," or as

some say, "Satisfied;" Boaz, "In him is strength." The book sets forth, First, Decision for Christ, i.; Second, Meeting with Christ, ii.; Third, Rest in Christ, iii.; Fourth, Union with Christ, iv. Obed, born of Boaz and Ruth, means "Serving, or worshipping," and was in the line of Christ's human ancestry, Matt. i. 5.

### I SAMUEL.

After the call in type of the Church, we have in their proper order the six books of the kingdom; not seven, the divine perfect number, but six, the imperfect human number; for the failure of man as king is to be proved, following his failure as priest. Intimations of this period had been previously given, (Deut. xvii. 14-20), but in the purpose of God it succeeds the unfaithfulness of Israel in the place of privilege and responsibility, leading them to say, "Nay; but we will have a king over us; that we also may be like all the nations." The first book gives us man's choice of a king, type of the antichrist, and it admits the following divisions: First, the birth of Samuel, meaning "Asked for of God," the prophetic song of his mother; and the vileness of the priesthood, i., ii. Second, the ministry of the child-prophet, and the utter ruin of the priestly house, iii., iv.

Third, the ark of the covenant among the Philistines, and the vindication of its holiness, v.-vii. Fourth, the election of Saul, meaning "asked for," and his rejection, viii:-xv. Fifth, the divine call of David, meaning "Beloved," and his victory by faith, xvi., xvii. Sixth, the persecutions and sorrows of the Lord's anointed, xviii.-xxx. Seventh, the wretched death of Saul and of his sons, even of Jonathan, whose heart was true to David, but who adhered outwardly to the world, xxxi.

## II SAMUEL.

This book centres about God's King, and treats of the following general subjects: First, his reign in Hebron, meaning "Association or fellowship," for seven years and six months, and the establishment of his throne in Jerusalem, "Foundation of peace," when he was 37, i.-v. Second, he brings the ark to his capital, learns that God is able to take care of His own, and receives the promise of Christ as his successor, vi., vii. Third, his victories over all enemies, and his clemency to Mephibosheth, "out of his mouth, shame," of Lodebar, "without pasture, or no word," type of the sinner, who is a "dead dog," viii.-x. Fourth, God's grace exhibited in the forgiveness of his great sin, and God's righteousness manifested in government,

which shows, "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," xi.-xxi. Fifth, an ode of triumph commemorating his deliverance out of the hands of all his enemies, and celebrating the glory of Christ, xxii. Sixth, Christ the only true King, predicted by the Holy Ghost, remembering and rewarding faithful service for His name, xxiii. Seventh, the site of the temple selected on the threshing floor of a Gentile, after the sin of pride and ambition, whereby our first parents fell, had been put away by sacrifice, xxiv.

#### I KINGS.

This book sets forth typically Christ and His heavenly people. Hence the temple and its chambers are to be viewed here as the "Father's house" with its many mansions. No silver, atonement money, is mentioned in connection with the sacred vessels, although David prepared it for them, (1 Chron. xxviii. 14-17); but all is gold; neither is there any brazen altar nor veil mentioned; but seven times the king says in his prayer of dedication, "Hear thou *in* heaven, thy dwelling place." Historically considered, we have First, Solomon, whose name means "Peaceable," exercising judgment upon his enemies, and reigning in power, i.-iv. Second, the building and dedication of the



temple, v.-viii. Third, his matchless wisdom and riches, when "all the vessels of the house of the forest of Lebanon were of pure gold; none were of silver: it was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon," ix., x. Fourth, his sad fall by the influence of "outlandish women," (Neh. xiii. 26), types of worldly churches, xi. Fifth, the division of the kingdom into the ten tribes, called Israel, and the two tribes, called Judah, xii. Sixth, the rapid spread of iniquity, especially in Israel, connected with the faithful testimony of Elijah, meaning "My God is Jehovah," xiii.-xxi. Seventh, Judah joins affinity with Israel, leading long afterwards to deplorable results, xxii.

## II KINGS.

First, the ministry of Elisha, meaning "My God is salvation," as an illustrious type of our Lord Jesus Christ in the midst of abounding evils, i.-viii. Second, the ever-increasing prevalence of unbelief, idolatry, and shameful crimes, in Jehovah's land, ix.-xvi. Third, the subjugation and removal by Assyria of the ten tribes, one hundred and thirty-four years before the overthrow of Judah, xvii. Fourth, the miraculous deliverance of Jerusalem, typical of the deliverance to be wrought in the last days, xviii.-xx. Fifth, the son of Hezekiah, illustrating that while grace is not inherited, the flesh

is transmitted, hastens the doom of Jerusalem, xxi. Sixth, the reign of Josiah gave "a little reviving," while the judgments were gathering, but he had to *command* the people to keep the passover, and to *cause* them in their stupid indifference to enter into covenant with God, xxii., xxiii. Seventh, the capture of the city of David by Nebuchadnezzar, the head of Gentile power, xxiv., xxv.

#### I CHRONICLES.

This book, with the next, is placed last in the Hebrew Canon, and was written after the captivity, (iii. 16-24; vi. 15). Commencing with Adam, it gives the connecting links in the history of the race, with special reference to the house of David, and David's greater Son. Christ being in the full view of the Holy Ghost, the sins of saints are not mentioned, as the sins of Old Testament saints are not mentioned in the New Testament, except where they bring out most clearly the wonders of pardoning grace. The special subject is David, and we have First, the genealogy of the tribes to the death of Saul, i.-x. Second, David's mighty men, and his coronation as king over all Israel, xi., xii. Third, David's removal of the ark, the promise of Christ, and the millennial song, xiii.-xvii. Fourth, David's wars and victories, xviii.-xx.

Fifth, David's selection of the ground for the temple, that was associated with grace reigning through righteousness, sin being put away by sacrifice, when he was afraid to go to the tabernacle, xxi. Sixth, David's preparation for building the temple, the pattern of which, and the ordering of the Levites and Singers, were revealed to him by the Spirit, xxii.--xxvii. Seventh, David's last message and thanksgiving, leaving Solomon his son "on the throne of the Lord," xxviii., xxix.

## II CHRONICLES.

This book confines itself to the house of David, viewed rather in its religious than its political relations. Typically it sets forth the millennial reign of Christ on the earth, and hence we read of silver, atonement money, in connection with the temple, and also of the altar and the veil; and seven times in his prayer of dedication Solomon says, "Hear thou *from* heaven." Historically we have, First, the brilliant reign of Solomon, i.--ix. Second, Rehoboam's departure from the Lord, x.--xii. Third, victory crowning the arms of those who looked to Jehovah in simple faith, xiii.--xvi. Fourth, the suggestive lessons of Jehoshaphat's reign, showing the results of alliance with the world, and God's reclaiming mercy, xvii.--xx.

Fifth, the inevitable consequences of affinity with a false religion, but for David's sake a lamp still shone in Jerusalem, xxi.--xxiii. Sixth, blessing attending kings who honored the Lord, but evil following Ahaz who walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, xxiv.--xxviii. Seventh, temporary revival under Hezekiah and Josiah, but speedy relapse until the captivity under the king of Babylon, xxix.--xxxvi.

## EZRA.

This book covers a period of about eighty years, and is a pledge that a remnant will be restored to the worship of Jehovah in His land, at the end of the present age. First, the return of some fifty thousand of the people of Judah by the decree of Cyrus, under Joshua the high priest, and Zerubbabel the prince of the house of Judah, the building of the altar, and the laying of the foundation of the temple, i.--iii. Second, the refusal of the remnant to have fellowship with the mixed multitude, and the interruption of the work, iv. Third, the appearance of the prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, and the completion of the temple, v., vi. Fourth, about sixty years later, the coming of Ezra, meaning "Help," and a small colony, by a decree of the king, vii., viii. Fifth, separation from the people of the lands, and putting away strange wives, ix. x.

## NEHEMIAH.

This book represents in type the restoration of civil government to the Jews, and their national supremacy, in the last days. First, the commission of Nehemiah, meaning "Consolation of the Lord," to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, and the names of his helpers, i.--iii. Second, hindrances to the work, (1) ridicule, (2) open enmity, (3) leaders holding back, (4) worldly brethren, (5) offer of the world's friendship, (6) charge of treasonable designs, (7) false prophets, iv.--vi. Third, the people numbered, and the feast of tabernacles, type of millennial joy, observed as it had not been for a thousand years, vii., viii. Fourth, confession and covenant, ix., x. Fifth, gladness in the holy city, the sabbath kept, and separation from evil, xi.--xiii.

## ESTHER.

This book teaches in type the setting aside of the professing Gentile bride, and the elevation of the despised Jew, according to the sure word of Rom. xi. 19--29. The name of God is not mentioned, to show His watchful care over His ancient people, although in their present unbelief they may refuse to recognize His hand. First, the rejection of the Gentile queen, who refused to exhibit her beauty to the people and the princes, i. Second, the

choice of Hadassah, meaning "Myrtle," afterwards changed to Esther, "A star," a poor Jewess, to sit upon the throne of earth's monarch, ii. Third, the rage of Haman of the cursed seed of Amalek, and the unchangeable decree to slay all the Jews, iii. Fourth, the wonder-working providence and grace of Jehovah interposing in their behalf, iv.-viii. Fifth, the deliverance of Israel, leaving a Jew next in authority to the king, who "laid a tribute upon the land, and upon the isles of the sea," ix., x.

#### JOB.

That such a man really lived is sufficiently proved by the testimony of the Holy Ghost in Ezek. xiv. 14, 20; James v. 11. It is probable that he was born long before the days of Moses, as he ministered in the priest's office for his family, and makes no allusion to the law given from Sinai, and attained a far greater age than any who are mentioned after the exodus from Egypt. His name means "persecuted," and "Human Perfection Tested," may be suggested as the proper title of the book. First, we have an account of his severe trials and bitter complaint, i.-iii. Second, the debate with his three friends, who charge him in three successive assaults with hypocrisy and falsehood and secret sins, as the real cause of his

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troubles, iv.-xiv.; xv.-xxi.; xxii.-xxvi. Third, Job's passionate vindication of himself, in which the personal pronouns "I" and "me" and "my" constantly occur, showing that his thoughts were occupied with his own goodness, and therefore inevitably leading to the mournful conclusion, "Let thistles grow instead of wheat, and cockle instead of barley. The words of Job are ended," xxvii.-xxxi. Fourth, Elihu, meaning "My God is He," *i. e.*, the Lord, appears upon the scene, acting according to Job's wish "in God's stead," and as a type of the daysman for whom Job longed; and he teaches the doctrine that if a man will confess his sinfulness, instead of asserting his righteousness, God will say, "Deliver him from going down into the pit; I have found a ransom," xxxii.-xxxviii. Fifth, the Lord answers Job out of the whirlwind, and displays His glory and majesty, xxxviii.-xli. Sixth, Job takes his right place before God: "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes," xlii. 1-7. Seventh, Job's deliverance, restoration, enlargement, and blessing, receiving double for all he had lost, and the same number of children he had before, as those who had died were still his. The general teachings of the book are, (1) the personality and malice of Satan; (2) the world by wisdom knows not God, not knowing grace; (3) the folly of self-righteousness; (4) the

need of a daysman between God and sinners ; (5) the unsearchable perfections of Jehovah ; (6) the vileness of the most perfect man in His sight ; (7) " the end of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy."

#### PSALMS.

This remarkable collection of inspired writings, one of which at least was composed 1500 years before Christ, has ever been regarded by the saints of God as a most suitable vehicle for the expression of their varied experience. So wonderful is the range of thought and emotion they embody, we are not surprised at the strong language of Edward Irving, " Every angel of joy and of sorrow swept, as he passed, over David's harp ;" and " the hearts of a hundred men strove and struggled together within the narrow continent of his single heart." This is owing to the fact that they describe so largely in prophecy the inner life of the Lord Jesus Christ, who " was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin ;" and unless the fact is kept constantly in view, they can not be read intelligently. Of the seventy-five quotations from the Psalms found in the New Testament, more than fifty represent Christ as the speaker, or are directly applied to Him, while He Himself affirms that He



is the theme of their testimony, (Luke xxiv. 44; John v. 39). Hence those who see in these beautiful songs only David and his circumstances, or David and the church, or, in the words of certain recent expositors, the "Jewish remnant" as their leading topic, are equally mistaken. Their main purpose is to set forth the sinless and suffering Messiah, first in His relations to Israel, especially Israel in the last days; and, second, in His relations to His redeemed of all lands and all ages. But they can not be understood, unless "dispensational truth" is known. The medley of interpretation in nearly all the commentaries, which identifies Israel with the church, the earthly people with the heavenly, the place of responsibility among the nations with separation from the world, tends only to confuse rather than to enlighten. Nor can they be perused with profit, until the Christian has learned to distinguish things that differ, remembering that he is not under law but grace, that he is no longer a servant but a full grown son, linked to the risen Christ, and having his place and portion in the heavenlies.

The entire collection is divided into five books. First, Ps. i.-xli., closing with a doxology and double Amen. Second, Ps. xlii.-lxxii., closing with a doxology and double Amen, and adding, "The prayers of David, the son of Jesse, are ended." Third, Ps.

lxxiii.-lxxxix., closing with a doxology and double Amen. Fourth, Ps. xc.-cvi., closing with a doxology, Amen, and Hallelujah. Fifth, Ps. cvii.-cl., closing with a rapid succession of Hallelujahs. Book I, Christ in covenant relation to His people, walking in communion though in the midst of trials; "Jehovah," the covenant title in redemption, occurring more than 270 times; "God," creation title, not 50 times. Book II, Christ in connection with His people, viewed as out of the land; "Jehovah" occurring about 30 times, and "God" more than 200 times. Book III, Christ in connection with Israel from the beginning of their history; "Jehovah" occurring about 50 times; "God" about 60 times. Book IV, Christ coming to take the kingdom, and to bless the Gentiles, the progress and results of His advent being celebrated; "Jehovah" occurring more than 100 times, and "God" about 20 times. Book V, Christ ruling over all to prepare the Jews for His earthly reign; "Jehovah" occurring more than 230 times; "God" about 30 times.

#### PROVERBS.

This book views Christ, as the Wisdom of God, governing the affairs of men, and guiding in the practical details of life. It exhibits the connection between sowing and reaping, guarding particularly

against evils that are prominent in our own day, as (1) disobedience to parents, (2) bad company, (3) licentiousness, (4) falsehood, (5) indolence, (6) intemperance, (7) a contentious and envious spirit. It is divided into four parts; First, the general principles that should control the conduct, i.-ix.; Second, aphorisms, or brief sentences, or proverbs, containing a world of wisdom to direct in every event and at every step of our journey here, x.-xxix.; the last five chapters of this section consisting of "proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied out;" Third, the words or prophecy of Agur, summing up human experience and observation, xxx.; Fourth, the words of king Lemuel, giving us a beautiful picture of a just ruler, and of the church, under the figure of a woman, loyal to her Bridegroom.

#### ECCLESIASTES.

The opening verse gives the title of the book, "The words of *Koh-heh-leth*, the son of David, King in Jerusalem." *Koh-heh-leth* occurs seven times, but is not found elsewhere in the Bible, and was translated into Greek by the word *Ecclesiastes*, loosely rendered in English "the Preacher." The second verse gives the key-note of the book, "Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of

vanities; all is vanity." But it must be remembered that he treats only of that which is "under the sun," and hence he leaves us a most valuable, because inspired, record of the bitter disappointment which awaits those, whose faith and hope and love do not soar above the sun, "where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." He gave himself (1) to study, exploring the depths of philosophy and science; (2) he proved what is in mirth and pleasure to impart happiness; (3) he tested the power of wine to dispel care and sorrow; (4) he engaged in great works, building houses, planting vineyards, setting out garden and orchards, with pools of water; (5) he got him servants and maidens, and had sons born in his house, and great possessions above all that were in Jerusalem before him, gathering gold and silver, and the choicest works of art; (6) he summoned about him men singers and women singers, and the delights of the sons of men, as musical instruments, and that of all sorts; (7) he was crowned with fame; and found that all the ambitions and enjoyments of the world turned to ashes in his grasp. "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."

## SOLOMON'S SONG.

This is indeed the song of songs. It celebrates the love of the divine Bridegroom and the bride, who is here restored Israel, with the converted Gentiles as the attendant virgins. "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: for thy love is better than wine." The book contains expressions of mutual affection and admiration, with confessions of failure on the part of the bride, but there is no change in the love of the Lord Jesus Christ. If she exclaims, "I am black," He responds, "Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee." All He desires is to look upon one whom He has so loved, that He gave Himself for her. "O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice." He wants to see the countenance before hearing the voice. There is also a growing experience on her part of His deep and unchangeable love. At first she can say with a bounding heart, "My beloved is mine, and I am his;" but at last she can declare in fuller trust, "I am my beloved's, and his desire is toward me." During the night of His personal absence she cries, "Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, turn, my beloved; and be thou like a roe, or a young hart, upon the mountains of

Bether," division, or separation. But as the time draws near, when she is to come up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved, her desire for His appearing is more intense. The last words of the book, like the last words of Revelation, form an earnest prayer for His speedy advent; "Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe, or to a young hart, upon the mountains of spices."

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It may be well before entering upon the prophecies to say that they must be studied in the light of two principles: First, they express the counsels of God with respect to His Son, and look on to the great crisis that is to usher in His second advent. Second, while many of the events which they predict may have had a fulfillment in the past, they can have their *fillfullment* only in that grand consummation, toward which the church and the world are so fast hastening. The five books known as "the Law" give us the utterance of God's voice, showing what man *ought to be*, followed by the historical books, showing what man *is* under the best circumstances. "The Prophets" give us the utterance of God's voice, showing what man will be till Jesus comes. The five books known as "the Psalms," and including Job, Psalms, Proverbs,

Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon, give us the utterance of *man's* voice, telling out the various phases of human experience.

Job shows us "a perfect and an upright man," confessing, after creature goodness was thoroughly tested, that he was "vile," and abhorring himself. The Psalms record the joys and sorrows, the hopes and disappointments, the victories and defeats, of Israel and of the Church also, but having through it all the sympathy of a heart over which no storms can any more sweep. In Proverbs, Solomon is led by the Holy Ghost to trace the path of wisdom in the midst of abounding evils, making plain the harmony of God's providential government with obedience to His word. In Ecclesiastes we hear the dirge of a dead world, with its greatest prince as chief mourner. The wisest of men, with matchless skill to make the largest possible use of limitless resources, and with determined will to test to the utmost all sources of earthly happiness, comes forth with the wail, "all is vanity." In the Song of Songs, Solomon appears once more, after his bitter grief, to celebrate in sweetest strains the approaching nuptials of the Prince of peace with restored Israel, amid the rejoicing of the nations, when the Church shall have been caught up in clouds to meet the Lord in the air. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

## ISAIAH.

It is needless to remind the careful reader of the Sacred Scriptures that the prophetic books are not arranged in chronological order. That order is probably as follows :

Joel,	Hosea,	Habakkuk,	Daniel,
Obadiah,	Micah,	Zephaniah,	Haggai,
Jonah,	Isaiah,	Jeremiah,	Zechariah,
Amos,	Nahum,	Ezekiel,	Malachi.

Here we have sixteen "holy men of God" who "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," (2 Pet. i. 21), appearing together, or at intervals for nearly five hundred years, and leaving on record seventeen distinct testimonies that still reach in their final sweep into the future.

Of these Isaiah, whose name means "Salvation of the Lord," or "The Lord will save," is appropriately placed at the head, as he may be pre-eminently styled the prophet of redemption. His ministry extended from the year B. C. 756, to the year B. C. 711, and included the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, Kings of Judah. When he states, as in the opening verse, that he is about to relate the vision which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem, he means precisely what he says. It is a vision concerning Judah and Jerusalem, and not concerning the Christian Church,



however proper it may be for us to learn lessons of wisdom from the great principles of God's dealings with men of old, which are of course applicable to all people in all ages. But so far is it from being true that the Church is his theme, we are explicitly told in the New Testament that it did not please the Holy Ghost to reveal to the ancient prophets the mystery of Christ and the church, or the Church as it really exists, the body of the risen Christ, Eph. iii. 5, 6; Rom. xvi. 25, 26.

