THE

BIBLICAL ILLUSTRATOR:

OR,

ANECDOTES, SIMILES, EMBLEMS, ILLUSTRATIONS, EXPOSITORY, SCIENTIFIC, GEOGRAPHICAL, HISTORICAL, AND HOMILETIC, GATHERED FROM A WIDE RANGE OF HOME AND FOREIGN LITERATURE, ON THE VERSES OF THE BIBLE.

BY

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ROMANS.

VOL. I.

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INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

I. ITS GENUINENESS AND AUTHENTICITY. The author declares himself to be Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles (chaps. i. 1–7, xv. 15–20), who writes in order to fulfil his commission "to bring all the Gentiles to the obedience of the faith" (chap. i. 5). 1. The witnesses. The unanimous tradition of the Church is in harmony with the declaration of the author. (1) Between 90 and 100 A.D. Clement of Rome reproduced in his Epistle to the Corinthians (chap. xxxv.) the picture of the vices of the Gentiles traced in Rom. i., and (chap. xxxviii.) applies to the circumstances of his time the exhortations addressed to strong and weak in Rom. xiv. Our letter was therefore preserved in the archives of the Church of Rome, and recognised as the work of the apostle whose name it bears. (2) The author of the Epistle of Barnabas (cir. 96 A.D.) in chap. iii. had present to his mind Rom. iv. 11, &c. (3) The letters of Ignatius again and again reproduce the antithesis in the twofold origin of Jesus (Rom. i. 3, 4). (4) In the Dialogue with Trypho (chap. xxvii.) Justin (middle of 2nd century A.D.) repeats the enumeration of the many Biblical passages whereby Paul (Rom. iii.) demonstrates the natural corruption of man. (5) The Epistle to Diognetus alludes (chap. ix.) to Rom. v. 18, 19. (6) The Churches of Lyons and Vienne in their letter to the Churches of Pontus (cir. 177 A.D.) speak of their martyrs "really proving the sufferings of the present time" (Rom. viii. 18). (7) Many features of the picture of Gentile infamies (Rom. i.) reappear in the Apologies of Athanagoras and of Theophylus (soon after the middle of 2nd century A.D.). The latter quotes Rom. ii. 6–9, xiii. 7, 8. (8) The so-called Canon of Muratori (170–180 A.D.) places our Epistle among the writings which the Church receives, and which should be read publicly. (9) The quotations made by Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian are very numerous. It is only from this time that Paul is expressly named as author. (10) In century 3rd A.D. Origen, and in century 4th, Eusebius, do not mention any doubt as expressed as to the authenticity of our Epistle. (11) The testimony of heretics is no less unanimous, Basilides, Ptolemæus, and very particularly Marcion, from the first half of the 1st century onwards make use of our Epistle as a genuine apostolic document. (*Prof. Godet.*) 2. Objections answered. Throughout the whole course of the past centuries only two theologians have contested this unanimous testimony—Evanson and Bruno Bauer. They ask—(1) Why does the author of the Acts not say a word about a work of such importance? As if the Acts were a biography of Paul! (2) How are we to understand the numerous salutations of chap. xvi., addressed to a Church in which Paul had never lived? As if (granting that they really belong to this Epistle) the apostle could not have known all these persons in Greece and the East, as he did Priscilla and Aquila! (3) How can we account for the existence of so considerable a Church before the arrival of any apostle? As if the founding of the Church at Antioch did not furnish us with a sufficient precedent to solve the question. There is nothing to prevent us from accepting the testimony of the Church, which is confirmed, besides, by the grandeur which betrays a master, the truly apostolic power of the work itself, and its complete harmony in thought and style with other

acknowledged epistles. (*Ibid.*) 3. The force of the argument. Could this absolute unanimity have been obtained for a forgery? Suppose a case. The laws of causation have been set aside, and a bramble has produced the fruit of Paradise: a deceiver has written this Epistle. Or a great man has written it, and left his offspring to the tender mercies of an ungrateful world. The foundling has escaped the notice of every one else, and come into the hands of a deceiver, and by him has been wrapped up in the garments of Paul and brought to Rome. When was it brought? Not during the apostle's life, for he died at Rome; and his presence was a safeguard against such imposture. It must then have been brought after his death. It is shown to the members of the Church. No one has heard of it before. Yet it professes to have been sent to them years ago, when Paul was in active work, and before he came to Rome. They ask at once, Where has the letter been all this time? Why have we not seen it before? The details given in chaps. i., xv. expose the fraud. That this important work is in the form of a letter to a prominent Church, is in some sense a voucher for its genuineness. In short, we have a result for which we seek causes: the unanimous acceptance of the Epistle in the 2nd century. In Paul we have an author worthy of the Epistle; in the Epistle we have a work worthy of Paul. If it came from him its universal reception is accounted for. If it did not, its reception is a fact for which no sufficient cause is assigned. (*Prof. J. A. Beet.*)

II. DATE AND LOCALITY OF COMPOSITION. These can be fixed to a nicety by a comparison of the Pauline letters with the Pauline history in the Acts. 1. It was written before the apostle had been at Rome (chap. i. 11, 13, 15), but during the time when he was purposing to go there after his visit to Jerusalem (chap. xv. 23-28). Such was the apostle's wish when at Ephesus (Acts xix. 21), just before his visit to Greece (Acts xx. 2). 2. It was written when he was about to take a collection of alms from Macedonia and Achaia to Jerusalem (chap. xv. 26, 31); and this he did carry from Greece to Jerusalem at the close of his three months' stay (Acts xx. 2, 3, xxiv. 17). 3. When Paul wrote it, Timotheus, Sosipater, Gaius, and Erastus were with him (chap. xvi. 21, 23). Now in the Acts the three first of these are actually mentioned as being with him during his three months' stay in Greece (Acts xx. 2, 3); and Erastus (2 Tim. iv. 20), who was probably himself a Corinthian, had been sent shortly before from Ephesus (Acts xix. 22) to Macedonia with himself. 4. From 1 Cor. xvi. 10, 11 we learn that Timotheus was sent to Corinth; and as Phœbe (chap. xvi. 1, 2), the probable bearer of the Epistle, came from Cenchrea, the port of Corinth, it seems almost certain that during Paul's three months' stay in Greece he wrote the Epistle to the Romans. "It was written," too, Lewin remarks, "from Corinth, and not from Cenchrea, for Gaius, a Corinthian (1 Cor. i. 14), was the host of the apostle at the time of writing the Epistle (chap. xvi. 23); and while Paul mentions Cenchrea by name, he refers to Corinth as 'the city,' viz., in which he was sojourning" (chap. xvi. 1, 23). 5. As Paul was imprisoned two years before Felix's recall and Festus's appointment in A.D. 60 (Acts xxiv. 27), we arrive at the early spring of A.D. 58 as the date of the Epistle. (*C. Neil, M.A.*)

III. LITERARY CHARACTERISTICS. 1. Its style. (1) In general. (*a*) It is Paul's constant habit to insulate the one matter he is considering and to regard it irrespective of qualifications or objections up to a certain point. Much of the difficulty in chaps. v., vi., vii. has arisen from not bearing this in mind. (*b*) After thus treating the subject till the main result is gained, he then takes into account qualifications and objections, but in a manner peculiar to himself; introducing them by putting the overstrained use, or the abuse of the proposition, in an interrogative form, and answering the question just asked. (*c*) One of the most wonderful phenomena is the manner in which all such parenthetical inquiries are interwoven with the great subject; in which, while he pursues and annihilates the off-branching fallacy, at the same time he has been advancing in the main path—whereas in most human arguments each digression must have its definite termination. The thesis must be resumed where it has been left. A notable instance is seen in chap. vi., in which, while the mischievous fallacy of ver. 1 is discussed and annihilated, the great subject of the introduction of life by Christ is carried on through another step—viz., the establishment of that life as one of sanctification. Among other characteristics note—(*d*) Frequent and complicated antitheses, requiring great discrimination. For often the different members of the antitheses are not to be taken in the same

extent of meaning; sometimes the literal and metaphorical significations are interchanged in a curious and intricate manner, so that perhaps in the first member of two antithetical clauses the subject may be literal and the predicate metaphorical, and in the second *vice versâ*. Sometimes, again, the terms of one member are to be amplified to their fullest possible meaning, whereas those of the second are to be reduced down to their least possible meaning. (*e*) Frequent plays upon words, or rather, perhaps, choice of words, from their similarity of sound, which of course cannot be translated, and thus much of the terseness and force of the apostle's expressions are lost. (*f*) Accumulation of prepositions often with the same or very slightly different meanings, which tempts the expositor to give precise meaning and separate force to each, thus exceeding the intention of the sentence. (*g*) Frequency and peculiarity of parentheses which are hard to disentangle. The danger is lest we too hastily assume an irregular construction not perceiving the parenthetical interruption, and lest we err on the other side and assume a parenthesis where none exists. The parentheses, however, are generally well marked to the careful observer, and their peculiarity consists in this, that owing to his fervour and rapidity Paul frequently deserts in a clause intended to be parenthetical, the construction of the main sentence, and instead of resuming it again, proceeds with the parenthesis as though it were the main sentence. Instances of all these difficulties will be found in chap. v., where they reach their culminating point. (*Dean Alford.*) (2) In particular the style of the Epistle is characteristic of the apostle and non-classical. As in general we can best estimate the style of a writer in connection with his character, so here. The attributes which especially characterise Paul are power, fulness, and warmth. If to these is added perspicuity we have all united which ennobles an orator. But fulness of ideas and warmth of feelings often bring with them a certain informality of expression; the very wealth of the productive power does not always leave time to educate the thoughts which are born into the light —to arrange and select the feelings. And the result in the case of Paul is that, as the Fathers frequently confess, we must refrain from seeking classical elegance. As the Son of God appeared in a state of humiliation, so also the Word of God. (*Prof. Tholuck.*) 2. The language in which it was written. This Epistle to the Romans was written not in their own language, the Latin, but in Greek. Of this the explanation is that the Greek had become the *literary* language of the empire. It was the tongue which, no doubt, Paul himself best understood; and the great majority of his hearers would understand it also. The Jews learnt it by intercourse with Greeks, and many of the Romans preferred it to the Latin. The oldest Jewish tombs of Rome have Greek inscriptions, and that Gentile Christians understood it we infer from various witnesses: from Martial, Tacitus, Juvenal and Ovid, Ignatius, Dionysius of Corinth, and Irenæus wrote in Greek to the Church at Rome. Justin Martyr, who resided in Rome for a time, wrote his apologies to the emperors in the same tongue. Clement and Hermas wrote in Greek. Of the names of the first twelve bishops of Rome, ten are Greek, and only two Latin. Of the twenty-four names found in chap. xvi. 5–15, one is Hebrew, seven are Latin, and sixteen Greek, and they belong for the most part to the middle andl ower grades of society. Many of them are found in the *columbaria* of the freedmen and slaves of the early Roman emperors (Phil. iv. 22). (*S. G. Green, D.D.*)

IV. CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS. Coleridge pronounced the Epistle to be "the profoundest book in existence." Chrysostom had it read to him twice a week. Luther says in his preface: "This Epistle is the chief work of the New Testament, the purest gospel. It deserves not only to be known word for word by every Christian, but to be the subject of his meditation day by day, the daily bread of his soul. The more time one spends upon it, the more precious it becomes and the better it appears." Melanchthon, in order to make it thoroughly his own, copied it twice with his own hand. It is the book he most frequently expounded in his lectures. The Reformation was undoubtedly the work of Romans as well as Galatians; and the probability is that every great spiritual revival in the Church will be connected as cause and effect with a deeper understanding of this book. This observation unquestionably applies to the various religious awakenings which have successively marked the course of our century. In studying the Epistle we feel ourselves at every word face to face with the unfathomable. Our experience is somewhat analogous to what we feel when contemplating the great masterpieces of mediæval architecture, such, *e.g.*, as the cathedral of Milan. We do not know which to admire most, the majesty of the whole or the finish of the details,

and every look makes the discovery of some new perfection. M. De Pressensé has called the great dogmatic works of the Middle Ages "the cathedrals of thought." The Epistle to the Romans is the cathedral of the Christian faith. (*Ibid.*)

THE CHURCH OF ROME.—I. ITS ORIGIN. 1. It was not founded by Peter. According to Papal teaching this apostle came to Rome to preach the gospel and combat the heresies of Simon Magus at the beginning of the reign of Claudius (41–54). But it is probable that this tradition rests on a gross mistake of Justin Martyr's, who took a statue raised to a Sabine god (Semo Sanctus) for one erected to the sorcerer. But if the tradition were true Paul evidently could not write a long letter to this Church without mentioning its founder, nor indeed could he write it at all in consistency with his own principles had Peter been its founder (chap. xv. 20; 2 Cor. x. 16). It is supported, however, by two facts. (1) Acts xii. 17, where it is said that the delivered Peter went "into another place," viz., Rome. (2) The passage in Suetonius relative to the decree of Claudius banishing the Jews from Rome, because they ceased not "to rise at the instigation of Chrestus"—whom presumably Peter preached. But why should not Luke have specially named Rome?—there was no cause for mystery. Besides, at this period Peter can hardly have gone as far as Rome; for in 51 (Acts xv.) we find him at Jerusalem, and in 54 only at Antioch. Paul himself, the great pioneer of the gospel in the West, had not yet, in 42, set foot in Europe; and Luke enumerates (chaps. vi.–xiii.) very carefully all the providential circumstances which paved the way for carrying the gospel into the Gentile world. Assuredly, therefore, Peter had not up to that time crossed the seas to evangelise Rome. As to the passage from Suetonius, it is very arbitrary to make Chrestus a personification of Christian preaching in general. A true Roman tradition is much rather to be sought in a deacon of the Church (Ambrosiaster or Hilary, third or fourth century) who declares to the praise of his Church that the Romans had become believers "without having seen a single miracle or any of the apostles." Not that we deny that Peter ever came to Rome; but his visit cannot have taken place till after the composition of Romans, and the Epistles of his first imprisonment (62–63). How, if Peter had at that time laboured simultaneously with him in the city of Rome, could Paul have failed to name him among the preachers of the gospel whom he mentions, and from whom he sends greetings? Peter cannot therefore have arrived at Rome till the end of 63 or the beginning of 64, or his stay cannot have lasted more than a few months till August, 64, when he fell a victim of the persecution of Nero. To be a good Protestant one need not combat this tradition. It is even probable that, but for the notoriety of this fact, the legend of the founding of the Church at Rome could never have arisen and become so firmly established. (*Prof. Godet.*) 2. It was probably founded by the Pentecostal disciples of Peter. We may readily believe that the first nucleus of the Christian order and discipline which was about to develop itself would be the declaration of Peter, "that God hath made this same Jesus, whom ye"—(the Jews at Jerusalem)—"have crucified, both Lord and Christ"; that confession upon which Christ had said that He would build His Church as upon a rock. This, they would say one to another, is the faith we have learnt from Peter, who seemed to be the mightiest among the disciples we met on the day of Pentecost; whose preaching was confirmed to us by the gift of tongues. The name of Peter would still stand first and foremost in their minds, and occupy the chief place in their accounts of what they had discovered. To him they would refer as the author of their faith. As their internal organisation began to assume a form, they would recognise in him the founder of their Church. Such, we may presume, would be the natural progress of ideas among them. Even if Peter never came to Rome at all, never assumed any authority of the Church, nevertheless, it was natural that to him such a foundation should be attributed, that an ecclesiastical legend should grow up around it, and that it should become, in the course of ages, an established article of popular belief that Peter was the founder of the Roman Church, and the first bishop of Rome. Such, indeed, we know to have been the case; but the historical testimony on which this development is founded is absolutely worthless. We assume that the message of the gospel was first announced at Rome by the Jews or proselytes who had been converted to Christ by the preaching of St. Peter on the day of Pentecost, A.D. 33. These men doubtless talked over what they had seen; they discussed its bearings; they contracted a natural sympathy, and communicated their own hope and faith to those nearest to them. As heirs of one hope and of the same calling they rejoiced over every new adherent whom they attracted to their side

and induced to listen to their spiritual exhortations. One or another of them would come to be soon acknowledged as a leader, for his spiritual gifts, for his gift of praying, of preaching or expounding, for the sanctity of his life, or generally for the superior force of his character. These disciples would occupy themselves in searching the Scriptures for their witness to Christ's appearance, and for the assurance they might give of a new covenant with the God of Israel. But they would not all at once develop any form of spiritual government among themselves. They would be satisfied at first with administering the simple rite of baptism as an assurance of the remission of sins upon a declaration of repentance; they would live constantly together in the practice of mutual kindness, breaking bread from house to house, and consecrating their meal with prayer, in remembrance of their blessed Lord and Saviour. Such would be "the apostles' doctrine and fellowship," in which they had been instructed at Jerusalem; such the common forms of obedience by which they would become mutually known to one another. But they had received no instructions there as to the position which the law must now assume, the conditions of the covenant of grace, the services or ministry of the gospel. Such matters as these, fundamental as they were, must be left for their own discovery, or for the arrival of more advanced teachers to disclose to them. (*Dean Merivale.*) 3. Or possibly by the Gentile converts of Paul. Without denying what may have been done in an isolated way for the spread of Christianity in Rome by Jews returning from Jerusalem, we must assign the founding of the Roman Church to a different origin. Rome was to the world what the heart is to the body—the centre of vital circulation. Tacitus asserts that "all things hateful or shameful were sure to flow to Rome from all parts of the empire." This law must be applied to better things. Long before the composition of this Epistle, the gospel had already crossed the frontier of Palestine and spread among the Gentile populations of Syria, Asia Minor, and Greece. Endowed as it was with an inherent force of expansion, could not the new religious principle easily find its way from those countries to Rome? There are some facts which serve to confirm the essentially Gentile origin of the Roman Church. Five times in the salutations (chap. xvi.) the apostle addresses groups of Christians scattered over the great city. At least five times for once to the contrary the names are Greek and Latin, not Jewish. These bear witness to the manner in which the gospel gained a footing in the capital. This wide dissemination and those Gentile names find a natural explanation in the arrival of Christians from Greece and Asia, who had preached the Word each in the quarter of the city where he lived. A still more significant fact is that of Acts xxviii. 15, which proves that the Roman brethren already loved and venerated Paul as their spiritual father, and that consequently their Christianity proceeded directly or indirectly from the Churches founded by Paul in Greece and Asia, rather than from the Judæo-Christian Church of Jerusalem. The objection has been raised that the time between the composition of the Epistle (57 or 58) and the founding of the Churches of Greece (cir. 53 or 54) is too short for the gospel to have spread so far as Rome, and for the "whole world" to have heard of the fact (chap. i. 8). But the latter phrase is, of course, somewhat hyperbolical (*cf.* 1 Thess. i. 8; Col. i. 6), and the time is surely enough to admit of reinforcements from the great commercial centres of Thessalonica and Corinth, of those who at any time from the year 40, when the Churches of Syria were founded, may have brought the gospel from thence or from Asia Minor. The question arises how it was that the standard of the new doctrine had not yet been raised in the synagogue? And the answer is, that for such a mission it was not enough to be a sincere believer; one required to have a scriptural knowledge and a power of speech and argument which could not be expected from simple men engaged in commerce and industry. When (Acts xviii. 26) Apollos "made bold" to speak in the Ephesian synagogue even Aquila did not attempt to answer him in the open assembly. Only a very small number of men exceptionally qualified could essay an attack such as would tell on the fortress of Roman Judaism, and not one of these strong men had yet appeared in the capital. We have in the founding of the Church of Antioch a case analogous to that which we are supposing for the Church of Rome. Some Christian emigrants from Jerusalem reach the capital of Syria shortly after the martyrdom of Stephen; they turn to the Greeks, *i.e.*, the Gentiles. A large number believe, and the distinction between this community of Gentile origin and the synagogue is so marked that the new name "Christian" is invented to designate believers (Acts xi. 19–26). Let us transfer this scene to the capital of the empire and we have the history of the founding of the Church of Rome. We understand how Greek names are in the

majority, the ignorance which prevailed among the rulers of the synagogue, and the eagerness of the Roman Christians to salute Paul on his arrival. We believe, therefore, that the Roman Church was mostly of Gentile origin and Pauline tendency, even before the apostle addressed our letter to it, and that the formation of the Church was indirectly traceable to him, because its authors proceeded for the most part from the Churches of the East, whose existence was due to his apostolic labours. (*Prof. Godet.*) II. ITS COMPOSITE ELEMENTS. As all the Christian Churches outside of Palestine were composed partly of Jews and partly of Gentiles, we would naturally expect that this would be the case also in Rome. The Epistle, however, gives us some clear indications as to the real facts of the case. 1. That the congregation contained Jewish Christians is evident from chap. ii. 17, iv. 1, vii. 1, and from the general argument of the fourteenth chapter. 2. That it contained Gentile Christians is evident from chap. i. 6, 13, xi. 13, 25, 28, 30, xv. 15–21. 3. That the Church was composed of both elements is further evinced by such passages as chap. xv. 7–13, xvi. 17–19. 4. We may also infer that the Gentile portion of the Church was in the ascendency both in numbers and in doctrinal influence. Not only was this the ordinary condition of the Churches in Gentile lands, but the whole argument of chaps. ix.–xi. presupposes this; and so decisive was the majority that St. Paul could even directly address the Church at Rome as a Church of believers of the Gentile world (chaps. i. 5, 6, 13–15, xv. 15–21). That this is the correct view of the composition of the Church at Rome is further confirmed by Acts xxviii. 16-28. (*Prof. R. F. Weidner.*) The Roman Church was at once Jewish and Gentile; Jewish in feeling, Gentile in origin—Jewish, because the apostle everywhere argues with them as Jews; Gentile, because he expressly addresses them by name as such. In this double fact there is nothing strange or anomalous: it typifies the general condition of Christian Churches, whether Jewish or Gentile. To those who were Gentiles by birth, but had received the gospel originally from Jewish teachers, the subject of the Epistle would have a peculiar interest. It expressed the truth on the verge of which they stood, which seemed to be peculiarly required by their own circumstances, which explained their position to themselves. It purged the film from their eyes, which prevented them seeing the way of God perfectly. Hitherto they had acquiesced in the position which public opinion among the heathen assigned to them, that they were a Jewish sect: and they had implicitly followed the lives as well as the lessons of their first instructors in Christ. But a nobler truth was now to break upon them. God was not the God of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles also. And this wider range of vision involved a new principle, not the law, but faith. If nations of every tongue were to be included in the gospel dispensation—barbarian, Scythian, bond and free—the principle that was to unite them must be superior to the differences that separated them, and that principle was faith. In confirmation note that there is no allusion in the Epistle to circumcision. This would hardly have been the case had the Church been divided between two parties of Jew and Gentile, or had it been a Jewish Church opening its door to the Gentiles. The absence of such an allusion is, however, perfectly consistent with the fact that it was addressed to a community, the majority of whose members had not undergone the rite. (*Prof. Jowett.*) III. THE SOCIAL RANK OF ITS MEMBERS. Those saluted by Paul in chap. xvi. could assuredly boast no aristocratic descent, whether from the proud patrician or the equally proud plebeian families. They bear upstart names, mostly Greek, sometimes borrowed from natural objects, sometimes adopted from a pagan hero or divinity, sometimes descriptive of personal qualities or advantages, here and there the surnames of some noble family to which they were attached perhaps as slaves or freedmen, but hardly in any case bearing the stamp of high Roman antiquity. From the middle and lower classes, therefore, the Church drew her largest rein-

forcements. Of Rome, not less than Corinth, it must have been true, that "not many wise after the flesh, not many powerful, not many high born" were called. Not many, and yet perhaps a few. The great Stoic philosopher and statesman Seneca, the poet Lucan, the philosopher Epictetus, the powerful freedmen Narcissus and Epaphroditus, the emperor's mistresses Acte and Poppœa—a strange medley of good and bad have been swept by tradition or conjecture, without a shadow of evidence, into that capacious drag-net which "gathers of every kind." Yet one illustrious convert, at least, seems to have been added about this time. Pomponia Græcina, the wife of Plautius, the conqueror of Britain, was arraigned (57 or 58) of "foreign superstition." Delivered over to a domestic tribunal, according to ancient usage, she was tried by her husband in presence of her relations, and was pronounced by him innocent. Her grave and sad demeanour (for she never appeared but in mourning garb) was observed by all. The untimely death of her friend Julia had drawn a cloud over her life, which was never dissipated. Coupled with the charge, this notice suggests that shunning society she sought consolation under her deep sorrow in the duties and hopes of the gospel. At all events a generation later Christianity had worked its way even into the imperial family in the persons of Flavius Clemens and his wife Flavia Domitilla both cousins of Domitian. (*Bp. Lightfoot.*)

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THE BIBLICAL ILLUSTRATOR.

ROMANS.

CHAPTER I.

VERS. 1–7. **Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ.**—*Authentication and salutation:*—I. THE APOSTLE. 1. Paul was not the name by which he was always known, but was assumed shortly after the commencement of his mission to the Gentiles. The practice of assuming a Gentile, in addition to the original Hebrew name, was then common, and indicated a loosening of the bonds of religious exclusiveness. 2. Servant of Jesus Christ. Not a hired servant (*μίσθιος, ἢ μισθωτός*), nor a voluntary attendant (*θεράπων*), nor a subordinate officer (*ὑπηρέτης*), nor a ministering disciple (*διάκονος*); but a slave (*δοῦλος*). Yet the title is very far from denoting anything humiliating. That, indeed, it must do if the master were only human. Even though the slave should be promoted as minister of state, the stigma of servitude was not removed; for the despot might, at any moment, degrade or destroy him. We may therefore rest assured that to no mere man, however exalted, would St. Paul have willingly subscribed himself a slave. But to be the bondmen of the Lord Jesus Christ, whose property he was both by right of creation and redemption; all of whose requirements were known to be in absolute accordance with truth and righteousness, and to all of which his own renewed heart responded with most lively sympathy, was the truest liberty and the highest dignity. 3. This dignity St. Paul participated in common with every other disciple; but, unlike many others, he had been called to the office of an apostle. Those thus called were constituted "ambassadors for Christ," being chosen, qualified, and deputed by Him to transact business with their fellow-men in respect to His kingdom. The twelve had been chosen by the Master during the days of His flesh, and had companied with Him during His earthly ministry (Acts i. 21). St. Paul had not enjoyed this advantage. Nevertheless, he, too, was an apostle by Divine call (Gal. i. 1). True, he was confessedly, because of the lateness of his call, "as one born out of due time" (1 Cor. xv. 8); but his call was not the less real or effectual. And in all that was requisite, he was "not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles" (2 Cor. xi. 5; xii. 12). 4. He had not only been called, but specially "separated unto the gospel of God." Like Jeremiah (Jer. i. 5), so, too, St. Paul was "separated from his mother's womb" (Gal. i. 15). His parentage, birth, endowments, education, &c., had been so arranged by God as to constitute him "a choice vessel" for this very work (Acts xxvi. 16–19; xiii. 1–3). II. THE GOSPEL TO PUBLISH WHICH HE HAD BEEN SEPARATED. 1. It had been "promised afore by the prophets in the Holy Scriptures; so designated because they were written for holy purposes, by holy men, inspired by the Holy Spirit, and developed holy fruits. 2. This gospel was "concerning His Son [Divine dignity] "Jesus Christ" [the personal name and official designation] "our Lord" (absolute right of property and dominion). (1) He was, as to His human descent, of "the seed of David" (Rom. viii. 3; Gal. iv. 4, 5; Heb. ii. 14). His "flesh" is His complete human nature, in respect of which it is said that "He increased in wisdom," &c. (Luke ii. 52). (2) He had also a higher nature, here distinguished as "the Spirit of holiness," in respect to which He was not made, not born, but instated with power in His proper glory as the Son of God, by His "resurrection from the dead." In order to estimate the full force of the apostle's statement, it ought to be remembered that men—the Jewish rulers—had denounced Him as a blasphemer (John xix. 7; v. 18; x. 33). They could not endure that He, being manifestly a man, should make Himself God. But the

"resurrection" was God's answer to their derision. That act proclaimed, in reply to all that man had done, "This is My beloved Son, hear Him." III. THE OBJECT, EXTENT, AND RESULT OF HIS COMMISSION. He had received "grace and apostleship." 1. To promote "obedience to the faith": *i.e.*, first of all, men must be taught the faith—*i.e.*, the things to be believed (Matt. xxviii. 19). It is a mistake to suppose that Christian men are called upon to believe they know not what, nor why (2 Thess. ii. 13; John viii. 32). Now these things proposed to faith not only bring to us the tidings of peace and of new life in Christ, but they propose to us a course of life to be pursued. They require belief, in order to obedience; and make it plain that a faith which does not result in obedience is a dead thing (Matt. xxviii. 20; Rom. xvi. 26). 2. The apostle had received authority to promote this obedience of faith amongst "all nations." The Gentiles had never grasped the truth of the universal brotherhood of man; while the Hebrews, though very strictly separated from all others, not only possessed the thought, but were preparing the way for a reign of grace in which all the nations should be blessed. That was the purport of the promise made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and confirmed to David and his son. Therefore the prophets sang triumphantly of one whom the Gentiles should seek (Isa. xi. 10). The nation did not indeed admit Gentiles on equal terms. They required that these should assume the yoke of the Mosaic law. But now the obedient to the faith from amongst all nations were to constitute the true Israel of God. 3. The whole result was to be for the glory of "His name," by whom our redemption has been accomplished. It was not for the glory of Israel, nor of the apostles, nor of any number of men (1 Cor. i. 27-29; 2 Cor. iv. 6, 7). IV. THE FORMAL ADDRESS AND SALUTATION. The things to be noted are—1. That the blessing sought for the saints was the grace of God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, so manifested as to insure peace. 2. The specially Christian conception of God as our Father. 3. The significant association of God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ as the common object of prayer and the common source of grace and peace. (*W. Tyson.*) *The opening address*:—I. THE AUTHOR. 1. Paul, once called Saul, of Tarsus, a citizen of no mean city, a Benjamite, of pure Hebrew extraction, well trained in a knowledge of the Scriptures, a free citizen of the Roman empire, acquainted with the literature of Greece, by nature endowed with great force of intellect, passion, and resoluteness, of bold and ambitious spirit, a Pharisee of the austerest type, zealous for the law, and hating its enemies, real or supposed. 2. Yet a servant of Jesus Christ, by a free, rational subjection. He stood before his Lord, like the angels which stand before the throne of God, or like nobles in the court of a mighty prince. How was this? 3. He received grace for his own salvation's sake; and apostleship to bring about the salvation of others. 4. He was an apostle to the Gentiles: while Peter and the other eleven were apostles to the Jews. II. THE PERSONS ADDRESSED. The letter was written in 58. Think what Rome was at that period—much like London at the close of the last century, only without its Christianity. Its population exceeded two millions, half of whom were slaves. Many families were amazingly rich and luxurious: but far more, among the freemen, were as lazy as they were proud, and as poor as they were lazy. The population was low sunk in misery and sensual degradation. In religion, the vulgar were besotted polytheists, and the philosophers avowed atheists. The Jews occupied a quarter apart from therest of the city. It is not known by whom that Church was founded, but probably by some of the "strangers from Rome" who were in Jerusalem at Pentecost, and was composed principally of Gentile converts. To these would be added such Jewish converts as had effectually separated themselves from the synagogue. The Church seems to have been one of singular purity, spirituality, and strength. Its disciples were "beloved of God"; His "chosen saints." And the Church needs to be built up in its holy faith. It is not enough to hear of Christ and believe in Him; to be converted and witness a good confession; but to be fully instructed in the apostle's doctrine, and to continue in it, that we may grow up to the full stature of a perfect man in Christ. III. THE SUBJECT-MATTER OF THE EPISTLE. 1. It is an exposition of what is contained in the prophets. Here is no new thing, but the historic verification and doctrinal development of what the prophets declared. 2. It concerns the glad tidings of God, which relate all to the salvation wrought out for men by Jesus Christ, who—(1) Was a true man, and a lineal descendant of David, the ancient king of Israel. (2) Had also a Divine nature, called here the Spirit of holiness, because it made Him absolutely immaculate; and because by it He dwells in the hearts of His people to make them

holy. By this nature He was God's coeternal Son. Such had He announced Himself when living, and His claim was demonstrated, by irresistible evidence, by His resurrection from the dead. (3) Wills His gospel to be proclaimed among all nations. IV. THE SPIRIT OF THE WHOLE. This comes out in the benediction and salutation of ver. 7. 1. "Grace" is Divine favour. Its fruit and effect is "peace," which comprehends all gospel blessedness. 2. Grace and peace come from God the Father, and God the Son. (*T. G. Horton.*) *The true preacher and his great theme* :—I. THE TRUE PREACHER. 1. His spirit: a willing bondsman—not by force or legal orders, but by inward necessity. "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel." Bound by obligations that are as tender as silken cords, but firm as adamant; too weak to fetter, but too strong to break. 2. His preparation: "called" "separated"—the Godward side of the call to the ministry, and the ground of ministerial authority. 3. His aim—(1) From God—how high; to announce glad tidings from God. (2) For all men—how wide. II. HIS GREAT THEME. The gospel is great because of—1. Its Author, God: not about Him merely, but from Him. The gospel has its source in God as the river in the fountain, the beam in the sun. It is—(1) The plan of the Creator for renewing His spiritual creation. (2) The proclamation of the Sovereign for producing loyalty and peace. (3) The pardon of the Great Father offered to His prodigal sons. "Herein is love." 2. The method of its foreannouncement (ver. 2). A gospel which had been foretold by such men as Moses, David, Isaiah, Daniel, and in such a way, is indeed a great gospel. And just as by the dawn God promises day, by spring, summer, so by old prophecy He "promised the gospel." 3. Its subject. "His Son Jesus Christ." Christ is great because of—(1) His position in regard to us. "Our Lord," signifying His dignity, claims and crown rights over us. (2) His exalted human mastery (ver. 3). (3) His relationship to God, as proved by His resurrection (ver. 4). (*U. R. Thomas.*) *Christianity as an objective system* :—I. ITS NATURE—a gospel (ver. 1). II. ITS ANTIQUITY. It was promised before in the Holy Scriptures by the prophets (ver. 2). III. ITS CENTRAL IDEA. The Lord Jesus Christ (ver. 3). IV. ITS INSTRUMENTALITY. Men, apostles, with the truth, not priests with things to do, but men with a truth to teach (ver. 5). V. THE IMMEDIATE AND ALTERNATE AIMS. The obedience of faith in the reception of the truth, a holy sainthood to the man who receives it (vers. 5–7). VI. ITS SUPERNATURAL AND SPIRITUAL ELEMENTS. Grace and peace, &c. (ver. 7). VII. ITS SPHERE. It is to go abroad into the whole world, and be exhibited there (ver. 8). (*T. Binney.*) *A servant of Jesus Christ* :—I. THE HIGHEST TITLE KNOWN IN EARTH OR HEAVEN is "a servant of God." 1. At the commencement of their Epistles, Paul, James, Peter, and Jude, use, indiscriminately, the expressions—"servant of God," and "servant of Christ," as if they were synonymous. It is one of the undesigned, and therefore strongest arguments for the Deity of Christ. James combines the two. And in every case each apostle places it first as his highest title—above his apostleship. 2. And were you to ask the man on earth nearest heaven, "What are you?" or the saints in Paradise, or the angels—in all their order and degrees—the response would be, "I am a servant of Jesus Christ." 3. And no marvel! The Lord Jesus Himself gloried in the name. It designated Him in prophecy. It was His own delineation of His work—"a Servant." II. HOW DO WE ENTER THE SERVICE? 1. It begins with a vocation from God. It is not such as any one may say that he has it. It is a distinct call. Every one here might be inclined to say, "I am a servant of Christ—of course I am." When did you go to that "service"? There cannot be "service" without an act of engagement. The outward vocation—the pledge on either side—was at baptism. But it was not there that it became real. It is real when you begin to close, with certain inward impulses, which have been at work in your heart by the Holy Ghost; and to love God. This love is the child of liberty, and the service is the child of love. 2. Now you are prepared for "service." And you go, and in some way or other—it may be at confirmation, or holy communion—you go and consecrate yourself to His work. "Lord, here I am. I am Thine. Accept me, fit me, teach me, use me, as Thou wilt." III. THE PRIVILEGE OF THE SERVICE. 1. You are placed in close communication with your Master, He tells you His secrets. "The slave knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of My Father, I have made known unto you." 2. You serve "the King of kings and Lord of lords"; but you serve One who was once a servant. Many an earthly servant may sometimes have wished, "O that my master or mistress knew what service is!" That is what you have. He understands it all, and has the heart to feel, and the power to help. 3. And to

that same Master His servants bring all their work; and as they lay it at His feet, He makes it clean, and perfumes it with the odour of His own perfect service. What has been wrong in it, He cancels: what is good, He accepts, when He has made it—by what He adds to it—acceptable to Himself. 4. And all along the sweet feeling of the servant is, "My Master is pleased with me and my poor service. And all I am doing, it is practice for a far higher and better service." IV. THE CHARACTER OF THE "SERVICE." It does not much matter what Christ's servants do. They are His servants everywhere. It is the motive which makes the service, not the action. If a person desires to carry on his business upon Christian principles—and directly or indirectly to honour Christ in the world—that man is "a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ." If any one does an act of kindness to another—if he give to the poor, or minister to the afflicted, and if he see Christ in them—then he does it to Christ, and he is "His servant." If a man humble himself for Christ's sake, then that man is Christ-like in His service, and he is a "servant" indeed. Or, no less, if a man suffer patiently, for Jesus' sake, he is "a servant of Jesus." Perhaps that is the highest service which combines the right fulfilment, for Christ's sake, of the greatest number of the duties of life. The daughter whom every day her father, mother, brothers, sisters, and servants, rise up to bless, and who, as she has opportunity, goes out to the poor, and the sick, and the schools about her, she is a truer "servant of Christ" than the daughter who shuts herself up into the one narrower sphere of her own selection. Practically, what you have to do, is to accept whatever work the providence of God may give you. And if you want to know what it is, in the providence of God, that you should do, consult, after special prayer about it, your minister, your Christian friends, your own judgment. A field of service will be sure to open to you, in due time, if you look for it. There go in, nothing doubting, and put all the Christ you can into it. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*)

The servant of Jesus Christ a willing servant:—The following story well illustrates the force of δοῦλος, as applied to the believer. A slave, on hearing that an Englishman had purchased him, gnashed his teeth, knit his brows, and declared, with true pathos and heartfelt indignation, that he would never obey so unworthy a representative of the land of boasted freedom. On learning afterwards, however, that his new master had bid for and bought him in order to bestow upon him his freedom, the poor negro was so overcome with joy and gratitude, that he fell down at the feet of the man he had just vowed never to serve, and exclaimed, "I am your slave for ever" (Psa. cxvi. 16). (*C. Neil, M.A.*)

Paul, the slave of Jesus Christ:—I. NO ONE HAD A MORE VIVID SENSE OF LIBERTY and the right of private judgment than this disciple of Gamaliel. He had all the zeal of a Republican for the worth of manhood. He was a free-born Roman citizen, and he never forgot it. He could make a stand for his civil rights like a Hampden or a William Tell. He allowed no privileged authority to rob him of his franchise. He was the champion of personal liberty before the weak-minded Felix, or the straightforward Festus, or the frivolous Agrippa. And that famous declaration: "I appeal unto Cæsar!"—it rings down eighteen centuries like the sound of a war-trumpet. "Paul, a slave of Jesus Christ." Yes, a slave—in body, mind, and spirit; boasting of his slavery in the face of the world. II. THE AUTHORITY OF THIS DIVINE SLAVE IS PROPORTIONATE TO THE EXTENT OF HIS SLAVERY. The more slave he is of the Supreme Mind of humanity, the more right and power has he to be the founder of Christian theology. For what does this splendid slavery mean? It is a soul finding a personality higher and better than its own, and yielding allegiance to it. Slavery? It is liberty. It is moving within God. "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (*H. Elvet Lewis.*)

The mystery of loyalty—the master and the slave:—1. Christianity has revolutionised the world, above all by teaching the value and dignity of man as man. There is one instance which exhibits this in the highest degree—"Paul, the slave of Jesus." 2. It is thus that he begins the most elaborate of his letters. Now such a beginning is noteworthy for two reasons, because—(1) It is deliberately chosen, for only one other of his Epistles opens in precisely the same way. (2) In both cases the apostle is addressing those who, fully in Rome, and in some measure in Philippi, understood the proud position of Roman citizenship. 3. The gospel, however, had spread through every rank of society; and so in these two cities there would be those who understood the term of "master," as well as those who, to their sorrow, could not fail to realise the position of a "slave." 4. Dwell for a moment on the title. This man gives of himself an almost contemptuous description to the proudest people in the world. And then think of the man who thus voluntarily places himself in the ranks of the

conquered. Brought up a Pharisee, by his very training inclined to be proud, uncompromising; to this must be added the possession of learning, and a consequent sense of superiority, was ever man less likely to submit willingly to the place of a slave? Note—I. THE MEANING OF THE APOSTLE. 1. Complete submission of will to the commands of Christ. What those commands are, or mean, may be a matter, in part at least, of question; but the point of importance is that once discovered, they are to be unhesitatingly and entirely obeyed. It has been said that "a Celt craves for a king." It is true of all mankind, and a true King for us there is. One who understands man, whose sway is imperial, but whose laws meet the deepest yearnings of the soul, and whose result is blessing. To disobey such is to make life a scene of slaughter; and obey Him and "the wilderness and the solitary place blossom as the rose." 2. Entire submission of judgment to the revelation of Christ. To accept Christ at all is to accept Him as the absolute truth. Hard sayings, mysterious doctrines, came from His lips. To accept these in so far as they accord with our preconceived notions, or suit our tastes and wishes, is scarcely to accept them at all. To hold ourselves in submission to His revelation is the attitude of mind suited to His followers: to that tone of thought more light is given, and "spiritual things are spiritually discerned." 3. An entire and earnest effort to imitate the life of Christ. St. Paul felt this to be a necessity, because that life was itself a revelation. St. Paul, like others, might have set about to seek self in a manner not altogether ignoble, but in the prudent indulgence of legitimate ambition, and, indeed, he did so till Christ crossed his path. He had taken one view of life, and it was the wrong one. Here, in spite of all the world's assertion to the contrary, was the best, the noblest, the happiest life. What is your line in life? "A servant you are to whom you obey"; and your obedience will be regulated by that object of imitation and attainment to which your desire is turned. Is it pleasure? To seek it is, proverbially, to scare it from your path; and if found in any degree, how soon it palls upon the satiated soul! Is it reputation? Ah, me! it is a mere bubble shining for a moment in a gleam of sunlight, then bursting and gone. Is it riches? Our graveyards remind us that "we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out." Nay, more. What is dearer, what more beautiful than family life? If ever the weary worker may find an end and an object in his work, it is to create around him those objects of love which elevate and soothe. And yet they die. 4. That one attitude towards the Redeemer that is suitable in a soul which has sinned. When we are fully alive to sin, how little do the arguments with which before we cozened ourselves when sinning then avail! We want—and we feel that we want—a Redeemer. It is then that Jesus Christ is precious. To waken to that great truth to which Paul wakened—"loved me, gave Himself for me"—is to become the willing, loving slave of the Redeemer. II. THE CONSEQUENCES OF THIS CHRISTIAN VIEW OF SUBMISSION TO CHRIST. 1. It points to a large and loving recognition of all who name the Holy Name. "Our common Christianity" is a dangerous phrase, when it is meant to hint or encourage a doctrine of indifferentism. But it is true and consoling when it expresses that amongst all who are "baptized unto Jesus Christ" there is a share in one main ground of common faith and hope, which may unite them more at last than their differences can divide. 2. It affects in a very serious sense the attitude of the individual life. (1) There is one striking difference between the Roman servitude from which the apostle took his image, and that condition to which it pointed. To be a "slave of Jesus Christ" we must deliberately choose our Master. (2) If we choose Christ, there follows necessarily a wholly new view of our relation to mankind. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all and in you all." (3) To have constantly before the mind an unblemished ideal, and that with the knowledge that all life, happiness, and power are proportioned to our approach to that ideal; and, further, to have learned that abundant help is offered to essay the task, this must indeed have a powerful effect on character. III. THE SECRET SPRING OF SUCH AN ATTITUDE OF MIND. In the mind of Paul there was no sort of question as to who Christ was. He had had amplest opportunity of examining His claims, but no amount of study, observation or evidence was enough. Divine faith ruled his life. He recognised Christ as the Eternal God, who was also the Representative Man, and recognising this, by the grace given him, he acted on the recognition. 1. To do this was to live by faith. Henceforth he directed his course by the visual efficacy of a fresher and fuller spiritual sense directed upon the reality of the unseen world. That reality was Christ's. To submit to the absolute supremacy of the same Master

involves in each soul the supremacy of the same principle, to "walk by faith." Now the antagonist of such a principle is to walk by sight. The man who lives by the principle of "sight" may be respectable; but one thing he is not doing, viz., seeking to guide his course and govern his actions by habitual reference to an unseen, a loving Friend; he has in no way staked his all upon the promise, and committed his destiny to the keeping of "the Son of God." 2. But as faith was allowed to exercise its sovereign sway, there grew and deepened in the mind of the apostle an intense personal love and loyalty towards Christ. This lay at the root of his patient study of the mind of his Master, and his unwearying effort to do His work. Henceforth life was changed. Not only was he now baptized into Jesus Christ, but he rose to the fulness of his regenerate life. One, the Highest, had thought of him, even him. Could he ever forget it? "The life that I now live in the flesh," so he writes, "I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." Jesus the Conqueror! Paul the slave! A great love had overmastered Paul, and a faithful response was given. (1) Loyal affectionateness is always beautiful. To see the grey-haired man, melting into tenderness at the dear memory of one, once loved, now gone—having once seen, what heart can resist it? To see the little child, sweet, gentle, retiring—flash into sudden enthusiasm, or grow into sudden gravity of reproof in behalf of an absent parent or friend—the heart is touched. (2) Ah, me! the world grows cold and critical: young hearts lose their freshness because they lose their faithfulness; miss their nobility when hero-worship is dead. God save you from the cynical spirit. It is the generous spirit that is the brave spirit; because where it is there is loyalty. To what? Well, to anything or any one who is in any measure really deserving; to your Church, Queen, country, to a great tradition, to a hallowed memory—loyalty to these leads to the higher. (3) Think what it is for us Christians to have the vision of the highest truth before us, and to fail in loyalty! What follows? Success, money, greed satisfied, and the dark heart, the narrow brain. Think also, to see the highest truth and to be loyal! Certainly it means some pain, some shame. Conclusion: What Paul did that we Christians must do. The child Blandina smiled as she went to her agony; the aged Polycarp wept in an ecstasy of tenderness when he thought of the love of his Master, and the horror of denying One who so long had loved him. The Greek girl—in a beautiful romance—lay in the depth of the African dungeon; she had longed for the azure skies of Attica, she had pined for the free breezes of the fresh Ægean, but they found her radiant with joy in her darkness and solitude, and the only account she gave of that strange completeness of revolutionised nature was this, "My Love was crucified." 1. The comfort. Life is full of failure, of sorrow, of sin. Listen. He changes not, "He loved you, and gave Himself for you." Well, then, if listening—2. The result. (1) Surely penitence—deepening penitence. And more. You will grow, advance, increase in grace as your surrender becomes more complete. (2) Devotion. Not perhaps the burning enthusiasm of His first followers, or the blind, vigorous courage of the martyrs. But life will be truer, nobler, better, if we keep Him before us; the business man may restrain his speculations when they pass the line of honesty, may spend his money for God; the young city clerk may subdue his passions, and teach in the Sunday school; the fashionable lady may bend the proud rules of social convention with a sweet dexterity, and do self-denying acts in real Christian love; the labouring man may work; the bedridden may endure; each with one thing in common some surrender; that is, some deepening love of heart, and stronger energy of will for love of Him who gave Himself for them, may learn in their several measures to be "slaves of Christ." (*Canon Knox-Little.*) *The sublimest servitude*:—Men are made to serve. In true service alone they realise the harmonious development of their powers, and the realisation of their aspirations. Note here—I. The highest MASTERHOOD. 1. His mission—Jesus, *i.e.*, a Saviour; Christ, *i.e.*, anointed. Christ is God in His redemptive capacity. There is no salvation where there is not a deliverance from sin, from its possession, dominion, consequences. 2. His divinity—"the Son of God." The universe teems with sons of God; but the Infinite has no son like Christ. Hence He is called "His only begotten Son." 3. His human history. (1) By birth He sprang from the seed of David (John vii. 42). He was born of humanity. (2) He was raised from the dead. His birth proved Him a man, His resurrection a God according to a spirit essentially, eternally holy. Such is the Highest Master. His authority is indisputable, His love amazing, His character holy, His experience wonderful. II. The highest EMPLOYMENT. Paul was an apostle of this Master.

There are many branches of employment in the service of Christ; but there is nothing higher than that of apostleship (1 Cor. xii. 28). It is an office of the highest trust, it is to represent his Master. Of the most salutary and ennobling influence, it is to redeem the world. Paul was "called" to this high office, on the way to Damascus, and from his mother's womb (Gal. i. 15). 2. He was an apostle of the highest message. "The gospel of God." God is the Author, the Substance, and the End of this good news to men. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Paul's servitude and apostleship:*—I. PAUL, A SERVANT OF JESUS CHRIST. 1. On his first appearance in history who would ever have thought of finding his name associated with such a designation? The Jewish priests and rulers, the sworn enemies of Christ, were then his masters; and Satan was theirs. But the slave of the devil became the servant of Christ. And he transferred from the one service to the other all his native ardour, and all his indefatigable activity. That service was more than destitute of dignity in the eyes of both Jews and Gentiles. But now to be "a servant of Jesus Christ" was esteemed by Paul his most distinguished honour, and was enjoyed by him as the chief zest and happiness of his life. 2. Let the disciples of Christ remember that they are all His servants; and what department soever of that service they are called to fill, whether public or private, let them cherish the same spirit with Paul. The more highly we think of the Master the more honourable will we deem His service; and the deeper our sense of obligation, the more ardent will be our delight in the doing of His will, and in the advancement of His glory. II. BUT PAUL SERVED CHRIST IN A SPECIAL CAPACITY. 1. The office of an apostle was the highest among the offices of the Christian Church. In every enumeration of them this stands first (Eph. iv. 8–11; 1 Cor. xii. 28). In the apostles we find all gifts combined. They were, in the very highest sense, "ambassadors for Christ," and "stewards of the mysteries of God." Their testimony was the standard of truth; and their authority, as the plenipotentiaries of their exalted Lord, was without appeal (John xvii. 18). 2. And that authority continues still. The writings of the apostles have all the authority of the apostles themselves. What a powerful inducement to their careful study, and how solemn the admonition, that if we "wrest" them, it must be to "our own destruction"! This is coin that bears "the image and superscription" of the King of Heaven; to destroy, to debase, or to lighten it is an act of treason. III. THIS OFFICIAL HONOUR REQUIRED A COMMISSION FROM THE LORD HIMSELF. Such commission Saul of Tarsus received when the Lord appeared to him on his way to Damascus (Acts xxvi. 15–18). There was he "called to be an apostle." The word "called" has by different commentators been explained as of the same meaning with "chosen." It may be questioned, however, whether the calling is not, more properly, the result, or practical following-out, of the choice. "A called apostle" means one who had not assumed the office of his own will, but in virtue of an express call, at once authoritative and effectual, from the Lord; for while the call included the sanction of authority, it included also that Divine operation upon the mind by which he was at once inclined and fitted for the office. IV. THE OBJECT TO WHICH HE HAD BEEN PREVIOUSLY SET APART, AND WAS SUBSEQUENTLY CALLED, WAS "THE GOSPEL OF GOD." "The gospel of God," is a message from Him to His sinful and guilty creatures; and its very name implies that it is a message of good. As such, it recommends itself to all to whom it comes by the appeal which it makes to their desire of happiness, and as "the gospel of God" it comes with all the united recommendations of authority, kindness, and truth. Thus it should be contemplated with solemnity and awe on the one hand, and welcomed with delight on the other. V. THE SUBJECT OF THAT GOSPEL IS—1. Jesus, "Jehovah that saveth"—*i.e.*, a Divine Saviour. He was to "save His people from their sins." 2. Christ—*i.e.*, anointed—the Hebrew Messiah (Isa. lxi. 1, 2). Jesus was thus anointed when, after His baptism, "the heavens were opened, and the Spirit of God descended like a dove, and lighted upon Him," being given to Him "without measure," and consecrating Him to His official work. 3. Our Lord (Matt. xxviii. 18; Rom. xvi. 9; Phil. ii. 9–11). (*R. Wardlaw, D.D.*) *A servant of Christ:*—When the saintly George Herbert took possession of the humble parsonage to which strangers for his sake made pilgrimage, he is said by his biographer to have entered a resolution from that day forward always to speak of Jesus Christ with the added words "my Master"; and the appropriation seemed, it is added, to perfume his very life. He then may be said to have consecrated Christ as Lord in his heart. (*Dean Vaughan.*) *The happiness of service:*—Many years ago, happening to be in South Wales, I made the acquaintance of a Welsh gentleman. He was then a landed proprietor, living in his own mansion, and in very comfortable

circumstances. He had been before carrying on an extensive business in a large town. By the death of a relative he had unexpectedly come into possession of this property. After considering whether he should retire from business, he made up his mind that he should still continue to carry it on, though no longer for himself, but for Christ. I could not help being struck with the gleesomeness of a holy mind which lighted up his countenance when he said, "I never knew before what real happiness was. Formerly I wrought as a master to earn a livelihood for myself; but now I am carrying on the same work as diligently as if for myself, and even more so, but it is now for Christ, and every halfpenny of profit is handed over to the treasury of the Lord, and I feel that the smile of my Saviour rests upon me." I think that is an example worthy of being imitated. (*Dr. Duff.*) *The Christian's personal service:*—Every Christian hath his talent given him, his service enjoined him. The gospel is a *depositum*, a public treasure, committed to the keeping of every Christian; each man having, as it were, a several key of the Church, a several trust for the honour of this kingdom delivered unto him. As in the solemn coronation of the prince every peer of the realm hath his station about the throne, and with the touch of his hand upon the royal crown, declareth the personal duty of that honour which he is called unto, namely, to hold on the crown on the head of his sovereign; to make it the main end of his greatness, to study, and by all means endeavour the establishment of his prince's throne; so every Christian, as soon as he hath the honour to be called unto the kingdom and presence of Christ hath immediately no meaner a *depositum* committed to his care, than the very throne and crown of his Saviour thau the public honour, peace, victory and stability of his Master's kingdom. (*Bp. Reynolds.*) *Christ's servant Christ's representative:*—A man who knocks at our door, and calls himself a servant of some great one, implies that he has come on his master's business; and claims an attention to be measured by the importance, not of himself, but of his master. (*Prof. Beet.*) **Called to be an apostle.**—*A call to the ministry*—includes—I. DIVINE APPROVAL. A servant, accepted, devoted, faithful. II. A DIVINE COMMISSION. Inward conviction, holy impulse. III. DIVINE DESIGNATION. By suitable qualifications, providential arrangements, to a special work. (*J. Lyth.*) *Qualifications for the apostleship:*—He had seen the Lord after His resurrection (1 Cor. ix. 1). He had received his commission directly from Jesus Christ and God the Father (Gal. i. 1). He possessed the signs of an apostle (2 Cor. xii. 12). He had received the knowledge of the gospel, not through any man, or by any external means, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ (Gal. i. 11, 12), and although he was as one born out of due time, yet, by the grace vouchsafed to him, he laboured more abundantly than all the rest. (*R. Haldane.*) **Separated unto the gospel of God.**—*Separated unto the gospel:*—Christ separated him from the service of sin; from Jewish tradition, superstition, and empty ceremony; from working out a righteousness of his own; from all merely temporal aims and purposes; from cares and anxieties of provisions for the flesh; from the more worldly affairs of the Church, the serving of tables; to be a living depositary of gospel doctrine, a gracious example of the gospel's power, and an efficient organ for the gospel's utterance. Like a vessel separated from the foul clay of the mine, the worthless dross of the metal, the graceless and useless forms of the shapeless mass, the common uses of the world, and even the ordinary uses of the house of Christ, "a chosen vessel," to be filled full to overflowing with the water of life, and borne about everywhere among thirsty men. "No man can serve two masters." "Be ye separate." "If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour," &c. (*W. Griffiths.*) *Paul's separation:*—I. WHAT. Set apart to a special purpose, sanctified (Jer. i. 5). II. How. 1. In God's purpose from the womb (Gal. i. 15). 2. Actually and generally at his conversion (Acts ix. 15). 3. Specially as apostle of the Gentiles at Antioch (Acts. xiii. 2). The first separation preceded the call; the others followed it. Before his conversion Paul separated himself and became a Pharisee; after it he was separated by God and became a Christian and an apostle. The first separation by human pride; the second by Divine grace. III. WHAT TO. 1. The gospel. (1) Good news (Luke ii. 10) concerning Christ and His salvation. (2) Foretold by Isaiah under this term (Isa. lii. 7; Rom. x. 15). (3) Called gospel—(*a*) Of the kingdom (Matt. iv. 2). (*b*) Of the grace of God (Acts xx. 24). (*c*) Of salvation (Eph. i. 13). (*d*) Of peace (Eph. vi. 15). (*e*) Glorious of the blessed God (1 Tim. i. 11). (*f*) Everlasting (Rev. xiv. 6). (4) It is good news in respect to past, present, and future. 2. Of God. God is its Author and subject-matter (John iii. 16). It is the product of His wisdom and love (Eph. iii. 10; Titus iii. 4). Hence—(1) Its

excellence, preciousness, and authority; for the gospel of God must be—(*a*) True; (*b*) Important; (*c*) Full of authority. (2) The guilt and danger of neglecting it (Heb. xii. 25; 1 Thess. iv. 8; Luke x. 16). (3) God speaks in the gospel, therefore it must be heard with—(*a*) Earnestness; (*b*) Reverence; (*c*) Thankfulness. (*d*) Obedience. (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) *The gospel of God*:—God is—I. ITS AUTHOR, as He has purposed it in His eternal decrees. II. ITS INTERPRETER, as He Himself hath declared it to men. III. ITS SUBJECT, because in the gospel His sovereign perfections and purposes towards men are manifested. (*R. Haldane.*)

Ver. 2. **Which He had promised afore by His prophets.**—*The Messiah predicted*:—The Jews, throughout their history, differed from every other nation in their expectation of a Messiah. While heathen kingdoms decayed and fell without hope of deliverance, in Israel political decline was attended by an increasing expectation of a high and God-sent deliverer. This idea was always referred by the prophets to Divine revelation, and we have every reason to receive their testimony; for it is contrary to the very nature of things that such golden fruit as this should grow on the barren thorn of the simple human heart. Could this have been, surely the great and noble spirits of other nations would also have confidently expected salvation, whereas we only hear from the lips of a few some dim and obscure yearnings of this kind. It was only as a vanished epoch, a poetical dream, or a political panegyric, that heathen poets ever sang of a golden age. The heathen were "without hope" because they were without God in the world. (*Professor Auberlen.*) *Christ foretold by the prophets*:—I. WHO THEY WERE. Persons—1. Speaking by special Divine impulse (1 Sam. x. 6; 1. Cor. xiv. 1). 2. Employed by God to reveal His will and to foretell future events. 3. Moved to compose and sing hymns to God (Exod. xv. 20; 1 Chron. xxv. 1). 4. Living in habitual communion with God. II. WHAT THEY PROMISED. Christ and His salvation (Luke xxiv. 27; Acts iii. 18, x. 43). 1. By Moses as—(1) The woman's seed (Gen. iii. 15). (2) Abraham's seed (Gen. xxii. 18). (3) Shiloh (Gen. xlix. 10). (4) The prophet like unto Himself (Deut. xviii. 15). 2. By David as—(1) His son (Psa. cxxxii. 11). (2) His Lord (Psa. cx. 1). (3) The Anointed (Psa. ii. 2; lxxxiv. 9). (4) The Priest-King (Psa. cx. 1). (5) The Pierced One (Psa. xxii. 16). 3. By Isaiah as—(1) The Virgin's Son (vii. 14). (2) Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God (ix. 6). (3) Rod out of the stem of Jesse (xi. 1). (4) Man of sorrows (liii. 3). (5) Wounded and bruised Surety (liii. 5; 10–12). (6) God's righteous Servant (xlii. 1; lii. 13; liii. 11). 4. By Jeremiah as—(1) The righteous Branch (xxiii. 5). (2) The Lord our Righteousness (xxiii. 6). 5. By Ezekiel as the true David, the Shepherd King (xxxvii. 24). 6. By Daniel as Messiah the Prince (ix. 25, 26). 7. By Micah as the Judge of Israel (v. 2). 8. By Haggai as the Desire of all nations (ii. 7). 9. By Zechariah as—(1) The Pierced One (xii. 10). (2) The Man who was Jehovah's Shepherd and Fellow (xiii. 7). 10. By Malachi as—(1) The Messenger of the Covenant (iii. 1). (2) The Sun of Righteousness (iv. 3). (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) *Messianic prophecy*:—The prophets had foretold concerning the Messiah—1. His Divine and human natures (Isa. ix. 6). 2. His descent (Gen. iii. 15, xii. 3, xlix. 10; Isa. xi. 1; 1 Sam. xvi. 11). 3. The time of His appearing (Gen. xlix. 10; Dan. ix. 24, 25; Haggai ii. 6–9). 4. The place of His birth (Micah v. 2). 5. The virginity of His mother (Isa. vii. 14). 6. The Forerunner who should prepare His way (Mal. iii. 1). 7. The special scene of His ministry (Isa. ix. 1, 2). 8. The miracles that should accredit His mission (Isa. xxxv. 5, 6). 9. His sufferings and death (Psa. xxii. 16, &c.; Zech. xiii. 7; Isa. liii. 28). 10. His resurrection (Psa. xvi. 10). 11. His ascension (Psa. lxviii. 18). 12. His sitting down at the right hand of the Father (Psa. cx. 1). 13. His effusion of the Holy Ghost (Joel ii. 28). 14. His second coming in judgment (Dan. vii. 13). (*Ibid.*) *The gospel is no afterthought, but the forethought of God*:—God sees the end from the beginning. All things in nature and grace are working out one grand scheme, which God before the creation of heaven and earth designed. The gospel was but a further and fuller development of God's plans in Old Testament times. The stem is no afterthought; the leaves and buds are no afterthought; the flower is no afterthought; the fruit is no afterthought; for they were all wrapped up from the first in the seed, or cutting, or bulb. Or, to take another illustration, it is of no unfrequent occurrence that the architect designs a Gothic church which is not to be built all at once, but as sufficient funds are forthcoming, or as the congregation increases. At first the nave is constructed, then one aisle after another is added; and afterwards the chancel is built, and last of all is erected the spire—whose "silent finger points to heaven." The pulling down of

temporary walls and hoardings, and the additions from time to time made, are no afterthought, but only the carrying out of the original design. Thus the doing away with the ceremonial law and Jewish ritual, and the bringing life and immortality to light through Jesus, are no afterthought, but the *fore*thought of God—the revealing of His glorious scheme of grace designed before the foundation of the world, and previously promised by His prophets. (*C. Neil, M.A.*) **In the holy Scriptures.**—*The Old Testament Scriptures called holy* from—I. THEIR AUTHOR, God the Holy Ghost (2 Pet. i. 21; 2 Tim. iii. 16; Heb. i. 1). II. THEIR MATTER, God's holy will, thoughts, words, and works. III. THEIR DESIGN AND TENDENCY, to make man holy (2 Tim. iii. 17; John xvii. 17). IV. TO DISTINGUISH THEM FROM ALL OTHER BOOKS. (*T. Robinson, D.D.*)