Chapter i. of Isaiah's prophecy includes the entire period of which he treats, and therefore may be regarded as a preface or introduction. Judah and Jerusalem are the prominent subjects throughout. The following divisions may be helpful: First, the sore punishment of the Jews, with their certain restoration and song of joy at the second coming of Christ, i.-xii. Second, the burden of seven Gentile nations, that would have had no mention by the Spirit but for their connection with God's covenant people, and that will reappear, though under new names, at the close of Jewish history, ending with the promise of the second coming of Christ, xiii.-xxvii. Third, God's wrath upon Israel as more guilty than the surrounding Gentile nations, ending with the promise of the second coming of Christ, xxviii.-xxxv. Fourth, historical, this being the third recital of the events

recorded, because it presents in type Israel sick unto death, the appearing of antichrist, the miraculous deliverance of the Jews, accomplished, as we learn elsewhere, by the second coming of Christ, xxxvi.-xxxix. Fifth, God's controversy with Israel for idolatry, containing promise of the second coming of Christ, but ending with the words, "There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked," xl.-xlviii. Sixth, God's sharper controversy with Israel for the rejection of Christ, containing promise of His second coming, but ending with the sharper words, "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked," xlix.-lvii. Seventh, a beautiful description of the second coming of Christ at the very time of Israel's worldliness and hypocrisy and defilement, but ending with a far more emphatic warning to unbelievers, "Their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh," lviii.-lxvi.

#### JEREMIAH.

His name means "whom the Lord sets, appoints," or as some say, "Elevated of the Lord." The word of the Lord came to him when he was very young, in the thirteenth year of Josiah, or B. C. 628, so that he followed Isaiah at the distance of about one hundred years. He was contemporary with

Zephaniah, Habakkuk, Ezekiel, and Daniel, preceding the last two by a brief interval. He delivered his discourses at particular times during a period of more than forty years, and hence the lack of chronological order and logical arrangement. Although his entire ministry was passed in the most trying circumstances, immediately preceding and immediately succeeding the Babylonian invasion and the fall of Jerusalem, he may be pre-eminently called the prophet of hope.

Chapter i., as with Isaiah, is a general introduction to his book, which may be divided as follows. First, the bitter complaints of Jehovah against the Jews for their perversity, and idolatry, and manifold sins, ending with the cry of the prophet's wounded heart, cursing the very day wherein he was born, i.-xx. Second, specific predictions against individuals, as Zedekiah, Shallum, Jehoiakim, and Coniah, false prophets and false priests, together with the distinct announcement of the overthrow of the house of Judah by Nebuchadnezzar, and the seventy years' captivity, xxi.-xxix. Third, the promised restoration of Israel, looking forward most clearly and fully to their final re-establishment in their own land at the personal second coming of Christ, xxx.-xxxiii. Fourth, historical, showing the false confidence of the princes and the people, the Nazarite separation of the

Rechabites in the midst of abounding evils, the contempt of the king for the word of God, the scourging and imprisonment of the prophet, the capture and destruction of Jerusalem, the release of Jeremiah and his removal to Egypt, but the continuance of God's testimony through it all, xxxiv.-xlv. Fifth, the judgment of seven surrounding Gentile nations, xlvi.-xlix. Sixth, the fearful doom of Babylon, and the glorious redemption of Israel, plainly looking on to a period yet future, l., li. Seventh, historical appendix, lii.

#### LAMENTATIONS.

This remarkable book is a dirge consisting of five elegies, sung amid the ruins of Jerusalem. Each of these has twenty-two stanzas, according to the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet. The third chapter, however, has sixty-six stanzas, containing three short verses under each letter of the alphabet, the initial letter being three times repeated. The first four elegies are acrostic, the successive stanzas beginning with the successive letters of the alphabet, but in the fifth the alphabetic arrangement disappears. As in the Psalms, the sufferings of God's people are so linked with the sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ, He is to be kept in view all the time. First, we hear the

touching lament of Zion, sitting like a desolate widow in unutterable grief. "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger." But she also confesses, "The Lord is righteous; for I have rebelled against his commandment," i. Second, This is followed by the lament of the prophet. "All that pass by clap their hands at thee; they hiss and wag their head at the daughter of Jerusalem, saying, Is this the city that men call The perfection of beauty, The joy of the whole earth?" He then beseeches Jehovah to behold the low estate of His people, ii. Third, Jeremiah describes his own deep afflictions, but hope lights up the darkness, and in the brightness of this hope, he looks on to the time when judgment shall be established on the earth under the sceptre of Christ, iii. Fourth, the prophet identifies himself with the afflicted people, in distinction from their false prophets and priests, and although the sufferings of Jerusalem were so great that "the hands of the pitiful women have sodden their own children," yet he anticipates with joy the restoration and triumph of Israel, iv. Fifth, the last elegy is the voice of the stricken people, and is throughout an earnest appeal for divine mercy, v.

## EZEKIEL.

After the surrender of Jerusalem by the worthless Jehoiachim, and previous to its destruction under Zedekiah, many of the noblest in the land were carried away in captivity to the rivers of Babylon. Jeremiah remained in the city until its overthrow, and sent an inspired message to the captives, recorded in the twenty-ninth chapter of his prophecy, warning them against the delusion of believing that they would soon return from their exile. Among these captives was Ezekiel, the meaning of whose name is "God shall strengthen," or "Strength of God." Like Jeremiah he was a priest by extraction, and like him and Isaiah also, his prophecy was principally concerning Judah and Jerusalem, and not concerning the Christian Church. Part of his predictions and messages he delivered previous to the final capture and desolation of Jerusalem, and part afterwards.

First, in the fifth year of his captivity he beheld the vision of the Cherubim and of the glory of God, followed by his commission, as a watchman unto the house of Israel, i.-iii. Second, then came strange signs and visions, setting forth the wickedness of the people and their impending doom; and in the midst of his denunciations he was carried in the spirit to Jerusalem, where he beheld the glory

of God, which lingered about the threshold of the temple, arose from the midst of the city; stood for a moment on the mount of Olives, and then disappeared, iv.-xi. Third, having been returned by the Spirit into captivity, he enters upon a series of typical actions, and delivers stern reproofs, all bearing upon the swiftly approaching doom of his distant countrymen, until on the very day the Chaldean army invested Jerusalem, he told his fellow-prisoners in Babylon what was occurring hundreds of miles away; and his wife dying on the evening of the same day, in obedience to God's command, he shed no tear, to signify that a heavier woe was at hand, xii.-xxiv. Fourth, but if Jerusalem is punished, the wicked heathen shall not escape, and sentence of judgment is pronounced upon seven Gentile nations, the prince of Tyre being made a type of antichrist, and Egypt a type of the world, xxv.-xxxii. Fifth, upon the news of the capture of Jerusalem, he is led to predict the long continued desolation of the land, ascribed to the influence of false shepherds, but also the literal and happy restoration of the widely scattered flock, by the power of the true Shepherd at His second coming, xxxiii.-xxxvii. Sixth, this restoration is to be followed by an invasion of their land from Russia and its dependencies; but the armies of the uncircumcised will find a place of graves, and the

debris of the battle-field will supply Israel with fire wood, xxxviii., xxxix. Seventh, all their enemies having been crushed, the glory returns, the temple is built, Jesus is worshipped as King over all the earth, and the Holy City shall be named Jehovah-Shammah, the Lord is there, xl.-xlviii.

#### DANIEL.

During the Babylonian captivity the Holy Ghost raised up a man whose inspired testimony opens a most important era, for it marks "the times of the Gentiles." The testimony is given in Chaldee from the fourth verse of the second chapter to the close of the seventh chapter, as if God would say to the proud kingdoms of the world, "Read in your own language what shall be the end of your boasted power." The book is divided into two equal parts, the historical, i.-vi., and the prophetic, vii.-xii. But the historical is prophetic in the sense that it is typical, the characteristic features of Gentile dominion being exhibited in the singular narratives that interrupt the visions of the seer. Its idolatry is shown in the golden image which the king of Babylon commanded all people, nations, and languages to worship; its pride and brutal indifference to God is shown in the degradation of Nebuchadnezzar to the condition of the beasts; its impiety



and sensuality in Belshazzar's wild revelry; its daring blasphemy in the decree of Darius, anticipating the antichrist, forbidding prayer to be offered to any being other than himself.

But apart from this the book gives us in unmistakable outline the course of the present age down to the second coming of Christ. First, we have Nebuchadnezzar's dream, in which the four great world powers are clearly delineated, and during the existence of the last of these in a divided state, the God of heaven sets up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, ii. Second, in the first year of Belshazzar Daniel had a dream, and in his vision saw the same four world powers, symbolized by four beasts, with the added feature of a power known as the "little horn," the antichrist making war with the saints, and prevailing against them until Jesus comes in person, vii. Third, in the third year of Belshazzar he had another vision in which the beasts are not only most appropriately described, but two of them are named, as Babylon has been previously named, so that we do not need to go out of the Bible to learn that the four universal empires are the Babylonian, Medo Persian, Grecian, and Roman, viii. Fourth, in the first year of Darius, after earnest prayer and humble confession, Daniel learns that seventy periods of seven will include the whole troubled history of his people,

the Jews, and of his holy city, Jerusalem; sixty-nine of these periods having elapsed when Messiah was cut off, and the seventieth heptad still lying in the future, the interval being filled by the church, of which no notice is here taken, ix. Fifth, in the third year of Cyrus, another vision was granted, which was designed, as he was told, to make him understand what shall befall his people, that is, the Jews, in the *latter* days: "for yet the vision is for many days," x. Sixth, in the first year of Darius the Mede, a wonderful vision passed before his rapt spirit, that unfolds the history of the Jews after prophecy ceased with Malachi, and before the birth of Messiah, but that reaches on to the reign of antichrist, xi. Seventh, deliverance comes at last, and Daniel whose name means "God is my Judge," or, "Judge of God," the singularly conscientious and consecrated youth and man, almost blameless in the highest and most trying position, will stand in his lot at the end of the days, crowned with the approval of his Lord.

#### HOSEA.

This prophet, whose name means "Deliverance or Salvation," is the first of those known as the twelve Minor Prophets, whose books were written at various periods extending over four

hundred years. He lived during the long and vigorous reign of Jeroboam the second, king of Israel, and was contemporary with Isaiah. But unlike the latter prophet, who was burdened chiefly about Judah and Jerusalem, Hosea was principally occupied in uttering the lamentation of Jehovah over the ten separated tribes of Israel, who had persistently broken His covenant, and hardened their hearts against the moving entreaties of His love. But amid all the touching expressions of wounded and disappointed affection, there is distinct promise of both spiritual and national recovery, of both conversion and restoration.

In the first section the prophet is directed to take "a wife of whoredoms," obviously a symbolic action, designed to be a living parable of the unfaithfulness of Israel to God. Of the three children proceeding from this marriage, one was named Jezreel, "God will scatter or sow;" one was called Lo-ruhamah, "Not having obtained mercy;" and the third Lo-ammi, "Not my people." But God announces His purpose to hedge up the way of His unfaithful wife with thorns, and by and by to allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak to her heart, until she shall cry Ishi, "my husband," and be betrothed unto Him forever, the queen regent of earth, during the millennial age. Meanwhile "the children of Israel shall

abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim," i.-iii.

In the second section the wickedness of the people, the priests, and the princes, is sharply reprov'd, and it closes with the warning, "I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face." The central thought of the section is, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge," iv.-v. In the third section we have an impassioned appeal and earnest expostulation, showing that the lack of knowledge is followed by intense worldliness, "Ephraim, he hath mixed himself among the people; Ephraim is a cake not turned," vi., vii. In the fourth section there is stern threatening, for the worldliness is succeeded by utter corruption; "They have deeply corrupted themselves, as in the days of Gibeah: therefore he will remember their iniquity, he will visit their sins," viii., ix. In the fifth section Israel is described as an empty vine, and then as a child most tenderly loved; but "my people are bent to backsliding from me: though they called them to the Most High, none at all would exalt him," x., xi. In the sixth section Judah comes in for a share in God's reproof, but the Holy Ghost speedily turns again to Ephraim, representing the

ten tribes, as pre-eminently wicked, and following the backsliding with open idolatry, to be terribly punished: "And now they sin more and more, and have made them molten images of their silver, and idols according to their own understanding," xii., xiii. In the seventh section they are exhorted to return unto the Lord, because they had fallen by their iniquity, and are told precisely how to return, and what words to use, with the assurance that they will be received and healed and abundantly blessed, xiv.

#### JOEL.

There is no mention of the time in which this prophet lived, although it has been supposed, from certain internal evidences, that he was the earliest of all the prophets, major or minor. His name means "Jehovah is God," and brief as is his prophecy, it sweeps over the entire history of the people who forgot that Jehovah is God, from the time it was uttered to the second advent of Christ. In the Hebrew Bible it is divided into four chapters, but if it is proper to make any break at all, it should occur at the eighteenth verse of the second chapter.

First, the Holy Ghost uses the devastations brought about by locusts as a type of the terrible judgments to be inflicted by the invasion of hostile armies, and therefore calls upon the priests and

the elders, the bridegroom and the bride, the children and all the people, to humble themselves in deep penitence before the Lord God of hosts, i., ii. 1-17. This is followed by the assurance that He will be merciful, removing the armies of the invaders, restoring the temporal blessings which they had lost, and planting them in their own land, where, it is said, "Ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you: and my people shall never be ashamed. And ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the Lord your God, and none else: and my people shall never be ashamed."

It is needless to say that this prophecy awaits its fulfillment, but it is important to notice that God declares, "It shall come to pass *afterward* I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh." When the Apostle quotes this language on the day of Pentecost, he does not say the scene then witnessed was a fulfillment of the prophecy, but, "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;" and we know that the signs accompanying the prediction were not witnessed, "blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke; the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come." These signs did not follow the gift of the Spirit in Peter's day,

because Israel was not then repentant and obedient, but as God's word is true, they will surely be seen in a day yet future.

Hence the last chapter tells of the gathering of all nations about Jerusalem, where the judgment takes place which is described in Matt. xxv. 31-46. "The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the Lord will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel." Their enemies will be overthrown, but amid the tokens of supernatural fertility, "Judah shall dwell forever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation."

#### AMOS.

This prophet, whose name means "*Bearer of burden*," was contemporary with Isaiah and Hosea. But, unlike the latter, his burden was borne on account of both Judah and Israel, and also surrounding Gentile nations. All that is known of his life we gather from his own words to Amaziah, a worldly priest who urged him not to deliver his unpopular messages at Bethel, the king's chapel, and the king's court: "I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son: but I was an herdman, and a gatherer of sycamore fruit: and the Lord took me as I followed the flock, and the Lord said unto

me, Go, prophecy unto my people Israel," (vii. 14, 15).

The Holy Ghost through this humble man first announces a series of judgments upon seven nations, the Syrians, Philistines, the kingdom of Tyre, the Edomites, Ammonites, Moabites, and then God's own people, i., ii. This is followed by three searching addresses, each beginning with the summons, "Hear this word." The first reminds his countrymen of their peculiar privileges, as constituting the only people of all the families of the earth God had known; but this brought with it peculiar responsibilities: "THEREFORE I will punish you for all your iniquities," iii. The second address mentions their iniquities, especially the mockery of their formal services at Bethel and Gilgal, as having brought upon them the rod of punishment, iv. The third address, after an earnest exhortation to turn unto the Lord, predicts the overthrow of the kingdom and their captivity, v., vi.

This is succeeded by a series of five visions, the grasshoppers, the devouring fire, and the Lord standing upon a wall with a plumb-line in His hand, like the law of God, showing how far they were from rectitude. The judgments thus typified were executed in the invasions of Pul, Tiglath-pileser, and Shalmaneser, the last of whom carried



away the ten tribes, and they have not returned to this day. Then came the basket of summer fruits, showing that Israel was ripe for the threatened infliction, and ready to fall; and finally the Lord was seen standing upon the altar, to give the stroke of destruction with His own hand, and to scatter it to the winds, vii.-ix. 1-10.

Yet in the end grace triumphs, as set forth by all the prophets, and it will be gloriously displayed, when Christ comes a second time. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt. And I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God," ix. 11-15. The Apostle James quotes a part of this passage, and reveals the divine purpose in language it seems difficult to misunderstand. God is now visiting the Gentiles "to take out of them a people for his name." After this is accomplished, not the conversion of all the Gentiles, but only the gathering out of an elect

number, Christ will return, and "build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down," restoring Israel to their land, "that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles," (Acts xv. 14-17).

#### OBADIAH.

We know not the time of this prophet, whose name means "Servant of the Lord," but it is probable that he was among the earliest called to the prophetic office. His book is the briefest message that was delivered, and yet it is exceedingly important, as it predicts the doom of the Edomites. These were the descendants "of Esau, who is Edom," (Gen. xxxvi. 1), the twin brother of Jacob, and the type of the unchangeable hostility of the flesh to that which is born of the Spirit. Although their name and identity are lost at present among some of the existing nations, God will search them out in the last days; and it is apparent that a more terrible destruction awaits them then, than that which has overtaken them in the past.

The prophet announces that the hand of the Lord will drag them from their munitions of rocks, though they exalt themselves as eagles, and set their nest among the stars, for their treatment of Jerusalem in the day of its calamity and sorrow. This shows that whosoever touches His people

touches the apple of His eye, and will be remembered in the day of the Lord that is near upon all the heathen, (vs. 15). "But upon mount Zion shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness; and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions. . . . And saviours shall come up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau; and the kingdom shall be the Lord's."

Thus the book, however short, reaches on like all prophecy to the second advent of the Lord Jesus, and like all prophecy promises both spiritual and national recovery and restoration to the now scattered children of Jacob. It is a book that should be studied in connection with the following scriptures: Num. xx. 14-22; xxiv. 17-19; Ps. lx. 8-12; cxxxvii. 7; Isa. xi. 11-14; Isa. xxxiv; Jer. xlix. 7-22; Ezek. xxxv.

#### JONAH.

Jonah, whose name means "dove," was one of the earliest prophets, for we find that a prediction he uttered was fulfilled in the days of Jeroboam II, about eight hundred years B. C., (2 Kings xiv. 25). It is blessed to know that the affecting and significant story of his ministry, which shallow and impudent infidelity has always ridiculed, has received the full endorsement of the Lord Jesus

Christ, and is thus linked forever with His veracity, (Matt. xii. 39-41). Any one taught of the Spirit can readily see that the object of the devil in calling forth a sneer of incredulity at the resurrection of Jonah, is to lead men to reject the resurrection of Jesus, for it is no more difficult to believe the one than the other. Science has shown that "a great fish," the true shark, exists in the Mediterranean; and upon human testimony the statement will be accepted that in some of these fish, fully a dozen undigested tunny-fish, weighing 400 pounds, have been found; that in one of them an entire horse was found, having an estimated weight of 1500 pounds; that from another a sailor, who had been swallowed, was rescued alive, (Keil and Delitzsch, vol. i. p. 398). Yet when God speaks, He only is to be treated as a liar. But such is man.

The desperate wickedness of the human heart is again illustrated by the conduct of Jonah himself, who flew in the face of God's command when it crossed his wishes, who would rather resign his prophetic office than mortify the flesh, who proudly refused to submit his reason and will to the divine pleasure. He knew something of the Lord's loving heart, and he was afraid that if he preached to Nineveh, the people might repent, and then be spared to lay waste his beloved land of Israel,

(2 Kings xvii. 1-23). As a loyal Jew, therefore, he was determined not to proceed upon a mission of warning and perhaps of mercy to the hated enemies of his country; and when the Lord told him to go to Nineveh, he fled in the opposite direction, taking a ship that was sailing to Spain. But the Lord sent out a great wind into the sea, and the unfaithful servant was startled from the guilty insensibility of spiritual slumber by the piercing call of the terrified ship master, "What meanest thou, O sleeper? Arise, call upon thy God." Overwhelmed with a sense of his sin, he took the place of death and judgment, and at his own request was cast into the tempestuous sea, (chap. i.).

"Then Jonah prayed unto the Lord his God out of the fish's belly." How helpless he was, and how humiliating to find a prophet of Israel borne to the bottoms of the mountains, the weeds wrapped about his head, and the bars of the earth caging him! But his prayers, and quotation from the Psalms, and vows, did him no good, until he cried from the heart, "Salvation is of the Lord." The moment he got to that in his experience, "the Lord spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land," (chap. ii.).

Obedient at last, the prophet who had thoroughly learned the lesson of submission went to Nineveh, and delivered the message he was sent to communi-

cate to the mighty capital of Assyria. "So the people of Nineveh believed God." They believed God, and then they repented, and proclaimed a fast, and covered themselves with sackcloth, both man and beast, and cried mightily unto God. It was enough. "Is he the God of the Jews only, is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also," (Rom. iii. 29). God turned from His fierce anger, and Nineveh was spared, though He knew the same city would be the rod in His hand to afflict Israel, (chap. iii.).

It is deeply humbling and searching to our souls to find that the man of God was exceedingly displeased and grieved by the divine forbearance and patience. He had cried, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown;" and the city still remained. Regard for his own reputation made him angry, and he would rather witness the destruction of all the Assyrians than to see himself dishonored. The flesh in a prophet is no better than the flesh in a heathen, and in a Christian it will lift up its horrid and disgusting head, unless constantly kept down by the Spirit. But God taught His poor, foolish servant a wonderful truth by the gourd; and the book closes abruptly, leaving Jonah disgraced, as it were, forced to commit his reputation to the keeping of Jehovah. It is comforting to notice that everything in this

remarkable scripture is of God. It was He who sent out the wind, who prepared the fish, who prepared the gourd, who prepared the worm. It is precious too to observe that He counted the little children in Nineveh, more than 120,000, and also much cattle, (chap. v.).

#### MICAH.

Micah, meaning "Who is like the Lord?" was contemporary in part at least with Isaiah, as we learn from the first verse of his prophecy, which consists of seven chapters. First, the rapidly approaching doom of Samaria, the capital of the ten tribes, by the Assyrians, is announced, (i.). Second, the cause of the overthrow is to be traced to the covetousness and worldliness of God's once highly favored people, (ii.). Third, the princes and the popular preachers come in for a share in the rebuke, and for their sakes Jerusalem also is to become heaps, and beautiful Zion plowed as a field, (iii.). Fourth, mercy rejoiceth against judgment, and when the Son of God appears, Jerusalem shall shine in glory, and Zion be the meeting place for the happy millennial nations, (iv.). Fifth, the place of His birth is pointed out, and He is to be the peace of His people, delivering from the Assyrian of the last days, and making the remnant of Jacob as a

young lion among the Gentiles, (v.). Sixth, the tender pleading and solemn upbraiding of Jehovah follow, warning the children of Israel that they must suffer for their iniquities, (vi.). Seventh, in the midst of His rebuke and indignation, the hope of the Lord's coming glitters like a star in a dark sky. and the prophecy closes with a burst of joy in the anticipation of the bright day, when God will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea, (vii.).

#### NAHUM.

The name of this prophet means "Comfort, or consolation," and he reminds us of Noah, also meaning "Rest or comfort." He is the seventh chronologically of the Minor Prophets, the date of his ministry falling under the reign of Hezekiah, about 150 years after Jonah. "The burden of Nineveh" was laid upon his heart, and he foretells in graphic style the utter desolation of that proud oppressor of God's people. The preaching of Jonah had led to repentance and to temporary reformation; but "because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil," (Ecc. viii. 11).

The very manner of its destruction is minutely described, for it is said, "with an overrunning flood



he will make an utter end of the place thereof, and darkness shall pursue his enemies," (i. 8); "the gates of the rivers shall be opened, and the palace shall be dissolved," or, as it is in the margin, "molten." It was besieged by the Medes and Babylonians, and Diodorus Siculus says, "There was an old prophecy, that Nineveh should not be taken till the river became an enemy to the city. And in the third year of the siege, the river being swollen with continual rains, overflowed every part of the city, and broke down the wall for twenty furlongs; then the king, thinking that the oracle was fulfilled, and the river become an enemy to the city, built a large funeral pile in the palace, and, collecting together all his wealth and his concubines and eunuchs, burnt himself and the palace with them all; and the enemy entered at the breach that the waters had made, and took the city." The recent discoveries of Layard and Rawlinson, bringing to light a buried city of whose very existence ancient historians seemed to be almost ignorant, show how accurate were Jonah and Nahum in their reference to its extent and magnificence, although of course the word of God does not need to be confirmed by human testimony.

But if the latter prophet was burdened with the doom of the mighty city, the type of this world, and of the enemies of God's elect, and especially

of the Assyrian of the last days, he can not close without a word of consolation to the redeemed of the Lord: "Though I have afflicted thee, I will afflict thee no more. . . . Behold, upon the mountains the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace! O Judah, keep thy solemn feasts, perform thy vows: for the wicked shall no more pass through thee; he is utterly cut off." Thus Nahum, like all the prophets, reaches on to the end of the present dispensation.

#### HABAKKUK.

His parentage, birth place, and date of his ministry, are unrecorded, but from certain internal evidences it is probable that he lived in the days of Josiah, the last king of Judah who observed the passover, and strove to purify the enemies of the temple. As Nahum had to bear the burden of Nineveh, so Habakkuk was called to bear the burden of God's people in connection with the Chaldeans who were to be used for the punishment of Judea, and then be overthrown for their own iniquities. His name means "Embracing," or, according to Dr. Young, "Love's embrace," and it is sweet to notice that amid the gathering judgments that were about to burst upon his country, he was safe in the embrace of infinite Love.

His prophecy consists of three chapters. The first, announcing the coming of the Chaldeans, contains earnest expostulations and entreaties, that God would spare his people and visit their enemies. The second shows the prophet on his watch tower, patiently waiting to hear what the Lord would say unto him. He is informed that the vision is for an appointed time, "but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry." Thus it looks to the close of the present dispensation, and while the world is ripening for judgment, the saint must live by faith. Then follow four woes upon Babylon as the symbol of the world's evil, but in the midst of it all, the promise breaks in like sunshine through the storm, "The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

Hence in the third chapter we have a prayer and song in the sublimest strains, covering the whole history of God's dealings with Israel, and closing with the exulting confidence of faith: "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation."

## ZEPHANIAH.

The meaning of his name is "Hid of the Lord," or, as Young gives it, "Jah is darkness." He delivered his prophecy in the days of Josiah, and it shows that the "revival" brought about by that pious king was of brief duration. The iniquity of the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem weighed very heavily upon his heart, as it did upon the heart of his contemporary Jeremiah, and it was waxing worse and worse. At last the people reached the place of practical atheism to which the world of culture and science has come in these days, when they said, "The Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil." After this nothing remains but "the great day of the Lord; . . . a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness."

But if His professed people are to be righteously chastened, the nations of the world will be terribly punished, as set forth in the second chapter. "The Lord will be terrible unto them: for he will famish all the gods of the earth; and men shall worship him, every one from his place, even all the isles of the heathen." As in Habakkuk, so here it is written, "Therefore wait ye upon me, saith

the Lord, until the day that I rise up to the prey ; for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger : for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy.”

But while judgments sweep the defiled scene according to the testimony of all the scriptures, a remnant will be spared, described as “ an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord.” These will form the nucleus of a saved and restored people at the coming of Christ, and hence the prophecy ends with beautiful strains of promise. “ Sing, O daughter of Zion ; shout, O Israel ; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. . . . The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty ; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy ; he will rest in his love ; he will joy over thee with singing. . . . Behold, at that time I will undo all that afflict thee ; and I will save her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out ; and I will get them praise and fame in every land where they have been put to shame. At that time I will bring you again, even in the time that I gather you : for I will make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth ; when I turn back your captivity before your eyes, saith the Lord.”

## HAGGAI.

This prophet, whose name means "Festive," or "Festival of the Lord," is the first of the three who were called to the prophetic office after the captivity. He is mentioned in Ezra v. 1; vi. 14; and his ministry had much to do with the rebuilding of the temple, and with the religious condition of the remnant of Judah, that had been permitted by their Gentile masters to return to their land. His style is homely, as the critics say, but for all this we read, "Then spake Haggai, the Lord's messenger, in the Lord's message unto the people." He is the first of the prophets who is called Jehovah's messenger, and God put high honor upon him, notwithstanding the plainness and simplicity of his language.

His prophecy consists of five parts: First, His message delivered to the people through Zerubabel their civil ruler, and Joshua their high priest, arousing them to build the temple, which they had shamefully neglected, while attending to their own affairs, i. 1-11. Second, the effect produced by his stirring summons, as seen in the fact that within three weeks, the rubbish was cleared away, the materials collected, and the workmen were on the walls, i. 12-15; Ezra v., vi. Third, they did not wait for the decree of the king; but their enthusiasm

soon cooled, and hence Jehovah's messenger addresses them again with a word of cheer, that reaches on to the second coming of Christ. "I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come;" or as the Septuagint has it, "the choice things of all the nations shall come;" or as Hengstenburg says, "the beauty of all the heathen;" or as Ewald translates, "the loveliest of all people." However this may be, we know that the time stretches forward to the glorious advent of our Lord, for the Holy Ghost so declares in Heb. xii. 27. "The glory of this latter house," or rather, "the latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former, saith the Lord of hosts;" and it is interesting to notice that the identity of the house is preserved to the end, ii. 1-9. Fourth, another message is delivered, setting forth the moral condition of the Jews, answering to the sad state of things in these last days, ii. 10-19. Fifth, the closing message again announces the shaking of the heavens and the earth, and the overthrow of all kingdoms before the coming and crowning of Christ, of whom Zerubbabel is used as a type in his princely office. "Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying, I will shake the heavens and the earth; and I will overthrow the throne of the kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the nations," ii. 20-23.

## ZECHARIAH.

This prophet was contemporary with Haggai, both of them following Zephaniah by an interval of at least an hundred years. His name, meaning "Remembered of the Lord," or as Dr. Young says, "Jah is renowned," occurs in connection with that of Haggai in the book of Ezra. But while the former prophet was chiefly concerned with the temple and the religious state of God's ancient people, the latter takes a broader view, unfolding the future of Israel and of Gentile nations down to the coming and kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, and reaching on into millennial days.

The first six chapters contain a series of visions, all seen in one night in the second year of Darius. (1) The vision of four horses among the myrtle trees, God's providential agencies, and representatives of the Gentiles, that found the whole earth at rest under Gentile dominion. But this aroused the jealousy of Jehovah for His despised people, and led to the promise, "the Lord shall yet comfort Zion, and shall yet choose Jerusalem."

(2) The vision of the four horns and four carpenters, the horns the symbols of power, and the carpenters the symbols of still greater power that shall in due time fray the four great Gentile powers, to whom dominion passed after Israel was set aside.



(3) The vision of the measuring line, indicating the vastness and magnificence of Jerusalem; but it is expressly said it shall be "after the glory," or, in other words, after the personal return of the Lord Jesus to the earth. "And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people."

(4) But the sin of Judah must be dealt with in grace before the glory, and hence we have the vision of Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord in filthy garments. The vision furnishes one of the most beautiful pictures of God's way of justifying and saving the sinner, found in all the Bible.

(5) This is appropriately followed by the vision of the golden candlestick or lamp stand, setting forth the work of the Holy Spirit in behalf of the justified ones, and presenting Joshua and Zerubabel as types of Christ in his priestly and kingly offices.

(6) But they must be dealt with in righteousness too, and this is exhibited in the vision of the flying roll and the woman in the epha, telling of wickedness preceding the day of the Lord's coming, and judgment on the track of wickedness. The whole scene answers to the woman hiding leaven in the three measures of meal, leading on to the Babylon and antichrist of the last days.

(7) Then comes the vision of the four chariots, or the overthrow of the entire Gentile dominion, succeeded by the appearance of The BRANCH. "Even he shall build the temple of the Lord; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both," that is, between Jehovah and the reigning priest, i.-vi.

The rest of the book is divided into six parts. (1) In the fourth year of Darius a message is delivered, searching the hearts and consciences of God's people with a lighted candle, but promising divine deliverance and complete restoration to the house of Judah and the house of Israel. "In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold, out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you; for we have heard that God is with you." If a Jew does not mean a Jew, what does it mean? vii., viii.

(2) The burden of the word of the Lord fell upon the prophet with regard to surrounding nations; and he describes the victorious progress of the great king of Macedon, sparing Jerusalem, because the Lord had encamped about His house. But the Jews were to be scattered for their sins, and then brought back. "I will sow them among the

people: and they shall remember me in far countries: and they shall live with their children, and turn again. . . . And I will strengthen them in the Lord; and they shall walk up and down in his name, saith the Lord," ix. 10.

(3) Then we have an account of the good Shepherd and the idol shepherd, the Christ and the antichrist, leading us forward to the close of the present dispensation, xi.

(4) Judah and Jerusalem in the midst of conflict shall at last accept their rejected Messiah, only when they shall *look* upon Him, and there shall be a great national mourning in view of their blindness and unbelief for more than eighteen hundred years, every family mourning apart in bitterness of soul, xii.

(5) "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness." This is not a "fountain filled with blood," as we often sing, for the moment they see Jesus as Lord, as the man that is God's fellow, smitten for transgression, they have pardon. But it is the washing with water by the word, xiii.

(6) Last of all comes glorious deliverance, when all nations shall be gathered against Jerusalem to battle, and His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on

the east, and the Lord our God shall come, and all the saints with Him. "And the Lord shall be king over all the earth," His "Peace, be still," falling in sweetest accents upon the storms of a troubled world, xiv.

#### MALACHI.

The last of the Old Testament prophets, whose name means "the messenger of the Lord," deals with the sad spiritual state of Israel, succeeding the days of Haggai and Zechariah, which corresponds precisely with the state of the professing body at the close of the present age. Man, wherever placed and however tried, is a wretched failure, and will be till Jesus comes. The mass of the people in the time of Malachi were "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." They kept up their religious ceremonies, but brought to God for sacrifice the torn, and the lame, and the sick, while they were over-reaching each other in money making, and procuring divorces to indulge their lusts.

Seven times they ask the insolent question, "Wherein hast thou loved us?" "Wherein have we despised thy name?" "Wherein have we polluted thee?" "Wherein have we wearied thee?" "Wherein shall we return?" "Wherein have we

robbed thee?" "What have we spoken against thee?" Truly might God say, "I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." But in the midst of the empty profession there was a little remnant, that feared the Lord, and spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened, and heard with delight their prayers and conversation. Yea, their very thoughts of Him He put down in His book, as He puts the tears of the saints in His bottle, and their prayers in His vial. Twenty-five times in four short chapters do we find "Thus saith the Lord," as if the people then, like many professed Christians now, were losing all faith in verbal inspiration.

First, God reproaches them for their formal service, and their want of filial affection and loyalty and devotedness to Himself, i. Second, He upbraids them for the hypocrisy and time-serving spirit of their priests, for their sharp dealing with each other, and for the prevalence of divorces, ii. Third, He tells them that Christ will suddenly come, and then there will be an awful reckoning with adulterers, and false swearers, and those that defraud the hireling of his wages, and those that rob God of tithes and offerings, and those that said in their hearts, "It is vain to serve God," iii. Fourth, The day is coming when the proud and the wicked shall be as stubble, but to those that fear

His name, the appearing of Christ will be as the Sun of righteousness. It is an appearing that will be ushered in by the ministry of Elijah "before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord;" and in view of the melancholy record from Genesis onward, the Old Testament most appropriately closes with the word *curse*.

#### MATTHEW.

The best way to study this book is to compare carefully the facts it records with the same facts, as recorded in the other gospels. No one who does this with spiritual intelligence, and with honesty of purpose, can remain in doubt concerning the superhuman origin of any of the books, or concerning the truth of verbal inspiration. It will be seen that the Holy Ghost had a special design in each of the four gospels, and this design He keeps constantly in view even in the smallest particulars. The additions, the omissions, the so-called discrepancies, are all in perfect harmony with the object He had before Him in these various accounts of the life, and death, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ; and if there are some things we do not understand, it will be modest and becoming to confess that it is due to our ignorance, which is often enlightened by patiently waiting at

the feet of the Saviour, rather than conclude that the Spirit of the living God has made a mistake.

It is easy to perceive that in the gospel of Matthew, Jesus of Nazareth is presented as the promised king of Israel; in Mark, as the faithful Servant who has set us the example of prompt and perfect obedience to God's will; in Luke, as the Son of man; and in John, as the Son of God. It is easy to perceive also that Matthew does not observe any chronological order in his narrative, but ranges over the whole field of our Lord's ministry, in order to call out and group together the facts and incidents that illustrate the point he has before him. That point is to reveal Jesus Christ as the Messiah of the Old Testament, the anointed king of the Jews, and if we would know the meaning of the book, this must be kept before the mind in every chapter.

Chapter i., the genealogy of the king. Chapter ii., the birth of the king. Chapter iii., the baptism of the king. Chapter iv., the temptation of the king. Chapter v., the king announces the laws, and describes the subjects, of His kingdom, already anticipating His rejection by Israel. Chapter vi., the king passes from actions to motives and principles, in setting forth the character and conduct becoming those who belong to His kingdom. Chapter vii., the king shows the relation of His

subjects to each other, with warnings against false prophets, and a formal profession of His name. Chapter viii., the king's presence manifested in grace and power to Israel. Chapter ix., effect of the king's presence upon the leaders in Israel. Chapter x., the king's messengers to Israel. Chapter xi., the king utterly rejected by Israel. Chapter xii., Israel rejected by the king. Chapter xiii., the mysteries of the kingdom, or the kingdom existing in concealment, and the state of things during the present age. Chapter xiv., the kingdom revealed in type. Chapter xv., Israel after the rejection of the king. Chapter xvi., the church revealed, occupying the interval during which the kingdom is in mystery. Chapter xvii., a glimpse of the kingdom, as it shall be at the close of the church period. Chapter xviii., the spirit becoming those who are waiting for the kingdom. Chapter xix., earthly relationships in the light of the kingdom. Chapter xx., sovereignty of the king in the awards of the kingdom, and service the test of position. Chapter xxi., the king presents Himself to Israel for the last time. Chapter xxii., the king appearing in grace, but despised. Chapter xxiii., the king pronounces the doom of apostate Israel. Chapters xxiv., xxv., the king's last message to His disciples, dwelling at length upon His second advent. Chapter xxvi., the king betrayed, forsaken,



and denied. Chapter xxvii., the king crucified. Chapter xxviii., the king risen.

It is in this gospel we find the phrase, "the kingdom of heaven," or more literally, "the kingdom of the heavens." It occurs thirty-two times, and does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. The word *kingdom* is found fifty-six times; and although the expression, "the kingdom of God" is used three times, there is an obvious reason for the change in the language. God's king was there in Israel, but being denied and disowned, he was taken up into the heavens, and "the kingdom of the heavens" began upon His ascension to the right hand of the Father. Hence the phrase is equivalent to the present, Christian dispensation, during which Christ from the heavens is exercising rule in an especial manner over that part of the earth in which His gospel is proclaimed.

But if the gospel is rejected, as it surely is rejected before our eyes by an overwhelming majority of men and women in Christendom, and as the Lord assures us it will be rejected to the end of the age, we need not be surprised to find the kingdom of heaven likened to that which is evil. During the time the king is in the heavens, and not manifested in regal glory and power on the earth, He tells the disciples that only a fourth part of the seed will bring forth fruit, and this variously; that

the tares and the wheat will grow together until the harvest at His coming; that, although the outward growth of the professing body will be like a great tree springing from the least of seeds, it will furnish shelter for the very birds that had interfered with the work of the sower; and that a woman, not the man, will hide leaven, sour dough, in three measures of meal, until the whole is leavened. He, however, comforts their hearts by the assurance that He has a treasure hid in a field, or Israel still dear to His heart, and one pearl of great price, or His loved church, for the sake of which He had sold all He had.