Vers. 3, 4. **Concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord.**—*Christ, God's Son*:—I. IN WHAT SENSE. 1. Not—(1) As angels (Job. xxxviii. 7). (2) As Israel (Exod. v. 22; Hos. xi. 1). (3) As Adam and men in general (Luke iii. 38; Acts xvii. 29). (4) As kings and rulers (Psa. lxxxii. 6). (5) As the godly and regenerate (Gen. vi. 2; John i. 12; 1 John iii. 1). 2. But in an entirely peculiar sense (John v. 17, 18). (1) God's own Son (Rom. viii. 32). (2) Only begotten Son (John iii. 16). (3) Equal with God (Phil. ii. 6; John v. 18). (4) One with the Father (John v. 30). (5) The brightness of His glory, and express image of His person (Heb. i. 3). (6) With God from eternity (John i. 1, 2; Prov. viii. 22, 23). (7) God Himself (John i. 1; Rom. ix. 3). II. BY WHOM DECLARED. 1. By prophecy (Psa. ii. 7). 2. By the Father (Matt. iii. 17; xvii. 5). 3. By Himself (Matt. xxvi. 63, 64; John ix. 35, 39, x. 30-36). 4. By the apostles (Acts iii. 13, ix. 20; 1 Cor. i. 9, xv. 28; 2 Cor. i. 19; Gal. iv. 4; 1 Thess. i. 10; Heb. i. 2, v. 8; 1 John iv. 9). (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) *Christ as Lord*:—He was promised as such (Psa. ii. 6, 9, cx. 1, 2; Isa. ix. 6, 7; Micah v. 1, 2), and assumed as by right the title (John xiii. 13; xx. 28). He was made so by the Father (Acts ii. 36; Phil. ii. 11; Eph. i. 22), and the universal confession of the fact will constitute His mediatorial reward (Phil. ii. 11). Now He is confessed as such by men only through the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. xii. 3). As Lord, Christ. I. IS THE SOVEREIGN OF THE UNIVERSE; men, angels, and devils, are subject to Him (Eph. i. 21). II. IS HEAD OF HIS CHURCH AND KING OF SAINTS (Eph. i. 22, iv. 15; Rev. xv. 3). All other headship is usurpation. III. ABOLISHES THE OLD TESTAMENT ECONOMY (Matt. xi. 6; John iv. 21, 23; Heb. xii. 26, 27; Rev. xxi. 5). IV. SENDS DOWN THE HOLY SPIRIT (Acts ii. 33-36). V. GATHERS MEN INTO HIS KINGDOM (John x. 2-4, 14-16; Isa. lv. 4, 5). VI. COMMISSIONS HIS APOSTLES TO PREACH WITH THAT OBJECT (Matt. xxviii. 18, 19). VII. APPOINTS WHAT IS TO BE DONE IN HIS CHURCH (1 Cor. ix. 14, xi. 23; Matt. xxviii. 19, 20). (*Ibid.*) **Which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh.**—*Christ the seed of David*:—Christ's descent from David gave Him a claim upon the Jews as a descendant of their ancient kings; and as a scion of the stock to which the future royalty was promised (Jer. xxiii. 5; Psa. cxxxii. 11). (*Prof. Beet.*) *Christ the seed of David*:—Messiah to be descended from David (Psa. cxxxii. 11; Matt. xxii. 42). He was David's seed by Mary (Luke iii. 23), also by Joseph, His adoptive Father (Matt. i. 18). The promised Saviour. 1. The seed of the woman and therefore a man (Gen iii. 15). 2. The seed of Abraham and therefore a Jew (Gen. xxii. 18; Rom. xv. 8). 3. The seed of David and therefore a king (Psa. lxxxix. 29; Luke xxiii. 3; John i. 49). (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) *The Incarnation of God (a sermon for Christmas Day)*:—I. SUCH AN EVENT AS THAT CAN HAVE NOTHING LIKE IT, OR PARALLEL TO IT, WHILE THIS WORLD LASTS. It is the turning-point in the history of the world. The gospel of Christ has made the Incarnation of the Eternal Son what St. Paul made it—the centre of all teaching, worship, obedience, and morality, the fulfilment of all that was old, the starting-point of all that was new—the gospel of Christ refuses to compromise with any view of religion which puts this tremendous truth in any less than its sovereign place. God has been with us, and seen our life, what we are, what we do, all our sin and all our need—seen it with the eyes of a man, with a heart as human in its sympathy and brotherhood as it was Divinely perfect in its love and righteousness. God has unveiled Himself to us here, to be as man the restorer of mankind. Is it possible that such a thing could be, and not that all things else be changed by it? II. The Incarnation was the turning-point in the history of the world; and, as a matter of fact, WE HAVE BEFORE OUR EYES THE CONSEQUENCES WHICH HAVE FOLLOWED FROM IT. For each man, as for the world, the Son of God was made man to enable each man to reach the perfection for which he was made. His Incarnation has

been made known to us, not only for the public creed of the Church, but for the personal hope and stay of each of our souls. And to know what it means, to realise what it is to us, is the turning-point of each man's belief. To think that He who loved with such self-sacrifice is He of whom all may be said that the mind of man can conceive of the everlasting God—this is a revelation to a man's spirit which, whether it comes gradually or suddenly, is one of those things which lift him up out of the commonplaces of routine religion, one of those things which bring him face to face with the real questions of his being—with those fateful alternatives, the choice of which decides the course of life and its issues. We may overload and cloud it with subordinate doctrines, with the theories and traditions of men, with a disproportionate mass of guesses on what is not given us to know—of subtleties and reasonings in the sphere of human philosophy. We may recoil from it as something which oppresses our imagination and confounds our reason: but we may be sure that on the place which we really give it in our mind and heart depends the whole character of our Christianity, depends what the gospel of Christ means to us. III. We see in the Incarnation HOW GOD FULFILS THE PROMISES HE MAKES, AND THE HOPES WHICH HE RAISES, IN WAYS UTTERLY UNFORESEEN AND UTTERLY INCONCEIVABLE BEFOREHAND, utterly beyond the power of man to anticipate; and, further, we see exemplified in it that widely prevailing law of His government, that in this stage of His dispensations with which we are acquainted—which we call "this world" and "this life"—that which is the greatest must stoop to begin from what is humblest, the greatest glories must pass through their hour of obscurity, the greatest strength must rise out of the poorest weakness, the greatest triumphs must have faced their outset of defeat and rebuke, the greatest goodness start unrecognised and misunderstood. Is it not something almost too great for the mind to endure—the contrast between what the eye of man really saw and what really was; between what was to be, and its present visible beginning? When wonder, adoration, and thanksgiving, if it were possible, without bounds, have had their due, there remain the practical impressions to be laid up for the serious work of life. You are the heirs—you cannot doubt it in presence of that manger-cradle—of a hope which passes measuring here. You are the object of a Divine solicitude, interested in an economy of grace and recovery, of which human language is absolutely incapable to reveal the fulness. But, in the meanwhile, you are men and women, with your appointed parts to play on this earthly scene—with time to waste or to elevate, with the risks of unfaithfulness, with the sure rewards of self-discipline, with a character to fashion after the mind of Christ, with an allotted and fast shortening term to finish your work. What can you learn for your own guidance from the mystery of His Incarnation? Is it not, surely, that we must begin our eternal work, as He was pleased to begin His, according to that law which He has laid down for the kingdom of God, by which those who are to reach the highest must have known and welcomed the humblest and the lowest. "Except ye become as little children," is His characteristic word, "ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." Let us think of ourselves as children in the presence of that supreme mystery with which all our destiny is bound up—children before the incalculable humiliation of the Son of God, before the infinity of His greatness and His love; children on the brink and threshold of that vast, unchanging life, to which this one is but a play-time and a trial-ground, knowing nothing except in part, yet with the fortunes of an eternal existence in our hands. (*Dean Church.*) *The necessity of Christ's Incarnation:*—Whenever the Saviour's character can be understood there is a felt adaptation. We do not know Him as a Jew any more; we know Him as the Son of Man, as the Saviour, as the Great Representative of the human race; we know Him as having something in common with everything that is human; we know Him as being more nearly related to human beings than any human being is to another, feeling every throb—shall I say?—every emotion, and every anxiety of every human creature with an interest, a depth, and a nearness of sympathy that no mother ever felt for her child. This is wonderful! It is an amazing provision for human want. All humanity cries out for an Incarnation. Did you ever think that the very idols which the poor heathen hath prepared throughout the whole world, wherever the gospel has not gone, are the product of the groaning there is in the human heart after God incarnate? They are groping in the dark, and yet they are reaching out after the light of heaven. It is the want of humanity reaching after something that is more tangible, more accessible, and more within the grasp and conception of human character than an invisible, intangible, inappreciable, all-pervading and infinite Spirit. It is strange that men shut themselves off

in a vacuum when this wonderful provision is brought to them—God manifested in the flesh. (*C. Kingsley.*) **And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.**—*Christ evinced by the resurrection to be the Son of God*:—His resurrection then did not constitute Him the Son of God, it only evinced that He was truly so. Jesus Christ had declared Himself to be the Son of God, and on this account the Jews charged Him with blasphemy, and asserted that He was a deceiver. By His resurrection, the clear manifestation of the character He had assumed, gloriously and for ever terminated the controversy which had been maintained during the whole of His ministry on earth. In raising Him from the dead God decided the contest. He declared Him to be His Son, and showed that He had accepted His death in satisfaction for the sins of His people, and consequently that He had suffered not for Himself, but for them, which none could have done but the Son of God. On this great fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ Paul rests the truth of the Christian religion, without which the testimony of the apostles would be false, and the faith of God's people vain. (*R. Haldane.*) *Christ's resurrection a proof of His Divinity*:—I shall—I. EXPLAIN THE WORDS. 1. "Declared" may signify decreed or determined. But with what propriety could Christ be said to be decreed to be that which He was from eternity. That which is the proper object of decree or destination is something future; but that which was eternal cannot be imagined in any period of time to be future. Those who deny the eternal godhead of Christ, and date His Sonship principally from His resurrection, are great friends to this exposition. But the word also means to declare, show forth, or manifest, and this signification carries a most fit and emphatic opposition to "He was made of the seed of David," which word imports the human constitution that did not exist before; but here, since He had from eternity been the Son of God, it is not said of Him that He was made, but only declared or manifested to be so. 2. "With power"; which, though some understand of the power of Christ, as it exerted itself in His miracles; yet here it signifies rather the glorious power of His Divine nature, by which He overcame death, and properly opposed to the weakness of His human nature, by which He suffered it (2 Cor. xiii. 4). 3. "According to the Spirit of holiness." Christ's Divine nature—in opposition to His human nature (John iv. 24; 1 Tim. iii. 16). This qualification of holiness is annexed because Paul considers not the Divine nature of Christ, absolutely in itself, but according to the relation it had to His other nature. For it was His Divinity which consecrated and hypostatically deified His humanity. 4. "By the resurrection from the dead" cannot, as some suppose, mean the general resurrection, because that was future, and the apostle's design here is to demonstrate the Divinity of Christ by something already done and known. It must be understood therefore of His personal resurrection. II. SHOW THAT CHRIST'S RESURRECTION IS THE GREATEST ARGUMENT TO PROVE HIM THE SON OF GOD. 1. The foundation and sum of the gospel lies within the compass of this proposition, that Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God. For that which properly discriminates the Christian religion from the natural, or Judaical, is the holding of Christ's Deity. Of course Christ is capable of being called the Son of God in several respects. (1) According to His human nature, He had no natural father, but was produced in the womb of His mother by the immediate power of God. (2) For His resemblance to God; it being proper to call Him the Son of God, who does the works of God (John iii. 44). (3) From His having the government of all things put into His hands upon His ascension. Yet here we are to consider the principal cause of His being called so; which is from the eternal generation that He was the Son of God in such a way as proves Him to be God Himself. 2. Now this supereminent Sonship ought in reason to be evinced by some great and conclusive argument; and such a one is supplied by His resurrection. (1) But you will naturally reply, How can His resurrection, which supposes Him to have been dead, prove Him to have existed from all eternity, and so could not die? The answer is that we must consider it with relation to His doctrine, affirming Himself to be the Son of God, and as the seal set to the truth of that doctrine. (2) It is much disputed, whether Christ's resurrection is to be referred to His own power, or only to the power of the Father. But it is not material, for both equally prove the same thing. If Christ raised Himself, He must have done it by virtue of a power inherent in another nature, which was Divine; if the Father raised Him, it still proves Him to have been God; for the Father would not have exerted an infinite power to have confirmed a lie. 3. The resurrection is the principal proof of His Divinity. The ordinary arguments are—(1) From the nature

of the things which He taught. (2) The fulfilling of prophecies in His person. (3) The wonderful works that He did, which were the syllogisms of heaven, and the argumentations of omnipotence. (4) Yet over these Christ's resurrection had a vast pre-eminence. (*a*) All His miracles, supposing that His resurrection had not followed, would not have had sufficient efficacy, but His resurrection alone had been a full and undeniable proof. The former part of the assertion is clear from 1 Cor. xv. 14, 17. Now before Christ's death all His miracles were actually done, and yet the apostle states that if He had not risen the whole proof of the gospel had been buried with Him in the same grave. And for the other part of the assertion, that appears upon two accounts; first, that the thing considered absolutely in itself, according to the greatness of it, did transcend all the rest of His works put together. Secondly, that it had a more intimate connection with His doctrine than any of the rest; and that not only as a sign proving it, but as enabling Him to give being to the things which He promised, viz., to send the gifts of the Holy Ghost upon His disciples to fit them to promulge the gospel, and to raise up those that believed in Him at the last day, which are two of the principal pillars of His doctrine. But for Him to have done this not rising from the dead, but continuing under a state of death, had been utterly impossible. (*b*) His miracles did not convince men so potently, but that while some believed, more disbelieved, and assigned them to some other cause, short of Divine power, either devilish or magical (Matt. xii. 24). But now, when they came to His resurrection, they never attempted to assign any cause besides the power of God, so as to depress the miraculousness of it; but denied the fact, and set themselves to prove that there was no such thing; allowing, tacitly, that, if real, His Godhead could not be denied. Their scepticism in regard to the other miracles arose from—first, the difficulty of discerning when an action is really a miracle; *i.e.*, above the force of nature, and therefore to be ascribed to a supernatural power. For who can assign the limits beyond which nature cannot pass? Then, secondly, supposing that an action is fully known to be a miracle, it is as difficult to know whether it proves the truth of the doctrine of that person that does it, or not. For it is by no means certain but that God may suffer miracles to be done by an impostor, for the trial of men, to see whether or no they will be drawn off from a received, established truth (Deut. xiii. 1-5). But now neither of these exceptions take place against the resurrection. For first, though we cannot assign the determinate point where the power of nature ends, yet there are some actions that so vastly transcend it, that there can be no suspicion that they proceed from any power but a Divine. I cannot tell, *e.g.*, how far a man may walk in a day, but I know that it is impossible for him to walk a thousand miles. Now reason tells us that the raising of a dead man to life in reference to the force of natural causes, that is not in their power to do it. And secondly, should God suffer a miracle to be done by an impostor, there is no necessity hence to gather that God did it to confirm His words; for God may do a miracle when and where He pleases. But since Christ had so often laid the stress of the whole truth of His gospel upon His resurrection, and declared to those who sought for a sign that it was the only sign that should be given to that generation, God could not have raised Him but in confirmation of what He had said and promised, and so have joined with Him in the imposture. In a word, if this does not satisfy, I affirm that its not in the power of man to invent, or of God to do any greater thing to persuade the world of the truth of a doctrine and he who believes not upon Christ's resurrection from the dead would scarce believe, though he rose from the dead himself. (*R. South, D.D.*) *The resurrection of Christ: its evidence, and its bearing on the truth of Christianity*:—I. IT WAS PREDICTED BEFOREHAND. In the Old Testament (Psa. xvi. 9, 10; Isa. xxvi. 19), and by Himself (Matt. xvii. 9, 23). This was not understood by His disciples (Mark ix. 10; Luke xviii. 33, 34), and they were slow to believe the fact when it took place (Mark xvi. 11-14; Luke xxiv. 21, 25). II. IT OCCURRED UNDER CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH RENDERED IMPOSTURE IMPOSSIBLE. 1. Christ's death was real. 2. The story of the Jews in regard to the resurrection is absurd. III. THE IDEA OF FALSEHOOD IS CONTRADICTED BY THE WHOLE LIFE AND CONDUCT OF THE APOSTLES. IV. THE EXISTENCE OF CHRISTIANITY THE PROOF OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION. The institution of the Christian Sabbath is due to it, and all its other institutions and distinctive doctrines stand or fall with it. The resurrection is true, or Christianity is built on a lie, to believe which requires greater credulity than the resurrection itself. (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) *The secret of the success of Christianity*:—The theophilanthropist Larevellère Lepeaux had laboured to bring into vogue a sort of improved Christianity, which should be

both a benevolent and rational religion. He went to Talleyrand, and, with expressions of mortification, he admitted that he had failed, for the sceptical age would have nothing to do with religion. "What, my friend, shall I do?" he mournfully asked. The wily ex-bishop and diplomat hardly knew, he said, what to advise in a matter so difficult as the improvement of Christianity. "Still," said he, after a moment's pause, and with a smile, "there is one plan you might try." His friend was all attention, but there was a somewhat prolonged pause before Talleyrand answered. "I recommend to you," he said, "to be crucified for mankind, and to rise again on the third day!" It was a lightning flash, and the reformer stood, at least for the moment, awed and reverent before the stupendous fact suggested by the great diplomat. (*W. Baxendale.*) *Christ's Holy Spirit*:—The word "spirit" is in contrast with "flesh," and "according to" (Gr.) limits the assertion "who was marked out as Son of God" to the spirit which animated the body born of David's seed. Looking at the material of His body, we call Him David's Son; looking at the Spirit which moved, spoke, and acted, in that human body, we call Him Son of God. In every man there is a mysterious linking together of two worlds, of that which is akin to the clay, and that which is akin to God; of flesh and Spirit. In Christ on earth we have this in a still higher degree. The flesh of Christ was ordinary flesh; and therefore needs no further description. But the Spirit which animated that flesh is altogether different from all other human spirits. Spirit of holiness is chosen, perhaps, to distinguish the personal Spirit of Christ from the Holy Ghost, and to show that it was a personal embodiment of holiness (Psa. li. 11; Isa. lxiii. 10), *i.e.*, absolute devotion to God is a great feature of the nature of Christ, that of Him every thought, purpose, word, act, points directly towards God. This agrees with the words of Jesus about Himself (John iv. 34; v. 19, 30; vi. 38). With Him holiness was not accidental or acquired; but was an essential element of His nature, arising directly from His relation to God (chap. v. 19). When we look at Christ's body, we find Him like ourselves; and we call Him David's Son; but when we look at the Spirit which moved those lips and hands and feet, which breathed in that human breast, and when we see that Spirit turning always and essentially to God, we declare Him to be the Son of God. (*Prof. Beet.*)

Ver. 5. **By whom we have received grace and apostleship**:—*Grace and apostleship*:—I. Grace OF apostleship, *i.e.*, the favour of being an apostle. Given to the twelve (Matt. x. 1, 2); to Paul (Acts ix. 15; xiii. 2). The ministry of the Word is given as a mark of Divine favour. So Chrysostom deemed it when he said, "Not by our labour and industry, but by His grace"; and Philip Henry, after his ordination, "I received this day as much honour and work as I shall be able to know what to do with." Especially was this a grace to one who had been a blasphemer and persecutor. II. Grace WITH apostleship, *i.e.*, apostleship with the necessary gifts and graces, extraordinary gifts as well as spiritual grace (2 Cor. xii. 9; Gal. ii. 9; Eph. iv. 8–11). The grace which calls also qualifies for office (Rom. xii. 3, xv. 5: Eph. iii. 2). This is necessary, as was felt by Augustine when he said, "The ministry is a weight from which even an angel might shrink"; and by Luther, who, "though an old preacher, trembled each time he ascended the pulpit." III. Grace, THEN apostleship, *i.e.*, saving grace necessary to apostleship. Grace and office not to be separated (Psa. l. 16). A graceless ministry a grievous curse to the Church and to the minister himself. Of all callings the ministry is the most dangerous to an unconverted man, and more likely to destroy men's souls than to save them. How dreadful to preach to others and be at last a castaway (1 Cor. ix. 27). Noah's workmen refused to enter the ark and perished. (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) *Apostleship*:—1. Its source. 2. Its privilege. 3. Its object. 4. Its sphere. 5. Its motive. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) **For obedience to the faith.**—*Obedience to the faith*, or (Gr.) obedience of faith:—I. OBEDIENCE. The gospel a thing to be obeyed (Rom. vi. 17; 1 Pet. i. 22; Acts vi. 7). In it God commands as well as invites and offers (1 John iii. 23). Men are commanded to believe the gospel (Mark i. 15); in Christ (1 John iii. 23). Unbelief and rejection of Christ rebellion against God. II. FAITH viewed—1. Subjectively is—(1) Credit given to the gospel as God's message. (2) Trust reposed in Christ and His finished work as God's plan. 2. Objectively—the doctrine of the gospel to be received in faith (Gal. i. 23; iii. 23–25). Gospel truth is only to be known and learned by a Divine revelation. III. OBEDIENCE TO THE FAITH. 1. Obedience, in which faith consists. Faith is itself obedience. When God speaks men are not to reason, but to believe and accept. The Jews asked for a sign, Greeks for wisdom;

God demands faith, and faith cordially submits to His method of salvation by Christ. 2. Obedience as the fruit of faith. Faith in Christ is the mother of all true and acceptable obedience (Rom. xv. 18, xvi. 19; 2 Cor. vii. 15, x. 5, 6; 1 Pet. i. 3). Works without faith, faith without works, both alike dead (James ii. 26). God seeks evangelical, not legal obedience, because the gospel, not the law, produces the love that alone fulfils it. Faith in Christ proved by obedience to Him as a tree by its fruit (James ii. 18-26). Faith is the obedience of the understanding to God revealing its effect, the obedience of the will to God commanding. (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) *Faith measured by obedience*:—Our obedience being the child of faith, partakes of its parent's strength or weakness. Abraham was strong in faith, and what an heroic act of obedience did he perform in offering up His Son! (*W. Gurnall.*)

Ver. 6. **Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ.**—*The called of Jesus Christ*:—This expression denotes—1. That the change is wholly of the Lord, that it is the effect of His own good pleasure, and accomplished by His Almighty power. Others may attempt it, but none can do it effectually but Himself. The Word may be the instrument, but its success is of Him alone. 2. The ease with which this great work is accomplished, for what more easy than to do it with a word. In the morning of creation God said, "Let there be light, and there was light." In the morning of conversion His mandate is equally sovereign and efficacious. 3. The great difference that is made between the former and present state of the person called. It clearly implies that a separation existed between the parties, and that in virtue of this call the sinner is brought nigh to God. I. THE NATURE OF THIS HOLY CALLING. There are various calls mentioned in the Scriptures. 1. To particular services of a civil nature. God called Cyrus to the conquest of nations, and to be the protector of Israel. A person's secular employment is said to be his calling; it is the work to which Providence invites him (Isa. xlv. 4; 1 Cor. vii. 20). 2. To office, as when Paul was called to the apostleship (ver. 1). Thus every faithful minister of the gospel, in an inferior degree, is called of God (1 Cor. xii. 7-11). 3. To mankind, wherever the gospel comes, to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved. But though all without exception are thus invited, few are chosen (Prov. viii. 4; Isa. lv. 7; Matt. xxii. 1-10; Acts xvii. 30). But the call mentioned in our text is peculiar to true believers. It implies—1. A conviction of the evil of sin, of the utter insufficiency of the creature, and of the want of a Saviour. 2. A sweet and powerful inclination of the whole soul towards God. The compliance is voluntary, while the energy is efficient and almighty. "I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love." 3. A solemn surrender of ourselves to be the Lord's. 4. Certain effects. Sinners are hereby called out of darkness into marvellous light; from the bondage of sin, Satan, and the law, to the glorious liberty of the sons of God. It is said to be a holy and a heavenly calling, whereby we are called to the attainment of glory and virtue. It is that by which we are meetened for heaven. A partial but real conformity to God in this world will be followed by a perfect conformity to Him in the next; for whom He called, them He also glorified (Rom. viii. 30; 2 Pet. i. 3). II. THE MEANS EMPLOYED. These are diverse, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. Some are called into the vineyard at the third hour, some at the sixth, some at the ninth, and some even at the eleventh hour of the day. Sometimes remarkable providences have become the messengers of unexpected mercy; sometimes fearful dreams, or the edifying discourse of pious friends, but more frequently the public ministry of the Word. The Lord calls some in thunder, others in the still small voice. III. ITS DISTINGUISHING PROPERTIES. It is—1. Personal and particular. The general call of the gospel is addressed to all who come within its sound, but this singles out the object and speaks to him as it were by name. "Zaccheus, come down," "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" The former is drawing the bow at a venture, the latter directs the arrow to the mark. The one is the act of man, the other the sole work of God: the one is directed to the ear, the other to the heart. 2. Secret and internal. It is visible only in its effects (John iii. 8). Saul's companions heard a sound of words, but knew not what was spoken. 3. Effectual. Many other calls are not so, even where God Himself is the speaker; for he speaketh once—yea, twice—to our senses, to our reason, in the works of creation and providence, and in the ministry of the Word, but man perceiveth it not, or does not regard it. But when God speaks to the conscience and the heart the sinner is made to hear and to obey. His lan-

guage is, "Call Thou, and I will answer—speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth." 4. Irrevocable. Not only the gifts, but the calling of God is without repentance (Rom. xi. 29). God is said to repent that He gave man a being, but never that He gave him grace. Improvement: 1. How necessary and important is it that we give all diligence to make our calling and election sure (2 Pet. i. 10). 2. Let us learn our obligations to Divine grace. Whatever we are enabled to do for Christ is the fruit of what He has done for us. 3. Let our gratitude for God's distinguishing grace be exemplified by a course of universal obedience. (*B. Beddome.*) *The inspiring energy of a Divine call*:—Great heroes of history have often been represented as urged on, stimulated, or inspired by some influence beyond themselves. Whether it has been called a genius or a spirit, a demon or an angel, fate or providence, the principle is the same. They have either themselves believed, or the superstition of their followers has given birth to the idea that some overruling and irresistible power was leading them through the intricacies of their earthly course and directing their every step towards a predetermined end. Thus Joan of Arc, a simple rustic country maid, was led on by imaginary voices which she heard to seek the deliverance of her country from the hand of her enemies. She believed herself inspired to take the lead of armies and to place the crown of France upon the head of the rightful monarch. Nor did she cease or fail in her endeavours till she had roused her countrymen to vigorous action, led them on to victory, and restored the kingdom to him whom she regarded as its true and lawful king. (*Harvey Phillips.*) *The Christian calling ascertained*:—To every Christian man there is a heavenly calling, a Divine mission, a sacred consecration, and it behoves him to see, to contemplate, to study what that calling is and how he can best perform its sacred obligations. (*Ibid.*) *Life not to fall below the heavenly calling*:—A being already invested with a deathless life, already adopted into the immediate family of God, already enrolled in the brotherhood of angels, yea, of the Lord of angels; a being who, amid the revolutions of earth and skies, feels and knows himself indestructible, capacitated to outlast the universe, a sharer in the immortality of God—what is there that can be said of such an one which falls not below the awful glory of his position! Oh, misery, that with such a calling, man should be the grovelling thing that he is!—that, summoned but to pause for awhile in the vestibule of the eternal temple ere he be introduced into its sanctuaries, he should forget, in the dreams of his lethargy, the eternity that awaits him! Oh, wretchedness beyond words, that, surrounded by love, and invited to glory, we should have no heart for happiness, but should still cower in the dark, while light ineffable solicits him to behold and enjoy it! (*Prof. W. A. Butler.*) *The Christian calling should lead to service*:—Like as if the Queen, to show her puissance against a foreign power, should call forth some of her subjects who are most beholden to her to combat in her presence for her honour, they would, no doubt, strain all their strength in this service, yea, and their lives too: even so, much more ought we that are Christians to perform this duty to our God and Prince, who hath called us out by name to fight for His honour, to be a chosen and peculiar people unto Himself, to stand on His posts, to show forth His virtues and to be zealous of good works; yea, and, that we might the better perform this service, He had furnished us with His own armour and weapons, yea, and His own holy hand is with us too, though all men see it not; therefore we must endeavour to do valiantly, and to do our best, to answer the expectation of our heavenly King and Prince. (*Cawdray.*) *The gospel* is—I. THE CALL OF GOD. 1. He provides it. 2. Speaks in it. 3. Sends it. II. ADDRESSED TO ALL. 1. Of every nation. 2. To you in particular. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*)

Vers. 7. **To all that be in Rome.**—*The apostolic greeting*:—I. ITS CONTENTS. 1. Grace. (1) Favour bestowed by God in conviction, conversion, sanctification, comfort, help, &c. (2) Consciously enjoyed. Not something placed to our account in a heavenly record, but actually experienced in the heart and life, (3) Through the use of means. Not a mysterious endowment, but received by the exercise of a rational faith working through prayer, meditation, communion, &c. (4) Exhibited in the ever ripening fruits of the Spirit. Not an inward enjoyment merely, but an outward expression by which, in grace of character and usefulness, a Christian is read and known of all men. (5) Issuing in glory. As grace originates in heaven, so it works through our earthly experience only to return to its source. Its final issue is eternal fellowship with the God of all grace. 2. Peace. (1) Its nature. (*a*) Reconciliation with God—indifference or fear replaced by love and confidence.

(*b*) Inward tranquillity—freedom from mental and moral disturbance ; all can cast upon God. (*c*) Amity with all men. When men are at peace with God they will be at peace with each other. Wars and dissentions are utterly foreign to the family of the God of peace. (2) Its relation to grace. (*a*) It originates in grace. God makes overtures of peace ; says, "roll thy burden upon the Lord" ; "the fruit of the Spirit is . . . peace" ; as grace ripens, peace increases. II. THEIR SOURCE. 1. God as Father delights to bestow—(1) Grace. It is His pleasure—(*a*) To confer the highest benefit. (*b*) To see its blessed operation. (*c*) To contemplate its lovely effects. (*d*) To enjoy its everlasting fruits. (2) Peace. The supreme desire of a father is to see his children in amity with himself and with one another and free from care. 2. God as *our* Father is the warrant for our confidence in—(1) Supplicating these highest blessings. (2) Anticipating their presence here and their full perfection hereafter. III. THEIR MEDIUM—"The Lord Jesus Christ." 1. As God He has grace and peace to give. 2. As Man He exhibited the perfect enjoyment of these blessings. He was "full of grace" ; and He had peace to such an extent that He regarded it peculiarly as His own—"My peace." 3. As God-Man Mediator He is qualified and commissioned to bestow them. (1) He purchased both by the blood of the Cross. (2) He gives both (2 Cor. xii. 9 ; John xiv. 17, 27, xx. 19 ; Phil. iv. 7). (*J. W. Burn.*) This *salutation* is—I. RICH IN ITS IMPORT. I. Grace. 2. Peace. II. DIVINE IN ITS EFFICACY—from God, &c. III. SPECIAL IN ITS APPLICATION AND DESIGN—to all that are beloved, &c. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Christian salutation* :—Many persons say, "What is the use of salutations ? When I meet a lady in the street, why should I raise my hat ? " And, by the by, young men, it is worth your while either to salute a lady, or not to. The habit of touching your hat is a vulgar habit. It is like, in letter-writing, using "gent" instead of "gentleman." It is a kind of contraction that is indicative of a lack of proper information. A man says, "Why should I say 'Good morning' to a man when I meet him ? " or, "Why should friends say 'Good-bye' when they part ? " That very expression, "Good-bye," shows what the Western literalising tendency is. There was a time when friends at parting looked gravely at each other, and said, "God be with you" ; but now they say "Good-bye," which is the same thing abbreviated. In the "God be with you" of the West there is no "God," no "with you," no anything, except "Good-bye," which is what a bird is when its feathers have all been plucked off. But why should we have so many of these salutations ? Well, for my part, I think that even good folks, without such little ceremonies, are like grapes packed for market without leaves between them. They will crush, and come in mashed. Even good folks need to have little courtesies between them to keep them from attrition. And to take society and divest it of all these little civilities would be to deteriorate it, and carry it toward the savage state. I do not think that the bushmen of South Africa trouble themselves about such things. They economise speech and conduct. And as you go up in civilised and Christian communities, you will find more and more, and not fewer and fewer, of them. And when you come to the very height of civilisation and Christianity—the family—you will not only find more of them, but you will find that they are not conventional. There you will hear the mother talking to the little child, and the child talking back ; and you will hear them calling each other all manner of fond epithets. The whole of society is chased by golden figures of those civilities that tend to make life rich and happy. And if you think that these things are of no use, it is because you never put your heart into them. When you see a friend coming, and you say, "Good morning," *mean* good morning. Let your heart go in kindness toward him. If you meet a person, and you choose to uncover your head, let your heart be uncovered too. When in honour you prefer others to yourselves, put more good-will, more Christianity into it. Please men more, desire to please them more, and it will swell up the shrunken proportions of these civilities, and make them put now buds and new blossoms out. We need not fewer, but more of these things in human life, to take away its vulgarity, and its hard surfaces, and to enrich it with more flowers and perfumes. (*H. W. Beecher.*) **Beloved of God.**—*Beloved of God* :—This is the glorious distinction of believers. So of Israel (Deut. xxxiii. 4). God's love the origin of believers' salvation (John iii. 16 ; Eph. ii. 4 ; 1 John iii. 1). God has a common love to all men (Deut. x. 18 ; John iii. 16 ; 1 Tim. iv. 10 ; Titus ii. 11, iii. 4) ; a special love to believers (1 John iii. 1 ; Jer. xxxi. 3 ; Eph. i. 3-6, ii. 4-8). This special love is seen in making them His people and blessing them as such. This love is—I. DISTINGUISHING (1 Cor. iv. 7 ; Rom. viii. 28, 29). II. FREE AND SPONTANEOUS (Eph. i. 2-6 ; ii. 4). III. UNCHANGING AND EVERLASTING (John xiii.

1; Jer. xxxi. 3; Isa. liv. 10). IV. INFINITELY COSTLY (Zech. xiii. 7; Isa. liii. 6, 10; Rom. viii. 32). V. OPERATIVE AND EFFICACIOUS (2 Thess. ii. 16; 2 Tim. i. 9). VI. ALL-CONQUERING (Psa. cx. 3; Rom. viii. 30, 35–39). VII. EXISTING IN AND FOR THE SAKE OF CHRIST (Rom. viii. 39; Eph. i. 3, 6; John xvii. 23). To be beloved of God is a creature's highest blessedness, secures every blessing, and, when realised, is bliss itself (Psa. lxiii. 3, xxx. 5; Canticles i. 2). (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) **Called to be saints.**—*Called to be saints*:—The text might have been rendered "called saints." It is requisite to remember this, because you might think that it means "called to be saints" hereafter, as though it would be impossible to be a saint here. I. WHERE AND BY WHAT MEANS ARE WE CALLED TO BE SAINTS? 1. By the election of God and the providence of birth in a Christian land. 2. By the dedication and grace of baptism, 3. By those inward calls felt in the heart. 4. By the many voices of affliction and the constant gentle operations of the Comforter in the soul. II. WHAT IS THE PROCESS? 1. Stands the pardon of sin and the sense of pardon. Many greatly increase the difficulty of saintliness by putting holiness before peace. 2. But forgiveness is not merit; it is not even acceptance. You must be acceptable and pleasing in God's sight. And for this you must have a righteousness not your own, and be able to present yourself to God in Christ, and be pleasing even to Him, because He sees the Christ in whom you are. 3. When you are so justified, an act of union takes place between Christ and your soul. Through that union the Holy Ghost, who is the fountain of all saintliness, flows into you, and the flow will vary according as the Spirit is grieved or honoured in you. 4. And now saintliness, properly so-called, begins. You are a thing dedicate. (1) There is intercourse set up between your soul and God. You feed on spiritual food. Your Bible is a home—worship is the atmosphere of your love, especially the Holy Communion. (2) Meanwhile the natural appetites are being subdued, and the body subjugated. The besetting sin, by the power of a wonderful alchemy, is being gradually turned into a characteristic grace. The temper which was hot, is meek—the spirit which was restless, is patient—your appetites first changed, then turned, go upward. (3) You have become devoted to good works; you love the brethren; whatever is holy, it is akin to you; you yearn for souls and to extend the Church. (4) And now men are beginning to "take knowledge of you." (5) I do not venture now to look where those blessed ones, in the dazzling lustre of their white robes, are still pursuing their saintly offices. But I do ask, "Out of what material is that holy saintship made?" And He who makes the rainbow from the mist, and the pearl from the shell, and the butterfly from the grub, and the diamond from the charcoal gives the answer. "These are they which came out of great tribulation," &c. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *Called to be saints*:—Why? Because—I. They lived WITH Jesus. II. They lived FOR Jesus, and therefore—III. They GREW LIKE Jesus. (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) *Saints*:—What is a saint? A celebrated wit, who was asked this question, replied, "A saint is long-faced piety, which has neither the smile of friendliness, nor the tear of pity." It is to be regretted that the word "saint" is a sort of nickname for that which is mean and spurious; but when people know a man to be really saint-like they give him reverence. I remember, one day, asking a little orphan girl, "What is a saint?" After a little thought, she answered, "Please, sir, my mother was a saint!" To that child's mind saint meant somebody good, holy, and loving; and the person whom she had known to fulfil that description was her mother. Every mother should try to be to her daughters the panorama of what a saint should be, and every father too. A saint is—I. A REPENTING CHILD OF GOD. II. A CHANGED CHILD OF GOD. That man who is honest, because it is the best policy, is in a very low state of morality; is he not at heart a thief? The prodigal may desire pardon as a policy which saves him from hell and admits him into heaven; but the saint acts from a nobler motive. The saint yearns for heaven more as a state of holiness than as a place of freedom from pain. Napoleon once said, "If you would truly conquer, you must replace." This is true of morals as of nations. If you wish to take away the craving for sin, whatever it may be—drink, or anything else—you must replace it with a craving for something higher and better. You remember the old fable of the Isle of Sirens, whose songs lured the sailors from their ships to sin and death; and the shore of the island was covered with the bleached bones of tempted men. We are told that Ulysses, when sailing past, in order to see and not be captivated, ordered that his crew should have wax put into their ears, and then stopped up his own ears, and had himself tied to the mast. When his ship sailed by the island the Sirens sang their most bewitching melodies, but Ulysses and his

crew did not hear; and were, therefore, not tempted as other sailors who had both seen and heard. But, some time afterwards, there came another ship, commanded by Orpheus, who was a master of music. Orpheus did not attempt to resist the temptation by putting wax in his ears, or by tying himself to the mast. The Sirens sang their most melodious strains; but Orpheus played a sweeter music, which, like a magnet, kept his crew from having the slightest desire to go to the island. The song of the Sirens charmed the ear; but the music of Orpheus thrilled the soul. Such is the change which has taken place in the soul of the saint. The joys of religion are sweeter to him than the pleasures of sin; to be beloved of God is more precious than the applause of erring men. You may ask, "How is this accomplished?" Just by the love of God being inspired in the spirit of the forgiven penitent. III. A FORGIVEN CHILD OF GOD. A young man went headlong into evil courses, and stole some of his father's money, and ran away from home. Some time afterwards his father solemnly crossed the prodigal's name from the family register at the beginning of the Bible. After many years the son, like the prodigal, "came to himself," and when he knocked at the door was received with a loving welcome. The following morning the father opened the Bible at the first page, wrote the name of his son, and after it, "Everything forgiven." This is like what takes place when a penitent cries for pardon; but the page where the forgiveness is written is in the heart of the penitent. (*W. Birch.*) *Sainthood now being prepared for glory*:—They who are not made saints in a state of grace shall never be saints in glory. The stones which are appointed for that glorious Temple above are hewn and polished and prepared for it here, as the stones were wrought and prepared in the mountains for building the temple at Jerusalem. (*T. H. Leary, D.C.L.*) **Grace.**—*Grace*:—1. The word is from the French, who got it from the Romans. And the Romans got it under the old parental roof, at that remote period which preceded the migration both of Latins and Greeks from their common Oriental home. The Greek form of the word is χάρις, connected with χαίρω, "I rejoice." So that the word, in its etymology, means "that which gives joy and pleasure, that which is delightful." 2. Hence it was, at a very early period of its career as a word, applied to that which was beautiful. Beauty gives delight. It is grace. A beautiful movement of the body is graceful. If a dress is beautiful in its fabric, and if it fits beautifully, it is graceful. The fertile Greek imagination constructed three distinct personifications of beauty, "the Graces." The echo of their idea continues, and we still speak of the three Christian graces—faith, hope, charity. When our Queen visits some private home, we sometimes say that the royal lady graces the home with her presence. She lends charm and beauty to it; and the charm and beauty occasion delight. 3. But Greeks, Latins, French, and English, were not slow to perceive that there is an inner as really as an outer beauty. There is beauty of character, of moral deportment, of moral feeling and acting; and this beauty is fitted to give great delight and joy. Hence all united in calling it grace. Kindness and loving-kindness is grace. It is really most graceful. It is the most beautiful possible ornament. Justice is admirable. It cannot be dispensed with. Its presence lends dignity to character; and dignity is a species of grandeur; and grandeur is a species of beauty. Thus there is beauty in justice. But it is by a circuitous logical process that we find out "the beauty of holiness," and the corresponding beauty that is inherent in the hatred of sin. But not so is it with kindness. It inspires us, on the spur of the moment, with delight and joy, especially when we find ourselves the objects of the loving-kindness. It is the grace that belongs peculiarly to God. God's favour is grace. 4. But man, too, as well as God, can be gracious. Our Queen and Princess of Wales are gracious. It is their pleasure to be kind; and their loving-kindness is delightful, and, because delightful, is grace; so that they are gracious. Even a very humble man can be gracious, or show favour to his fellow-men, when, *e.g.*, his fellow-men have injured him. Such graciousness is the reflection in man of the peculiar glory which is inherent in the character of God. 5. Again: We speak of grace before and after meals. The meaning is the utterance of thanks or gratitude to God, the bountiful Benefactor. This gratitude is grace. How significant! With what charm it invests the idea of gratitude! Gratitude for favour received, as a token of loving-kindness, is as truly graceful as is loving-kindness itself. In nothing is there greater deformity and unloveliness than in ingratitude. Hence both Greeks and Romans freely combined in calling gratitude grace. "For if ye love them who love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. And if

ye do good to them who do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners to receive as much again." We read in another part of the New Testament those glorious and glowing words of the Apostle St. Paul, "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift." In these passages the term employed is grace. In the sayings of our Saviour, as is evidenced by the parallel expression in St. Matthew, the word is tantamount in import to reward. What thank or reward do ye deserve? In the saying of the apostle it simply means thanks; and thanks is expressed by this term "grace," just because thankfulness is always, as a manifestation of character, a grace, delightful to God and to all other beings who are Godlike. (*J. Morison, D.D.*) *The beginnings of grace*:—Trace back any river to its source, and you will find its beginnings small. A little moisture oozing through the sand or dripping out of some unknown rock, a gentle gush from some far-away mountain's foot, are the beginning of many a broad river, in whose waters tall merchantmen may anchor and gallant fleets may ride. For it widens and gets deeper, till it mingles with the ocean. So is the beginning of a Christian's or a nation's grace. It is first a tiny stream, then it swells into a river, then a sea. There is life and progression towards an ultimate perfection when God finds the beginning of grace in any man. (*J. J. Wray.*) *Grace necessary for human perfection*:—The nature of a seed is such that when it is thrown into the ground it unfolds itself without culture, without any exterior influence beyond the light and air and soil, to be just that thing which it was meant to be. Every flower comes to its own nature; and although culture may make it larger and finer, yet it expresses the radical idea involved in the seed. It is so with every insect and every animal. But man is not a creature that, according to this analogy, being born into the world opens and develops himself to that which God meant manhood to be. When left in the most favourable conditions man does not, and will not, so develop himself; for that which is required to make manhood is not in him. There were elements left out of the nature of man without which that nature never can come to its perfection. For, as in fruits sugar comes from the sun, so in man grace comes from the Sun of righteousness, working in us, and elaborating the things that we need. But they are never wrought out by any process that takes place by the natural faculties in the soul. (*H. W. Beecher.*) **Peace.**—*The peace of God*:—Hence the worldling does not understand our peace, and frequently sneers at it because he is puzzled by it. Even the Christian is sometimes surprised at his own peacefulness. I know what it is to suffer from terrible depression of spirit at times; yet at the very moment when it has seemed to me that life was not worth one single bronze coin, I have been perfectly peaceful with regard to all the greater things. There is a possibility of having the surface of the mind lashed into storm while yet down deep in the caverns of one's inmost consciousness all is still: this I know by experience. There are earthquakes upon this earth, and yet our globe pursues the even tenor of its way, and the like is true in the little world of a believer's nature. Why, sometimes the Christian will feel himself to be so flooded with a delicious peace that he could not express his rapture. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Vers. 8–16. **First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all**—*True Christian zeal*:—I. As it respects God is—1. Thankful. 2. Sincere. 3. Constant. 4. Prayerful. 5. Dependent (vers. 8–10). II. As it respects man is—1. Earnest. 2. Communicative. 3. Loving. 4. Unquenched by difficulties. 5. Expansive. 6. Humble, not a merit but a debt. 7. Self-sacrificing. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Paul's desire to see Rome*:—I. The facts of the passage. 1. "I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world" (chap. xvi. 19). The "world" here means, in the first place, the Roman Empire. But the term must be limited further to a particular class in the empire; though even at this time the general population were alive to some of the great Christian facts. The expression however, does not mean that the people in all parts of the empire were all talking about the "faith" of the Romans, because as you know there are twenty distinct worlds even in this London of ours. There are different classes that actually intermingle, but do not touch. There may be a world close to you that may have connections all over the nation and yet you know nothing about it. Literary men have a world of their own, and they are known one to another all over the world; and there are religious teachers who are known all over their world, and yet they often know nothing of one another. So the

meaning is that every city wherever Paul went, amongst the Christian people with whom he mingled, the faith and obedience of the Roman Christians was spoken of. And when I was in America I did not enter a single town but I met with some one or more persons who had been in this place. I was mingling with a certain class; they found me out and I found them out, because we had sympathies in common; but there are many millions of people who never heard either of them or me. Well now, three years after the apostle wrote that he got to Rome, and called a number of most respectable Jews, yet these men seemed to know nothing of the "faith" or "obedience" of the Christians at Rome; but only knew concerning the "sect" that it was "everywhere spoken against." Now these two accounts may at first seem rather startling, but they are perfectly in harmony with each other if properly viewed; and the entire naturalness of the two convinces me of the truth of both statements. The Jews and the Christians at Rome lived in different worlds. 2. "God is my witness" (vers. 9–12). (1) The two points in the passages are these—that the apostle was very earnest in his prayers that he might get to Rome, and have a prosperous journey. The other point is that he wished to impart some spiritual gift and to be comforted by mutual faith. I think he means not to confer any miraculous gift as an apostle, but that as an authoritative teacher by preaching the truth, they might be rooted and grounded in the faith. There is an exquisite delicacy of feeling here. Paul had been uttering a great thing about what he wished to get to Rome for. And then, as if he had uttered nothing that might imply apostolic authority and distinction, but as if he had simply placed himself on a level with the people, he says, "that is, that I," &c. (ver. 12). (2) Now I very much doubt whether these things came to pass; and it may do us much good to learn that the prayers even of an apostle, and long continued, were not answered. We must always be ready for disappointments, and be prepared for a very different state of things from that for which we pray. Instead of getting to Rome "soon," it was three years (two of them in prison), then he was shipwrecked, and when he got to Rome he was a prisoner. You will find in chap. xv. that he asked the people at Rome to join their prayers with his for the same thing. But their prayers were unanswered. And so with respect to the other point. The letters written from Rome contain some alarming statements about how things had gone. He says that there were some who preached the gospel out of envy and strife, wishing to add affliction to his bonds; and although the things that happened to him turned out for the furtherance of the gospel, yet those hopes which he had formerly cherished were disappointed. 3. The apostle goes on—"Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come to you (but was hindered), that I might have some fruit among you, even as among other Gentiles." He wanted to have men converted as well as to comfort and impart spiritual gifts to the Church. The apostle felt that he had "a dispensation committed to him." "I am called and commissioned, and, therefore, am a debtor to all men; I am, therefore, ready to preach the gospel to you at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel." II. THE LESSONS. 1. In regard to the Christian life we perceive here its—(1) Peculiar nature in opposition, generally, to philosophic theism, or anything else. "I thank my God through Jesus Christ," says Paul. That means God contemplated as revealed by Christ; and it is well known that the apostles and early Christians conducted their worship in the name of Christ, as a mediator and advocate. (2) That it is habitually earnest and devotional; praying in everything; in everything giving thanks; committing everything to God, asking even for a prosperous journey, believing in the gracious presidency of God over human affairs; expecting answers, but being prepared for disappointments. (3) Its peculiar sympathies, as becomes the children of the same father; an interchange of affection, fellowship and union, "and be comforted together by mutual faith." 2. In relation to the apostle. (1) The union of prayer and preaching; and he did both with earnestness. He preached as if the conversion of the world depended upon it, and as if he was able to convert the world. But we find him equally earnest in prayer. (2) He is always modest but manly. He says, I want to comfort and establish the Church, and I want to be comforted together with you by mutual faith. (3) He served God in his spirit in the gospel of His Son, with earnestness, with sincerity, and with faith. Paul had a great idea of duty, and the word "debtor" comes from duty: that which is due to another is duty from me. (4) He was not ashamed of the gospel because of the commission which he had received from on high. (*T. Binney.*) *Thankfulness for the blessings of others*:—The expression of thanks to God for His mercy to them was fitted to conciliate their feelings and to prepare

them for the truths he was about to communicate to them. It showed the deep interest he had in their welfare, and the happiness it would give him to do them good. It is proper to give thanks to God for His mercies to others as well as to ourselves. We are members of one great family, and we should make it a subject of thanksgiving that He confers any blessings, and especially the blessing of salvation, on any mortals. (*A. Barnes.*) *Standard of thankfulness* :—As physicians judge of the condition of men's hearts by the pulse which beats in their arms, and not by the words which proceed from their mouths; so we may judge the thankfulness of men by their lives rather than by their professions. (*Dictionary of Illustrations.*) *The bond of Christian union* is a bond of—I. BROTHERLY LOVE (vers. 8–10.) II. MUTUAL HELP (vers. 11, 12). III. UNITED EFFORT for the spread of Christ's kingdom. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Thanksgiving* :—I. Is every Christian's first duty. II. Should be offered through Jesus Christ. III. Should be presented for every blessing and for all. IV. Is especially due for the success of the gospel. (*Ibid.*) *Personal religion* :—"My God," is—1. The Author of my being and my well-being. 2. The object of my worship. 3. My covenant God in Christ. The text is the language of—I. FAITH IN CHRIST. God is only ours through faith in Him, only according to the new covenant (Jer. xxxi. 33; Heb. viii. 10). Receiving Jesus and trusting in Him God becomes our God (John i. 12; Gal. iii. 26). II. LOVE. That is our God which we most love and esteem (Psa. lxxiii. 25). III. TRUST (Psa. xviii. 2). The object of our confidence is our God (Job xxxi. 24; Hab. i. 16). IV. SUBJECTION, DEDICATION, OBEDIENCE (Isa. xliv. 5; Acts xxvii. 23). Conclusion: 1. Thanksgivings to be presented to God as our God in Christ. 2. The gospel teaches us not only to say "our Father," but "my God." 3. God as our God, the most glorious and only satisfying portion. (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) *Thankfulness for faith spoken of* :—I. FAITH SPOKEN OF PROVES—1. Its nobility. 2. Its boldness. 3. Its fruitfulness. II. THANKS GIVEN FOR THIS on account of—1. Honour bestowed on the Romans. 2. Benefit likely to accrue to others. 3. Glory redounding to Christ. (*Ibid.*) *Exemplary faith* :—I. ITS FEATURES—consistent; earnest; loving. II. ITS EFFECTS—a good report; glory and thanks to God. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*)

Ver. 9. For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of His Son.—*Paul's appeal to God* :—I. ITS GROUND IS THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF ENTIRE CONSECRATION TO THE SERVICE OF THAT GOD WHOM HE HAD FOUND IN THE REVELATION OF HIS SON. 1. These are the two thoughts which are stamped on the whole of this introduction, and which everywhere else are prominent. (1) Before he knew Christ his God was always the object of his fear and devotion. But how different was that God and his knowledge of Him—without his love in Christ, and His Triune essence. The service he offered was sincere, but ignorant and bigoted, a service which rejected Christ and persecuted His saints. But now in Christ all this had undergone a change. It had pleased God to reveal His Son in Him, and the Son had revealed the Father, and both revelations had been made perfect in the gift of the Holy Ghost. God in Christ became the Alpha and Omega of Divine things to Him. (2) To that God whom the gospel revealed the apostle gave the service of his renewed spirit. Not merely in the sphere of his intellect, because that was convinced, nor in the sphere of the emotions, because they had been stirred, but in the very inmost self of his self he had given his life to the God of the gospel. 2. Let the richest treasure of your experience be "God is my Witness." Paul had no grace that we may not claim. But the real secret which enables us to dare this Omniscient scrutiny is the habitual revelation of the Fatherly love of God in Christ which enables us to say, "My God." "If Thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquity!" carried to an extreme would take away all confidence. "God is my witness," but He is "my God" in Christ. II. ITS SPECIAL EMPHASIS RESTS UPON THE WORDS "IN MY SPIRIT." 1. The terms are liturgical, for Paul never forgot the ancient temple. The soul is regenerate because inhabited by God. Where He dwells must be a temple; and all glorious things spoken about the ancient dwelling-place of Jehovah may be transferred to the spirit of the believer. But He is Priest as well as Temple. "Sanctify the Lord Christ in your hearts." The great concern of our life must be to preserve our spirit inviolate for the sacred Indweller. The apostle lived in his body as in a temple: "an earthly house" which should be dissolved, but then built again. He lived in his spirit, however, as in a temple which should never be dissolved; and he lived in hope that both should be reunited and glorified as the eternal dwelling-place of God in Christ. 2. This service that he offered in his spirit was the service of God in the gospel of His Son. (1) He served

God for himself. In a certain sense he was a solitary worshipper, presenting in secret his whole devotion before it was translated to the outer sanctuary and the visible life. Habituate yourself to an interior life, hid with Christ in God. (2) With this, however, we must connect his supplications for others. In the temple of his spirit he offered a systematic, persevering intercession with thanksgiving for the Churches of Christ. It was a house of prayer for all nations. 3. Cultivate this habit of prayer for yourself, your own communion, Christendom and the world in general; cultivate also the habit of mixing mutual prayer with all your engagements. 4. Remember that God alone is the witness of your fidelity, but men will be the witnesses of its results. (*W. B. Pope, D.D.*) *The true service of God*:—I. RESPECTS THE SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL. II. IS RENDERED WITH THE SPIRIT. III. IS CONSTANT. IV. PRAYERFUL. V. IS DISCHARGED AS IN THE SIGHT OF GOD. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The nature of Christian obedience*:—We all serve something or some one, self, passion, prejudice, sin, business, ambition, &c., and we find the service pleasant enough. But the only service worth entering upon is that of Christ. I. THE CLAIMS WHICH GOD HAS UPON OUR SERVICE. These are—1. Self-interest. God is a good Master. 2. Gratitude. A child that turns his back on a kind parent, a servant who repays affection by insult, a rebel who plots against a munificent king—all these is the man who forgets God. II. THE PRINCIPLES WHICH SHOULD DIRECT AND GOVERN OUR SERVICE TO GOD. "Whom I serve with my spirit," implies—1. Voluntariness. We are not so much influenced by the command which addresses the ear, or the threatening which alarms the conscience, as by love. 2. Sincerity. The "spirit" is that which commands the whole of man. Often we see the affections dormant and the will persevering. How much of God's worship is performed outwardly when it is inwardly disliked. The body without the spirit is dead; service without love is hypocrisy. 3. Universality. It had respect to every precept of God's Word. The carnal mind will only obey such commands as seem pleasing to us. 4. Perpetuity. Not in prosperity only nor in adversity only. It is only by continuousness that perfection is arrived at. III. THE RULE BY WHICH THE SERVICE SHOULD BE GOVERNED. The gospel is not only the means of salvation, but it is the rule which regulates our life. To serve God in the gospel is to—1. Serve God in light. The gospel is the light which shows the Christian's safety and danger. 2. To serve God in faith. The whole principle of the gospel is faith, the principle of life, thought, and action. 3. To serve God in love. Love is the great rule of life and sanctification. 4. To be rewarded by God according to the gospel. (*J. J. S. Bird, B.A.*) *My spirit*:—1. There was an auction one day of the books and furniture of a very celebrated author, and a vain but rich young man, having induced the auctioneer to offer them in one lot, paid several thousand pounds for the books, shelves, carpet, and in fact everything except the room itself. He directed the things to be taken carefully to his house and fitted up in a room, and placed in the same positions as in the author's study. The young man then sat down with reverence on the author's chair, took up the author's pen, dipped it in the author's ink, and bent his head over the paper on the author's table. But nothing came; the paper remained a blank. The genius of the author was in neither his pen nor his surrounding, but in his spirit—the gift of God. We may be unable to create in our spirit the genius of a celebrated man; but we may develop our own faculty; and, if we do this, we shall bless the world exactly as God wishes us to do. The little forget-me-nots which grow in the quiet nook of the steep rock do their work as effectively as the great oaks which grace the park of a king; and as the tiny flower does its best, it is as worthy of praise as the gigantic tree that does no more. 2. But though we cannot obtain the special genius of another man's spirit, we can receive as our own the disposition of the greatest man who ever lived—Christ can be received by all, and the breathings of His Spirit within us shall mould our thoughts, fashion our desires, and develop our lives like His own. If a man would occupy the place in the world for which he has been specially created, it is absolutely needful for him to have the breathings of Christ in his own spirit; and when undertaking any sacred mission for the benefit of our fellow-men, our inquiry should not be, Have I bags of money? but, Is my spirit influenced by Christ? Christ-direction is the first and most important step in the kingdom of God. 3. One day a young soldier went to visit the tomb of Scandenberg, and the sword of the famous warrior was placed in his hand. The soldier lifted it saying, "Is this really Scandenberg's sword? Why there is nothing in it more than mine!" The old clerk exclaimed, "You see only the sword; you should have seen the hand that grasped it!" Likewise,

the preacher may be only an ordinary man, he is only an earthen vessel; but in his spirit there should be a power which can move men's hearts and influence their lives—God should breathe within him. 4. Christ and the angels do not look on us as we look on each other. We value a man's surroundings rather than the man himself. An artist whose soul loves beauty does not value a picture by its frame. Seeing the picture to be a gem, he buys it, and does not care twopence for the frame, So, when the Lord looks on you, He does not value your bank book, your dress, your bodily strength and beauty; he values you—your spirit. "A man is measured by his soul!" (*W. Birch.*)

Vers. 10–12. **Making request, if by any means . . . I might have a prosperous journey.**—*Prosperous journey* :—What is necessary to render a journey, or a voyage, prosperous in the estimation of a real Christian? Is he satisfied if by it his temporal interests are advanced, if he enjoys worldly pleasure, if he meets with kind friends, if he be preserved from calamity, and return home with invigorated health? These are blessings which require his grateful acknowledgments to God. With these he ought to be contented, if this world were his home. But when he remembers that heaven is his true country, and religion his great business, he must feel that something more is necessary. I. WE SHOULD SEEK MORE AFFECTING AND ADMIRING VIEWS OF THE CREATOR, AS DISPLAYED IN HIS WORKS. When our minds are employed upon the works of nature, it is generally only to make them subservient to our worldly interest, or to administer to our earthly gratification; and not to warm our hearts by the contemplation of that infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, which appear in the formation of them. If such conduct at all times is inexcusable and ungrateful, it is doubly so in our journeys, in which the works of God are presented to us in rapid succession. II. WE SHOULD ACQUIRE A MORE DEEP AND GRATEFUL SENSE OF THE GOODNESS AND CARE OF THAT PROVIDENCE ON WHICH WE DEPEND. Though in God "we live, and move, and have our being," yet the majority of mankind think but little of this guardian providence. And even Christians, when nothing occurs to interrupt the regular course of their lives, are too apt to forget their dependence; but surely in our journeys we must, from their unseen dangers, feel that we need each moment to be shielded by the power of God. III. IT SHOULD DEEPEN OUR CONVICTION OF THE VALUE AND UNIFORMITY OF THE RELIGION OF JESUS. The various objects presented to him will be calculated to produce this conviction. Far from home we meet with the disciples of the Redeemer. IV. WE SHOULD EMBRACE OPPORTUNITIES OF ACQUIRING AND DOING GOOD. Sometimes even believers, during their journeys, have found their graces withering, because they neglected these means of spiritual improvement. Carefully guard against this. Let the Word of God not be disregarded. Let nothing interfere with prayer, Sabbath duties, &c: Be not ashamed to avow your attachment to the blessed Saviour. A word spoken in season may be the means of saving a soul. V. REMEMBER THAT OUR WHOLE LIFE IS A JOURNEY TOWARDS ETERNITY. Frequently think, when far from home, that you are only sojourners upon earth; that heaven is your country. (*S. Davies, D.D.*) *A prosperous journey* :—I. DEPENDS UPON THE WILL OF GOD. II. SUPPOSES GOD'S CARE, DIRECTION, AND BLESSING. III. CAN ONLY BE SECURED BY EARNEST PRAYER. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) **By the will of God,** or *in* the will, &c.—Paul seemed to regard the will of God as a straight course, in which he was desirous of sailing; or as a circle, outside of whose radius he would not steer, through selfishness, impatience, and self-judgment. The track marked out on God's chart must be followed, for out of it were shoals and rocks, where he would founder and make shipwreck of his faith. (*C. Neil, M.A.*) *Prayer and the will of God* :—There is nothing with which Christians should be more habitually impressed than that God is the disposer of events. They should look to His will in the smallest concerns of life, as well as in affairs of the greatest moment. Even a prosperous voyage is from the Lord. In this way they glorify God by acknowledging His providence in all things, and have the greatest confidence and happiness in walking before Him. Here we also learn that, while the will of God concerning any event is not ascertained, we have liberty to desire and pray for what we wish, provided our prayers and desires are conformed to His holiness. We also learn in this place that, since all events depend on the will of God, we ought to acquiesce in them, however contrary they may be to our wishes; and likewise that in those things in which the will of God is not apparent, we should always accompany our prayers and our desires with this condition if it be pleasing to God, and to be ready to renounce our desires as soon as they

appear not to be conformed to His will. "O how sweet a thing," as one has well observed, "were it for us to learn to make our burdens light by framing our hearts to the burthen, and making the Lord's will our law!" (*J. Haldane.*) **For I long to see you that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift.**—*Paul's desire to see the Roman Christians:*—Note—I. THE LONGING OF AN EARNEST MIND FOR ENGAGEMENT IN CHRIST'S SERVICE. Paul wished to see them—1. That he might impart some spiritual gift. Some suppose reference is made to those supernatural gifts in which the Church at Corinth was so rich, and were they still in the Church some would be tempted to say, "Give me this power," with a view to usefulness. But why do you not use those you already have? It is not that our Churches come behind in gifts, but that so many are unemployed. Every one has some gift—use it. Some mistake their gifts and hinder. If you have no gift for public prayer, pray in silence. But all have the gift of tongues. Every one can speak a word in season to them that are weary. Pray that they may be baptized with fire. That will purge from detraction, &c., and make meet for the Master's use. 2. That he and they might be comforted by the faith of each. There is a law pervading God's works by which the giver becomes the receiver. The seed comes back in the harvest; the ocean receives the rain it gives off in evaporation. Nothing is so injurious as selfishness; nothing so remunerative as benevolence. No prayer is so profitable as intercession for others; no Bible knowledge so rich as that derived from exposition to others. How many have been recompensed for efforts made to attend the prayer meeting! II. THE DELAYS OFTEN MET WITH IN THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF OUR WORK. Do not suppose that because your motive is pure your end will be achieved at once. Paul planned long ago to visit Rome, but found his plans set aside by God. In all your undertakings do what he did—pray to, and then wait for, God to make the way plain. The opportunity will come in His, *i.e.*, the best time. III. OUR DESIRE FOR EMPLOYMENT IN CHRIST'S WORK MAY BE REALISED IN A WAY LEAST EXPECTED. The spirit, rather than the letter, of the prayer is answered. How little Paul thought that he would enter Rome a prisoner; but the sequel shows that God was right. What a rich experience Paul brought with him, and accumulated for the benefit of the Church of all ages. How invaluable is the record of his shipwreck! We could ill have spared the incidents of his history even for more sermons and epistles. Then he tells us how that all fell out for the furtherance of the end he had in view (Phil. i.). IV. TO ACCOMPLISH CHRIST'S WORK WE MUST HAVE A POWERFUL CONVICTION—1. Of our personal indebtedness. 2. Of the glory and power of the gospel. (*J. S. Pearsall.*) *Personal intercourse:*—I. ITS ADVANTAGES. It accomplishes more than a letter—hence reading the Word at home does not supersede the necessity of the living ministry. II. ITS OBJECTS. 1. The communication of some spiritual good. 2. Mutual edification. III. ITS ATTRACTIONS. 1. Mutual love. 2. Love to Christ. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Pastoral visitation:*—1. Supposes personal communication about Divine things. 2. Contributes to the development, increase, and communion of faith. 3. Secures mutual comfort—the minister needs it—can impart it. 4. Promotes unity of affection and effort. (*Ibid.*) *The bond and purpose of the ministry:*—I. NOTICE THE MANLY EXPRESSION OF CHRISTIAN AFFECTION WHICH THE APOSTLE ALLOWS HIMSELF HERE. Very few Christian teachers could or should venture to talk so much about themselves as Paul did. The strong infusion of the personal element in all his letters is so transparently simple, so free from affectation or unctuous sentiment, that it attracts rather than repels. He had never been in Rome when he spoke these words; he had no personal relations with any of the believers there; but still his heart went out towards them, and he was not ashamed to show it. "I long to see you." II. NOTE THE LOFTY CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE PURPOSE OF THEIR MEETING. The word he employs here, "gift," is never used in the New Testament for a thing that one man can give to another, but is always employed for the concrete results of the grace of God bestowed upon men. The very expression, then, shows that Paul thought of himself, not as the original giver, but simply as a channel through which was communicated what God had given. In the same direction points the adjective which accompanies the noun—a "spiritual gift"—which probably describes the origin of the gift as being the Spirit of God, rather than defines the seat of it when received as being the spirit of the receiver. Notice, too, as bearing on the limits of Paul's part in the gift, the delicacy of the language in his statement of the ultimate purpose of the gift. He does not say, "that I may strengthen you," which may have been too egotistical, but he says, "that ye may be strengthened," for the true strengthener is not Paul, but the Spirit of God. And now, what are the lessons

that I take from this? 1. No Christian teacher has any business to open his mouth unless he is sure that he has got something to impart to men as a gift from the Divine Spirit. And no Christian organisation has any right to exist unless it recognises the communication and further spreading of this spiritual gift as its great function. That is the one lesson, and the other one is this—2. Have you received the gift that I have, under the limitations already spoken of, to bestow? That is, have you taken Christ, and have you faith in Him. The purpose of the Church, and the purpose of the ministry, is that spiritual gifts may be imparted. And if that purpose be not accomplished, all other purposes that are accomplished are worse than nothing. III. NOTE THE LOWLY CONSCIOUSNESS THAT MUCH WAS TO BE RECEIVED AS WELL AS MUCH TO BE GIVEN. The apostle corrects himself after he has said, "that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift," by adding, "that is, that I may be comforted (or rather, encouraged) together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me." If his language were not so transparently sincere, and springing from deep interest into the relationship between himself and these people, we should say it was exquisite courtesy and beautiful delicacy. But it moves in a region far more real than the region of courtesy, and it speaks the inmost truth about the conditions on which the Roman Christians should receive, viz., that they should also give. There is only one giver who is only a giver, and that is God. All other givers are also receivers. Paul's was a richly-complicated nature—firm as a rock in the will, tremulously sensitive in its sympathies; like some strongly-rooted tree with its stable stem and a green cloud of fluttering foliage that moves in the lightest air. So his spirit rose and fell according to the reception that he met from his brethren, and the manifestation of their faith quickened and strengthened his. And he is but one instance of a universal law. All teachers, the more genuine they are, the more sympathetic they are, are the more sensitive of their environment. The hearer reacts on the speaker quite as much as the speaker does on the hearer. If you have got ice in the pews, that brings down the temperature up here. And the unbelief and low-toned religion of a congregation is always pulling down the faith and the fervour of their minister, if he be better and holier, as they expect him to be, than they are. On the other hand, the true encouragement to give a man when he is trying to do God's will, to preach Christ's gospel, is not to pat him on the back and say, "What a remarkable sermon that was of yours! What a genius; what an orator!" not to go about praising it; but to come and say, "Thy words have led me to Christ; and from thee I have taken the gift of gifts." (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Sharing happiness*:—Men of the noblest disposition think themselves happiest when others share with them in their happiness. (*Jeremy Taylor.*) **To the end ye may be established.**—*Christian establishment*:—I. THE OBJECT WHICH WE ALL SHOULD HAVE IN VIEW—"that we may be established." 1. In knowledge. This kind of knowledge Paul terms "the full assurance of understanding to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God," &c. When we attain this, comprehend the gospel of Christ so completely that we see its adaptation to all our wants, it becomes its own evidence; doubt vanishes, the heart and the mind are both at rest. 2. In holiness (1 Thess. iii. 12, 13.) So that we get a fixed abhorrence of evil, and love good for its own sake, and be like God and those holy beings who minister to Him perpetually. 3. In all those external habits which flow from holiness. The holiness of the Christian's heart must be manifest in his daily habits and conduct, "in every good word and work." II. THE MEANS WHICH MAY BE EMPLOYED TO FURTHER THAT OBJECT. God Himself is the source of the establishment of His people, but the Word of God is explicit as to the part which men should take in the same. While, therefore, it is frequently a prayer of the apostle that the Churches might be "established in the faith," this is no less the subject of exhortation (1 Cor. xv. 58). While we are using the prescribed means, we may look to Him for His needful blessing; the grace of God co-operates with the energy to which He brings His people. And among these means which God has provided are—1. The ministry of the gospel. This is perhaps a less important means than it once was, because of the accessibility of the Word of God to all; and now each parent, each master, may become a minister of Christ in his own household. Yet still ministers have been appointed by Christ as instruments in the building up of their fellow Christians. 2. The summoning into activity all the individual powers. If you have any earnestness, decision, promptitude, courage, in prosecuting any common business, try the sincerity of your spirits by seeking whether they are manifest in seeking your spiritual progress daily. 3. Prayer. (*Baptist Noel, M.A.*) **That I may be com-**

forted together with you.—*Christians mutual helpers:*—The relations of Christians to each other are like the several flowers in a garden that have upon each the dew of heaven, which being shaken with the wind, they let fall the dew at each other's roots, whereby they are jointly nourished, and become nourishers of one another. (*J. Bunyan.*) *The joy of imparting joy:*—And I might add that service in itself, through the blessing of the Holy Spirit, is always a means of comfort, because of the blessedness which it yields to a generous heart to be doing good to others. Oh! you little know how much pleasure you would derive from the kindly endeavours to impart joy to others. I passed a brother yesterday whose eyes sparkled, and his cheerful face was lit up with smiles. Though I did not know the man, I seemed to read his character in his countenance. Surely, thought I, he is a busy one who is trying to dispense some blessings to the needy. Again this morning I fell in with him, and this time I made his acquaintance. His cordial greeting pleased me, and his lively manner induced me to ask on what good errand he had been. "Well," said he, "I have just been visiting some poor people, and talking with some sick ones, and I have had a sweet time with them." Yes; that is the way to get sweet times. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The communion of saints:*—As in the case of fire, if any one gather together many lights, it is a bright flame that he kindles; thus also does it naturally happen with the faithful. For when we be by ourselves, torn away from others, we are somehow in worse spirits. But when we see one another, and are entwined with the members of our own selves, great is the comfort we receive. (*Chrysostom.*) **By the mutual faith both of you and me.**—*Mutual faith:*—Faith is the all-inspiring element of work everywhere! No man long pursues any work which he does not believe in. No man invests his money in something he does not believe in. Faith is not misty imagination, nor is it a mere mystical meditation about God; it is built upon what God is and what God has said and what God has done. But then there comes in this other consideration; faith is a thing of degree. Here, then, it touches the point of mutuality! If you and I engage in a commercial enterprise, I find my faith weakened or strengthened. I say I wish you knew a little more about that enterprise. If we do business with a great firm, the doubt of others affects us. It was a terrible thing when the crew of Columbus said, "We do not believe." The heroism of that man is seen in the fact that he found the land in spite of the mutinous crew! But where there is this element of mutuality in faith, there is wonderful strength. I. SUCCESSFUL ENTERPRISES NEED THE FAITH OF EVERY ONE OF US. The unbeliever is a weakness wherever he is. Do you believe that yourself? Masses are not strong in and of themselves. The unity of the spirit in the bond of faith—that is strength. 1. Men who are engaged on gospel enterprises can only do it in proportion as they believe in Christ, and in each other as true men in Christ. 2. If you are mated to another, take care your friend believes with you, or, young woman, you will regret it. You cannot row to heaven with one oar comfortably; both must row together. It is a terrible revelation to some. "I am yoked to an unbeliever!" 3. The enterprises of home-life demand mutual faith. II. THE BEST FAITH NEEDS REFRESHMENT. Even Paul gained strength by another's faith. The rivulet feeds the sea, as well as the mountain feeds the river! The little child feeds my faith—I cannot hear a child's prayer without being helped. The increase of faith is made up of quiet influences! When you went to the seaside out of health, you wonder how it was you got better. You breathed the pure oxygen; you looked up to the broad heavens and forgot meaner things; your nature was influenced by a million little touches along the nerves. So you may be in an atmosphere of faith; and Paul wanted to see them to be in such an atmosphere and to contribute to it. III. FAITH BRINGS COMFORT. When we voyage to America, "Do you believe in the captain, too?" Then, when evening comes, "Good night," and we are all comforted. The vessel is safe in which we voyage to heaven. All believe in the same Divine Lord over the storm. You are going home without trepidation to-night, but if you had lived in some parts of Italy some time ago we might have asked, "Are you afraid of being stabbed to-night? Which way are you going? We will walk together!" We are comforted by mutual faith in each other. The same thing holds good in regard to religion. What a glorious triumph over fear the early Christians enjoyed. IV. FAITH GIVES COURAGE. There were a few people inside Rome who believed in Jesus, and the apostle took courage from the thought that he should not be alone, but be surrounded by a loyal few. In the army every one helps the other's courage. There is no talk about danger, but only of taking the battlements! So wherever you are, by the exercise of your faith you are sus-

taining that poor fellow there who has the same battle to fight as you have. V. FAITH MEANS PRAYER. "Making request," &c. You cannot work yourself up into love or faith! It must be something that comes to you. Every good gift comes from God. What we want to make request for is faith, and if we have it as a possession, may God enlarge it. (*W. M. Statham.*)

Ver. 13. **Oftentimes I purposed to come unto you.**—*Paul's purpose*:—I. ITS HISTORY. "Oftentimes." The project doubtless early formed. What more natural than that so distinguished a Christian citizen should desire to see the gospel firmly planted in the centre of the empire. This would be strongly opened by the conviction that from Rome the gospel would perforce radiate more powerfully. A Christianised Rome would mean a Christianised world. The purpose was originated or confirmed by Divine revelation (*cf.* Acts xix. 21, xxvii. 24; Rom. xv. 23). His eye would never be off this great object. II. ITS TEMPORARY FRUSTRATION. 1. Doubtless by Divine interpositions. He was kept from Rome as he was kept from Asia, &c. (Acts xvi. 6, 7). Sometimes God's purposes are best answered by the frustration of our own when they are of the highest. Perhaps it was best for Paul to work his way to Rome by a circuitous route, coming in contact with diverse peoples, and so preparing him for dealing with the heterogeneous population of the capital. Anyhow, no ministry at Rome would have compensated for the loss of his brilliant history. 2. Certainly by necessary engagements (chap. xv. 20, 21). It is always best to do the duty which is nearest to hand, and follow it up by proceeding to the next. All Paul's career seems an illustration of this. He never seems to have gone out of his way. One event leads to another by a perfectly natural sequence. 3. Possibly Satan may have hindered. If at one time, why not at another (1 Thess. ii. 18; Dan. x. 13)? Did he hinder at Illyricum (chap. xv. 20) when Rome was so temptingly near? III. ITS ULTIMATE OBJECT. "Fruit." 1. This fruit was—(1) The conversion of sinners (Col. i. 6; Phil. i. 11). (2) The comfort and advancement of believers (John xv. 16; Phil. i. 25). (3) The growth of the Church, both inwardly and outwardly. 2. Much fruit he had reaped already (chap. xv. 18–21). 3. Yet he yearned for more. He could have no rest while one field remained unplanted, and he knew that the most fruitful field yet remained. IV. ITS ACCOMPLISHMENT. Read Phil. i., and remember that Philippians, Colossians, Ephesians, and Philemon were written at Rome. Who shall estimate the fruit reaped by this visit to Rome? Only the Great Husbandman at the Great Day. (*J. W. Burn.*) **But was let hitherto.**—*The true estimate of hindrances*:—1. Distinguish between the imaginary and the real. 2. Do not be discouraged by them, nor seek to evade them. 3. Conquer them by prayer. 4. Convert them into means of advancement—among other things the apostle's difficulties occasioned this Epistle to the Romans. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) **That I might have some fruit.**—*Anxiety for souls*:—Brainerd could say of himself on more than one occasion, "I cared not where or how I lived, or what hardships I went through, so that I could but gain souls to Christ. While I was asleep I dreamed of these things; and, when I waked, the first thing I thought of was this great work. All my desire was for the conversion of the heathen, and all my hope was in God." *Earnestness in seeking for souls*:—When Judson carried the message of salvation to the villages and jungles of India, he declared his conviction that men must be redeemed to God by personal, individual contact with those who knew the grace of Christ; and he said, "I am determined to preach the gospel wherever I can find a congregation of one."