This thirteenth chapter marks the break and change in His ministry, as it is the turning point in the book, which for the sake of convenience may be divided as follows: First, the birth of the king, whose lineage is traced back through Joseph to David and Abraham, and the attempt to destroy the infant king of the Jews, i., ii. Second, the baptism of the king, succeeded by the temptation which reached its climax in the offer to Him of all the kingdoms of the world, iii., iv. Third, the actions and principles becoming the subjects of a king, already preparing His followers for sorrow and persecution, v.-vii. Fourth, the personal ministry and rejection of the king, leading Him no longer to recognize Israel after the flesh, viii.-xii.

Fifth, the mysteries of the kingdom, or the state of things during the period He is in the heavens, xiii. Sixth, the king is seen on His way to the cross, xiv.-xxv. Seventh, His agony in the garden, His crucifixion, and resurrection, xxvi.-xxviii.

But it will be observed that in this gospel there is no ascension, as becometh the king of Israel, an earthly people, whose place corporately and dispensationally is here below. But while we see His relations to Israel all the way through, in every miracle, in every parable, in every action, there are bright intimations of His grace flowing out to the Gentiles. Hence in the opening chapter, there are only four women mentioned, and upon each of these there was a dark stain in the estimation of the proud Jew. There were many illustrious women in the line of His human ancestry, but only Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, belonging to the accursed race of Moab, and the wife of Uriah, are named, as if the Holy Ghost were hinting that the king knew how to go beyond Israel, in order to seek and to save that which was lost. Those who thoroughly study this precious book, and are taught by the Spirit its meaning, will have a key not only to the New Testament, but to the Old. The more it is studied, the more profound will be the conviction that every line has upon it the stamp of divinity.

## MARK.

It is the purpose of the Holy Ghost in this Gospel to set forth our Lord Jesus Christ as the faithful and obedient Servant, according to the terms of the prophecy, "Behold, my servant, whom I uphold, mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my spirit upon him; he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. . . . Who is blind, but my servant? or deaf, as my messenger that I sent? Who is blind as he that is perfect, and blind as the Lord's servant?" (Isa. xlii. 1-3, 19; xlix. 6; lii. 13; liii. 11).

The blessed One was blind to every object but the glory of God, deaf to every call but the voice of God, and hence gave us an example of perfect service. It was a service, as described in the gospel of Mark, distinguished by many beautiful and significant features. First, it began with His temptation in the wilderness, when He "was with the wild beasts;" like another David who gains the victory in secret over the lion and the bear, before he went forth to open conflict with Goliath. This fact is recorded by Mark alone.

Second, it was a service undertaken in secret prayer, Mark alone informing us, that "in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed." This statement is the more noteworthy because the evening before, after the sun did set, and we know not how far into the night, He was at work. But however busy, nothing must hinder the faithful servant from personal communion with God.

Third, it was a service promptly rendered. Ten times in the opening chapter we find the words *immediately, straitway, forthwith*, as indicating the haste and energy with which the obedient Servant did the bidding of Him who sent Him. The Greek word so translated occurs eighty times in the New Testament, and forty times it is found in the short gospel of Mark.

Fourth, it was an unwearied service. Again and again it is recorded, and it is peculiar to Mark, that when He sought retirement for prayer, and rest, and sleep, He suffered the need of others to call Him forth into the activities of His busy ministry; nor did He utter a murmuring word at the thoughtless selfishness of grief and want.

Fifth, it was a service that entered into minute details, as if nothing were too small for His notice. Mark alone mentions the fact that He took up the

little children in His arms, or rather, folded them in His arms; that He not only set a little child in the midst of His disciples as the symbol of true greatness, but took him up in His arms; and that He took the mother of Peter's wife by the hand, and lifted her up. Many such striking incidents can be gathered by comparing the different gospels.

Sixth, it was a service rendered in great tenderness. Mark alone notices that He had compassion on the loathsome leper; that, beholding the young ruler, He loved him; and the same Evangelist tells us more frequently than the other gospels, of the touch of His hand, His looking, His sighing; as if the Holy Spirit would indicate the necessity of love and sympathy for the true servant.

Seventh, it was a service not performed for display, but carried on in secret. Hence we read that He took the deaf man, who had an impediment in his speech, aside, and when He had healed him, "charged them that they should tell no man;" that He led the blind man out of the town, and when He had given him sight, said, "Neither go into the town, nor tell it to any in the town;" and that "He entered into a house, and would have no man know it."

This gospel, therefore, as compared with the others, is remarkable both for its omissions and its additions. It gives no account of the genealogy of

Jesus, nor of His miraculous conception and birth, nor of the sermon on the mount, nor is the title of "Lord" given Him by the Evangelist or by the disciples, until after His resurrection; but He Himself declares, only in this gospel, "of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." This language which has perplexed so many becomes perfectly plain, when we remember that it is the purpose of the Holy Ghost in Mark to reveal Him as the faithful servant; and "the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth."

All the way through the gospel it is service, even in the four parables that are recorded, and in the miracles that are mentioned. Every chapter, except the first, seventh, eighth, and fourteenth, begins with the word AND, as if there were scarcely a pause in His ministry of grace from first to last. Onward He moved with an obedience that never faltered, with a zeal for God's glory that never wavered, with a love for poor sinners that no coldness could chill, with a courage that no danger could shake. The opening chapter introduces Him as engaged in constant labor for others, and the last verse of the last chapter tells us the disciples "went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen."

It is important too to state that Mark observes the chronological order of events, as Matthew does not, and hence it is easy to follow his simple narrative. First, we have His unceasing toil in Israel, i.-vi. Second, His rejection by the leaders of Israel, vii. Third, the announcement of His approaching death, viii. Fourth, His journey from the mount of transfiguration to Jerusalem, ix., x. Fifth, His entrance into the city and final address to the people, xi., xii. Sixth, His farewell message to His disciples, and crucifixion, xiii.-xv. Seventh, His resurrection and ascension, xvi. In the study of the whole gospel we can only be "beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well," (vii. 37).

#### LUKE.

In this gospel the Holy Ghost presents the Lord Jesus to us as the Son of man. In Matthew we have the wise men asking, "Where is he that is born king of the Jews? Mark begins with His public ministry. But in Luke the angel says to the shepherds, "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." Zacharias before His birth announced



that He was "to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace;" and at His circumcision Simeon preached that He was to be "a light to lighten the Gentiles."

Thus at the beginning of this gospel He is exhibited in His broadest relations to the human race, and in that aspect of His wondrous character and life which brings Him before us as a perfect man. Hence here alone we read that "the child grew," that "when he was twelve years old," Joseph and Mary went with Him to the feast of the passover, and "as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem," that "He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them," and that "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." All of this is intensely human, and indicates a purpose distinct from the other gospels, that can not escape the notice of the attentive reader.

So in the genealogy which follows His baptism, unlike Matthew who gives us "the book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham, Luke traces His lineage through Mary back to David, back to Abraham, back to "Adam which was of God." This at once links Him to the whole family of man, and the

thought is carried out in all of the parables and teachings, that are peculiar to the third gospel. Here only are we told that "a certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho;" that "a certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard;" that "a certain man made a great supper;" that "this man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them;" that "a certain man had two sons;" that "there was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen;" that "two men went up into the temple to pray;" and that the centurion, deeply impressed by the scenes which attended the crucifixion said, "Certainly this was a righteous man." The last statement is the more striking when compared with the testimony of Matthew, "Truly this was the Son of God," and of Mark, "Truly this man was the Son of God."

Here too the human side of His character is brought out in the frequent mention of His praying. Nowhere else do we learn that "when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened;" that "He withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed;" that "He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God," before His choice of the twelve; that "as he was alone praying" Peter confessed Him "the Christ of God;" that "He went up into

a mountain to pray; and as he prayed" the transfiguration occurred; that "as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased" He taught the disciples the Lord's prayer; that He said to Peter, "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not;" that "being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly;" that on the cross He prayed, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Surely in all this He brings Himself very near to us as the pattern man.

There are many minor differences between Luke and the other Evangelists, in the narration of the same facts, which the diligent student of the Bible can discover for himself, if he will take a so-called harmony of the gospels, and notice the minute distinctions, every one of which proves a special purpose in each of the four, and every one of which proves verbal inspiration. One of these gospels was written before the others, and it would have been an easy matter for a copyist, if he had been a mere boy, to repeat precisely what he had before his eyes. But the distinctions, not contradictions, show that the pens of the writers were guided by superhuman wisdom, to subserve the specific design of the Holy Ghost in these several narratives.

For example, when our Lord sent forth the twelve, according to Matthew He commanded them, saying, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles,

and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not : but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel ;” because Matthew gives us the gospel of the king of Israel. But in Luke we are told that “ they departed, and went through the towns, preaching the gospel, and healing everywhere ;” because here we have the gospel of the Son of man in His relations to the whole world. Other illustrations of carefully prepared differences of statement can be easily found, and it is recommended to those who would receive a full impression of the divinity and import of the Scriptures, to place before them four copies of the gospels, thoughtfully examining the miracles, parables, sayings, and events, that are recorded in two or more.

The divisions of Luke’s gospel are very simple and natural : First, Jesus the son of man from His birth, through His childhood, to the time of His baptism, when He “ began to be about thirty years of age, i.-iii. Second, His public ministry in the sympathies of a human heart, leading Him about the cities and towns of Galilee, iv.-viii. Third, His sending forth the twelve and the seventy, in connection with the stedfast setting of His face to go to Jerusalem in order to accomplish His exodus, ix., x. Fourth, His grace and love manifested during the progress of His last journey, and His entrance into the city, xi.-xix. Fifth, His last

message to the people, and to His disciples, xx., xxi. Sixth, His betrayal and death, saving a poor sinner even on the cross, xxii., xxiii. Seventh, His resurrection, showing Himself to be still the son of man by eating, and His ascension, xxiv.

### JOHN.

This sublime and beautiful gospel is necessary to complete the view of the wonderful character and life of our blessed Lord. As already noticed Matthew describes Him as the Son of David, Mark as the unwearied Servant, Luke as the Son of man, while it was reserved for John to present Him as the Son of God. Hence it is not strange that through all the history of the Church, the four gospels have been seen to answer somewhat to the four cherubim mentioned in the book of Revelation. The first was like a lion, and is therefore connected with the gospel of Matthew; which reveals Jesus Christ as the Lion of the tribe of Judah. The second was like a calf, or, as Ezekiel has it, an ox, the symbol of patient service and uncomplaining sacrifice, and therefore belongs to Mark. The third had the face of a man, and is linked to Luke; and the fourth was like a flying eagle, the suitable emblem of the gospel of John, setting forth the heavenly Stranger.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men.” Such is the marvellous opening of the fourth gospel, and if it does not prove the true and proper divinity of Jesus Christ, the doctrine can not be taught in human language. In the same chapter there are twenty-one distinct names and titles given to Him, to which may be added the sevenfold testimony of John the Baptist concerning One, in whose ever-increasing greatness he was glad to decrease. (1) He testifies that Jesus is Lord, i. 23; (2) that He is the Lamb of God, i. 29, 36; (3) that He is the Son of God, i. 34; (4) that He is the Bridegroom, iii. 29; (5) that He is above all, iii. 31; (6) that all things are given into His hands, iii. 35; (7) that faith in Him is essential to the salvation of the soul, iii. 36.

In chapter ii., we have His first miracle, the turning of water into wine, as typical of the cheering and joyful dispensation He had introduced, followed by the scourging from the temple of those who polluted its sanctity; showing that this gospel commences, as it were, where the others leave off.

In chapter iii., we are told of the new birth, and therefore of the Spirit, who is presented in the

gospel, (1) as quickening, iii. 5-8; (2) as indwelling, iv. 14; (3) as outflowing, vii. 38, 39; (4) as comforting, xiv. 16, 17; (5) as teaching, xiv. 26; (6) as testifying, xv. 26; (7) as showing things to come, xvi. 13.

In chapter iv., we see our Lord in Samaria, and again in Cana of Galilee, talking with a sinful woman at Jacob's well, meeting her six words of ignorance, longing, and confession with seven words of matchless grace, and then in divine power giving life to the son of a certain nobleman, which was His second miracle.

In chapter v., an impotent man, lying helpless at the pool of Bethesda, is healed, and this gives rise to a wonderful discourse, that can leave no room for doubt in the mind of any, who are subject to the word, concerning the full equality of the Son with the Father. The chapter mentions four witnesses to the fact that Jesus is the source and maintainer of life, and to these are added three other witnesses in the rest of the gospel. (1) The Old Testament Scriptures; (2) John the Baptist; (3) The Father; (4) the works of Jesus; (5) Jesus Himself in distinct and oft-repeated testimony; (6) the Spirit of truth; (7) all true believers.

In chapter vi., He goes over the sea of Galilee, feeds an immense multitude on five barley loaves and two small fishes, walks on the sea at night,

when a great wind blew, and being willingly received by the terrified disciples, "immediately the ship was at the land whither they went," suggesting most precious thoughts of His sufficiency for our need, and of His coming again when His people are tossing in the dark upon a strange sea. The remainder of the chapter is occupied with the revelation of Himself as the Bread of life.

In chapter vii., He is walking in Galilee; but about the midst of the feast of tabernacles suddenly appears in the temple at Jerusalem, and, looking upon the longing crowds in vain endeavoring to satisfy their souls with empty forms, He utters the sweet invitation, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink."

In chapter viii., He is on the Mount of Olives, but, coming early in the morning into the temple, He pardons a woman who was taken in the act of adultery, writing with His finger in the dust, which is the type of death, while her equally guilty accusers fiercely demanded her condemnation; and then again revealing Himself as the light, and the life, and the Son of God, closing with the declaration, "Before Abraham was [literally, was made, or came into existence] I AM."

In chapter ix., passing out of the temple to avoid the stones hurled at Him by the infuriated Jews, He gave sight to a man born blind, and



when the man was excommunicated for the confession of His name, He sought him, and made Himself known to him as the Son of God, and received his grateful worship.

Chapter x., should be connected with the preceding chapter, and it brings out the relation of Christ to His people as that of a tender Shepherd, but He again declares that He is the Son of God. Chapter xi., gives us the resurrection of Lazarus, with its momentous consequences to Jesus Himself. In chapter xii., we behold Him at the brazen altar, as it were, speaking of His death. In chapter xiii., He stands at the laver, washing the disciples' feet. In chapter xiv., He turns His face to the temple with its numerous chambers, and tells of the Father's house and its many mansions, and of His going to prepare a place for His saved ones, and of His coming again. In chapter xv., He approaches the vine-clad porch, and gives us a wonderful word about fruit-bearing. In chapter xvi., we may think of Him as entering in spirit the holy place; and in chapter xvii., the high priest is in the holiest of all, offering up His precious and inexhaustible intercessory prayer.

The remaining chapters are occupied with His arrest, trial, crucifixion, resurrection, and final appearance to the disciples, all in perfect keeping with the design of the Holy Ghost in this gospel.

When the risen Lord came to those whom for the first time He addressed as brethren, three times He met them with the glad message, "Peace be unto you," as if He would say, I have been down into the dark domain of death, and not an enemy, nor an accuser is left. When in touching love He restored Peter to peace of conscience, which he had lost by his cruel denial of his Master, the humbled Apostle, going up from the feet of Jesus, had strength to drag the net of fishes to land, although seven men had previously failed.

The whole gospel may be divided as follows: First, the introduction, i. Second, the personal ministry of the Lord Jesus, largely in Judæa, embracing three passovers, at which He appeared successively as prophet, priest, and king, ii.-xi. Third, His royal entrance into Jerusalem, and announcement of His death, xii. Fourth, His observance of the passover, and farewell words, setting forth the perfect safety of believers, the abiding presence of the Holy Ghost, the secret of constant fruit-bearing, and Himself as the source of peace in a world of tribulation, xiii.-xvi. Fifth, His intercessory prayer, xvii. Sixth, His trial and death, xviii., xix. Seventh, His resurrection and revelation of Himself to His followers, xx., xxi. So far as this gospel goes, they are still following Him along the shores of Galilee.

## THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

Luke, who was employed by the Holy Ghost to record these acts, begins his Gospel narrative with the statement, "It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus." The word rendered *from the very first* is elsewhere translated *from above*, (John iii. 31; xix. 11; Jas. i. 17; iii. 15, 17); and it may refer to the fact that he had perfect understanding of all things by divine inspiration. Here He says, "The first narrative, indeed, made I, concerning all things, O Theophilus, which Jesus began to do and teach." Such is Rotherham's translation, to which he adds in a foot-note, "The FIRST narrative told of all things which Jesus, while on earth, BEGAN to do and teach; this SECOND narrative tells of all things which Jesus, from heaven, WENT ON to do and teach. This emphatic implication is a key to the following history."

Hence it would have been more properly called "The Acts of the Holy Ghost," for it contains His name nearly sixty times, and it is largely but the manifestation of His power through the Apostles and others. The book opens with the ascension and promised return of the Lord Jesus in like manner as He was seen to go into heaven; and it

closes with the Apostle in prison, as if to indicate the rejection and persecution of His faithful witnesses, just before His second advent. But the interval should be filled, as we learn here, with prayer, scriptural testimony, and evangelistic services, not, indeed, in the expectation of the world's conversion, for the Apostles plainly declare, when all these were employed with an energy and power never since equalled, that such is not God's purpose in the present dispensation. His revealed design is to take out of the Gentiles a people for His name; and *after this* the Lord will return in person to resume covenant relation to the Jews, that the residue of men may seek the Lord, and *all* the Gentiles, (xv. 14-18).

It is a most suggestive fact that prayer, and united prayer, occupies so prominent a place in this instructive book. The Apostles "all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women," (i. 14); "and they prayed," (i. 24); "they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers," (ii. 42); "Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer," (iii. 1); "when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together," (iv. 31); "we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word;" and it will be

observed that prayer is placed before the ministry of the word, (vi. 4); "and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them," (vi. 6); Stephen died praying, (vii. 60); Peter and John went down to Samaria to see the new converts, and "prayed for them," (viii. 15); "pray God," (viii. 22); "pray ye to the Lord for me," (viii. 24); "behold, he prayeth," (ix. 11); "Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed," (ix. 40); "Peter went up upon the housetop to pray," (x. 9); "I prayed in my house," (x. 30); "I was in the city of Joppa, praying," (xi. 5); "prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him," (xii. 5). See also xii. 12; xiii. 3; xiv. 23; xvi. 13, 16, 25; xx. 36; xxi. 5; xxii. 17; xxviii. 8. Truly, Christians prayed, and had prayer meetings, in those days.

Another striking fact is the scriptural preaching of the Apostles. Almost the whole of the effective sermon delivered by Peter on the day of Pentecost consists of quotations from the Old Testament; and so it is of Stephen's address, when he stood before the council, and they "saw his face as it had been the face of an angel." These discourses, that are the longest in the book, would be regarded at present as nothing more than "Bible readings;" but the Holy Ghost put upon them the seal of His approval. "Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with

them out of the scriptures," (xvii. 2). To king Agrippa he testified that he had been "witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than the prophets and Moses did say should come," (xxvi. 22); and in the last notice we get of him in Rome, the Jews gathered around him, "to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening," (xxviii. 23). Thus it is with every sermon of which we catch a glimpse throughout the book. Jesus was the subject, and the Scripture furnished the proof. If any think they improve upon this method when they put a text at the beginning of their essays, and then shun it, and all other scripture, as carefully as if it had the small pox, they may well consider whether in their desire to please men, they do not dishonor and grieve the Holy Ghost.

Still another fact seen in the study of this portion of God's word is the dependence of the Apostles and early Christians upon the Spirit. The promise of the Saviour was that they should receive power, after that the Holy Ghost was come upon them; and a few days later, when there came a sound from heaven, "as of a rushing mighty wind," and as if the Holy Ghost were in haste to bear witness to the ascension of Jesus to the right

hand of the Majesty on high, "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance," (ii. 4). They might be threatened and imprisoned, but "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness," (iv. 31). So filled, earthly possessions were nothing in their esteem; and when it became necessary to select seven men to look after the wants of the Hellenist Jews, who complained "because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration," among others Stephen was chosen, "a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost;" and the next record is, "full of faith and power," (vi. 5-8). The way to obtain power is the same to-day it was then: full of faith, and of the Holy Ghost, and of power, is still the divinely prescribed mode.