Vers. 14–16. **I am debtor both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians.**—*I am debtor*:—The text raises a question on points which, in mercantile phraseology, would be designated—I. THE BUSINESS. 1. A merchant, embarked in an extensive foreign trade, has fallen into the habit of doing a good deal of petty business at home on which the profit is small; but it is near, and therefore occupies time out of all proportion to its worth. In the meantime rumours are rife that in one foreign market prices had suddenly fallen before his goods arrived; that in another his agents had sold his cargo and absconded; and that in a third direction an investment, not insured, had been lost at sea. He declines to examine these reports, because he does not like the subject; and to keep his mind free from painful reflections he throws himself with redoubled energy into his huckstering, and exults over the halfpence of profit which each transaction produces. The man is mad, you say. He is. But probably "thou art the man." 2. We are all merchants.

We have business with both worlds; but our stake in the one is slight, in the other all but infinite. It becomes, therefore, an important question whether our attention to these two is in due proportion to their comparative worth. Alas! there are many foolish traders who are anxious about the balance of their accounts for time, and leave the interests of eternity to sink or swim. 3. Paul was a diligent and energetic man. Had he been a merchant, the keenest wit in all the Exchange could not have overreached him. He closely examined the worth of an article, and nicely calculated how much it would bring. He embarked all in one business, and then pushed it to the uttermost. He did not neglect the necessary affairs of this life, but his treasure was in heaven, and his heart followed it. II. THE DEBT. 1. However good men's position in the present world, in their greatest business all begin in debt, and no efforts of their own can ever discharge it. Some heirs would fain get quit of their heritage. When a man discovers his property is burdened beyond the worth of all that he has or can ever hope to win the consequences are disastrous. If there were any hope of success, he might strive by industry to diminish gradually his burden; but the debt is obviously so great that, in spite of all his efforts, its amount will grow greater every year. He loses heart, and abandons himself to his fate. Such is the condition of men in relation to God. We are born with a debt, and the amount of our liabilities has increased and is still increasing day by day. In this extremity a Daysman comes in between the Judge and the guilty and pays the debt. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." The handwriting that was against us is blotted out; the bond is cancelled, and we are free. 2. The forgiven sinner is clear in the book of God's judgment; but he owes much to his Redeemer. He is as deeply in debt as ever, but it is now a debt of gratitude. It is greater than he can ever pay; but the more he realises its greatness the happier he grows. 3. But Paul confesses here that he is a debtor to man—to every man. How comes this? Thus: In the complicated processes of modern merchandise a man often finds himself in debt to unknown persons. You have done business with a merchant at a distance, and the result is a pecuniary balance in his favour, while in transactions with another party the balance is against him. With a view to the convenience of himself and his correspondent, instead of getting money from you and paying it to his creditor, he hands over to that creditor the claim which he holds against you; or, to make the analogy more complete, the merchant to whom you owe money desires to help certain destitute persons in your city, and to them makes over the bill as an equivalent for money. The person who possesses that claim so transferred presents it for payment, and you must pay. Thus you become debtors to persons whom you never saw. Thus Paul became a debtor to the Greeks; and he owed all that he had and was to Christ, who transferred his claim, and Paul was bound to honour it. So wherever there is a man in want, spiritual or temporal, there a legal claim is presented to the disciples of Christ; and if they repudiate they dishonour their Lord. This principle is exhibited in the story of the woman with the alabaster box of ointment (Mark xiv. 3–9). 4. The root and life of true religion is personal devotion to a personal Redeemer; thereafter and thereon grows active service in his cause. These are the first and second commandments of the New Testament decalogue. Neither of these can thrive alone. Devotion without work degenerates into monkery; work without devotion sinks into a shallow, fitful secularism. If we have got mercy from Christ, we owe mercy to men. 5. Nor does the world's apathy release a Christian from his obligations. If a company of poor people held a claim against a citizen, and if he should take advantage of their ignorance and poverty to evade the payment, he would be a dishonourable man. In like manner, although those who now hold Christ's claim on us, not knowing its value, do not present it for payment, we are bound in honour to seek them out and discharge our obligations. III. THE COMPOSITION; in what manner and to what amount the insolvent proposed to pay. Carefully observe that the most devoted life is not offered as an adequate return to the Saviour. As well might a man purchase his pardon at first from the Judge as repay the Redeemer for it afterwards. He pays, not in the spirit of bondage, but in the spirit of grateful love; not that he looks to a time when the debt will be paid off, but that he delights in the act of paying it. Having announced his principle, Paul plunged at once into its practical details (ver. 15). Adopting the natural and Scriptural order, we shall suggest first some instalments of the debt that are due to parties—1. At home. It is not necessary that the debtors should go far away in order to find a person authorised to receive the payments. The original creditor has secured that properly qualified receivers should be at hand. Wherever there is a

being in wretchedness within your reach, to that human being you are a debtor. Behold the open spring of all home-mission effort! When certain institutions which at first were supported by voluntary contributions were transferred to a tax imposed on the community by imperial authority the difficulties of the managers disappeared. Ah, the treasury of mission would always be full if the authority of Christ were as effective in the hearts of Christians as that of the government! But let it not be supposed that it is in money only or chiefly that Christians should pay their debt. Personal service is the legal tender, and it is only to a limited extent that money may be received as an equivalent. Personal dealing is the need of our day. 2. Abroad. A rich man dies, leaving a large family of young children, of whom another rich man obtains the guardianship. Partly by law and partly by violence he drives off all competitors and constitutes himself sole trustee of the wealthy minors. He then proceeds to enrich himself out of the inheritance of his wards. We have masterfully, not to say unjustly, ousted all other claimants, and assumed absolute guardianship over the vast populations of India. We have enriched ourselves by the inheritance of those little children. As a Christian nation, therefore, we are debtors to them. (*W. Arnot, D.D.*) *Debtor and creditor*:—The text suggests that Christian missions are "a new way to pay old debts." The debts are indeed old; the way to pay them is new. The creditors have been increasing in numbers, while the debt, with interest, has been growing. The debtors, too, have been growing in numbers and in ability to discharge their obligations. But still the debt is, to a large extent, unpaid. I. THE DEBTOR AND HIS DEBT. The apostle used these words as representing the whole Church. The Church is not a company under the Limited Liability Act, but is a partnership, and each partner is involved to the uttermost of his possessions. Consider—1. The ground of this indebtedness. Paul's words are not used directly of his relation to God. Yet we must remember that there is an intimate connection between our debt to God and our debt to our fellow-men. The question, "How much owest thou unto thy Lord?" must ever precede the other, "How much owest thou to thy neighbour?" Because we are debtors to God we are debtors to man, and just in proportion as we recognise the one shall we recognise the other. The true ground of this indebtedness is found, therefore, in the relation of the regenerate man to God as a subject of "the exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." 2. Looked at in this light, the debt is a debt of honour. I do not use the term, as is often done, in such a way as to imply that there may be no dishonour in neglecting debt in other forms. But as in this case no writ can be issued, it is therefore peculiarly a debt of honour. When God gave us His salvation it was not for ourselves alone, but for the family of man, of whom we are but members. Our honour is concerned, therefore, in fulfilling to the utmost the purpose of God thus made known. A trustee has a charge committed to him by another whose representative he is. The due administration of the trust is with him a point of the highest honour. Every Christian is, in virtue of his Christianity, a trustee of the gospel for mankind at large, and therefore in honour bound to see that the members of the race get their full share. 3. Granted this, I think you will admit that to the man of honour it is a sad thing to be in debt. Paul was no pessimist; but he was far too true a man to shut his eyes to the real state before God of those who knew not Christ. There were, therefore, two sides to his experience, as there must be to that of every Christian. Looking Godward, he was gladdened by the rays of the Sun of Righteousness; looking manward, he was saddened by the thick darkness of his unregeneracy and death in sin. So it came about that he was "sorrowful, yet always rejoicing," and his sorrow wakened in him a deep sense of responsibility, which found expression in the words, "I am debtor." 4. The Christian debtor, seeing the true ground of his indebtedness, moved by a sense of honour to Christ, and saddened by the thought of his responsibility, will make strenuous and self-denying efforts to discharge his debt. Thus it was with Paul. In spite of the scanty means of transport at his disposal he managed to reach nearly all the chief centres of the then known world. Brief as was his Christian course, it was packed full of action. "He flew across the world," and at every point he touched he held meetings of his creditors—meetings the object of which was, not to offer a composition, but to pay twenty shillings in the pound—as he unfolded to them "the unsearchable riches of Christ." The debt is owing still. There is no "statute of limitations" cancelling our obligations to preach the gospel to every creature. II. THE CREDITOR AND HIS CLAIM. 1. Where is he? The touching cry of the widow to Elisha was, "The creditor is come." Aye, the creditor is come. Civilisation has

brought him. Time was when the heathen was afar off; but railroad and steamboat, telegraph and telephone, have unified the race. In three weeks you may be among the teeming millions of India. You may know to-day what took place in China yesterday, as William Carey could not have known in Northampton what had transpired in London the day before. The discoveries of science have laid fresh and weighty burdens of responsibility on the Church of God, but at the same time help us to discharge our obligations. 2. Who is he? "I, too, am a man," he says; "no evolutionised ape, much as appearances are against me, but of the creation of God. Your father Adam was my father too." The common brotherhood constitutes the claim of man upon man in regard to the gospel. When God, in the mystery of the Incarnation, was pleased to take humanity into union with Himself, it was not English humanity or civilised humanity, but humanity as such. The brotherhood of the race, established in creation in the person of the first man, is confirmed in Incarnation in the person of the Second Man. The creditor, then, is your long-lost brother asking for his share of that salvation which God came near to man to secure. 3. His claim. This is emphatically the day of the people. The day of oligarchy and of aristocracy has set; the day of democracy, whether we like it or not, has dawned. The few have had their day, the many are now to have theirs. The rights of man as man are being rapidly brought to the front. He who discerns the signs of the times hears the ever-swelling cry of the proletariat claiming a larger share of privilege, and alongside of it the equally eager though silent cry from the heathen world for a fuller communion in Christian privilege and blessing. He who notes these things will still have sounding in his ears the cry, "Come over and help us!" 3. How is this claim to be met? The claims of the widow's creditor were met by a supply given by God. The debts we owe to the heathen must be paid by that which we receive from the same Divine source. When God had multiplied her oil, the prophet said, "Pay thy debt and live, thou and thy children, of the rest." Home work will not suffer because the demands of the outside world are met. I do not under-value money nor men; but in order to the bringing out in fuller measure both of men and money we need that which neither money can buy nor men create—a fuller measure of Divine power in the whole Church. (*W. P. Lockhart.*) *Debtors* :—1. The language is commercial, and yet the obligation is not precisely that which a merchant commonly understands. Debt is that which a man owes to another for something received. But Paul was not in any such way indebted to the Gentiles. He owed no one a penny. Neither did he owe the Gentiles any gratitude, for in almost every city he had suffered wrong. It was not, therefore, on this ground that Paul acknowledged himself to be a debtor, but solely on the ground that he had received something for them. "The glorious gospel of the blessed God" had been "committed" to his "trust"; he had been "allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel." This, therefore, he could not honestly hold back. On the one hand he had been signally blessed by Christ. Then, on the other side, were the needs of the Gentile world. The vision of the Macedonian crying, "Come over and help us," was, indeed, a special Divine indication of what the Lord would have him to do; but it came in that form and time because it was already in the line of all his desires. He knew the hollowness and degradation of the idolatries of the Gentiles, and having learned the value of his own soul at the Cross of Christ, he was eager to be the means of communicating the same revelation and conveying the same life to them. Whether they should accept it or not rested with themselves. But as for the proclamation, necessity was laid upon him, and he felt that it was at his peril if he should hold his peace. 2. How that motive operated is seen by his course at Athens. He was there alone. He had not intended without companions to do anything publicly there; but when he saw the state of things his spirit was so stirred that, at the risk of scorn and persecution, he could not but speak. He was always on the outlook for opportunities of paying this debt. He was not afraid to speak to men like Sergius Paulus or Festus; and yet he was not above seeking the salvation of a runaway slave like Onesimus. He was equally earnest in the little prayer-meeting at Philippi and upon the summit of Areopagus, and even in Rome he found a congregation large enough for his ambition in the soldier that was chained to his right arm. He never saw a man without remembering that he had a debt to pay to him, and so, not more for the benefit of the stranger than for the exoneration of his own conscience, he sought his highest welfare. When I put it so, I cease to wonder at the unwearying assiduity of the great apostle, while at the same time I am filled with shame at the paltry littleness of our modern Christianity. 3. His was only a specific instance of a principle,

which holds for us as really and powerfully as it did for him, viz., that personal possession of privilege is of the nature of a trust, and involves the obligation to use it not for individual profit merely, but for the welfare of others. The greatness of exceptional endowment carries with it an obligation to exceptional service. The highest of all, by virtue of his very elevation, is to be the servant of all. The power of the strong is Divinely mortgaged in the interests of the weak; the sufferer has a God-given claim upon me for relief and the ignorant for instruction. This is clearly the true interpretation of the parable of the good Samaritan; and indeed it is the true and proper outcome of the gospel itself. I know that selfishness would repudiate all such indebtedness. The man of wealth, rank, learning, power, says he has won his position, and that he has a right to use it as he will, no matter what may become of others. 4. But Christ has reversed all that by introducing the principle on which I am now insisting, and already we see indications of its operations among us. Take power, for example; and how readily now men assent to the statement that it has its duties, *i.e.*, debts, as well as its prerogatives! Then as to wealth: the conviction is becoming stronger among us that the man who is blessed with it is a debtor to the community of which he is a member. The same is true of education, &c. True, we are a very long way yet from a full recognition of this principle; but it is making its way. 5. The principle has had its origin in the gospel, for until Christ came men cared little for anything outside of themselves. The question of Cain, "Am I my brother's keeper?" gives the key to the explanation of all the enormities of the ancient civilisations. But Christ taught His followers to look "not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." And this principle furnishes what is needed to meet the perils of our modern civilisation. The tendency of the times is to increase the separation between different classes. We continually hear it said that the rich are becoming richer and the poor are growing poorer. The gulf which has long yawned between employer and employed is widening. Now some of that is no doubt inevitable. We can never have a dead level of absolute equality. What we have to do is to bring the gospel principle to bear upon this subject with more force; for see how it takes the poison out of all this diversity of condition. It makes the powerful man the trustee for the weak, the rich man the guardian for the poor, the learned man the teacher of the ignorant, and the free man the emancipator of the enslaved. When His followers disputed among themselves which should be greatest, the Lord, instead of seeking to uproot ambition, gave a new definition of greatness as service, and bade them be ambitious of that. And in precisely the same way here the gospel, far from blotting out all distinctions in society as the Communist would do, makes the very privileges which mark the distinction between a higher class and a lower the basis of obligation, so that the one is the debtor of the other, and the obligation increases with the increase of the privilege. 6. But we should expect to find the highest manifestation of this principle in the Christian Church. And here, though it has not attained anything like its legitimate development, we are not entirely disappointed, for it has originated and sustained the great missionary enterprise; and though the Church as a whole has not yet anything like come up to the level of Paul, still there have been individuals who are not unworthy to be compared even with the great apostle of the Gentiles. While we here at home are enjoying our privileges with self-complacency and satisfaction, and thinking that we perform our part by giving a small annual donation, missionaries are labouring with devoted heroism to carry the gospel into benighted lands. (*W. M. Taylor, D.D.*) *Every Christian a debtor to the pagan*:—I. THE NATURE AND STRENGTH OF THAT PARTICULAR MOTIVE TO LABOUR FOR THE SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL WHICH IS PRESENTED IN THE TEXT. The feeling of indebtedness in an honourable mind is—1. A powerful one. It lies under all the commerce of the world, and is the spring which impels all the wheels of secular business. Never are the secular abilities of a man braced up to a more vigorous activity than when, under the sense of obligation, he proceeds with perfect integrity to obey the injunction, "Owe no man anything." 2. A cheerful and an encouraging motive. Men distinguished in the monetary world have described the gush of pleasure which they experienced in the earlier days of their career from the excitement incident to a gradual but certain overcoming of their liabilities. II. ITS SOURCE AND FOUNDATION. Every Christian owes the gospel to the pagan—1. Because of the deep interest which Christ takes in the pagan. In the account of the last judgment we are taught that all neglect of human welfare is neglect of Christ, and that anything that is done for human salvation, in any nation or age, is done for Him. We have no conception of the

immensity of that Divine compassion for man which moved Christ to "take our infirmities and bear our sicknesses." So absorbed was He in His merciful work that "His friends went out to lay hold on Him." This compassion originated partly from His Divinity and partly from His humanity. The Divinity in His complex person gave the eye to see, and the humanity the heart to feel and suffer; and when such an eye is united with such a heart the sorrow and the sympathy are infinite. As God, the Redeemer was the Creator of men, and as Man He was their Elder Brother; and therefore He can so unify Himself with mankind, as He does in these wonderful utterances, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me," &c. 2. Because of his own personal indebtedness to Christ. Language fails to express the absoluteness of the right which the Redeemer has to the service of His redeemed people. The right to man's service which He has by virtue of His relation as a Creator is immeasurable; but this claim which God as Redeemer possesses upon a human being who He has saved from eternal death is even greater. This it was that made Paul say, "I am debtor," &c.—"I owe the knowledge of this great atonement which my Redeemer has made for the sin of the whole world to every creature." Conclusion: Every Christian—1. Should look upon the work of evangelising the world as a debt he owes to Christ and to his fellow-man. He should heartily acknowledge this debt and not attempt to free himself from it by explaining it away as a figure of speech. "Freely ye have received, freely give." This was the command which the Saviour gave to His twelve disciples when He endowed them with miraculous powers "against unclean spirits to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease." Suppose now that they had attempted to use this supernaturalism for their own selfish purposes, how instantaneously would the wrath of the Redeemer have fallen upon them! But the case would have been the same had they neglected to make any use of their gifts. They were debtors, and owed these healing mercies to the sick and the dying, and the mere non-use of them would have been a sin and a crime. Precisely such is the relation which every Christian sustains to that power of healing spiritual maladies which is contained in the gospel of Christ. We cannot too carefully remember that the work of missions is not an optional matter; it is a debt. "Woe is me," said St. Paul, "if I preach not the gospel." It is like the manna, which, so long as Israel used it, was the bread of heaven; but when they hoarded it, it became corruption in their very hands. If this sentiment of indebtedness declines, then the Church will lapse back into indifference and apathy, and these are the harbingers of a corrupt Christianity, which will be buried in one common grave with paganism, Mohammedanism, and all forms of human sin and error. 2. Should labour zealously to discharge this debt. The debt which the believer is to pay is not his debt to eternal justice. That he can never discharge. Christians are not to send the gospel to the Greek and the Barbarian for the purpose of making atonement for their sins, and thereby cancelling their obligations to law and justice. That debt Christ Himself has paid. But our debt is to "preach the gospel to every creature." If the providence and Spirit of God indicate that we are to go in person, then we are to go in person. If the providence of God has placed in our hands the silver and the gold by which we can send our representative, then we are to give our silver and our gold, with our prayers for the Divine blessing upon it. And, by the grace of God, this can be done. The labour is of that moderate and proportioned species which consists in giving back to Christ what we have received from Him. 3. Will be rewarded for his discharge of his obligations. "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." God rewards His own grace. (*G. T. Shedd, D.D.*) *The Christian a debtor to mankind*:—I. How was PAUL A DEBTOR? 1. Not for special benefits conferred. He had the Roman citizenship, indeed, and he was not unmindful of its privileges; but he did not have it as a peculiar grant in consequence of any peculiar favour of the Roman people. He had received benefits from contact with the Greek literature and art, the influence of which pervaded the atmosphere of the world in that age; but even this was not a benefit which was conferred upon him as separate from others. And these benefits, whatever they were on any human calculation, were wiped out by the treatment which Roman and Greek alike gave to him. 2. Still less was he indebted to the barbarian who had nothing whatever to give him. 3. He felt the obligation of those who have special gifts of power or grace entrusted to them of God to use them for the benefit of others. (1) He had a knowledge which the world as yet had not attained—the knowledge of God, in the person of His Son, by the power of His

Spirit, giving redemption to the world, providing for man purification from sin, into the white beauty of God's holiness. It was the knowledge most necessary of all to personal welfare, for the guidance of men in this life, and for their preparation for the great life beyond. It was the knowledge most prolific of public benefit; under whose transforming energy the empire itself should be purged of its savageness and converted to Christ. (2) He had extraordinary power, too, given him of God for the proclamation of this knowledge; and because he had such eminent gifts he felt himself under proportionate obligations to others destitute of them. II. THE IMPORTANT AND HELPFUL SUGGESTIONS WHICH FLOW FROM THIS. 1. What reason the poor and the weak always have to bless God for the gospel. It is simply the gospel of Christ taking the current of man's natural inclination—arresting it, and then reversing it—which gives to the poor, the weak, and the friendless their recognised claim upon those who are stronger. 2. What a beautiful civilisation it is which the gospel contemplates as its result in the world—a civilisation the key of which is in this doctrine; that weakness confers right, and power simply imposes obligation. 3. What the test is of the progress of Christian civilisation in the world. Not in the multiplying inventions of mechanism; in the accumulating wealth of cities; in the extension of free institutions; in the spread of literature, and the steady advance of science in the earth; but in the answer to this one question: How far does society recognise its obligation to the weakest and the poorest in it? 4. Here is the practical test of our individual Christian experience. Not in outward belief; not in ecstasy of spirit, but here: How much have I of the feeling of Paul toward all around me that, by whatever of power and grace, and of His supreme knowledge God has given to me, I have become the more indebted to them? (*R. S. Storrs, D.D.*) *Christian debt*:—I. ITS NATURE AND OUR POWER TO PAY IT. 1. When a footpad starts to relieve a traveller of his purse he says to himself, "The world owes me a living, and a living I must have." Many a one cherishes the same feeling. A scholar murmurs, as he gazes upon his unsold volume, "The world owes me fame and a hearing!" The woman of fashion declares, "The world owes me a position!" As the politician clamours for votes he insists, "The world owes me a place!" The ancients exercised themselves much in the attempt to answer the question, What is man? One said, It is the animal which laughs. Another said, It is the animal who cooks his food. A truer answer is, It is the animal who never is appreciated. There lives not the man who is restful under the estimate he receives. And if that great burden-bearer—the world—should attempt to pay all the bills for undervaluation presented to it from day to day, it would be hopelessly bankrupt in a single generation. 2. Now precisely here the gospel meets our race. When Jesus hears the cry, "The world owes me," He answers, "Well, I will pay you all it owes; I will pour out upon you such a wealth of resource that the balance due shall be reversed; then you will in turn owe the world." Here is a man who has been wont to say, "The world owes me a competence, for it is the duty of the strong to take care of the weak." To him Christ says in the gospel, "I admit that principle. You shall have all you need. 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God,' &c. Concern yourself no more about money. If you implicitly trust Me, I will see that the treasure never fails. Remember steadfastly your own principle. You owe the world a living. I have furnished you with vast resources. You are to spread the kingdom which crowns you." Just so of everything else. If one demands happiness, influence, position, the gospel bestows it beyond any measurement. All that it ever says the world owes, is so copiously transcended that the obligation rushes across the ledger into a new balance. And now it is the Christian man who is in debt, and that upon his own showing; for he is strong, and the strong are to care for the weak. II. THE PARTIES WHO HOLD OUR OBLIGATIONS. The apostle specifies the ranks and the races he owes. He meant, simply, he owed everybody. As he says elsewhere, he was to "do good to all men." And all Christianity is embodied in Paul. "Owe no man anything, but to love one another." Love is the fulfilling of the law, and ye are the children of God! III. THE PURPOSE of all which has been said is this—1. There is a lesson of deepest importance here to all young Christians. Life is certain to be moulded by the ideal one has of it, and the principles which he makes to underlie it at the start. A child of opulent parents who goes forth into life saying, "The world owes me honour, ease, flattery, and place," will make a very different man from the child of many prayers who enters the conflict saying, "I owe the world a work and a duty." So the gospel sets the Christian on the search, not how much he may claim in the wrestle of existence, but how much he may give. 2. There is

something instructive in those instances when men have put forth all their energies to pay their debts. Sir Walter Scott once tried to rest his half-delirious brain. But he had no time to be sick, as the outstanding obligations matured. "This is folly," said he to the startled servant, as he sprang up from the couch; "bring in the pens and paper!" There is no fertility of genius like the pressure of a great debt. Necessity is the mother of invention. 3. Note, also, the industry and thrift it promotes. That man pays most of his dues whose unfailing hammer rings earliest in the morning and latest at night. He lessens debt the most whose shuttle weaves the most yards in faithful toil. Diligence in business keeps the bailiff a stranger. Put this commonplace alongside of devout Christian life, and so learn the lesson. A child of God who really feels that he is a debtor to the whole world will surely find some shrewd way of his own to discharge the duty. Conclusion: Sometimes you notice a new church coming into being. Once a pastor was asked, "When will this building be completed?" He easily gave the time. "Will the congregation be in debt?" "Oh yes, awfully; sometimes it frightens me to think of it!" Then came the question, "Why did you begin when you had not the money?" Then the minister of God answered, "Oh, we have money enough; we shall have no such debt as that; but think how much a church like this is going to owe the community and the world! How they will look to us for man's love and God's grace!" Is our church debt paid? How much owest thou? Souls are looking to us for help. The true test of piety is a sense of debtorship to souls. (*C. S. Robinson, D.D.*) *Debtors to all men:*—Then I am afraid there are a great many dishonest Christians who scarcely recognise, and never pay, their debts! What was it that Paul felt he owed to the whole world? It was the gospel, the message of God's love in Jesus Christ. I. WE ARE ALL DEBTORS BY THE POSSESSION OF A COMMON HUMANITY. The differences between slave or free, cultured or uncultured, rich or poor, are but the surface. What lies beneath is the one human heart, with the same wants, the same weaknesses, the same aspirations, the same fears, the same possibilities. Here stand a range of Alps, separate, frowning, white-topped, the Jungfrau, the Eiger, and the Mönch, and all the brother giants of that mountain system, parted from each other by profound gulfs. Yes! so they are, at the top; but at the bottom all rise up from the one formation. And so mankind. And that unity involves, as a distinct consequence, the thought that every man possesses all his possessions in order that through him the benefit and the use of them may pass to his fellows. II. WE ARE DEBTORS BY THE POSSESSION OF A COMMON SALVATION. God's purpose in giving you and me Christ for ours is that we should give Him to others. The world needs healing; you there have the healing that the world needs. Is anything more required to prescribe duty? What would you say about a man that, in the midst of famine, sat at home and feasted luxuriously whilst his brethren were starving, and then pleaded that nobody had bade him go out to supply their wants? III. WE ENGLISH CHRISTIANS ARE DEBTORS, IN MANY CASES, TO THE WORLD, BY BENEFITS RECEIVED. This great commercial, maritime, colonising nation, what does it not owe; what do your homes not owe; what does the business of Manchester not owe to the heathen, to whom you owe your Saviour? We have received our civilisation in its germs, our language, and much high thought, from that far-off East which is still the possession of the English Crown. IV. WE ARE DEBTORS BY INJURIES INFLICTED. That is a sad but, as it would appear, almost an inevitable law, that the contact of the superior, or, at all events, of the civilised, with the inferior or uncivilised races, shall result in the gradual fading of the latter from before the stronger conquerors. And, in addition to that injury, the vices of our modern civilisation are carried whithersoever our ships and our colonies and our commerce goes. "How much owest thou unto thy Lord?" You pay Christ when you pay your fellows. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Christendom's debt to the world:*—If A gives me property to be employed for the use of B, my debt is to B. God has given the gospel to Christendom to impart to mankind, and Christendom owes it as a debt. This is a debt—I. WHOSE MAGNITUDE IS IMMENSE. 1. It is the gospel. Who can estimate this treasure? It is the pearl of great price, God's unspeakable gift. 2. It is the consecration of life to the diffusion of the gospel. We owe not merely the gospel, but all our powers and circumstances in order to its diffusion. Not merely the preaching of it, but the living it, and that for ever. What a debt is this! We are not our own. II. WHOSE JUSTICE IS INDISPUTABLE. Think of—1. The terms of its bestowment. It was given in trust; not to monopolise, but to diffuse. "Go ye into all the world," &c. 2. The universality of its provisions. They are not for

a class, but, like the elements of nature, for universal man—the bread and water of life to all. 3. The conscience of its possessors. All its genuine disciples feel that they ought to communicate it. "Necessity is laid upon me." 4. The condition of its claimants. Those to whom we owe it are perishing for the lack of it. III. WHOSE DISCHARGE IS URGENT. It is urgent as far as—1. The creditor is concerned—the whole heathen world, sunk in ignorance, superstition, and misery. The recovery of these fallen millions depends on our paying the debt. 2. The debtor. He who neglects to discharge it is injuring his own nature, character, prospects, and usefulness. Conclusion: Let us all rise to discharge this debt. 1. It has long arrears. 2. Is ever accumulating. 3. May be on our hands at death. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Our debtorship*:—I. PAUL'S ESTIMATE OF THE GOSPEL. 1. He designates it "the gospel of Christ," not so much because Christ is the author, as because He is the subject of it. It is the good news about Christ as our Substitute and Sacrifice. In this sense only is it "good news." Ignore the doctrine, and the bare facts of the history are no more a gospel than any other story of a life or death would be. Only when you speak of a Christ who has died for our sins will you put music into the heart of a sin and sorrow-stricken world. 2. In view of Paul's anticipated visit to Rome this expression is especially suggestive. The Romans prided themselves on power, and worshipped it, and Paul seizes on this historic fact to tell the Romans that he knew of a greater power even than theirs. The emblems of this power are the dew, the seed, the light, the leaven, things which work quietly; mighty forces, resistless in the might of their stillness. Sometimes, it is true, God comes to men in the thunders of the law, as when He made Felix tremble; but more frequently it is with the gentle persuasiveness which opened Lydia's heart to the gracious message as the flower unfolds its petals to drink in the dew. I have seen machines used in Nottingham lace work with power enough to rend the whole fabric into a thousand pieces, yet working with such exquisite nicety that they do not break the finest thread. So in the gospel, though God brings His Omnipotence to bear upon the soul, He influences men through means and motives so sweet yet strong that they willingly and gladly yield. 3. And the sphere of the gospel's operation is to be as broad as its power is boundless. "To every one," &c. There is an old Turkish proverb which declares that Islam can flourish only where the palm-tree grows. But there is no such legend for the gospel as that. The word of life which Paul sought to plant will grow in every soil. II. PAUL'S SENSE OF THE OBLIGATION IN WHICH THE POSSESSION OF THE GOSPEL INVOLVED HIM. "I am debtor," &c. 1. Debt implies obligation, and obligation is—(1) A law of nature. Nothing in the material world lives to itself. The flower made sweet by the breath of God is constrained to shed its fragrance on the air. The sun, filled with warmth and radiance, flings them abroad to gladden the dark places of the earth and to make her desert smile. Basking in his beams the birds sing, the corn ripens, and the trees bend down with rich ripe clusters. All the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea is not full. Why? Simply because it is under the same beneficent constraint. Thus Nature everywhere and by everything proclaims with sublime though silent voice, "I am debtor." (2) An instinct of human life—the genial, gracious bond which unites all hearts. As no man liveth *by* himself, so no man may live *to* himself. We all live through others and are dependent on their ministries. And every generous nature feels that unless he gives back to the world as much service as he takes from it he is a delinquent. 2. Christianity enlarges and ennobles this feeling. (1) Sitting at the foot of the Cross men catch the spirit of Him who hangs upon it, who "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister," &c. Christ's life was love in action. And as His disciples we learn from His lips as from His life, that He designs sweet and sympathetic ministries to be the golden coinage of our new nature, the currency of our affections, and that if we try to be misers of such wealth we shall suffer the fate of misers. But if grace has rightly done its work in us we cannot help sharing it. It will flow forth from us as spontaneously as heat from a fire, or fragrance from a June rose. Like the box of ointment which Mary broke, it will shed its perfume all around. (2) The gospel, too, strengthens the instinct of debtorship by revealing men in a new light. Apart from the gospel we are almost ready to question whether some of our dark and depraved fellows are worth saving at all; but the gospel reveals the fact that the most depraved are men after all, and precious in God's sight. Outcasts and prodigals, as children of the same Father, have a claim on our brotherly sympathy and succour. As trustees of an inheritance to which they have an equal right, they demand that we share with them our riches. (3) Again we are laid under obligation by positive command of

the Master. When the Crusades were being preached the one cry which provoked a response from every lip was this: "God *wills* it!" The plea in our case is more urgent than in theirs, and shall our sense of obligation be less. "It is not merely God wills it, but Christ *commands* it. It comes direct, not merely as the Divine wish, but as the Divine injunction." When Christ says "Go," who will dare to stay? 3. And having laid the obligation on us, the Master has opened the way for its fulfilment. Never have the nations been so accessible as they are to-day. As Englishmen we mix with the world everywhere. Now, why has God thus brought us into touch with all the nations? Merely that we might fill the coffers of our merchants or sharpen to a keener point the boast about "An empire on which the sun never sets"? Conclusion: Do we realise our obligation, and, if so, are we ready and willing to discharge it? Paul said, not only "I am debtor," but "I am ready." So ready that neither pain, nor peril, nor privation could root out of him his eagerness. Thus "ready," like Paul, to proclaim the gospel, let us rejoice in the assurance that it will be as resistless in our hands as it was in his. When the knights of Germany offered their swords to Luther in behalf of his cause he replied: "The Word shall do it." And he was right. There is an old story about the conqueror of Rome, who dashed his sword down into the scales when the ransom was being paid; and Christ flings His two-edged sword into the scale when we are weighing resources, and the other scale kicks the beam. Only make sure that your hand grips His, and then nothing can withstand you. A young officer detailed by the Iron Duke for some dangerous service, asked for one grasp of the great commander's "all-conquering hand," to fit and fire him for the death-daring enterprise. (*J. Le Huray.*) *The Christian's obligation to diffuse the gospel*:—This declaration of the apostle implies—I. THE ADAPTATION OF THE GOSPEL TO ALL THE VARIETIES OF HUMAN CHARACTER. There are three reasons which prove this fact, which fact constitutes the basis of all missionary duty, and gives encouragement to missionary exertion. 1. The perfection of its evidence. There is no species of moral proof by means of which the understanding can be convinced, the heart impressed, the conscience affected—that is, not brought before us in that evidence which establishes and illustrates the divinity of the gospel. 2. The completeness of its discoveries. Jesus is expressly termed "the Finisher of the faith." He has not only announced it, but completed it. Whatever respects the character of God, the way of salvation, the rule of duty, the source of happiness—whatever belongs to the faith, the hope, the holiness of the Christian—is fully revealed in this sacred testimony. 3. The results of its influence. We can look back on the workings of this mighty system for eighteen centuries, and see how it has always been attended by the same gracious power, and secured the same spiritual results, and thus has been demonstrably proved the truth that it "is the power of God to salvation unto every one that believeth." II. THE OBLIGATIONS WHICH CHRISTIANS ARE UNDER TO SECURE BY ALL PRACTICAL AND DIVINELY APPOINTED MEANS ITS UNIVERSAL DIFFUSION. 1. The obligation respects yourselves. There is a question which should always take the precedency when we are contemplating any line of benevolent effort. Have you fled to the refuge of mercy? Is the gospel testimony cordially believed by you? Let these be your feelings, and then you will be at once prepared to appreciate the force of the apostle's statement: "I am a debtor," &c. Having yourselves tasted that the Lord is gracious, you will be delighted to invite others to partake with you in the rich banquet of mercy. The very fact of receiving it carries along with it the obligation to make it known as well as imparts to the mind receiving it an holy activity in its diffusion. 2. In what respects may we regard this obligation as a debt? (1) Gratitude to the Redeemer requires that we should regard this debt and attempt to discharge it. What is there that we do not owe to Christ? (2) It is a debt of honour. If there were no explicit command, yet recollecting how much you owe to the Saviour, and your high privileges, every honourable feeling should bring you to His service. (3) It is a debt of justice. You have what every man wants, and what has been given you for every man; therefore it is unjust to withhold it. What would have been the condition of this land, or our personal conditions, if others had acted towards us on the same feeling of selfish indifference and forgetfulness of this plain and palpable duty? (4) It is a debt for the payment of which we shall be amply compensated. No man lends in this work of labour and love without finding an abundant interest. To be in any measure instrumental, directly or indirectly, in saving the souls of men, will confer a great happiness compared with which all other sources of enjoyment are less than nothing and vanity. (5) It is enforced by the command and authority of the Divine Redeemer.

It is not, therefore, left to your calculations or to your feelings. (*J. Fletcher, D.D.*) *The Christian's obligation to propagate the gospel*:—I. THE OBLIGATION UNDER WHICH THE APOSTLE LAY. "I am a debtor." Necessity was laid upon him (1 Cor. ix. 16). But there it was a necessity laid on him to Godward; here it is towards man. How so? 1. There is an obligation in man towards man, established by the law of creation, which nothing can set aside. One proof of it will be seen in the character of the man who disowns the obligation. He is anti-social. He opposes the fundamental law of society by which it is seen that men are formed for each other. And, if so, no limitation either of country or peculiarity of condition, can supersede this law. The parable of the good Samaritan establishes and illustrates this position. It was the old commandment from the beginning, though in Christ new both as to motive, extent, and object. 2. But there is an obligation which results from the condition on which good is imparted by the great Giver of all good. "Freely ye have received, freely give." The apostle himself states that Christ was revealed in him, that he "might preach Him among the heathen." And in another place that "a dispensation or stewardship was committed unto him" (1 Cor. ix. 17), "to make all men know the fellowship of the mystery" (Eph. iii. 9). 3. But, while the apostle would quicken his own zeal by thoughts of responsibility and by the plea of necessity, he delighted rather to dwell upon the more constraining obligation of love. He was one of a redeemed brotherhood. He could honour all men. Hence he could look on every one he met, whether "Barbarian or Scythian, bond or free" (Col. iii. 11), as one of the families which are all blessed in Christ. II. THE MANNER IN WHICH THE APOSTLE DISCHARGED THE OBLIGATION. The proposition is, that the debt owing from every Christian man to another is the gospel: the preaching or communicating the gospel is the discharge of that debt. How so? The substance of all good is comprised in the gospel. Everything short of it leaves a man short of salvation, is an abridgment of human happiness. The gospel brings the sinner near to God (Eph. ii. 13, 18; 2 Cor. v. 21), and restores man to his former position of love to his fellow (Eph. ii. 19–22). The preaching of it satisfied all the claims, because it answered all the wants, of man. (*Canon Jacob.*) *The duty of proclaiming the gospel*:—I. AN URGENT CHRISTIAN OBLIGATION. There is an obligation in man towards man which nothing can destroy. It is instituted and established. 1. By mutual expediency. The interest of one demands the good of all. One bad man in a community will destroy the peace of all. One diseased person may infect a whole nation. 2. By the fundamental laws of society. All men are made for each other. 3. By the law of benevolence. Even heathens have felt the force of this sentiment, and among the early Christians it became particularly prominent. 4. By the condition on which all good is imparted to us. "Freely ye have received, freely give." II. THE CHRISTIAN'S MANNER OF CARRYING THIS OBLIGATION OUT. There is—1. Undaunted purpose. "I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also." Rome had everything which was opposed to the nature and character of Christianity, and could endanger the apostle's life. How little do we imitate this example! Do we care for men's moral and social well-being to such an extent that we should be willing to sacrifice home, comfort, or even self, for their advantage? 2. A limitation of power. "So far as in me is." (1) This limitation has its use. It prevents us from despair when our talents are small or our opportunities few. Not all of us can go as ambassadors to Rome. But we can help so far as in us lies. If we cannot go, we can send those who can. (2) But this limitation is also made an abuse. Persons urge it as an excuse for their negligence, sloth, or parsimony. (*Homilist.*) *The missionary spirit*:—I. THE MISSIONARY ESTIMATE. The "power of God to salvation," and from this the debtorship to extend it rises. 1. You would not have expected that Paul would have had this estimate. The doctrine was incredible, the demand insupportable, the blessings impalpable and vague—belonging either to the world of the spiritual or of the future. And how could he expect such a gospel to be accepted? But Paul knew what it had been to himself and dared not despair. He took it everywhere, and the new power, wherever it went, although ignored by the better and despised by the worse forces of society, made its calm and even way. Its very incredibilities were the things that won credence of the human heart, and its insupportable demands came to men as a dignity which they were proud to wear, and its impalpable blessings of peace with God of light, of heavenly hope came to them as the balm of heaven. 2. But it is not the acceptance that the apostle accentuates. A man may accept a creed, and if it has no influence there is no great importance in the acceptance of it; but this creed men accepted to a throne of mighty influence. It wrought marvels. It was "the

Omnipotence of God unto salvation." You know how hard it is to touch the character; how that is the aim and the despair of all reform. The necessary thing is to lift men's manhood, then you lift everything about them. But it is just here that other reforms fail. But where everything else failed the gospel never failed, but lifted them up into what Paul calls "salvation." And it did this universally. Philosophers wanted specially fitted disciples to receive their truths, mysteries wanted some culture, other doctrines wanted some congruity; but the glory of the gospel was this—that whoever believed it in him it was omnipotent. 3. That was Paul's estimate of the gospel after twenty years' experience; the estimate and experience of all that preached it. Let us to-day remember that what we have got in our hands is no feeble thing, but the omnipotence of God for salvation to every one that believeth. II. THE MISSIONARY INSTINCT. "I am debtor," &c. 1. This is not exclusively Christian, it is a human instinct; we all have to say, "I am debtor." From infancy to age no day passes but we are enriched with some comfort that comes to us from the service of our fellow-men. We did not work our freedom; others wrought the laws which give us protection; others achieved the sciences which gives us delight; others opened wide those very avenues of trade by which men make their wealth. What would we be without the example, influence, sympathy of other men? We cannot pay the debt back to those that have gone; we can only pay it forward to those they make their heirs, and every generous nature feels that unless he gives back to the world as much service as he takes from it, he is a delinquent and short of honour. 2. And this instinct blossoms into many forms—into neighbourly affection, into righteousness, patriotism, philanthropy, sympathy. Sometimes this instinct is thwarted in its growth. But in the degree in which there is nobility, in that degree men look not to society's duty to them, but to their duty to society. Sometimes thwarted by the action of pride and fear and weakness; when this sense of debtorship meets with the gospel, then it comes forth in all its lordly strength. Everything helps to develop it then—penitence deepens it; gratitude increases it; it thrives beneath the dew of Calvary and especially under the influence of grace, because it moves love, and sees men in the new light. Outside the light of the gospel men may almost question whether their fellow-men are worth helping. But when we begin to see them precious in God's sight, then our fellow-men put on a dignity which makes it worth our while to serve them. It has, therefore, been the singular mark of the Church of Christ. At Pentecost men saw the love of God and copied it, and none said that aught of the things that he possessed was his own. The widows' hearts began to sing for joy with the new kindness that had dawned upon the world. Now it blossoms into the care of the infants cast out into the streets of the heathen cities; now in the redemption of captives; now in the ministry to the sick. All the fairest names in the Church's history are the names of those who felt that debtorship to proclaim the gospel of Christ to their fellow-men. You do not wonder, then, that Paul should feel this debtorship. He saw a creditor in the face of every man—his creditor wanting gold that he could give him; and he woke glad and eager to pay his debt. III. THE MISSIONARY CONSECRATION. "I am ready"—that is Paul in three words. The first question at conversion was, "What wilt Thou have me to do?" and that was the last, the hourly question. So ready was he that "forthwith" he preached Christ in the synagogues of Damascus and in Jerusalem; so ready that God had to stop him and send him to Arabia to meditate and pray. So ready that if to-night he dreams of the Man of Macedonia, in the morning he is looking out for the ship that will carry him across the wave. So ready that nothing can root out of him his eagerness. He was ready always, and now—a battered, withered old man—he is ready to assail Rome itself, and believes in the possibility of converting that secular empire, and all its degradation, to Christ. Of what infinite value that readiness is in any man! Presence of mind is good, but presence of heart is better. It saves time, freshness, and penetrative power. What a different story there would have been in Christianity if Paul's readiness had not been so bright! The gospel grew richer with every new effort to proclaim it. Paul's heaven has grown larger and richer from that hour to this, as daily still the pilgrims have entered it who were led by him to know and to choose the Lord! He was "ready," but we are unready. We are rich, but not ready. Strong minds and warm hearts are ready for commerce, war, science, but the great ambition does not seem to touch them. (*R. Glover.*) *The Grecian*:—There are four departments of human nature spoken of in these verses, with only one of which we can now deal. Four characteristics marked Grecian life and religion. I. RESTLESSNESS. 1. Polytheism

divided the contemplation over many objects, &c. The Grecian was to obtain wisdom from one Deity: eloquence from Mercurius; purity from Diana, &c. Hence dissipation of mind: that fickleness for which the Greeks were famous. All stability of character rests on the contemplation of changeless unity. 2. And all the results of science have been to simplify and trace back the manifold to unity. It is ever tending towards unity of law. Hence science is calm and dignified, reposing upon uniform fact. 3. So also in religion. Christianity proclaimed "One God and one Mediator," &c. St. Paul's view of the gospel, the salvation of the Gentiles, was the eternal purpose, and his own personal election was part of an eternal counsel. Now see the effect on character. First, on veracity (2 Cor. i. 18, &c.). He contemplated the changeless "yea" of God—his own yea became fixed as God's. Again in orthodoxy—"Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." Be not carried about by divers and strange doctrines. Truth is one—Error manifold—many opinions, yet there can be but one faith. See how calm and full of rest all this spirit is. St. John's view of the gospel recognised it rather as the manifestation of love. Pain and pleasure, the sigh and smile, the sunshine and the storm, were but the results of eternal love. Hence came deep calm—the repose which we are toiling all our lives to find, and which the Greek never found. II. WORLDLINESS. There are men and nations who live as if they had no aspiration above it. If ever there was a nation who understood the science of living, it was the Grecian. This world was their home and the object of their worship. The results were threefold. 1. Disappointment. Lying on the infinite bosom of Nature, the Greek was yet unsatisfied. The worldly man is trying to satiate his immortal hunger upon husks. 2. Degradation. Had you asked the Greek his highest wish, he would have replied, "This world, if it could only last—I ask no more." This is to feed on husks: but husks which the swine did eat. 3. Disbelief in immortality. The more the Greek attached himself to this world, the more the world unseen became a dim world of shades. Accordingly, when Paul preached at Athens the resurrection of the dead, they "mocked." This bright world was all, and the Greek's hell was death. The dreadfulness of death is one of the most remarkable things that meet us in their ancient writings. And these men were startled by seeing a new sect rise up to whom death was nothing. For the Cross of Christ had crucified in their hearts the Grecian's world. The rise of the higher life had made this life nothing, "and delivered those who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject unto bondage." III. THE WORSHIP OF THE BEAUTIFUL. 1. The Greek saw this world almost only on its side of beauty. He looked at actions in the same way. If he wanted to express a perfect man, he called him a musical or harmonious man. What was the consequence? Religion degenerated into the arts. Hence, necessarily, sensuality became religious. There is a peculiar danger in refinement of sensuous enjoyments. Coarse pleasures disgust and pass for what they are; but who does not know that the real danger and triumph of voluptuousness are when it approaches the soul veiled under the drapery of elegance? They fancied themselves above the gross multitude; but their sensuality, disguised even from themselves, was sensuality still—ay, and at times even, in certain festivals, broke out into gross and unmistakable licentiousness. 2. There is this danger now. Men are awakened from coarse, rude life to the desire of something deeper. And the God of this world can subtly turn that aside into channels which shall effectually enfeeble and ruin the soul. Refinement, imagery, witchery of form and colour, music, architecture: all these, even coloured with the hues of religion, producing feelings either religious or quasi-religious, may yet do the world's work. For all attempt to impress the heart through the senses, "to make perfect through the flesh," is fraught with that danger beneath which Greece sunk. This, too, is the ruinous effect of an education of accomplishments. An education chiefly romantic or poetical, not balanced by hard practical life, is simply the ruin of the soul. 3. If any one ever felt the beauty of this world it was Christ, but the beauty which He exhibited in life was the stern loveliness of moral action. The King in His beauty "had no form or comeliness": it was the beauty of Divine self-devotion. The Cross tells us that it is the true beautiful which is Divine: an inward, not an outward beauty, which rejects and turns sternly away from the meretricious forms of the outward world, which have a corrupting or debilitating tendency. IV. THE WORSHIP OF HUMANITY. 1. The Greek had strong human feelings and sympathies. He projected his own self on nature: humanised it: gave a human feeling to clouds, forests, rivers, seas. In this he was a step above other idolatries. It was not merely power, beauty, or life, but human power, &c., which was the object of

his profoundest veneration. His effort therefore was, in his conception of his god, to realise a beautiful human being. Much in this had a germ of truth—more was false. This principle, which is true, was evidently stated: The Divine, under the limitations of humanity, is the only worship of which man is capable; for man cannot conceive that which is not in his own mind. They wanted humanity in its glory—they asked for a Son of Man. Christ is Deity under the limitations of humanity. But there is presented in Christ for worship, not power, nor beauty, nor physical life, but the moral image of God's perfections. Through the heart and mind and character of Jesus it was that the Divinest streamed. Divine character, that was given in Christ to worship. 2. Another error. The Greek worshipped all that was in man. Every feeling had its beauty and its divine origin. Hence thieving had its patron deity, and treachery and cunning, and lust had its temple erected for abominable worship. All that was human had its sanction in the example of some god. Christ corrects this. Not all that is human is Divine. There is a part of our nature kindred with God; the strengthening of that, by mixture with God's Spirit, is our true and proper humanity—regeneration of soul. There is another part whereby we are related to the brutes; and whoever lives in that, sinks not to the level of the brutes, but below them, to the level of the demons; for he uses an immortal spirit to degrade himself, and the immortal joined with evil, as the life to the body, is demoniacal. Conclusion: In all this system one thing was wanting—the sense of sin. The Greek would not have spoken to you of sin: he would have told you of departure from a right line, want of moral harmony, discord within: he would have said that the music of your soul was out of tune. Christ came to convince the world of sin; and for this there is only one remedy—that which is written in the Redeemer's blood. (*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*)

The Roman:—The Roman nation was one of the noblest that the world has seen. We may judge from the fact of St. Paul's twice claiming his Roman citizenship, and that at a time when a luxurious Greek could purchase his freedom. We may conceive what it had been once, when even the faint lustre of its earlier dignity could inspire a foreigner, and that foreigner a Jew, and that Jew a Christian, with such respect. At the outset, then, we have a rare and high-minded people and their life, to think of. I. THE PUBLIC LIFE OF ROME. 1. The spirit of its religion—the very word means obligation, a binding power. Very different from the corresponding Greek expression, which implies worship by a sensuous ceremonial (*threskeia*). The Roman began from the idea of duty. The fabulous early history of Rome preserves the spirit of the old life when it does not preserve the facts. Accordingly, the tradition taught that the building of Rome was done in obedience to the intimations of the will of Heaven. Its first great legislator (Numa) is represented as giving laws after secret communion with the superhuman. It was the belief of Roman writers that the early faith taught access to God only through the mind: that therefore no images were found in earliest Rome. War itself was a religious act, solemnly declared by a minister of religion casting a spear into the enemy's territory. Nay, we even find something in spirit resembling the Jewish sabbath: the command that during the rites of religion no work should go on, but that men should devoutly contemplate God. 2. This resulted in government. Duty: and therefore law on earth, as a copy of the will of Heaven. Beauty was not the object of the Roman contemplation, nor worship; nor was harmony. Hence, when Greece was reduced to a Roman province, in 146 B.C., the Roman soldiers took the noblest specimens of Grecian painting and converted them into gambling-tables. You may distinguish the difference of the two characters from the relics which they have left behind them. The Greek produced a statue or a temple, the expression of a sentiment. The Roman, dealing with the practical, has left behind him works of public usefulness: roads, aqueducts, bridges, drains, and, above all, that system of law which has so largely entered into modern jurisprudence. 3. In accordance with this, it is a characteristic fact that we find the institutions of Rome referred to inspiration. Turning to Scripture, whenever the Roman comes prominently forward, we always find him the instrument of public rule and order. Pilate has no idea of condemning unjustly: "Why, what evil hath He done?" But he yields at the mention of the source of law, the emperor. The Apostle Paul appeals to Cæsar, and Festus respects the appeal. The tumult at Ephesus is stilled by a hint of Roman interference. When the angry mob was about to destroy Paul, Claudius Lysias comes "with an army, and rescues him." It was always the same thing. The Roman seems almost to have existed to exhibit on earth a copy of the Divine order of the universe, the law of the heavenly

hierarchies. II. PRIVATE LIFE. 1. The sanctity of domestic ties. (1) Very touching are the anecdotes—that, *e.g.*, of the noble matron, who felt, all spotless as she was, life-dishonoured, and died by her own hand. The sacredness of home was expressed strongly by the idea of two guardian deities (Lares and Penates) who watched over it. There was no battle-cry that came so to the Roman's heart as that, "For the altar and the hearth." The whole fabric of the Commonwealth rose out of the family. First the family, then the clan, then the tribe, lastly the nation. (2) Very different is it in the East. A nation there is a collection of units, held together by a government. When the chief is slain, the nation is in anarchy—the family does not exist. Polygamy and infanticide, the bane of domestic life, are the destruction too of national existence. (3) There is a solemn lesson in this. Moral decay in the family is the invariable prelude to public corruption. The man whom you cannot admit into your family cannot be a pure statesman. A nation stands or falls with the sanctity of its domestic ties. Rome mixed with Greece, and learned her morals. The Goth was at her gates; but she fell not till she was corrupted and tainted at the heart. (4) We will bless God for our English homes. Partly the result of our religion. Partly the result of the climate which God has given us, so that darkness, making life more necessarily spent within doors, is domestic. When England shall learn domestic maxims from strangers, as Rome from Greece, her ruin is accomplished. 2. Let us break up this private life into particulars. (1) We find manly courage. Courage, manhood, virtue, were one word. Among the degenerate descendants of the Romans virtue no longer means manhood: it is simply dilettantism. This courage was not merely animal daring. Like everything Roman, it was connected with religion. The Roman legions subdued the world, not by their discipline, strength, or brute daring, but by their moral force. A nation whose heroes could thrust their hand into the flame, or come from captivity and advise their countrymen against peace, and then go back to torture and death, or devote themselves by solemn self-sacrifice (like the Decii), could bid sublime defiance to pain and count dishonour the only evil. The world must bow before such men; for unconsciously here was a form of the spirit of the Cross: self-surrender, unconquerable fidelity to duty, sacrifice for others. (2) The honour of her women. There was a fire in Rome called Eternal, which was tended by the Vestals, and implied that the duration of Rome was co-extensive with the preservation of her purity of morals. The Roman was conspicuous for the virtues of this earth; but moral virtues are not religious graces. There are two classes of excellence, each of which is found at times disjoined from the other. Men of almost spotless earthly honour scarcely seem to know what reverence for things heavenly and devout aspirations towards God mean; and men who have the religious instinct yet fail in matters of common truth and honesty. Morality is not religion. Still, beware of talking contemptuously of "mere morality." III. THE DECLINE OF ROMAN LIFE. 1. First came corruption of the moral character. The soul of the Roman, bent on this world's affairs, became secularised, then animalised, and so at last, when there was little left to do, pleasure became his aim. Then came ruin swiftly. When the emperors lived for their elaborately contrived life of luxury—when the Roman soldier left his country's battles to be fought by mercenaries—the doom of Rome was sealed. Lofty spirits rose to stem the tide of corruption and the death-throes of Rome were long and terrible. 2. Scepticism and superstition went hand in hand. The lower classes sunk in a debased superstition—the educated classes, too intellectual to believe in it, and yet having nothing better to put in its stead. Or perhaps there was also a superstition which is only another name for scepticism: infidelity trembling at itself—shrinking from its own shadow. This is as true now. Men tremble at new theories, new views, the spread of infidelity; and they think to fortify themselves against these by multiplying the sanctities which they reverence. But it is not by shutting out inquiry and resenting every investigation as profane, that you can arrest the progress of infidelity. Faith, not superstition, is the remedy. 3. Religion degenerated into allegiance to the State. In Greece it ended in taste. In Rome it closed with the worship of the emperor, and the word "sacrament" meant an oath of allegiance. In the Christian Church it is also the oath of highest fidelity. "Here we offer and present unto Thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a living sacrifice." And in this contrast of the sacramental vows were perceptible the different tendencies of the two starting-points of revealed religion and Roman. Judaism began from law or obligation to a holy Person. Roman religion began from obedience to a mere will. Judaism ended in Christianity; whose central principle is joyful surrender to One whose name is Love. The religion

of Rome stiffened into Stoicism, or degenerated in public spirit. 4. The last step is the decline of religion into expediency. It is a trite and often quoted observation of a great Roman, that one minister of religion could scarcely meet another without a smile upon his countenance. And an instance of this, I believe, we have in the town-clerk of Ephesus, who stilled the populace by an accommodation to their prejudices, much in the same way in which a nurse would soothe a passionate child. He was the friend of Paul, yet he assures the people that there could be no doubt that the image fell down from Jupiter—"great goddess Diana." (*Ibid.*) *Neglecting to extend the gospel*:—The late Hugh Stowell said:—"In the Isle of Man, as I was one day walking on the seashore, I remember contemplating, with thrilling interest, an old grey ruined tower, covered with ivy. There was a remarkable history connected with the spot. In that tower was formerly hanged one of the best governors the island ever possessed. He had been accused of treachery to the king during the time of the Civil Wars, and received sentence of death. Intercession was made on his behalf, and a pardon was sent; but that pardon fell into the hands of his bitter enemy, who kept it locked up, and the governor was hanged. His name is still honoured by the Manx; and you may often hear a pathetic ballad sung to his memory to the music of the spinning-wheel. We must all feel horror-struck at the fearful turpitude of that man who, having the pardon of his fellow-creature in his possession, could keep it back, and let him die the death of a traitor. But let us restrain our indignation, till we ask ourselves whether God might not point His finger to most of us and say: 'Thou art the man! Thou hast a pardon in thine hands to save thy fellow-creatures, not from temporal but eternal death. Thou hast a pardon suited to all—sent to all—designed for all; thou hast enjoyed it thyself, but hast thou not kept it back from thy brother, instead of sending it to the ends of the earth?'" *Paul's desire to extend the gospel*:—Paul was anxious to do more good, to get more good, to be more good. He sought to win souls. He wanted to make Christ's name known. An ardent passion inflamed him; a high enthusiasm inspired him. Tent-making, it is true, was his trade, but tent-making did not monopolise quite all his heart, and soul, and strength. Does your secular vocation absorb all your thoughts? Though Paul was proud of his industry, and could say, conscientiously, "My own hands have ministered to my necessities," yet preaching the gospel was the one thing he pursued as his life-work. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Ver. 16. **For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ.**—*The gospel*:—What grand truths lie concealed in this Scripture, as in a kaleidoscope! The gospel being its focal point, several easy turns bring into clearest view some of the most precious things of our Christian faith. I. The first turn presents its EFFICACY: "It is . . . power." II. The second its DIVINITY: "It is the power of God." III. The third its OBJECT: "It is the power of God unto salvation." IV. The fourth its IMPARTIALITY: "It is the power of God unto salvation to every one." V. The fifth its CONDITIONALITY: "It is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." VI. The sixth the ORDER in which it was to be preached to and employed by guilty man: "To the Jews first, and also to the Greek." A man who can define it so comprehensively and grandly, could not well be "ashamed of the gospel of Christ." In more than the sense of willingness he is "ready to preach" it anywhere. (*W. H. Luckenbach.*) *The apostle's estimate of the gospel*:—I. PAUL'S ESTIMATE OF THE GOSPEL. 1. The gospel is a power. This power is manifested—(1) In overcoming deeply rooted prejudices. Perhaps no man was more prejudiced than was Paul. Yet he embraced it. (2) In triumphing over cruel persecutions. (3) In overturning systems of long-established idolatry. Diana of the Ephesians, worshipped by the world, lost her adherents when the gospel was proclaimed. All the deities of Greece and Rome were soon dethroned. Buddhism, Brahminism, and other isms are furnishing unmistakable signs of decay. (4) In its influence over men's lives. When imprisonment, stripes, destitution, and disgrace have been powerless to reform, the gospel of Christ has succeeded. 2. The gospel is the power of God. The Jews said this power was of Beelzebub. The Pagans that it was the power of fanaticism. Paul said it was of God. (1) The gospel scheme was originated by God. (2) The success of the gospel is of God. "Not by might . . . but by My Spirit," &c. 3. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation. Nature exhibits His power in creation. The Deluge furnished proof of His destructive power. The gospel reveals His power to save. It saves—(1) From present sinfulness. "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, because He shall save His people from

their sins." (2) From future wrath. 4. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation to believers. The Lord has a perfect right to fix the terms of our salvation. 5. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. II. PAUL'S PERSONAL FEELINGS CONCERNING THE GOSPEL. "I am not ashamed." Being satisfied of its Divine origin. 1. The poverty of its adherents did not make him ashamed of it. Though our religion had a carpenter for its founder, fishermen for its advocates, and the poor for its supporters, yet Paul was not ashamed. 2. The illiterateness of its adherents did not make him ashamed of it. Paul was a learned man. The vast majority of Jewish rabbis and heathen philosophers despised the gospel. The bulk of Christians were unlearned and ignorant men. Yet Paul was not ashamed. 3. The persecutions of its adherents did not make him ashamed. Lessons: 1. The apostle was not ashamed to profess the gospel. 2. The apostle was not ashamed to live the gospel. 3. The apostle was not ashamed to preach the gospel. 4. Are you ashamed of the gospel? (*W. Sidebottom.*) *Not ashamed of the gospel: and why?*—The success of Christianity has won for it the respect even of its enemies. I. THE SUBJECT WHICH IT EMPHASISES—the "gospel." In the context we have clearest evidence that a knowledge of certain facts and truths associated therewith existed among those to whom the apostle wrote. These facts and truths all clustered around the person, life-work, example, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The bare historical record of these, however, was not the gospel any more than mere creeds or systems of Christian truth, however important these may be. The members of the body are the servants of the living soul; so the gospel is the animating spirit which employs as its instruments facts and doctrines, precepts and institutions. II. THE REFERENCE WHICH OUR TEXT IMPLIES—Not ashamed of the gospel! Strange language, surely, for Paul to use, is it not? Did he not love the gospel with a most ardent affection? Did he not prize it above all things, and glory in it as an ineffable trust Divinely committed to his charge: How could Paul content himself with declaring that he was "not ashamed of the gospel"? The reference here implied brings us back to the words in which Christ described His mission to the world at its commencement (Luke iv. 18), and also, when replying to the messengers sent to Him by John the Baptist, from the prison (Luke vii. 22). Christ's heart glowed with love to all; but most intensely towards the poor, the vast struggling masses of humanity, denied universally the rights of citizens and of manhood. Slavery and class-privilege were the corner-stone of that Pagan civilisation, then so powerful, and to these the gospel did not offer any terms of compromise; and so its advocates, as Paul tells us, were "made as the filth of the world, the off-scouring of all things." Enemies were constantly asserting that this "new religion drew to it the dregs of the population—peasants, mechanics, beggars, and slaves." Even long after the time of Paul, when Christianity had won many triumphs, we find Celsus, a haughty, heathen philosopher, remarking that "even the Christian teachers were wool-workers, cobblers, and fullers—the most illiterate and vulgar of mankind." We can easily understand that some might waver in the good cause, and that others, though favourable, might shrink from embracing it through fear of being treated as persons who had degraded themselves in the social scale. So the apostle Paul comes down for the moment from his wonted high position of "glorying" in the gospel and adopts a lowlier strain; he "was not ashamed of the gospel." III. THE ARGUMENT UPON WHICH THIS DECLARATION RESTS. (*J. M. Cruickshank.*) *The distinguishing features of Christianity*:—Whether religion in general has any rational ground or not, it is certain that human society in the long run is quite impossible without religion. You have heard of the ten great religions of the world. Of these only three have been expansive and conquering religions—Buddhism, Mohammedanism, and Christianity. To these three the struggle is narrowed down. And as between the three, whether legitimately or illegitimately, the hard, historic fact is, that Christianity is certainly carrying the day. I. I name as the first distinctive feature of Christianity, THE INCARNATION OF GOD IN CHRIST. History teaches that human nature cannot endure a bald spiritual theism. We have two thoughts of God equally necessary. We think of Him as an Infinite Spirit, wholly separate from matter and superior to it—wise, just, awful in holiness. Hence the pure monotheism now recognised as lying in the background of all the better mythologies. But human weakness, and, above all, human depravity necessitate another conception of God. The human heart, yearning for sympathy in its weakness, and stricken with terror in its defilement, cries out passionately for an Incarnate God. Call it reason and conscience, or call it finite limitation and guilty fear, this uniform importunate

demand for an Incarnate God is answered only by our God in Christ. II. The second distinctive feature of Christianity is ATONEMENT. Both Testaments are full of it. III. The third distinctive feature of Christianity is REGENERATION. Confession of sin is not confined to Christendom. Universal sacrifice is universal confession. Christianity begins its curative work by a better diagnosis of the disease. It sets in clear light the original rectitude of man, discloses the tempter, and proclaims the fall. (*R. D. Hitchcock, D.D.*) *On Christianity*:—I. THE CHARACTER OF ITS AUTHOR RECOMMENDS CHRISTIANITY TO PARTICULAR REGARD. II. THE INTRINSIC EXCELLENCE OF CHRISTIANITY MARKS ITS SUPERIORITY TO EVERY OTHER RELIGIOUS SYSTEM. III. CONSIDER THE MODE OF ITS ESTABLISHMENT. (*T. Laurie, D.D.*) *The Christian evangel, its contents and results*:—In these words we have exhibited the true spirit of this ambassador of Christ, and the nature of the message he was commissioned to make known. "The gospel is no feeble utterance, no mere human speculation composed of sentiments light as air. It is charged with Divine energy, and works out the salvation of all who receive it." I. Notice that by these words we are assured THERE IS A DIVINE POSITIVE MESSAGE TO MAN. Paul did not appear before the world as a philosopher, who by the workings of a powerful intellect could solve all the problems of being and knowing which had baffled those who went before him. He did not assume the position of a reformer, whose business was to set in order those things which pertained to the social and political conditions of life. Neither did he maintain the position of an educator who should train minds in the mental products of human genius. Paul was a herald of the King of grace and of glory; he was an ambassador of Christ, a preacher of a positive message of truth and love to all mankind, and which came from the heart of the Eternal. God has looked down from His high and holy abode in tenderest love and righteous mercy, and has made known to us His purposes and desires. II. Our text teaches us that THE BURDEN OF THIS DIVINE MESSAGE TO MAN IS A PERSON. The gospel is the gospel of Christ—concerning Christ. It came from Him and it is occupied with Him and nothing else. III. THE CHRISTIAN EVANGEL IS CHARGED WITH DIVINE POWER. The magnetism of great men—which is the resultant of their personalities—has more power with those they influence than their wisest counsels. So it is with the gospel. It is powerful, not only because of its truthfulness, or merely because of the love it reveals, but because God in the person of His own Son is in it, and with it, dealing personally with the sinful and the lost. Its efficiency is from Heaven, and the spiritual revolutions it has wrought have been produced, not only by power as power, but by the living spirit of the Lord. IV. We advance a step further by noticing that THE GOSPEL IS A SAVING POWER. The Roman power was in its outgoings, in very many instances, a power unto destruction. It pulled down, injured, and destroyed; and the more destruction it produced, the greater it was feared, and the more loudly it was applauded. This destroying power is a low, vulgar power. Any person—no matter how weak and wicked—is capable of destroying the finest work of art which ever proceeded from the reason and hand of man. On the other hand, it takes one who is wise, tender, and good—inspired by more than human genius—to raise and to save the human soul, and secure the advance and development of the human race. Of all beings who ever appeared in this world, no one has ever been equal to this Herculean task except the Man of Sorrows. He alone can build up the temple of humanity which was pulled down by sin. V. Finally, it is to be observed that THE SALVATION THE GOSPEL WORKS OUT IS TO BE POSSESSED AND ENJOYED BY FAITH. Faith is the door by which all spiritual power and upbuilding influences enter the soul. It is receptive in its nature, and takes into the inner man those thoughts, feelings, and persons, which regulate the heart out of which flows the issues of life. He that believeth the testimony of the gospel takes Christ and all that is in Christ into the deepest parts of his spirit. By faith Christ dwells in us the hope of glory and the power of an endless life. (*W. Adamson, D.D.*) *God's power unto salvation*:—If he had been ashamed, could we have so much wondered? Consider the time and the place, and the man and the message. The time was the hideous time of Nero; the place was the city of Rome, in which, as in a sort of moral sewer, all the detestable, and, to us, in many respects, inconceivable wickedness of the world festered. The man was a Jew, one of an ancient and indestructible race, which then, even more than now, the world despised, ill-used, and robbed. The message was this: that a crucified Hebrew had risen from the dead, being the Son of God, with power. And the apostle felt no sort of reluctance with this message. Of this gospel, the apostle tells us these magnificent statements. First, he calls it a

gospel, a good news—a good news which could have been discovered only in one way, by revelation from heaven, a good news declared in a life sealed by death, confirmed by resurrection, and written in a book. And this great revelation, which none of the great thinkers of the day had been able to think out, tells us of three great things. It is a revelation of the fatherhood of God, of the redemption of Christ by the power of grace. Then, in the power of this grace, we go on free, reconciled, and strengthened for the duties of life and for the city of God. This is the gospel, there is no other—the free, full, present forgiveness of sin in Christ our Lord. And it is called the gospel of Christ; Christ is the gospel; Christ reveals the Father. "And Christ is our Redeemer. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world." "The gospel of Christ," the apostle calls it, and he goes on to tell us that the gospel of Christ is the power of God. How is it the power of God? It is the power of God because God uses it to convert, and to instruct, and to console, and to inspire. This book that brings us to God makes us like God, it makes us thirst for God, it helps us to be filled with God. And once more it inspires ideas of the power that rules the world; and this power, with its lofty ideals, with its moral principles, with its wonderful history, with its life-giving promises, is the one book in all the world which has done more than anything else to break the chains of the captive, to lift up mortal man to the true dignity for which God intended him. It is the power of God; and yet there is another sense in which it is the power of God, because only God can make it powerful. I think it is upon this great truth that we preachers need to rely more than we have ever relied yet. "Not by might, nor by power, but My Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts." The apostle further defines what he means by "power"; he says, "unto salvation." Salvation from the power of sin; from the dominion of the world; from the yoke of selfishness; from the misery of small, wretched faults which eat and ulcerate the soul like venomous insects; salvation from all that makes life poor and mean; salvation from low idea; salvation from forgetting God. It is the gospel which is the power of God unto salvation, because it tells us whence we came, and to what we go: that we are the sons of God. But there is a limitation to this—"unto every one that believeth." God never makes a man good against his will, He never takes from any one of us our awful freedom. He knows that one day we shall stand to be judged for our works before His Son, to whom He hath committed judgment. How could He punish us for the evil we have done, how could He recompense us for the good which, by His grace, we may have done if He did not leave us free? To every one that believeth is the gospel a power, and to no one else. It was of this gospel of which the apostle was not ashamed first to accept it for himself, and then to proclaim it to others. He knew, if any man ever yet knew, on whom he had believed. With these last three truths I will leave the subject in your hearts. First, St. Paul's reason for writing to Rome, and afterwards going to Rome, was the sense of his indebtedness. "I am a debtor," so we are debtors to God, to the world, to the Church, and in a sense to ourselves and to those who come after us; and just so far as we know what we owe to Christ, and what Christ has done for us, shall we feel the blessed duty and obligation of passing on to others what has been given to us. And then when this is the case, when we feel our obligation, and when each takes such share as we may in what Christ gives us to do, we shall feel the reasonableness of faith—the reasonableness of a reasonable faith. (*Bp. Thorold.*) *Not ashamed of the gospel:*—I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ—I. Because of the heroic character of its witnesses. II. Because of the influence it has had on civilisation. III. Because of its adaptability to human necessities. IV. Because of the promise it gives of eternal life. I. THE HEROIC CHARACTER OF ITS WITNESSES. I think it is Thomas Carlyle who says that "the history of a nation is the history of its great men." On the same principle it may be said that the history of Christianity is the history of its heroes. For it is from them and by them that we have given to us practical illustration of the power and processes of the great God-sent religion. And first we turn to Him who was at once the Founder and Finisher of the faith, Jesus Christ, whose life may be said to epitomise the biography of mankind. But perhaps it may be said, "Time has lent a fascination to their labours; what they did perforce has been transfigured into something done for love." If it was done "perforce," it was the force of Christianity—the force of Jesus Christ, and that is the force of devotion and love. I do not know that history and the lapse of time have done anything to magnify their work. The gospel of Jesus Christ prompts men to acts of as great heroism to-day as it did in the darker times of history.

II. BECAUSE OF ITS INFLUENCE ON CIVILISATION. So silently has this power been exercised, that we are very apt to lose sight of its influence upon the morals of men. And yet in its very secrecy has lain its strength. It began by enforcing the truth of universal brotherhood: the duties of each to all, and of all to each. It flung aside the superstitions of the age. Civilisation without religion! It is impossible. It is fire without warmth; it is motion without progress; it is existence, but it is not life. It becomes in time the very apotheosis of immorality. I have said that the influence of religion is spiritual. But all work which is spiritual eventually reveals itself in the natural, the material. So is it especially, I think, with the Christian faith. What has Christianity done for men in the mass? Each phase of its spiritual activity has its equivalent in the natural world, in society. III. BECAUSE OF ITS ADAPTABILITY TO HUMAN NECESSITIES. Herein lies the beauty and the blessedness of our religion. It is to this that what in the most sacred sense may be called its success is due. To go back to its earliest days, how did it attract men? It gave rest to the weary, and comfort to the sad; it cheered the mourning and raised the dead to life. To-day its methods are the same. How are we to account for this power? Simply, I think, because its Founder was "the Man Christ Jesus." He knew what was in man. IV. BECAUSE OF THE PROMISE IT GIVES OF ETERNAL LIFE. It is not a reward; it is a development. And even if it were only a reward, I am too human to disregard its value as an element in the teaching of Jesus Christ. A religion which provides for this world only is no religion at all. (*R. Barclay, M.A.*) *The nature and claims of the gospel*:—I. WHAT ARE WE TO UNDERSTAND BY THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST? Christianity, or the scheme of religion revealed in the New Testament. 1. The things it proposes to our faith. These are of several sorts. Some of them are merely historical; others purely authoritative, and some partly historical and partly authoritative. Of this latter class are the truths relating to the Incarnation of Christ. 2. The things which the gospel commands to be practised. II. WHAT ARE THE REASONS FOR NOT BEING ASHAMED OF THIS GOSPEL, BUT, ON THE CONTRARY, FOR EMBRACING IT, AND GLORYING IN IT, WITH ALL THE HEART? 1. Its incontrovertible truth. 2. Its incomparable excellence. Compare the system, in its doctrines and duties, with all other systems. (1) What has been the worship of the heathen religions? Ceremonies, penances, and orgies; many that were puerile, painful, cruel, and obscene. And are these to be compared with a worship contemplative, devout, reverential, filial, such as that of Christianity? (2) What have been the duties inculcated by other religions? How questionable and scanty their moral code! But what weed escapes in the moral garden of Scripture? (3) It is, however, in its state of future rewards and punishments that the gospel far outshines every other system. 3. Its sovereign efficacy. "It is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth." Its objects and sentiments are not merely to fall upon the ear, or to remain before the eye, but to enter into the mind and accomplish its renovation. III. WHAT ARE THE OBJECTIONS URGED BY MEN AGAINST THIS SYSTEM, AND BY WHICH THEY ATTEMPT TO JUSTIFY THEIR NEGLECT OF IT? These may be easily shown to be trivial. 1. Do they object that they can arrive at the knowledge of the truth of the New Testament history, only in a secondary way—only from the testimony of others—and that, therefore, they are not so responsible for their unbelief as these other would be? This, however, is felt to be no prejudice to the truth of any other history, and no argument for its disbelief. 2. Do they object to severity of the gospel requirements? The gospel requires us to crucify only our sins; to deny ourselves only what would be injurious to us. The virtues it inculcates it renders easy to us by a new nature, and productive of a present happiness surpassing every other kind of happiness. 3. Do they object the incomprehensibleness of many things which the gospel states to exist? If God has not revealed them, reject them for their incomprehensibleness; if He has, receive them for His veracity's sake. Conclusion: 1. How awful is their condition who oppose the gospel! What excuse can there be for this? What evil has the gospel done? What attestation does it lack? What good has it not done? 2. How pitiable is their condition by whom the gospel of their salvation is practically disregarded! We are about to be wrecked; the gospel is the only plank left for our escape to the shore; and while we neglect to seize it, our danger increases, and the destructive waves bear us nearer and nearer to our doom. 3. Let them who have received the gospel, and who, in addition to all other evidence, have that of experience in its favour, attach themselves closely to it. 4. The gospel is a subject of triumph to Christians, as through life, so especially at the hour of dissolution. Its grandest objects are those of another world. (*J.*

Leifchild.) *St. Paul's confidence in the gospel:*—St. Paul's enthusiasm for Christ is one of the great problems of history. That such a man should deliberately renounce all his advantages, and embark on a career which involved obloquy and suffering, is a fact that has to be accounted for. His own explanation is clear enough, viz., that the Lord Jesus appeared to him under circumstances which left no room for doubt as to His person and His claims; that the evidences he received of Christ's love acted on him like an irresistible constraint to yield to those claims; and that to discharge them he had become a preacher of a gospel which he knew to be the power of God unto salvation to a perishing world. The world, therefore, was his creditor until the glad tidings had been everywhere proclaimed. By the time he wrote this letter Paul had been able to wipe off no inconsiderable portion of his debt. But he felt that until he had seen Rome the greatest portion of the debt must remain unpaid, and that at Rome the most favourable opportunities would be afforded for paying it. Once firmly rooted there the gospel would spread its branches everywhere. So he says, "I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are in Rome." Here the apostle seems to pause to take breathing time, so that he might calculate his resources for an enterprise the like of which he had never yet attempted. "At Rome! Yes, at Rome also, for I am not ashamed of the gospel. I was not ashamed of it at sacred Jerusalem, at philosophical and artistic Athens, at commercial Ephesus and Corinth, any more than among my own friends at Tarsus, or among the unsophisticated heathen at Lystra. And now, although I shall have to confront in combination at Rome all the forces I have elsewhere met singly, I am not ashamed of the gospel." I. THE APOSTLE'S CONFIDENCE IN THE GOSPEL. To fully appreciate this we must—1. Reflect where the apostle was writing to. If St. Paul could have been ashamed of the gospel it would certainly have been when brought into juxtaposition with Rome. The incredible tenets of some obscure Hindoo or Chinese sect would hardly appear to greater disadvantage in London than would Christianity in that proud capital of the world. For Rome was now in the zenith of her glory. Yet before this wondrous city, where all that constituted what was then thought greatness existed in colossal proportions, the advocate of a creed which was everywhere spoken against, and to whom, as a provincial, the grand metropolis, we may be sure, would lose none of its glamour, says, "I am ready to preach the gospel at Rome; for I am not ashamed of the gospel." 2. Notice where the apostle was writing from. St. Paul had only recently been prosecuting a vigorous ministry in Ephesus which had been brought to a riotous close. From Ephesus Paul went to Corinth, where he wrote to Rome, and where there was enough to put a far less sensitive mind than his to the blush, and enough for some men to utterly discredit the pretensions of a religion claiming to be heavenly and Divine. And again, he had just learned how the gospel had fared among the Churches of Galatia, and the memorable Epistle to these Churches unfolds one of the most tragic of all the stories of early Christianity. Riot and scandal and failure had been the result of three of the most recent experiments of the gospel, and Paul knew the impression that they would make at Rome. And besides, were these results to be repeated there on a gigantic scale? But such was the apostle's faith in the gospel that, with Ephesus, Corinth, and Galatia behind him, and Rome, with its unmeasured and complicated problems before him, he nevertheless declares, "I am ready to preach the gospel in Rome," &c. 3. Consider what that gospel was of which he was not ashamed at Corinth when writing to Rome. (1) It was a system of vast pretensions, with no apparent means of supporting them. The Roman government was exceeding tolerant of the diverse faiths of its heterogeneous peoples. But the gospel scorned to ask for a simple toleration as it afterwards declined to receive an honourable patronage. It aimed at universal supremacy. And what were its means for furthering its amazing pretensions? There was no known force in the world beside which it did not look contemptible. It had no history. It was a word, and therefore could not compete with the power of arms. It had no public buildings, and scarcely anything that could be called a ceremonial. From a political, intellectual, and religious standpoint nothing seemed so feeble as the gospel. Nor did its advocates dissemble in the least in this particular. "Not many wise, not many mighty, not many noble were called." The chiefest among them were fishermen and tent-makers, and the rest, for the most part, artisans or slaves. They "came in much weakness," and were content to let the gospel go on its own merits, and on those merits they insisted with a confidence that startled the world. (2) It was a system whose principles seemed least likely to succeed. Its Author belonged to a race

nowhere so detested as at Rome, and yet the Romans were asked to accept the crucified Jew as the Son of God, who had died and had risen again to be their Saviour. Forgiveness and salvation, words of insult to patrician and plebeian alike, must be sought on the humiliating conditions of penitence and faith. In urging these the gospel appealed to sentiments which were a degradation for a Roman soldier to encourage, and to hopes and fears which he scorned to entertain. Those who embraced it were charged with duties alien to their nature, and with the exercise of virtues for which no existing vocabulary could provide a name. In return it offered privileges in this life on which the Romans would set no value, and a destiny in the next from which they would turn with scorn. And Paul had discounted all this. He had once himself regarded and persecuted the gospel as a foolish and offensive thing. And so had people everywhere. In Rome, of all places, was this general verdict least likely to be reversed. Nevertheless, he says, "I am ready to preach the gospel in Rome," &c. II. THE GROUNDS OF THE APOSTLE'S CONFIDENCE IN THE GOSPEL. 1. Paul sounded the apparent power of Rome and found it weakness. As the apostle gazed at Rome he saw a colossal fabric whose foundations were sand. The empire was built up in utter disregard of the forces on which power has ultimately to depend. The mere lust of power was satiated; but with its gratification everything that made it worth the having went to wreck. (1) The nations poured their luxury into the lap of Rome; but with their treasures came their filth, and that which made her the embodiment of this world's glory, made her the receptacle of its corruption and its shame. Military plunder brought vast wealth into hands that knew not how to use it. It had, however, to be spent, and an era of extravagance set in. Family life was extinguished. Divorce, and worse, was rife, and infanticide was fearfully prevalent. What political life had become may be guessed by the positions to which a Caligula and a Nero, a Pilate and a Felix, might attain, and the means they employed to attain them. The consequences were inevitable. The age was fast wearing itself out. Wholesale indulgence was inducing an intolerable lassitude which refused relief from the ordinary means of excitement. A monstrous ingenuity had to be called into play to invent new pleasures and hitherto inconceivable vices, and the end could not be far off when death by suicide was recommended and embraced as a refuge from the tedious superfluity of a life which had exhausted all possible means of gratification. (2) Equally gigantic evils in another direction also sprang from the satiated lust of power. The swarms of captives who survived the butchery which celebrated the military triumphs had to be provided for. A system of slavery was therefore introduced, for which it would be impossible to find a parallel. Not the least evil of the system consisted in its wholesale adoption in trade and agriculture, from which the freemen were gradually driven, to the extinction of a middle class. Thus there grew up a free population, released from the obligations and opportunities of labour, and eventually despising it as beneath the dignity of a Roman citizen, who became mere loafers and parasites. This teeming, lazy, and because such, dangerous class had to be kept quiet. It was not enough that they were fed by the State, and that they received occasional doles from their lordly patrons. They caught the prevalent unrest and craving for excitement, and developed vicious instincts, which had, at all costs, to be gratified. Hence the savage amusements of the amphitheatre. Hence the open and unabashed practice of every form of moral abomination, of which there was an unlimited provision at a cheap rate. Is there, then, no relief to this terrible picture? Was there no salt that could purify this poisoned fountain? The answer is—none. Religion, which had been powerless to check the progress of corruption, became incurably tainted with it, and eventually succumbed to it. Worship was but one of the outlets for the passion for excitement, and was made the cover for the most licentious orgies. Of course, widespread infidelity prevailed; but the very Atheists surrendered themselves wholesale to still baser systems of superstition and imposture. Philosophy was the last hope of the age; but that, alas! was dying of despair. The apostle saw all this moral rottenness and had already predicted its doom. Christianity, however humble, he felt, could not suffer by comparison. He said, therefore, with the utmost confidence, "I am ready to preach the gospel at Rome," &c. 2. Paul proved the apparent weakness of the gospel and found it power. He knew that under the seeming weakness of its infancy lay the germs of a mighty manhood, which would soon measure itself with Rome and wrest from its senile grasp the sceptre of the world. This knowledge was born of a personal experience of its power. (1) It was the power of God. It might seem weak, but then he felt that "the weakness of God is stronger than

men." The gospel was a word, but it was the word of God. A word of God brought the universe into being, and by the Divine word it is still upheld. It was but a word that was spoken at the grave of Lazarus, but at that word the power of death was shattered. To the Word of the gospel a Divine power was guaranteed in a special sense. Its preachers were filled with His inspiration, and were endowed by Him with tongues of flame. Mighty promises urged them forward with it; and so, as they preached it, their word was with power, and it grew mighty and prevailed. The want of this Divine power reduces the greatest human force to impotence. Rome was built up by force of arms, but were is Rome to-day? Our schools of thought are created by the power of intellect, but how many survive their own generation? Human power, like its embodiment, "is as grass, and the glory thereof is as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but the Word of our God shall stand for ever." And this Word is that gospel of which, in the presence of the splendid rottenness of Rome, St. Paul was not ashamed, because it was the power of God. (2) It was the power of God directed to the mightiest result. The weakness of Rome largely lay in the inability of its leading men to measure the world's needs, and in the inadequacy of the best systems of the age to supply them. But the power of the gospel consisted in the fact that it could penetrate the secret of the world's wretchedness and despair, and articulate it. The gospel met man at once with the most searching diagnosis of sin, but told how that God commended His love toward men in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for them. And men began to realise what it was to be saved. This was what men wanted, and what nothing else could give them. The gospel succeeded in accomplishing results that nothing else was competent to reach—nay, even to conceive. And the apostle was therefore "not ashamed of the gospel," &c. (3) It was a power available for all men. (*a*) It was offered to every man. It began, as it has continued, not by dealing with the mass, but by dealing with individuals. (*b*) This universal offer was to be accepted on the condition of faith. The embrace of the heart's faith was and is necessary to quicken it into a salvation. "The word could not profit" where it was not "mixed with faith in them that heard," but it worked effectually in them that believed. (*c*) This condition was within the compass of every man's ability. The evils which the gospel proposed to remedy were worldwide. If the remedy therefore were to be equal to the evil, the conditions of its application must be within the reach of all. All the gospel asks is to be embraced, and surely every man can do that. Paul lived long enough to repeat this boast after a ministry at Rome. With what emphasis would he repeat it could he stand where we stand to-day! And how he would endeavour to make those tongues which, eloquent on every other, are dumb on this great theme aflame with a live coal from off the altar, and the vehicles of this solitary boast, "I am not ashamed of the gospel," &c. (*J. W. Burn.*) *Paul's holy audacity in regard to the gospel*:—Courage is of two kinds. There is the hardihood which can face danger, and there is the intrepidity which can confront shame. The former can only be where the danger is without dishonour, and the latter where the shame is without desert. The former is an instinctive and animal endowment, while the latter is an acquired virtue and a moral quality possessed only by man. It is physical courage which we admire in the soldier who stands unmoved in front of blazing musketry; in the sailor, lashed to the wheel, and steering his tumbling vessel across the foaming waves, or in the traveller of science scaling untrodden heights: but it is a much higher, rarer, and Diviner quality which we admire in the pious workman who rebukes the ribaldry and oaths of his fellow-craftsmen. Rarely does it happen that these two kinds of courage meet in the same individual. You may see the undaunted hero of a battle-field crimson with shame and rage to be twitted for his virtue, or the firm heroine of the household tremble to hear an unusual noise. In Paul, however, the union may be found; and it is this which ranks him among the kingliest of men. Let us ponder a few of the reasons of Paul's holy audacity. Note—I. THE END PROPOSED: Man's salvation, an object not only aimed at but achieved. 1. Salvation may be viewed either as an individual benefit or as a social one. On the one hand, it is a blessing for every one that believeth; on the other hand, it is needed by the race at large, and the gospel proposes to accomplish the salvation of mankind in both these aspects. In saying this we oppose those who speak and act as if the whole aim of the gospel was to pick out themselves, and a few other individuals, from the mass devoted to destruction, and translate them one by one to a better world. And we also oppose the vague dreams of rationalistic philosophers who profess to be engrossed with a noble

concern for the good of mankind at large. The peculiarity of the gospel is that it begins with the individual, and so seeks, as its last result, the salvation of the community. 2. It may be regarded as either an inward or outward process. Inward salvation is sanity or soundness; outward salvation is deliverance and safety. Each one of us needs to be both restored to righteousness and rescued from hell. 3. It is negative and positive. There is much sin and suffering from which we are saved by it; but there is also much of holy attainment and heavenly joy to which we are raised by it. II. THE POWER EMPLOYED. 1. Its source is Divine; and this in so direct a way that its very nature is Divine. It is the power of—(1) God's truth, revealing to us both His nature and our own state. (2) Love appealing to us to subdue our enmity and incite us to gratitude and trust. (3) All urgent motives addressed to our hopes and to our fears. (4) Precious promises whereby we are offered a filial position in God's family, and a final lot among all the sanctified. (5) The power of the Holy Ghost, who helpeth all our infirmities. This is the gospel, the power of God unto salvation, because it has God Himself in it and with it. 2. Its extent. The gospel is as strong as God. It can do all that He can do. (1) As to individual souls, it can save any and it can save all. It can deliver from all sin, and enrich with all the treasures of holiness. (2) And so for society generally and the world at large. Here is a Divine and all-availing expedient for the regeneration of the species, and the establishment of righteousness and peace through all the earth. (*T. G. Horton.*) *Not ashamed of the gospel:*—We have no reason to be ashamed of—I. THE EVIDENCE BY WHICH IT IS SUPPORTED. 1. Historical. Take the testimony of Paul. He was a contemporary of Christ; he conferred with the apostles; he saw the Lord. In his four undisputed Epistles he embodies all the facts of gospel history. His testimony is unexceptionable, for he was too sane to be imposed upon, too disinterested to be an impostor. 2. Prophetical. The canons of prophecy are that it should be long anterior to the event; that it should be so constructed that the story of its fulfilment could not be manufactured out of the mere study of its terms, and that its fulfilment be undesigned and in full correspondence with it. Apply these to Isa. liii. 3. Moral. How can we account for the difference between the character of Christ and that of His age? The age could produce a Nero, but not a Christ. II. THE INTELLECTUAL CALIBRE OF ITS CHIEF REPRESENTATIVES. Although not exclusively fitted for intellectual giants, but for the least intelligent also, yet in every age it has produced champions able to cope with the most gifted of its opponents. III. THE EFFECTS IT HAS PRODUCED. 1. Individually. It has made the drunkard sober. 2. Domestically. It has given sanctity to the marriage tie and blessed little children. 3. Socially. It has stood between class and class as the good Samaritan. 4. Politically it has laid the foundation of liberty. (*W. M. Taylor, D.D.*) *Not ashamed of the gospel:*—I. THE NATURE OF THIS AVOWAL. "Not ashamed." 1. Of what is this spoken? Of the gospel's—(1) Doctrines. (2) Precepts. (3) Threatenings. (4) Promises. (5) Privileges. 2. By whom? Paul—(1) The gifted. (2) The disinterested. (3) The self-sacrificing. 3. To whom? Rome—(1) The great. (2) The intellectual. (3) The cruel. 4. What is implied in it? (1) That he gloried in the gospel. (2) That he held everything else in comparative contempt. II. ITS GROUND. 1. The Divine energy of the gospel. 2. The powerful combination against which it has to contend. 3. Its saving efficacy. 4. Its impartiality. Learn—1. The evil of religious cowardice. 2. The necessity of consistency in religion. 3. Your obligation to make it known. 4. Your duty to expect that your efforts will be successful. (*R. Newton, D.D.*) *Not ashamed of the gospel:*—I. WHAT THERE IS IN THE GOSPEL TO MAKE CARNAL MEN ASHAMED OF IT. 1. It proceeds upon principles so contrary to the natural man, and so brings down human reasoning and the pride of intellect, that men are shocked at its positions and requirements. 2. It exposes a man's great idol. 3. It demands absolute submission. 4. The world attributes regard to it to weakness of either the head or heart. 5. It levels men. II. WHY PAUL WAS NOT ASHAMED OF IT. Because he knew it to be—1. The power of God. 2. The power of God to the greatest end—salvation. (*R. Cecil, M.A.*) *Not ashamed of the gospel:*—The solitary grandeur of the imperial city; Paul's knowledge of Rome's own and its borrowed glories, as a centre of power; his courage in meeting the contemptuous estimate which ancient society passed upon the truth of God. I. SOME ELEMENTS OF POWER IN THE GOSPEL. 1. Great in—(1) Motives. (2) Penalties. (3) Sacrifices. (4) Inspirations. 2. These forces Paul had seen exerted on individuals and on communities. They were—(1) Moral forces. (2) Universal. (3) Permanent. II. HAVING SEEN AND FELT THESE BENEFICENT INFLUENCES, PAUL GLORIED IN THE SAME.

We urge—1. Paul's interpretation of the gospel is vital in its power. The doctrines of sin, atonement, the Holy Spirit and eternal retribution, cannot be eliminated and any power remain. A glass crowbar could as well tunnel the Alps. 2. That each of us trust the gospel as heartily as did Paul. Exemplify its power here, and enjoy its fruition in the perfect felicity of heaven. (*R. S. Storrs, D.D.*) *Not ashamed of the gospel*:—There were reasons which made it needful for Paul to say this. The gospel was then a "contemptible thing." Its Author had been despised and executed. Its character was at variance with the traditions of men, and, above all, of the Pharisees. Its followers were looked upon as the scum of the earth. But, amid all this, there was a man of the highest intellect and the noblest powers, who knew the gospel and knew the world, standing forth and declaring in the face of all that he was not ashamed of it. Consider it—I. INTELLECTUALLY. As a scheme it is more magnificent than any mind of man could have conceived. No systems of philosophy possess its grandeur or power. The gospel is no puny, drivelling, or paltry imitation. Other systems have been propounded, but all are borrowed more or less from the gospel. II. MORALLY. It is the purest system of morality which the world has known. God's spotless purity is made the model for human conduct. But the gospel is not only a system of morality, it is a means thereto. It teaches men how they may become holy. Its chief object is to purify and to destroy the evil which is in the world. III. HISTORICALLY. It affords an outline of history of which but for it we should know nothing. That which it is requisite for us to know—the life of Christ, and the particulars of the way of salvation—are fully developed. IV. ITS PURPOSE. It is the "gospel"—good news, and it is the power of God unto salvation. Salvation is a great word. What can we wish for more than it includes? Its object is to transform human nature. It is to glorify the soul, to exalt the spirit, to give us thrones in the kingdom of heaven, to purge us from the dross of sin. Is this a thing whereof to be ashamed? (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Not ashamed of the gospel of Christ*:—There are three gradations of artists. The lowest is one who is able to reproduce an exact representation of natural objects as they appear to ordinary eyes. A higher type is where one brings to objects a clearer eye than belongs to most men. There is a third and rare artist power, where the things represented are, as it were, but instruments to represent the effect produced upon the mind of the artist by the scene, or the event, or the thing, Now, upon this scale Paul was the greatest moral artist of the world. All the way through, it was the unconscious endeavour of the apostle to represent truths as they reflected themselves upon the sensitive surface of his glowing soul. Instead of showing what were all the wonderful elements that in his view constituted it, he reflects what the impression was of the whole gospel of Christ upon his sensitive soul. "I am not ashamed." Well, why should he have been? Every one of us would say it now; but not one of us would have said it in his time, perhaps. In our time, yes. And it is a matter of much interest to imagine what would be Paul's thought if he were permitted to discern the Christianity of the present age and all its triumphs, its monuments, its power, its wealth, its learning, its refinements. 1. If he had looked out into the world and at the external forms and organisations of the Church, what would he have had occasion to be ashamed of? 2. And if Paul had seen the pomp of their worship, and their worship in the pomp of architecture which had been inspired and created by them, he would not have occasion to express a feeling of shame. 3. Still less could he have been insensitive to the literature and the learning that have been inspired among devout scholars all over the world, and that have sprung from Christianity. 4. And still more would he have been in sympathy with the outpouring of the spirit of manhood, "the enthusiasm of humanity," that has sprung from the temper of the gospel, and has gradually crept into the laws, and ameliorated the theory of morals, and softened and sweetened the whole intercourse of human life; and that, moreover, has made man helpful to man. 5. More beautiful still to Paul, who had the art of discerning much from little, would have been the exhibitions of the Christ spirit in its humbler workings among Christian men and in Christianity unorganised, or but slightly organised. 6. More yet, to him, would it have been to have seen what a class of men and women had arisen in every household, and become scattered up and down through every village and hamlet of the land. Domestic life, its purification and its exaltation, would have been a glorious sight to his eyes. As one that should go across a prairie and carry a bag filled with the rarest seeds and give them to the north wind that scattered them south, and to the south wind that scattered them north, every whither, might, years afterwards, when he goes over the same ground,

rejoice to see, in the midst of many coarse weeds and much choking grass, here and there ledges and beds of flowers; so if Paul should come down to our day, and see the seeds he has sown which are every day springing up in the household, would not he be filled with more than gratitude and wonder—with transcendent transport? Of course he would not be ashamed. Nobody is ashamed of the gospel now except those of whom it is ashamed. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Not ashamed of the gospel:*—We are not ashamed of the gospel because it is—I. DIVINE POWER. 1. The history of Christianity among the nations of the earth has established its claim to power. Its progress has often been in the face of bitterest hostility, without the help of worldly patronage. It proved more than a match for the iron despotism of Rome, and it has never failed for eighteen centuries to make its enemies its footstool. 2. The secret of this amazing power is that God is behind it. Nothing but Divine influence could account for such uniform and unfailing triumphs. Other systems may show the power of man, but the gospel shows the power of God. It brought into the world a force unknown before. II. SAVING POWER. The power seen in creation and providence is truly Divine, but not necessarily saving. Nor will the power that resides in the gospel result in salvation, unless it is accompanied by the influence of the Spirit. The gospel—1. Comes with a message of forgiveness to guilty man. Sin is the disease, and in God's hands alone is the remedy. 2. It is a power for the renewal of man's nature. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" This is a task beyond unaided human resources. Man can neither begin the work of grace in his heart nor carry it on after it is begun. III. UNIVERSAL POWER. "To every one that believeth." The glory of the gospel consists not only in its Divine origin or saving efficacy, but also in its universal adaptation. It suits the needs of mankind everywhere. It reaches out a helping-hand to all, without respect to nation or social standing. (*D. Merson, M.A.*) *Not ashamed of the gospel:*—I. JUSTIFY THE HIGH CLAIM HERE MADE FOR THE GOSPEL. Paul was not ashamed of—1. Its origin. The advocates of other systems had reason to be ashamed of their origin. 2. Its sentiments—(1) Of God. God is light, love, purity. (2) Of man. His degradation, guilt, helplessness. (3) Of salvation and of the influences of the Spirit to make that salvation known with power to every heart. (4) Of a future state. Which of these sentiments can cause shame? 3. Its practical tendency. It is a system of purest morals springing from the purest motives—gratitude and love. It shows us a temper without a flaw, and a life without a stain; and it says, "We ought to walk as He also walked." 4. Its efficacy. The efficacy of the ancient systems was nothing. But the gospel is "the power of God to salvation." II. WHO ARE GUILTY OF BEING ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL? One would suppose that none could ever be ashamed of it; but, alas! there is reason to fear that some are. 1. Such are those preachers and writers who know the truth, but conceal it by specious arguments. 2. In the social circle how many are ashamed of the gospel! 3. In private life there is not that attention to religion which there should be. Young Christians are too often ashamed because of the sneers of those around them. (*B. Rayson.*) *Not ashamed of the gospel:*—The botanist is not ashamed of the insignificant plant which he prefers before the rose and the jasmine, because of its healing properties and powers. The gardener is not ashamed of the tiny, dusky little seed, because he knows that God has endued it with hidden virtues which He has denied to the diamond and ruby. Thus the apostle was not ashamed of the gospel, because it could accomplish what the law was powerless to do; and because from his own personal experience he knew that it was able to produce a mighty and spiritual change in a man's whole character and life. (*C. Neil, M.A.*) *Not ashamed of the gospel of Christ:*—1. Years ago the subject of the extension of the Church would have suggested questions of one kind only—viz., that it was desirable, and possibly discussions would have turned upon the best means of carrying it out. Now you only raise in certain minds the previous question, whether it is worth the effort. 2. St. Paul is led to use this expression by an association of ideas which is easy to trace. "In Rome also." Before his imagination there rises the imperial form of the mistress of the world. And this vision for a moment produces a momentary recoil, so that, like a man whose course has been suddenly checked, he falls back to consider the resources at his disposal. There is a moment's pause and then, "I am not ashamed," he says. 3. He is not ashamed of the gospel. We are struck at first by the reserved and negative phrase. It seems to fall so far below the requirements of the occasion and the character of the man. Elsewhere the apostle uses very different language from this. He loves to call the gospel, just as the Jews call

their law, his boast. The truth is the apostle is not using a rhetorical figure at all. His negative and measured phrase is imposed on him by the thoughts which rise before him. He is resisting the feeling which threatens to overawe him, and it is in protesting against this feeling, and in thus disavowing it, that he cries, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ." Why, you may ask, should he be ashamed of it? Note—I. THE APPARENT INSIGNIFICANCE OF THE GOSPEL RELATIVELY TO THE GREAT WORLD OF THOUGHT AND ACTION REPRESENTED BY AND EMBODIED IN ROME. 1. The very name was a symbol of magnificence and power. Rome was the seat of empire, the centre of society, the home and the patroness of learning and thought, the great centre of the current religions. She was in ancient civilisation what Paris is to France; everything else was provincial. 2. And the gospel—how did it look when placed in juxtaposition with Rome? Was it not relatively to everything else, as far as the natural sense and judgment of man could pierce, poor and insignificant? (1) The estimate which a French academician might be supposed to form of Quakerism is probably not unlike the estimate which approved itself to the most cultivated minds in Rome respecting the religion of St. Paul. (2) And then if it meant to propagate itself, what was its organisation? How could a few unnoticed congregations challenge any sort of comparison with the mighty system of the imperial rule? (3) Where was its literature? How could it compete with the genius of poets and historians who had the ear of the world? (4) Where were its leading men when set side by side with the accomplished statesman who had created, and who still from time to time ruled the empire? Yes, Rome must overawe, by the magnificence of its collective splendours, the pretensions of any system, or of any teacher coming from an out-of-the-way corner of the empire, on a commission to illuminate and to change the world. 3. True enough Paul had his eye on higher things; but his was too sympathetic a nature not to be alive to what was meant by Rome. Yet the splendours of Rome do not overawe him. He is not enslaved by the apparent at the cost of the real; he knows that a civilisation which bears a proud front to the world, but which is rotten within, is destined to perish. Already, five years before, he has shown in one line in 2 Thess. that he forsees the end of all this splendour. In Christian eyes Alaric and his Goths were at the gates of Rome before their time. 4. St. Paul was well aware of the insignificance of the gospel when measured by all ordinary human standards. It was his own observation that not many mighty, not many noble, are "called." But then, in his estimate of the relative value of the Divine and the human, this did not matter; for "God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty." II. THE APPEARANCE OF FAILURE WHICH HAD CLUNG TO THE GOSPEL. 1. Remember that he was writing from Corinth, and what was the Church there a short year before in the judgment of the apostle himself. Its discipline forgotten; its unity rent by schisms; fundamental articles of the faith were denied among its members; scandals permitted such as were not even named among the heathen. Of all this the apostle was sufficiently conscious; and yet with Corinth behind him, and Rome with its gigantic and unattempted problems before him, he still exclaims, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ." 2. And the truth is that in this matter St. Paul distinguished between the ideal revealed from above as in his Master's mind, and the real, embarrassed by the conditions imposed on it by fallen human nature. He "knew that the treasure of the faith was deposited in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the glory might be of God and not of us." And, therefore, Paul for his part was not surprised. The failure lay not in the gift, but in the recipient. It was still possible to believe that a new power had entered into human nature which was not therefore incapable of raising and saving human nature, because it did not suspend man's free will and overrule his instincts of resistance and mischief. III. THE SUBSTANCE OF THE MESSAGE. 1. Paul was well aware that there were features in the Christian creed which were in the highest degree unwelcome. Less than this he cannot mean by "the offence of the Cross," or "Christ crucified foolishness to the Greeks." How was this teaching, familiar enough to our generation but strange beyond all measure to the men who heard it from its first preachers, to compass acceptance and victory? Was it the cogeny of the evidence? No doubt much of the earliest teaching of the apostles was devoted to enforce this. Certainly the resurrection of Christ was sufficiently well attested, and yet its witnesses were not believed. Mere demonstrative evidence, although at first hand, has no effect against a strong and hostile predisposition of the will. 2. And here it is that the apostle may give us his own reason for not being ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for not despairing of its capacity to win a cynical and scornful world.

He says that it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. There is lodged in it a secret impetuosity which pours forth from it into the human soul, with the result of bearing down all opposition and landing it safely on the eternal shore. And by this gospel he means no mere fragment of it, such as Christian morality without Christian doctrine, or as the atonement without the grace and power of the sacraments. For all, all is really included in that free unmerited gift of righteousness which faith receives at the hands of Christ, and which robes the believer in the garments of salvation. St. Paul knew that this had been his own experience. Since that scene on the road to Damascus he had been another man, he had lived a new life. Old things had passed away, and all things had become new. And as with himself, so with others. The gospel had made many a man, whom he knew, utterly unlike his former self. The religion of Jesus Christ is here upon ground peculiarly its own. There are many claimants in our modern world for the throne which it has owned for eighteen hundred years. But whether the eye rests upon the masters who have done so much for mind, or upon the masters who have spent themselves in manipulating matter, what has been achieved by these great and distinguished men that could be described as the power of God unto salvation? No: the deeper aspects of human life, and much more the grave and real significance of death, are quite beyond them. 3. And yet, even here, a lingering feeling might well be experienced, I do not say of shame, but of hesitation. Those to whom the saving power of Christ's gospel is intimately certain, cannot without difficulty bring themselves to talk about it. We do not any of us readily talk about that which really touches us. Men have no objection to talk politics, because politics address themselves to those common sympathies and judgments which we share with others. But no man will consent to discuss, if he can help it, his near relations or some family interest in public. This motive operates not unfrequently in the case of religion. Religion twines itself round the heart like a family affection. The relations of each soul to the Lord of souls are quite unique; and therefore the very best of men are not unfrequently the least able to talk freely on the one subject respecting which they feel most deeply. Doubtless so human and sympathetic a nature as St. Paul's would have felt this difficulty in its full force, and yet we know how completely he overcame it. If he did not yield to the instinct which would have sealed his lips and stilled his pen, this is so because he knew that the gospel of his Lord and Master was not really, like some family question or interest, a private matter for him. The friend of his soul was the rightful, the much-needed friend of every human being. And therefore no false reserve could permit St. Paul to treat the gospel as a private or personal interest. Conclusion: In their degree the feelings which may have been present to St. Paul's mind will have been our own. Pagan Rome has perished, and yet that which it represented to the apostle's eye is still in a modified form before us. And yet to those who can take a sober measure of men and things there are no reasons for being ashamed of Christ's gospel. The world which confronts us is really not more splendid nor yet more solid than the empire which has long since gone its way. The religious weakness and disorganisation which alarms us in the Church is not greater than that which was familiar to St. Paul. Modern attacks upon the faith are not more formidable than those which he refuted. And the gospel is now what it was then, only to a much greater multitude of souls, the power of God unto salvation. 1. "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ." Here is a fitting motto, not merely to Christ's great apostle, but—(1) To the humblest and weakest of His ministers. No man who wears His livery can be ashamed of His gospel without incurring even the scorn of the world. (2) For every young man who is entering upon life. You know what is practically meant by being ashamed of the gospel. The creed is best confessed in the life of the believer. (3) For a nation which owes to Christ's gospel so great a debt as England has owed it now for 1,400 years. They tell us, indeed, that the gospel is an admirable guide of life for the individual, but that it has no business to enter into the sphere of politics. But if the religious principle is worth anything, it applies to a million of human beings just as truly as to one. Yet many a man who is exemplary in all the private relations of life, is in his public conduct and political opinions too often ashamed of the gospel of Christ. Let us be honest. Let us either have the courage not to be ashamed of the gospel of Christ in any one department of life and thought, or let us own that we have really adapted the ethics of the New Testament to suit a state of feeling and conduct which they were intended gradually to render impossible. (*Canon Liddon.*) *Who are ashamed of the gospel:*—I. THE WISE, because it calls men to believe

and not to argue. II. THE GREAT, because it brings all into one body. III. THE RICH, because it is to be had without money and without price. IV. THE GAY, because they fear it will destroy all their mirth. (*R. M. McCheyne.*) *The gospel ashamed of some of its preachers*:—Dr. Murray was made warden of Manchester by James I. There was little to do, and Murray had neither the ability nor the inclination to do much. He was expected to preach but seldom, and he did not intend to preach at all. Once, however, he did preach before the king, and his text was, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ." "True" said James, "but the gospel may well be ashamed of thee." *The shame of the gospel of Christ is its glory*:—I. In its relation to the HUMAN INTELLECT. Its mysterious character. II. In its relation to the MORAL CONSTITUTION. Its humiliating character. III. In its relation to OTHER KINDS OF RELIGION. Its transcendent character. IV. In its relation to THIS LIFE. Its unworldly character. (*H. G. Weston, D.D.*) *Reasons for glorying in the gospel*:—There are three things in connection with this avowal which invest it with great significance: the distinguished character of the author—the great apostle; the universally execrated nature of the subject—the religion of the crucified malefactor; and the class of persons to whom it was addressed, the cultured, intrepid inhabitants of the imperial city. For such an avowal there must have been good reasons and here they are specified:—The gospel is—I. A SYSTEM OF DIVINE POWER. 1. There are three manifestations of Divine power. (1) Material, as seen in the production, support, and order of the universe. (2) Intellectual, as seen in the plan upon which the whole, the vast and the minute, is organised. (3) Moral, as seen in the influence of God's thoughts and feelings upon the minds of His intelligent creatures. The last is the power of the gospel, God's truth. 2. All truth is powerful. But there are three things that make gospel truth peculiarly powerful. (1) It is moral, appealing to the conscience and heart. (2) Remedial, graciously providing for our deeply-felt spiritual wants. (3) Embodied in the living example of God Himself. There then is one reason why Paul was not ashamed of it. Had it been a weak thing, he as a strong-minded man might have blushed to own it. II. A SYSTEM OF DIVINE POWER TO SAVE. What is salvation? Some persons speak of it as if it were a local change, a transporting of man from one world to another. "But the mind is its own place." Salvation may be regarded as consisting in the restoration of a—1. Lost love. We were made to be governed in all things by a supreme affection for God, but nothing is more clear than that man is not so governed now. The gospel comes to restore it. 2. Lost harmony. The soul is all in tumult. This cannot be the normal state. 3. Lost usefulness. Our relations to each other and our social instincts and powers are such as to show that we were intended to be useful to each other. But we are injurious. The gospel makes us useful. This is another reason which made Paul glory in it. If it had been a power to destroy, his generous nature would have been ashamed of it. Any power can destroy. III. A system of Divine power TO SAVE ALL. 1. "The Jew first," because—(1) He has the best opportunity of testing the foundation facts of the gospel. (2) When converted he would become the most effective agent in converting others. (3) It exhibits more strikingly the merciful genius of the gospel. The Jew, the murderer of the prophets and of Christ, &c. 2. The gospel is, like the air and sun, for humanity. Had it been for a sect, or class, Paul might have been ashamed of it. IV. A system of Divine power to save all ON THE MOST SIMPLE CONDITION. "To every one that believeth." Man as man—1. Has this power to believe. It requires no peculiar talent or attainment. 2. Has a strong tendency to believe. He is credulous to a fault. Conclusion:—Who are ashamed of the gospel? 1. Any in heaven? No! They owe their blessedness to its discoveries, and chant the praises of its Author. 2. Any in hell? No! There are thousands there ashamed of themselves for having been ashamed of the gospel. 3. Who on earth? Not the best parents, &c., the greatest sages, poets, patriots and philanthropists. They are to be found in the lower strata of moral life. They are to be found amongst men who ought to be ashamed of themselves. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Moral courage ready to encounter shame*:—Let us not pass over the intrepidity of Paul, in the open and public avowal of his Christianity. We call it intrepidity, though he speaks not here of having to encounter violence, but only of having to encounter shame. For, in truth, it is often a higher effort and evidence of intrepidity to front disgrace, than it is to front danger. There is many a man who would march up to the cannon's mouth for the honour of his country, yet would not face the laugh of his companions for the honour of his Saviour. We doubt not that there are individuals here who, if they were

plied with all the devices of eastern cruelty to abjure the name of Christian, whose courage would bear them in triumph, and yet whose courage fails them every day in the softer scenes of their social and domestic history. The man who under the excitements of persecution was brave enough to be a dying witness to Jesus, crouches into all the timidity of silence under the omnipotency of fashion. There is as much of the truly heroic in not being ashamed of the profession of the gospel, as in not being afraid of it. Paul was neither: and yet when we think of what he once was in literature, and how aware he must have been of the loftiness of its contempt for the doctrine of a crucified Saviour; and that in Rome the whole power and bitterness of its derisions were awaiting him, and that the main weapon with which he had to confront it was such an argument as looked to be foolishness to the wisdom of this world—we doubt not that the disdain inflicted by philosophy was naturally as formidable to the mind of this apostle as the death inflicted by the arm of bloody violence. So that even now, and in an age when Christianity has no penalties and no proscriptions to keep her down, still, if all that deserves the name of Christianity be exploded from conversation—if a visible embarrassment run through a company when its piety or its doctrine is introduced among them—if, among beings rapidly moving towards immortality, any serious allusion to the concerns of immortality stamps an oddity on the character of him who brings it forward—if, through a tacit but firm compact which regulates the intercourse of this world, the gospel is as effectually banished from the ordinary converse of society as by the edicts of tyranny the profession of it was banished in the days of Claudius from Rome:—then he who would walk in his Christian integrity among the men of this lukewarm and degenerate age—he who, rising above that meagre and mitigated Christianity which is as remote as Paganism from the real Christianity of the New Testament, would, out of the abundance of his heart, speak of the things which pertain to the kingdom of God—he will find that there are trials still which, to some temperaments, are as fierce and as fiery as any in the days of martyrdom; and that, however in some select and peculiar walk he may find a few to sympathise with him, yet many are the families and many are the circles of companionship where the persecution of contempt calls for determination as strenuous, and for firmness as manly, as ever in the most intolerant ages of our Church did the persecution of direct and personal violence. (*T. Chalmers, D.D.*) **For it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.**—*The power of the gospel:*—I. THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL. 1. We can quite understand that to a man of such singular force of character as St. Paul, the "power" of the gospel would be its leading idea. To St. John, it might be its sweetness. And we can follow the current of St. Paul's feelings when he said that he could not be "ashamed" of anything which was so very strong. 2. What we all want is to treat religion more as a thing of "power." We think and speak of it, and act about it, too softly. It is a thing of beauty, poetry, enjoyment,—but would not it be far better if we held it more as a grand fact for vigorous thought, manly action, and practical effort? The piety of the day is too enervated. Hence its watery literature, its feeble hold on the minds of working men, its pettiness, unreality, and small results. There would be less "shame" if there were more "power." 3. I need scarcely say that before the gospel can be this "power," it must be gospel indeed—not a theory, a system of theology, an abstract truth, a diluted joy, something half fear and half hope, but "God's spell." II. SOME FACTS IN REFERENCE TO THIS POWER. 1. The Christian religion is the only one which has ever had "power" to set in motion real missionary action. Why? The selfishness and sluggishness of human nature is exclusive, and it requires an immense lever to stir it, and nothing in the world has ever been found equal to do it, except the love of such a God as we have in Christ. That, and that only, can "thrust out labourers into the vineyard." We have something to say worth making a mission for—we have a motive which can send us forth to say it. 2. See what the gospel of God does in all lands wherever it is planted—what softening of savagery, what civilisation it carries along with it. True, it may be hindered by the inconsistencies of Christians. But in itself the gospel always grows into an improvement in everything. 3. Look over this world at this moment. There are about two hundred millions of Christians upon the earth—once there were twelve. The increase without war—the great engine of Mahometanism—with very little to please and attract flesh and blood into it, rather with the greatest opposition to all which is natural to us, what "power" lies in that single historical fact! 4. Or let me tell you the experience of every Christian minister. It is when he preaches the full simple gospel that he gets all his success.

If he preach morality, or an abstract divinity, or a gospel which is half gospel, he has no results whatever. But Christ carries everything. 5. Or listen to the witness of your own heart. (1) What have been the best hours of your life? The hours when Christ was most to you. (2) Who is the really composed man, but the man who is at peace in his own soul. That man does everything with confidence, and rest is power—"the power of God." III. WAYS IN WHICH YOU MAY USE THIS "POWER." 1. Perhaps you are a weak character. You long for more strength of mind, and will, and purpose, and for capacity and power to persevere. Now nothing will give what you want but real personal religion—union with Christ, the gospel of Christ in you, and that gospel is "power." 2. Or you may have a habit, and you want to conquer it. Bring Christ to bear upon that habit, have motive enough, make the effort for Christ's sake, because He has loved you, do it to please Him, and show that you love Him. That principle will command all victory. 3. Or, perhaps, there is some one you very much wish to influence, but you cannot move him. Lead him to your object through the peace you bring into his own soul, and Christ will be stronger than the strong one. 4. Or, you are conscious of a want of moral courage in speaking of religious subjects; there is only one remedy, Christ must be more to you, and then you will be able to say, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ," &c. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *The gospel's power: it is great*:—I. IN THE REVELATION IT EMBODIES. It is the power of God, because it not only emanates from God, but God is in it. The Father has centred all His thoughts in the words of His gospel, and these words retain their power because they are the only satisfying portion of the human heart. II. IN THE DELIVERANCE IT EFFECTS. It was with a mighty hand that Israel was delivered from Egyptian bondage. No less wonderful is the power demonstrated in the deliverance of man from under the thraldom of sin. III. IN THE TRANSFORMATION IT PRODUCES. IV. IN THE MOTIVES IT INSPIRES. Men are actuated by a desire to gain wealth, fame, learning; and what unflagging energy this inspires! The gospel inspires us with a hope of being kings and priests unto God. But love to God and our fellow-men is to be the great motive for our actions. This is to be the ruling power of our lives, and this will render us godlike. V. IN THE UNIVERSALITY OF ITS APPLICATION. "To every one that believeth." It is the gospel for mankind, and among all nations it has gained its trophies. Its power has not waned. Conclusion:—Its hindrances are in the individual soul. Sin makes the barrier. But the gospel brought home by the Spirit can overcome all. There is nothing in it of which we should be ashamed. (*A. Huelston, Ph.D.*) *The power of the gospel contrasted with other theories*:—Suppose that two persons start upon a philanthropic mission. One shall be a preacher determined to preach the old-fashioned gospel; and the other shall be a nineteenth century lecturer, whose great article of faith is, "I believe in the nineteenth century." Each of us addresses congregations, and at the end of one of my sermons I say, "Now then, if there are any of you who feel yourselves tied and bound with the chain of your sins, while you are longing to lead a better life, stay behind and I will endeavour to make the way as plain as I can." Well, suppose also that the lecturer has delivered his oration, the place is crowded, and a great amount of enthusiasm is kindled by the wonderful oratory of the man. At the end, suppose again that he too says something of the same kind: "Now then, I have been speaking of the progress of civilisation, and the development of humanity, and what we may expect as years roll away and as man rises to a higher level. But I wish to be practical, and to endeavour to benefit any now present who feel they need some help. Should any of you to-night feel as if you are failing to benefit by this general advance that is being made, just remain behind and I will offer you a few words of advice." Suppose that in both cases the invitation is accepted by some. I come down, and there approaches me a miserable-looking specimen of humanity. I have only to look in his face to see the marks of sin there. A few minutes' conversation discloses the fact that there is scarcely a sin which that man has not committed; tears stand in his eyes as he says to me, "I wish you could tell me, sir, what I must do to be saved." To such a one I should have no difficulty in making answer—"My dear brother, you are just the person I have to preach to. My Master came to seek and to save the lost. Tell me, are you altogether out of conceit, nay, out of heart, with yourself?" I can imagine the melancholy reply, "What hope have I left in myself? Unless a higher power than mine do something for me, there is nothing before me but despair." If such be the response, I can hail that self-despair as the harbinger of true hope. I am able to lead the forlorn and hopeless wretch out of self and into Christ; show him the

provision that has been made to meet the case of the helpless, and guide him step by step, till at length he claims Christ as his all-sufficient Saviour who is able to save to the uttermost. Well, in such a case, the man will become a changed person. The intervention of the Creator will have made him a new creature, and he who before delighted in sin, will suddenly find himself hating sin and loving purity and holiness. Now let us turn to the other scene. The lecture is just closing, and the lecturer gives such an invitation as I have suggested. One man comes up and addresses himself to the lecturer: "I am a very bad man, and have lived a very bad life, and I want to know if you can give me any advice that shall make me better." "Well, my friend, reasoning on utilitarian grounds, I assume that you have found your evil course not much to your advantage." "Advantage! Why, I have stripped my house of every comfort, and turned it into a wild beast's den rather than a human home; I have lost my situations; and it is all through that cursed drink." "Then your case is very clear, my friend. You can see without any lecture on utilitarianism that drunkenness is unprofitable to you." "Well, I know that; but the point is how I am to overcome this craving." "Well, first reflect seriously that you are injuring yourself." "But I am convinced of that already." "Well, then act in accordance with that conviction; sign the pledge." "I have signed the pledge, over and over again, but I cannot keep it." "Why not? Have you been really in earnest?" "Yes, sir; but I could never keep it for any length of time." "Well, but you had better sign it again." "I have signed it a dozen times, sir." "Well, I don't know what to advise; struggle more earnestly." "But I have struggled my very utmost." "Then can you keep out of the way of bad company?" "I may try, sir; but the bad company won't keep out of my way." What is the lecturer to say next? My own impression is that there is nothing left for the apostle of the new creed but to admit his failure, unless he has the assurance to say to him, "Very well, then, your only chance is to believe in the nineteenth century!" But where is there one who would dare to say this? No! the individual must perish, while the lecturer comforts himself with the hope that the species will improve. You ask me to lay aside the gospel, and take in place of it one which leaves me in such a position that I am morally helpless and incapable of grappling with the infirmities of human nature, or of holding out a helping hand to those around me who are sinking down to perdition. We are asked to accept the dictates of science, or the theories of philosophers, or what are supposed to be exhibitions of supernatural power, or some enthusiastic visionary who sets himself up as a religious reformer, and bids us accommodate our convictions to his dreams. But we go back to that question, "Where is the power?" As I look around on all the various substitutes for the gospel, I seek an answer, and I seek in vain. Where is the man who is ready to tell me how a bad man is to become good, how a weak man is to become strong? From all these I turn to the cross of Emmanuel. The power of God in redemption is felt, and from the cross I see men going forth, new creatures in Christ Jesus, possessed of new desires and new affections, and animated by a new power. (*W. Hay Aitken, M.A.*) *The gospel a power unto salvation*:—(Text, and Matt. vi. 13; Acts. i. 8). The first of these verses declares that power belongs to God, and, by implication, that we have power only as we borrow it from God; the second, how this power is, in the moral and spiritual realm, to be bestowed upon men; the third, through what instrumentality this power shall be bestowed—"the gospel." I. THE RELIGION OF THE BIBLE IS, THEN, CHARACTERISTICALLY A POWER-BESTOWING RELIGION. It is this which distinguishes it from all other religions. 1. All the significance of the miracles of the Old Testament and the New Testament lies in this, that they are witnesses to a help that lies beyond humanity, but which is extended to humanity. The entire Old Testament is the history of a power not belonging to humanity, and yet working for the benefit of Israel. It is by the power of God that the Israelites are summoned from their boudage, that the waves of the Red Sea part for them, and that one after another victory crowns their campaigning in Palestine. The history is not the history of what the Jews did or Jewish great men did, but of what a power not themselves was doing for them. As this is the Old Testament history, so this is the Old Testament experience of the individual. It reappears in David, in Isaiah, in every prophet. 2. The old doctrine that power belongeth unto God, and that God bestows this power upon His children, reappears in the New Testament, but in a new form. It is now the spiritual helpfulness of God that comes to the front. We speak as though a man's power had greatly increased our power during the past few centuries; but all the power of civilisation is a power that is not our

own. We have increased a little our individual muscular power, but the increase is very little, while it is stored in nature, and we lay hold upon it and use it. And I will not go to an orthodox authority, but I will ask Herbert Spencer what this power is in that famous definition: "Amid the mysteries which become the more mysterious the more they are thought about, there will remain the absolute certainty that we are ever in the presence of an Infinite and Eternal Energy from whom all things proceed." What is this but the old Hebrew Psalmist's "Power belongeth unto God?" And what is the result of all modern science but this: a skill to lay hold on this power that is not our own, and to make it our own by obedience to its laws? 3. Now, the New Testament, as a spiritual appendix to the Old, confirmed by modern science, adds the declaration that there are powers not our own that make for human helpfulness and lift us up in the spiritual realm. The power that is of God is a power unto spiritual salvation. As there is a power to help man in the material and physical world, so there is a power to help him in the realm of virtue and truth. A hopeful man can inspire hope; a weak-willed man can be made stronger in will by leaning upon a man whose will is stronger than his own; there is power in a great heart to fill vacant hearts full of noble, Divine love. 4. And as the individual imparts to the individual, parents to their children, the teacher to his pupils, the pastor to his congregation, so generations impart to other generations. It is not all a fiction, this Roman Catholic idea of works of supererogation stored up, on which men may draw. The world has accumulated a great reservoir of virtue, and we draw on it every day. You are stronger men and women to-day for your Puritan ancestry, for your Anglo-Saxon blood. II. SALVATION IS NOT SOMETHING YOU ARE TO GET IN HEAVEN BY AND BY, ON CONDITION THAT YOU DO BELIEVE, THINK, OR EXPERIENCE SOMETHING HERE ON EARTH NOW. That man will be saved from future punishment through faith in Christ is true, but it is not the burden of the Bible declaration. The great good news of the Bible is this: men are saved from the burdens of their present life; from the darkness of their scepticism; from the bondage of their superstition; from inhumanity, weakness of will, and sin, here and now. This universe is stored with great spiritual powers. Do not fight your battle alone; lay hold on those powers and ask their help in the conflict. "There is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." What is that? A narrow declaration? Not at all. I find a man trying to lift a great stone, which is too heavy for his strength; and I say to him, Get out your tackle and pulleys, and then you can lift it. Is that narrow? No man can take the fruits of civilisation unless he lays hold on powers other than his own; and no man can take the fruit of Divine culture unless he reaches out and lays hold of powers that are not his own, that make for righteousness. III. FAITH IS NOT BELIEF. It is not belief in a long or a short creed. Faith does in the spiritual realm that which reason does in the material realm. It is simply reaching out a heart of sympathy and laying hold on the heart of God, and receiving strength that God pours into the children whose souls are open to receive His help. What virtue is there in the mere declaration of an opinion? This is not faith. Faith in Christ is an appreciation of the quality that is in Christ, a sense of His worth, a desire to be like Him, a resolute purpose to follow after Him. (*Lyman Abbott, D.D.*)

The power of the gospel to save:—The gospel manifests the power of God. I. IN THE REVELATION IT MAKES OF WHAT GOD HAS DONE FOR US IN THE WORK OF HIS SON. 1. As transgressors the law held us in bondage, and bound us over to endure the wages of sin in everlasting death. But in the obedience which Christ has rendered to the law, and the satisfaction He has made to its demands, He has opened a new and certain way of life for the guilty. Satan also held us captive, but Christ has overcome him who had the power of death. 2. The influence of this work is displayed—(1) In heaven in the acceptance there of Christ's sacrifice, in His prevailing intercession, and in the continual crowning of the subjects of His redemption. (2) On earth in the increasing testimony that is borne to the glorious redemption, in the providence which causes all things to work together for the good of the redeemed, and in the continual progress of the truth. (3) In hell, in the subjection which it compels Satan to acknowledge to the Lord Jesus. II. IN THE EXHIBITION OF THE WORK WHICH GOD ACCOMPLISHES WITHIN US BY HIS SPIRIT. Take a view of this as given—1. In the past history of the Church. Reflect on the progress of the gospel, and the multitudes who have been actually rescued. 2. In the experience of the individual. (1) Who awakens and converts the careless sinner? (2) Who justifies the penitent believer, and gives him peace and acceptance with God? (3) Who carries on in increasing holiness the work thus commenced?