There are two leading divisions of the book, of almost equal length. The first gathers about Jerusalem as the centre, and Peter as the prominent figure, i.-xii.; the second gathers about Antioch, a Gentile city, as the centre, and Paul, "the apostle of the Gentiles," as the prominent figure, xiii.-xxviii. More minutely we have First, the ascension and promised return of the Lord Jesus, i. Second, the descent of the Holy Ghost in manifested power, and the founding of the Church, ii. Third, the active ministry of the Holy Ghost

through the apostles and others, the presence of evil, put down by a sharp stroke as it will be in the day of Christ, the martyrdom of Stephen, the persecution of the saints, the conversion of Saul, the calling of the Gentiles, but still in connection with Jerusalem, and the tyranny and pride of Herod, as a type of the antichrist, iii.-xii. Fourth, Paul's first missionary journey, extending over the large island of Cyprus, and a portion of Asia Minor, terminating with the authoritative announcement of the freedom of Gentile believers from the law of Moses, xiii.-xv. Fifth, Paul's second missionary tour, reaching into Europe, where he gathered a company of believers at Philippi, preached Jesus and the resurrection in cultivated Athens, and continued in dissolute Corinth a year and six months, determined to know nothing among them, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified, xvi.-xviii. Sixth, Paul's third missionary expedition, all starting from Antioch, and his labor for two years in Ephesus and the surrounding region, xix., xx. Seventh, his last visit to Jerusalem, his arrest in the temple, his imprisonment for two years in Cæsarea, and his stormy voyage to Rome, where in the closing words of the book, we see him still "preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ," xxi.-xxviii.



## ROMANS.

Of the seven epistles to Gentile churches, that to the Romans is properly placed at the head of the list. It was not the first that was written, but it is first in the importance of its relations to Christian doctrine, if one may distinguish where all is divine. It lays broad and deep the foundations of gospel truth, showing what man is by nature; how helpless and hopeless he is, even in the midst of his highest attainments in a Godless culture and religion; the wonderful scheme of redemption accomplished by our Lord Jesus Christ; its application to the believer by the Holy Ghost; God's absolute sovereignty in its bestowal; the eternal security of the Christian; and his affectionate obedience as a dear child, notwithstanding the unchangeable badness of the nature he has received from fallen Adam. It sets forth with the clearness and force of inspiration in every word, God's righteousness, our justification by faith alone, our sanctification through oneness with our risen Lord, our present freedom from condemnation, the impossibility of our separation from His love, our election irrespective of any good works as the procuring cause, and the fruit of all this as seen in a life filled with love to God and man.

It must be borne in mind, while reading this

epistle, that the division of the English Bible into chapters and verses is of human origin, and often the divisions exhibit very little spiritual intelligence. But with this fact in view, the following may be regarded in general as appropriate titles of the various chapters: The ruin of man, chap. i. God's judgment on man, chap. ii. All under sin, chap. iii. Righteousness by faith, chap. iv. Results of faith, chap. v. Dead to sin, chap. vi. Dead to the law, chap. vii. In Christ Jesus, chap. viii. God's sovereignty, chap. ix. Israel's failure, chap. x. Israel's future, chap. xi. The Christian's character, chap. xii. The Christian's relation to civil rulers, chap. xiii. The Christian's relations to the brethren, chap. xiv. The Christian's labors, chap. xv. Christian salutations, chap. xvi.

God is kept prominently in view throughout the epistle, His name occurring twenty-one times in the opening chapter, where we read of the gospel of God, the Son of God, the beloved of God, the will of God, the power of God, the righteousness of God, and the wrath of God. In connection with this we see in the same chapter the progress of the human race apart from God, (vs. 21), the results of human culture, (vs. 22), the achievements of the human intellect, (vs. 23), the manifestations of human virtue, (vs. 24), the end reached of human

love of truth, (vs. 25), human religion when man is left to his own resources, (vs. 25), and the true picture of society, after philosophy, science, and art had done their best for the Greek and Roman world, (vs. 26-32).

In the next chapter the Jew receives yet heavier condemnation, by reason of his exalted privileges, for while resting in the law, making his boast of God, knowing God's will, approving the good, instructed in the law, having confidence in himself, and instructing others, the name of God was blasphemed among the Gentiles through his disobedience. Hence in the third chapter, both Jew and Gentile are all proved to be under sin, first by negative and then by positive testimony; and it is a sin manifested in the throat, tongue, lips, mouth, feet, ways, eyes, the whole man, both inward and outward, being utterly defiled, depraved, and ruined. If therefore he ever gets righteousness, it must be the gift of God, as shown in the fourth chapter, and illustrated and confessed by Old Testament saints. This righteousness becomes ours only in answer to faith, which means that we cease from our own efforts, and trust wholly in Christ, thus obtaining peace, or a permanent state of acceptance with God. Thus, too, God continues to observe the principle upon which He was pleased to constitute the race, that one should

stand as the head and representative of the many, all of which is brought out in the fifth chapter.

Then follows the old and the new objection of ignorance to grace, that it leads to sin. But the inspired Apostle shows that the believer is dead to sin, and dead to the law, by virtue of his union with the risen Christ, and that he can obtain deliverance, neither from the one nor the other, by looking at self, and struggling with self, but only by looking away from self, and by resting on Christ day after day, hour after hour. This we have in the sixth and seventh chapters, and in vs. 7-25 of the latter chapter, "I," "me," and "myself" occur forty-nine times. No wonder it is the passage of despair. But the eighth chapter is a shout of triumph, commencing with "no condemnation," ending with "no separation," and "God for us" in the middle.

The next three chapters deal largely with Israel, making manifest that the church dispensation is a parenthesis, interrupting the flow of special grace to God's ancient people, "until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in," when it will be resumed in unchanging covenant mercy, and flow on in its millennial brightness and beauty, waters to swim in, a river that can not be passed over, (Ezek. xlvii. 5). The remainder of the book is occupied with exhortations and incentives to personal consecration of

soul and body, and to mutual love and forbearance in our relations to the brethren.

The three divisions that are usually made of the epistle are first, Doctrinal, i.-viii.; second, Dispensational, ix.-xi.; third, Practical, xii.-xvi. But if it will be helpful to any, it may be described as setting forth, first, The ruin of man, i.-iii.; second, Salvation by grace, iv., v.; third, Dead to sin and the law, vi., vii.; fourth, Safe in Christ, viii.; fifth, God's way with Israel, ix.-xi.; sixth, Christian character and conduct, xii.-xv.; and seventh, Christian salutations, xvi. The phrase, "it is written," occurs eighteen times; and there are sixty-one quotations from the Old Testament, besides obvious allusions to the ancient scriptures, which the apostle recognized as the authoritative voice of God.

#### FIRST CORINTHIANS.

This Epistle was dictated by the Holy Ghost in the year of our Lord 57, toward the close of the Apostle's three years' residence in Ephesus. In Acts xviii. we learn that this devoted servant of Christ had labored for more than a year and a half in Corinth, a magnificent commercial city situated on a narrow isthmus between the Ionian and Ægean seas. It was a city noted for its wealth, culture, luxury, and licentiousness. The

Acrocorinthus, towering two thousand feet above the sea, commanding a view of unsurpassed loveliness, including the Acropolis of Athens, was the site of the temple of Venus, in which more than a thousand priestesses, all of whom were prostitutes, daily ministered to the lust of men.

After the Apostle's departure many of the church, gathered by his faithful testimony and service, yielded to the corrupt influences around them, and fell into grievous sin. The beginning of their decline can be readily traced to the pride of intellect, and the vain boastings of philosophy, leading to party spirit, to seduction "from the simplicity that is in Christ," to a contemptuous rejection of the humbling doctrines of grace, to an excuse for the natural but lawless gratification of the appetites, to a disregard of marriage ties, to a blunted conscience touching the worship of idols, to a subversion of the divinely appointed relation between man and woman, to forgetfulness of the very purpose of the Lord's Supper, to ambition and self-seeking, and at last to a denial of the fundamental truth of the resurrection of the body.

It is easy, therefore, to see how applicable are the solemn admonitions and entreaties and instructions of the Epistle to our own times; and it should be kept in mind that it is addressed, not only "unto the church of God which is at Corinth," but

also to "all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both their's and our's." The same experiment is made now, that was made then, when the Apostle testifies that "the world by wisdom knew not God," and "the natural man, [the psychical, or as Rotherham says 'the *soulical* man,' man using merely his intellect] receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." The danger which threatens the church to-day is precisely the same that nearly ruined the church of Corinth, for every fresh discovery and invention of the human intellect is carrying men further from God, and deeper into manifold errors and vices. Hence the profound significance of the Epistle in its bearing upon the state of things at present existing.

A general outline of the several chapters may be presented as follows: The salutation, introduction, the rebuke of party spirit, and the foolishness of man as contrasted with the wisdom of God, chap. i. The true preacher knows nothing, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified, and delivers his message in the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth, chap. ii. Divisions among Christians reveal a carnal state, and those who, not having an eye single to the glory of Christ, put poor material into the building of God, will have their work burned at

last, although if on the only foundation, they themselves shall be saved, yet so as by fire, chap. iii. Faithful ministerial service attested by a thorough denial of self, and the preaching of the gospel, chap. iv. Impurity rebuked, and discipline exercised, chap. v. Believers forbidden to go to law against one another, and fornication defiling the body, which is redeemed to be the temple of the Holy Ghost, chap. vi. The law of marriage, chap. vii. The believer seeking the good of his brethren in abstaining from that which in itself is harmless, chap. viii. Self-denial the privilege of saints, and the way to win the crown, chap. ix. Warnings against self-indulgence, and positive prohibitions to make any compromise with idolatry, chap. x. Woman's place in relation to man, and the importance of properly observing the Lord's Supper, chap. xi. Concerning spiritual gifts, and the unity of the body, chap. xii. Concerning the best gift, which is love, of which Christ is the embodiment and the exponent, chap. xiii. Directions for public worship in the church, where woman, in subserving the design of God in her creation and redemption, is to keep silence, chap. xiv. The resurrection, chap. xv. Contributions for Christian purposes part of the worship upon the first day of the week, and farewell exhortations and greetings, chap. xvi.

It will thus be seen that the Epistle sweeps over



a vast range of practical subjects; and to these words nothing must be added, from them nothing must be taken. They still form a rule for the guidance of the Christian and the Church, and how much they are needed may be gathered from a glance at the condition of things all around, and at the evils which are here so sharply censured. First, party spirit, and the following of men in the things of God, receive severe reproof, i.-iv. Second, remissness in the exercise of discipline, and the failure of the Church to exclude immoral members, v. Third, brethren fought against brethren before heathen magistrates, revealing a state of heart and mind, that at once accounts for their lack of personal purity, and of loyal consecration to Christ, and of fidelity in the marriage relation, vi., vii. Fourth, in order to make their "religion genial," they sadly compromised the truth of the gospel by compliance with the customs of the world, viii.-x. Fifth, women were leaving their place of subjection and modest retirement, to push to the front, while there was strange ignorance of the nature of the Lord's Supper, and there was no longer a mutual dependence of the members, one upon another, xi.-xiii. Sixth, speaking in a language that nobody could understand, thus exciting admiration, was unduly coveted and ostentatiously displayed, xiv. Seventh, the literal resurrection

of the dead, involving the utter destruction of the gospel, was denied then, as it is now, xv. If Rome was the symbol of power, Corinth was the seat of culture, and we see where it leads, when not kept beneath the cross. Blessed be God, the coming of the Lord, so often mentioned in this Epistle, is the bright end to which man's failure is hastening.

#### SECOND EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

Soon after the first epistle was written, the Apostle left Ephesus, owing in part at least to the uproar which his preaching had excited, to go into Macedonia. Titus, his fellow-laborer and travelling companion, was sent to Corinth to learn the effect produced by the inspired admonitions and instructions; and Paul anxiously awaited his return at Troas. There he continued "to preach Christ's gospel," and he says, "a door was opened unto me of the Lord;" but as week after week passed, and Titus did not make his appearance, he had no rest in his spirit, and at length his extreme solicitude about the Corinthian Church led him to continue his journey to Macedonia, and no doubt to Philippi, where his friend rejoined him, and where in all probability the second epistle was written, in the year of our Lord 58.

This is a suitable place to make a brief statement

about the second epistles of the New Testament in general. Of the seven Gentile churches formally addressed by the Holy Ghost, the Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians received but one epistle each, and the moment the contents of these various epistles are clearly understood, it will be seen that nothing can be added to them. They are complete in themselves. But the reasons for second epistles to the Corinthians and Thessalonians are equally obvious. The condition of these two churches demanded second epistles; and it was not by chance, or oversight, or forgetfulness on the part of the Holy Spirit to say something in the first epistles which needed mention, that two of the seven churches are addressed a second time.

Moreover there is a profound significance in all of the second epistles, which should not escape the notice of careful students of God's word. Besides the two to the Corinthians and Thessalonians, we have the second epistle to Timothy, the second epistle of Peter, the second and third epistles of John. In all of these much is made of the proper ministry of the word, much is made of the truth; and there are solemn warnings and awful denunciations against false teachers. This fact, taken in connection with repeated references to the second coming of Christ, shows that the Holy Ghost in

the second epistles designs to make a special application to the last days of the truth brought out in the first epistles. Hence the peculiar value of the second epistles at the present time, when all manner of false doctrine is rapidly increasing on every hand. They are surely worthy of a more diligent perusal than they usually receive.

In the second epistle to the Corinthians the inspired writer, having learned from Titus the practical results of his former epistle, and desiring to eradicate wholly the errors and evils still existing among the brethren so dear to his heart, expresses his thanks to God for the comfort derived from the tidings that had reached him, and promptly meets the charge of fickleness which the Judaizing teachers alleged against the absent apostle, chap. i. He then refers to the "much affliction and anguish of heart" out of which he had previously written, exhorting them with great tenderness to deal gently with the erring brother, and exulting in the continued triumph of the gospel, chap. ii. This is followed by a defence of his ministry, which was exercised under the new covenant of grace, and not under the old covenant of law, chap. iii.; and by a vindication of the manner in which he discharged his ministry, that in his personal weakness and insufficiency only the more exalted the power of God, who sustained him

in his trials, chap. iv. ; giving him the assurance of a habitation in heaven, "a building of God, a home not made with hands," so that impelled by the constraining love of Christ, he cared for nothing save to be approved of Him, whose ambassador he was, in beseeching men to be reconciled to God, chap. v.

The true character of his ministry was attested by his sufferings, through which his love for the brethren could carry him even joyfully, while the same love poured itself forth in earnest entreaty to avoid all worldly and dangerous alliances, chap. vi. ; and it had been kindled to a warmer glow by the favorable account of their affection and obedience, communicated by Titus, chap. vii. As a proof of their affection and repentance, he exhorts them to imitate the example of their Macedonian brethren in the contribution made for the poor saints of Judea, chap. viii. ; and begs them to justify his boasting of their liberality, chap. ix. He also deplores the necessity of asserting and exercising his apostolic authority and power against false teachers who would seduce them from the gospel, chap. x. ; apologizes for the appearance of self-commendation, because forced to contrast his preaching and labors with the arrogant assumptions of these false teachers, chap. xi. ; alludes to a remarkable vision he had enjoyed more than

fourteen years before, and to other evidences of his apostleship, chap. xii.; and closes with an announcement that he would vindicate his denied apostleship in the condign punishment of obdurate offenders.

A brief summary of the epistle may be presented as follows: First, the noble anxiety of a true minister for those under his spiritual care, and the certain success of the gospel in all that it was designed to accomplish, i., ii. Second, the characteristic features of a true ministry exhibited (1) in preaching Christ only, (2) in the accompanying energy of the Holy Ghost, (3) in greatly exalting the word of God, (4) in self-abasement, (5) in meek endurance of afflictions and in incessant labors, (6) in assurance of faith and hope, (7) in singleness of aim, ambitious to please the Lord Jesus alone, iii.-vii. Third, the divine principle in giving, which requires that our contributions should be voluntary and liberal, viii., ix. Fourth, the power of true ministry, x. Fifth, the courage of true ministry, that can be intimidated by no danger, xi. Sixth, the glory that is to be revealed hereafter, and the sufficiency of Christ's grace here, enabling His true servants to take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for His sake, xii. Seventh, strength in weakness, xiii.

## THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS.

We learn from the inspired history that the Apostle twice visited Galatia, a central province of Asia Minor, whose inhabitants were originally Gauls. The first visit was during the progress of his second missionary tour, (Acts xvi. 6); and the second was some years later, during his third missionary journey, when he "went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples," (Acts xviii. 23).

The message which he communicated by the Holy Ghost to the church of Corinth was followed up by his return to that city, in order to correct personally the numerous and shocking evils into which the brethren there had fallen. His heart must have been burdened with much anxiety and sorrow, as he threaded his way among the pleasure seeking crowds on the streets, and thought of the delusive and dangerous power which the god of this world had gained over many of his brethren, who were more precious to him than his heart's blood. But the burden must have been heavier, when he heard the astounding tidings from the churches of Galatia, that Judaizing teachers were at work, substituting the law for the gospel, and, to effect their purpose, undermining his influence, by a denial of his apostolic authority. Accordingly

he wrote with his own hand the epistle before us, probably in the winter of 57-58, and from Corinth.

It was his habit to employ an amanuensis; but so deep was his concern for the condition of the Galatian Christians, he departed from his custom, and says, "Ye see how large a letter [literally, 'with what large letters,' referring to their size, and not the length of the epistle] I have written unto you with mine own hand," (vi. 11). This may have resulted either from a defective vision, as some plausibly suppose, or from a desire to give strong emphasis to his admonitions and entreaties. At all events he exhibits more solicitude about the false doctrines which had crept in among the Galatians, than he does about the evil practices indulged by the Corinthians. It is quite the fashion in these days to say that it matters not what a man's creed may be, so his life is right. But the life can not be right before God, unless the creed is right; and the Apostle keenly felt, as every loyal Christian still feels, the foul dishonor done to the Lord Jesus Christ by a wrong creed.

Hence, while in Romans he proves the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ, apart from the works of the law, in Galatians he vindicates the doctrine against ignorant or evil minded teachers, who sought to bring in the law as the joint means of the believer's salvation. First, he asserts that



he had received his commission directly from the risen Lord Himself, and from God the Father, enabling him to act independently of those who were apostles before him, and even to rebuke them. He had graduated, not in man's theological seminary, but God's; and if any man, or an angel from heaven, preached any other gospel to them, than he had preached, and they had received, the curse of God was upon him, i., ii. 1-14.

Second, he shows that the law, to which their false teachers sought to lead them, could not give (1) justification; (2) nor life; (3) nor love; (4) nor the Spirit; (5) nor redemption; (6) nor the inheritance; (7) nor the relationship to God of children. In this connection he announces that "as many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse." Whoever, that is to say, seeks to please God on the *do* principle, instead of the *believe* principle, which sees that all is done, is under the curse. Men were justified by grace, and entered into a covenant of grace, long before the law was given, which, at best, is only a light to reveal our uncleanness, a plumbline to prove our want of uprightness, a rule to exhibit our unevenness, a jailer to shut us up to the necessity of deliverance, a child-conductor, (Rotherham and Young), with rod in hand, to keep us from playing truant until Christ came, ii. 15-21 and iii.

Third, The liberty of full grown sons, and their war with that which is born of the flesh. Those who desired to go back to the law for justification were like men wishing to return to infancy, like freemen preferring to become bond-slaves, and to live under guardians and trustees, rather than to exult in the consciousness of mature sonship, and to look up into the face of God with the joyous cry, "Abba, Father." The bond and the free can have no fellowship, any more than could Ishmael and Isaac; and in the use of this unexpected "allegory," the apostle leaves a margin for the discovery, if not of types, at least of significant and valuable suggestions of spiritual truth in all of the Old Testament narratives, iv.

Fourth, the absolute necessity of standing fast in the truth and liberty and grace of the gospel, rejecting every temptation to be justified by the law; for whosoever is justified by the law is fallen from grace, and this is the only kind of falling from grace the Bible knows about. The Spirit is received, not by the works of the law, but by the hearing of faith; and practical victory over indwelling evil is achieved by walking, not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, v.