(4) Who upholds and preserves to final salvation those who are thus brought to God? (5) Who finally crowns the subjects of grace in glory? III. IN THE PROPER GROUND FOR HOPE WHICH IT THUS AFFORDS. 1. If you look upon yourselves you find yourselves utterly weak and unworthy; but there is offered to you in the gospel a sufficient and abiding hope. 2. Let the Christ have all the praise for this work of salvation. (*S. H. Tyng, D.D.*) *The gospel the power of God*:—There are two reasons for which we may be ashamed of anything—1. If it be base in itself, or shameful in its aim. 2. Though good in itself, and honourable in its aim, if it be weak and powerless to achieve the good it aims at. For example: we are ashamed of a traitor who sells his country for gold; and of a general who, though loyally fighting for his country, ruins its cause through ignorance or incapacity. Paul was not ashamed of the gospel because—I. IT WAS NOT BASE IN ITSELF, NOR SHAMEFUL IN ITS AIMS. Its facts were true, its morals pure, its doctrine ennobling. Its aim is "salvation." You have seen at a railway station carriages labelled "London," "Edinburgh," &c., signifying that the company engaged to carry the passengers to these places. So the gospel is labelled as intended to carry passengers "unto salvation." Anything short of that would be to fail in its promise. But what is this "salvation"? The common idea is, that when a man dies he shall be saved from hell and have a place in heaven. But salvation implies more than this—deliverance from the corruption of sin as well as from its condemnation; from its power as well as from its punishment—in short, deliverance from sin itself. II. IT WAS NOT FEEBLE AND UNABLE TO ACHIEVE ITS AIM. Its power is as great as its purpose is good. This is what most of all we need? We know the doctrines of the gospel, the sins it forbids, the duties it requires, the hopes it teaches. But somehow we feel that these things do not influence us as they ought. What we need is power to convince us, to subdue us, to rule over us, to sustain us, power to resist the devil, to overcome the world. In some things the gospel has come to us in power. For example, we believe in the forgiveness of sins through Christ's blood. And that belief has brought us peace from the fear of punishment. But oh! how we long that the words, "Go and sin no more," would "come in power." Behold, then, gospel promises do not speak more truly of pardon than they speak of power for present duty by Christ's living grace. III. ITS OFFER IS NOT LIMITED TO ANY ONE NATION OR CLASS, but is free and sure "to every one that believeth." "To as many as received Him, to them gave He power," &c. Every one who believes on Jesus receives of the Holy Spirit. They receive this power, but they must use it. The power of God is laid up for them in Christ; but out of His fulness they must go on to draw grace for grace. (*W. Grant.*) *The gospel the power of God*:—1. The apostle here gives his reason for the statement that he was willing to preach the gospel in Rome. In characterising the gospel as "the power of God," he showed his usual tact. It was his object to present the gospel to his readers in such an aspect as would commend it to their peculiar disposition as admirers of power. At Athens, on the other hand, he was amongst a people who spent their time in telling or hearing some new thing. The apostle, therefore, observing an altar to "the unknown God," presents himself as one who had the key to this mystery. The effect upon men of such an inquisitive turn of mind may be easily conceived. The Corinthians, again, made great pretensions to wisdom; to them, therefore, the apostle represents the gospel as the highest wisdom—the wisdom of God. Whilst, however, representing the gospel as "power," to the Romans the apostle is careful to say that it was the "power of God," not that military and political power so much desiderated by them. 2. In the text we have three terms, salvation, gospel, and power. The gospel effects the salvation, and the power is the reason why. (1) Salvation must be regarded in the light of the exposition of it given in this Epistle. Three words describe it—justification, sanctification, and glorification. The first is the soul's deliverance from the condemnation and penalty of sin (chaps. i.–v.); the second, its emancipation from its dominion as a ruling principle (chaps. vi., vii.); and the third, the bestowment upon it of everlasting happiness and glory (chap. viii.). (2) The gospel as a record embodies a scheme of truth based upon a series of transactions of transcendent glory, the incarnation of the Son of God, His life, death, resurrection, exaltation, and the gift of the Holy Ghost. As a message of mercy, the truths it records are presented for acceptance as a means for effecting salvation. (3) The power of God. The gospel is—I. THE PRODUCT OF DIVINE POWER. The transactions it records testify to the power of God in the same way that every author's power is revealed by his works. Power has three qualities. Moral, which indicates the motive, and has regard to the end

in view; intellectual, which contrives, and has regard to the means; physical, which executes, *i.e.*, applies the means devised to the end contemplated. Thus, power manifests itself in force, contrivance, and purpose. The Divine operations ever display these qualities. These qualities, however, in the gospel show different degrees of combination from those which obtain in creation—*e.g.*, all physical objects are distinguished by some one particular colour, although all the other hues of light are there. In the light falling upon objects which appear blue, all the hues of light are present, but by the operation of a certain law, the blue alone presents itself to the eye. So in creation physical power prevails, at least to our senses. The multiplicity of its worlds and their vast magnitude divert the mind from the equally glorious, but less obtrusive, manifestations of intellect and beneficence. Now the gospel is a marvellous manifestation of power in its several phases. As the product of God's moral power it is defined as "the exceeding riches of His grace" (Eph. ii. 5). As an exhibition of His intellectual power it is represented as "making known the manifold wisdom of God" (Eph. iii. 10; 1 Pet. i. 10). Its manifestations of physical power, instanced in the resurrection and exaltation of Jesus, are described as the working of His mighty power (Eph. i. 19). But its moral power is its crown and glory. One characteristic will suffice to show this. Its pith and marrow is its provision for the forgiveness of sin, and this is the grandest exercise of moral power possible. "Who is a God like unto Thee, that pardoneth iniquity?" So far was the idea of forgiveness from the hearts of men that when they came to create gods they never imagined gods possessed of the power to pardon sin. Does not this prove that the religion which presents this fact to us must be, as regards its conception, absolutely Divine? II. AN INSTRUMENT OF DIVINE POWER. "The power of God unto salvation." The transactions it embodies were characterised by superlative condescension and self-sacrifice. As such they were replete with power in the two senses of legal merit and spiritual influence—the one forming the ground of men's reconciliation with God, the other forming the instrumentality for weaning them from sin, for changing their disposition, subduing their passions, and kindling in their hearts the love of Christ. But this is not all. The gospel possesses instrumental fitness for securing justification and sanctification, but in order that these may become experimental realities men must, believingly, accept, as the ground and instrument of their salvation, the transactions it records. Hence powerful influences are necessary to overcome men's indifference and stubbornness. The gospel is the power of God to this end. The transactions it embodies are presented as messages of love. This message is instinct with the moral and Divine power of the transactions which form its theme. No wonder the gospel is called the "word of salvation"—the word which both reveals salvation and opens the heart, by conviction, to its reception. (*A. J. Parry.*)

The gospel the power of God:—The gospel is the power of God—I. IN ITS MOST PARADOXICAL AND YET HIGHEST FORM. 1. Of course, the message was power only as being the record of power; the real energy lay in the Incarnate Word. And Paul's thought is, that high above all other manifestations of the Divine energy, rises that strange paradox, the omnipotence of God declared in weakness. Sinai is impotent, compared with the tremendous forces which stream from the little hillock, where stand three black crosses, and a dying Christ on the midmost. 2. There is the power of God; for material force is not power; nor majesty, which being deprived of its externals becomes a jest; nor the rule over men's wills by iron constraint; nor is the rule of ideas the highest power; but the Divinest force in God is tenderness, and the true signature of omnipotence is love. (1) What a discovery of the depths of the Godhead that is! The world has heard of gods of physical force, lustful, whimsical, benevolent by fits and starts, vengeful when mood suits them; gods apathetic and indifferent, but it never dreamed until this Man came of a God whose power could drape itself in weakness, and was guided by love. (2) What a lesson as to where the true strength and greatness for man lies! We have had enough of the worship of genius; of the beating of drums and singing hosannas over the achievements of poet and philosopher, and artist and scholar. Let us remember that there is a stronger thing in the world than all these, and that is patient gentleness that bows, and bears, and suffers, and dies. II. IN ITS MIGHTIEST OPERATION. Rome gathered its forces for destruction. And Paul is thinking of the contrast between the devilish use of human strength which generally attends it, and the Divine use of Divine power which dedicates it all for salvation. Salvation is negatively the deliverance from everything that is evil; positively it is the endowment with every good. 1. Think of the strange audacity of Christianity in calmly pro-

posing to itself such an end as this. People tell us that the gospel idea of men is dark and depressing. Why? but because the gospel can afford to look facts in the face, inasmuch as it knows itself able to overcome all that is evil, and to reverse and supplant it by perfect good. And there is nothing in the New Testament that is more of the nature of a demonstration of its Divine energy than the unruffled composure with which it declares, looking on the ruins that lie round about it, "I have come to set all that right, and I know that I can do it." And it has done it. I do not know any other religion that would not be laughed out of court if it strode forward and said, "I have come here to abolish all evil, and to make every soul of man like God." "Well, then; do it!" would be the simple answer; "and if with your philosopher's stone you can turn the smallest grain of a baser metal into gold, we will admit the claim and believe that the transmutation of the rest is a question of time." Well, Christianity *has* done it, and there are millions of people in this world to-day who will say, "One thing I know, there are a great many things I do not know, but one thing I do: whereas I was blind now I see. Look at my eyes if you doubt it." 2. This transforming and saving power is clearly beyond man's ability. It will take God to change a man's relations to the Divine government, and to hold back the consequences which, if there were no God, by the law of cause and effect, would certainly follow every transgression and disobedience. And it needs no less than God to renew the spirit into a loftier life. And the world knows it, and instead of salvation it talks about reformation, restraint, culture, &c.; all very good in their way, but not going deep enough down into the facts of man's condition, not being able to lift him high enough up towards the destined good, to be accepted as a substitute for the Divine idea of salvation. There tower the great white summits of the Himalayas; down at their feet stand palaces, temples, porches for philosophers. Measure the height of the one by the other, and you get an approximation to the difference between human efforts upon human society and the Divine design for every soul of man upon earth. 3. This restoring work of salvation is not only exclusively a Divine work, but is the most energetic exercise of the Divine power. Creation is great and Divine. The new creation, which is restoration to more than primeval blessedness and beauty, is greater, inasmuch as it is accomplished not by a word but by toil, sacrifice, and death, and inasmuch as the result is man more truly and gloriously the image of God than was he over whose appearance angels shouted for joy, and God said, "It is good." It is great to "preserve the stars from wrong," and to keep the most ancient heavens "fresh and strong," but the conception of the Divine power that is gathered from those majestic regions where His finger works is low compared with that which flows from the redeeming work of Christ. God never has done, and never will do a mightier thing than when He sends His Son with power to save a world. III. IN ITS WIDEST SWEEP. 1. Rome wielded an empire which approached to universality, so far as the world then knew. But Paul has a vision of an empire that overlaps it, as some great sea might a little pond, and sees the Dove of Christ outflying the Roman eagle, and the raven, sin. For to him his Christ is everybody's Christ; and that which changed him from persecutor to apostle can never have a more obstinate block to hew into beauty. 2. The text may seem to narrow the universality which the apostle proclaims, but not really. For to believe is nothing more than to take the power which the gospel brings. Faith is the belt by which we fasten our else still and silent wheels to the great engine, and the power then begins to drive. You would not say that a universal medicine was less universal because it did not cure people that did not take it. 3. Nay! rather the intention and power of the gospel to save everybody can only be preserved by faith being the condition of its operation. For the condition is one that everybody can exercise, and just because men do not get saved by things that belong to classes it comes about that "not many wise, not many noble, not many mighty after the flesh" are saved. The wise man wants a religion that will give culture its proper high seat in the synagogue. The noble does not like to have his robes crumpled by a crowd of greasy jackets going in at the one common door. And so they turn away because they would like to have a little private postern of their own, where a ticket of a special colour would let them and their friends in. Conclusion: Are you exercising this faith, and therefore saved? You can separate yourselves from the power, notwithstanding the Divine purpose and adaptation of the gospel to everybody. And although God wants all of us to come to His heart, you can, if you will, stand apart. You do not need to do much. Putting your hands behind your back, or letting them hang languidly at your sides, is enough. Not to accept is to reject. You can waterproof

your souls, as it were, and so lie there as dry as a bone, whilst all around you the dew of His blessing is refreshing others. Christ's power received is life; Christ's power not received is not negatived, but reversed, and becomes death. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*)

The gospel the power of God unto salvation:—By affirming this the apostle lays down the fundamental doctrine which he intends to establish against the legalistic pretentions of the Jews. Here are no less than five cardinal terms, key-words, which suggest a five-fold antithesis between Christianity and Judaism. The gospel is—I. "THE POWER OF GOD"—a hint as to the weakness of the law in reference to salvation. This contrast is brought out fully and clearly in chap. viii. 2–4. God Himself is powerless to save any one righteously except through the gracious provisions of the gospel of His Son, whom He accordingly "set forth to be a propitiation," &c. (chap. iii. 25). II. "The power of GOD." He who wins souls in the presentation of the gospel is wielding a power not human, but Divine; and the resulting justification before God is based, not on the righteousness of man, but "the righteousness of God." Here we have another antithesis of the apostle's great theme, which is fully presented in chap. x. 3 and Phil. iii. 7–9. The Jews, "being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God." It is only on the ground of merit that law can justify. If, then, a man could merit his acceptance with God, his justification would not be due to the gracious "power of God," but would rest upon his own inherent goodness. III. The "power of God UNTO SALVATION." This the law could not accomplish in that it was weak through the flesh. But as regards the very opposite result, condemnation and death, it has, indeed, tremendous power (chap. vii. 9, 10; 2 Cor. iii. 6, 7). Thus the only hope for man is to pass from under a legal system, which can only justify the sinless, to a dispensation of grace which is clothed with Divine power to "justify the ungodly." IV. "The power of God unto salvation to EVERY ONE who believes." But the Jew, supposing that he had kept the law sufficiently to stand before God in the strength of his own righteousness, very naturally limited the favour of God to legalistic worshippers, and looked upon all others as inevitably doomed to death without mercy. Now the argument of the Epistle, in dispelling this double delusion, enables us to discern the broad contrast between the universality of grace and the exclusiveness of legalism (chap. iii. 21–23). We are again and again reminded that this blessedness cometh not upon the circumcision only, but upon the uncircumcision also; that "the same God over all is rich unto all who call upon Him," and that, consequently, "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." V. "The power of God unto salvation to every one who BELIEVES." The contrast between the gospel and the law is the significant antithesis of faith and works so extensively developed in this Epistle. The dictum of the law is, "Do this and thou shalt live." The maxim of the gospel is, "The just shall live by faith." Doing is the ground of legal justification. Believing is the condition of gracious justification. The radical opposition between these, together with the inapplicability of the former to man as a sinful being, undergoes thorough discussion, especially in chaps. iii. and iv. (*Prof. I. B. Grubbs.*)

To the Jew first and also to the Greek.—*Our duty to Israel:*—The gospel should be preached first to the Jews, because—I. JUDGMENT WILL BEGIN WITH THEM (chap. ii. 6–10). Why is this? Because they have had more light than any other people. God chose them out of the world to be His witnesses. Every prophet, evangelist, and apostle was sent first to them. Christ said, "I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." The Word of God is still addressed to them. Yet they have sinned against all this light and love. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem," &c. Their cup of wrath is fuller than that of other men. Is not this a reason, then, why the gospel should first be preached to the Jew? They are ready to perish—to perish more dreadfully than other men. In an hospital the physician runs first to the worst case. When the sailors have left the shore to save the sinking crew they first help those that are readiest to perish. And shall we not do the same for Israel? The billows of God's anger are ready to dash first over them—shall we not seek to bring them first to the Rock that is higher than they? Yes, and some of you are in a situation very similar to that of Israel—you who have the Word of God in your hands and yet are unbelieving and unsaved. Think how like your wrath will be to that of the unbelieving Jew. II. IT IS LIKE GOD. It is the chief glory and joy of a soul to be like God. Too many rest in the joy of being forgiven. We should be like God in understanding, in will, in holiness, and also in His peculiar affections; and the whole Bible shows that God has a peculiar affection for Israel (Deut. vii. 7; Lam. iv. 2; Jer. xii. 7). Shall we be

ashamed to cherish the same affection as our heavenly Father? III. THERE IS PECULIAR ACCESS TO THE JEWS. IV. THEY WILL GIVE LIFE TO THE DEAD WORLD. A reflective traveller, passing through the countries of this world, and observing the race of Israel in every land, might be led to guess, merely from the light of his natural reason, that that singular people are preserved for some great purpose in the world. There is a singular fitness in the Jew to be the missionary of the world. They have not that peculiar attachment to home and country which we have. They are also inured to every clime; they are to be found amid the snows of Russia and beneath the burning sun of Hindostan. They are also in some measure acquainted with all the languages of the world, and yet have one common language—the holy tongue—in which to communicate with one another. But what says the Word of God? (Read Zech. viii. 13, 23; Micah v. 7.) (*R. M. McCheyne.*) *To the Jew first:*—The preaching of the gospel to the Jews first, served various important ends. It fulfilled Old Testament prophecies, as Isa. ii. 3. It manifested the compassion of the Lord Jesus for those who shed His blood, to whom, after His resurrection, He commanded His gospel to be first proclaimed. It showed that it was to be preached to the chief of sinners, and proved the sovereign efficacy of His atonement in expiating the guilt even of His murderers. It was fit, too, that the gospel should be begun to be preached where the great transactions took place on which it was founded and established; and this furnished an example of the way in which it is the will of the Lord that His gospel should be propagated by His disciples, beginning in their own houses and their own country. (*R. Haldane.*) *The usefulness of converted Jews:*—A Jewish convert says: "It is a well-known fact that men celebrated as theologians, as lawyers, as teachers of the young, as professors at the various universities of Europe, have been or are converts from Judaism. The late M. Fould, the great French finance minister, was a Jewish convert. The late Dr. Neander, the author of one of the most erudite works on the Church of Christ, and professor of theology at the University of Berlin, was a converted Jew. Dr. Crippadorn of Holland, physician to his Majesty the King of Holland, is a converted Jew. The late Dr. Dufosty, one of the greatest poets which Holland has ever produced, and the author of 'Israel and the Gentiles,' 'A Harmony of the Gospels,' and several other works, was a Jewish convert. Prof. Leone Levi, of King's College, is a Jewish convert. The late Dr. Alexander, the first bishop of Jerusalem, was a converted Jew; while not less than a hundred and thirty clergymen of the Church of England are converted Jews." He states further that, in London, there are between two and three thousand Jewish converts, whose conduct, whether as heads of families, as citizens, or as men, is an honour and credit to the churches with which they are connected.

Ver. 17. **For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith.**—*Righteousness revealed:*—I. THE GOSPEL IS A REVELATION OF GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS. 1. Righteousness is a regard to what is right. 2. God is essentially a righteous Being. He knows what is due from each to the rest, and from all to Himself, and also sees and acknowledges what is due from Him to them. The foundation and standard of all righteousness are to be found in His nature and character. He has no desire, and can have no temptation to do that which is unjust. The Judge of all the earth must do right. 3. He loves righteousness in others, and hates iniquity. Whether we rob God or our neighbours, it is alike abhorrent to Him. He shows His love of righteousness—(1) By rewarding it; this He has done among the angels in heaven. (2) By punishing unrighteousness; this He has done among the lost spirits in hell. (3) By seeking the recovery of those who have fallen from righteousness; and this He is doing upon earth through the gospel of His Son. 4. The gospel is not merely a display of mercy, but of righteousness. He could not bestow forgiveness on sinners in violation of righteousness. (1) He must therefore devise some way of satisfying the demands of justice before He can deliver the ungodly from the doom which they deserve. This He has done in the surrender of His Son as a sin-offering for the world. (2) He must provide—which He has done through the Holy Ghost—for the restoration of pardoned rebels to personal purity and holiness; and so will His righteousness be displayed and His law magnified in the salvation of a ruined race. Shall we say that His righteousness is the handmaid of His love, or that His love is subservient to His righteousness? Let us not attempt to settle the law of precedence; it is enough for us to know that in the salvation of sinful men both God's righteousness and God's love are resplendently revealed—the righteousness through His love, and the love through His righteousness. II. THE

OBJECT OF THE GOSPEL IS TO RAISE MAN TO RIGHTEOUSNESS. 1. Man was at first made upright. In the enjoyment of this righteousness he possessed life. But by transgression he fell. Instantly his understanding was darkened, his conscience perverted, his heart disordered, and his happiness destroyed. He lost his life. 2. God's purpose in the gospel is to make us again righteous; to deliver us from condemnation and renew our souls in virtue and truth. This is the same thing as to recover us from death to life. By being righteous we live, by being unrighteous we die. III. FAITH, AS THE INSTRUMENT OF MAN'S RECOVERY TO RIGHTEOUSNESS. 1. Faith is mentioned in opposition to legal works. We might be righteous if we could keep the whole law unfalteringly and unceasingly. But we have not, and cannot do so. Hence we are shut out from works, and shut up to faith. We cannot acquire a righteousness of our own, but must be content to let God give us one. 2. Faith is not to be confounded with feelings. It may lead to certain emotions of the soul, but it does not consist of them. The object of faith is not to be found within ourselves; it lies without. 3. What, then, is faith? (1) It is belief, and nothing more, when it is directed to a doctrinal statement or alleged fact of the past, and then we may call it intellectual or historical faith. (2) But suppose its object to have some immediate and powerful bearing upon our duty and interests; then will our faith necessarily lead to action. Such faith may be called practical or ethical. (3) But the object of faith may be something more than either statements or precepts: it may be a living person. We then have faith in him, or on him, as well as belief about him; our faith takes the form of confidence, reliance, trust. It is through faith in all its forms, but especially through the last one, that we lay hold on the righteousness of God in the gospel, and appropriate it as our own. 4. Faith is a noble and worthy instrument of our salvation. It is not to be disdained as inferior to reason. Rather it is reason's highest and most enlightened exercise. Faith gives reason wings, wherewith she mounts to regions of truth otherwise beyond her reach. 5. Faith is necessary as the means of salvation. It is not an arbitrary condition of salvation, but indispensable in the very nature of things; and, being such, it is all that is demanded, for "whosoever believeth," whatever else he lacks or hath, "shall not perish, but have everlasting life." (*T. G. Horton.*) *The righteousness of God*:—The two statements of the previous verse are here explained and confirmed. The gospel is the saving power of God, because it reveals a Divine righteousness which is itself salvation. The first of these propositions declares to us what gives the gospel its saving property. It has many excellences which may well recommend it. It inculcates a morality which in purity and completeness is unapproached. It presents us with its historical embodiment in a character equally lofty and unique. It contains the noblest and most attractive conception of God which has ever dawned upon the world, while it invests men with a new and unspeakable dignity by bringing life and immortality to light. Yet while all this is true, it remains that what constitutes the gospel a saving power is that revelation of righteousness of which the apostle here speaks. Whatever else it may do for you in awakening conscience, in haunting you with an ideal which you have never really embraced, in sobering you with convictions of judgment and eternity, it will not save you unless this righteousness be apprehended. And what in the last resort will it have done for you if it has failed to save you? I. WHAT, THEN, IS THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD? 1. The ostensible meaning might seem to be the righteousness which is an attribute of God. But it cannot be said that this in any special sense is a revelation of the gospel, for it was the great theme of Old Testament teaching. Moreover, it is impossible to see how the revelation of it could constitute a saving power. We can understand how it might awaken conscience and deepen the conviction of sin. But this would only make our condemnation more obvious and inevitable. 2. The righteousness of God, as is evident from the quotation in Habakkuk, as well as from other parallel expressions, is the righteousness of which God is the author, which He provides and bestows, so that the man who acquires it becomes thereby a righteous man. Now, this is precisely what we need. (1) The testimony of the apostle is that the whole world is guilty before God. None, accordingly, is clear in the eye of the law. God cannot count us as anything else than transgressors until we stand guiltless in His sight. The great question is, How can this be accomplished? And the only answer, independently of the gospel, is, By our own efforts or not at all. It is no part of the righteous judge, as such, to assoil the transgressor. It might be a palpable breach of his duty to do so. Hence man has never looked to God alone to clear him, but always to some sacrifice or endeavour of his own, which might

cancel or atone for his offence. But no sacrifice could ever assure him that his relation to God had been rendered satisfactory, because he has never received any Divine promise to that effect. The same is true of every effort after repentance or amendment of life. At the best, therefore, one could only hope that such expedients might attain their object. And this hope has been the root and spring of almost all religions. But the gospel shows that the desired prospect is not to be secured by any such means. (2) But what the world could not do for itself God did for it. And if the gospel passes its sentence of impotence upon us, it is only to direct us to its provision of saving grace. This position has been secured by the mediation of Christ, whom God gave to be the Saviour of the world. Every demand of the law was satisfied in His life of obedience. And He gave Himself for us, to bear, as our Representative and Substitute, the penalty of our disobedience, so that everything the law might claim at our hands might be infallibly and fully met. By His resurrection the Divine satisfaction was openly declared, and He passed through the heavens to enter into the presence of God on our behalf. There He appears, the eternal pledge of a righteousness fulfilled, presenting to His Father a humanity clear of every ground of accusation, and securing to every one who will trust in Him a safe standing in His sight. He is the Lord our righteousness. This, then, is what the apostle means when he says that in the gospel is revealed a righteousness of God. 3. Thus understood, it is not difficult to see how the gospel becomes thereby the power of God to salvation. For—(1) It lays the foundation of fellowship with God. So long as sin is unforgiven fellowship is impossible. Sin compels Him to treat us as offenders. Therefore it is that the broad foundation and starting-point of all religion lies in being right with God. (2) Further, if being right with God is essential to fellowship with Him, so also it is fellowship with Him that secures the growth of spiritual life. As the branch must abide in the vine to receive the sap and nourishment that circulates through the tree, we must abide in connection with God to be partakers of His Spirit and power. This it is that enables us to bring forth the fruits of holiness. The expulsive power of the new affection will purge the soul of its fleshly desires. As the soiled and crumpled leaves are pushed off the tree by the rising sap that swells the buds with the foliage of the coming summer, so it will cleanse us from dead works to serve the living God. II. THE GOSPEL IS THE SAVING POWER OF GOD BECAUSE IT IS FROM FAITH TO FAITH. 1. This righteousness of which the apostle has spoken is not due to our own works, which do not contribute to it anything whatever. When it becomes ours it is due entirely to faith, which appropriates Christ, and by resting upon Him enters into it and invests us with all its prerogatives. "We are found in Him, not having our own righteousness," &c. 2. And just as it is due to faith, so also it is designed to produce faith. The more thoroughly its character is understood, the more perfectly its completeness and satisfactoriness in all points is perceived, the more will faith be confirmed. For if anything weakens faith it is just our not being sure of our rightness with God, or of the foundation on which that rightness depends. On the other hand, if the ground of our acceptance be clearly distinguished and seen in its length and breadth in Christ Jesus, we learn more boldly to appropriate the contents of His salvation. Here lies the secret of its power to transform you and lift you up. There is no other sure foothold for us. But this is sure. (*C. Moinet, M.A.*) *The righteousness of God for justification revealed in the gospel as being by faith*:—I. THERE IS A RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD AVAILABLE FOR SINFUL MEN. This righteousness is revealed as a "free gift" of God (chap. v. 16, 17), of which they become possessed "in Christ" (2 Cor. v. 21), and this, not as a result of their own striving or legal obedience (Rom. x. 3; Phil. iii. 8, 9), but simply by faith in Him (chap. iii. 21, 22). 1. It is manifest therefore that this "righteousness of God" does not denote—(1) That perfect personal righteousness which is required of us by law. That can exist only where there has been maintained perfect innocence and obedience. But "there is none righteous, no, not one." And therefore, "by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified" (chap. iii. 9-20). (2) That righteousness which is implanted and perfected in believers by the grace of God. Clearly, indeed, there is such a righteousness, but it is surely not one which is so by faith as to be "not of works," and "without the law." (3) "God's method of saving sinners," nor "that authorised and attested method of justifying the ungodly," which is revealed in the gospel. For how manifestly absurd to declare that "God hath made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might be made" God's method of justifying sinners in Him! (4) The active obedience or positive righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ, as distinguished from His negative righteousness, or innocence, and His sufferings and

death. The Scriptures know nothing of such a parting and distribution of the Redeemer's one seamless robe of righteousness. They do not teach that a believer, as such, has a right, in the positive righteousness of Christ, to the rewards of eternal glory. A right, in Him, every believer has to the position and immunities of innocence, but the positive rewards of righteousness are to be conferred on each "according as his work shall be." (5) "The justification which is of God." For that fails to bring out the most central thought of the expression, viz., the ground upon which God saves or justifies. It confounds effect with cause. 2. What then is this "righteousness of God"? It is that one righteousness of Christ which He effected for us in His obedience unto death. To establish valid ground for the justification of the sinner, it is obvious that mere innocence was not enough; nor the most splendid achievements of active righteousness. That which law demands, in regard to an offender, is the endurance of penalty. When that has been endured, the law relaxes its grasp, and sets the prisoner free. Then he goes forth justified, so as that he cannot be again legally touched on account of the offences for which he has already suffered. It is quite true that such a righteousness could never be won for himself by a sinful man; for a sinful act in him induces at once a sinful character, and the fact and guilt of sin go on increasing with the progress of his being. Hence, in the Scriptures, the possibility of any man being justified before God on the ground of his own righteousness, however accomplished, is never once imagined. But these Scriptures do maintain that "as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of One, the free gift (namely, of righteousness) came upon all men unto (or for) justification of life" (chap. v. 18). But that righteousness is pre-eminently the righteousness of suffering. Therefore it is written that "He was delivered [namely, to suffer unto death] on account of our offences, and [that having so suffered, and thereby earned the legal claim for our discharge, He] was raised again on account of our justification" (chap. iv. 25). This, then, we apprehend, is "the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe" (chap. iii. 22). It is this which, being conferred upon believers as a free gift of grace, secures for them the legal ground on which they can be justified. To impute this to them is to put them in possession of that which insures for them a full discharge from all liability to arrest, imprisonment, or punishment on account of their own past offences. In Christ, the demand of the law has been met on their behalf. They were arrested in Him, condemned in Him, led forth to be crucified in Him, suffered the extreme penalty of the law in Him, and are now also "made the righteousness of God in Him." II. THIS RIGHTEOUSNESS IS REVEALED IN THE GOSPEL, not indeed exclusively, but specially, pre-eminently, and perfectly. The righteousness itself, in its true ground and nature, had not been before revealed. Indeed, till the Holy One and the Just had given exhibition of it in His own actual human history, it could not be. Yet, even in the Old Testament times, thus much was known, namely—1. That no man could, in his own right, claim to be legally justified—he had no righteousness which could command that result; and yet—2. That some men should, through gracious Divine provision, inherit the rewards of righteousness; righteousness should be imputed to them; they should be justified and treated as righteous (Psa. xxiv. 5; Isa. xlv. 24, 25, lxi. 10). What constituted that righteousness had not yet been disclosed. It was indeed faintly foreshadowed by those perpetual sacrifices, which could not make the offerers perfect, but without reference to which the plea for mercy could not be successfully urged. This plea failed indeed to supply any solid ground of hope, and yet there was hope, a hope which in some sense was sustained by it (Psa. li. 16, 17). But that hope was ever reaching onward into the coming age, for that One who would make an end of transgression and bring in an everlasting righteousness, and whose name was forenannounced as "The Lord our righteousness" (Dan. ix. 24; Jer. xxiii. 6). But now, in the gospel of Christ, this Hope of Israel has actually come, and accomplished His work of righteousness for sinners. III. THIS RIGHTEOUSNESS IS HERE REVEALED TO BE FROM FAITH TO FAITH, or by faith for belief. 1. Of faith, or by faith. Men attain possession of it by faith, and by faith only (chap. iv. 16). Hence the protest of St. Paul to the "dissembling" Peter (Gal. ii. 15, 16). 2. By faith for belief. The righteousness of God, as the ground of justification, is proclaimed to men in the gospel, as being by faith, in order that they may believe and be justified. So the testimony that the faith of Abraham was counted to him for righteousness, had been put upon record, not for his sake alone, but for ours also (chap. iv. 23–25). And the whole mystery concerning the righteousness of God is made known to all nations for the

obedience of faith (chap. xvi. 25, 26). Conclusion: 1. A salvation grounded in the righteousness of God must, when clearly apprehended, afford an equal satisfaction to reason, judgment, and conscience. 2. A salvation which is by faith is possible to all. 3. Salvation on any other terms would be impossible. (*W. Tyson.*) *God's righteousness of faith*:—It is a "righteousness" because on it the acquittal of accused and sinful men justly proceeds. It is "God's righteousness" because provided by the Triune God through the human passion of the Second Person. It is "God's-righteousness-of-faith," because, in order to our becoming justified by it, faith is the solitary condition. The relation of gospel righteousness is thus expressed by its very name on both sides. As it respects God, it is His, as opposed to its being mine: He is its Author, Achiever, Proprietor. But it comes to me, stands me in stead, is reckoned to me for acquittal "by faith." This expression stands opposed to another often recurring—"by law-works" (chap. iii. 20), *i.e.*, personal acts of obedience carrying with them some merit in God's sight. If men could accomplish these they would have a righteousness of their own, not God's, arising out o. such "law-works." But in sharp contrast to this self-provided righteousness stands the gospel righteousness provided by Another. Thus the whole of this composite title, "God's-righteousness-by-faith," is at every point clean contrary to "Man's-righteousness-by-works," and accordingly the apostle through nearly three following chapters endeavours to abolish the latter that he may establish the former, and shut us up to accept it. (*J. Oswald Dykes, D.D.*) *The righteousness of God*:—All our conceit about our past righteousness must be completely overthrown. Perhaps we flatter ourselves that all is well, because we have been baptized, or have come to the communion, like one who was visited, a few days ago, by an elder. Seeing that she was sick, and near to die, he asked her: "Have you a good hope?" "Oh, sir, yes; a good and blessed hope." "And pray," said he, "what is it?" "Well," she said, "I have taken the sacrament regular for fifty years." What think ye of that in a Christian country, from the lips of one who had attended a gospel ministry? Her confidence was built upon the mere fact of her having attended to an outward ceremony, to which, probably, she had no right whatever! There are hundreds and thousands who are thus resting upon mere ceremonies. They have been churchgoers or chapel-goers from their youth up. They have never been absent, except under sickness, from their regular place of worship. Good easy souls! if these are the bladders upon which they hope to swim in eternity, they will surely burst, to their everlasting destruction. Some base their confidence on the fact that they have never indulged in the grosser vices; others that they have been scrupulously honest in their commercial transactions. Some that they have been good husbands; others that they have been charitable neighbours. I know not of what poor flimsy tissue men will not make a covering to hide their natural nakedness. But all this must be unravelled—every stitch of it. No man can put on the robes of Christ's righteousness till he has taken off his own. Christ will never go shares in our salvation. God will not have it said that He partly made the heavens, but that some other spirit came in to conclude the gigantic work of creation, much less will He divide the work of our salvation with any other. He must be the alone Saviour, as He was the alone Creator. In the wine-press of His sufferings Jesus stood alone; of the people none were with Him: no angel could assist Him in the mighty work; in the fight He stood alone, the solitary Champion, the sole Victor. So too thou must be saved by Him alone, resting on Him entirely, and counting thine own righteousness to be but dross and dung, or else thou canst never be saved at all. It must be down with Shebna, or else it cannot be up with Eliakim. It must be down with self, or it can never be up with Christ. Self-righteousness must be set aside to make room for the righteousness of Jesus; otherwise it can never be ours. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *From faith to faith* indicates—I. The EXCLUSIVENESS of faith. Faith all in all in a man's justification. Works not in the account. Not from faith to works, but from faith to faith (chap. iii. 22, 28). II. The GROWTH of faith. From one degree of faith to another. Advance made in clearness, simplicity, strength. III. The MANY SIDEDNESS of faith. From one kind of faith to another. From faith which saves to faith for still further blessings. From faith which justifies to faith which sanctifies. From faith of the intellect to faith of the heart. (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) The just shall live by faith.—*The life of faith. The harmony of the Old Testament teaching and the New*:—The apostle quotes from Habakkuk, who mourns the vileness and lawlessness around. He foresees as its retribution the rapid and complete conquest by the Chaldeans. He appeals to the character of God; and expresses for himself and the godly in Judæa an assurance of deliverance grounded on God's character,

"We shall not die." He betakes himself to the watch-tower, and awaits the reply of God. In solemn tones God proclaims the destruction of the proud Chaldeans; and declares that while others perish, the righteous man shall live, shall live by his faith. In the Old Testament, as in chap. iii. 3, the words "faith" and "faithful" denote, not belief—as almost always in the New Testament—but faithfulness, that constancy and stability of character which makes a man an object of reliance to others. In these words God assumes that faithfulness is an element of the righteous men's character; and declares that by his faithfulness he shall survive. It is quite evident that this faithfulness arises from belief of the Word of God. Hab. i. 12 is an expression of belief. The prophet is unmoved because he leans upon the veracity of God. "Shall live" refers primarily to the present life. The righteous shall escape when others perish. But in this sense the promise is only partially fulfilled. And the incompleteness of its fulfilment in the present life was a sure proof that there is a life to come. Thus in the Old Testament God proclaims in face of the coming storm, that the righteous man will survive by his faith. In Paul's day God spoke again. In face of the tempest so soon to overwhelm the Jewish nation, and some day to overwhelm the world, God proclaims that the man of faith shall live. Therefore God's word in the gospel is in harmony with His word to Habakkuk. This harmony, amid so much divergence, confirms the words both of prophet and apostle. (*Prof. Bert.*) *The life of faith*:—1. The soul is the life of the body. 2. Faith is the life of the soul. 3. Christ is the life of faith. (*J. Flavel.*) *High living*:—The secret of all living is living by faith. Faith is the Christian's vital principle. "No man's religion," it has been said, "survives his morals"; and it is equally true to assert that no man's religion survives his faith, for the just shall live by faith, if he lives at all in the higher sense of the word. Other graces may be necessary to his comfort, to his completeness as a man of God, but faith is necessary to his very existence. 1. This faith by which the just are to live is to be in continual operation from first to last. The just shall live by faith, and that not at any one stage of their career, but all the way through, from the moment they leave the house of bondage till they plant their footstep on Canaan's happy shore. Faith is not to be exercised only occasionally. It is not to be kept for great occasions, or for dire emergencies. It is to resemble not the rushing torrent of Kishon's brook, sweeping all before it for the time, but the steady flow of Siloah's quiet waters, which make glad perpetually the city of God. 2. Faith as a principle of living is intensely practical. It is not a garment to be worn on Sundays, but the ordinary workday garb, which we are to wear in the farmyard and the field, in the shop and in the marketplace. 3. This principle of faith is exclusive of every other that may compete with it. There is not a word here in favour of living by feeling. Our feelings are too variable to rely on. Such a one must needs live jerkily, inconsistently, uncomfortably. But, behold, I show unto you a more excellent way. The just shall live by faith. That is a form of living which is not liable to the ebbs and flows incident to a state of emotionalism, for faith fixes on a Saviour who never alters, on a righteousness which is always the same, and on a promise which is for ever sure. There is another class who are accustomed to live by experience. The same objection applies here. There are so many ups and downs, even in the best experience, that to build upon it is to build upon a quaking bog. The just have more stable comforts, for they live by faith, and faith walks above experience, singing of heaven's brightness when earth is dark around her, and boasting of pardon when sin makes itself felt most consciously. When Ralph Erskine lay upon his death-bed one of the bystanders said to him, "I hope, sir, you have some blinks of sunshine to cheer you in the valley." The answer was: "I had rather have one promise of my God than all the blinks of sunshine that ever shone." "The just shall live by faith." 4. The faith here spoken of is applicable to all kinds of living. If the just are to live by faith, the faith must be capable of adjustment to every variety of life that the just may be called upon to lead. "We talk of human life as a journey," says Sydney Smith, "but how variously is the journey performed." Variously indeed. It is a Pilgrim's Progress to us all, but to no two pilgrims is the progress the same. (1) Whether it be high life or life on a lower plane it is to be lived by faith. I have seen a bird on the topmost bough of a tree, and very sweetly he sang. But I have seen another bird perched on the lowest bough of that same tree, and he sang just as sweetly. And so you may put the just person on the uppermost branch or the undermost, but in either position he will live by faith. (2) Whether life be ordinary and commonplace, or exalted and heroic, it is to be lived by faith. Those humble duties of yours—you must look up

to Heaven for strength to discharge them with fidelity. Your little cares—you must cast them all on Him who careth for you. It has been beautifully said, that "while God is great in great things, He is greatest in little things." Take to Him, therefore, the ounces of trouble as well as the pounds and the tons. But assuming your life to be lived on a more elevated platform and on a much grander scale—what then? Living by faith is still the rule. If you are summoned to Abrahamic duty, you have need of Abrahamic faith. (3) Whether life is long or short it is to be lived by faith. Length of life is a great blessing, but it is also a great trial. To hold out is often a harder thing than to hold fast or to hold on. How the unjust get on with that problem I do not know, but as for the just—I can speak for them—they live by faith; and there is nothing so strengthening as faith. In the case of short life I do not alter the prescription. (4) May we not add to this, that life at its highest pitch is to be lived by faith. There are periods of inspiration when we are alive at every point in our character, when there is no death in us at all, and we feel forceful, triumphant. We are strong for service, we are brave for endurance. Faith provides the channel by which God's life flows into our life. It is the link between our weakness and His almightiness. 5. But it is time to ask the question, By faith in what? (1) I answer, first and foremost, by faith in God. "Sever my connection with God," says Prince Bismarck, "and I am the man to pack up my trunks to-morrow, and go back to my country residence." The great statesman feels that he cannot occupy his difficult position, unless he has God to fall back upon. (2) Do not the just live also by their faith in Providence? It would be a great mainstay to us if we could only resign all things into God's hands and sweetly rest upon the promise. During the American war a poor coloured soldier came to General Grant in a state of great anxiety and asked him, "How are things getting on, General?" The General's answer was, "Everything is going right, sir." These words acted like magic. They were passed round the whole camp as a watchword, and one soldier might be heard cheering his fellow-soldier with the assurance, "Everything is going right, sir." Christian, let that be a watchword with you also. Cherish a stronger faith in Providence. (3) Do we not also live by our faith in prayer? (4) Above all, let us live by faith in the Son of God. When we can trust in nothing else we can trust in Him: and when no comfort can be quarried out of our own hearts, we can always find comfort at the Cross. (*S. L. Wilson, M.A.*) *Faith: life* (text, and Hab. ii. 4; Gal. iii. 11; Heb. x. 38):—When the Spirit frequently repeats Himself, He thereby appeals for special attention. A doctrine so often declared—1. Must be of the first importance. 2. Should be constantly preached. 3. Should be unhesitatingly received by the hearer. We will treat the four texts—I. As ONE: 1. Life is received by the faith which makes a man just. A man begins to live—(1) By a full acquittal from condemnation and penal death so soon as he believes in Christ. (2) As one raised from out of spiritual death so soon as he has faith in Christ. No form of works, or profession, or knowledge, or natural feelings, can prove him to be an absolved and quickened man; but faith does this. 2. Life is sustained by the faith which keeps a man just. (1) He who is forgiven and quickened lives ever after as he began to live, viz., by faith. Neither his feelings, devotions, nor acquirements ever become his trust; he still looks out of himself to Jesus. He is nothing except so far as he is a believer. (2) He lives by faith as to all the forms of life. (*a*) As a child and as a servant. (*b*) As a pilgrim proceeding and a warrior contending. (*c*) As a pensioner enjoying, and as an heir expecting. (3) He lives by faith in every condition. (*a*) In joy and sorrow. (*b*) In wealth and poverty. (*c*) In strength and weakness. (*d*) In labouring and languishing. (*e*) In life and death. (4) He lives best when faith is at its best, even though in other respects he may be sorely put to it. He lives the life of Christ most blessedly when most intensely he believes in Christ. 3. Hearty belief in God, His Son, His promises, His grace, is the soul's life, neither can anything take its place. "Believe and live" is a standing precept both for saint and sinner (1 Cor. xiii. 13). II. SEPARATELY. 1. Habakkuk exhibits faith as enabling a man to live on in peace and humility, while as yet the promise has not come to its maturity. While waiting, we live by faith and not by sight. We are thus—(1) Able to bear up under the temporary triumphs of the wicked (Hab. i.). (2) Preserved from proud impatience at delay. (3) Filled with delight in confident expectation of good things to come. 2. Paul in the text exhibits faith as working salvation from the evil which is in the world through lust. The chapter presents an awful view of human nature, and implies that only faith in the gospel can bring us life in the form of—(1) Mental

enlightenment of life as to the true God (vers. 19–23). (2) Moral purity of life (vers. 24, &c.). (3) Spiritual life and communion with that which is Divine and holy. Naturally men are corrupt. The law reveals our death (chap. iii. 10–20); but the gospel imparts spiritual life to those who receive it by faith. 3. Galatians exhibits faith as bringing us that justification which saves us from the sentence of death. Nothing can be plainer than the declaration that no man is justified before God except by faith. 4. Hebrews exhibits faith as the life of final perseverance. (1) There is need of faith while waiting for heaven (vers. 32–36). (2) The absence of such faith would cause us to draw back (ver. 38). (3) That drawing back would be a fatal sign. (4) From that drawing back we are saved by faith. Conclusion: 1. What can you do who have no faith? In what other way can you be accepted with God? 2. On what ground can you excuse your unbelief? 3. Will you perish sooner than believe? (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Rectitude and faith*:—The just man is the righteous man—the man who is right—right with God, with man, with his environments, with himself. Faith is what keeps a man right in every department of life. A man can only live rightly as he lives by faith. I. On what may be called HIS SECULAR SIDE. 1. Intellectually. Faith is necessary to mental soundness, and to efficient mental work. First principles must be taken for granted; results of previous workers must be accepted. To be ever digging foundations and discussing axioms not only wastes time, but unsettles and enervates the mind, and incapacitates it for healthy work. The just thinker works from established conclusions to first results. 2. Commercially. All business would be at a standstill but for faith—faith in self, faith in others, faith in success. The distrustful man is unjust to himself and all concerned, and eventually dies in bankruptcy. 3. Domestically. Family life is dead where the members distrust each other, but flourishes in full vigour when there is honest and implicit faith between husband and wife, &c. 4. Politically. Where there is no faith in principles, but only a scramble after place and power, political injustice supervenes and political life dies. II. HIS SPIRITUAL SIDE. 1. As a religious character. (1) Faith makes a man right. (2) Faith keeps him right. 2. As a Christian worker. His is pre-eminently a work of faith, and only as such can he rightly perform it. He requires faith which—(1) Lays hold of Divine strength. (2) Supports him in the midst of discouragements. (3) Relies on the Divine promise. (4) Confidently anticipates future results. 3. As a Bible student. Faith—(1) Accepts its mysteries without questioning. (2) Transmutes its truths into spiritual food. Without faith he is both unjust to the Bible and to himself. Instead of the Word of life it becometh the letter which killeth. 4. As an immortal being. Faith links the future with the present, makes both one, and sets the believer right with both. (*J. W. Burn.*) *The office of faith*:—It is not dead: but living and active. It is not something by which we conceive of ourselves as interested in that which is infinitely removed from us. It is the hand by which we grasp the Saviour near to us; making Him, with all His wealth and all His righteousness, our own; so that, in having Him, we become both righteous and rich. It is the tendrils by which the branches of the vine do cling around their all-supporting stem; it is also the common vessels by which, from the root, the sap is conducted to the branches and leaves. It is that system of nerves by which all the parts of the body are consciously connected with the head. It is very artery, the aorta, by which from the heart life is conveyed; so that by its habitual action the very lowest extremities are continually invigorated and warmed. (*Wm. Elliott.*) *The conversion of Martin Luther*:—Near the splendid church of St. John de Lateran is the famous Scala Sancta, or Sacred Stair, supposed to have been brought from Jerusalem—the same steps down which our Saviour walked from Pilate's hall of judgment to the hill of Calvary. These steps are twenty-five in number, made of solid marble, and covered with wood to keep them from being worn away by the knees of the climbing pilgrims. These pilgrims on Easter week come from all parts of the world. They are of different colours, and ranks, and ages, and I watched them beginning to climb this "holy stair," slowly creeping up, counting their beads, crossing their faces, and muttering their "Ave Marias" and "Paternosters" as they went. Near the top was a full-sized image of the Saviour made of wood, crowned with thorns, and wearing the marks of His wounds on His temples, and hands, and side, and feet. Around this "image" of Jesus a group of women were gathered. It was sad to see their pitiful looks and hear their groaning prayers, as they beat their breasts and kissed each wound, from the pierced feet to the thorn-crowned head. Poor people! they were quite in earnest, but they were sadly self-deceived. They thought that for every step they climbed, they received indulgence or pardon for the

sins of a year! Therefore, when they reached the top, they thought that sins of twenty-five years were blotted out; so that, taking their average life at fifty, two visits to the Sacred Stair would carry them to the "gates of heaven." I thought of a noble man—namely, Martin Luther—who, three centuries ago, found the light of the gospel on that same stair. Dressed as a monk, with his shaven head and bare knees, he was creeping up those marble steps, hoping thereby to calm his troubled conscience and work his way to heaven, when all at once the voice of God was heard crying in his soul, "The just shall live by faith." Obedient to the heavenly voice, he saw his error of trying to earn his title to salvation by his own pains and works; and leaving the city in disgust, he went home to nail his "Theses" to the church door at Wittenberg, and to kindle the fire of the glorious Reformation. *Faith*:—Now we talk so much in Christian teaching about this "faith" that, I fancy, like a worn sixpence in a man's pocket, its very circulation from hand to hand has worn off the lettering. And many of us, from the very familiarity of the Word, have only a dim conception of what it means. It may not be profitless, then, to remind you, first of all, that this faith is neither more nor less than a very familiar thing which you are constantly exercising in reference to one another, that is to say, simple confidence. You trust your husband, your wife, your child, your parent, your friend, your guide, your lawyer, your doctor, your banker. Take that very same emotion and attitude of the mind by which you put your well-being, in different aspects and provinces, into the hands of men and women round about you; lift the trailing flowers that go all straggling along the ground, and twine them round the pillars of God's throne, and you get the confidence, the trust of praises and glories of which this New Testament is full. There is nothing mysterious in it, it is simply the exercise of confidence, the familiar cement that binds all human relationship together, and makes men brotherly and kindred with their kind. Faith is trust, and trust saves a man's soul. Then remember, further, that the faith which is the foundation of everything is essentially the personal trust reposing upon a person, upon Jesus Christ. You cannot get hold of a man in any other way than by that. The only real bond that binds people together is the personal bond of confidence, manifesting itself in love. And it is no mere doctrine that we present for a man's faith, but it is the Person about which the doctrine speaks. We say, indeed, that we can only know the Person on whom we must trust by the revelation of the truths concerning Him which make the Christian doctrines; but a man may believe the whole of them, and have no faith. And what is the step in advance which is needed in order to turn credence into faith—belief in a doctrine into trust? In one view it is the step from the doctrine to the Person. When you grasp Christ, the living Christ, and not merely the doctrine, for yours, then you have faith. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*)

Ver. 18. **For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness.**—*The wrath of God*:—I. ITS OBJECTS. 1. Unrighteousness. 2. Impenitence. II. ITS REVELATION. 1. In the conscience. 2. In the Word of God. 3. In Divine providence. III. ITS CONSUMMATION. 1. Certain. 2. Terrible. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The wrath of God*:—I. Of a HOLY God, whose hatred of sin is infinite. II. Of a JUST God, who cannot but punish sin according to its true desert. III. Of an OMNISCIENT God, whose eye there is no eluding, who is "greater than our hearts and knoweth all things." IV. Of an ALMIGHTY God, whose ability to punish no created power can resist. V. Of an UNCHANGEABLE God, whose nature must continue eternally opposed to sin, whose knowledge no forgetfulness can ever impair, and whose power eternity cannot weaken! "Who knoweth the power of His anger?" (*R. Wardlaw, D.D.*) *Wrath in God and wrath in man*:—I. THE DIFFERENCE OF WRATH AS IT IS IN GOD AND AS IT IS IN MAN. 1. In man it is an exciting passion. It shakes him to the very centre of his being. It is seen in his countenance; sometimes in a ghastly pallor, and sometimes in scarlet fire. Not so in God; it wakes no ripple on the infinite rivers of His being. He is ever of one mind. 2. In man it is a malignant passion. It burns with a desire to make its object miserable. But there is no malevolence in the heart of God. "Fury is not in Me." "God is love"; and all His other attributes are but so many forms of His love. All His threatenings are but love raising its warning voice to prevent His creatures from falling into ruin. 3. In man it is a painful passion. The man who treasures anger inflicts a greater injury on himself than he can on the object of his hate. But nothing can disturb the peace of the "ever blessed God." 4. In man it is a selfish passion. Man's wrath is excited because something has occurred which he supposes injuriously affects him in some way or other. There is nothing of this kind in the wrath

of God. No creature can injure Him. II. THE AGREEMENT OF WRATH AS IT IS IN GOD, AND AS IT IS IN MAN. 1. Repugnance. Wrath in man raises his whole nature against the offence, or the offender, or both. There is at once a recoil, and an antagonism. Is there nothing answering to this in the wrath of God, in relation to sin? There must. Wickedness is repugnant—(1) To His nature. He is essentially holy, and moral evil in all its forms must be necessarily disagreeable to Him (Prov. vi. 6). (2) To His procedure. The construction of the universe, the moral constitution of souls, the essential conditions of happiness, personal, social, and national, show that God's whole conduct as Creator and Governor is opposed to sin. As wrath in man separates him from his offender, wrath in God detaches Him from wickedness. He has no fellowship with wrong. 2. Retribution. There is in the wrath of man an avenging instinct. There is this retributiveness in the wrath of God. Not as a passion, but as an eternal and unalterable principle. The principle of retribution runs through the whole universe, so that the wrong never fails to meet with punishment. Thus the wicked now and here are "going away into everlasting punishment." Every sin is a step adown. Every sinful feeling is a nest where the furies hatch their swarming brood. Conclusion: This subject—1. Corrects a theological error. The error is that Christ's death was an appeasement of Divine vengeance. Christ's mission was the effect, not the cause, of God's love. 2. Supplies a terrible warning to sinners. "Be sure your sins will find you out." 3. Urges the necessity of regeneration. The only way to avoid wrath is to avoid sin, the only way to avoid sin is by repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *On ungodliness and unrighteousness*:—I. The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against ALL UNGODLINESS AND IMPIETY OF MEN. This description of sinners use the name of God irreverently, in vain, and for criminal purposes. It is a consequence of such impious representations, to arraign the dispensation of Divine mercy by a Mediator, and to become incapable of salvation, by an unrighteous rejection of the best means Infinite Wisdom has appointed for its attainment. II. The wrath of God is also revealed from heaven against EVERY SPECIES OF INJUSTICE AND CRIME. Under injustice I comprehend every injury done to character and to fidelity, as it respects promises and engagements; and it may be extended to every mean and insidious art by which another is overreached and circumvented. III. IN WHAT MANNER THE JUDGMENTS OF GOD ARE MADE KNOWN AND EXECUTED. Man, by the moral constitution of his nature, is susceptible of various and intense punishment; and his corporeal frame subjects him to another species of it. The constitution of things is adapted to the nature of man, and is either adverse or friendly in proportion to his obedience or disobedience to the laws of his Maker. (*A. Stirling, LL.D.*) *God's wrath against wickedness*:—I. THE WORLD'S ABOUNDING WICKEDNESS. 1. Its exhibition. (1) Men have renounced their Creator, receiving His gifts without acknowledging His kindness, and wilfully withholding from Him both homage and thanks. (2) The renunciation of Jehovah soon led to gross and palpable idolatry. Men must worship something; and when they refused to acknowledge God, they were driven to find substitutes for Him. For awhile they were content to adore the works of His hands; but ere long they set up the works of their own. So low did they sink that they worshipped images of themselves. Nothing has been too mean, or too obscene, for man to worship. He has taken and set up for his god that which he should only have shrunk from in disgust or cast away with shame. (3) With idolatry is connected—(*a*) The most reckless profligacy of manners. (*b*) Abandonment to every selfish and malignant passion. 2. Its guiltiness. It was wilful. Men had the truth, but stifled it in their unrighteousness; and therefore they were "without excuse." The race began with a sufficiency of Divine knowledge; but it interfered with their bad passions and propensities, and so they resolved to adapt their theology to their base practices. This disposition, started at an early period, was maintained by every succeeding generation. In each age the light diminished; but still in each enough remained to convict the human conscience of wrong. "God left not Himself without witness." Ever since the creation of the world His "eternal power and Divine supremacy" have been displayed in the material universe. Besides which, other means of religious instruction have always been accessible. Once in Judaism, and since in Christianity, God has maintained a testimony for Himself. Hence the wickedness of the world brings with it an infinite culpability. II. GOD'S ANGER REVEALED AGAINST IT. 1. Its mode. This is various. It was declared of old by the prophets. It was displayed in the great crises of the world's history, as the Deluge, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the overthrow of the Egyptians in the Red Sea, and

the downfall of Babylon, &c. Besides, there were the acknowledged miseries of life bewailed by philosophers and poets; could these be pondered by the thoughtful without the conviction that God was "angry with the wicked every day"? Above all there was death. Was it not in His wrath that the Almighty consumed the nations? All these evidences of God's anger, backed by the internal monitions of every man's conscience, were patent to all long before the time of Paul, but they had all been cast into the shade by a still mightier and more convincing demonstration furnished by the gospel of Christ. 2. Its burden. The thing revealed is that He hates sin, and is resolved severely to punish those who practise it. Each individual who persists in his iniquity will die, and after death be judged, condemned, and banished into "the outer darkness," &c. So also there is a day of wrath appointed for the world at large. Conclusion: Let the subject—1. Convince you of sin. 2. Inspire you with salutary fear. 3. Turn you to the gospel of Christ. (*T. G. Horton.*) *The revelation of the wrath of God*:—I. THE WRATH OF GOD. 1. Its nature. It is no easy thing to speak of wrath in connection with God. Among us it is known to be a passion, and seldom a righteous passion. But it is not a passion in God: "Fury is not in Me"; in Him it is principle, the love of order, a determination to maintain equity, a resolution to punish sin. It results, therefore, from the perfection of His nature. The legislator is not angry when he promulgates his laws, nor the judge when he pronounces sentence. But the case is that society cannot be maintained without laws, and laws are nothing without penalties and sanctions. In all well-ordered countries crime is punished; and can it escape in the empire of a Being who is "righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works"? And this we contend to be essential to the very character of God. We could not esteem nor love Him if we supposed that He viewed equally truth and lies, honesty and injustice, cruelty and benevolence. 2. Its dreadfulness. If "the wrath of a king" be, as Solomon says, as "the roaring of a lion," what must the wrath of God be? "Who knoweth the power of His anger? Even according to Thy fear so is Thy wrath." In many cases the evil is far less than the fear; and when the reality comes it is found to be nothing compared with the apprehension. But here the reality will equal, will surpass all imagination. II. THE REVELATION OF THIS WRATH to our very senses. 1. To our faith. This is done by the Scriptures. There hell is naked before it, and destruction has no covering; there faith beholds the outer darkness where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. 2. To the conscience. Thus it is revealed in those uneasinesses and apprehensions which attend the commission of sin. When Joseph's brethren were in the hold, they said one to another, "We are verily guilty," &c. What was there here to remind them of Joseph? Oh, there was enough. Inhumanity deserves and demands punishment, and conscience knows it. And when Belshazzar saw the handwriting his face gathered terror, the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another. Why? How does he know but that it is an eulogium upon his character, or an announcement of the raising of the siege, or a prediction of the extension of his reign? There was something within him that foreboded of evil; and the interpreter, therefore, only came in to confirm the exposition of his own feelings. So was it with Herod, who, when he heard of the fame of Jesus, said, "It is John the Baptist." 3. To our senses. All nature abounds throughout with tokens of God's displeasure against sin. And before we dismiss this part of the subject we will observe that, while the existence of this wrath shows us the holiness and justice of God, the revelation of it displays His mercy and His grace too. He would not take you sinners by surprise. He has revealed the wrath before that you may escape it. III. THE OBJECTS AGAINST WHICH THIS WRATH IS REVEALED. 1. Ungodliness. Ungodliness comprehends all the sins against the first table of the law. The ungodly do not fear God, do not love Him, worship Him, confide in Him. God is not in all their thoughts; they practically say unto Him, "Depart from us; we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways." 2. Unrighteousness. Unrighteousness comprehends all the sins against the second table of the law. Unrighteousness is injustice in your regards and in your dealings with your fellow creatures. 3. All ungodliness, and all unrighteousness—the concealed and the open, the refined and the gross. You do not worship a graven image, but then you take the name of your God in vain. IV. THE CLASS OF VICTIMS PECULIARLY OBNOXIOUS TO IT. "Who hold the truth in righteousness." 1. The heathen themselves never lived up to the light they possessed. This is the charge directly brought home against them by the apostle in this chapter. 2. It was not otherwise also with the Jews, they never practised what they knew. This is the charge the apostle brings against them in

the next chapter. 3. There is not a man that lives up to his own principles; he does many things which he knows to be wrong, and he omits many things which he knows to be right. The plea of ignorance therefore can only be admitted in the case of idiots. The original is, "who imprison the truth in unrighteousness"; that is, the truth would speak in them, and struggles to be heard; but it is confined, imprisoned. Fashion, the god of this world, the love of fame, the love of money, the love of pleasure, these are the jailers that confine the truth in prison. Saul knew it belonged not to him to offer sacrifice; his conscience told him, therefore, that it was a sin; he struggled hard, but yielded. "I forced myself." Herod knew John and revered him, yet for the oath's sake, and them which sat with him at meat, he sent and beheaded John. It was the same with Pilate. Conclusion: 1. What then shall we say to the state of many born in a land of light, who have from children known the Holy Scriptures? With what accusing and condemning consciences you have forced yourselves on, you and God only know. I have read of a captain who, when he found his men begin to waver, threw himself on the ground, and exclaimed, "Well, if you will flee, you shall tread me under foot." Conscience has done the very same with regard to some of you. 2. Let me beseech you to practise what you know. Do you believe that covetousness is a sin? Let the conviction go free; be ready to distribute. If you believe it your duty to make a profession of religion, and to join the Church of God, why, then, go immediately and give up yourselves, not only "to the Lord," but "to His people," and be concerned to walk in all the ordinances of the Lord blameless. 3. Is there nothing else revealed from heaven but the wrath of God? We deserve nothing else; but is there no way of escape from it? We have a revelation of mercy and of grace too. Jesus delivers us from the wrath to come. (*W. Jay.*) *The revelation of wrath:*— I. IT IS HERE ASSUMED, the position being presently fully established, THAT ALL MEN ARE BOTH UNRIGHTEOUS AND UNGODLY. 1. They are ungodly. For, being the creatures of God, they owe to Him perpetual allegiance and service. Those who withhold this violate their moral obligations, and rob God of His due. 2. They are unrighteous. Indeed, it is hardly to be supposed that it could be otherwise. The more completely men are cut off from the fear of God the less regard do they have for the rights and happiness of their fellows. Besides, the claims of God being first and supreme, there can be no true righteousness where those claims are denied. II. THIS BEING SO, WHAT ASPECT DOES THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOD OF NATURE ASSUME TOWARDS UNGODLINESS AND UNRIGHTEOUSNESS. Is it one of complacency? or of indifference? or not rather of active and resolute antagonism? Paul is not here writing of a revelation of righteous wrath which is to be made at the close of human history, but of one which is present and preparatory. It is made openly and incontestably "from heaven." Not that it comes glistering down from on high as the shaft of livid lightning. When M. Arnold affirms that "there is an eternal Power, not ourselves, which makes for righteousness"; and when the Psalmist exclaims that "the face of the Lord is against them that do evil," they but set forth, in varied form, the truth that "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven." For heaven is the throne of God; and that throne is but the symbol of His supreme legislative and executive dominion. From that heaven—that throne—the wrath of God is being perpetually revealed—1. In the human conscience. What but the manifested power of conscience, as an actual revealer of the wrath of God from heaven, gave occasion to the Proverbs, that "the wicked trembleth at the shaking of a leaf," and "fleeth when no man pursueth"? Why fled our first parents, but that conscience had already revealed a coming wrath? Why that whispering, pallid terror in those ten bronzed Bedouins in the Egyptian treasure-city? (Gen. xlii. 21, 12). Why does that agitated man in the temple treasury so vehemently press those officials to take from him his thirty pieces of silver? And why, when he finds that it cannot be recalled, does he hasten away to hang himself? Who knows not that conscience has compelled many a man to reveal secrets of iniquity, from whom no rack or torture could have extorted the disclosure? And though many a guilty conscience becomes so accustomed to its load as to be little incommoded thereby, it requires but that startling touch which Providence may, at any moment, give to cause it to awaken from its slumbers. 2. In the general moral sentiments of mankind—those sentiments as they are exercised in reference to those who invade human rights. It is quite true that, as human nature now is, it is not safe to leave the administration of justice in private hands. Therefore society has combined for the purpose of maintaining private rights by public power. This power for the administration of justice is ordained of God (chap. xiii. 1-7). And hence the penal laws and all the

instruments of punishment are but so many mediums, through which the wrath of God is revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. 3. In the general course of providence, or of God's own administration of the universe in reference to men. (1) While those vices which terminate upon the individual himself, or which elude the vigilance of society, are subject to the remorse of conscience; and while those which prey upon the general community are repelled and punished by the officers of public justice; those which arise from the perversion or over-indulgence of bodily appetites are sooner or later overtaken and avenged by bodily disease and death. Now all these bear unmistakable testimony to the fact that the face of the Lord is indeed against them that do evil. But have we not also further proof of this in His more general government of nations and the race? Do we not find that so soon as any nation has become morally degenerate Providence has at once planted His standard and "hissed" for the gathering forces which should humiliate and punish that people? 4. In the Scriptures. In the Pentateuch the principles of the Divine government, including the revelation of wrath against sin, are clearly set forth. In the prophets those principles are so expounded and enforced as to warn against misapprehension and perversion; while in the historical books, the principles not only receive abundant illustration from God's actual treatment both of Gentiles and Jews, but the additional information is given, on God's own authority, that such and such calamities which had overtaken particular men and nations were revelations of His wrath from heaven against the ungodliness and unrighteousness of the sufferers. By these Scriptures the general truth is established beyond all contradiction, that "verily there is a God who judgeth in the earth"; and that, "though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished." Conclusion: But—1. It should ever be remembered that this revelation of wrath is but preparatory and predictive. It is neither perfect nor universal. Many criminals remain undetected, and, in this respect, unpunished, and sometimes the innocent are wrongfully convicted and punished. The whole effect, therefore, of the present revelation of the wrath of God from heaven is to remind us that we are under moral government; and that all are hasteuing onwards towards that day in which "every one of us shall give account of himself to God." 2. And in prospect of that final retribution, this present revelation of the wrath of God from heaven may prove to us what ample and tremendous powers of punishment are provided for the unrighteous and ungodly. (*W. Tyson.*) **Who hold the truth in unrighteousness.**—*Holding the truth in unrighteousness:*—The word "hold" signifies "to restrain or hold back." Under the influence of "unrighteousness" they restrained or held back the truth from exerting its proper power. They laid it, as it were, under arrest, because its imperative dictates were such as opposed the inclinations of their depraved hearts. It is not merely that they kept the truth to themselves—holding it in concealment and captivity, and instead of disclosing to others what they knew, criminally leaving them in error and delusion, which some of the philosophers have justly been charged with doing in regard to the unity and other attributes of the Divine Being; but more generally that both philosophers and others refused to frame their lives even according to such knowledge of truth as they actually possessed, or had the ready means of attaining. They acted towards the truth, in voluntarily resisting its control, and shackling its freedom, as a foolish and unprincipled king does towards his best and wisest counsellor, whom he throws into prison to have him out of the way, resenting his past fidelity, and determined to be no longer troubled with his salutary but unpalatable admonitions. (*R. Wardlaw, D.D.*) *Holding down the truth:*—The heathen world would not allow the truth to exercise its proper and legitimate influence upon them. They failed to educate their minds to perceive it, or their hearts to love it. The eye can be trained to discover beauty in the landscape and in works of art; or it may have its very powers of vision impaired and destroyed by gazing at the sun or on the snow. So man, by a holy walk and conversation, may fit and prepare his soul to discern and value the truth concerning the eternal power and character of God; or by unrighteousness he may injure his spiritual faculties and be unable to read the revelation of God, though plainly written in the book of nature. The following are some of the steps by which men keep back the truth:—1. They are prejudiced against it. 2. They positively hate it. 3. They neglect or misrepresent it. 4. They deny and dethrone it in order to enthrone and exalt falsehood. 5. They revile it. (*C. Neil, M.A.*) *Repression of God's truth:*—Two interpretations: One, that a man may be of unrighteous life and yet have a knowledge of the truth; he holds the truth, but is unrighteous in spite of

it. The other, that men keep down the truth by their unrighteousness. Compare 2 Thessalonians ii. 6, where the word here translated "hold" is translated "withhold." We take the latter. Man's unrighteousness "withholds," "keeps back," "represses God's truth." This is evidently the view of the revisers of the Authorised Version, for they translate: "Who *hold down* the truth in unrighteousness." I. ALL THINGS DEMAND FOR THEIR PROPER DEVELOPMENT SUITABLE CONDITIONS AND SURROUNDINGS. Truth no exception to this rule. We observe that it requires—1. An appreciative spirit—love for truth. 2. A receptive spirit—openness to truth. 3. An earnest spirit—zeal for truth. Such, and such alone, attain truth; into such minds only will truth enter or come to anything. This with respect to truth generally. Religious truth requires something more. 4. An obedient spirit (John vii. 17; viii. 31, 32). II. TRUST INVOLVES A MORAL ELEMENT BECAUSE IT DOES NOT CONCERN THE INTELLECT ALONE, BUT REGULATES THE LIFE. The text declares that unrighteousness—sin—represses the truth. This appears from the following considerations: Sin—1. Destroys the love of truth. 2. Sensitiveness to truth. 3. Zeal for truth. 4. Obedience to truth. Hence it destroys the conditions necessary to the development and progress of God's truth. III. IT FOLLOWS FROM ALL THIS—1. That a sinner is disqualified for pronouncing upon Divine truth. 2. That our doubts—all scepticism—are finally referable to a sinful nature in ourselves rather than to any inherent difficulties in the truth itself. 3. That the progress of Christ's religion is hindered not only by outward sin, but by the imperfections and inconsistencies of those who profess it. (*H. M. Jackson.*) *The truth held prisoner:*—I. WHAT IS THAT TRUTH WHICH MEN HOLD PRISONER? Religious and practical truth which tends to the right ruling of the heart and life in obedience to the will of God. The truth is twofold. 1. The truth of natural religion, or the dictates of a natural conscience, agreeable to those common notices of good and evil left in man since the Fall. 2. The truth of revealed religion, which comprehends the whole truths of the law and of the gospel also. II. HOW MEN HOLD TRUTH PRISONER. 1. In others. (1) By putting truth into an ill name, casting reproach and disgrace upon it, on whatever pretences. (2) By resisting and opposing the truth. (3) By an authoritative shutting up of truth. This often follows as a judgment. 2. In themselves. This is what the text mainly aims at. It is kept prisoner—(1) With respect to others, when it is kept back from preventing sin in them. This is done two ways. (*a*) When it is restrained by undue silence. If the Lord call men to bring it forth, silence in that case is a bond laid on truth. "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of Me and of My words," &c. When is truth held prisoner by undue silence? (*i.*) Negatively, not when one has no sufficient call to bring it forth. "There is a time to keep silence, and a time to speak." And in discerning these times there is much spiritual wisdom. Truth kept in silence, during the proper time of silence, is not kept prisoner, but entertained in its lodging suitable to its character. "A fool uttereth all his mind, but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards." Truth is too sacred a thing to bring forth just to make a show of, and far more to prostitute to men's lusts and humours. There is an unseasonable venting of truth, by which truth and holiness gain nothing, but lose much (1 Sam. xxii. 10). Our Lord forbids it. "Neither cast ye your pearls before swine." (*ii.*) Positively, when the honour of God requires the bringing it forth (Mark viii. 38). When the Lord's honour is at stake, truth is like a fire that will seek a vent, and get it in a tender soul. Thus speaks Jeremiah, "His word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay." And it exposes men to the wrath of God, to hold in truth in that case, for that is to sacrifice God's glory to men's own interests. Again, to hold it in when the good of our neighbour requires it to come forth, is to hold it prisoner, "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him." Where there is any probable appearance of sin's being prevented in others, by means of the coming forth of truth, it is not to be held in, nor can it be so, without the guilt of imprisoning it. (*b*) When by words or actions, one holding in the truth, leads another into sin. This is to hold truth prisoner with a witness, shutting the prison door with double bars. (2) In themselves several ways. As by—(*a*) Neglecting, overlooking, and not adverting to it in the management of their hearts and lives. The light shines about them, but they take no notice of it to order their steps by it. This is put the Lord's candle in them, under a bushel. (*b*) Not obeying truth speaking to them in their consciences. (*c*) Going on in opposition to known truth, knowing the right and doing the wrong. "They are of those that rebel against the light." (*d*) By overcoming the truth in their war against it. Many

a battle there is betwixt truth in the conscience and a man's lusts, till the man taking part with his lusts against the truth, convictions are murdered, the troublesome light in the soul is put out, and truth is taken and held prisoner, that it can no more disturb the man in the enjoyment of his lusts. III. TRUTH IS UNJUSTLY THUS TREATED, WRONGLY HELD PRISONER BY SINNERS. This is clear, for that—1. It is God's messenger to men and His deputy in the soul, over which they have no power and authority. So that one cannot hold it prisoner but in unrighteousness, or in rebellion against the God of truth. 2. It is never guilty of any crime against men, that it should be so treated. Falsehood and lies are ever contrary to men's true interest, but the truth is never so. 3. It cannot be held prisoner but for an unrighteous cause, and in favour of some lust or other. 4. A just God will clear it, and set it free at the cost of those who hold it prisoner. "They shall know, saith the Lord, whose word shall stand, Mine or theirs." If truth prevail not to men's reformation, it will prevail to their destruction. IV. TO CONFIRM THE DOCTRINE. Consider—1. A person's treating truth thus is rebellion against God, who is the God of truth and Lord of light. "If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things." 2. It exposes men to severe temporal judgments. It was our first parents holding truth prisoner which brought in the flood of miseries on the world (see also 1 Pet. iii. 19, 20). 3. It exposes to spiritual judgments (Isa. vi. 8–10; Rom. i. 21–23). 4. It exposes to eternal judgments. Conclusion: Consider—1. The evil of it. (1) It is ingratitude to God of the deepest dye. (2) It is direct disobedience to God, a flying in the face of His orders. (3) It is a rising up against God in open rebellion and war. (4) It is working against our own interest in favour of Satan and our lusts. It is the putting out of the candle which God in compassion to our darkness has lighted unto us. It is like one travelling through a wilderness of pits, rising up against his guide, binding him and casting him into one of them. Like captives conspiring against their deliverers, or sick men against their physicians, to their own ruin. 2. The greatness of the hazard. (1) Men so doing grow worse and worse. (2) It brings on judicial blindness. (3) It brings on judicial hardness (Isa. vi. 10). (4) It provokes God to give up with men and to give them over to their own lusts. Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone. (5) It paves the way to the unpardonable sin (Heb. vi. 1–8). (6) It is often punished with the prevailing of the spirit of error and delusion (Isa. lxvi. 3, 4). (7) It provokes God to remove the gospel from among a people, and to leave them in darkness (Rev. ii. 5). (8) It will aggravate a person's torment in hell. "It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment than for you." Remember the doom of the servant who knew his master's will, but did it not. As the sharpest vinegar comes of the most generous wine, so the most fierce wrath comes from the despising of truth revealed to one in the gospel. 3. Set truth free, loose its hands that it may reign freely in your hearts and lives. That is—(1) Resist not truth laid before you. (2) Slight not nor overlook truth in the conduct of your lives. (3) Submit to the truth, to the truth in the Word, and to truth in your conscience, as the ruler of your life. (*a*) It will set you at liberty. "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (*b*) The way of truth is the way of holiness and happiness. (*T. Boston, D.D.*) *God's truth and man's treatment of it*:—I. THE THING SPOKEN OF HERE AS "THE TRUTH." 1. Truth in the spheres of science, literature, art, philosophy, is an object worth attaining. But it is not in reference to such truth that Paul writes. Truth, indeed, is one, in whatever you may find it, whether in geological records or in the Bible. It means universally the reality as opposed to that which is not real. Now we want to know what the reality is in everything that comes before our minds. We want the historian to give us the reality as he narrates for us the events of history. So also in the higher matters of religion. The truth about God and His relation to man; truth bearing upon our duties, destiny—this is our supreme want. That which distinguishes us from the brutes is the possession of a religious nature with its moral capacities. 2. It is only as this religious nature grows that the man himself can be said to truly grow; and this growth can proceed only in connection with religious truth, which is its proper food. Take away light and moisture from the plant, and it dies. So our spiritual being can live and grow only in the light and under the vitalising influence of religious truth. Christ assigns two functions to Divine truth in relation to our fallen humanity. (1) A liberating work. Christ says, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." With all the progress of civilisation, and the spirit of civil and political liberty, moral slavery still prevails among every people. And men are not very adverse to it. A very real slavery this; because, while the

body may be free, the man himself is fettered by the love of sin and the spirit of worldliness. How shall he be made free? The truth is the only instrument to effect his liberation. "The truth," not any truth. The truths of physical science or of political philosophy, however precious for other purposes, are wholly insufficient for the liberation of a soul from sin and guilt. (2) A sanctifying work. "Sanctify them through Thy Truth." Growth in holiness of character is the great thing—greater than any advancement in culture, than brilliant talents and genius; than the acquisition of material wealth or social rank and power. As we grow in holiness we grow in real greatness and in real happiness. II. MAN'S CONDUCT IN REFERENCE TO "THE TRUTH." It does not get access to the heart, does not get its rightful power and ascendancy; it is checked, hindered, held back in its design to bless by unrighteousness. In what way? Notice—1. That sin extinguishes the love and desire for the truth. It does not do so in regard to secular truth. The astronomer in his observatory, the chemist in his laboratory, the geologist among the rocks—each in his own way seeks the truth and desires it. But it is very different in regard to "the truth" as it comes to us in God's Word, and sounds in the conscience. Why? (1) Because it does not offer itself as mere abstract truth, to excite speculative interest; it comes with great demands; it is truth which claims obedience; and it is not so easy always to obey the truth as to talk about it and admire it. (2) "The truth" is a rebuke to a life of sin; and we do not like to be rebuked for that which we know to be wrong. (3) "The truth," again, reveals to man the peril to which a life of sin exposes him. The sinner, therefore, closes his eyes to it. He desires to be undisturbed and at peace in his sin. 2. Sin destroys the soul's sensitiveness to the truth. It weakens the soul's power of moral perception, beclouds the inner vision. (*A. Bell, B.A.*)

Vers. 19–21. **Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them, for God hath showed it unto them.**—*What acquaintance man can have of God without Divine revelation*:—Consider—I. HIS MEANS OF INFORMATION. Conscience; nature; providence. II. THE EXTENT OF HIS INFORMATION. God's natural perfections, eternity, power, wisdom, &c.; even something of His justice, &c.; but nothing of His infinite holiness and mercy. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Ignorance of God* is—I. CRIMINAL. Because every man has the opportunity of knowing something of Him; is only hindered by his corrupt nature and love of sin. II. NEVER TOTAL. God reveals Himself in the conscience, in nature. III. A JUDICIAL CONSEQUENCE OF SIN. Sin darkens the heart, eclipses the intellect. IV. A PRECURSOR OF FINAL JUDGMENT. They are without excuse. (*Ibid.*) *Divine revelation* is—I. LIMITED. "That which may be known"—hence some things may not be known. Do not pry into the mysteries of the Divine existence, futurity, &c., but be humble and contented with what may be known. II. SUFFICIENT. "That which *may* be known." God knows best what this is. Enough has been revealed to make us holy and happy; let us be thankful. III. MANIFEST to reason and conscience. Reason approves the contents of revelation as true, and conscience accepts them as good. IV. CLEAR. Therefore—1. Study it. 2. Embrace it. 3. Carry it out. (*J. W. Burn.*) *The limit of nature's revelation*:—Nature proclaims the existence of a God; but concerning what that God is to us, nature is altogether silent. Nature tells us that there is a God, possessed of boundless wisdom and of vast benevolence; but nature's oracles do not announce that that God will pardon sin. It gives us intimations from our conscience that He is just; it gives us intimations from the mechanism of our frames that He is infinitely wise; it whispers to us from the broad surface of the world we gaze on that He is a benevolent God; but conscience, while it tells us that God is holy, tells us, too, in the tones of a despair that it cannot dissipate, that man is a fallen, guilty, miserable sinner. I ask philosophy, How shall God be just while He justifies the ungodly? I ask of physiology, with all its bright and brilliant announcements, Will God forgive me my sins? I ask of astronomy, as it discloses world piled on world, If amid the brightness and the glory of those stars, if amid the splendour of those ten thousand lamps, it has discovered that there is "a just God and yet a Saviour"? And all nature is dumb; astronomy is dumb; the mechanism of a man's frame is dumb. Still the great proposition that must be solved before my dying pillow can be peace remains unexplicated, unreconciled, unknown. (*J. Cumming, D.D.*) *Our knowledge of God limited*:—A young child, who has hitherto fancied that the rim of the sky rests on the earth a few miles away, and that the whole world lies within that circle, sails down the Forth there, and sees the river-

banks gradually widening and the river passing into a frith. When he comes back, he tells his young companions how large the ocean is. Poor boy! he has not seen the ocean, only the widened river. Just so with all creature-knowledge of God. Though all the archangels were to utter all they know, there would still remain an infinity untold. (*J. Culross, D.D.*) **For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen.**—*Invisible things clearly seen*:—See here, I hold a Bible in my hand, and you see the cover, the leaves, the letters, the words, but you do not see the writers, the printer, the letter-founder, the ink-maker, the paper-maker, or the binder. You never did see them, you never will see them, and yet there is not one of you that will think of disputing or denying the being of these men. I go further; I affirm that you see the very souls of these men in seeing this book, and you feel yourselves obliged to allow that they had skill, contrivance, design, memory, fancy, reason, and so on. In the same manner, if you see a picture, you judge there was a painter; if you see a house, you judge there was a builder of it; and if you see one room contrived for this purpose, and another for that, a door to enter, a window to admit light, a chimney to hold fire, you conclude the builder was a person of skill and forecast, who formed the house with a view to the accommodation of its inhabitants. In this manner examine the world, and pity the man who, when he sees the sign of the wheatsheaf, hath sense enough to know that there is a joiner, and somewhere a painter, but who, when he sees the wheatsheaf itself, is so stupid as not to say to himself, "This had a wise and a good Creator." (*C. S. Robinson, D.D.*) *The illustrious manifestations of God and the inexcusable ignorance of men*:—I. IT IS MORE KNOWABLE THAT THERE IS A GOD THAN ANYTHING ELSE IS KNOWABLE. 1. In respect of the fulness of being that is in Him. We sooner find out the sun than a lesser light, the sea than a little fountain. 2. In respect of the ways of knowing Him. We come to a more certain knowledge of God—(1) By way of perfection. We need not fear to say too much of God. If we speak of man's soul, or of an angel, we may speak too much; but of God we cannot speak too much. (2) By way of negation. We can never remove imperfection far enough from God. When we have done our most we must say, God is beyond what finite and limited understandings can lay out. 3. In respect of our relation to Him. We stand nearer related to God than to anything in the world; our souls and bodies are not nearer related than our souls and God (Acts xvii. 28). 4. In respect of our dependence upon Him, and His conservation of us and co-operation with us. Any man that is in any degree spiritual and intellectual, and not altogether sunk down into sense and brutish affections, seeks in himself foreign suggestions and whispers that direct him better and carry him beyond his own mind and resolves (Job xxxii. 8; xxxv. 27). II. I INFER—1. The excellency of religion. It is no stranger to human nature, nor any of the eminent notable acts of it. Man contradicts his own principles and departs from himself when he falls off from God. 2. The use of reason in matters of religion. In religion there is the natural knowledge of God, and the knowledge of the revelation of His will. In the former we are made to know; in the latter we are called to partake of God's counsel. In the former we know that God is and what His nature is; and in the latter we know what God enjoins in order to our future happiness. 3. That there is no invincible ignorance as to the great rights, viz., that God is to be worshipped and adored, and that there is a difference between good and evil. If a man varies from these laws, he contracts guilt to his conscience, and is condemned by the sense of his own mind. 4. That reason is so far from doing any disservice to Christian faith, that it fits men to receive it. For man in the true use of his reason, knowing that he hath not performed his duty to God, reason puts him upon deprecating God's displeasure, and to think that God, who is the first and chiefest good, will certainly be ready to commiserate the case of him who repents and returns to duty. And this is gospel, that Jesus came into the world to confirm. And taking up the Bible and finding that "God is in Christ reconciling the world to Himself," Reason says, "This is that I did expect: I did believe such a thing from the first and chiefest good; and now I am assured of it by the gospel." 5. Since the great things of religion and conscience are committed to reason to keep and secure, why should we think the reason of a man may not be trusted with those things that are of lesser moment. III. THE IMPIOUS AND PROFANE ARE THEREFORE WITHOUT EXCUSE. There is a natural sense of Deity in every rational soul; and this is fundamental to all religion. The eternal power and Godhead are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made. If men are ignorant, it is through their own fault;

either through the neglect of their own faculties, or through an inobservance of the great effects of God in the world, which show and declare what He is. To pursue the argument a little further. The Scripture doth thus represent the state of man's creation that the proper employment of mind is to inquire after God (Acts xvii. 27). God did never intend that reason should ever be adjudged to be a hewer of wood or a drawer of water, but for observance of God and attendance upon Him. "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord." A candle is a thing first lighted, then lighting; so that mind is first made light by Divine influences, and then enlightens a man in the use thereof to find out God, and to follow after Him in creation and providence. And we find degeneracy is thus described: "They have no fear of God before their eyes." "Without God in the world." And it is the fool's sense that "there is no God." There is therefore no plea for want of the sense of Deity. 1. No invincible difficulty lies upon any man but that he may come to the cognisance of a God. Not the difficulty of—(1) Ignorance; for we are made to know there is a God. (2) Impotency; for every man may use his natural parts and powers. (3) Foreign impediment; for it is a transaction performed within a man's self. If any one be devoid of all sense of Deity, I declare it is the malignity of the subject upon a threefold account. First, because of the nearness of God to us. Secondly, because of the sagacity of our faculties. And thirdly, because of the nearness of light of knowledge. 2. There are invitations everywhere afforded us to acts of acknowledgment and taking cognisance of God. (1) The communications of God awaken us. All we have and are is by a voluntary communication from God. We are nowhere but receivers. (2) The very principles of man's make do incline him to God. All things move to their centre, and God is the centre of immortal souls. Cæsar's money was no more properly his than mind is God's; for it bears His impress. The soul of man, any ways by violence torn off from God, is like leaves fallen off from the trees, that wither away; but in God, who is their centre, they have rest, perfection, and quiet. (3) If we consider the whole creation about us, they contribute, by way of object, to God's glory; for they have not ability to do it by way of efficiency. And this is the sense of the Psalmist. For mind in man is to see and observe the wisdom and power and goodness of God. 3. To speak a little more home, and only to the Christian world. There is God's superadded instrument, the Bible, which contains matter of revelation from God whereby also our natural notices of God are awakened and enlivened. Being disposed by the two former arguments, this Book gives further assurance. So that here are my three arguments. (1) The language of our own souls within. (2) The impressions of the Divine wisdom throughout the whole creation, and objective acclamations of all creatures, carry us strongly on to the knowledge of God. (3) Holy Scripture comes in to the pursuance of these, to repeat and reinforce them, so that he must needs be of a stupid mind, or a havoced conscience, or dissolute in his life and manners, that lives in the midst of so many arguments, and doth not spell out God and understand the audible language of heaven and earth. Conclusion: Note—1. The infinite patience of God to endure men of stupid minds, havoced consciences, and profligate lives (Heb. xii. 3). 2. The business of the Day of Judgment is very easy on God's part, but very sad on degenerate men's part. For God's work is prepared to His hands; all sinners are self-condemned. 3. The greatness of the work of reconciliation. A man must be made whole in himself, or else he cannot be kept out of hell. A man cannot be at ease until all that he hath sinfully done be undone, and until right judgment hath been renewed which hath been violently forced, and regular life and conversation be restored. Now these are the materials of regeneration. (*B. Whichcote, B.D.*) *The doctrine of correspondences*:—The science of correspondences is little understood at the present day; yet it is in truth the grandest of all sciences. For it is founded on the relation that exists between heaven and earth, between the Creator and His creation. There is nothing existing in the material world, whether of the animal, vegetable, or mineral kingdom, which does not correspond to something spiritual, as an effect corresponds to its cause. Here is the foundation of what is called figurative writing, in which human thoughts and feelings are described by natural images. Thus we say in ordinary conversation, "bold as a lion," "cunning as a fox," &c.; and the Lord Himself is called, in the Divine Word, a Lion, and also, in other places, a Lamb. He calls Himself also a Vine: "I am the Vine, ye are the branches." The Scriptures, indeed, are written throughout according to this science, and it is only by means of an understanding of its laws and principles that we can rightly interpret Scripture. Thus the sun, moon, and stars are all used

in Scripture as metaphors or correspondences, and a knowledge of their signification is a key to many singular passages. As for instance, when it is said, "that the sun and moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall fall." By the sun is here meant Divine love, because love is spiritual heat, of which Divine love is the sole source. Hence the Lord is called the "Sun of Righteousness." The moon, again, is the emblem of faith, because all the light of faith is derived from love, as the moon derives all her light from the sun. The stars signify the various forms of knowledge in the mind with reference to Divine truth: for as the stars are little points of scintillating light scattered through the sky, so these truths in the mind are as little points of spiritual light, whereby the young Christian may be guided in his dark way, ere yet the brighter light of faith of the glowing sun of love has arisen in his soul. The declaration, therefore, that at the "end of the world the sun and moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall fall," means, when spiritually understood, that at the end of the Church love and faith should be extinguished, and that even the very knowledge of truth should be lost. Other things also in the visible heavens, or in the atmosphere, as rain, snow, clouds, &c., are all correspondences. Water refers in a general sense to truth; hence rain, which is water falling from the skies, signifies truth descending from heaven into the human mind. As the objects above the earth are correspondences, so are all things upon the earth itself, whether in the mineral, vegetable, or animal kingdom. A knowledge of this will explain innumerable difficult passages in the Scriptures. Let us look first at the mineral kingdom. The Lord says in Isaiah, "For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver." Brass corresponds to natural goodness, and gold to celestial goodness. Iron, again, refers to natural truth, and silver to spiritual truth. The meaning, therefore, is that when the Lord came to publish the gospel, and to establish Christianity, then instead of only natural or external goodness and truth, which had prevailed in the Jewish Church, He would bring to men celestial and spiritual goodness and truth—in other words, that the Christian Church was to be an internal or spiritual church. Let us now turn to the vegetable kingdom. We know that the olive, the vine, and the fig-tree are very often mentioned in Scripture, and frequently simultaneously. The same general meaning is implied as in the case of the metals already explained. By the olive is signified celestial, by the vine spiritual, and by the fig-tree natural goodness; for there are three distinct degrees or regions in the human mind. Turn now to the signification of the animals mentioned in Scripture. The Lord Himself is compared both to a lion and a lamb; a lion from the power of His Divine truth, and a lamb from the innocence of His Divine love; for a lion in a good sense signifies the power of truth, and a lamb the principle of innocence. In a bad or opposite sense, a lion is used to denote the power of falsity and its destructive influence in the Church; for false doctrines have a powerful effect in leading men into evil practices. Birds represent generally thoughts and intellectual faculties. Thus where it is said in Jeremiah, "I beheld, and there was no man, and all the birds of the heaven were fled," the meaning is that the Jewish Church had come to an end; there was no wisdom left, and no thought of spiritual things. From the views here set forth, we learn how all things in nature are representative of things in the spiritual world; how the outward universe reflects, as in a mirror, the inward and unseen, and how the whole creation is an image of the great Creator. (*P. Hiller.*) *The inexcusableness and unreason of unbelief*:—The law of manifestation is that there must always be hidden powers and forces adequate to produce the manifestation. The law is worthy of all honour, and commands our reverence; it is the basis of faith in invisible things. Whatever we see is but the face, or expression, which the unseen substance and energy have made for themselves. If men are dubious about there being an invisible universe behind the veil of the visible, they are mentally and spiritually blind. Our houses, ships, steam-engines and whatever is mechanically fabricated are made out of things which appear; but living, breathing organisms could only be evolved by an invisible spirit. Bells on the stem of the lily, the petals of the rose, equally with the constellations of the heavens, could only be played into form by an inscrutable mind. Not only is the visible creation a birth from the invisible; but it is every moment fed and kept alive by the communication and inbreathing of the invisible potency. To scientists who affirm "We can know nothing but phenomena," I reply we can know, and do know, the invisible world of our affections, of our thoughts a great deal better, and with much more certainty, than we can ever know phenomena. If we speak of an imaginary world, it must be the world that is outside of us rather than the unseen world of our consciousness. We all know the

hidden world of our likes and dislikes, our designs and motives, our hopes and fears, much more indubitably than we can ever know external appearances. Aspirations, reasonings, and intuitions are constantly coming to birth within us, and are very living realities; but they can neither be seen nor handled. Nor can they be ascribed to the solids and fluids of our physical structure. By physical observation a man can no more find himself than he can find God, who is to the universe what man is to the organs of his natural body. Observe that the conclusions of our very knowing, but unknowing, friends empty the universe of all real contents, and the soul of all reverence and hope. Yet it is somewhat instructive to find many of these cold sciolists surrendering and even bowing down the invisible fire of love which they find embodied in woman, and pulsing through woman. Man's admiration of woman has no adequate ground, nor can it endure, unless she be regarded as a shrine for the love and beauty of eternal God. Suppose a man has actually come to such a conclusion, and that his final positivism is, "There is no infinite understanding in and over the universe, nor is there any enduring spirit in man"; what in that case has he done for himself and the human race? He has set up reasonless atoms above reason; for he has made them to be the cause of reason. He has exalted icy indifference to the throne of the universe. In effect, he says: "I have searched creation through, and I find everywhere complicated contrivance, realising most admirable results; and from beginning to end law reigns, all-comprehending, but there is no Lawgiver, no supreme Fount of Life, no God and Father of the spirits of men." Now if that be reason, I earnestly pray that I may be for ever and ever void of such reason. The truth is, that men who magnify material forms, above spiritual and personal entities, suffer the penalty in the infatuation of their own minds. Strictly speaking, education is not the acquisition of knowledge from without; but consists rather in awakening and leading out the latent and superior powers which are in the man, that he may be able to correct the conclusions of his outer senses—a work this involving a vastly higher estimate of humanity than the wretched postulate that you can catalogue the contents of a man by the analysis of his physical form. There is a path of entrance to the sacred substance and centre of life; but neither the lion nor the vulture of materialism will ever find it. And let me press the inquiry here: How could there be in nature such a scope for the researches of the human mind, unless she were a revelation of mind? If the heavens and the earth do not show forth the wisdom of God, how is it they are so attractive to mind? And surely, if we admire mind and wisdom in the men, who are no more than appreciative observers, we must much more ascribe mind and wisdom to the originating genius and architect. If mind, and mind only, can read and study the book of the heavens, how is it possible to escape the conclusion that mind, and mind only, could have composed the book? Our friends, therefore, who say that they can discover no evidence of mind in the structure of the universe are, as it appears to us, strangely illogical. We are afraid also that they are answerable for some degree of perverseness. For they treat not the works of man as they treat the works of the Infinite. They see man's mind in his machinery, and in his manipulation of the forces of wind and water, steam and electricity; but fail to see the Mind of minds in the forces and the laws, the processes and beneficent results of nature. The infinite soul which streams through and through nature, blending with our souls, gives us an intense feeling of at-homeness in the universe. It is our Father's house and our house. Light, hope, and joy reign in our bosoms. And, by a like law of cause and effect, all human souls who turn to God as the earth turns to the sun, and whose affections attract the Spirit of His love, become absolutely conscious of a new summer in their breasts, which is their heaven begun. We compassionate greatly all blind and paralysed souls who never see what is best worth seeing, and never taste the sublime, the undying human joy. (*J. Pulsford.*) *The universe a manifestation of God*:—Some may ask, "What has this to do with our sins and our salvation—with this life or the life to come?" I answer, "Much," for the root of them all lies in the nature of God and in the state of man; and as we should know more of our own selves if we knew more about humanity, so should we know more about humanity if we knew more of the great truths which God has written upon the tablets of the universe. The beauty of the works of God is one of the most signal manifestations of the Creator's handiwork, and the recognition of this is one of the purest sources of human happiness, and one of the surest proofs that the universe is a revelation of its God. The reason why I am not sorry thus to touch on this theme is because in these great cities, where we lose nine-tenths of the lessons of nature, we are more liable to be feverishly absorbed in

our personal and material interests, and because we should be much purer, wiser, larger-hearted men if we looked more lovingly and thoughtfully at the great works of God. The remedy for much personal sadness, narrowness, irreligious spirit of much that calls itself religion, is that deeper knowledge of God to be found not only in Scripture, but in nature, history, conscience, and the reason of mankind. For them who have the knowledge and the humility to read His awful signature, God has written His name upon the universe. I. Even THE HEATHEN read it there. The mythology of Greece, in its purer and earlier stage, was but an expression of the sights they saw and the lessons they read therein. In Homer, the earliest of Greek poets, we see throughout this cheerful piety. St. Paul himself appeals to the holy lessons which the Greek poets had learnt from the works of God. "We are all God's offspring"; "God giveth us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness"; and, in my text, he argues with the Romans that God was manifest even to the heathen, because "the invisible things of Him," &c. Many an age had intervened between the early Greek singers and the late Stoic philosophers; yet in them, too, we find exactly the same feeling to the works of God. "All things," says Marcus Aurelius, "come from that universal power. Everything harmonises with me which is harmonious to thee, O universe! Everything is fruit to me which thy seasons bring." Is not this the language in every age of natural piety? And if, in all ages, it has been thus that the best and wisest have interpreted the universe, is not that alone a proof that God meant it to be so interpreted? II. THE SCRIPTURES leave us in no doubt upon that matter. Read over Psalm civ., which has been called the natural theology of the old Jews. It is eminently refreshing, at all times, to turn from the wordy strifes, and petty jealousies, and miserable interests of earth, to these sweet and wholesome truths of natural theology. When God speaks to Job out of the whirlwind to console his sorrows, to revive his sinking faith, He points him to the sweet influences of the Pleiades and the bands of Orion, &c. And is it not thus in our Lord's own sermon on the Mount? Did not our Lord speak there of the fowls of the air and of the lilies of the field? And does He not draw parables from the simplest objects of nature? Why should He have done so if it were not to show us that this universe is a parable of God? III. GOD'S TRUE SAINTS IN ALL AGES have not been unmindful of the lesson. They have ever regarded nature as a revelation of God's awfulness and goodness, of God's care and love. When St. Anthony was asked how he could exist without books, he replied that to him who read the two books of Scripture and of nature no other teaching was necessary. Take the mediæval saints. St. Bernard said that the oaks and beeches of Clairvaux had been his best masters in theology. St. Francis thanks God "for our brother, my lord the sun, and for our sister, the moon, and for the jocund strength and irresistible brightness of our brother, the fire, and for the sweet, chaste usefulness of our sister, the water." Take the outburst of our own Milton, "These are Thy glorious works, Parent of good," &c.; and the sweet hymn of the poet-statesman, "The spacious firmament on high," &c.; and the touching story of the dying Livingstone, revived into the effort which saved his life by seeing there, in the African desert, the little tuft of moss, and thinking that if God could water that little beaming moss, and keep it moist with the dew and bright with the sunshine, He surely would care for him. IV. And this also has ever been the attitude of all TRUE SCIENCE. It is the attitude of Bacon, praying that after labouring in God's works with the sweat of his brow, God would make him partaker of His rest and Sabbath. It is the attitude of Faraday, worshipping Sunday after Sunday in his little, quiet Dissenting chapel. It is the attitude of Linnæus falling on his knees under the open sky to thank God for the unspeakable beauty of fields, golden in the sunshine with a summer gloss. V. And such, also, is THE INTUITION OF GENIUS. The great poets, painters, musicians of this and the close of the last century, seem to have been specially commissioned to interpret nature to man. Who that has heard the thrilling jubilance of the "Creation," has not seen, as it were, a new door opened into heaven—has not been drawn nearer to the presence-chamber of God? To Wordsworth it was given to make others feel that "the meanest flower that blows can give thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears." To Turner it was given to perpetuate the most transient glories of nature, and the scenes he painted became an apocalypse of the splendour and the meaning of the world. The greatest thing which Ruskin's writings have done for us has been to show us how all creation testifies to its God, and that we miss the happiness which His mercy has provided when we fail to trust Him, and to learn of Him as we drink in the delights of the

hearing ear and the seeing eye. Conclusion: Believe me, it is often the most humble and obvious arguments which are most irresistible; and the simple earth-work stops the cannon ball which shatters the buttress into dust. Once when the great Napoleon was sailing to Egypt, he sat on the deck with a circle of distinguished *savans* around him, who were openly boasting of their infidelity. He listened in silence; but as he rose to leave them, he raised his arm towards the starry canopy of night, and he asked them the simple question, "It is all very well to talk, gentlemen, but who made all those?" And if this natural conviction has been shaken in some minds by the pride of science, it has, as we have seen, been simultaneously intensified in others; and that is why the great painters, and poets, and musicians have not only saved many of us from being crushed by the revelations, or inflated by the discoveries, of science; but, pouring on every realm of nature a flood of Divine illumination, they have opened our eyes to beauties before unnoticed, and filled our souls with melody, which heaven only can excel. (*Archdeacon Farrar.*) *God in nature*:—I. WHEREVER WE SEE A CHANGE, WE ARE FORCED BY THE VERY CONSTITUTION OF OUR MIND TO BELIEVE THAT IT HAD A CAUSE. If we see a plant growing to-day where there was none a short while ago, we conclude that some hand has planted it there. If we feel pain we at once ascribe it to some cause, and immediately set about to discover what it is. And so with every change. I take the book geologists have opened for me, and I find there that innumerable changes have passed upon our globe. Science takes us back to a time in its history when there was no life upon it. Nothing, therefore, is more certain than that life had a beginning on our globe. What produced it? The most distinguished scientific men have to confess that there is a gulf here which they cannot bridge. "The present state of knowledge," says Professor Huxley, "furnishes us with no link between the living and the not-living." "I am," says Sir W. Thomson, "ready to adopt, as an article of scientific faith, true through all space and through all time, that life proceeds from life and nothing but life." So far, then, as science is concerned, the origin of life remains a mystery. "Give me matter," said Kant, "and I will explain the formation of a world; but give me matter only, and I cannot explain the formation of a caterpillar." I contend, therefore, that the existence of life on our globe proves its origination by a living Being. II. WHEREVER WE SEE ORDER, WE SEE AN EVIDENCE OF MIND. 1. When we see that changes have been produced through which there runs a principle of order, we are compelled, by the very constitution of our nature, to say, Here is not only a power which causes these changes, but one which has intelligence. (1) "One day at Naples," says a French writer, "a certain person in our presence put six dice into a box, and offered a wager that he would throw sixes with the whole set. I said that the chance was possible. He threw the dice in this way twice in succession; and I still observed that he had succeeded by chance. He put back the dice into the box for the third, fourth, and fifth time, and invariably threw sixes with the whole set. Then I exclaimed, 'The dice are loaded!' and so they were. And when I look at the order of nature, and consider that there is but one chance which can preserve the universe in the state I now see it, and that this always happens in spite of a hundred millions of other possible chances of perturbation and destruction, I cry out, 'Surely nature's dice are also loaded'"; which is just saying that order is due to intelligence. (2) Or suppose you come upon a quantity of type lying in confusion. You say these types have been thrown together by accident. But close beside this confused mass you find a form of types, which are so placed as to make words, and the words sentences, and the sentences a continuous story. What would you be constrained to conclude? That it was the result, not of chance, but of intelligence. (3) Or let us take this building. There you have window, doorway, wall, roof, forming a structure in which you see unity, order, and beauty. All this, you know, is the result of intelligence, and any man who would try to persuade you that as much order and beauty can be produced by mere blind force acting on matter, might as well ask you to give up using your reason altogether. 2. Now, when we turn to nature, we find order everywhere. There may be much in the world of which we do not know the precise use, except that of ornament. The architect who planned this building designed much which was not needed, except to please the eye. And so, in the works of nature, we find precisely the same thing. As Professor Le Comte puts it, "The law of order underlies and conditions the law of use"; and he illustrates this in the following way. (1) He goes back to the period when fishes were the only representatives of the vertebrate plan of structure. This machine, as he calls the fish, was a swimming machine, fitted

for locomotion in the water. Ages pass away, and then reptiles appear; but there is no new organ created to enable them to crawl upon the land. The swimming organ is so modified as to become a crawling one. Ages again pass away, and then birds are introduced. Here again the same order is modified, and becomes a wing which enables them to move in the air. Ages again pass away, and at last man appears on the scene. What is wanted now is not a fin, nor a wing, but a hand; and this is obtained by another modification of the same organ. "And thus, in the hand of man, in the forefoot of a quadruped, in the paw of the reptile, in the wing of a bird, and in the fin of the fish, the same organ is modified for different purposes." (2) Dr. M'Cosh arranges order under four heads—number, time, colour, and form. Take—(*a*) Number. You find seven bones in the vertebræ of the neck of all mammalia, whether the neck be short or long. (*b*) Colour. Seldom or never are the two primary colours, blue and red, found on the same organ, or in contact on the same plant. Every dot in the flower comes in *its* the proper place, every tint and shade and hue is in accordance with all that is contiguous to it. (*c*) Form. All minerals crystallise in certain forms, and every living object, though composed of numerous parts, has a definite shape as a whole, and a normal shape for each of its organs. (3) But take a wider view. Sweep the universe with your eye, and you will everywhere find order. "Our own planet is so related to the sun and moon that seed-time and harvest, the ebb and flow of tides, never fail. The countless millions of suns and stars are so arranged and distributed in relation to one another, or in accordance with the profoundest mathematics, as to secure the safety of one and all, and to produce everywhere harmony and beauty" (Prof. Flint). Now can you think of that universal order and beauty without thinking of a mind behind it to which they are due? 3. But all this, we are told, is the result of evolution, in which force is revealed but mind dispensed with. But evolution only describes a process, and does not account for it. It is not enough to point to force as the explanation; it may account for change, but not for order. Force throws no light upon the evolution of protoplasm now into a fish, now into a bird, and now into a man. The prevalence of order is the "reign of law"; and the "reign of law" is the reign of mind. III. IN THE ARRANGEMENTS AND ADAPTATIONS TO ENDS WHICH WE FIND IN MATTER WE HAVE ALSO THE EVIDENCE OF MIND. 1. Take the simple illustration of a rude hut. The materials are so placed and adapted that you have not only order, but a useful end; you have a contrivance, an evidence here of design, and this means that you have here a proof of mind. Or take the steam engine. There you have iron, water, coal, and fire; but observe how they are arranged. The iron is so disposed as to furnish a receptacle for the water, and a chamber into which coals can be put and lighted. You have also cylinders, pistons, connecting-rods, and wheels. And then the connection of all the parts is such that, when the coals are lighted, the water is changed into steam, which gives motion to piston, rod, and wheel, and sends the engine along its track, or propels the vessel over the ocean. No mere shaking of coal, iron, and water, for any period, however lengthened, and by any forces, however mighty, could ever have resulted in forming such an engine. No union and adjustment of them, such as we have, could have been brought about by mere chance. This adaptation and arrangement of different elements of matter, so as to accomplish this end, the production of motive power, required mind, ay, and vastly more of it than the construction of a rude hut. 2. Now, let us turn to the works of nature, and we shall see that whether we look to earth, or ocean, or sky, or man, we meet everywhere with arrangements for distinct ends, which reveal the highest intelligence, and not only constrain belief in the Divine existence, but rouse to admiration and praise. (1) We take this globe, which revolves around the sun. There are two forces acting upon it, which balance each other—the one tending to draw it towards, and the other to draw it away from, the sun. If the first of these had been greater than it is, the earth would have been drawn into the sun and destroyed; and if the second had been stronger than it is, then, just as a stone slung round the head flies off when the string is let go, so the earth would have rushed from its orbit into darkness and ruin. In this adjustment of forces, then, which preserves our world, do we not see the manifestations of a controlling mind? (2) We take the book which the geologist has opened. The great convulsions it records prove to have been but the birth-throes of a world fitted for the varied necessities of the living creatures which inhabit it. The coal and the iron, for example, which, more than anything else, have contributed to human civilisation and comfort, have had their strata tilted up by these, so that man could reach

them. The disposition of land and water; the elevation, slope, and direction of the mountain ranges; the scooping out of the valleys; the elevation of vast plateaus; the formation of the lakes; the streams; the oceanic currents—all these affect the temperature, rainfall, and vegetation. (3) Turn to the atmosphere, which is essential to life. (*a*) Its chemical elements are being constantly abstracted in the vital processes of vegetable and animal; but what the one consumes the other supplies; and so, by this and other arrangements, the balance of elements in the air is maintained, otherwise it would become unfit to support life. (*b*) Look at it as the medium for the diffusion of light and heat and sound. If we had no atmosphere, then, while every object on which the sun's rays fell would dazzle us by its brightness, everything else would be in the deepest darkness. Nor could we hear, for the air is necessary to the transmission of sound. Nor could the heat of the sun's rays be retained and diffused without an atmosphere. (4) From dead matter let us turn to organic or living matter. Take vegetable life. When a certain cycle of existence has been passed, vegetable growths die; but before they die they make provision for the continuance of their species. (5) Let us ascend to a higher region. The structure of the human body. "How complicate! how wonderful is man!" The writer of one of the old Hermetic books called "The Divine Poemander" puts the argument from man's structure in this way: "Consider, O son, how man is made and framed in the womb; and examine diligently the skill and cunning of the workman, and learn who it was that wrought and fashioned the beautiful and divine shape of man. Who circumscribed and marked out his eyes? Who bored his nostrils and ears? Who opened his mouth? Who stretched out and tied together his sinews? Who hardened and made strong the bones? Who clothed the flesh with skin? Who divided the fingers and the joints? Who flattened and made broad the soles of the feet? Who digged the pores? Who stretched out the spleen? Who made the heart like a pyramid? Who made the liver broad and the lungs spongy and full of holes? Who made the belly large and capacious? Who set to view the more honourable parts and hid the filthy ones? See how many arts in one matter; and how many works in one superscription, and all exceedingly beautiful, and all done in measure, and yet all differing. Who hath made all these things? What mother? What father? Save only God that is most manifest—that made all things by His own will." Now, "Who in the world is a verier fool," as Jeremy Taylor puts it, "than he who is an atheist? . . . Can anything in this world be more foolish than to think that all this rare fabric of heaven and earth can come by chance [or blind force] when all the skill of art is not able to make an oyster? To see rare effects and no cause; an excellent government and no prince; a motion without an immovable; a circle without a centre; a time without an eternity; a second without a first; a thing that begins not from itself, and therefore not to perceive that there is something from whence it does begin, which must be without beginning; these things are so against philosophy and natural reason, that he must needs be a beast in understanding who does not assent to them; this is the atheist. 'The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.'" (*A. Oliver, B.A.*) *Nature's revelations overlooked in their commonness:*—If the stars should appear one night in a thousand years, how would men believe and adore and preserve for many generations the remembrance of the city of God which had been shown. (*R. W. Emerson.*) *God seen in the order of nature:*—A clergyman asked an old negro his reasons for believing in the existence of a God. "Sir," said he, "I have been here going hard upon fifty years. Every day since I have been in this world, I see the sun rise in the east and set in the west. The north star stands where it did the first time I ever saw it; the seven stars and Job's coffin keep on the same path in the sky, and never turn out. It ain't so with man's works. He makes clocks and watches: they may run well for a while; but they get out of fix, and stand stock still. But the sun and moon and stars keep on the same way all the while. There is a power which makes one man die, and another get well; that sends the rain, and keeps everything in motion." *The existence of God:*—I. GROUNDS OF BELIEF IN THE EXISTENCE OF GOD. God reveals Himself—1. By the works of nature. (1) Every effect must have a cause. You see the picture of a flower or a bird, and you ask at once, Who drew it? You behold a statue, and you inquire, Who was the sculptor? But how much more is a real flower, bird, man, the proof of a Creator! (2) The same conviction is only confirmed when you observe the adaptation of means to ends. The plant is designed to be stationary, and accordingly its roots are firmly fixed in the earth. The bird was designed for locomotion, and hence in its wings we find a perfect apparatus for

transporting it from place to place. Man was intended to govern all creatures, and accordingly he is endowed with an understanding that renders him capable of doing so: the human understanding—the most wonderful of the works of nature—cannot be accounted for, but upon the ground of the existence of an Infinite Mind. Vegetation was to be sustained, and hence roots have so many mouths to extract nourishment from the soil, while their leaves are for lungs to inhale from the atmosphere those gases that are congenial and to exhale those that are unwholesome. Vegetation was to be propagated, and hence every plant is made to produce its own seeds; and in the work of sowing them, winds, waves, and animals, are all made to do their part. The construction and furnishing of this world were intended mainly to promote the welfare of the human family—and how admirably is this object accomplished! Do our lungs need air? Nothing is so free. Do we need food to satisfy our hunger? It springs up all around us. Do we require water to slake our thirst? Its limpid currents murmur at our feet. Do we want clothing to defend us against the changes of the seasons? It grows in our fields, or is brought to our doors upon the backs of the bleating flocks. 2. In providence. (1) Which connects vicious habits with disease, disgrace, and poverty, and a virtuous life with health, wealth, and honour. (2) Which leads to the detection and punishment of crime, and which pursues every criminal with the scorpion lash of self-condemnation. (3) As exerted in favour of that best and purest system of morals, the Christian religion. 3. In the Scriptures. Here we have the portraiture of His moral character. 4. To the soul by His Spirit. II. IMPROVEMENT. This doctrine lies at the foundation of all religious truth. This established, and the most important inferences follow. 1. To the impenitent hearer. If there is a God, He is your Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer; and you are under infinite obligations to serve and obey Him. 2. To Christians this doctrine is the source of great consolation. If there is a God, the Christian's hopes are all safe; death loses its terror, and the bright visions of heavenly bliss are a glorious reality. (*N. Rounds, A.M.*) *The existence of God; evidence for:*—Basil called the world a school, wherein reasonable souls are taught the knowledge of God. In a musical instrument, when we observe divers strings meet in harmony, we conclude that some skilful musician tuned them. When we see thousands of men in a field, marshalled under several colours, all yielding exact obedience, we infer that there is a general, whose commands they are all subject to. In a watch, when we take notice of great and small wheels, all so fitted as to concur to an orderly motion, we acknowledge the skill of an artificer. When we come into a printing-house, and see a great number of different letters so ordered as to make a book, the consideration hereof maketh it evident that there is a composer, by whose art they were brought into such a frame. When we behold a fair building, we conclude it had an architect; a stately ship, well rigged, and safely conducted to the port, that it hath a pilot. So here; the visible world is such an instrument, army, watch, book, building, ship, as undeniably argueth a God, who was and is the Tuner, General, and Artificer, the Composer, Architect, and Pilot of it. (*J. Arrowsmith.*) *No effect without a cause:*—A man of talent was supping one evening with some atheists. The philosophers spoke of their denial of the existence of God, but he remained silent. They asked his opinion, and while they were speaking the clock struck. He answered them by pointing to the clock and saying, "Clocks do not make themselves." (*A. G. Jackson.*) **So that they are without excuse; because that when they knew God they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful.**—*Natural religion, without revelation, sufficient to render a sinner inexcusable:*—I. THE SIN HERE FOLLOWED—Idolatry. "They glorified not God, as God," which general charge is drawn into particulars: as, that they "changed His glory." &c. (ver. 23); where, by glory, he means God's worship; that by which men glorify Him, and not His essential glory, which is not in men's power to change or debase. Note that the persons charged with idolatry are affirmed to have known and worshipped the true God. From whence it follows that they did not look upon those images, which they addressed, as gods. So idolatry is a worshipping the true God in a way wholly unsuitable to His nature—viz., by the mediation of corporeal resemblances of Him. For the defence of which no doubt but they pleaded that they used images, not as objects of worship, but only as instruments by which they directed their worship to God. But the distinction, which looks so fine in the theory, generally miscarries in the practice; especially where the ignorant vulgar are the practisers. II. THE PERSONS CHARGED WITH THIS SIN. The old heathen philosophers, who "professed themselves to be wise." Their great title was σοφοί, and the word of applause, still given to their lectures, was

σοφῶς. Pythagoras was the first who brought σοφὸς down to φιλόσοφος, from a master to a lover of wisdom, from a professor to a candidate. These grandees and giants in knowledge looked down upon the rest of mankind, and laughed at them as barbarous and insignificant, yet blundered and stumbled about their grand and principal concern, the knowledge of their duty to God, sinking into the meanest and most ridiculous instances of idolatry—having confessed a God, and allowed Him an infinite power and an eternal Godhead, they yet denied Him the worship of God. Had the poor vulgar rout only been abused into such idolatrous superstitions, it might have been detested or pitied, but not so much to be wondered at: but for the stoa, the academy, or the peripaton to own such a paradox; for an Aristotle, or a Plato, to think their Eternal Mind, or Universal Spirit, to be found in the images of four-footed beasts; for the Stagirite to recognise his gods in his own book, "De Animalibus," this, as the apostle says, was "without excuse." III. THE CAUSE OR REASON OF THEIR FALLING INTO THIS SIN: their holding of the truth in unrighteousness. 1. What was the truth here spoken of? There were these six great truths, the knowledge of which the Gentile philosophers stood accountable for: as—(1) That there was a God; a being distinct from matter, perfect, omniscient, omnipotent, eternal, good and holy. And this was a truth written with a sunbeam, clear and legible to all mankind, and received by universal consent. (2) That this God was the Maker and Governor of this visible world. The first of which was evident from the very order of causes; and the second followed from it; for that a creature should not depend upon its Creator in all respects (among which, to be governed by Him is one), is contrary to the common order and nature of things. Besides all which it is also certain that the heathens did actually acknowledge the world governed by a Supreme Mind. (3) That this God was to be worshipped. For this was founded upon His omnipotence and His providence. (4) That this God was to be worshipped by virtuous and pious practices. For so much His essential holiness required. (5) That upon any deviation from virtue and piety, it was the duty of every rational creature to repent of it. The conscience of every man, before it is debauched and hardened by habitual sin, will recoil after the doing of an evil action, and acquit him after a good. (6) That every such deviation rendered the person liable to punishment. And upon this notion, universally fixed in the minds of men, were grounded all their sacrifices. 2. These truths they held in unrighteousness. (1) By not acting up to what they knew. As in many things their knowledge was short of the truth, so almost in all things their practice fell short of their knowledge. The principles by which they walked were as much below those by which they judged, as their feet were below their head. By the one they looked upwards, while they placed the other in the dirt. For they neither depended upon God as if He were almighty, nor worshipped Him as if they believed Him holy. For the proof of which go over all the heathen temples, and take a survey of the absurdities and impieties of their worship, their monstrous sacrifices, their ridiculous rites and ceremonies. And then so notoriously did they balk the judgment of their consciences, in the plainest duties relating to God, their neighbour, and themselves; as if they had owned neither God nor neighbour, but themselves. (2) By not improving those known principles into the proper consequences deducible from them. For surely, had they discoursed rightly but upon this one principle, that God was a Being infinitely perfect, they could never have been brought to assert or own a multiplicity of gods. Nor could they have slid into those brutish immoralities, had they duly cherished these first practical notions and dictates of right reason. But they quickly stifled and overlaid those seeds of virtue sown by God in their own hearts, so that they brought a voluntary darkness and stupidity upon their minds (ver. 21). (3) By concealing what they knew. For how rightly soever they might conceive of God and of virtue, yet the illiterate multitude were never the wiser for it. Socrates was the only martyr for the testimony of any truth that we read of amongst the heathens. As for the rest, even Zeno and Chrysippus, Plato and Aristotle swam with the stream, leaving the poor vulgar as ignorant, vicious, and idolatrous as they first found them. And thus I have shown three notable ways by which the philosophers held the truth in unrighteousness. This disposed them to greater enormities; for, "changing the truth of God into a lie," they became like those who, by often repeating a lie to others, come at length to believe it themselves. They owned the idolatrous worship of God so long, till, by degrees, even in spite of reason and nature, they thought that He ought so to be worshipped. But this stopped not here; for as one wickedness is naturally an introduction to another, so, from absurd and senseless devotions, they passed into

vile affections (ver. 24, &c.). God knows how far the spirit of infatuation may prevail upon the heart, when it comes once to court and love a delusion. IV. THE JUDGMENT, OR RATHER THE STATE AND CONDITION PENALLY CONSEQUENT UPON THE PERSONS HERE CHARGED BY THE APOSTLE WITH IDOLATRY: "they were without excuse." The last refuge of a guilty person is to take refuge under an excuse, and so to mitigate, if he cannot divert the blow. It was the method of the great pattern and parent of all sinners, Adam, first to hide, and then to excuse himself. But now, when the sinner shall have all his excuses blown away, be stabbed with his own arguments, and, as it were, sacrificed upon that very altar which he fled to for succour; this, surely, is the height and crisis of a forlorn condition. Yet this was the case of the malefactors who stand here arraigned in the text; they were not only unfit for a pardon, but even for a plea. An excuse imports the supposition of a sin, and—1. The extenuation of its guilt. As for the sin itself, we have already heard what that was, and they could only extenuate it on the ground either of ignorance or unwillingness. As for unwillingness, the philosophers generally asserted the freedom of the will, which, in spite of the injury inflicted by sin, has still so much freedom left as to enable it to choose any act in its kind good, as also to refuse any act in its kind evil. This is enough to cut off all excuse from the heathen, who never duly improved the utmost of such a power, but gave themselves up to licentiousness. The only remaining plea therefore must be that of ignorance, since there could be no pretence for unwillingness. But the apostle divests them even of this also (vers. 19, 21). Conclusion: Note—1. The mercy of God to those to whom He has revealed the gospel, since there was nothing that could have obliged Him to it upon the account of His justice; for if there had, the heathens, to whom he revealed it not, could not have been thus without excuse. 2. The unspeakably deplorable condition of obstinate sinners under the gospel. The sun of mercy has shined too long and too bright upon such, to leave them any shadow of excuse. (*R. South, D.D.*) *Sin without excuse*:—How fearful an evil is sin! Its nature precludes all apology for it. And yet all men "with one consent make excuse." Apt scholars of the first apologist! Adam and his fallen race, rather than condemn themselves on account of transgression, will venture to charge the Holy One with the occasion of it. Many lines of Scriptural argument might be adduced to show the inexcusableness of sin. But we know of none more answerable than that of the text—man's impiety and ingratitude. Take the case of—I. THE FIRST SINNER. Whatever was the occasion of Satan's sin, the text gives a clue as to its nature. "The first estate" of the fallen angels was doubtless one of extensive knowledge. In their present condition what craft, what subtlety do they display! And yet angels were made to live even in His unveiled presence—to know Him, to love, serve, and glorify Him. But from some unrevealed cause, their knowledge did not beget humility, their surprising privileges did not ensure gratitude; whilst standing before "the high and lofty One who inhabiteth eternity," they were "lifted up with pride," and rebelled against Him. And God, who created them and had blessed them, spared them not, and "they are without excuse; because that when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful." II. OUR FIRST PARENTS. Their nature was one degree lower than that of the angels. They were created after the image of God in holiness and happiness. What bounds could have been fixed to that mind which held daily converse with God? What privileges were there! The body and soul united in blissful harmony, and both united in the God of love! But notwithstanding, impiety and ingratitude were the sin and ruin of Adam! He credited the word of "the father of lies" before the word of the God of truth. Ambition made him forget his privileges. And "they were without excuse, because that," &c. III. THE HEATHEN. The apostle proves that though they are ignorant of the revelation of grace (and they will not be condemned for rejecting that which was never offered to them), yet they cannot be ignorant of the revelation of nature. The present awful and ruinous state of the heathen has arisen from the depravity of human nature; the love of sin, and consequent hatred of holiness. They abused their privileges, "loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." IV. THE JEWS. What nation was ever so blessed as they! Raised from obscurity to the dignity of a theocracy, they passed on from one degree of glory to another, till the Lord of glory appeared as "the King of the Jews." And notwithstanding all this, impiety and ingratitude were the sin and the ruin of Israel. V. NATIONS PROFESSING CHRISTIANITY. Have we not known God? Are we not blessed by Him with extraordinary and peculiar privileges? To what modern nation has God revealed Himself so signally as the

God of love has unto us? And how great our temporal prosperity, and our influence and power over the whole world! Such are our privileges. And what use do we make of them? If we "know God," by what national acts do we "glorify Him as God"? Does He receive the glory due unto His holy name in the calm deliberation of our senators? Is His Word alone the acknowledged and the supreme rule of faith and practice? Is truth and piety upheld and protected, and are falsehood and idolatry trampled under our feet? Alas! if our candlestick were removed, we are "without excuse, because that," &c. (*G. A. Rogers, M.A.*) *Inexcusable irreverence and ingratitude*:—After a missionary had gone into a certain part of Hindostan, and had given away New Testaments, a Hindoo waited upon him, and said, "Did you not write that first chapter of Romans after you came here?" "No; it has been there nearly two thousand years." "Well, all I can say is, that it is a fearfully true description of the sin of India." However, I am not going to talk about Hindoos; they are a long way off. I am not going to speak about the ancient Romans; they lived a couple of thousand years ago. I am going to speak about ourselves, and about some persons here whom my text admirably fits. Here is—I. WANT OF REVERENCE. "They knew God," but "they glorified Him not as God." 1. Many never think of God. Whether there is a God, or not, makes no practical difference to them; if we could prove that there were no God, they would feel easier in their consciences. "Well," says one, "I do not care much whether there is a God or not; I am an agnostic." That is a Greek word, is it not? And the equivalent Latin is "Ignoramus." I could not bear to be an "ignoramus" or an "agnostic" about God! I must have a God. He is to me as necessary as food to my body, and air to my lungs. The sad thing is, that many who believe that there is a God yet go from the beginning of the week to the end of it without reflecting upon Him at all. 2. Have no right conceptions of God. The true conception of God is that He is all in all; and unless we treat Him as such, we have not treated Him as He ought to be treated. 3. Some who think of God a little, but never offer Him any humble, spiritual worship. Do not imagine that God can be worshipped by anything which is merely mechanical or external, but which is not from the heart. 4. There are those who do not obediently serve Him—for they are the servants of themselves; and there is no master more tyrannical than unsanctified self. But, remember, if the Lord be God, and He made us, we are bound to serve Him. 5. They do not trust Him. The place for man is under the shadow of God's wings, but you run to your neighbours as soon as ever you are in difficulties. 6. They did not seek to commune with Him. It is a very sad business when a boy who has been at home with his father and mother for years has never spoken to them. 7. They do not want to be reconciled to Him. II. WANT OF GRATITUDE. I cannot say anything much worse of a man than that he is not thankful to his benefactors; and when you say that he is not thankful to God, you have said about the worst thing you can say of him. I will prove ingratitude on the part of many. 1. God's law is despised. God has taken the trouble to give us this map of the way, and to direct us in the only right road; yet some have gone directly in the teeth of it; in fact, it looks as if the very existence of the law is a provocation to them to break it. 2. God's day is dishonoured. God has, in great mercy, given us one day in seven wherein to rest, and to think of holy things. He said, "Take six, and use them in your business. No, we must have the seventh as well. 3. God's book is neglected. Was there ever such a book, so full of wisdom, and so full of love? But there are many who do not take the trouble to read it. A father's love-letter to his son, and his son leaves it unread! 4. God's Son is refused. Ingratitude, thou hast reached thy utmost limit now. 5. God's deliverances are forgotten. Some years ago I spoke with a soldier who rode at Balaclava; and when he told me so, I took him by the hand; I could not help it, though he was a stranger to me. The tears were in my eyes, and I said, "Sir, I hope that you are God's man after such a deliverance as that." But I did not find that he had given his heart to Christ. Over there is a man who has been in half-a-dozen shipwrecks; and if he does not mind, he will be shipwrecked to all eternity! One here has had yellow fever. Ah, sir, there is a worse fever than that on you now! 6. God's providences are ignored! Some of you, from your childhood, have had all that heart could wish. Should God not have some gratitude from you? But one says, "I have had good luck." Here is unthankfulness to God indeed, when you ascribe His gifts to "good luck." "Well, you know, but I have been a very hard-working man." I know you have, but who gave you the strength for your work? 7. God's Spirit is resisted. III. THIS IRREVERENCE AND INGRATI

TUDE WERE AGAINST KNOWLEDGE. "When they knew God." Notice—1. Knowledge is of no use if it does not lead to holy practice. It was no good to them to know God, for "they glorified Him not as God." So, my theological friend, it does not matter what you think, or know, unless it leads you to glorify God, and to be thankful. 2. Knowledge will increase the responsibility of those who are irreverent and ungrateful. Whatever excuse might be made for those who never heard of God, there was none for these people. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *False and faulty conceptions of God* :—1. To right hearts, a study of God's character both attracts and repels. The attractive influences are our need of God, our thirst after Him, and the curiosity of our natures. And yet no sooner do we approach the consideration of His appalling greatness and spotless purity, than we shrink back under an oppressive sense of our demerit. Only sanctity of heart can give the power of apprehending this subject needs. 2. Our age is pre-eminently one of criticism and reconsideration. Every theory of science and theology is being put into the crucible. We have no anxiety about the final issue. Nothing will be lost but the dross. But this fact should not become a couch on which our indifference reclines, but rather an inspiration to us to defend the truth. Between the Bible representation of God and the God of much modern thought there are sad discrepancies. Error can change its form without disappearing. If heathens have had a god made with their own hands, modern thinkers have one cast in the mould of their wild imaginations. They may revolt at the idea of bowing before an idol; but they conceive a Deity lacking the qualities essential to the nature of Jehovah, such as righteousness, justice, and grace. 3. There are many reasons why we should seek to have right conceptions of God. (1) Our belief will effect our life. Souls become assimilated to the object of their worship. The voluptuous worshipped Venus, &c. False and faulty conceptions of God cannot do other than result in the false and faulty character. (2) There is an equally close connection between character and work. Our work will never be better than we are. I. FALSE CONCEPTIONS OF GOD. The most prevalent of these are—1. Pantheism which teaches that the universe is God, and that God is the universe. This, of course, denies His distinct existence, and affirms that God has neither intelligence, consciousness, nor will. He is not a personality who can say "I," or be addressed as "Thou." What a man would be without faculties and without consciousness, that, say they, is God without the universe. The destiny of the human soul, according to Pantheism, is its absorption into the Infinite. And, as we may well suppose, its effects have been, and still are, disastrous. It destroys all distinctions between good and evil, for they are alike the operations of God. Sin is no barrier to intercourse with God. Self is deified, for the soul is part of the Divine essence. The drapery and sophistry of this form of religion deceive the imagination and captivate the minds of some. But there will come a time when all hearts will be sick of it. The heart yearns for a personal Father to whom it can carry its burdens and tell its griefs. But that Father is not found in Pantheism, but in the personal, self-existent, glorious God of the Bible. 2. The mechanical conception of God is very different, but little less revolting. According to this "God is"—as Carlyle has worded this theory, "an absentee, sitting, ever since the first Sabbath, on the outside of His creation seeing it go." God is only present in the world by the agency of law, and law acts through the agency and tendencies of matter; while the Lawgiver Himself is, to use Martineau's words, "a remote and retired mechanician, inspecting from without the engine of creation, to see how it performs." Those who thus believe seem to leave the character of God with no other perfection than that which belongs to a great first cause, or an Almighty contriver—"too vast to praise, too inexorable to propitiate, with no ear for prayer, no heart for sympathy, no arm to save." They believe in law, and that is all they do believe in. Poor mortals! We are fed, preserved, and nurtured from the cradle to the tomb by machinery. We do not hesitate to pronounce this conception of God to be false. The world is not a mere machine. Natural law is but the omnipresent expression of God's will. Law does not govern, but God—by means of law. Instead of God being "an absentee," "He is not far from any one of us," &c. 3. The poetic view of God has been propagated, by sentiment and imagination, influenced and guided largely by an unsanctified heart. A few of God's attributes are admired, but the stern integrity of His nature is forgotten. With these dreamers God is not principle, but sentiment. As to how the great Lawgiver is to act towards a broken law these visionaries never trouble themselves. The King of kings may reign, but He certainly does not govern. But such conception is false.

The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob still lives, and, as ever, He has thunderbolts as well as tears. He awards and avenges. Holiness and heaven, sin and hell, He has linked together with indissoluble chains. The Judge is not lost in the Father nor the Father in the Judge. II. FAULTY CONCEPTIONS OF GOD, *i.e.*, defective, fragmentary. 1. Perhaps there are few of us but have faulty conceptions of God. (1) This can be partially accounted for by a consideration of our constitutional peculiarities. Most of our minds are ill-proportioned, and, as a consequence, we are apt to see only isolated fragments of God's character. We may believe in God as revealed in Scripture, and yet, certain elements of our nature being more susceptible of impression, we are apt to conceive of God as possessing only those attributes and qualities that interpret themselves to our nature. One man is overstrung with nerves; to him God is all joy—one eternal summer. But to another man "whom melancholy has marked for her own," God exhibits the hues of His own feeling. Men, whose natures are full of stern severity, are apt to view God only as a mass of spiritual strength. But there are those who revolt at this stoical conception of God, for in them the pathetic, tender, benevolent elements largely predominate. (2) Our individual experiences have a determining force in this matter. To the Christian whose life has been one of signal success and joyous prosperity, God is the hero of a thousand battles, never once disappointed in His expectations or frustrated in His purposes. To others, life has been a melancholy blank—a series of unfinished, unsuccessful enterprises. Such are apt to forget that "the Lord reigneth," and that "out of evil He still educeth good." 2. How are we to avoid these mistakes? (1) Let us labour after a growing likeness to God, for God only becomes real to us as His nature is unfolded within us. (2) In our testimony for God, let us endeavour to meet every phase of human want. The needs of human souls, the conditions of human life, are infinitely various, and it will expand, ennoble, and enlarge our conceptions of God if we endeavour to show that God's character is adapted to the necessities and wants of all. (3) Above all, we should constantly study Him who is "the image of the invisible God." The person of Christ reflects the Divine nature; His ministry the Divine mind; His death the Divine heart; His resurrection the Divine power. In the life and death of our Redeemer, justice, wisdom, love, and power, mingle their beams and shine with united and meridian splendour. There they form a glorious covenant rainbow, made up of the effulgent light of the Eternal, and tears of the Redeemer's grief. (*W. Williams.*) *The sin of not glorifying God*:—I. WHAT IS IT TO GLORIFY GOD? 1. Negatively, (1) Not as if we made Him glorious (Exod. xv. 11). (2) Nor as if we added anything to His glory. 2. Positively. (1) To acknowledge His glory (Psa. xix. 1). (2) To admire it. (3) To live up to it. (4) To speak of it. II. WHAT IS IT TO GLORIFY GOD AS GOD? 1. To acknowledge Him to be God. (1) To be what He is in Himself—a Spirit, Almighty, all-wise, &c. (2) To be what He is to us. Our—(*a*) Maker (Gen. i.) (*b*) Preserver (Acts vii. 28). (*c*) Governor (Psa. lxxv. 6; Matt. x. 29, 30). (*d*) Redeemer (Psa. xlvii. 41). 2. To fear Him as God. 3. To hope in Him (Psa. xxvii. 1; xlvi. 1, 2) as an all-wise, almighty, all-gracious and all-faithful God. 4. To rejoice in Him (Phil. iv. 4) as reconciled in Christ, and a soul-satisfying God in Himself. 5. To desire Him as one without whom we cannot but be miserable, and in whom we cannot but be happy. 6. To love Him as the chief Lord in Himself (Luke xviii. 19), and as the fountain of goodness in His creatures. 7. To worship Him only, and in spirit and in truth. 8. To serve Him alone, in all things, so as to do all to His glory (Isa. xlii. 8; 1 Cor. x. 31). III. HOW DOES IT APPEAR TO BE A SIN NOT TO GLORIFY GOD AS GOD? 1. God here accuses the Gentiles of it, and blames them for it. 2. Not to glorify God as God is not to glorify Him at all. IV. WHO ARE GUILTY OF THIS SIN? 1. Such as do not acknowledge there is a God (Psa. xiv. 1). 2. Such as do not know the Lord they acknowledge. 3. Such as know Him, but do not glorify Him. 4. Such as glorify Him, as they think, but not as God, and these are—(1) Such as have not right apprehensions of Him. (2) That have not right affections for Him. (3) That do not perform right worship and obedience to Him. Conclusion: 1. You know God; you know that He is an all-knowing and all-powerful God, that He is the chiefest Good, most merciful and gracious, and that He will bring all things into judgment, and yet you do not live up to this knowledge, and therefore do not glorify Him as God. 2. Examine whether you have not been guilty of this sin, humble yourselves for it, and then reform it. Consider—(1) The glory of God is the first thing that ought to be prayed for (Matt. vi. 9). (2) Remissness in this is denounced (Mal. ii. 2) and punished (Acts xii. 23: Rom. i. 24). (3) Unless you glorify God your religion is

vain. (4) To glorify God is the glory of heaven. (5) Glorify God and God will glorify you (1 Sam. ii. 30). (*Bp. Beveridge.*) *God dishonoured by the heathen*:—They did not render to Him the honour that was His due; cherish towards Him those tempers of mind which became His creatures, or express the sentiments of devotion in worship befitting His nature and character. They forgot His unity, and gave Him not exclusive adoration; they lost sight of His spirituality, and instead of worshipping Him "in spirit and in truth," imagined Him to be gratified with what pleased the sensual appetites of corporeal beings; the impression of His infinite though unseen majesty (the majesty of eternity, immensity, omniscience, and omnipotence) being effaced from their minds, their homage was no longer that of "reverence and godly fear"; and, letting slip the remembrance of His infinite and irreconcilable separation from all evil, they served the God of light with the works of darkness, the "Holy One" with the mysteries of iniquity and impurity. (*R. Wardlaw, D.D.*) *Ingratitude to God*:—Why are men unthankful to Heaven? I. Is it because HEAVEN DOES NOT BESTOW FAVOURS ON MEN? There can be no gratitude without favours. What has God given us? Existence, the world, His blessed Son. Were He to withdraw from us all that He has given, we would have nothing left, and be no more. Ingratitude to man is bad; but to God it is infinitely worse, for the greatest favours we receive from men are only borrowed from Heaven, and are mean, and few in comparison with what God bestows. II. Is it because THOSE FAVOURS ARE DESERVED? Great favours have not power in themselves to generate gratitude. The recipient must feel that he has no claim whatever to them. He who gives me that which I feel to deserve will fail to inspire with thankfulness by that act. III. Is it because GOD IS NOT FREE IN THEIR BESTOWMENT? If I know that a man is constrained to bestow a favour, his gift will fail to inspire me with thankfulness. I care not how valuable his gift, nor how greatly it may serve my interest; the feeling will destroy the possibility of gratitude. IV. Is it because HE IS NOT DISINTERESTEDLY KIND IN GIVING? If in the man who bestows on me a favour I discover indifference or selfishness, I can feel no thankfulness, however valuable the gift may be. Conclusion: Ingratitude to God is not only without all reason, but against all good reason. It is the basest of all vices, and lies at the root of nearly all the evils of life. "As the Dead Sea," says an old author, "drinks in the river Jordan, and is never the sweeter, and the ocean all other rivers, and is never the fresher, so we are apt to receive daily mercies from God, and still remain insensible of them, unthankful for them. The rain comes down from heaven in showers; it goes up but in mists. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Ingratitude*:—Ingratitude is here reckoned among the fatal steps taken toward degradation and toward gross impiety. The whole world agree to consider that nature base which is not moved by substantial kindness. All agree, too, that gratitude is a manly and noble quality. There is a great difference in this affection. There are some natures that take but the slightest favours to make them exhale thanks and gratitude. There are others that require much. Gratitude works also with different degrees of expression. In some, favours are very soon forgotten. In others, never. With some, gratitude is like the new-fallen snow, exquisite; but, like it, it very soon dissolves and passes away. With others, gratitude is like the diamond, once formed, hard and enduring, brilliant, and from every facet sending radiance. In some, gratitude excites uneasiness and unrestfulness till in some way it can discharge obligation. In others, there is no such thing as discharging the obligation for a favour—a kindness done to them binds them to the doer evermore. It is perfectly fair, then, that God should demand at our hands gratitude for mercies received, and that we should attempt to measure human character and human conduct by this expectation of God. I. HAS THANKFULNESS TO GOD BEEN IN ANY PROPORTION TO THE BENEFITS RECEIVED? Has it ever been a common experience, lively and quick? Has it acted to promote obedience? The children of unnumbered kindnesses—have these blessings of God that have watched you from youth up to this hour, and that have flowed through all the channels of your life, ever brought forth in you a profound sense of recognition? Is not what the apostle describes applicable to us? But let us more in detail look into this matter. Let us look at —1. A man's own organisation, and inquire in what way he is wont to receive that as a comprehensive and complex gift of God. It is no small thing that we have an organisation that brings health and strength. There are many that are born to misfortune. They carry organised suffering with them. That, for the most part, is not our condition. The separate elements that go to constitute this gift of our organisation are marvellous. If the eye could keep a journal of all the pleasures

that it has brought to us no tongue could measure our obligations. If the ear could give its account of pleasures issued; if not a single sense merely, but the whole of our body, could rise up and bear witness to God's goodness in its organisation, what a complex series of services from God to us would be exhibited! And yet, are not life, and health, and strength, more frequently a reason of indifference? All the senses that God has put together to create the most noble thing made under the heaven—we take them as a gift, of course. We arrogate to ourselves personal beauty, if we are handsome; personal strength, if we are strong; personal skill, if we have a hand to execute. We take all these sovereign gifts of God, not with thanksgiving, not as if they brought us nearer to Him in sweet obedience, not as benefits received, but to set us apart from Him and His service. 2. The gifts of God expressed in the human mind and disposition. We are neither thankful for the casket nor the jewels that God has put within the casket. Indeed, the more men have, usually, the less apt are they to be grateful. Men are apt to become vain, arrogant, worldly, and foolish in the possession of their mental gifts and powers. We carry about, in reason, in imagination, in hope, in love, in sympathy, in everything that goes to make up the human disposition, that wonderful gift of God, the human soul, from the cradle to the grave, and scarcely think to thank God or to love Him for His benefaction. 3. Our social advantages. It is no small thing to have been born in a Christian land. How many of us find occasion for real thankfulness in this? It is no small thing to have been born of Christian parentage—to have been put into this life throngh a right gate. Have you ever made it an object of thought? Our honourable connections are matters of no small moment, as they stand intimately related to our happiness. The position we are permitted to occupy in society we are apt to ascribe to our own skill and work. But there is not a man living that has really achieved the social advantages which he has. There is a providence in them. And all that which we have of repute, ease, influence, consequence by reason of our social connection—does not this tend to puff us up? How many men requite God by being to others exactly what He is not to them! God bridges the way from His heart to ours by kindnesses without number. We look down upon men less favoured than we, and seem to say, "Stand thou there: come not near to touch our robes." 4. Our relations to the gifts of God in nature and in human society (1) No one can enough appreciate the wonderfulness of God's bounties of love registered for every one that has an eye to see and an ear to hear in the fulness of nature. Everywhere God makes Himself known to those that have a heart sensitive to His presence. The whole globe is a sacrament, and time is full of the most solemn lessons and the most momentous truths. And yet we let day after day, and year after year, pass over our heads, and our constant thought is—what? That the winter is severe; that the day is inclement; that the rain incommodes our party or mars our pleasure. (2) The successes of life, by which men attain livelihood and the respect of men, are gifts of God, and not the less subjects of gratitude because they depend upon our activity, since our activity again depends upon God's being ever present with us. God invites us to all the bounties of nature, and we are more vain of their skill to reap them than thankful for the bounties themselves. 5. The work of God in providences toward every one of us. There are gifts of prosperity and gifts of adversity; there are sparing mercies in sickness and danger to us, and, what comes nearer to a sensitive nature, to others. The providence of God that attends our daily walk is marvellous to him that has an eye to discern all its details, and wisdom to comprehend its full meaning. But we walk through the day, the year, often without a thought, or scarcely a reminiscence. 6. God's spiritual dealings with us. The gift of Christ, that richest and Divinest of all gifts, and the promise through Him of eternal life, and of help in every time of need; the gift of the Holy Ghost; His mindfulness of every feeling in us, though we are mindless of any feeling in Him—in all these spiritual blessings, gratitude and thankfulness are the exception, and not the rule. II. THE SIN OF THIS. 1. There is no one thing that you admit to be a fairer measure of character and life than this principle of gratitude; and when you take it and measure your course of conduct, not toward an inferior, or an equal, or a mero superior, but toward God—the highest, the noblest, the most disinterested, and the best being that ever lived—no man, not even the purest, can help feeling that he has lived a life of ingratitude. God's wonderful bounties have come before you unrecognised. You have made yourself selfish through God's kindnesses. You have made yourself proud through His goodness. The very things that were meant to draw you to God have built around you walls of separation