Fifth, the connection is then most appropriately shown between sowing and reaping in the dealings of God with men; and it may be said that the

sacred scriptures from beginning to end are designed to set forth His grace and government, vi. 1-13.

Sixth, the cross of Jesus Christ the only ground of glorying for the new creature, as it alone fully demonstrates the utter worthlessness of the flesh and the world. The cross, the cross, should be the battle cry and battle flag of every believer, vi. 14-16.

Seventh, "from henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." The Greek word here is *stigma*, and refers to the brands which the master put upon his slave. Oh, that all of His servants might covet more earnestly, and display more fearlessly, the signs and proofs of His divine and blessed ownership, vi. 17, 18.

#### EPHESIANS.

This sublime epistle was written by the Holy Ghost through Paul, probably in the year of our Lord 62. The Apostle had been a prisoner in Rome for at least twelve months, and while there had been previously led by the Spirit to indite the epistle to Philemon, and the epistle to the Colossians. The account of his remarkable labors in Ephesus, a splendid and renowned city of Asia Minor near the sea coast, is given in the Acts of

the Apostles. There we learn that after his stay in Corinth for a year and six months, he visited Ephesus (Acts xviii. 19-28), and after a brief sojourn took his departure, with the promise of returning. This promise he fulfilled, at the beginning of his third missionary journey, and remained "by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks," (Acts xix.).

The effect of his preaching in the power of the Holy Ghost was so great, that the idolatrous worship practiced in the famous temple of Diana was threatened with extinction. One Demetrius, who earned his living by the sale of silver shrines, brought it as a charge against him in a public assembly, "that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands;" "so mightily grew the word of God, and prevailed." The uproar that followed caused the Apostle to depart into Macedonia, but on his last visit to Jerusalem, "he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church" to meet him on the coast. The touching farewell address which he delivered to them presents a lovely portrait of a faithful gospel minister, and can scarcely be read at this day by a true Christian without tears, (Acts xx. 16-38).

Then came the arrest in Jerusalem, the two year's imprisonment in Cæsarea, the perilous voyage to Rome, the confinement there for more than a year, awaiting his trial, when his heart was stirred by the Spirit of God to write to the beloved Ephesians in the loftiest strains of divine revelation. In none of his other Epistles does he soar to such heights, or make known such wondrous truth, showing that he must have carried their thoughts over a magnificent range in his preaching to them, and that they had been prepared by the diligent study of God's word for the unfolding of the deep things brought to view in the epistle.

Christ the measure of the believer's standing and blessing, is the general subject, or as it may be put in another form, Christ in the believer, the believer in Christ, and the result manifested in the daily life. The expression, "in Christ," or its equivalent occurs twenty-eight times in the first chapter, and this is the key-note to the epistle, which may be divided as follows: First, God's eternal and electing love to us individually, chap. i. Second, what we were when God so loved us, chap. ii. Third, God's love to us corporately, Christ and the Church, chap. iii. Fourth, our walk toward the Church in view of this love and unity, . chap. iv. 1-16. Fifth, our walk toward Christ, in view of His love and of our union with

Him, chap. iv. 17-32; v. 1-21. Sixth, the relative duties of husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants, springing out of relation to Him, chap. v. 22-33; vi. 1-9. Seventh, we are to maintain our high standing, clad in the panoply of God, chap. vi. 10-24.

The thoughts that crowd upon the mind in the perusal of the epistle are altogether too numerous and too great for utterance, and it should be studied verse by verse, and word by word. Thus in the first chapter we have election, redemption, inheritance, the Spirit as the seal, as the earnest, God's calling, the body of Christ; involving His sovereign choice, adoption, our acceptance, forgiveness, hope, resurrection, and reigning.

In the second chapter we have our death, captivity, misery, guilt, ruin, helplessness, and low estate, set over against life, liberty, God's mercy, grace, love, strength, and our sitting together with Christ in the heavenlies. Gentile sinners are described as uncircumcised, without Christ, aliens, strangers, without hope, without God in the world; but believers are made as nigh by the blood of Christ to God as He is, for He is so entirely our peace, it may be truly said, He brought it, He made it, He preached it, He gives it, He preserves it, He is the source of it, He is the channel by which it is conveyed.

In the third chapter the mystery is not Christ, nor the Church, but Christ *and* the Church, which leads the Apostle into a contemplation of His love, that is like an ocean without a bottom and without a shore. He conducts our thoughts into infinity, and abruptly stops. But such love should make manifest the unity of the saints, secure their personal loyalty and holiness, and dignify and sanctify every relation of life, as set forth in the remainder of the epistle.

It is sad to know that, years afterwards, a church honored with such a revelation was rebuked by our Lord, because it had left its first love, (Rev. ii. 1-7), and started that downward course of the professing Christian body, that is now fast hastening to a shameful and melancholy end. The candlestick has long been removed out of its place in Ephesus; and the most advanced saint will walk in darkness, unless he keeps his eye singly and steadily fixed upon the Lord Jesus Christ.

#### PHILIPPIANS.

While the Apostle was still a prisoner in Rome, and about the time the epistle was prepared for the Ephesians and perhaps for other churches in Asia Minor, he was led by the Holy Ghost to write to the Philippians. These brethren

were no doubt specially near to his heart, for they were the first fruits of his ministry in Europe. In Acts xvi. we have an exceedingly interesting account of his access to a new continent, and of the trials and perils through which he fought his way, to plant the banner of the cross in the face of Grecian culture and Roman power.

Being "forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia," he "assayed to go into Bithynia; but the Spirit suffered them not;" and while waiting at Troas, "a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them."

The first convert was a woman; "and when she was baptized, and her household," he became her honored guest. But on his way to prayer-meeting one day, he and his companions were followed by a poor girl "possessed with a spirit of divination," who kept crying, "These men are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation." The name of Jesus Christ, pronounced in faith, expelled the demon; but her masters, seeing that the hope of their gains was gone, as she could no longer engage in fortune



telling, had Paul and Silas arrested; "and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them. And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailer to keep them safely: who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks."

It was just here the two happy believers exercised the office of "a holy priesthood," for they "prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them." It was just here too they exercised the office of "a royal priesthood," for the terrified jailer was soon at their feet with the anxious inquiry, "What must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." The same hour he "was baptized, he and all his, straightway," and brought them into his house, and served them at his table, "and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house."

Several years had passed since that eventful night, and he wrote to his beloved brethren from a prison, but still rejoicing as of old in the grace that was always sufficient for him. Indeed it is peculiarly the epistle of joy, for the words *joy* and *rejoice* occur in it eighteen times, and the word *sin* not once. Yet it is the very epistle in which salvation in its fullest sense is looked at as still in the

future, for it is to be completed at the second coming of Christ. Even before the goal is reached, therefore, the runners may pursue their course with a gladness of heart that grows brighter and brighter, as they approach nearer and nearer the end.

The following titles of the various chapters have been suggested as appropriately expressing their leading thoughts: Christ the believer's *life*, chap. i.; Christ the believer's *pattern*, chap. ii.; Christ the believer's *object*, chap. iii.; Christ the believer's *strength*, chap. iv. But perhaps a better analysis would be, The gospel, and Christ the theme, chap. i.; Humility, and Christ the pattern, chap. ii.; Earnestness, and Christ the object, chap. iii.; Peacefulness, and Christ the strength, chap. iv.

In chap. first the inspired writer announces his confidence that He which had begun a good work in them would perform it until the day of Jesus Christ; and yet this was not inconsistent with their solicitude in working out their own salvation. He also longs after them all "in the tender heart of Jesus Christ," as Alford renders it, and is sure that everything which had befallen him would turn to his salvation through their prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, the word *supply* referring to the Choregus among the Greeks, who was responsible to furnish all needed refreshments to the choir. Christ was so entirely his life,

he longed to depart and be with Him, and unto them it was *given* in His behalf, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake.

In chap. second the example of Christ in humility is commended; and the working out of their own salvation with fear and trembling is in view of the Apostle's absence, casting them in entire dependence upon God, who was working in them. Hence they were to work *out* what He worked *in*, and this explains their constant joy.

In chap. third Christians are described as those who worship God in, or by, the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh, flinging from them with disgust their own righteousness, and pressing on with singleness of heart and of aim to lay hold of that for which they had been laid hold of by Christ Jesus, doing the one thing of seeking to attain unto the out-resurrection, that one from among the dead, and waiting for the personal return of the Lord Jesus Christ from heaven. Surely there would be more of this eager looking and watching, if believers felt now, as they felt then, that our citizenship is not here, but in heaven.

In chap. fourth the Lord is viewed, according to heaven's mode of reckoning, as at hand, for according to this reckoning He has not been absent two days; the secret of peace is revealed, careful for

nothing, prayerful in everything, thankful for anything; the believer is able to do all things through Christ which strengtheneth him; and God shall supply all his need, not all he wants, according, not to his need, nor to his asking, nor even to his faith, but according to His own unsearchable riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

#### COLOSSIANS.

There are many points of resemblance between this epistle and that to the Ephesians, written from Rome at about the same time, and sent by the hands of the same messenger, (Eph. vi. 21, 22; Col. iv. 7, 8). But there are also points of difference that will not escape the attention of the careful reader. The epistle to the Ephesians tells us that we are Christ's fulness, (Eph. i. 23), the epistle to the Colossians that He is our fulness, (Col. ii. 10); the former that we are in Him, (i. 3), the latter that He is in us, (Col. i. 27); the former is largely occupied about the body, the Church, and the latter about the Head, Christ.

Conybeare and Howson in their valuable *Life of St. Paul* present two extended tables of resemblances between the epistles, and add in foot note, "From the first of the above tables it will be seen, that there is scarcely a single topic in the Ephesian

Epistle which is not also to be found in the Epistle to the Colossians; but on the other hand, that there is an important section of Colossians (ii. 8-23) which has no parallel in Ephesians. From the second table it appears, that out of the 155 verses contained in the so-called Epistle to the Ephesians, 78 verses contain expressions identical with those in the Epistle to the Colossians. The kind of resemblance here traced is not that which would be found in the work of a forger, servilely copying the Epistle to Colossæ. On the contrary, it is just what we might expect to find in the work of a man whose mind was thoroughly imbued with the ideas and expressions of the Epistle to the Colossians when he wrote the other Epistle."

But it was the Holy Ghost, who brings out both the resemblances and the differences of the two epistles, and therefore in both we have needed truth, expressed in precisely the proper form. In the latter He shows, first, what the Lord has done for us, and who He is. Here we learn that it is the privilege of believers to give thanks unto the Father, "which HATH made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: who HATH delivered us from the power of darkness, and HATH translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son; in whom we HAVE redemption through his blood." This dear Son is then declared to be divine, truly,

fully, absolutely divine ; and the testimony is so clear and complete that it settles the question forever with every one who is subject to the word of God, i. 1-18.

The second section shows what we were, when God made peace through the blood of His cross, and for what the mystery has been manifested. We often hear that such and such a person, especially if dying, made his peace with God ; but the already condemned sinner is in no condition to make peace. God made it, and preaches it through the gospel to every one that believeth ; and is now making known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles ; which is Christ in us, the hope of glory, i. 19-29.

Third, the inspired writer then expresses the most intense desire that this mystery may be practically understood, "wherein [margin] are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." But as the mystery is Christ in us, the hope of glory, it is equally true that in Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Hence the earnest exhortation to believers, that as they have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so we are not only to walk in Him, but to be rooted and built up in Him, ii. 1-7.

Fourth, this is followed by the most solemn warning against rationalism and ritualism, or a

reliance for salvation upon the observance of religious rites and ecclesiastical ordinances. We are complete in Christ, and do not need the wisdom and philosophy of this world to understand the gospel, nor ceremonial worship, however attractive and imposing, to render our salvation more secure. We are buried together with Him, quickened together with Him, risen together with Him, and the result is that God has already forgiven us all trespasses, or as the word means, "every thing about the fall." Hence we are to stand aloof from philosophy, and legalism, and asceticism, and curious speculations about the unseen world, and confidence in feast and fast days, adopting as our maxim with regard to all such things, "Touch not; taste not; handle not," ii. 8-23.

Fifth, How we should walk as dead and risen with Christ. He is so completely our life it may be said, *By Him* we live, as Creator of all things; *From Him* we live, as the source of our spiritual and everlasting life; *Through Him* we live, as the channel for the transmission of God's wondrous grace and love; *In Him* we live, as united to Him and identified with Him in all His work of redemption; *Under Him* we live, as our rightful and recognized Lord; *For Him* we live, as the one supreme object in view; and *With Him* we live here and hereafter. Because He is our life, and at His

second appearing we shall surely appear with Him in the glory, we are to make a corpse of our members which are upon the earth; and whatsoever we do, to do all in His name, giving thanks unto God and the Father by Him, iii. 1-17.

Sixth, relative duties of husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants, all of whom may live in abiding peace, and in mutual helpfulness and love, if they will keep Christ constantly before them, and learn to do, and to endure, for His sake. He can sweeten the bitterest cup, and dignify the lowliest lot, iii. 18-25; iv. 1.

Seventh, personal exhortations and Christian salutations, among which we learn that Onesimus, a runaway slave, was returned to his master in Colossæ with Tychicus as his companion and brother. We also learn that there were many dear servants of the Lord sharing the labors, the sorrows, and the joys of Paul's prison life, iv. 2-18.

#### FIRST AND SECOND THESSALONIANS.

These are the first of the fourteen epistles dictated by the Holy Ghost to the apostle Paul. They were both written from Corinth, the former toward the close of the year 52 A. D., or early in the year 53, and the latter a few months later. But they are appropriately placed in the Bible as the



last of the seven epistles to the Gentile churches, because they are chiefly filled with "the last things," or the coming of the Lord.

Conybeare and Howson in their very interesting and instructive "Life and Epistles of St. Paul," although ignorant of the truth of Christ's pre-millennial advent, truly say, "The royal state of Christ's second advent was one chief topic which was urgently enforced, and deeply impressed, on the minds of the Thessalonian converts. This subject tinges the whole atmosphere through which the aspect of this church is presented to us. It may be said that in each of the primitive churches, which are depicted in the apostolic epistles, there is some peculiar feature which gives it an individual character. . . . And if we were asked for the distinguishing characteristic of the first Christians of Thessalonica, we should point to their overwhelming sense of the nearness of the second advent, accompanied with melancholy thoughts concerning those who might die before it, and with gloomy and unpractical views of the shortness of life, and the vanity of the world. Each chapter in the first epistle to the Thessalonians ends with an allusion to this subject, and it was evidently the topic of frequent conversations, when the Apostle was in Macedonia."

Yet the same authors inform us that, notwith-

standing the "melancholy thoughts," and "gloomy and unpractical views of the shortness of life," the congregation of believers at Thessalonica was celebrated for hundreds of years as "the Orthodox Church," famous for sound doctrine, famous for purity of life, famous for missionary zeal, famous as a bright light shining through surrounding darkness. Within the past few years quite a good-sized book has been written and published to show that the Thessalonians constituted the "Model Church." Is there no connection between the "Orthodox Church," the "Model Church," with its "melancholy thoughts," with its "gloomy and unpractical views," and the coming of the Lord as the great incentive to fidelity and earnestness?

However this may be, no one can fail to see that the subject which occupied the mind of the Holy Spirit in the first epistle addressed to believers, was the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is mentioned in every chapter of both epistles, in one verse out of every five, and in every instance, unless in 2 Thess. ii. 8, it is not denied by expositors of any class or school of interpretation, that the coming is literal, personal, and bodily. Is it not unspeakably humiliating and painful that the doctrine which furnished the basis of all argument, the point of all appeal, the motive to all exhortation, the stimulus to all activity, has dropped out of the

faith of most preachers and Christians, as if it were worthy only of contempt? But so the predictions of these forgotten epistles are fulfilled before our eyes.

From the word of God we learn that the Apostle laboured at Thessalonica but three weeks, when he was driven away by a mob of Jews, and "certain lewd fellows of the baser sort," (Acts xvii. 1-10). He may have remained a little longer, but the inspired record mentions only "three sabbath days." Yet this was long enough for him to teach them the truth concerning the coming and kingdom of Jesus Christ, for he afterwards wrote to them, "Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?" (2 Thess. ii. 5). He had, therefore, been diligent, through a three weeks' meeting, to instruct them concerning the second advent of Christ, and the direful apostacy which will occur previous to His personal manifestation on the earth.

The difference between the two epistles may be described in a single word: "Christ coming *for* His saints" is the subject of the first; "Christ appearing *with* His saints" is the proper title of the second. In the former he describes the Thessalonian converts, of whom Gentile believers formed the larger part, as having "turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait

for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come," (1 Thess. i. 9, 10). He also confidently expects to meet his brethren "in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming," (1 Thess. ii. 19). Hence he prays to his ascended Lord, "to the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints," (1 Thess. iii. 13). They need not therefore be in distress concerning their believing friends who had fallen asleep, for "them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring WITH HIM." We which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not precede the sleeping ones, but they shall have the first place of honor. Then when they come forth from the grave in response to His shout, intended only for *their* ears, we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, (1 Thess. iv. 13-18).

Hence they had nothing to do with times and seasons, for they knew perfectly, because the Apostle had carefully instructed them during his three weeks' meeting, that "the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night." That great and terrible day will come as a thief upon the unbelieving world; "but YE, brethren," he adds, "are not in darkness, that that day should overtake YOU as a

thief. YE are all the children of light, and the children of the day : WE are not of the night, nor of darkness." All his anxiety about them was expressed in the one longing cry, "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly ; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ," (1 Thess. v. 1-6, 23).

The second epistle treats largely of the appearing of the Lord with His saints, when He "shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ," (2 Thess. i. 7-10). But a rumor prevailed among the Thessalonian believers that He had already come, leaving them out of His promised kingdom, (1 Thess. ii. 12 ; 2 Thess. i. 5) ; and "those who encouraged this delusion," as Conybeare and Howson well say, "supported it by imaginary revelations of the Spirit ; and they even had recourse to forgery, and circulated a letter purporting to be written by St. Paul, in confirmation of their views." Consequently the Apostle reminds them, not that the coming of Christ is not at hand, but that *the day of the Lord* is not at hand, or, as every critical expositor on the face of the earth admits it ought to be rendered, "is present," or, "is come."

He tells them that "that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first [Greek, the apostacy], and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." Even in the Apostle's day "the mystery of iniquity" was already at work, only the hinderer to its full developement, the Holy Ghost, stayed its progress, until the Hinderer shall be taken out of the way; "and then shall that Wicked [one] be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit [breath, Isa. xi. 4] of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness [elsewhere translated *appearing*] of his coming [translated *presence* in 2 Cor. x. 10; Phil. ii. 12], (2 Thess. ii. 1-12).

It is of interest to know that the city of Thessalonica was named after a sister of Alexander the Great, by her husband Cassander, out of whose dominion, in all probability, the Antichrist of the last days shall arise, (Dan. viii. 21-25). Men talk and write learnedly of evolution; and there shall surely be a complete evolution of the tremendous evil introduced by the fall of Adam, until the boasted culture of the age shall be developed into that Wicked, and "all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in

the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," (Rev. xiii. 8). May the Lord direct our " hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ," (2 Thess. iii. 5).

#### FIRST AND SECOND TIMOTHY.

According to Clement, Eusebius, Chrysostom, Jerome, and, it may be added, the whole of the early Church, the devoted Apostle was acquitted of the charges brought against him, and released from his long imprisonment, at his first trial before Nero. These authorities also inform us that he immediately resumed his missionary work for the Master he loved so well, and journeyed as far west as Spain, preaching the glad tidings wherever he went. It appears, however, from the inspired record, that he first directed his way eastward, and finding that his sad prophecy to the Ephesian elders (Acts xx. 29, 30) was already fulfilled, he left Timothy with their church to strengthen the things that remained.

Such was the occasion of the first of the personal epistles, written probably from Macedonia toward the latter part of the year 65, or early in the year 66 of our Lord. It is a remarkable fact that the inspired writer turns in his last epistles from addressing churches to individuals, as if in the last

days only one here and another there will be found to receive the messages of the Holy Ghost. It is also remarkable that in the epistles to Timothy and Titus, he invokes "grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord," whereas in the epistles to the seven churches previously addressed, he leaves out the word *mercy* in his invocation. The church viewed as a whole has an unchangeable standing before God in the heavens, having already received mercy, while the individual in his personal failures, and in the midst of failures, still needs the compassion of our Saviour-God for the wretched.