between yourselves and God. 2. It does not need that men should lay to their consciences the charge of theft, of crime. There is no offence any more guilty than this. If there be a single soul that says, "I need no repentance, no change of heart: I am not a sinner," I lay this charge upon him, and he cannot resist it. We cannot receive from our father and mother a love-token and not know it; but from Christ we can. We cannot take a poor gift from a fellow's hand without feeling a sentiment of honour and requital; but from God's hand we take royal bounties without any such consciousness. Ah! when Christ takes His own heart, His sacrifice, and His love, and brings it to us and makes it a present, is there no requital, are there no thanks due? When God requires the service of our life and the fulness of our heart, is it an exacting requisition? Does the mother expect too much when she demands that the child she has reared shall love and serve her? If you have given your time to nurse the sick, is it too much to expect that when they come to health they will kindly remember you? If a man is about to be destroyed, and you step between him and his peril and rescue him, is it strange that you should expect at least kindness and love from him? The untutored savage would never forget such a benefactor. It requires Christians, men educated in the knowledge of the death of Christ, who died that they might live, to refuse to requite service with gratitude. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *On the causes of unthankfulness:*— I. WE ARE APT RATHER TO REST IN SECOND CAUSES THAN TO TRACE OUR BLESSINGS TO THEIR PRIMARY SOURCE. Does man receive any good, it appears to be the fruit of his own labour, or prudence, or of the kindness of his friends; but the First Cause is the Being to whom our thanks are chiefly due. Take a case. The way in which I can best serve a friend is by persuading a third person to do something for his benefit. To whom, then, is my friend really indebted? While his thanks ought undoubtedly to be given to the third person, they are principally due to me. Suppose you deemed it right, before you conferred a favour upon your child, to require of him some previous exercise—would he, when he received it, argue justly if he were to say, "I do not owe this to my parent, but to my own labour"? The fact is, the favour is enhanced by the appointment of the means where a merciful end is secured. This we discover in other cases, but not where God is the Author of our success. Paradise was not less replenished by His bounty because He appointed Adam to dress the garden. The bounty of the monarch is not the less because he distributes it by the hand of his ministers. II. OUR DEFECTIVE VIEW OF HIS PROVIDENCE. Our acknowledgment of the agency of God in some instances becomes a means of diminishing our sense of His agency in others. The fact is, God more distinctly reveals to us His agency in some instances that we may learn to recognise it in all. The very idea of a particular Providence arises from our imperfect conception of the Divine agency. For, if we saw the agency of God as it is seen in heaven, we should discover that His providence is as distinct, as minute in one case as another. Thus men call it a "providence" when they receive some unexpected deliverance or blessing. But they do not call a loss, or a disease, a providence. But it is certain that on this point the views of God differ most widely from our own; and when we shall be able to form a true conception of the goodness of God we shall discover mercy where we once discerned only severity, and shall thank God for trials and sufferings as the most signal instances of His providential care. III. MEN DO NOT CONSIDER THEMSELVES INDEBTED TO GOD EXCEPT FOR PECULIAR OR DISTINGUISHING MERCIES. For the mercies they share in common with others they think little gratitude is due. But do the diffusiveness and extent of the bounty of God form any just cause of unthankfulness? What would you think of a child who should say, "I am not indebted to my parent; for he feeds and clothes and takes care of my brothers and sisters as well as of myself"? The fact is, that the very extent of those blessings we share with others demands additional gratitude, for such mercies are the most valuable. Compare such a gift as light with any petty comforts granted to an individual. All private mercies may be compared to the dew which fell only upon the fleece of Gideon. But general mercies are like the dew of heaven descending on the the general surface of nature, refreshing the thirsty fields, and clothing them with verdure and beauty. Surely the blessing cannot be lessened to me because others also are blessed. IV. THE VERY NUMBER OF THE MERCIES OF GOD TENDS TO DIMINISH OUR GRATITUDE. Examine the common feelings of mankind: is it not evident that some extraordinary instance of the bounty of God excites more gratitude than the more valuable mercies of every day? The constant enjoyment of our senses, the nightly refreshment of sleep, make scarcely any impression; but if a sense, apparently lost, is restored, then we feel much

gratitude to our Benefactor. The same disposition is seen in other cases. If a parent gives to his children something new and unexpected, they are more thankful than for their daily food and clothing. Thus, also, although the unexpected bounty of a friend may at first excite thankfulness, yet, if repeated every day, it is received with diminished gratitude, and at length the withholding of it is resented as an injury. If it be urged in reply that this springs from a principle in human nature, surely it is no excellent principle, but argues a depraved nature and a corrupt heart. From the same depravity it arises that the very feeling of obligation is attended with pain, especially where the debt is large. Men love to be independent, and therefore hate an obligation. V. A PREVALENT VIEW OF GOD'S CHARACTER AS A JUST AND HOLY RATHER THAN AS A KIND AND COMPASSIONATE GOD. (*J. Venn, M.A.*) **But became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.**—*Paul's indictment of heathenism:*—Note—I. THE CORRUPTION OF HUMAN NATURE. The facts enumerated are such as to manifest—1. Corruption in principle evincing itself by corruption in practice. Had there been in the human heart any liking to the true God, the difficulty would have been to forget not to remember Him. Those whom we love we are fond to think of. Has this been the case with men in regard to God? Has it not rather been, in every one point, precisely the reverse? And if it be in human nature to forget and depart from the living God, must it not be emphatically corrupt? 2. Idolatrous defection is here associated with practical wickedness as its inseparable concomitant. Does not the state of the heathen world bear ample testimony to its truth? 3. And observe further—the connection, in the way of reciprocal influence, between impiety and immorality. Immorality in the life is the natural consequence and evidence of impiety towards God in the heart, while the love of sin inspires the wish that God were other than He is. II. THE NECESSITY AND THE VALUE OF REVELATION. How early did this necessity appear! (Gen. vi. 5, 11, 12; Josh. xxiv. 2). And yet men talk of the sufficiency of the light of nature, while the experience of every age plainly contradicts this. Never was an experiment more completely tried, and on every trial the great general result has been uniformly the same. Take the most enlightened nations in the most enlightened times. Have they, in these circumstances, excelled others in their views of God and in moral goodness? Frequently, indeed, they have even been worse. Even the philosophers had defective and erroneous views of Deity, of the way of obtaining His favour, and of morals. All that is good in any of their systems is to be found in the Bible along with infinitely more and infinitely better. Yet the Bible must be discarded and their conjectures substituted! Because they had a dim taper, we must seek to quench the sun! No; blessed be God for this heavenly light! But for it we too should have been sitting in the region and shadow of death—"without God and without hope in the world." III. HOW INEXCUSABLE MUST THEY BE WHO, POSSESSING SUCH A REVELATION, REMAIN, NOTWITHSTANDING, IGNORANT OF GOD! But alas! the same principles of corruption which make men willing to forget God amidst His works of creation and providence, make them unwilling to receive the truth concerning Him when set before them more directly in His Word. 1. If the heathen be "without excuse," what shall be said of those who shut their eyes against this superior light, and while it shines around them continue to walk in darkness? 2. How inexcusable, too, and how deeply criminal must they be who still "hold the truth in righteousness"! Here is the Bible. You have a general knowledge of its contents. You profess to believe them. Yet, withal, they have no proper influence upon your hearts and lives. What if the righteous God, in His just displeasure, should give you over to "a reprobate mind"? Beware of imagining that the mere possession of revelation constitutes you Christians. The mere having of the Bible can do no good if its important truths are disbelieved or neglected. IV. THE GUILT OF IDOLATRY, IT IS TO BE FEARED, ATTACHES TO MANY WHO LITTLE IMAGINE THAT THEY ARE AT ALL CHARGEABLE WITH ANYTHING OF THE KIND. The spirit of idolatry is the alienation of the heart from God; the withholding from Him, and the giving to other objects, that homage and those affections to which He alone is entitled. Every man's idol is that on which his heart is supremely set. Ambition, wealth, power, learning, &c., are all idols if served irrespective of God. V. WHAT AN IRRESISTIBLE MOTIVE IS HERE PRESENTED TO MISSIONARY EXERTIONS! Whose spirit is not stirred within him with the emotions of indignant zeal in beholding the world "wholly given to idolatry." To suppose a Christian indifferent on such a subject is to suppose a contradiction in terms—a Christian without piety, without mercy, without benevolence! Think how the

glory of God is trampled under foot; how Satan reigns triumphant; how large a proportion of the world is still in the condition here described! VI. LET CHRISTIANS MAKE IT MANIFEST BY THEIR WHOLE CHARACTER THAT THE CONNECTION IS AS CLOSE BETWEEN TRUTH AND RIGHTEOUSNESS AS BETWEEN ERROR AND WICKEDNESS. Let your profession of the faith of the gospel be adorned by a conduct uniformly consistent with its pure nature and its holy influence. (*R. Wardlaw, D.D.*) *The omission of good leads to the commission of evil*:—1. In respect of the understanding the refusal of adoration, "they did not glorify," became a vain labouring of the mind, "they became vain," and complete estrangement from the truth, "they became fools." 2. In respect of the heart, ingratitude was first transformed into darkness, and then into monstrous and degrading fetishism. The ungrateful heart did not stop short at not thanking God, it degraded and dishonoured Him by changing Him into His opposite. (*Prof. Godet.*) *Evil imaginations*:—What you love, what you desire, what you think about, you are photographing, printing on the walls of your immortal nature. And just as to-day, thousands of years after the artists have been gathered to the dust, we may go into Egyptian temples and see the figures on their walls in all the freshness of their first colouring, as if the painter had but laid down his pencil a moment ago; so on your hearts youthful evils, the sins of your boyhood, the pruriences of your earliest days, may leave ugly shapes that no tears and no repentance will ever wipe out. Nothing can do away with "the marks of that which once hath been." What are you painting on the chambers of imagery in your hearts? Obscenity, foul things, mean things, low things? Is that mystic shrine within you painted with such figures as in some chambers in Pompeii, where the excavators had to cover up the pictures because they were so foul; or is it like the cells in the Convent of San Marco at Florence, where Fra Angelico's holy and sweet genius painted on the bare walls, to be looked at, as he fancied, only by one devout brother in each cell, angel imaginings, and noble, pure celestial faces that calm and hallow those who gaze upon them? What are you doing, my brother, in the dark, in the chambers of your imagery? (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*)

Ver. 22, 23. **Professing themselves to be wise they became fools.**—*The follies of the wise*:—Futility of thought has reached the character of folly. What, in fact, is polytheism, except a sort of permanent hallucination, a collective delirium, a possession on a great scale? And this mental disorder rose to a kind of perfection among the very peoples who, more than others, laid claim to the glory of wisdom. When he says, "professing to be wise," Paul does not mean to stigmatise ancient philosophy absolutely; he only means that all that labour of the sages did not prevent the most civilised nations—Egypt, Greece, and Rome—from being at the same time the most idolatrous of antiquity. The popular imagination, agreeably served by priests and poets, did not allow the efforts of the wise to dissipate this delirium. (*Prof. Godet.*) *Boasting of wisdom*:—In every department of knowledge, but especially in religion, boasting of wisdom is alike the proof and parent of folly. I. IT LEADS A MAN TO GO BEYOND THE LIMITS OF HIS OWN POWERS, and to meddle with matters too high for him, OR ELSE TO REFUSE TO BELIEVE IN ANYTHING WHICH HE CANNOT UNDERSTAND OR GRASP. 1. In either case this ends in folly. For the wisest and the most ignorant are on a par when they speculate upon subjects which transcend human thought, or over which God has been pleased to place an impenetrable veil. 2. He who believes in truth taught by nature and revelation is wiser than the so-called philosopher, who declines to receive anything but what his human intellect and finite powers can explain or fully grasp. II. IT LEADS A MAN TO DISPENSE WITH THE HELP to be derived from the labours, remarks, or suggestions OF OTHERS, AS WELL AS TO ADVANCE THE MOST ABSURD OPINIONS, and to maintain them with the most inveterate obstinacy for the sake of notoriety. III. IT MAKES A MAN TOO WILLING TO ACCEPT HIS OWN CONCLUSIONS without sufficient and searching examinations. IV. IT IGNORES GOD'S LAW THAT THE TEMPLE OF DIVINE KNOWLEDGE MUST BE ENTERED ONLY BY THE GATE OF HUMILITY. (*Biblical Museum.*) **And changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image.**—*Degradation of God's glory*:—The glory of God is the splendour which His manifested perfections cast into the heart of His intelligent creatures; hence a bright image which is to man the ideal of all that is good. This image had been produced within them. What did they make of it? The sequel tells. While holding the Divine person, they wrapped it up, as it were in the likeness of its opposite; it would have been almost better to leave it in silence—it would not

have been so great an affront. The preposition ἐν exactly describes this imprisonment of the Divine glory in a form ignoble and grotesque. The epithet "incorruptible" is, as it were, a protest beforehand against this degradation. (*Prof. Godet.*) *Idolatry a retrogression, not an advance in religious thought*:—Idolatry according to Paul is not a progressive stage reached in the religious thought of mankind starting from primeval fetishism. Far from being a first step towards the goal of Monotheism. Polytheism is, on the contrary, the result of degeneracy, an apostasy from the original Monotheism, a darkening of the understanding and heart which has terminated in the grossest fetishism. The history of religions, thoroughly studied nowadays, fully justifies Paul's view. It shows that the present heathen peoples of India and Africa, far from rising of themselves to a higher religious state, have only sunk, age after age, and become more and more degraded. It proves that at the root of all pagan religions and mythologies there lies an original Monotheism, which is the historical starting-point in religion for all mankind. (*Ibid.*)

Vers. 24, 25. **Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness.**—*The consequences of the Divine abandonment*:—You have merely to loose the connection, and the trucks by their own weight rush down the incline, and dash themselves to a thousand pieces. A physician has merely to retire when his orders have been repeatedly disregarded, to deliver his refractory patient over in his disease to protracted suffering and possibly to a premature grave. In like manner, if God judicially delivers over men who wilfully reject Him to their lusts, they will sink into the lowest depths of degradation, and come to everlasting destruction. (*C. Neil, M.A.*) *The Divine penalty attached to sin*:—Here Paul expresses the feeling of indignation raised in his heart by the thought and view of the treatment of God by the creation to whom He had revealed Himself so magnificently. There is something here of that "exasperation of heart" (Acts xvii. 16), felt at Athens. This feeling is expressed forcibly by the conjunctions, διό, "on account of which," *i.e.*, of the sin just described, referring to the justice of the punishment in general. Καί, "also," brings out more especially the relation of congruity between the nature of the punishment and that of the offence. They sinned, "wherefore" God punished them; they sinned by degrading God, wherefore also God degraded them. The word "gave over" does not signify that God impelled them to evil, to punish the evil committed. The holiness of God is opposed to such a sense, and to give over is not to impel. On the other hand it is impossible to stop short at the idea of a simple permission. God was not purely passive in the terrible development of Gentile corruption. Wherein did His action consist? He positively withdrew His hand; He ceased to hold the boat as it was dragged by the current of the river. This is the meaning of the apostle in Acts xiv. 16. It is not a simple abstention, but the positive withdrawal of a force. Such is the meaning of Gen. vi. 3. As Meyer says, "The law of history, in virtue of which the forsaking of God is followed by a parallel growth of immorality, is not a purely natural order of things; the power of God is active in the execution of this law." If it is asked how such a mode of action harmonises with the moral perfection of God, the answer undoubtedly is that when man has reached a certain degree of corruption he can only be cured by the excess of his own corruption; it is the only means left of producing what all preceding appeals and punishments failed to effect, the salutary action of repentance. So it is that at a given moment the father of the prodigal lets him go, even giving him his share of goods. The monstrous character of the excesses about to be described confirms this view. The two prepositions ἐν, "through," and εἰς, "to," differ from one another as the current which bears the bark along, once it has been detached from the shore, differs from the abyss into which it is about to be plunged. Lusts exist in the heart; God abandons it to their power, and the legions that fall which must end in the most degrading impurities. "You have dishonoured Me; I give you up that you may dishonour your own selves." (*Prof. Godet.*)

Ver. 23. **Who changed the truth of God into a lie.**—*The truth of God exchanged into a lie*:—ἐν signifies the workshop, or matrix, where the exchange took place. Everything, of course, effected in and coming out of the workshop or matrix of falsehood is falsehood itself. How ridiculous would it be for us to exchange the present knowledge of science for the crude notions and false theories of savages or of the ancients! How absurd for us to strip the walls of our national galleries of

the masterpieces of such artists as Raphael and Titian and the like, and to put up in their places paintings without true perspective, worthy conception, or correct execution! Or, again, what an act of madness would it be to abandon springs of clear and crystal waters for impure and poisonous ponds! (Isa. xliv. 20.) But such instances of folly and madness in exchanging the true for the false, the good for the evil, were nothing in comparison to the exchanging the positive and precious knowledge of God in the workshop of falsehood, and, as a matter of course, into falsehood itself, such as idols, the tales of mythology, and heathen systems of philosophy and religion. (*C. Neil, M.A.*) *Idolatry a lie against God's truth*:—The number of the gods of the heathen is a lie against the Divine unity; their corporeal nature a lie against His pure invisible spirituality; their confined and local residence a lie against His omnipresence and immensity; their limited and subdivided departments of operation a lie against His universal proprietorship and dominion; their follies and weaknesses a lie against His infinite wisdom; their defects and vices and crimes a lie against His unsullied purity and perfection. The entire system, in all its diversity of modes, is a sacrilegious robbery of Heaven, a universal slander on the character of the Most High. Every framer and every worshipper of idols, or of real or imaginary beings represented by idols, has "changed the truth of God into a lie." (*R. Wardlaw, D.D.*) *A lie*:—I. AN IDOL IS A LIE. 1. As professing to be what it is not. 2. As deceiving him who trusts in it. II. EVERYTHING OPPOSED TO GOD IS A LIE. III. EVERYTHING IS A LIE which—1. Disappoints man's hopes. 2. Fails to satisfy the cravings of his immortal soul. IV. THAT LIFE IS A LIE which is not—1. According to God's will. 2. Directed to His glory. 3. The realisation of His enjoyment. (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) **And worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator.**—*Nature-worship*:—1. There is no fact in the history of the Jews more certain or familiar than their propensity to lapse into idolatry, yet after the return from Babylon they have never been reproached with any tendency to idol worship. While a large part of the Christian world has resumed the form, if not the substance of idolatry, the Jews have borne witness against their defection. 2. This extraordinary contrast prompts the question, How and why is it so? What has become of the idolatrous propensity which once appeared inseparable from the corruptions of the human heart? There might be less cause to propound this question if a corresponding change had taken place among the heathen. But the heathen world is as idolatrous as ever. Is it because we are too civilised? If by this we mean intellectual refinement and cultivation of the taste, we have only to remember Greece. Or if a civil and political wisdom, military force, and practical sagacity, then look at Rome! 3. Since none of these solutions explain why idolatry is now so rare among ourselves, it may not be without its use to inquire whether, after all, we are so free from idolatry as supposed. Let us then inquire what is idolatry. We must reject the etymological definition which would restrict it to the worship of images. Then they who adored the host of heaven, who invoked the winds, bowed down at the fountains, whispered their devotions to the air, and called upon the mountains, are excluded from the catalogue. On the other hand, idolatry is not to be resolved into a purely spiritual act, the preference of some other supreme object of affection to our Maker. This, though the soul of all idolatry, is not the whole of it, and exists now just as much as in ancient times. Covetousness is idolatry, but idolatry is not covetousness. What imparted to the ancient Paganism its distinctive character, and gave unity to it, was the worship of nature. However they might differ in their symbols, rites, theology, or ethics, they are all reducible to this. 4. This view does not exclude a vast variety of forms and of gradations. The lowest stage, above that of mere stupid fetishism, may be described as the religious worship of particular natural objects or their artificial representatives, rising from the shapeless stone to plants, to trees, from the meanest brutes to the most noble, from the clod to the mountain, from the spring to the ocean, from earth to heaven. A still more intellectual variety would be that which, instead of individual sensible objects, paid its adorations to the elements or mysterious powers of nature. By a still higher act of philosophical abstraction some worshipped Nature itself, *τὸ πᾶν*, including all the objects which have been already mentioned. 5. These views as to the essential character of ancient heathenism derive at least some countenance from the solution which they seem to afford of the disappearance of idolatry. On this hypothesis, if on no other, it may certainly be said that there is still a strong taint of idolatry perceptible. I. IN OUR LANGUAGE; for to what strange accident can it be owing that in common parlance

and in current literature there should be so constant, so instinctive an aversion to the name of God as a personal distinctive appellation. Can it be reverence? Alas! this explanation is precluded by the levity with which the same men often make that venerable name the theme of jests and the burden of imprecation. No; the name seems to be shunned because it means too much. Not only is the grand and simple name of God exchanged for a descriptive title, such as Supreme Being—or an abstract term, the Deity—but still more readily and frequently is God supplanted by a goddess, and her name is Nature. It is Nature that endows men with her gifts and graces, that regulates the seasons and controls the elements. Whatever explanation may be given of this, it is still an odd coincidence that this darling figure of speech or philosophical formula should so exactly tally with the spirit and language of idolatry considered as the worship of nature. II. But this coincidence may, in some, be the effect of classical studies, and need excite no serious alarm if confined to the fanciful creations of romance or poetry. But we find these analogies also IN REAL LIFE AND ITS LEAST IMAGINATIVE WALKS. The compulsory dependence upon seasons and weather often takes the form of an extreme anxiety, a breathless watching of the elements, a superstitious faith in something quite distinct from God, and a constant disposition to invest this something with an individual existence and with personal attributes; although it may prove nothing with respect to any formal belief, it certainly presents another strange approximation to the spirit and the practice of the old idolaters. The fisherman who feels himself to be the slave of the winds and tides, without a thought of God as his Creator, is not so very far removed from the old Greek or Phœnician, who sacrificed to Ocean ere he launched his bark. The mariner who spends whole nights in whistling for the wind, may do it from habit or in jest; but he may also do it with a secret faith, by no means wholly different in kind from the emotions of the ancient pagan, as he poured out his libations to Eolus, or his prayers to the particular wind of which he stood in need. The social and domestic superstitions which have lingered in all Christian countries, as to signs of good and evil luck, and the methods of procuring or averting it, are the relics of a heathenism which we sometimes look upon as finally exploded. III. But objection may be made to sweeping influences from the errors of the vulgar. Well, admitting that the uninstructed multitude must always embrace errors, some of which may accidentally resemble those of heathenism, let us ascend again into the region of intellectual cultivation IN REFERENCE TO SCIENTIFIC OBSERVATION. The philosophical explorer often looks upon God's place as empty, or as filled by another—yet the same—viz., Nature. No one supposes that astronomers ever formally adore the stars, or geologists earth, or chemists the elements, or botanists trees and flowers. But let the evidence that some of all these classes recognise a Nature, quite distinct from God, by whose mysterious virtues these effects are all produced, and whose authoritative laws are independent of His will, be gathered from the language, actions, and feelings of these votaries of science, and then it will appear whether the prophets and the high priests of material wisdom are or are not in heart and practice worshipped of nature. IV. Another class adore nature as the source of sensible and imaginative pleasure. These are the worshippers of BEAUTY. The voice that whispers in the trees or roars in the tornado may, to some ears, be the voice of God; but they may also utter other inspirations, and bring responses from another oracle. Instead of calling us to God, they may but call us to themselves, or to the place where nature sits enthroned as God. This form of idolatry has all the aid that art can yield to nature. The idolater of nature cannot but be an idolater of art. The high art of the ancients was a part of their religion. It was nature that they represented, beautified and worshipped. The gradual return in modern times to this view of the arts, and the impassioned zeal with which it is pursued, is one of the most startling analogies to heathenism that can be produced, and threatens, more than any other, to result in an exterior resemblance corresponding to the essential one described already. It may no doubt be said that this apotheosis, both of art and nature, has resulted by reaction from the barbarous and unscriptural contempt, especially of God's material works. This is in some sense true. But the idolatry itself springs from a deeper and remoter source. As long as man retains the sensibilities which God has given him, and yet remains unwilling to retain God in his thoughts, the voice of nature will be louder than the voice of God. V. From the agreements which have now been traced, it may reasonably be expected that the principle of this idolatry will also avow itself IN DOCTRINE. It has done so already in the pantheistical philosophy of Germany.

Conclusion: From all this it becomes us to take warning, that whatever we do we do with our eyes open, to see to it that we incur not the reproach, "Ye know not what ye worship," and to see to it that we are not led into idolatry by any specious figments or delusions, lest we be constrained to take up the lament of those confessors in the times of heathen persecution, who, though proof against all menace and persuasion, were at last miserably cheated into acts of worship at the altar of an idol, when they thought themselves kneeling at the altar of their God. (*J. A. Alexander, D.D.*) *Scepticism and superstition:*—There is a very close connection, as all history proves, between theoretical disbelief in a future life and spiritual existence, and superstition. So strong is the bond that unites men with the unseen world that if they do not link themselves with that world in the legitimate and true fashion, it is almost certain to avenge itself upon them by leading them to all manner of low and abject superstitions. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Heart idolatry:*—Worship is the attribution of supreme excellence to, and the entire dependence of the heart upon, a certain person. And the people or the things to which a man attributes excellence, and on which he hangs his happiness and his well-being, these be his gods, no matter what his outward profession is. You can find out what these are for yourself, if you will honestly ask yourself one or two questions. What is it that I want most? What is it which makes my ideal of happiness? What is it which I feel that I should be desperate without? What do I think about most naturally and spontaneously, when the spring is taken off, and my thoughts are allowed to go as they will? And if the answer to none of these questions is "God!" then I do not know why you should call yourself a worshipper of God's. It does not matter, though we pray in the temple, if we have the dark subterranean pit, where our true adoration is rendered. Oh! I am afraid there are a great many of us nominal Christians, connected with Christian churches, posing before men as orthodox religionists, who keep this private chapel where we do our devotions to an idol and not to God. If our real gods could be made visible, what a pantheon they would make! All the foul forms painted on that underground cell would be paralleled in the creeping things—which crawl along the low earth, and never soar nor even stand erect, and in the vile bestial forms of passion to which some of us really bow down. Honour, wealth, literary or other distinction, the sweet sanctities of human love dishonoured and profaned by being exalted to the place which Divine love should hold, ease, family, animal appetites, lust, drink—these are the gods of some of us. (*Ibid.*) **Who is blessed for ever.**—*The blessedness of God:*—I. THE BLESSEDNESS OF GOD. To bless is to make happy, and to be blessed is to be happy. God is necessarily happy—1. In His benevolent feelings. God is love. Benevolence always gives pleasure to the mind. There is a selfish benevolence, which is a happy feeling so long as it continues. There is also a pure, disinterested, and universal benevolence, which yields a purer, higher, and more lasting satisfaction to the mind. And such is the benevolence of the Deity. His benevolent feelings, therefore, must be a source of pure and permanent felicity. 2. In expressing His benevolent feelings. There are emotions which are not productive of any external act. Good men have a thousand affections which they never could express by any external actions, but God is both able and disposed to express His benevolence. He diffuses as much happiness among His creatures as His mighty power, guided by His unsearchable wisdom, can produce. And all these expressions of His goodness are extremely gratifying to His benevolent heart. He makes Himself happy by making His creatures happy. Do parents feel peculiar satisfaction in expressing their love to their children? So does the kind parent of the universe. 3. In beholding the effects of His benevolence. As He loves to promote the happiness of His creatures, so He loves to see the happiness which He bestows and they enjoy. II. GOD IS PERFECTLY AND FOR EVER BLESSED. This blessedness is—1. Without the least alloy, or mixture. It is as pure as His perfect benevolence, from which it flows. God is love, and in Him is no malevolence at all. Though the benevolence of saints in this life affords them some real happiness, yet it is mixed with many painful feelings, which arise from the mixture of their selfish with their benevolent affections. But all the affections of God's heart are uniform and harmonious. 2. Uninterrupted. There are many things which serve to interrupt the happiness of saints in this imperfect state. But there is nothing to interrupt the pure and unmixed felicity of the Divine Being. He never finds any difficulty in the way of extending His benevolent regards to any of His creatures, who are always in His sight and His reach. He never sees a good to be done which is out of His power to do. He never sees an evil to be removed

which it is out of His power to remove. 3. Unlimited. The happiness of created beings never can be unlimited. Their finite natures will for ever set bounds to their enjoyments. But the blessedness of the Deity can admit of no limitation. This is evident from the great scheme which God formed from eternity. Among all possible modes of operation which stood present to His omniscient eye, His infinite wisdom chose the best, to give the most free, full, extensive expressions of His perfectly benevolent feelings. Among all possible things to be done, He determined to do all those which would diffuse the greatest sum of happiness through the universe. And by forming this scheme which would give the most unlimited indulgence to His benevolent feelings, He laid a foundation for His own unlimited felicity and self-enjoyment. 4. Everlasting. He is blessed for ever. He can never see any reason to alter His designs, and therefore it is certain that He never will alter them. He can never meet with any insurmountable difficulties in carrying His designs into effect, and therefore He will infallibly accomplish them. And if He does eventually accomplish all His purposes, His joy will be full. He was blessed in forming His benevolent designs; He has been blessed in carrying them on; He will be blessed in bringing them to a close; and He will be blessed in contemplating them, through interminable ages. III. IMPROVEMENT: 1. If the blessedness of God essentially consists in the benevolence of His heart, then we may clearly understand what is meant by His acting for His own glory. His creating the universe for His glory, means His creating it for His own most benevolent and perfect blessedness. 2. If God's blessedness, which consists in the gratification of His benevolence, be His glory, which He seeks in all His works, then His glory and the good of the universe cannot be separated. His acting for His glory is acting to express His pure benevolence to His creatures, in promoting their highest happiness. It is impossible that God should promote His own glory to the highest degree, without promoting the highest good of the universe. 3. If God means to gratify His own benevolence in all His conduct, then we may be assured that He never has suffered, and never will suffer anything to take place but what will promote the greatest good of the whole system of moral beings. Since He has caused both natural and moral evils to exist, we may be sure that no more shall exist than He sees necessary to promote His benevolent purposes. As He designs that the wrath of man shall praise Him, so the remainder of wrath He will restrain, or not cause to exist. 4. If it be God's supreme design to make Himself and His creatures as happy as possible, then we have reason to rejoice that He is absolutely sovereign. If any of His selfish creatures could guide or stay His hand, they would not suffer Him to seek His own happiness, nor the greatest happiness of the universe, but constrain Him to promote their own private, personal, selfish happiness. 5. Since God places His highest happiness in promoting the highest happiness of His creatures, we have solid ground to believe that He will fulfil all His great and precious promises to believers. He has inseparably connected their happiness with His own. 6. We learn from what has been said that none can be miserable, in time or eternity, but those who are unwilling that God should promote the highest good of the universe. (*N. Emmons, D.D.*) *The Divine blessedness*:—I. Let us approach this subject from the easiest standpoint, that of THE FUTURE. We project our vision through dim ages yet to come. The curse has gone from the universe. Terrible whilst it lasted, God's tenderness has at last abolished it from the hearts and lives of men. God's innate blessedness has been transfused into numbers no arithmetic can compute, and they are eager to copy the beneficence that has won their supreme adoration. If there were fresh worlds to be redeemed, not one would decline the task, for the Son who gave Himself a ransom for many is in them. In spirits many as the sands of the sea, He has implanted the foundation motives of His own saving love, and has drawn them into the same circle of sacred joy with Himself. When we look at God from this standpoint, it is not difficult to conceive of Him as infinitely and endlessly blessed. But the subject is not without its difficulties. 1. On the far-off confines of all this blessedness, is there not the smoke of a torment that ascendeth up for ever and ever? Whilst there is one world of guilt and pain, can God's great pitying heart be quite at rest? Well, do not suppose that the ratio between good and evil will always be what it was when Christ spoke of the few that were saved, or even what it is now. Evil will shrink to ever-diminishing proportions in the uncounted centuries yet to be. In the quiet night the heavens breathe their wealth of dew upon the fields and moors and forests, but you can scarcely find the dewdrop that has distilled itself into the cup of the nightshade. For many a hundred miles the trellised vines spread their proud clusters before the sun. You may travel for days

before you find the one vine that has been smitten with mildew. Uncounted suns glitter through the Milky Way. The astronomer may search for months before he can find the sun whose light has been quenched. And so evil will be lost in the prevalence of good, and God's blessing prove itself measureless. 2. But does not this view run counter to that of the Good Shepherd who left the ninety and nine to seek that which was lost? Yes, if the lost one could still be brought back. But I know of no law of beneficence that compels the Shepherd to tarry in the wilderness when the wanderer fights the hand that seeks to guide it back, or rushes into thickets where it is impossible to follow it. I know of no law of beneficence which compels the Shepherd to sit down by the carcase of His lost sheep, like Rizpah by the bones of her son, and rend the air with incessant lamentation. God would be untrue to the claims of the saved if He were so full of regrets for the lost few, that He could not rejoice with infinite gladness over the saved multitudes. 3. But was not God the Father of these lost ones, and can a father be perfectly blessed whilst a single child remains in uncancelled sin and abiding torment? But what is it that haunts the mind of the parent? The sense of possible failure in himself. "If I had guided more wisely, spoken more softly, prayed more faithfully, sympathised more ungrudgingly, possibly the issue might have been otherwise." But no thought akin to that can be awakened in the Divine mind. Whatever suffering convulses the world of impenitence, He has not contributed to it. In respect of the damned He has the blessedness of knowing that He has done for them all that infinite love and patience and resource could. 4. But He might have withheld the freedom through the misuse of which these men have damned themselves. Yes, but that would have been to create a vast negative hell of privation and frustrated gladness, in place of a limited positive hell of incurable perversity and woe. If God does all that His great heart can devise, and all that His mighty hand can achieve, and if what He has done issues in the sanctity and blessedness of a vast preponderating majority, God is without qualification infinitely blessed. II. Contemplate God's blessedness from the standpoint of THE PRESENT. That is much more difficult. How are we to reconcile God's blessedness with suffering and sin? If a mother lay in a trance, conscious of all that was going on around, but unable to move, and heard the cry of pain from her little one, could she be blessed? And God seems to be blessed? And God seems to be present in every scene of human woe. The human parent is spared the pain of looking upon the actual circumstances of the child's profligacy. But God is looking with unveiled eye upon every offence. One hot summer morning, long before daybreak, I wandered through the streets of a Japanese city. The houses are built of thin board, and the rooms separated by paper partitions only. I cannot describe the strange sensations that took possession of my mind. I could hear the tick of every clock, the very breath and movements of the sleepers. And I thought, Is it not thus with God as He walks through this world of ours? How can He be perfectly blessed? The least sensitive man in our midst could not bear it for an hour. Is not God's present relation to pain a qualification of His blessedness? 1. No; for He is ever exercising a ministry of pity and healing. A nervous woman in the presence of disaster is brought by the excess of grief to the verge of madness; but commit to her some trifling ministry of help, and she becomes calm as an angel. The people whose lives are employed in mitigating pain are always the happiest. And so the blessedness God realises through His secret ministry to sorrow, protects Him against the shadow that the spectacle of widespread suffering might otherwise cast upon His gladness. 2. God's blessedness can suffer no eclipse from contact with pain, because it is His will to make it the vehicle for the manifestation of conspicuous tenderness. How many cynical people have only felt the sympathy and affection of their kind in the hour of affliction? Although the human heart in its perversity may make of suffering a curse, it is God's will to make it a point in our wilderness lives at which sweet, secret springs of Divine and human sympathy shall arise and blend with each other, and create magic balm and beauty and freshness. When God's purpose is accomplished, He makes His servants glory in their tribulations; and when men glory in their tribulations God glories with them, and in that case His blessedness is not impaired. 3. God's blessedness is not overshadowed by human pain, because by it He is teaching us sympathy with each other, and conformity to His own pattern of beneficence. God very often does not help and heal because He wants us to do it. God is blessed in the very pains of His creatures, when they teach His people to be full of kindness. 4. God looks upon pain from the standpoint of that wider epoch when sorrow and sighing shall have fled away. (1) Pain so viewed cannot darken His gladness.

What a little thing the pain and sickness of your childhood is, when you look at it through the vista of years! Pain is nothing when passed, and, regarded from the standpoint of the Eternal, it is as though it were passed already. (2) So with death —so sad, solemn, unknown to us, it is a very different thing as God sees it. Some time ago a young lady was operated upon who had been blind from her childhood. The operations themselves were not painful, but the terror created by the returning power of sight was excruciating. She wished to remain in blindness. She felt as though she were always standing upon the brink of a precipice. But the doctor felt no remorse. He knew that his patient would by and by rejoice in the faculty of sight. So when death takes the scales from our sight, the revelation is full of terror. But the beneficent issue of the process is more than a counterpoise to its pain. The work of death does not embitter the blessedness of God. By and by death, like pain, will be no more. (3) And so with sin, which would otherwise be a qualification of the Divine blessedness. It is in the hearts of parents that the sweetest joys as well as sharpest sorrows are to be found. The father, by his relation and process of loving his children, has given to those children a strange power of wounding him through their disobedience. But the very same love attunes his nature to gratifications that may reach him through the conduct of dutiful and loving children. God looks upon the race in Jesus Christ, and in regard to their future. He may see the prodigal in his unholy riot. That is the fleeting image of the moment. He sees the restored prodigal welcomed back within the household. That is the reality that abides. He may hear the music to whose seductive strains the prodigal is listening in the haunts of harlotry, and that is the murmur in the sea shell. He hears also the music and gladness in the homes whose vacant places have just been filled again, and that is the pealing anthem of an everlasting ocean. In that anthem the faint murmurs in the shells that strew the shore are swallowed up and forgotten. There are terrible contingencies connected with the gift of free will. But we must never forget the profound theology in the simple parable of the marriage feast. God will find countless recipients for the bounty His great love has made ready; if not amongst Pharisees, then amongst publicans; if not amongst Jews, then amongst Gentiles; if not in the men of this generation, then in uncounted generations yet to come. III. Realise God's blessedness in relation to THE PAST. We go back to the epochs when the worlds had not issued upon their courses. How can we reconcile the Divine blessedness with solitude? There can be no blessedness without beneficence, and no beneficence without a relation. 1. Well, the beneficence of character that was the spring of all after triumph and achievement was there. The righteousness and purity and love that were exercised in the relations to be afterwards constituted, were already living and conscious forces. And God could not be morally perfect without being infinitely blessed in Himself. 2. More still: the Son, who was to be the instrument for the accomplishment of all the Father's vast and holy and loving purposes, was already a willing instrument in the Father's bosom. And in the life of that Son every soul was reflected that was to be afterwards united by faith to Him as its Saviour and Head. Literary artists sometimes identify themselves with the creatures of their imagination. They have shed tears over their pains and reverses, and been in ecstasies over the good fortune to which they thought fit to bring them at the breaking of the clouds. And the mind of God has been peopled from the beginning with the forms of those who were afterwards to be, not the figures of a romance only, but profound realities upon the platform of human life and action. And towards all these, the Divine love has been pouring itself out from everlasting. Conclusion: But it may be asked: "Does not this view of the eternal blessedness of God preclude the possibility of sympathy? How can the eternal God enter into the fleeting sorrows of time? Can He grieve for us in our grief and shame? Does not the vast perspective in His vision seem to exclude every trace of affinity and sensitive relation with our mortal life?" Just as the human eye has different focal lengths, and can adjust itself to the different degrees in which light may be diffused, so the Divine mind can mysteriously combine into one the view of life opening itself at the standpoint of time, and that other view opening itself at the standpoint of eternity. Indeed, in the Person of Jesus He has given us proof of the fact that He *can* bring Himself under the conditions of time, looking at sorrow and sin from our own levels, and transcending all human brotherhood and friendship in the perfectness of His sympathy. (*T. G. Selby.*)

Vers. 26-32. **For this cause God gave them up to vile affections.**—*Human depravity*:—I. THE CAUSE of all this gross ignorance and corruption is assigned in

ver. 28. "They did not like to retain God in their knowledge." 1. The expression plainly assumes God's having been known, and that the cause of corruption and loss of the original knowledge was entirely of a moral nature. This will appear—(1) From the word itself—"they did not *like*." Inability: whether arising from the want of evidence, or opportunity to observe, or capacity to understand it, is not alleged. The word clearly expresses the voluntariness of the defection, the indisposition to keep the knowledge as the true cause of the loss of it. (2) From the consequence which followed in the Divine procedure: "God gave them over to a reprobate mind," &c., is clearly judicial. Nothing of this description could ever be inflicted on account of mere deficiency of intellect, but must be connected with the disposition or state of the heart. 2. The true character of God it is impossible that corrupt creatures should relish. As a creature in love with sin, he wishes to believe that God is "such an one as himself." In this way idolatry becomes an evidence of the deep and universal depravity of the human heart. This view of the case accords well with the character of the "gods many and lords many of the heathen world." Men love sin; and they make their gods sinners, that they may practise evil under their sanction and patronage. The worship of their gods is such as might be anticipated from their characters. They consist, not merely of the most senseless fooleries and extravagances, but of the most disgusting impurities, and the most iron-hearted cruelties. II. THE CONSEQUENCES are clearly represented in vers. 26 and 28, as bringing upon them the just displeasure of a forgotten and insulted God. 1. "God gave them over to vile affections," "to a reprobate mind." God is not represented as infusing any evil principles; but simply as leaving them to the unrestrained operation of the principles of evil already in them. What an awful curse this was, will sufficiently appear from the portrait in the passage before us. The various evils are represented as "not convenient"—not becoming—against all propriety and all law; and as abounding—personal and social life being "filled" with them. The description shows the fearful length to which the corrupt affections of "a reprobate mind" will carry those who are given up to their unchecked dominion. We are not, it is true, to suppose all the evils enumerated to exist in individual characters. Many of them are of such different kinds that they could not exist together. It is with nations as with individuals. Some of the features of the picture may appear with more or less of characteristic aggravation or diminution, according to particular circumstances. But of the general state of the Gentile world, at that time and still the outline here drawn, hideous as it is, is not overcharged, but faithful to nature and to fact. 2. The displays of "eternal power and Godhead" in the works of God rendered men's forgetfulness and ignorance of Him "without excuse." In like manner, the wickedness here described was also rendered inexcusable by what is stated in ver. 32. The judgment originally pronounced by Jehovah against sin was death. Of this tradition could not fail to carry down some remembrance, and tradition had the assistance of natural conscience. And while the sentence of death was thus engraven on the memories and consciences of sinful men, the early and singular institution of animal sacrifices spoke the very same language. And so did the regular fulfilment of the original sentence against sin—"Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return"; together with all the judgments by which the Supreme Ruler manifested His displeasure against sin. Men, then, know, and ought to have kept in mind, "the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death." Yet, instead of this, they cast off all restraint. Instead of "striving against sin" they strove to rid their minds of every check to the commission of it. (*R. Wardlaw, D.D.*) *Sin*:—I. ITS NAME is legion. II. ITS NATURE is devilish. III. Its EFFECT is demoralising. IV. Its JUDGMENT is death. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Sin its own punishment*:—I. IN THE SINS HERE ENUMERATED. Which were—1. Senseless; 2. Filthy; 3. Inhuman; 4. Self-deceptive; 5. God dishonouring. II. IN THEIR EFFECTS, such as—1. Health impaired and bodily frame debilitated. 2. Mental faculties enfeebled. 3. Conscience seared, and moral sense weakened and degraded. 4. Finer feelings and delicate sensibilities blunted and extinguished. 5. Incapacity to appreciate the natural affections. 6. Insensibility to the noble and good, the beautiful, and true. (*T. Robinson, D.D.*)

Vers. 28. **And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind.**—*The state of heathendom*:—Idolatry is essentially the same in every age and place. 1. In its origin. It flows from a corrupt heart, desirous not to retain the knowledge of God. 2. In its nature. However great the variety, or modes of worship, there is a grand generic likeness

in them all. The Greeks may worship Jupiter, and the Hindoos Vishnu; one class a god, and another a goddess; but still all agree in this one point, they "like not to retain God in their knowledge." 3. In its effects: "God gave them over to a reprobate mind"; and, as the necessary consequence of that, they did "those things which are not convenient" (vers. 29–32). Such were the effects produced by idolatry in ancient times. And we ask those who object to this language to show us if idolatry, by being continued in for nearly two thousand years, has grown better than it was in the days of the apostle? I. THE STATE OF THE HEATHEN AS HERE DESCRIBED. 1. God has given them over to "a reprobate mind." The term signifies disapproved. The mind which God approves must be one which has correct views of the Divine character—a just idea of the plan of salvation; and these views must have a holy influence on the heart and life. The views of the heathen on these points prove that they are given over to a reprobate mind. (1) What are their views of the Supreme Being? The heathens of India believe that all things exist in God, and that God exists in them all. Hence, when you charge a Hindoo with sin, he answers with the greatest gravity, "Sir, it is not I that sin, but God that does all these things in me." If you ask them, Why, then, are you punished for what is not done by your agency? they answer, "Because there must be a certain consequence from all actions, like fruit from a seed; and it is not in the power of all the gods to prevent it." Surely they are given over to a reprobate mind! The same may be said with regard to their views of the gods and goddesses they worship. Seeing in these nothing that is excellent, they become objects of terror only to their minds. And to those whom they consider as having the greatest power, and as doing the greatest mischief, they pay the greatest respect, and make the most frequent offerings. All their gods and goddesses have been guilty of the greatest excesses. How must this strengthen their minds in sin, when they find themselves encouraged by such examples! So that their very religion is a curse to them. As for their visible embodiments, they know that "they have eyes, but see not," &c.; and yet such is their infatuation, that when the priest has pronounced certain formularies over these images, they imagine that the beings whom they represent become completely identified with the stocks of wood or of stone which stand before them. Is not this a proof that they are "given over to a reprobate mind?" (2) Being ignorant of God, they are ignorant of the way in which His favour may be secured. They suppose that they can obtain absorption into the supreme Being, by meditating upon Him. Hence some of them plunge into the forest, and stand in one posture meditating upon Him, till their hair becomes grown like eagles' feathers, and their nails like birds' claws. Thus they remain till they believe that their souls have passed into the structure of their skulls, and are completely absorbed into it. Those who are not able to enter into this sublime course of study, found the same hope on the performance of a number of rites, such as bathing in the river Ganges; repeating thousands of times the names of their chosen gods, counting over a vast number of beads, building some temple, making some god, offering fruits and flowers to some deity. By some, or all, of these duties they hope to heap up a stock of merit for a future world; and they have no other idea whatever of anything in the way of atonement. As merit is attached to suffering as well as to actions, many of the heathen have entered on certain penalties, and inflicted severe pains upon themselves. Some hold their hands towards heaven till their arms become fixed in their sockets. Some travel hundreds of miles to visit some sacred place; others measure the whole length of their journey with their bodies on the ground. Thousands die every year by these penances. Do not these things prove that they are "given over," &c. (3) Ignorance of the means to be adopted argues ignorance of the end that is to be obtained. The heathen have no idea of a pure and eternal heaven. Those who live in meditation maintain that when the soul goes out of the body it mingles as completely with the Deity as water mingles with the ocean, and suppose that they shall be as incapable of pleasure as of pain. Those who depend on rights and ceremonies believe that in proportion to their attention to these duties will be their future degree of pleasure in a heaven that is as sensual in its nature as it is short in its duration; and that then they shall return back again to earth to suffer again. Those who are left unburied, they believe will be cast into one of the nine hells, and will then come back to earth in the form of a reptile, a bird, or a beast, before they can again assume a human form. Thus, when there is no true knowledge of God or Christ, there is no true notion of eternal life. "This is life eternal," &c. 2. God has given them over "to do those things which are not convenient." Without entering into all here stated,

we may instance—(1) Their lying. The character of a people must always be in accordance with the things they believe. The Hindoos believe tales the most monstrous and absurd, and what wonder that they, who receive such lies, should be themselves given to lying? They consider the sin to consist, not in lying, but in being detected. So much does it prevail in civil life, that in the courts of judicature it is almost impossible to administer justice. In mercantile concerns, after telling many lies as to the value of an article, and what it cost them, they will sell the article for one-third less than they at first demanded. And the inconveniences of this practice are almost endless. (2) So are those which arise from the free and unrestrained indulgence of vicious appetites and propensities. The sins which are specified in this chapter are the very sins which they commit. I have gone through it with the Pundits, and have found, from their own confession, that this is really the case. (3) Their covetousness must be noticed also. They believe that money is everything, both for this world and the next. When urged to become Christians, it is not uncommon for them to say, "Give us fine houses, and gold, and we will become Christians." They will submit to anything, however base and mean, for money. It is contrary to their Shasters for any Brahmin to become the servant of a foreigner; and yet, for the sake of gain, there is not a priest among them but will acknowledge a barbarian for his master. They will offer up prayers to the goddess Kalee, to be assisted in their depredations on the property of others; and I know of one instance in which, when these prayers were supposed to be unanswered, the goddess was herself robbed. (4) Their cruelty. Some of them they practise on themselves. In many cases they will see misery and distress, without moving to afford the least relief. I have seen men fastened to a long pole by hooks, and then swung round by a rope with a swiftness which deprived them of their reason. Some have iron spits run through their tongues, or sticks passed through their sides. But the greatest of all their cruelties is the burning of widows, infanticide and murder of parents. II. WHAT EFFECT OUGHT THIS VIEW TO PRODUCE IN OUR MINDS? We ought to learn—1. How evil and dreadful a thing it is to separate God from our thoughts. If we exclude God from our thoughts, we must expect that He will cast us out from His presence. It became the righteous God to give over to a reprobate mind those who "did not like to retain Him in their knowledge." (1) That others may see the folly of such conduct, and avoid the rocks on which they have split. (2) That He might show His just abhorrence of idolatry. God had tried all means with the heathen, and all in vain; and at last He said, "They are joined to their idols, let them alone!" 2. To be truly thankful for our superior state and privileges. Contrast your state with theirs: they have no Bible, you have the Word of God. Their sacred books countenance the most unhallowed feelings, while the Bible teaches you to "deny ungodliness and worldly lusts," and to "follow holiness." Your Bible reveals an immortality of purity and bliss, their Bible reveals nothing except a sensual heaven. You have teachers to guide you in the way to heaven, but ignorance is perfect bliss compared to the knowledge which they obtain from their Brahmins. The priest will visit them at their houses, and covet some article which he sees in the room; and if it be not given to him, he will leave a curse instead of a blessing. You have Sabbaths, but the Sabbath never shines on Hindoostan! 3. To pity and to pray for the heathen. We ought to look on them as Christ looked on us when in our sins and our blood. If your feeling of pity be genuine, it will lead to prayer. 4. To make the most strenuous exertions for the amelioration of their condition. It is well to pity them and to pray for them; but if you do no more, it will be difficult to prove to God or man the sincerity of your pity and your prayers. (1) We should do so from a regard to the glory of God. The Word of God declares that He has given His Son "the heathen for His inheritance." He has placed the heathen of India in our hands, that we may bring them to the knowledge of the truth. (2) To this we are bound by the greatest obligations. "Freely have ye received, freely give." What a disgrace to the Christian army if volunteers be not found to engage in this service! Some may perhaps say, there are so many discouragements. But we should remember that God does not despise "the day of small things"; and that from some of our saddest exercises, the most glorious prospects may arise. (3) We call upon you, by the memory of those noble servants of the Lord who have laid down their lives in His service. (4) We exhort you, by the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, "who, though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor." (*W. Yates.*) *God lost to the sight of an evil heart*:—The heart that is addicted to evil, that is in love with sin, that is clogged and burdened with guilt, has lost the capacity of discerning God as it has lost the

wish to be near Him. His name is not welcome, the idea of Him is not pleasant; we are neither willing nor able, when we are plunged in our selfish sinfulness, to cherish the bright and purifying thought of our loving Father. As a cloud darkens the heavens, the mist of our own evil hearts rises up and fills our sky, and blots out all the starry intentions of our spirit, and drapes the face of God Himself in a blackness that can be felt. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Diminishing light but not diminishing responsibility*:—We would infer from this account that men, in the first instance, had a far more clear and convinced sense of God; but, not liking to retain it, committed the sin of a perverse disposition against the light which they had, and in part extinguished it—that they of course left their own immediate posterity in a light more shaded than that which shone around the outset of their own progress through the world—that these still disliked the remainder of truth which they enjoyed; and, by their wilful resistance inflicted upon it a further mutilation, and transmitted it to their descendants with a still deeper hue of obscurity thrown over it; but still with such glimpses as were enough at least to try the affection of man towards it, to stir up a distinct resistance on the part of those who disliked it, to keep up the responsibility of the world, and to retain it in rightful dependence on the judgment of Him who made the world—so as to make it clear on the day of reckoning, that men, even in their state of most sunken alienation from the true God, were never so destitute of all capacity for discerning between the good and the evil, as to render them the unfit subjects of a moral sentence and a moral examination. With every human creature who shall be pronounced worthy of death on that day, will it be seen that there was either a light which he actually had and liked not to retain, or a light which he might have had and liked not to recover. To whom much is given of him much shall be required; and there will be gradations of punishment in hell. (*T. Chalmers, D.D.*)

Vers. 29–31. **Being filled with all unrighteousness.**—*The prevalence of evil*:—All is full of crime and vice; there is more committed than can be healed by punishment. A monstrous prize-contest of wickedness is going on. The desire to sin increases, and shame decreases day by day. Vice is no longer practised secretly, but in open view. Vileness gains in every street and in every breast to such an extent that conscience has become not only rare but extinct. (*Seneca.*) **Wickedness.**—*With and without the gospel*:—The worst kind of religion is no religion at all; and these men, living in ease and luxury, indulging themselves in the "amusement of going without religion," may be thankful that they live in the lands where the gospel they neglect has tamed the beastliness and ferocity of the men who, but for Christianity, might long ago have eaten their carcases like the South Sea Islanders, or cut off their heads and tanned their hides like the monsters of the French Revolution. When the microscopic search of scepticism, which has hunted the heavens and sounded the seas to disprove the existence of a Creator, has turned its attention to human society, and has found a place on this planet ten miles square where a decent man can live in decency, comfort, and security, supporting and educating his children unspoiled and unpolluted—a place where age is reverenced, infancy respected, manhood respected, womanhood honoured, and human life held in due regard; when sceptics can find such a place ten miles square on this globe, where the gospel of Christ has not gone and cleared the way and laid the foundations and made decency and security possible, it will then be in order for the sceptical literati to move thither and then ventilate their views. But so long as these very men are dependent upon the religion which they discard for every privilege they enjoy, they may well hesitate a little before they seek to rob the Christian of his hope and humanity of its faith in that Saviour who alone has given to man that hope of life eternal which makes life tolerable and society possible, and robs death of its terrors and the grave of its gloom. (*J. R. Lowell.*) *Spreading tendency of sin*:—I need not, I suppose, spend any time in illustrating the vividness and truthfulness of that metaphor which compares any kind of evil in a man's character to the silently, gradually, surely working leaven. The cancer spreads; the fungus creeps steadily through the rotting timber; the smallest hidden speck of evil in a man's nature has in it a demoniacal transforming and assimilating power which works underground, unconsciously even to the man himself, until some strain of temptation and stress of trial comes; and lo! he finds that what he thought was solid timber is all eaten out in the heart of it, and has no strength to resist or to bear. The smallest sin may corrupt a man's whole nature, and change, as it were, the chemical composition of every part of it; though in itself it be but an infinitesimal and almost invisible atom

that has been dropped into the hole. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) **Whisperers, backbiters.**—*Detraction*:—These two words agree that they both wound the fame of our neighbour, and they both do it behind his back or in his absence. But they differ—1. In that whispering doth it secretly and closely, but backbiting openly. 2. Whispering tendeth to breed strife among our friends, but backbiting to our general disgrace before the world. The one seeketh to deprive us of the goodwill of our friends, the other to destroy our service. They are often conjoined (2 Cor. xii. 20). I. WHAT IS DETRACTION? 1. The nature of it in general. It is an unjust violation of another's reputation. God, that hath bidden me to love my neighbour as myself, doth therein bid me to be tender not only of his person and goods, but of his good name. Therefore certainly this is—(1) A sin against God, who hath forbidden us to bear false witness against our neighbour, and to speak evil of others without a cause (Eph. iv. 31); (2) A wrong to man, because it robbeth him of his good name, which is so deservedly esteemed by all that would do anything for God in the world (Prov. xxii. 1; Eccles. vii. 1). (3) The causes it proceedeth from are—(*a*) Malice and ill-will, which prompteth us to speak falsely of others, so to make them odious, or do them wrong or hurt. Now, to hate our brother is inconsistent with that charity which the love of Christ should beget in us (1 Pet. iv. 8; 2 Pet. i. 7); (*b*) Uncharitable credulity, whereby men easily believe a false report, and so convey it to others (Jer. xx. 10); (*c*) Rashness and unruliness of tongue (James i. 26). Possibly it may not come from downright malice, but (Prov. xi. 13) whisperers must be talking, and be it true or false, out it comes; (*d*) Passion for our different interests and opinions. Bitter envying (James iii. 14) hath made mad work in the world as to strifes, and confusions, and quarrels, and bloodsheds, and persecutions. But usually it venteth itself in evil-speaking (2 Cor. xii. 20). 2. The kinds of it are two in the text. (1) Whispering, which is privy defamation of our brother. Now this is a great sin—(*a*) Because it is here reckoned among those which reigned among the heathen, and God hath expressly forbidden to His people (Lev. xix. 16; Jer. xi. 4). (*b*) It is against natural equity, because they do that to others which they would not have done to themselves (Matt. vii. 2). (*c*) It is a cause of much mischief in the world, as—Grief to the party wronged (Prov. xviii. 8); much debate and strife (Prov. xxvi. 20; xvi. 28; vi. 19); sometimes even the destruction of another's life (Ezek. xxii. 9; 1 Sam. xxii. 9). But here ariseth a question, whether all private complaints and informations against others come under the name of whispering? I answer—No, with these cautions—(i.) If the party be duly admonished; for, before we go any further, the rule is (Matt. xviii. 15). (ii.) If it be made to such as have power to redress the fault by the most discreet and gentle means (Gen. xxxvii. 2). (iii.) If the complainer seeketh nothing but the amendment of the party. (iv.) If he grieve that he hath cause to complain, and pray for his conversion. 3. Backbiting is a more public speaking evil of our absent brother, to the impairing of his credit. Now, this may be done—(1) With respect to the good things found in him. There are four degrees in this: (*a*) When we deny them. This is not only to wrong our neighbour, but to rob God of His own praise. (*b*) When we lessen them. To extenuate and clip another's due praise is envy, but in honour to prefer them above ourselves is charity and humility (Phil. ii. 3; Rom. xii. 10). (*c*) When we but deprave them by supposing a sinister intention (Job i. 9). (*d*) When we enviously suppress them. (2) With respect to evil supposed to be committed by them. (*a*) When we publish their secret slips, which in charity we ought to conceal (Prov. xi. 13). (*b*) When, in relating any evil action of another, we use harder terms than are required, and make beams of motes, and mountains of mole-hills. We should lessen sins all that we can (Acts iii. 17). II. THE HEINOUSNESS OF THE SIN. 1. In general, that is evident from what is said already. I shall urge two arguments more. (1) That men shall be called to an account for these sins as well as others (Jude 15; 1 Pet. iv. 4, 5). (2) It is the property of a citizen of Zion not to be given to backbiting (Psa. xv. 3). 2. More particularly, it is the more heinous. (1) From the person against whom it is committed. As suppose the godly and irreprovable for the main, who by their life and conversation have the best right to honour and esteem (Psa. lxiv. 3; Numb. xii. 8; 1 Tim. iii. 7). Against these it is not only unjust, but noxious and hurtful to God's service. (2) From the persons before whom the slander is brought; so that they are deprived not only of private friendships, but the favour and countenance of those under whose protection they have their life and service (Esther iii. 8; Psa. lii. 1). (3) From the end of it. Some men have no direct intention of mischief, but are given to tattling. It is a great sin in them, and an unprofitable waste of time; but it is

a greater in those that make it their business to disgrace others or sow discord. (4) From the effect or great hurt that followeth, be it loss of estate, as in the case of Mephibosheth, or a general trouble and persecution on the people of God. When their good names are buried their persons cannot long subsist afterward with any degree of service. Conclusion: Note—1. How good-natured Christianity is, and befriendeth human societies; it condemneth not only sins against God, but sins against our neighbour (Phil. iv. 8). 2. That we should not speak evil of others behind their backs, but tell them their faults plainly in love and wisdom, nor encourage others in this sin (Prov. xxv. 23). (*T. Manton, D.D.*) **Haters of God.**—*Hatred of God:*—Enemies of God in heart and work (Rom. viii. 7). Hatred of God is the essence of sin, as the love of God is the essence of holiness. Hatred to God is shown in dislike—1. To His character as just and holy. 2. To His government as opposed to evil-doers. 3. To His laws as forbidding what is sinful. 4. To His people as bearing His image. Hatred of God is the cause of men's rejection of Christ (John xv. 21–24). Written in characters of blood in times of persecution (Psa. lxxix. 2, 3). Shows the intense wickedness and madness of the human heart. God is hated who is supremely excellent, and man's greatest benefactor. An unholy nature is at the root of such hatred, which is aggravated by conscious guilt and dread of God. It is only overcome by the belief of God's love as seen in Christ. (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) *Hatred of God: its futility:*—The inventions of a hater of God are as the proud engines and presumptuous artillery of a Titanic warfare of defiance against Heaven, which recoil on himself, like mountains which are hurled back on the heads of the giants who attempted to scale the skies, and which crushed them beneath the ruins. (*Bp. Chr. Wordsworth.*)

Ver. 32. **Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.**—*The displeasure of God with all who are pleased with sin:*—I. SINNERS DO THINGS WHICH THEY KNOW ARE DISPLEASING TO GOD. The heathen do things which God has forbidden by the law of nature; the Jews those which are forbidden by the God of revelation: both, therefore, do things which they know must be displeasing to Him. And this is true of all men now. They know that God forbids them to love themselves and the world supremely; but they do both. God forbids them to disobey His commands; but they do disobey them. God forbids them to disbelieve and reject the gospel; but they do disbelieve and reject it. And they will persist in displeasing Him, notwithstanding death appears to be their certain doom. II. THEY TAKE PLEASURE IN SEEING OTHERS TAKE THE SAME PATH TO RUIN. It will be easy to account for this if we consider—1. That they love one another. They are all by nature possessed of the same selfish heart. And it is therefore reasonable to suppose that, notwithstanding the great diversity in their external conduct, they love one another because they are sinners, and not saints. Christ says repeatedly, "that sinners love those that love them." And He tells His disciples that this selfish spirit is essential to their character. "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own." Men of the world universally approve the spirit of the world, and are pleased to see one another act it out without the least reserve; though they know it is infinitely displeasing to God. 2. As sinners possess one and the same selfish and sinful heart, so they are heartily united in opposing one and the same holy and benevolent cause. The greatest nations have been, and still are, united in their views, and feelings, and conduct, towards the Church of Christ. As all sinners wish that God's gracious designs may be defeated; so they have pleasure in seeing any of their fellow-men doing what they think has a tendency to frustrate them. 3. Those who do things which they know are displeasing to God, take pleasure in seeing others do the same. Those who disbelieve the existence of God are pleased to hear others say that they believe there is no God. Those who disbelieve the inspiration of the Bible are pleased to hear others say that they believe it is a cunningly devised fable. Those who disbelieve the doctrines of the Trinity, of atonement, of total depravity, of regeneration, &c., are always pleased to hear others say that they disbelieve all these doctrines. Those who disbelieve in the Sabbath, who practise tavern-haunting, vain and sinful amusements, like others to do the same. Those who are ambitious love to see others ambitious. Those who are worldly minded love to see others worldly minded. Those who despise all religion love to see others despise it. III. IMPROVEMENT. 1. If sinners love to do things which they know are displeasing to God, then they never refrain from doing anything merely because they know it will be displeasing to Him. They

know what is pleasing to themselves, and they mean to do what is pleasing to themselves, though they know it will be displeasing to God. They are like disobedient children and servants, who will always do what is agreeable to their own corrupt heart, though they know it will be disagreeable to their parents or masters, unless they fear their displeasure. It is the fear and not the love of God that restrains sinners from doing any evil action or pursuing any evil course. 2. If sinners love to do things which they know are displeasing to God, then, though they do a great many things which He has required, yet they never do anything merely for the sake of obeying or pleasing Him. They labour to please themselves, and not Him. 3. If sinners love to do things that they know are displeasing to God, and take pleasure in seeing others act from the same principle, then no external means nor motives are sufficient to restrain them from sin, and induce them to love and please God. They sin with their eyes wide open. They know what would please God, but they do not desire to please Him. 4. If sinners not only do things which they know are displeasing to God, but take pleasure in seeing others do the same things, then they are guilty not only of their own sins, but of all the sins of others, which they see and approve. And the approvers are often more guilty and criminal than the actors. Parents who allow their children to profane the Sabbath, to game, to attend balls and haunt taverns, are more guilty than their children that do these things. Executive officers, who see and approve of those who break the laws of the land, are more guilty than the actual transgressors. The reason is, that in all these cases the approvers know more than the actors, and are under stronger obligations to condemn and restrain those who are under their care, than the transgressors are to refrain from their evil courses. 5. If men are guilty of all the sins which they know and approve of, then we may see what it is to be guilty of national sins. It is to approve of those sins, which the majority of a nation commit and approve of. And, in this view, it is easy to see that one nation may be guilty of the sins of another nation. (*N. Emmons, D.D.*) *The heinous guilt of taking pleasure in other men's sins*:—From the beginning of ver. 18 to the end of ver. 31 we have an abridgment of the lives and practices of the whole heathen world. And yet, as comprehensive as this catalogue of sin is, it is but of sin under a limitation; sins of direct and personal commission. Is not this a sufficient comprehension? For is not a man's person the compass of his actions? Or, can he operate further than he does exist? Yes; he may not only commit sins, but also take pleasure in the sins of others. Which implies, first, that thus to take pleasure in other men's sins is a distinct sin from all the former; and, secondly, that it is much greater—the furthest that human pravity can reach. For surely, that sin that exceeds idolatry, monstrous unnatural lusts, &c., must needs be such a one as must nonplus the devil himself to proceed further. I. WHAT IT IS THAT BRINGS A MAN TO SUCH A DISPOSITION OF MIND AS TO TAKE PLEASURE IN OTHER MEN'S SINS. 1. In order to show this I shall premise—(1) That every man naturally has a distinguishing sense of what is fit, and what is not fit to be done—the candle of the Lord, which discovers to him both what he is to do and what to avoid. (2) That there is consequently upon this an inward satisfaction, or dissatisfaction, after a good or an evil action. And this, no doubt, proceeds not only from the real unsuitableness of sin to the nature of man, but also from a foreboding fear, that evil will follow the doing of that which conscience disallows, which, no question, is the voice of God Himself, speaking in the hearts of men, and by secret intimations giving the sinner a foretaste of that direful cup, which he is like to drink more deeply hereafter. (3) That this distinguishing sense of good and evil, and this satisfaction and dissatisfaction is a principle not easily extinguished. It is founded in nature, and the great important end that God designs it for shows the necessity of its being put beyond the danger of being torn up by ordinary violence. (4) That that which weakens this principle is an inferior, sensitive principle, which receives its gratifications from objects clean contrary to the former, and which affect a man much more warmly and vividly than those which affect only his nobler part, his mind. 2. From these considerations we naturally infer—(1) That no man is easily brought to take a full pleasure in his own sins. For though sin offers itself in never so alluring a dress at first, yet the remorse of the soul, upon the commission of it, infinitely overbalances those transient gratifications it affords the senses. The fine colours of the serpent by no means make amends for the smart and poison of his sting. (2) That as no man is easily brought to take a full pleasure in his own sins, so much less easily can he be brought to take pleasure in those of others. The reason is because the chief motive that induces a man to sin—the gratification

of his sensitive part—cannot be had from the sins of another. For certainly another man's intemperance cannot affect my sensuality any more than the meat and drink that I take into my mouth can please his palate. 3. What, then, are the causes that corrupt the mind of man as to take pleasure in other men's sins? (1) A commission of the same sins. This is imported in the words, "They not only do the same things." It is acquaintance that must give delight in actions, as well as in persons. And it is trial that must begin the acquaintance. None look with so much pleasure upon the works of art as artists. In like manner no sober man can look with complacency on drunkenness. No; he must first be a practitioner. It is possible, indeed, that a sober or a chaste person, through illwill, envy, or spiritual pride, may be glad to see the intemperance and debauchery of some about him, but he rejoices not in it, as in a delightful object, but as in a means of his neighbour's ruin. (2) A commission of them against the conviction of conscience. The persons charged in the text are such "as knew the judgment of God, that they who committed such things were worthy of death," such as broke through all mounds of law, and laughed at the sword of vengeance, which Divine justice brandished in their faces. For God has set a flaming sword not only before paradise, but before hell; and conscience is the angel into whose hand this sword is put. But if now the sinner shall not only wrestle with this angel, but throw him too, his heart lies open, like a broad road, for all the sin in the world freely to pass through. (3) Continuance in them. For God forbid that every single commission of a sin should so far deprave the soul and bring it to such a condition. David and Peter sinned against the dictates of their conscience; yet we do not find that either of them delighted in their own sins, and much less in other men's. Before a man can come to be pleased with sin, because he sees his neighbour commit it, he must have had such a long acquaintance with it as to create a kind of friendship; and we know a man is naturally glad to see his old friend wheresoever he meets him. It is generally the property of an old sinner to find a delight in reviewing his own villainies in the practice of other men. An old wrestler loves to look on the lists, though feebleness will not let him offer at the prize. An old huntsman finds a music in the noise of hounds, though he cannot follow the chase. An old drunkard loves a tavern, though he cannot go to it, but as he is supported by another, just as some are observed to come from thence. And an old wanton will be doating upon women when he can scarce see them without spectacles. Their great concern is, that the vice may still go on. (4) That meanness and poor-spiritedness that naturally and inseparably accompanies all guilt. Whosoever is conscious of sin, feels, whether he will own it or not, shame and depression of spirit. And this is so irksome that he is restless to rid himself from it; for which he finds no way so effectual as to get company in the same sin. A vicious person, like the basest sort of beasts, never enjoys himself but in the herd. Company, he thinks, abates the torrent of a common odium by deriving it into many channels; and, therefore, if he cannot wholly avoid the eye of the observer, he hopes to distract it at least by a multiplicity of the object. (5) A certain, peculiar, unaccountable malignity. This we see in those who secretly rejoice when they hear of the calamity of their neighbour, though no imaginable interest can be served thereby. And as this occurs in temporals, so there is no doubt but that with some it acts the same way also in spirituals. So he acted who made a poor captive renounce his religion, in order to the saving of his life; and when he had so done, presently ran him through, glorying that he had thereby destroyed his enemy, both body and soul. II. THE REASONS WHY A MAN'S BEING DISPOSED TO DO SO COMES TO BE ATTENDED WITH SUCH AN EXTRAORDINARY GUILT. 1. That naturally there is no motive to tempt a man to it. The lesser the temptation the greater the sin. For in every sin, the freer the will the more sinful the act. If the object be extremely pleasing, though the will has still a power of refusing it, yet it is not without some difficulty. Now this pleasure springs from the gratification of some desire founded in nature. An irregular gratification it is often; yet still the foundation of it is, and must be, something natural. Thus drunkenness is an irregular satisfaction of the appetite of thirst; and covetousness a boundless, unreasonable pursuit of the principle of self-preservation. There is hardly any one vice but what is the abuse of one of those two grand natural principles; namely, that which inclines a man to preserve himself, or to please himself. But now, what is, or can be, gratified by another man's pursuit of his own vice? All the pleasure that naturally can be received from a vicious action can immediately affect none but him who does it. And therefore the delight that a man takes for another's sin can be nothing else but a fantastical, preternatural

love of vice, as such, a delighting in sin for its own sake. "If a man plays the thief," says Solomon, "and steals to satisfy his hunger," though it cannot wholly excuse the fact, yet it sometimes extenuates the guilt. But when a man shall, with a sober, diabolical rancour, enjoy himself in the sight of his neighbour's sin and shame, can he plead the instigation of any appetite in nature inclining him to this? No, for he may as well carry his eyes in another man's head, and run races with another man's feet, as directly and naturally taste the pleasures that spring from the gratification of another man's appetites. Nor can that person, who accounts it his recreation to see a man wallowing in his filthy revels, allege for a reason of his so doing that it leaves the least relish upon the tip of his tongue. What can we then assign for the cause of this monstrous disposition? Why, that the devil and long custom of sinning have superinduced upon the soul new, unnatural, and absurd desires, that relish things not at all desirable. In fine, there is as much difference between the pleasure a man takes in his own sins, and that which he takes in other men's, as there is between the wickedness of a man and the wickedness of a devil. 2. A second reason is, from the boundless nature of this way of sinning. For by this a man contracts a kind of a universal guilt, and, as it were, sins over the sins of others; so that while the act is theirs, the guilt of it is equally his. Personal powers and opportunities of sinning comparatively are not great; for at greatest, they must still be limited by the measure of a man's acting, and the term of his duration. But now, for the way of sinning which we have been speaking of, it is neither confined by place nor weakened by age; but the bedrid and the lethargic may, upon this account, equal the activity of the strongest sinner. A man, by delight and fancy, may grasp in the sins of countries and ages, and by an inward liking of them communicate in their guilt. 3. It presupposes and includes in it the guilt of many preceding sins. For a man must have passed many periods of sin before he can arrive to it, and have served a long apprenticeship to the devil before he can come to such a perfection and maturity in vice as this imports. It is the wickedness of a whole life, discharging all its foulness into this one quality, as into a great sink. So that nothing is, or can be, so properly and significantly called the "very sinfulness of sin," as this. III. WHAT KIND OF PERSONS ARE TO BE RECKONED UNDER THIS CHARACTER? In general whosoever draws others to sin. But to particularise—1. Those who teach doctrines directly tending to a sinful course (Matt. v. 19; *cf.* xv. 5, 6). Now these are of two sorts. (1) Such as represent actions that are sinful, as not so—*e.g.*, Antinomians, who assert that believers cannot sin. (2) Such as represent many sins much less than they are—*e.g.*, those who assert that all sins committed by believers to be but infirmities. 2. Such as endeavour to allure men to sin, either by formal persuasions (Prov. vii. 13-22), or by administering objects and occasions fit to draw forth a man's corrupt affections; such as are the inflaming of a choleric person into a fit of rage against his neighbour, the provoking of a lustful person by filthy discourse, books, and pictures. 3. Such as affect the company of vicious persons. For otherwise, what is there in such men, which they can pretend to be pleased with? For generally such sots have neither parts nor wits. It is clear, therefore, that where a man can like the conversation of debauched persons, amidst all the natural grounds of dislike, it can proceed from nothing but the inward affection he bears to their lewd humour. It is this he enjoys; and for the sake of this the rest he endures. 4. Such as encourage men in their sins. This may be done—(1) By commendation. No man commends another any further than he likes him. He who writes an *encomium Neronis* is but a transcript of Nero. From whence we see the reason of some men's giving such honourable names and appellations to the worst of men and actions, and base, reproachful titles to the best. (2) By preferment. None certainly can love to see vice in power, but such as love to see it also in practice. IV. THE EFFECTS OF THIS SIN. 1. Upon particular persons. (1) It quite alters and depraves the natural frame of a man's heart. (2) It peculiarly indisposes a man to repent and recover himself from it. For the first step to repentance is a man's dislike of his sin; and how can we expect that a man should dislike that which has taken such possession of his affections, that he loves it, not only in his own practice, but also in other men's? (3) The longer a man lives the wickeder he grows, and his last days are certainly his worst. To delight in other men's sins is most properly the vice of old age, and may be truly called the old age of vice. For, as first, old age necessarily implies a man's having lived many years, and withal, this sort of viciousness supposes the precedent commission of many sins, so it has this further property that, as when a man comes once to be old, he grows every day older and

older; so when a man comes to such a degree of wickedness, as to delight in the wickedness of others, it is more than ten thousand to one if he ever returns to a better mind. Tiberius is a notable instance, who was bad enough in his youth, but monstrously so in his old age; and the reason of this was because he took a particular pleasure in seeing other men do vile things. And, therefore, let not men flatter themselves that though they find it difficult to combat an ill practice, yet that old age shall do that for them which they in their youth could never find in their heart to do for themselves, for a habit may continue when it is no longer able to act. The longer a blot continues the deeper it sinks. And it will be found a work of no small difficulty to dispossess and throw out a vice from that heart where long possession begins to plead prescription. (4) Many perish eternally who never arrived at such a pitch of wickedness as to take any pleasure in, or indeed to be at all concerned about, the sins of other men. But they perish in the pursuit of their own lusts, and often not without a considerable mixture of dislike of themselves for what they do. 2. Upon communities. Some men's taking pleasure in other men's sins will cause many men to sin to do them a pleasure, for—(1) It is seldom or never that any man comes to such a degree of impiety as to take pleasure in other men's sins, but he also shows the world, by his actions and behaviour, that he does so. (2) There are few men in the world so inconsiderable, but there are some who have an interest to serve by them. (3) The natural course that one man takes to serve his interest by another is by applying himself to him in such a way as may most gratify and delight him. (*R. South, D.D.*)

CHAPTER II.