The church at Ephesus was in much confusion when the Apostle was led by the Spirit to address his son Timothy. Ceremonialism, foolish questions, vain jangling, legalism, and even the putting away of faith and a good conscience on the part of some, had taken the place of the sublime doctrines set forth in the epistle they had previously received. This called for the exercise of discipline, and it was administered by one who speaks of himself as the chief of sinners, chap. i.

This state of things had introduced disorder touching their relations to civil rulers, and the women were leaving their proper place of subjection to teach, and to usurp authority over the man. All of this is contrary to the mind of God, chap. ii.



The offices and characteristics of Bishops and Deacons are then defined and explained, as vitally affecting the welfare of the church, "the pillar and ground of the truth," the Jachin and Boaz standing before the spiritual temple of God, and responsible to uphold and maintain the truth at all hazards. The special truth to be sacredly guarded relates to the incarnation, the divinity, the mediatorial work of Jesus Christ, as the sole object of faith, and the only Lord of the conscience, chap. iii.

But "the Spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;" and then follows an accurate description of the Romish apostacy. These latter times refer to the middle ages, and they will develope into something worse, as shown in the next epistle. Hence the only safety for any minister of the gospel is to take heed, first to himself, and second to his doctrine, chap. iv.

Then comes the order of God's house again touching old men and women, widows, young widows, ruling elders; and as Timothy was tired and worn with so much care and labor, and his health was failing him, it is comforting to notice the tender solicitude of the Holy Ghost about His faithful servant, directing him to drink no longer

water, but to use a little wine. Timothy's habitual temperance was still preserved, for it was a *little* wine only as a medicine, chap. v.

This is followed by exhortations to servants to render faithful and conscientious service, to the poor to be content with their lot, and to the rich to take heed how they employ the property God had given them, if they would lay up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come. It is a striking fact that the epistle closes with a solemn and tender warning against the "oppositions of science falsely so-called," which some professing erred concerning the faith in that day, as they do in this, chap. vi.

The second epistle is the last written by the beloved apostle, and it possesses all the interest which gathers about the farewell message of a dying father to his son. It obviously reaches on, not only to the latter times, as in the former epistle, but to the last days, when something worse than the Romish apostacy will come; for apostate Christendom will get back to ancient heathenism, as may be seen by comparing 2 Tim. iii. 1-8, with Rom. i. 21-32. Hence the Apostle seeks to stir up Timothy, who seems to have been alarmed and discouraged by the turning away of all Asia from the servant of the Lord, even then awaiting death, chap. i.

This is followed by an exhortation which is of special value at a time when the professing body is almost in ruins ; for it lays upon the conscience and heart a powerful motive to fidelity, and exhibits both sides of God's seal, showing the necessity of uncompromising firmness in separation from all that dishonors the Lord Jesus, chap. ii.

The only safeguard amid the perilous times of the last days is a strong hold upon the truth of the verbal inspiration of all scripture, refusing to yield the conviction of this truth, even if called to stand entirely alone in maintaining the absolute authority of God's word, chap. iii.

The closing warning is a most earnest charge, in view of our Lord's appearing and kingdom, to preach the word, with a distinct prediction of what is going on around us now, in the refusal of men to endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts heaping to themselves teachers, having itching ears, turning away their ears from the truth, and turning unto fables. But for the old and tried apostle a crown of righteousness was in store, and he departs with the shout of victory on his lips, although forsaken of men.

Paul the prisoner, and Timothy aroused, chap. i.  
Paul the soldier, and Timothy encouraged, chap. ii.  
Paul the witness, and Timothy warned, chap. iii.  
Paul the martyr, and Timothy charged, chap. iv.

## TITUS.

The name of this servant of the Lord is not mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, and all that we know of him is gathered from the inspired epistles. He is referred to, however, in terms of warm commendation in 2 Cor. ii. 13; vii. 6, 7, 13-15; viii. 6, 16-23; xii. 18. In another place we learn that he was for a time at least the Apostle's travelling companion, and that, being a Greek. Paul refused to have him circumcised, in order that the freedom of Gentile believers from the law might be vindicated and maintained at all hazards, Gal. ii. 1-5.

It appears that the epistle addressed to him was written during the time that elapsed between the two epistles to Timothy. As the latter had been left in Ephesus to uphold the truth, which even then was assailed by the pride and perversity of man, so Titus had been left in the island of Crete to "set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city." It is the Apostle's testimony that there too there were "many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: whose mouths must be stopped; who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake. One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, The

Cretians are alway liars, evil beasts, slow bellies," i. 10-12.

Amid the instructions given about bishops, old men and women, young men and women, it is comforting to notice that one of the finest passages in the Bible springs out of an allusion to despised slaves. "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works," ii. 11-14. Grace first saves, then teaches, then holds out as the hope of the believer the coming of the Lord; and as the Apostle adds, "these things speak," it is obvious that the preacher who never speaks of Christ's second advent disobeys the apostolic injunction.

The relation of faith to good works is also clearly stated in this important epistle. "After that the kindness and love [margin, pity] of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he

shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that, being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." Our good works, then, have nothing whatever to do with the *cause* of our salvation, but they are the necessary *consequence* of our acceptance wholly by grace. "This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men," iii. 5-8. First faith, and then works; not first works, and then faith; nor faith *and* works, but faith followed by works.

#### PHILEMON.

This little epistle is very sweet, because it shows the tender interest of the Holy Ghost in a poor slave. There is an intimation that he had robbed his master, a Christian named Philemon, belonging to the Colossian Church, and then that he ran away. The fugitive slave and thief turned up at length in Rome, during the apostle's first imprisonment; and it is a significant comment upon Paul's preaching, that such a man either desired, or was induced, to hear him.

We know not whether curiosity, or the demands of his own conscience, or the longings of his heart,

or the kind invitation of some Christian, led him to attend the ministry of the Apostle; but we do know that the grace of God which bringeth salvation to all classes and conditions of men, appeared to Onesimus in converting and sanctifying power. He became a saved man; but the Apostle would not violate the law, and wrong his master, by keeping him in Rome; and therefore sent him back with a letter that surely secured for him a reception, not usually accorded to a fugitive slave.

“I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds: which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me: whom I have sent again: thou therefore receive him, that is, mine own bowels [revised version, my very heart] whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the gospel: but without thy mind would I do nothing; that thy benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly. For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldest receive him for ever; not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh, and in the Lord. If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself.”

How touching and how beautiful is this love of

the inspired Apostle for a runaway slave, and how certain it is that if the gospel had been permitted to work out its beneficent spirit, unimpeded by man's folly and depravity, it would have quietly removed the evils of slavery, and lifted the believing slave into the brotherhood of saints, and into the very place of Christ before the throne of God. Verse 18 gives us a striking definition of imputation. "If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account." The word rendered *put that on mine account* is translated *imputed* in Rom. v. 13. So the precious Saviour stands in the presence of His Father, and says in behalf of the believing sinner, "If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account." It is blessed to know that we have One now at the right hand of the Father, who has given satisfaction for our wrong doing, and paid all our debts.

#### HEBREWS.

The titles of the different chapters in this precious epistle may be given as follows: Christ, the divine and eternal Son of God, i.; Christ, the captain of our salvation, ii.; Christ, the head of His house, iii.; Christ, the rest of His people, iv.; Christ, our great high priest, v.; Christ, our fore-runner, vi.; Christ, our living intercessor, vii.;



Christ, the mediator of the new covenant, viii.; Christ, our perfect sacrifice, ix.; Christ, perfecting forever them that are sanctified, x.; Christ, the only object of faith, xi.; Christ, the princely leader and pattern of faith, xii.; Christ, the great shepherd of His sheep, xiii.

Thus He is everything to the believer; and it is interesting and most suggestive to see how the greatness of the greatest is made to pale and disappear in the light of His superior glory. In chap. i. the angels are brought into view, but only to bow in lowly worship at His feet. In chap. ii. man in his original beauty and dignity is seen, but only as a fleeting shadow of Jesus. In chap. iii. Moses is mentioned, but only as a faithful servant in all his house, while Christ towers above him as a Son over His own house. In chap. iv. Joshua appears, but only to show his inferiority to Jesus, the Son of God. In chap. v. Aaron stands forth, but only as a stepping stone to the Son, who became the author of eternal salvation to them that obey Him.

In chap. vi. Abraham is named, but only to illustrate how strong is the consolation, and how sure the hope, of those who have Jesus as their forerunner and herald within the veil. In chap. vii. Melchisedek passes across the scene, but only to point to Him who was made a priest after the power of an endless life. In chap. viii. the old

covenant, proclaimed amid the pomp and pageantry of Sinai, is exchanged for the new covenant, confirmed in Him, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens. In chap. ix. the tabernacle with its imposing ritual is said to gather all its significance from its typical relation to Jesus, who by His own blood entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption. In chap. x. every priest standing daily ministering through all previous history only proved our need of this man, who, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God. In chap. xi. the heroes of the Bible, forming God's loved gallery of portraits, are brought before us; but only to bid the believer in chap. xii. to look away from the most beautiful picture unto Jesus, who in chap. xiii. is revealed as "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

Hence in this remarkable epistle to Hebrew Christians, which it is safe to assert, in the face of many modern critics, was written at the dictation of the Holy Ghost by the apostle Paul, the most illustrious persons and the most venerable institutions are made to give way to One, who was infinitely above and beyond them all in the dignity of His divine nature, and in the value of His atoning work. They are introduced one by one only to

retire one by one before the presence of Him, who being the brightness or effulgence of the Father's glory, and the very image of His person or the exact expression of His substance, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. The acknowledged date of the epistle, standing between the first and second epistles of Peter, may throw light upon the words of 2 Pet. iii. 15, 16.

Here all is eternal in contrast with the Mosaic ordinances, that disappeared in Messiah's finished sacrifice and ascension, as the gray dawn disappears in the splendor of the noon day sun. His throne is eternal, (i. 8); He became the author of eternal salvation, (v. 9); His priesthood is eternal, (vi. 20); He obtained eternal redemption, (ix. 12); He offered Himself through the eternal Spirit, (ix. 14); He has given us the promise of eternal inheritance, (ix. 15); and He has cleansed us with the blood of the everlasting covenant, (xiii. 20). Accordingly believers are viewed as not belonging to earth, but as "partakers of the heavenly calling," (iii. 1), knowing for themselves that they "have in heaven a better and an enduring substance, (x. 34). Hence too, the Holy Ghost, looking at everything from the stand point of eternity, could say, "For yet a little while, how short! how

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short! the Coming One will be here, and will not delay," (x. 37, Rotherham's translation).

The epistle brings out clearly the characteristics of our great High Priest, (1) as by Himself purging our sins, i. 3; (2) as suffering, ii. 9, 10, 17, 18; (3) as sympathizing, iv. 15; (4) as of royal station and power, vii. 2, 14, 17; (5) as interceding, vii. 25; (6) as holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens, vii. 26; (7) as appearing the second time, without sin, unto salvation, ix. 28. It also shows us that as our High Priest He is able (1) to succor, ii. 18; (2) to give grace, iv. 16; (3) to cleanse from dead works, ix. 14; (4) to secure for us entrance with boldness into the holiest, x. 19-22; (5) to lead us forth without the camp of the world and the world's religion, xiii. 13; (6) that we may joyfully confess His name, xiii. 15; (7) and offer acceptable service to God, xiii. 16.

Indeed in the whole of His priestly work, He had special and primary reference to the glory of God, as shown (1) by the fact that He is a high priest in things pertaining to God, ii. 17; (2) that He uses the word of God, iv. 12-14; (3) that He was called of God, v. 10; (4) that He fulfilled the immutable counsel of God, vi. 17-20; (5) that He is now on the right hand of the throne of God, viii. 1; (6) that He offered Himself without spot to God, ix. 14; (7) that He came to do the will of God, x. 7.

By the doing of His will, believers (1) have no more conscience of sins, x. 2; (2) they *are* sanctified, x. 10; (3) they are perfected forever, x. 14; (4) they have the witness of the Holy Ghost to their acceptance, x. 15; (5) there is no more remembrance of their sins, x. 17; (6) there is complete remission of their sins, x. 18; (7) they have freeness of access to God, x. 19; even when they know that our God, not God out of Christ, but “*our* God is a consuming fire,” xii. 29.

#### JAMES.

Some one has well said that when we leave the holy of holies, the epistle to the Hebrews, James takes us by the hand, and leads us through the world. It is eminently practical in its character, and may be regarded as the book of Proverbs of the New Testament. That it occupies an important place in the canon of Sacred Scripture will be gratefully acknowledged by all who bow to the authority of God's word; and if any true Christians have thought that its teachings are not in perfect harmony with the tone of the gospel, it is because they have failed to see the design of the epistle.

The opening verse informs us that it was written “to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad.” True that ten of these tribes had been lost from

human view for many centuries, but they still existed in the purpose of God, and to the eye of the Holy Ghost; and we find them here addressed, as if they had remained in the land which was given to their fathers for an everlasting possession. Among these twelve tribes were some who were Christians, and some of course who had never advanced beyond Jewish faith; and if this fact is remembered, every apparent difficulty can be readily explained. It is Jehovah's last, formal call to Israel, until the second advent, to live in the spirit and in the power of the Old Testament scriptures, that pointed to Christ as the only Deliverer.

Hence the Apostle, who was our Lord's brother according to the flesh, is careful at the outset to call himself "a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ." Hence too amid the directions he gives concerning trials, the way to obtain wisdom, riches and poverty, he reminds his brethren that God of His own will begets us with the word of truth, and that the new nature thus received will lay an arrest upon the unruly tongue and turbulent heart. He also calls the gospel "the perfect law of liberty," and tells us that "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." The former part of this definition is often

quoted, and it suits unregenerate men, who can get credit for visiting the fatherless and widows; but the latter part is nearly always left out, because it is impossible for the flesh to be unspotted from the world, chap. i.

The inspired writer, therefore, proceeds to show that Christian practice must rest on Christian faith, and speaks of our Lord Jesus Christ as the true glory, the shechinah of the temple around which their hopes had formerly clustered. This brightness fell upon the poorest saint, so that the brother of low degree might "glory in his sublimity," as Manson renders it, (i. 9), and any distinction between rich and poor in the house of God was most offensive to Him, who made it His crowning achievement that "the poor have the gospel preached to them," (Matt. xi. 5). But then as now there was a disposition to rely upon mere forms and ordinances for salvation, and consequently the faith that saves is shown to be a fruitful and powerful thing. There is not the slightest difference between Paul and James, but they present precisely the same truth from different stand-points. The former says, faith works by love, (Gal. v. 6), and so does the latter who says, "what doth it profit, my brethren, though a man SAY he hath faith, and have not works? Again he says, "YE SEE then how that by works a man is

justified, and not by faith only." Upon these two words, *say* and *see*, depends the meaning of James, who cites Abraham and Rahab, as Paul does, but at different periods, to show that while they were justified before God by faith alone, they were justified before men by works, chap. ii.

This is followed by a picture of the terrible evils and mischiefs wrought by an ungoverned tongue, which in graphic description surpasses anything in the range of uninspired literature; and it closes with a beautiful definition of the wisdom that is from above as "first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality [margin, wrangling], and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace," chap. iii.

Then comes a stirring admonition against the love of worldly pleasures, the fountain of restless desire and brawlings, the secret of unanswered prayer, and denounced as spiritual adultery. "Do ye think the scripture saith in vain, The Spirit that He placed in us jealously desireth us?" (vs. 5, Alford's reading). Humility, submission to God, resistance of the devil, downright earnestness, cessation of evil speaking, a deep sense of the uncertainty of life and of entire dependence upon the providence of the Lord every day, must characterize those who live according to His will, chap. iv.



Again does the warning sound forth against inordinate desire for riches, as specially suited to Jewish habits of thought, and the corrective of the tendency is the fixed expectation of the coming of the Lord. Lands and houses were not worth much as the year of Jubilee drew nigh, (Lev. xxv.). Meanwhile they were to be patient in affliction, remembering the tender mercy of the Lord in dealing with His chastened saints of old, and not forgetting that "very strong is the working supplication of a righteous man," (vs. 16, Young's translation). The conversion of one sinner shall save a soul from death, covering from God's sight a multitude of that soul's sins, and hence it is worth a thousand worlds like this, against the dangerous influence of which the epistle was designed to put us on our guard, chap. v.

#### THE EPISTLES OF PETER.

It is a suggestive fact that four of the New Testament epistles have special reference to the Jews. It shows God's loving remembrance of His ancient people, and, although no distinction exists between Jew and Gentile in Christ, it intimates His purpose to have them ever in view as a people, and, when "the fulness of the Gentiles be come in," to restore them to covenant relationship to

Himself. "Even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart. Nevertheless, when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away," (2 Cor. iii. 15, 16).

The first epistle of Peter is addressed to believing Jews, touchingly called "the strangers," or as the Revised Version has it, the "sojourners of the Dispersion," scattered through Asia Minor. But whatever they were in man's sight, they were "elect according to the foreknowledge of God;" looking forward with a living hope "to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away;" rejoicing "with joy unspeakable and full of glory," although in the midst of sore trials; called as obedient children to separate themselves from everything that dishonored their Father; knowing that they had been redeemed with the precious blood of Christ; and resting their faith, amid the swift changes of earth, upon the word of God, by which they were born again unto a life that, like the word, abideth forever, chap. i.

Upon this statement of facts as to their position before God is based a practical exhortation to grow in the knowledge of the word; to act worthy of their high vocation as a holy priesthood in their relation to Jehovah, and as a royal priesthood in their relation to the world; to adore the sovereign mercy which had made them a people in the time

of Israel's rejection ; to keep aloof as strangers and pilgrims from entangling alliances with the world ; to walk among the Gentiles with a sincerity, a conscientiousness, a lofty integrity that would constrain the recognition of God ; to be subject to civil rulers, however vile in themselves ; to make Christ their example in humility and meekness ; " who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness," chap. ii.

Then follow directions to wives and to husbands, which, if heeded, would make the marriage relation sweet and sacred ; directions to govern believers in their conduct toward one another, directions to be ready always with an answer to every man who asks for a reason of the Christian's hope ; directions to suffer uncomplainingly if it be God's will, remembering that " Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." Ages ago the Spirit of Christ in Noah preached to the ante-diluvian world, but, rejecting the testimony of the word, they are now shut up in prison, while Noah and his family passed through the water as a symbol of death and resurrection, of which baptism is still the figure, chap. iii.

The sufferings of Christ form the greatest incentive to courage and constancy and complete separation from the old life of sin, for even if death

passes upon believers, they still live according to God in the spirit, and are patiently waiting for the end, which is represented as at hand. Hence they are to keep the Master always before the mind, and thus to rejoice in all sufferings endured for His sake. Judgment must begin at the house of God, winnowing the chaff from the wheat, but a far more appalling judgment will fall upon those who obey not the gospel, chap. iv.

Those therefore who have the charge and oversight of the flock must live in the power of the certain appearing of the Chief Shepherd; and, so far from indulging the pride and self-sufficiency natural to man, all Christians are to be clothed with humility, or, as the Greek word signifies, to tie it on fast with a knot, remembering that they have a watchful and powerful adversary, who is ever seeking their destruction. "But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered awhile, stablish, strengthen, settle you," chap. v.

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The Second Epistle, like the other second epistles, is largely occupied with the last days. Hence the urgent exhortation to press forward with diligence to higher and still higher attainments, so that an entrance may be ministered abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and

Saviour Jesus Christ, of which we have a beautiful sample in the glory of the transfiguration, making more sure the word of prophecy, to which we do well that we give heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, and always remembering that holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, chap. i.

But notwithstanding the divine certainty and infinite sufficiency of God's word, we are plainly warned that false teachers will arise, for whom the most terrible damnation is in store. Balaam is their type, and although they may be regarded as fountains of learning; they are wells without water; although their beautiful language may soar to the skies, they are clouds that are carried with a tempest, to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever. Through their pernicious influence many professed Christians will turn like a dog to his vomit, and like a sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire, for they were never anything, amid all their pretentious profession, but dogs and swine, chap. ii.

So the apostacy will go, until in the last days scoffers shall arise among those claiming to be Christians, and sneering on scientific grounds at the truth of our Lord's personal return to the earth. But return He will, ushering in that day which will last a thousand years, and terminate in a

conflagration which will introduce the eternal state. All believers who would make their calling and election sure must be looking for, and hasting the coming of that day, ever rejoicing in the long suffering of our Lord, and accounting every part of His precious word as above all price. "To Him be glory, both now and to the day of the age. Amen," (Young's translation).

#### FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN.

The gospel of John is about the Son of God, while this beautiful epistle is chiefly occupied about the sons of God. Hence He who was "*in the beginning*" is here seen "*from the beginning*" moving for the deliverance of those whom the Father had given to Him out of the world. The epistle commences where the gospel closes, with a saved sinner in the bosom of incarnate love; and the whole family are viewed in their relation to the Father, to the elder Brother, to one another, to the world, to sin, to the Holy Spirit, and to prayer. It must not be forgotten that the entire epistle is addressed to believers, and only to believers.

First, we have eternal life in the Son of God, bringing us into fellowship or partnership with the Father and with the Son, causing us no longer to shrink from the light, revealing the efficacy of the

blood of Christ as keeping pace with every flash of that increasing light, pointing out the provision made to meet our failures in the ministry of the word and the advocacy of Jesus Christ, and making it certain that whosoever abideth in Him will walk even as He walked. In order to do this the heart must be established in the knowledge of present salvation, and hence the Holy Ghost says, "I write unto you, little children, because your sins ARE forgiven you for his name's sake," i., ii. 1-12.

Second, this happy household is then divided into three groups, according to their age, experience, practical attainments, and service, designated as fathers, young men, and little children; but the word rendered "little children" is altogether different from that so translated in ii. 1, 12, 28; iii. 7, 18; iv. 4; v. 21. It implies a very young child, or infant, and yet it is presumed that they know enough to know the Father, and to be warned of the antichrist, and to shun unitarianism as thoroughly antichristian, and to rejoice in the anointing of the Spirit, and to be independent of man's teaching. Each class is twice appropriately addressed, ii. 13-27.

Third, the household is brought together again, and told to abide in Christ in view of His second coming, to walk in righteousness as those born of

God, as sons of God, as destined to shine in the likeness of Jesus at His appearing, as obtaining real victory over sin and the devil on their way to meet Him in the glory, for that which is born of God in them, the new nature, can not sin, ii. 28, 29; iii. 1-10.

Fourth, the children of the family are then viewed in their relation to one another, and it is a relation of love under the influence of His example, who *did* lay down His life for us, so that we *ought* to lay down our lives for the brethren. Thus we have confidence toward God, and keep His commandments, which are not like the old commandments that said, "Love God," and "Love thy neighbor," but, "Believe in God's love for you," and, "Love one another," iii. 11-24.

Fifth, this is followed by a statement of their relation to the Holy Spirit, who has come to testify of Christ, and to glorify Christ, (John xv. 26; xvi. 14); and hence any teaching that does not exalt Christ, any teaching that puts self, experience, culture, progress, church, or what else above Christ, is not of the Spirit of God, and does not flow from the manifested love of God in the gift of His only begotten Son, but is essentially anti-christian in its origin and end, iv. 1-10.

Sixth, whatever measure of love we have for Him and for His children is but the faint reflection, the



feeble response, given in answer to His perfect love, that imparts boldness in anticipation of the day of judgment, that makes us in this world even as Christ is in heaven, that sets forth the way of salvation in such sweet simplicity we can say in unquestioning confidence, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God," and that secures in the power of the new nature, and continuing faith in Christ, complete victory over the world, according to the witness of the Spirit, iv. 11-21; v. 1-8.

Seventh, the witness of God is the sure foundation of our faith and hope, and this witness extends to the present possession of eternal life through His Son, to the knowledge of the fact by what is written, to confidence in prayer, to intercession for others, to the privilege of being kept by the power of God from the very touch of that wicked one in whom the whole world lieth until the Son of God shall come. Hence the importance of keeping ourselves from idols in the joy of that blessed hope, v. 9-21.

#### SECOND EPISTLE OF JOHN.

It is very suggestive that the second epistle which, like the other second epistles, has special reference to the state of things in the latter times, was addressed by the Holy Ghost to a lady. It

may come to pass very soon that only one here and another there will be considered worthy of a communication from heaven, but that one, though but a woman, will not be forgotten. Observe too how the word *truth* rings out five times, the Jewish number, in this little epistle, and how the elect lady and her children are put upon their guard against the many deceivers "who confess not that Jesus Christ is *coming* in the flesh," [see Greek]. It is that coming which stimulates to earnestness, "that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward;" and meanwhile, if any bring not with them the doctrine of Christ, the doctrine that honors Christ as the divine and eternal Son of the Father, the doctrine that presents Christ as the only Saviour of lost men, neither the lady nor ourselves are to receive such false teachers into our houses, nor bid them God speed. We are to be true to Him at any cost of what the world calls charity or courtesy, hoping to be with the saints in His presence, and to speak face to face, that our joy may be full.

### THIRD EPISTLE OF JOHN.

This brief epistle, reaching on to the very last days, is also addressed to an individual, and seven times, the church number of completeness, does

the word *truth* sound forth. The first epistle, like the first epistle of Peter, comforts believers amid trials arising from the world; but the second and third epistles, like the second of Peter, seek to confirm them against far greater trials arising from within the church. As in the second epistle of Peter *knowledge* is mentioned seven times, so in the third epistle of John, brief as it is, *truth* is mentioned seven times, showing to what manifold and dangerous errors and lies believers will be exposed in the last days. As the second epistle of John tells us whom to reject, the third epistle tells us whom to receive, not merely as an act of charity, not simply as an expression of Christian courtesy, but "that we might be fellow-helpers to the truth." It is most significant that in this last of the inspired epistles, touching the condition of things in the last days, so much is made of the truth, and that the church is mentioned three times, though existing amid surrounding ruins. But the dear old apostle could lift up his eyes above earth's gloom to look for the "Bright and Morning Star," and in the expectation of soon beholding its golden light he could say, "I trust I shall shortly [immediately] see thee, and we shall speak face to face." There will not be many left, however, and hence he closes with the sweet and solemn words, "Greet the friends by name."

## EPISTLE OF JUDE.

It was reserved for one who was called "the brother of the Lord," but who esteems it a privilege to call himself "the servant of Jesus Christ," to take us by the hand, and lead us to the threshold of the book of Revelation, thus introducing the appalling judgments there portrayed. Certain ignorant commentators have asserted that Peter borrowed from Jude, or that Jude plagiarized from Peter; but apart from the fact that both wrote immediately under the direction of the Holy Ghost, any attentive reader can readily perceive that Peter wrote in his second epistle of sin, while Jude advances the thought to treat of apostacy. A comparison of 2 Pet. ii. 4 with Jude 6 will illustrate the difference.

The seven incidents which the Spirit of God here cites from the history of the past are evidently intended to mark the course of events that precede the coming of the Lord in judgment, and to explain the cause of what follows in the book of Revelation. The danger will arise, as everywhere asserted, from those within the church, "ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ."

First comes unbelief, (vs. 5), the source of all sin, the poisonous root of all evil, the beginning of

all departure from God. Second, we have apostacy, illustrated by the angels who kept not their principality [margin], but left their own habitation, (vs. 6). Third, following this apostacy there will be, as in the past, gross sensuality leading to the unbridled indulgence of lust, (vs. 7). Fourth, lawlessness will abound, and contempt of constituted authority, impatience of restraint, communism, assassination of rulers, the overthrow of government when it does not meet the insane and insatiate demand of the mob, will succeed the apostacy, (vs. 8-10). Fifth, self-willed religiousness, choosing its own offerings, and despising the blood of atonement, as with Cain, is another characteristic of the days that will usher in wrath, (vs. 11). Sixth, then will be seen a bold invasion of the prophetic office, setting aside the authority of Christ as Teacher, as in the case of Balaam, who corrupted Israel by worldly alliances; and seventh, the crowning iniquity will be reached in the blasphemous denial of Christ's priesthood, substituting, like Korah, their own opinions for the testimony of the word concerning the worship that is acceptable to God, (vs. 11).

Well, the Lord is coming to vindicate His insulted majesty, and of this Enoch preached. We know not what beside he preached, but it is certain that he proclaimed the second coming of

Christ. "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy; to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen."

#### REVELATION.

It is needless to say that the Sacred Scriptures would have been incomplete without this last book. It impugns the wisdom of our heavenly Father to suppose that He made a mistake in placing it among His living oracles, and it surely grieves Him when His children treat it, as too many do, with studied neglect and almost with undisguised contempt. It is "The Revelation of Jesus Christ [not of St. John the Divine, as the uninspired title falsely asserts], which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass." As He gave it, therefore, to show His servants what is certainly coming to pass, it can not be His will to have them turn from its solemn testimony in utter unconcern.

The plea that is constantly urged as an excuse for indifference to this portion of the inspired word is our inability to understand it. But, as if God foresaw the excuse, and determined to sweep it out of the way of obedience to His command, He

says, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein." It will be observed that nothing is said about *understanding* it, but there is a blessing for him that readeth, and for them that hear. Any child of God can get this blessing, and every one should desire it. "*He that readeth*" implies that it should be read personally, and "*they that hear*" indicates that the people should have an opportunity of listening to it. Even if they can not read, it is blessed to hear and to keep the words of this prophecy.

After all, is not the trouble in the heart rather than the head, when professing Christians complain that they derive no profit from that which God has been pleased to make known as a revelation, apocalypse, or unveiling of Jesus Christ? No matter what the seals, trumpets, and vials mean: it is enough for the loyal believer to know that his Lord stands before him unveiled, even in the midst of strange symbols, to call forth his loving interest and adoring gratitude. It may be safely asserted that those who find nothing here worthy of their attention most neglect the book; and on the other hand, they who most frequently and prayerfully read it receive constant pleasure and instruction and blessing.

Even a casual acquaintance with the Bible

shows a striking similarity in many respects between the prophecy of Daniel and the book of Revelation; and it is suggested that the two be read together at a single sitting. There is this difference however, that what the former is told to shut up and seal to the time of the end, the last of the New Testament prophets, now that the time of the end is at hand, is told to reveal. Moreover the Lord Jesus Himself gives us a key to the general meaning and design of the book in the three grand divisions which He makes of its contents. He says to John, "Write the things which thou hast seen," that is, His walking in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, arrayed in the robes of a priest exercising judgment; "and the things which are," that is the things which were going on in John's day and during the present dispensation; "and the things which shall be hereafter," or literally "after these things," that is, after the present dispensation.

Hence the book gives us first the revelation of Jesus Christ, looking into the state of the churches, chap. i.: second, in prophetic outline the history of the churches, chaps. ii., iii.; third, the Church, the real Church, made up of quickeped souls, in heaven around the throne set for judgment; and the investiture of the Lamb with the title deeds to the earth, chaps. iv., v.; fourth, the outpouring of successive



judgments upon the earth, growing sharper and severer, but only hardening men in iniquity, until the evil heads up in the Antichrist, and a monstrous ecclesiastical system of corruption, chaps. vi.-xviii.; fifth, the marriage supper of the Lamb, and His descent with the saints to inflict personal vengeance upon Antichrist and his armies, chap. xix.; sixth, the resurrection of the righteous dead, the millennial kingdom, during which Satan is bound, and the final judgment of the great white throne, chap. xx.; seventh, eternal glory and millennial joy, chaps. xxi., xxii.

Scarcely do we open the book before we find that we stand upon different ground from other portions of the New Testament. The invocation is addressed to God, to Jesus Christ, and to the Holy Spirit, but in all the epistles grace and peace are implored only from the Father and the Son, because the Spirit is viewed as the abiding Comforter of the Church, dwelling in believers. Here He has taken His place in heaven, as before His descent on the day of Pentecost. This is immediately followed by a Christian song and a Jewish wail in view of the coming of Christ with clouds; and this again by His revelation as in Dan. vii., where He is about to take the kingdom, chap. i.

But before His final appearing the history of the professing body of His followers is given, to

explain the subsequent events sketched in the book. That the seven churches actually existed in John's day is certain, but it is equally certain that they were symbolical, as shown (1) by the fact that Jesus speaks of "the mystery" connected with them; (2) by the fact that there were just seven, the word *seven* occurring at least fifty times in the book, and always elsewhere as symbolic; (3) by the fact that our Lord confines His messages to these seven, although there were hundreds and thousands of churches then established; (4) by the fact that there are marked differences in the messages, though the churches were founded at the same time and composed of the same people, and lying almost in a circle within a few miles of each other; (5) by the fact that there is no explanation of the change that occurs in the mode of address to the first three and the last four, unless they are symbolical; (6) by the fact that the promises and warnings are evidently continuous, the blessings being restored in the order in which they were lost, and the whole seven answering to seven successive periods of Israel's decline and fall; (7) by the fact that the prophetic view corresponds precisely with events that have occurred in the history of the Church. Ephesus shows the giving up of the first love; Smyrna the period of persecution that followed the days of the apostles; Pergamos the

corruption of the church by union with the world under Constantine and his successors, and the prevalence of Nicolaitanism or clerical pretension; Thyatira increasing evil through the idolatry and spiritual adultery of popery in the dark ages. Here it will be observed, the warning, "He that hath an ear" succeeds the promise, and it does not precede as in the first three epistles; and here "the rest" or "remnant" are addressed in a great mass of empty profession; and from this time on the coming of Christ is mentioned as the motive and hope of the faithful, chap. ii.

This is followed by Sardis, or the state of Protestantism, with much that is good and much that is formal and dead; and this by Philadelphia, or revived interest in the person and word of Christ, leading to the promise, "I will keep thee from [out of] the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth;" and this by Laodicea, the last state of the professing body, outwardly prosperous, but inwardly corrupt, excluding the Saviour from His own house, and at length spued out of His mouth, chap. iii.

At some unnoticed point after the message to Philadelphia, and it must have been unnoticed by the very nature of the case, the real Church is caught up to heaven, for it was said to John, "Come

up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter," literally, "after these things" recorded in chap. ii. and iii. From that time the church is seen no more, until she descends with her divine Bridegroom in chap. xix. But her representatives are seated upon thrones, while the Almighty, a title given to God nine times in the book, though it occurs but once elsewhere in the New Testament, is preparing His judgments, chap. iv.

Then we have the Lamb, literally "a little lamb," a term of endearment given to Christ about thirty times in the book, and never elsewhere. He is seen to be the centre of God's counsels, and He alone is worthy to take the seven-sealed book, and to exercise lordship over creation, while the saints ascribe redemption solely to His blood, and the angels on the outer circle echo their praise, chap. v.

So the seals are opened, as the cry is heard to the executors of God's righteous judgments, "Come;" and wrath descends upon the fourth part of the prophetic earth. Here the prayer for vengeance from the souls of them that are slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held, can not be the prayer of saints in the present dispensation. But it will be noticed that there is an interval between the sixth and seventh seal, as

there is between the sixth and seventh trumpet, and the sixth and seventh vial, chap. vi.

During the interval an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel are sealed, the very names of the tribes being given, marking them as God's own; and a great multitude which no man can number of Gentiles are redeemed, though they do not constitute part of the church, strictly speaking. Multitudes were saved before the Christian Church was formed on the day of Pentecost, and multitudes will be saved after the church, composed of all who are baptized by one Spirit into one body, and united to their living Head, shall have been caught away to heaven, chap. vii.

The opening of the seventh seal is the signal or preparation for the sounding of the trumpets, that indicate sorer judgments over a wider field, even the third, or Roman part of the earth. Let it be borne in mind that these judgments are yet future, although no doubt there have been events in the past that are typical of them, as "history ever repeats itself;" but the very purpose of God in connection with the second advent of His Son would have been defeated, if He had been more explicit in details and explanations. Six trumpets sound, but those who are smitten only harden themselves, as did Pharaoh of old, chaps. viii., ix.

Then comes another interruption, during which a mighty angel descends from heaven, declaring "that there should be time no longer," or rather, "that there should be no longer delay," in winding up the awful scene, chap. x.

Meanwhile Jerusalem comes distinctly into view, the temple, the altar, the court of the Gentiles, the holy city, being explicitly mentioned, the two witnesses consuming with fire and smiting with plagues, which the saints of this dispensation are forbidden to do; and at length their dead bodies lie "in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified." Their ascension to heaven is followed by a terrible earthquake, and the sounding of the seventh trumpet, announcing that "the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever," chap. xi.

But this naturally leads to a rehearsal of God's purpose and plan in connection with the Son of His love, from His birth in Israel, or rather in Judah, to His sitting down on the throne in heaven, the casting out from the heavenly places, where our conflict is now, of the devil, and his baffled purpose to destroy the Jews and the believing remnant, chap. xii.

Therefore his last attempt is his old game to

counterfeit God, and hence we have an infernal trinity after the church is caught away, Satan counterfeiting the Father; an imperial infidel government in the restored Roman empire combined with a blasphemous ecclesiastical power, substituting culture for the gospel of Christ; and a base imitation of the Holy Ghost, working miracles, and deluding the whole world to worship Antichrist, chap. xiii.

But there will be an elect remnant, another hundred and forty and four thousand, refusing to bow the knee to man, the first fruits of a glorious harvest afterwards to be gathered in. This is followed by a swift succession of angelic ministries, cheering the faithful to meet death, and marking seven distinct results of God's dealing in grace and in judgment, chap. xiv.

Then come seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them is filled up the wrath of God. But before they proceed to inflict judgment, the martyred and yet victorious Jewish remnant is heard singing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, giving praise to the king, not of saints, but of nations, chap. xv.

The outpouring of the vials or bowls is the next act in this startling drama of the world's closing history, denoting still more terrible disasters that are coming upon the Christ-rejecting earth, and

thus bringing the testimonies of the last book of the Bible into perfect harmony with all preceding prophecies ; for they all predict that fearful judgments will usher in millennial glory. But there is a pause between the sixth and seven vials, as between the seals and trumpets, chap. xvi.

This brings us to the overthrow of Babylon, the false ecclesiastical system, by the false civil system upon which she rode into power. But if Babylon means popery, it must not be forgotten that she will be destroyed only by the personal advent of Christ, and that she is "the mother of harlots," having many daughters clothed, it may be, in a Protestant garb, chap. xvii.

So important, however, is the part Babylon plays, as the counterfeit of the true Church, the bride, in the causes that lead to the calamities of the last days, her destruction is more minutely described. God's people are called to come out of her, and all her luxury and power and splendor make her degradation and punishment the more appalling, chap. xviii.

Immediately upon the judgment of the great whore, the marriage supper of the Lamb is celebrated in heaven, and the crowned King of kings descends with His saints, who have been with Him during these terrible events, for the destruction of the Antichrist and all opposing powers, chap. xix.



Satan is then cast bound into the abyss for a thousand years, all the righteous dead before Christ, during the present dispensation, and after the rapture of the Church, are raised up, and share with him kingly and priestly dignity through the millennium, after which Satan is to be loosed for a little season, only to be finally and forever cast into the lake of fire; and the judgment of the great white throne introduces eternity, chap. xx.

A glimpse of eternal blessedness is given, and only a glimpse, for we could stand no more; but the rest of the book is occupied with an entrancing description of the glory of the Lamb, the beauty of the Lamb's wife, and the unalloyed happiness of the saved nations of earth, walking in the light of the celestial city and of the bride's shining garments, chap. xxi., xxii. That we may have our hearts fully and intently set upon the revelations of this wondrous book, three times in closing does Jesus say, "Behold, I come quickly;" "Behold, I come quickly;" "Surely, I come quickly;" and well may we respond with the eager cry—

"Lord Jesus, Come!  
Nor let us longer roam  
Afar from Thee, and that bright place  
Where we shall see Thee face to face:  
Lord Jesus, Come!"

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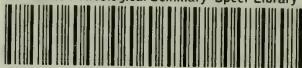




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