VERS. 1–16. **Wherefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest.**—*Man's inexcusableness*:—I. BECAUSE—1. He has a knowledge of his duty. 2. He was created with ability to perform it. 3. He knows the consequences of neglecting it. 4. He condemns others for doing what he does himself. II. WHATEVER BE—1. The nation to which he belongs. 2. The profession he makes. 3. The privileges he enjoys. 4. The position he occupies. (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) *Jews as bad as pagans*:—The tests of the Jews' pretentions lay to hand in the facts of Jewish life. Did the morals of his countrymen fit them to stand before the righteous tribunal of Eternal Justice? Had they so kept their boasted law as to attain by it to practical righteousness? Let the observation of the Roman world reply. The appeal is a rough and ready one—fit for the occasion. In his own case, Paul's Hebrew life had been outwardly pure. Like a good many of his contemporaries, especially among the Palestinian schools, he could accuse himself of no patent vices. Here, however, he is writing to a community familiar with foreign Jews resident in a city where of all others the basest elements from every land flowed together to make one another worse; and he could appeal to the observation of the Roman Christians whether the Jews of Rome were not as bad in morals as any pagan—nay, whether the very name of Jew had not come to be on Gentile lips a word of opprobrium and reproach. A vagrant life, association with the servile population of great towns, an equivocal position in the eyes of Roman law, social exclusion, the necessity of living by their wits and amassing bullion instead of stable property, these causes were already at work creating that deteriorated type of Hebrew character which has long been fixed in Europe. From independent witnesses we know that the Jews were at that day the gipsy, the usurer, the fortune-teller, the pander, and the slave agent of the Roman world; everywhere living on the vices of the heathen whom he despised; one of the most restless, turbulent, and despicable elements in that corrupt society. And this is what has come of Israel's religious privileges and ancestral glories. This was the upshot of the national attempt to attain to the righteousness of God by the works of "the law." An open rupture betwixt profession and performance, between religion and morals; on one side, a faith which was mocked by their life; on the other, a life which was condemned by their faith. For while in morals they were a byword even to the heathens, these same Jews were eaten up with religious self-importance, and looked down on heathens as outcasts and unclean. Arrogant and bigoted zeal for prosely-

tysing went hand in hand, therefore, with personal profligacy. It was nothing to be a cheat or a procurer: it was everything to know the true God, and to be circumcised and to be instructed in the law. (*J. Oswald Dykes, D.D.*) *Censoriousness*:—I. ITS PREVALENCE. II. ITS FOLLY. III. ITS INEXCUSABLENESS. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Unconscious hypocrisy*:—Hypocrisy is almost always unconscious: it draws the veil over its own evil deeds, while it condemns those of others, not intentionally, but because human nature is strangely gifted with the power of deceiving itself. It is popularly described as "pretending to be one thing, and doing, thinking, or feeling another"; in fact it is very different. Nobody really leads this sort of divided existence. A man does wrong, but he forgets it again; he sees the same fault in another, and condemns it; but no arrow of conscience reaches him, no law of association suggests to him that he has sinned too. Human character is weak and plastic, and soon reforms itself into a deceitful whole. Indignation may be honestly felt at others by men who do the same thing themselves; they may often be said to relieve their own conscience, perhaps even to strengthen the moral sentiments of mankind, by their expression of it. So that hypocrisy, though the worst of sins, is for the most part weakness and self-deception. The Scribes and Pharisees, "hypocrites," regarded their own lives in a very different light from that in which our Lord has pictured them. Their hypocrisy, too, might be described as weakness and self-deception, only heightened and made more intense by the time and country in which they lived. It was the hypocrisy of an age and a state of society—blinder, perhaps, and more fatal in its consequences for this very reason, but less culpable in the individuals who were guilty of it. Those who said, "We have a law, and by it He ought to die," were not without a zeal for God, though seeking to take away Him in whom only the law was fulfilled. But although experience of ourselves and others seems to show that hypocrisy is almost always unconscious, such is not the idea that we ordinarily attach to the word. The reason is—1. That the strong contrast we observe between the seeming and the reality, between the acts and words of the hypocrite, lead us to speak as though the contrast were present and conscious to himself. We cannot follow the subtle mazes through which he leads himself; we see only the palpable outward effect. 2. The notion that hypocrisy is self-deception or weakness is inadequate to express our abhorrence of it. 3. Our use of language is adapted to the common opinions of mankind, and is incapable of expressing the finer shades of human nature. (*Prof. Jowett.*) *The self-righteous and the hypocrite tried and condemned by*—I. CONSCIENCE (vers. 1-3). II. THE MERCY OF GOD (ver. 4). III. ETERNAL JUSTICE (ver. 5-11). (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Judging others*:—I. THIS SIN IS TO BE AVOIDED, because—1. We are incapable of judging accurately. 2. We are not invested with the office of judge (chap. xiv. 4; James iv. 12). 3. Judging others is generally the effect of uncharitableness; and—4. Is expressly forbidden by Christ. II. IN ORDER TO AVOID THIS SIN—1. Be slow to judge, and do not condemn without evidence. 2. While different motives are possible, do not ascribe an action to the worst. 3. When there is just ground for doubt, suspend your judgment. 4. When you are obliged to condemn, do it with regret. 5. Listen calmly to apology, and readily admit every explanation. 6. Confound not in one general censure all of a party or sect. 7. View men's actions in the sunshine of charity, not in the shade of moroseness. (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) *Judging others*:—By doing so a man—I. DEMONSTRATES HIS OWN GUILT. 1. He knows the law. 2. He violates it. II. DENIES THE JUSTICE OF GOD. 1. Its equity. 2. Its severity. III. DESPISES GOD'S MERCY. 1. As if he needed it not. 2. He will not repent. 3. He treasures up wrath. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The judges judged*:—I. TO WHOM THE EXPOSTULATION IS ADDRESSED. The disposition here reproved shows itself in—1. Worldlings towards—(1) Each other. (2) Professing Christians. 2. Religious persons towards—(1) Each other. (2) The world. II. THE ADDRESS ITSELF. Concerning uncharitable persons it shows—1. How vain their hopes. 2. How aggravated their guilt. 3. How fearful their prospects. Application: 1. Do not occupy yourselves too much about others, but rather take heed to yourselves. 2. Above all things seek to know your need of a Saviour. (*C. Simeon, M.A.*) *The final judgment foreshadowed*:—It had been clearly established against the Gentiles that they were inexcusable, and that there could be no hope of their escape but on the ground of the salvation revealed in the gospel. But of such salvation the Jew stood in equal need. Only to convince him of it a different process was required. Confident that he should escape the just punishment of sin, it was necessary to convince him that the grounds of his expectation were false. He is, therefore, reminded—

I. THAT, IN PRONOUNCING JUDGMENT UPON THE SINS OF OTHERS, HE WAS BUT FORESHADOWING HIS OWN DOOM, for that the judgment of God is always according to truth. It is true that Paul's reasoning would be equally conclusive against Jew or Gentile, but there is no intimation that the latter meted out condemnation only to others; or that he flattered himself that, while they were justly punished, he should escape. But the fond thought of many a Jew was that his interest with the Eternal Judge was too intimate, powerful, and well assured to render it possible that he should be punished as other sinners (Matt. iii. 9; John viii. 33–44). Now the apostle would have him understand that such a hope was vain. No external connection with the kingdom of God; no attention to the requirements of religious ritual can possibly avail to deliver any man from wrath if it does not avail to save him from his sins (Isa. i. 11–20). Neither circumcision nor baptism, neither the sacrifices of Judaism nor even the precious blood of Christ, will screen a man from wrath who does not honestly consent to abandon his sinful practices. II. THAT THE RICHES OF GOD'S GOODNESS WERE INTENDED TO LEAD HIM TO REPENTANCE, and that, therefore, his continued sinfulness would but serve to enhance his guilt. 1. In specifying "the riches of God's goodness," &c., the apostle refers to those aboundings of grace which pertained specially to the Jews. The words of Moses indicate at once their character and purpose (Deut. iv. 5–8). The Mosaic institutions, the Abrahamic covenant, the whole of the Old Testament, and the disciplinary dealing of God with the nation, had but this one object, "That they should fear the Lord," &c. (Deut. x. 12). To this end mercy was promised them upon repentance; and, for the like purpose, all gracious instruction, aid, defence, and supply were assured to them. But should they, notwithstanding all this, refuse to repent and to become a holy people, then they should be overtaken by wrath. 2. The purpose and tendency of the goodness of God was to lead them to repentance. But it required the concurrence of their own wills, which, however, they would not render. Their hearts were hard and impenitent. They valued their religious institutions only so far as they supposed that, through their magic influence, the consequences of their sins should never overtake them. Moses had clearly foreseen this abuse of God's goodness, and had strongly warned the people against it (Deut. xxix. 18–20). Yet, notwithstanding this, the people, from generation to generation, did bless themselves in their hearts, saying, "Peace! peace!" when there was no peace (Jer. xxiii. 16, 17). Therefore was sent to them the scathing rebuke (Isa. vi. 9, 10). III. THAT THE DAY FOR THE REVELATION OF WRATH IS FIXED, AND THAT THE DECISIONS SHALL THEN BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE STRICTEST EQUITY. This day is not one of probation, in which, along with a revelation of wrath, there is also a revelation of mercy; but one in which, probation being concluded, its lasting results will be disclosed. It is stated—1. That the judgments of that day shall proceed upon character and works alone. Such is the uniform and consistent doctrine of Scripture. The question of questions will be not to what nation or Church the man belonged; not, "Was he duly circumcised or baptized?" This, too, was the teaching of the Old Testament (Eccles. viii. 12, 13, xii. 14; Prov. xi. 18, 21; Psa. i. 5, 6) and of Christ Himself (Matt. vii. 21). If a man despise the goodness of God, and continue in his sins to the end of life, then all his sins, with all their evil influence upon his own character, must go with him to the judgment, and he must bear the punishment of all. But if, softened by the riches of that goodness, he yields to the gracious influence, then, by virtue of the Atonement, his iniquity shall be taken away (Ezek. xviii. 21, 22; Matt. xviii. 3). 2. That the rule of judgment shall be administered without respect of persons. That which is pronounced wicked in a heathen will be pronounced equally wicked in a Jew or a Christian. Nay, more so (Luke xii. 47, 48). Therefore, "as many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law," &c. 3. That the judgment of that day will be so far from opening up a way of escape for the Jew that it will disclose for his portion a "how-much-sorer punishment." And this according to the solemn warning of the Judge Himself (Matt. xi. 21–24). His sin is greatest who has sinned against the fullest light and the richest grace. Therefore there must be provided a deeper hell of "tribulation and anguish" for the obdurate Jew than for the impenitent Gentile; but the deepest must needs, on the same principle, be reserved for those who have sinned away the day of Christian light and salvation. 4. The results of the judgment shall be to the righteous eternal life, *i.e.*, an immortality of supremely blessed existence. To the impenitent and disobedient it shall be a revelation of "indignation and wrath," producing "tribulation and anguish." And as the award shall be final, so too the results shall be ever-enduring (Dan xii. 2; Matt. xxv. 46; Mark ix. 43–48; 2 Thess.

i. 9). One way there is, but only one, by which sinful men may escape from the terrors of that great day—the way of repentance. Obviously that way of escape was open to the Jew even before the advent of Christ (Ezek. xviii. 30), and was assumed by Paul to be available for the sinful Jew still, and also for the sinful Gentile (vers. 26-29). (*W. Tyson.*) *Judgment—human and Divine*:—I. HUMAN JUDGMENT IS PRONOUNCED BY INCONSISTENT MEN. The men who judge, often those who judge most sternly, are themselves guilty. David and Nathan. The accusers and the woman taken in adultery. In the light of the Sermon on the Mount we are all inconsistent. II. DIVINE JUDGMENT IS PRONOUNCED BY A PERFECTLY RIGHTEOUS BEING. We notice —1. The standard by which God judges—truth. 2. The spirit in which God judges. His judgment is—(1) Longsuffering; (2) Impartial; (3) Thorough. 3. The character of the Divine Judge is—(1) An inspiration to those who seek well-doing. (2) A terror to those who obey unrighteousness. (*U. R. Thomas.*) *The judgment of God*:—It is easy for us to see sin in others, and to join in general confessions of sin, in which we seem to include ourselves. But it is very hard to acknowledge it penitently before God. There is, in every man's heart, a subtle element of self-flattery, which leads him to extenuate or deny his own offences, while yet he is very forward to condemn the iniquities of his neighbours. When Haldane read to D'Aubigné a chapter from this Epistle concerning the natural corruption of man, he said, "Now I do, indeed, see it in the Bible." "Yes," replied Haldane, "but do you see it in your heart?"—a home-thrust which awakened a sense of sin, and led to his conversion. Thus Paul proceeds here to bring home to every man's conscience the terrible charge advanced against the world at large in the latter part of chap. i. He knew that many who, while acknowledging the general correctness of his statements, would make an exception of themselves. None would be more ready to do this than the Jews The apostle therefore approaches them warily, beginning with appeals of a more general character, and then coming gradually down to a direct application of his argument to every self-righteous descendant of Abraham. Let us notice—I. THOSE WHO EXEMPT AND EXCUSE THEMSELVES FROM THE GENERAL CHARGE OF THE WORLD'S ABOUNDING WICKEDNESS. 1. The Greeks, or Gentiles. Among these were many who could condemn their neighbours most severely, while yet they openly commended themselves. Even Socrates could practise in secret gross sensualities which he inveighed against in public. There were men who were by nature less savage or less treacherous than their fellows; but there were vices of disposition, such as envy, malice, and revenge, in which they freely, if not vauntingly, participated. Then there were men of refinement whose only difference from the licentious mob was in the superior delicacy of their pleasures, the higher artfulness of their hypocrisies, the closer secrecy of their excesses. And have not we also many classes of character, the exact counterpart of those just described—those who have not yet been found out, or are careful to avoid all coarse and flagrant forms of vice; but are selfish, covetous, proud, or vindictive? And are not these dispositions as certainly the manifestations of a corrupt heart as many fouler sins from which they fastidiously shrink? Therefore are they without excuse, for in judging others they condemn themselves. 2. The Jews. Their common delusion was to fancy themselves free from condemnation, merely because they possessed the oracles of God and enjoyed special tokens of the Divine regard. They thus missed the very object of the kindness extended toward them. It was meant to lead them to repentance; but they used it to build up their pride and confirm their obduracy. And have they not also their representatives in the Christian pale? There are many amongst us who pride themselves on their religious advantages without ever improving them to their own salvation. Are you, then, better than the heathen, because you possess the Bible, rest on the Sunday, and attend the sanctuary? Is it enough that you hear the law, without obeying it? The enjoyment of these advantages only heightens your obligation, adds to your responsibility, and may make you at last tenfold more the child of hell than the pagans you despise. "He that knoweth his master's will, and doeth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes." II. THE FINAL JUDGMENT OF THE WORLD BY JESUS CHRIST. 1. This is a peculiarly gospel disclosure. True, there were premonitions of it amongst the heathen, as there were pre-intimations of it in the Old Testament; but still it was left to Christ and His apostles to develop the doctrine. Here we learn that a day is determined on by God to be devoted to that exclusive business. We need not conceive of a day consisting of twenty-four hours, but rather of a vast period—just as we call the term of gospel grace the day of salvation, or of immortal ages as the day of eternity. Over the affairs of that day shall the Son of Man

preside in person. Before His bar all nations must be arraigned. "We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ," and answer for the things done in the body. 2. Mark its impartiality. "There is no respect of persons with God." No man's case will be prejudiced by his circumstances, and no man will find favour because of the accidents of birth and position. We can conceive of no motives of favouritism in the mind of God. And certainly it will be impossible either to corrupt the Judge with bribes, to pervert Him by flattery, or to overcome Him with threats. The wise will not be saved by his wisdom, nor the strong by his strength, nor the rich by his riches, nor the noble by his rank; youth and beauty will be as powerless as decrepitude and age. 3. Its strict equity. Each must receive according to his deeds, whether good or evil. What, then, is the moral amenability of the extra-Christian world? What the possibility of its salvation? (vers. 12–15.) The heathen world was not left wholly without a knowledge of right and wrong. Also, in highly civilised countries, wise men had been raised up who had carefully sought out the rule of virtue, and thus established many correct principles of moral guidance, which gained the consent of their fellow-citizens, and might have served to lead them far on in the path of righteousness. If the light of Christianity is that of the sun, the light of Judaism that of the moon, the rest had at least the light of many stars. The same state of things is still found among unchristian peoples. They have both religious feelings and moral convictions. Thus is the foundation laid for a future judgment, extending to all. All have within or amongst them a law, through the operation of which they are held amenable to their Creator, and are preparing to stand before His judgment bar. And thus may they perish without the law, although, in such a case, their guilt will be less and their doom more endurable than that of men who sin amid all the illumination of Scriptural truth. And so also it is possible for some to be saved, if, with honest purpose, they follow up the light they possess and sincerely seek to please God. Thus may it come to pass that from every heathen land redeemed souls may come and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of God. Any way, the judgment of the great King will be according to truth and justice. To whom much has been given, from him much will be expected; and only little from him whose advantages have been few. 4. The principle of judgment will be a strict regard to the actions of men. Universally, throughout the Bible, is this doctrine affirmed (Eccles. xii. 14; Matt. xxv.; 2 Cor. v. 10; Rev. xx. 13). Yet none will be saved by their works as works, but only as evidential of a right and honest state of will and feeling; a state produced, in all cases, by the influence of the Holy Ghost through such light of truth as may be enjoyed. This principle will not invalidate, but only the more elucidate and confirm, the fundamental arrangement of grace that "the just shall live by faith." 5. The grand bearings of the final judgment upon the destiny of men (vers. 6–10). Two awards, and only two, will result from the proceedings of the great judgment day. The good will be thenceforward and for evermore separated from the evil; the former will enter into a state of absolute enjoyment and peace, while the latter will be consigned to an abode of unmitigated wretchedness and infamy. (*T. G. Horton.*)

Ver. 2. **But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth.**—*God's judgment* is—I. CORRECT; according to the facts of the case. II. IMPARTIAL; according to a true moral standard, having respect to character. III. EQUITABLE, according to the principles of infallible justice. By Him actions are weighed (1 Sam. ii. 3). "Tekel" is written on each one's conduct (Dan. v. 27). Job's wish (Job xxxi. 6) is realised in all. (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) *The final judgment of God:*—When Rabbi Jochanan Ben Zachai was sick his disciples came to visit him, and when he saw them he began to weep. They said to him, "Rabbi, the light of Israel, the right-hand pillar, the strong hammer, wherefore dost thou weep?" He answered, "If they were carrying me before a king of flesh and blood, who is here to-day and to-morrow in the grave, who, if he were angry with me, his anger would not last for ever; if he put me in prison, his prison would not be everlasting; if he condemned me to death, that death would not be eternal; whom I could soothe with words or bribe with riches; yet even in such circumstances I should weep. But now I am going before the King of kings, the holy and blessed God, who liveth and endureth; who, if He be angry with me, His anger will last for ever; if He put me in prison, His bondage will be everlasting; if He condemn me to death, that death will be eternal; whom I cannot soothe with words nor bribe with riches. When, further, there are before me two ways, the one to hell and the other to paradise,

and I know not into which they are carrying me, shall I not weep?" (*Talmud.*) *The sure judgment of God*:—Said Anne of Austria, the Queen of France, to her implacable enemy, Cardinal Richelieu, "My lord cardinal, there is one fact which you seem to have entirely forgotten. God is a sure paymaster. He may not pay at the end of every week or month or year; but I charge you, remember that He pays in the end." *The justice of God's judgment*:—I. THIS WE SEE in its—1. Principles. 2. Exercise. 3. Awards. II. OF THIS WE HAVE THE ASSURANCE in—1. God's own nature. 2. His Word. 3. His providence. 4. Conscience. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*)

Ver. 3. **And thinkest thou . . . that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?**—*The sinners' folly*:—I. THEIR CONDUCT. 1. They judge others. 2. Forget themselves. 3. Dream of impunity. II. ITS FOLLY. There is but—1. One law. 2. One judge. 3. One judgment. (*Ibid.*) *No escaping God's judgment*:—I. THE JEWS THOUGHT TO ESCAPE IT, on the grounds of—1. Their relation to Abraham. 2. Their possession of the law. 3. Their circumcision. 4. Benefits already received. 5. Their own good works. 6. The merits of their ancestors. 7. Their ceremonies such as the Day of Atonement, &c. II. MEN IN GENERAL THINK TO ESCAPE IT. With as little reason, through—1. Wealth, power, or exalted position. 2. Poverty or insignificance. 3. Religious profession, Church membership, or sacred office. 4. Personal conduct. 5. Pious ancestry. 6. Practice of religious rites. 7. Prayers, fastings, almsgivings. 8. Afflictions. III. THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF THIS. 1. The Jews were solemnly warned that they should not escape (Amos ix. 1–4; Psa. i. 7–22). 2. The only escape is through Christ (Acts iv. 12), just as the only refuge from the flood was in the provided ark (1. Pet. iii. 20, 21). 3. The guilty flee, the pardoned alone escape the judgment of God. (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) *The gradual but inevitable advance of Divine judgment*:—Slow goes the hand of justice, like the shadow on the sun-dial; ever moving, yet slowly creeping on, with a motion all but imperceptible. Still stand in awe. The hand of justice has not stopped, although imperceptible it steadily advances; by and by it reaches the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth hour. And now the bell strikes. Then unless you have fled to Christ, the blow which was so slow to fall, shall descend over the head of impenitence with accumulated force. (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*)

Ver. 4. **Or despisest thou the riches of His goodness.**—*Earnest expostulation*:—I will give nothing for that preaching that is like the sheet-lightning, flaming over a broad expanse, but altogether harmless. The apostle fixes his eye on a single person who had condemned others for transgressions in which he himself indulged; one who did not place his candle on his table to light his own room, but hold it out at the door, to inspect therewith his neighbours who passed by. He thinks he shall escape in the future, and so despises the present goodness and longsuffering of the Most High. Let me speak to thee, unregenerate man, of—I. THE GOODNESS OF GOD WHICH THOU HAST EXPERIENCED. 1. In temporal things. You have, perhaps, been prospered above your fellows. God has granted you wealth and health. You are happy in your wife and children. A thousand evils have been kept from you. 2. In spiritual things. You are in the very focus of Christian light. The Word of God is on your table; you hear the earnest preaching of the gospel. A tender conscience makes your road to perdition peculiarly hard. The Spirit has so striven with you that you were at times almost ready to drop into the Saviour's arms. 3. He has been forbearing and longsuffering for your sins. Forbearance has to do with the magnitude of sin; longsuffering with the multiplicity of it. Many have been snatched from vice only to return to its deep ditch of filthiness. They have trembled on the brink of death, yet God has permitted them to recover strength. They slight His love, yet He perseveres in it. How many years you have been heaping up the loads of transgression! Yet here you are still, on praying ground and pleading terms with God. Think, also, who and what God is, who displays this longsuffering. Think of His goodness: why should you provoke Him? Think of His omniscience: every transgression is committed in His very presence. Think of how powerful He is: your wicked heart would cease to beat if He should withdraw His power. Think of His purity: sin is much more intolerable to Him than to us. II. THE SIN OF WHICH THOU ART SUSPECTED. Some despise God's goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, because—1. They never even gave a thought to it. God has given you life, and indulged you with kindness; yet it has never occurred to you that this patience is worthy of the smallest thanks. You have been of no service to your Maker, nor even thought of being of service to Him. Others have,

perhaps, thought of it, but never meditated thereon. 2. Because they imagine God does not take any great account of what they do. So long as they avoid gross and open sin, they think it of light consequence not to love God. 3. They think the threatenings of God will never be fulfilled. They think, because the blow is long delayed, it never will come. III. THE KNOWLEDGE OF WHICH THOU ART FORGETFUL. The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance—1. By giving opportunity to repent. All these years have been given you, that you might turn to God: yet you are spared only to multiply your transgressions. 2. By suggestions to repent. Life and death, heaven and hell, call upon you so to do. Every page of the Bible, every sermon, calls you to repent. Nature is full of voices warning you. 3. By leading to repentance. His mercies lead you. If they fail, He turns you by admonition. He leads you; hence He will help you, and will accept your repentance. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *God's goodness:*—The principal thoughts of these words are the wonderful things which meet our observation—the wonderful conduct of God. I. THE WONDERFUL CONDUCT OF GOD. How grand is the expression! It is not merely the "goodness," &c., but the "riches" of them all. 1. God is rich. We lay up a few thousands, or purchase a few acres and call ourselves rich; but God is the owner of all. Our world is but a speck of sand in His possessions. How stupendous, then, that He should accept the halfpence which some of you give to His cause! Then think of His spiritual wealth—the souls He owns—how much more astounding this than His material! 2. We are here directed to His wealth of goodness. Here is an ocean unfathomable. We know so little of what goodness really consists in that we can only stand and gaze on the surface. The riches of Divine goodness are more wonderful than those of Divine possession. 3. This goodness is manifested in "longsuffering and forbearance." God need not be long-suffering. Why not end the long, sad, tale of rebellion and sin? Why not crush the blasphemous atoms? He could create another race. Surely, there is no theme for the contemplation of angels or men like the wonderful conduct of God. II. THE WONDERFUL CONDUCT OF MEN. These words contain—1. A charge. It is unnatural among men to manifest ingratitude and indifference in return for favour. To injure one who saves our life is inhuman. But men think little of the treatment they show to God. Sin is weak in some things, and man is powerless, but in this thing they both have strength. They can do what angels dare not do. Man can break down barriers which it cost the life of the Son of God to erect. He can withstand the love of God. Oh fatal power! Some have attempted to dare the power of God, but they have been crushed as a moth before the advance of a world. But they are more successful in resisting His love. 2. An appeal. It is as if it said, "Can you despise such riches?" &c. It is an appeal to our highest attributes of humanity. It is an appeal to our gratitude. Thanklessness is the lowest stage of inhumanity. It is an appeal to our own hearts. How should we like such a return to our beneficence? Despised! Are we not thrilled with the unnaturalness of the act? We despise that which is evil and contemptible; but the apostle speaks of despising that which is good. It is wonderful that God acts as He does; it is far more wonderful that man should treat that action with contumely and scorn. What madness for the shipwrecked sailor to despise the rope thrown to him! What folly for the inhabitants of a burning house to scorn the fire-escape! But to spurn the tenderness of God is incomprehensible in the intensity of its madness. III. THE WONDERFUL LOSS—"That leadeth thee to repentance." He who despises the riches of Divine forbearance despises that which ought to lead to his eternal salvation. Earthly friendships are precious, how much more the friendship of God! Yet this is despised, and so lost, and with it happiness, peace, glory, eternal life. But the loss consists not only in what we lose, but in what we gain. It is easy to lose by a gain. A man had a splendid coat given him which had been worn by a fever patient. He gained the coat, but he lost his life. In despising God we not only lose heaven, but we involve ourselves in eternal condemnation. (*J. J. S. Bird, B.A.*) *God's goodness*:—As the sun sends forth a benign and gentle influence on the seed of plants, that it may invite forth the active and plastic power from its recess and secrecy, that, by rising into the tallness and dimensions of a tree, it may still receive a greater and more refreshing influence from its foster-father, the prince of all the bodies of light; and, in all these emanations, the sun itself receives no advantage but the honour of doing benefits: so doth the Almighty Father of all the creatures. He at first sends forth His blessings upon us, that we, by using them aright, should make ourselves capable of greater; while giving glory to God and doing homage to Him are nothing to His advantage but only to ours;

our duties towards Him being vapours ascending from the earth, not at all to refresh the regions of the clouds, but to return back in a fruitful and refreshing shower; and God created us, not that we can increase His felicity, but that He might have a subject receptive of felicity from Him. (*Bp. Taylor.*) *God's riches:*—A favourite word of Paul's, implying abundance, preciousness. It is applied to—1. God's wisdom and knowledge (chap. xi. 33). 2. His glory (chap. ix. 23). 3. His grace (Eph. i. 7; ii. 7). 4. The glory of His inheritance (Eph. i. 18). 5. The glory of this mystery (Col. i. 27). 6. The full assurance of understanding (Col. ii. 2). 7. The unsearchable riches of Christ (Eph. iii. 8). 8. The liberality of the poor (2 Cor. viii. 2). Here the riches—(1) Of goodness is goodness overflowing, multiplied, long-continued. (2) Of forbearance is patience all but unwearied. (3) Of longsuffering is delay in punishing beyond all expectation. Corresponding aggravation of the sinner's impenitence. (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) *God's riches:*—I. IN WHAT THEY CONSIST. 1. By the "goodness" of God I understand those providential mercies which surround us, and ought to lead us to acknowledge Him, and those which are manifested in His calling sinners "out of darkness into His marvellous light." We are to bear in mind that there was no one single thing in man which could attract or merit God's goodness, but that all sprang from God's sovereign grace. 2. The "forbearance" of God is His withholding the judgments which are due to His enemies (chap. iii. 24, &c.). 3. The "longsuffering" of God is manifested—(1) By the plenteousness of redemption. We can understand that plenteousness—(*a*) By looking at the will of God. He does not desire "that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (*b*) By the infinite price that has been paid. (*c*) By the extent to which that redemption reaches. II. THE RIGHT USE OF THESE RICHES. 1. The awakening of our better affections. There is a sorrow for sin which "worketh death," and a sorrow which "needs not to be repented of." When we realise the greatness of God's goodness there will be a greatness of love toward God—*e.g.*, take the history of the woman spoken of in Luke vii. When we truly understand the extent of sin which has been pardoned, the depths of misery from which we have been extricated, the heights of glory to which we are to be admitted, then, and not till then, will our hearts burn with love towards God. 2. To teach us the exceeding sinfulness of sin—that we are sinning not only against One whose eyes are too pure "to look upon iniquity," but against One who is good, and to lead us therefore to repentance. III. THEIR ABUSE. How common is it that men live and die despising the riches of God's love! Take the case of temporal mercies. How many speak of their good fortune, their success, never considering that these things came from God! And if we turn to the subject of our gracious mercies, how many are there who presume upon the continuance of those mercies, and determine to indulge in sin, as if there were no reckoning-time for them (Eccles. viii.). There are many who misrepresent God's forbearance as though He were overlooking sin. Many are there who, when they learn the exceeding riches of His grace, suppose that sin can therefore be of no consequence (Jer. vii. 9, 10). (*Bp. Villiers.*) *The riches of God's goodness:*—God only is originally good. All created goodness is a rivulet from this fountain, but Divine goodness has no spring. God has it in and of Himself. All the goodness that is in His creatures is but the flowing of His goodness upon them, and vast as is the number towards whom it flows—angels, glorified spirits, men, &c.—there is still less manifested than is left. All possible creatures are not capable of exhausting its riches. And God only is perfectly good, because infinitely good. He is good without indigence, because He has the whole nature of goodness, not only some beams that may admit of increase of degree. As nothing has an absolutely perfect being but God, so nothing has an absolutely perfect goodness but God; as the sun has a perfection of heat in it, but what is warmed by the sun is imperfectly hot, and equals not the sun in that perfection of heat wherewith it is naturally endued And then God only is immutably good. Other things may be good by supernatural power, but not in their own nature; *i.e.*, they are not so good but they may be bad; God is so good that He cannot be bad. (*S. Charnock, B.D.*) *The exuberance of God's goodness:*—There is not so much sin in man as there is goodness in God. There is a vaster disproportion between sin and grace than between a spark and an ocean. Who would doubt whether a spark could be quenched in an ocean? Thy thoughts of disobedience towards God have been within the compass of time; but His goodness hath been bubbling up towards thee from all eternity. (*N. Culverwell.*) *The riches of God's goodness:*—Goodness to the innocent, or goodness to the deserving, merely displays this attribute in a state of simplicity; but the good-

ness which remains unequalled and unexhausted after it has been sinned against—the goodness which persists in multiplying upon the transgressor the chances of his recovery, and that in the midst of affront and opposition—the goodness which, loth to inflict the retaliating blow, still holds out a little longer and a little longer; and, with all the means in its power of avenging the insults of disobedience, still ekes out the season for its return, and plies it with all the encouragements of a free pardon and an offered reconciliation. This is the exuberance of goodness, this is the richness of forbearance and longsuffering; and it is the very display which God is now making in reference to our world. And by every year which rolls over our heads—by every morning in which we find that we have awoke to the light of a new day, instead of awaking in torment—by every hour and every minute through which the stroke of death is suspended, and you still continue a breathing man in the land of gospel calls and gospel invitations—is God now justifying His goodness towards you. And earnest as He is for your return, and heedless as you are of all this earnestness, does it call as time moves onwards for a higher and a higher exertion of forbearance on the part of the Divinity, to restrain His past and accumulating wrath from being discharged on the head of those among whom though God entreats yet no man will turn, and though He stretch out His hand yet no man regardeth. (*T. Chalmers, D.D.*) *Despising the riches of God's goodness*:—I. WHAT ARE THE RICHES OF GOD'S GOODNESS? &c. The greatness, the abundance of His kindness and patience towards sinful men. 1. To understand this you must consider the greatness of the provocation that is given Him. Look around you—look within you! Can you help seeing how unspeakable the outrage that is offered to Him day by day! Think of—(1) The amount of it. There is not a moment in which ten thousand times ten thousand lips are not uttering corrupt communications; not a moment in which as many guilty hearts are not thinking wicked thoughts; not a moment in which as many hands and feet are not hastening to acts of sin. And God's all-seeing eye perceives at every instant, and in every quarter, one widespread scene of sin and vileness. (2) The heinousness of it. It is the Creator, the Preserver, the Redeemer of mankind who is thus sinned against. Nor do men sin through ignorance of His requirements. He hath written His law in the consciences of men; and to a vast multitude He hath revealed it plainly in His Scriptures. Yet they only listen to His precepts that they may tread them under foot. They know that He hath sent His Son into the world to die for them; and yet they do outrage to His very mercies—neglecting such a great salvation. 2. And now behold "the riches of God's goodness," &c. How doth He act? Doth He crush every sinner? No; He sits patiently seeing and hearing all the outrage that is done to Him; yet holding back His judgments, and giving breath to all these sinners, and providing food convenient for them. True, God doth in some cases break forth and vindicate the injured honour of His name by sending instant death on the transgressor. But such instances are comparatively rare. Where is the sinner who hath not cause to say that the Lord is slow to punish. 3. But why is this? (1) Is it because He looks upon sin with indifference and unconcern? Is it excusable—is it a trifle in His eyes? No; sin is an abomination in His holy eyes beyond what we can possibly imagine. (2) Is it, then, a want of ability to punish them? Were God only to pronounce the word, how instantly would death be at our side! Nay, were He only to take from you His preserving hand, where would you now be? (3) Why, then, if sin be so "exceedingly sinful," why does He prolong the life of the transgressor? (2 Pet. iii. 9; Ezek. xxxiii.). II. WHAT FRAME OF MIND THEY OUGHT TO LEAD US TO. Who can meditate on the goodness of God and not feel that it calls him to repentance? 1. It does so, were it only for this reason, that it gives the sinner time and opportunity to turn to God. 2. While there is a time there is a call. So long as God's forbearance gives you opportunity, His grace gives you invitation. The sinner may be sure that, whilst the longsuffering of God waiteth, he is welcome to a Saviour, and cannot seek in vain (Job xxxiii. 27, 28). 3. But God's longsuffering makes, on another ground, a strong appeal to guilty man. Suppose it were a fellow-creature we had wronged, and he should return our injuries with kindness and forbearance, should we not be moved and melted by it? Then how much more ought we to be melted down by the forbearance of our God! As often as you have sinned against Him, so often hath He pitied you and spared you. How different His dealings towards you from your dealings towards Him! Ought not this amazing kindness of the Lord to make you feel the vileness of your sins? III. WHAT IS IT TO DESPISE THEM? In order

to reply there is only need to describe the way in which men do avail themselves of God's forbearance. 1. Multitudes draw courage from it to live on in sin (Eccles. viii. 11; Psa. vii. 21). Let not, then, a man venture after reading the text to bolster himself up in sin by making God's longsuffering his pillow. If God prolong a wicked man's life it is not because God hath a liking for that man, or because He views his conduct with indifference; it is to give him time and reason for repentance; but if the man be not led unto repentance by God's goodness to him, that goodness will only aggravate his final ruin (Psa. xcii.). 2. They also despise it who consider not "that the goodness of God leadeth them to repentance." Alas! how vain for countless multitudes of sinners is the time in which God waits for them! "The three-score years and ten" are all consumed in vanity, and end as they began. (*A. Roberts, M.A.*) *God's goodness despised*:—I. THE OBJECT OF GOD'S GOODNESS is—1. To exhibit His perfections and to receive His creatures' praise. 2. To attach this to Himself in gratitude and love. 3. To lead them to obedience and a holy life. II. GOD'S GOODNESS IS DESPISED. 1. When not duly noticed. 2. When not followed by grateful acknowledgment. 3. When the end aimed at in it is disregarded. (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) *The heinousness of despising God's goodness*:—To sin against law is daring, but to sin against love is dastardly. To rebel against justice is inexcusable, but to fight against mercy is abominable. He who can sting the hand which nourishes him is nothing less than a viper. When a dog bites its own master, and bites him when he is feeding him and fondling him, no one will wonder if his owner becomes his executioner. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *God's goodness, &c., not to be despised*:—I. THE GOODNESS, FORBEARANCE, AND LONGSUFFERING OF GOD. 1. As God is good, infinitely good in Himself, so—(1) His goodness was the cause of the universe, and is still the source of all His dispensations. It is true, all His other attributes also were concerned in creating, and are still concerned in governing the world; but it seems they are all but modifications of His goodness. What is His wisdom but goodness planning and directing? His power but goodness executing? His justice but goodness governing, &c. (2) And if His goodness gave origin to the universe in general, so did it to man in particular, as he was first formed, that masterpiece of Divine workmanship. Although by the Fall we forfeited every blessing our Creator had bestowed upon us, His goodness continues to us (Acts xiv. 17). (3) His goodness is more particularly manifested in our redemption, in which especially "the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared" (Tit. iii. 4; John iii. 16; 1 John iv. 9). The unspeakable extent of His goodness is seen in the dignity of the Person given, and the humiliation and sufferings to which He was given (Phil. ii. 6–8); the unworthiness of those for whom He undertook; the great misery from which we are rescued; the happiness to which we are, or may be, advanced. It is manifested in the blessings consequent on our redemption; as in the information afforded by the gospel, and means of grace (Luke i. 78); the influences of the Holy Spirit; the sincere and free offer of salvation, both present and eternal. (4) As to the influence this goodness of God ought to have upon us; ought it not to humble us, as a much less display of goodness did one of old? (Gen. xxxii. 10) to fill us with gratitude and love? 2. His forbearance—(1) Exercised of old towards the heathen world (Acts xiv. 15, 16; xvii. 24–31). What an awful picture in chap. i., and what a proof of God's forbearance that He should endure those depicted! Towards the Jews (ver. 1, 17–24), whose perverse and sinful manners He suffered for ages. (Acts xiii. 18; Isa. i. 5). Towards sinners still; those wilfully ignorant, neglecting the means of instruction; those living in open or secret sin, and though knowing their Master's will (Isa. lxv. 2; i. 10), such as rest contented without Christian experience and practice, such as leave their first love, and backslide (Hos. xi. 7–9; Jer. iii. 12); unfruitful and slothful Christians, compared to the "earth drinking in the rain which cometh oft upon it" (Heb. vi. 7, 8). He bears with them year after year. (2) What is the end for which He bears with them? That a reformation may be wrought, and a change take place in all the instances mentioned. If there be no alteration, still God is—3. Longsuffering, *i.e.*, slow to punish (Numb. xiv. 18; Joel ii. 12). Many instances of this are noticed in Scripture, as towards the old world in the days of Noah (1 Pet. iii. 20; *cf.* Gen. vi. 3–7; vii. 4). Towards the world now (2 Pet. iii. 7–9). Towards particular nations, as Egypt, in the days of Pharaoh (Gen. xv. 13, 14; Rom. ix. 22); the Canaanites (Gen. xv. 16); the Israelites in all ages (Isa. v. 1), especially in the time of Christ (Matt. iii. 7–10; Luke xiii. 6–9). Towards particular cities, as Sodom (Gen. xviii. 20); Nineveh (Jonah i. 2; iii. 10; iv. 11);

Babylon, Tyre. Towards Churches that have left their first love (Rev. ii. 1–6); that are lukewarm (Rev. iii. 15); that are formal and dead and barren (Rev. iii. 1). Towards families, as that of Ahab (1 Kings xxi. 29); the house of Stuart, in England, and of Bourbon, in France. Towards individuals innumerable of all characters, whom God is slow to punish, and even to chastise (Luke xiii. 7). II. How these attributes, included under the name of the goodness of God, lead, or should lead, men to repentance. 1. Repentance is—(1) After-thought or reflection; the looking back upon our former ways, and considering them with a just conviction of our guilt, attended with humiliation, sorrow, and hatred of all our sins. (2) A change of mind of all our powers. (3) Evidenced by the production of the proper fruits. 2. How does the goodness of God lead men to repentance? His longsuffering leaves room for it (Rev. ii. 21), which there would not be if punishment followed immediately on the heels of transgression. His forbearance, when considered, strongly invites, persuades, and must move an ingenuous mind. His goodness and bounty also afford every needful and useful help, as the mediation and intercession of Christ; the ministry of the Word; the chastisements and blessings of Providence; the strivings and influences of the Holy Spirit. III. The reasons why the goodness of God does not produce that effect. These are—1. Ignorance. "Not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance. Ignorance of their fallen state and exposure to Divine wrath; of the worth and necessity of holiness; of the true character of God, that He is as holy and just as He is merciful and gracious; of the dignity of the Redeemer, and of His great love and sufferings: of the end of man's creation, preservation, and redemption; of the infinite importance of this short span of human life, and how much depends on our rightly improving it, as a state of trial, for eternity. 2. Hardness, or callousness, contracted by sinning against light, and the formation of evil habits (Eph. iv. 18, 19). 3. An impenitent heart, *i.e.*, an inconsiderate, unreflecting, and therefore unrelenting heart. (*Joseph Brown.*) *God's goodness: its abuse and its design*:—1. It is an instance of Divine condescension that the Lord reasons with men, and asks this question, and others like it (Isa. i. 5, lv. 2; Jer. iii. 4; Ezek. xxxiii. 11). 2. God not only acts kindly to sinners, but when they misuse His kindness He labours to set them right (Isa. i. 18; Hos. xi. 8). 3. It is a sad thing that any who have seen God's judgments on others, and have escaped themselves, should draw from this special mercy a reason for adding sin to sin (Jer. iii. 8). From the Lord's earnest question let us learn wisdom. I. Let us honour the Lord's goodness and forbearance. A reverent sense of it will be a sure safeguard against despising it. It is manifested to us—1. In a threefold form. (1) Goodness which has borne with past sin (Psa. lxxviii. 38). (2) Forbearance which bears with us in the present (Psa. ciii. 10). (3) Longsuffering which, in the future as in the past and the present, is prepared to bear with the guilty (Luke xiii. 7–9). 2. In great abundance—"riches of His goodness." (1) Riches of mercies bestowed, temporal and spiritual (Psa. lxviii. 19). (2) Riches of kindness seen in gracious deliverance, measured by evils averted which might have befallen us, such as sickness, poverty, insanity, death, and hell (Psa. lxxxvi. 13). (3) Riches of grace promised and provided for all needs. 3. In its excellence by four considerations. (1) The person who shows it. It is "the goodness of God" who is omniscient to see sin, just to hate it, powerful to punish it, yet patient towards the sinner (Psa. cxlv. 8). (2) The being who receives it. It is dealt out to man, a guilty, insignificant, base, provoking, ungrateful being (Gen. vi. 6). (3) The conduct to which it is a reply. It is love's response to sin. Often God forbears, though sins are many, wanton, aggravated, daring, repeated, &c. (Mal. iii. 6). (4) The boons which it brings. Life, daily bread, health, gospel, Holy Spirit, new birth, hope of heaven, &c. (Psa. lxviii. 19). 4. It has been in a measure manifested to you. "Despisest thou?" II. Let us consider how it may be despised. 1. By allowing it to remain unnoticed—ungratefully passing it over. 2. By claiming it as our due, and talking as if God were bound to bear with us. 3. By opposing its design, and refusing to repent (Prov. i. 24, 25). 4. By perverting it into a reason for hardness of heart, presumption, infidelity, and further sin (Zeph. i. 12; Eccles. viii. 11). 5. By urging it as an apology for procrastination (2 Pet. iii. 3, 4). III. Let us feel the force of its leadings. The forbearance of God should lead us to repentance. For we should argue thus- 1. He is not hard and unloving, or He would not have spared us. 2. His great patience deserves recognition at our hands. We are bound to respond to it in a generous spirit. 3. To go on to offend would be cruel to Him, and disgraceful to

ourselves. Nothing can be baser than to make forbearance a reason for provocation. 4. It is evident from His forbearance that He will rejoice to accept us if we will turn to Him. He spares that He may save. 5. He has dealt with each one personally, and by this means He is able to put it, as in the text, "God leadeth thee to repentance." He calls us individually to Himself. Let each one personally remember his own experience of sparing mercies. 6. The means are so gentle, let us yield to them cheerfully. Those who might refuse to be driven should consent to be drawn. Conclusion—1. Each gift of goodness draws thee to Jesus! 2. Forbearance would fain weep thee to Jesus! 3. Longsuffering waits and woos thee to Jesus! Wilt thou not turn from sin and return unto thy God, or "despisest thou the riches of His goodness?" (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) **And forbearance.**—*God's forbearance:*—The Roman magistrates, when they gave sentence of scourging, a bundle of rods tied hard with many knots was laid before them. The reason was this: that whilst the flagellifer was untying the knots, which he was to do in a certain order, and not hastily, the magistrate might see the deportment of the delinquent, whether he was sorry for his fault, and showed hope of amendment, that he might recall his sentence or mitigate the punishment; otherwise he was to be corrected the more severely. Thus God in the punishment of sinners, how patient is He! how loath to strike! how slow to anger if there be but hopes of recovery! How many knots doth He untie! How many knots doth He make in His way to justice! He doth not try us by martial law, but pleads the case with us, "Why will ye die?" And all this to see whether the poor sinner will throw himself down at His feet, make his peace and be saved. (*T. Fuller, D.D.*) *The patience of God:*—I. ITS NATURE. It is one of those attributes which the sins of His creatures first called into exercise. We are not to suppose that it proceeds from any ignorance in God, for "He has set all our misdeeds before Him." Nor is it the fruit of indifference. On the contrary, it implies that "God is angry with the wicked every day." Neither must we ascribe it to a want of power to punish. We sometimes bear with provocations because we are unable to avenge them; but the Omnipotent has at all times the means of vengeance. II. ITS SOURCE. Solely God's goodness. These attributes are mentioned together, and the one must be regarded as the origin of the other. Goodness, when exercised in withholding vengeance is patience; and when continued under repeated provocations, is longsuffering. There is, however, a distinction to be made between the goodness and the patience of God. Man, as needy, is the partaker of the one, whilst man, as guilty, is the object of the other. Goodness supplies our wants, patience bears with our sins. The one will endure for ever, and is inseparable from the Divine nature; the other is adapted only to the present scene of things, and may end to-morrow. III. ITS GREATNESS, or its "riches." Every blessing Christ has purchased in abundance. The mercy He has obtained is "great" and "tender," the grace "manifold and exceeding," the redemption "plenteous," the joy "unspeakable," the glory "an exceeding great and eternal weight." In regard to God's patience consider—1. How long it has been exercised. 2. How many sins every man commits. 3. How aggravated and daring many of our provocations have been. 4. How many sinners there are. IV. ITS DESIGNED EFFECT. "Repentance." The forbearance of the Almighty—1. Gives us time for repentance. 2. Shows that the penitent may obtain forgiveness. 3. Has a tendency to produce repentance in our hearts. Experience proves that man's stubborn heart is much less likely to be subdued by the contemplation of vengeance, than by the influence of mercy. V. THE DANGER OF DESPISING IT. We are undoubtedly guilty of this sin—1. When we are unmindful of the patience which bears with us, when we either think nothing at all about it, or think of it lightly. 2. When we draw encouragement from it to continue in sin. **And longsuffering.**—*God's longsuffering a demonstration of His almighty power:*—Longsuffering is the greatest exhibition of power on this side the day of judgment. It is our evidence that God now possesses all that God shall then exercise. 1. When I am told that God is longsuffering, and no limitations are placed on the attribute, you bring before me a picture as overwhelming in outline as stupendous in detail. I see at once that God *can* punish sin. Then vice may seem to carry it over virtue, and I may search in vain through all that is passing over a disordered creation for tokens that a moral government is still upheld; and the infidel may tauntingly refer to the triumph of evil, and infer that God has been compelled to abandon one world at least to the dominion of His foes; but fastening on the longsuffering of the Creator, I am proof against all doubts as to His power. He could not be longsuffering unless He could punish; He could not punish unless

He were supreme. 2. To each of us He has been longsuffering. Each of us has provoked His wrath, and yet upon none of us has that wrath come down to its fury. So that if the great demonstration of God's power be His longsuffering, then each of us may find in himself that demonstration in all its completeness. And thus it may be possible that after summoning suns and seas and mountains to give in their tribute to His night, that angels may be looking down upon myself as the crowning proof; and not because I am marvellous as the compound of matter and spirit, of mortal and immortal: and not because I inherit a nature that has been taken into union with the Divine; but because I have sinned and yet breathe; because I have defied the living God and not been consumed; because I have been long-offending and God has been longsuffering—therefore may they regard me as the most perfect demonstration that the power of their Lord is great; and assign me because spared in mine offences, a place amongst the witnesses to the almightiness of their Maker, which they give not to the marching of planets, nor to the gorgeousness of light, nor to their own beauty as ethereal beings, and rapid and masterful. 3. We have all heard of the infidel challenging God to prove His existence by smiting him, His denier. Now you can hardly picture to yourselves a being exercising over himself so perfect a command that, with all the apparatus of fiery reply at his disposal, he should not answer the challenge by levelling him who utters it to the ground. Can you measure to me the effort which it would be to a creature to keep the thunder silent, and to chain up the lightning? Yet the atheist is allowed to depart unscathed; and the proof of God's existence, which would have seemed pre-eminently calculated to overspread a neighbourhood with terrible conviction is mysteriously withheld. But the believer learns God's might a hundredfold more from the unbroken silence of the firmament than he would from the hoarse tones of vengeance rushing down to the destruction of the rebel. The atheist overthrown—this is as nothing to the atheist spared. It would have been as nothing that God should have launched the bolt—the prodigy whose height I cannot scale, whose depth I cannot fathom is that God should have withheld the bolt. I should have learnt God powerful over the elements had I seen the blasphemer a blackened corpse at my feet: I learn God powerful over Himself when the questioner of His deity passes on uninjured. 4. When I think on the difference between God's creating a world and God's pardoning a sin—the one done without effort, the other demanding an instrumentality terribly sublime; the one effected by a word, the other wrought out in agony and blood on a quaking earth and beneath a darkened heaven—the one is as nothing beside the other. That God can pardon is at the very summit of what is wonderful; and therefore then, O Lord, do I most know Thee as the Omnipotent when I behold in Thee the longsuffering. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) **Not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance**—*Goodness leading to repentance*:—A distinguished minister on a journey was once stopped by a highwayman, and called on to deliver his purse, with the weapon of death presented at his breast. "Wait," said the man of God, "for one moment"; and instantly fell on his knees and offered a fervent prayer for the unhappy man before him. The murderer stood silent, and listened. When the holy man had finished his supplication, he said to him for whom he had prayed: "Do you not wish for some better employment than this; some other means of a livelihood?" The answer was in the affirmative. "Come, then," said the minister, to such a place, naming his own residence, "and without ever divulging this act of yours while you live, such a provision shall be made for you." He confided in the assurance of one so intent on his welfare; became a member of his own family—an humble disciple of Christ: and, after a life of exemplary piety, died at the age of sixty, when, in his funeral sermon, the minister related these facts. (*N. W. Taylor, D.D. God's goodness leading to repentance*:—Let us—I. EXPOUND THE TEXT. 1. "Repentance" denotes a change of mind, inclination, and habits. 2. "Leadeth" describes the method in which the Lord deals with rational creatures. There is a sort of spurious repentance, to which men are sometimes driven. Thus Ahab was driven by Divine threatenings, Pharaoh by supernatural judgments, Felix by the dread of a future reckoning, and Judas by the terror of his own conscience; but to genuine repentance a man is led; allured by the discovery of hope, and the attraction of love. 3. "Thee." It matters not so much what others are: the question is, What are we? The charge of the prophet is pointed: "No man repented him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done?" 4. Observe what it is that conducts to this result. "The goodness of God." Not that this is always the case. It

frequently emboldens men in transgression, and hardens them in impenitence. The text, however, expresses its natural and proper tendency. II. ILLUSTRATE THE SENTIMENT WHICH IT CONTAINS. The goodness of God—1. Gives time for repentance. This is implied in the "forbearance and longsuffering." It is said of one, "I gave her space to repent, and she repented not." Here was the perversion of Divine goodness. Of others it is affirmed, "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." Here is depravity in its most hateful form. Let us "account that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation." 2. Provides the means. (1) The law, by which "is the knowledge of sin." (2) Affliction, which, while it gives leisure for reflection, disposes to the duty. (3) The gospel. A man may be convinced of sin; but his repentance is not unto salvation, except so far as he is persuaded of mercy, and discovers "a door of hope." 3. Furnishes motives. Note—(1) The common mercies you enjoy. Are they not all forfeited by sin? And yet do they not freely, richly, and constantly descend? (2) Every special interposition of God in your favour. From how many dangers and sicknesses has He delivered you? (3) Trials. Are not trials wisely appointed; mitigated by abounding comforts, and mingled with innumerable benefits? (4) The authority which enjoins it. "God hath commanded all men everywhere to repent." (5) The love which recommends it. How tender the expostulations, how precious the promises of the gospel on this subject! "Return, ye backsliding children." "Let the wicked forsake his way," &c. (6) The grace which accepts it. For repentance is accepted, not in consideration of its desert, but in virtue of the mediation of the Saviour. (7) The examples which illustrate it. The Prodigal, Zaccheus, Peter, &c. Conclusion: 1. Does not this subject remind you of the hardness of the human heart? The design of Divine goodness is apparent; its true tendency is most beneficial; but how is it perverted and abused! 2. Forget not the necessity of the Holy Spirit to produce this change. He it is who works repentance by impressing the heart with a sense of Divine goodness; and of the evil of sin, and to feel the attractions of heavenly love, as displayed in the gospel. (*T. Kidd.*) *The goodness of God a persuasive to repentance:*—1. There is much in the very nature of Divine goodness that is fitted to lead men to repentance. It lays them and all intelligent beings in the universe under everlasting obligations to love and serve God, the great Author of their being and of their mercies. It shows also, in a very affecting light, the exceeding sinfulness of sin, as committed against the greatest and best of beings. It appeals to our reason; and the verdict is that to sin against such a Being as God is a most guilty perversion of the noble faculties with which He has endowed us. It appeals to our sense of duty; and the verdict is that no obligation is so strong as that which binds us to the love and service of Jehovah. It appeals to our gratitude, to our hopes and fears; and the verdict is that no good can be secured so great as that which flows from repentance toward God, and no evil incurred so tremendous as that which must result from continued impenitence. There is, too, a peculiarity in the mode in which Divine goodness flows to guilty man which adds inexpressibly to its tender, persuasive power. It is not goodness flowing to innocent beings through the unobstructed channels of benevolence; but goodness flowing to lost sinners through the mediation and suffering of the Son of God. Here is goodness such as was never manifested in any world but ours, nor towards any other beings but the lost children of men. 2. The goodness of God is suited to lead men to repentance, as it secures for them a respite from punishment and gives a space for repentance. 3. The goodness of God leads to repentance, as it has opened a way in which repentance is available to secure pardon and life for even the chief of sinners. 4. The goodness of God is fitted to lead to repentance, as it furnishes the best possible means of repentance, and the most powerful motives to this duty. Consider the impressive instruction poured around you from the Word, the providence, and the works of God. All these conspire to impress on your mind the same lessons of eternal wisdom and love. Notice next the invitations of Divine goodness; they must avail to subdue every heart that is not a heart of stone. Turn next to the promises which Divine goodness has made to those that repent—promises of pardon, grace, and eternal glory. Such, then, being the tendency of the goodness of God, let us inquire what are its actual effects. 1. All who truly love God feel the constraining power of His goodness, and by it are made penitent, believing, thankful, and obedient. 2. There is another class of persons whom the goodness of God appears to leave wholly unaffected and unmoved. Is not this to despise the riches of God's goodness, and with singular

rapidity to treasure up wrath against the day of wrath? 3. There is another class who go still farther, and take encouragement from the goodness of God to sin against Him with an increased freedom and boldness. This is eminently to despise the riches of the goodness of God, and forbearance, and longsuffering. (*J. Hawes, D.D.*) *The Divine goodness a motive to repentance*:—There is no need to insist on the necessity of repentance; for nothing would appear more impious than for any one to say, "I need no repentance." But there is a consideration of very grave importance, viz., that all men will certainly come to repentance. In this view it is a very solemn thing to look at the thoughtless, impious, hardened, self-righteous, and think, "You will certainly repent! your repentance may be in vain—too late, but it will certainly come!" But we would speak of reasons that should enforce it now; and surely this should be a powerful one. If ultimate repentance is inevitable, under an irresistible power, how desirable it should not be left to be caused so; but be effected under the persuasive influence of more gracious causes! And of these the chief "is the goodness of God," manifested, acknowledged, and felt. Contemplate, then, that "goodness." I. As BEHELD IN THE SAME VIEW WITH THE DESERTS OF MAN. 1. What is it in man that is adequately correspondent to that goodness? Is it a humble, constant sense of dependence? an affectionate admiration of His beneficence? a mighty attraction towards Him? a solicitude to be conformed to Him? an aversion to all that He disapproves? 2. Look at any of the particulars of His goodness—His constant provision, His watchful protection, His compassionate care of weakness. What corresponds to these? His rays of instructive wisdom falling on man—what corresponds? Love of truth? anxiety to be taught? His shining forth on them, a sovereign pattern of sanctity, and in an economy of redemption—what does this very thing imply that there is in man to answer to it? II. IN THE SAME VIEW WITH THE MANIFESTATIONS OF GOD'S MIND AGAINST SIN. How many they are, how decisive, solemn, just! And yet the world is not made an unmingled scene of vindictive execution. His just denunciations are sent conjoined with mercies exceeding the number of the expressions that He is offended, as if He would not send His rebukes or threatenings but by the hands of friends. "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed." III. As BEING CONTEMPORARY WITH EACH SIN IN OUR LONG SUCCESSION OF OFFENCES. Advert to any sin in its time, there was goodness experiencing then: advert to the next, and the next; at that time there was still "the goodness of God," and in various ways at once. IV. BY SUPPOSING IT WITHDRAWN. Deprivation is sometimes the most effectual way of verifying what and how much a thing was. So God might cause His bounty to recede on every side of the sphere of our interests. On one side a diminution just enough to be felt at first; but speedily more, and still more; the same operation on another side: something still departing day after day!—things we had scarcely thought of as mercies, leaving incurable pain, or want, behind; our condition becoming more and more miserable, till we sunk in a death without consolation or hope! Or, instead of this gradual process, a sudden general deprivation. V. IN ITS CHARACTER OF PATIENCE AND LONGSUFFERING. All His lengthened indulgence, His train of favours—what for? What, but that there might be increasing gratitude and devotedness? And when has there been such a degree of these, that it was anything but mere goodness in God to continue His favours? (*J. Foster.*) *The goodness of God an inducement to repentance*:—Adversity has its place in the salutary economy of probation, but God's voice may be discerned in prosperity at least as much as in adversity, and much more frequently. The latter is His common way of addressing us; to the other mode He only resorts when for some reason it is necessary or expedient. I. HOW MAY WE ABUSE THE GOODNESS OF GOD? We do so—1. When we accept His gifts but ignore Him. How common a thing it is for men to enjoy the good things of this life, without thinking for one moment that they come from God! How many of us take our portion without a thought of thankfulness, as though it came from that office-keeper, Nature, instead of from our Father's hands! How does it cut us to the heart when our gifts elicit no grateful recognition! And where is there a man that would go on from year to year repeating his kindnesses where no sort of notice was taken of him? And what do men gain by this? nay, what do they not lose? Should we enjoy His gifts any the less if we took them as coming from the Giver, and found in each an occasion for fresh manifestation of grateful love? Where we receive the gifts of God, but disown the Giver, the gift loses the most precious part of its value. It ceases to be a gift at all to our higher nature. 2. When we accept His gifts, and

find in them a substitute for Himself, and so many reasons why we should ignore Him. He gives us many good things, that we think we can dispense with Him, the Giver; so much gratification, that we have no need to seek a truer and deeper gratification in His love. But when His gifts thus become substitutes for Himself, and you turn away from Him because you enjoy them, surely you are making it necessary for Him to take them away. Rather than let you lose all, in your folly and blindness He may see fit to take away some of the many good things that you enjoy. Why not hear His voice in all that He gives you, and let the goodness of God lead you to repentance? 3. By counting upon the continuance of His goodness, in order that we may go on sinning against Him. This is the very worst abuse, and it is to this that St. Paul here specially refers—the abuse of God's forbearance, who, though provoked, in the magnanimity of His nature goes on forbearing to smite when smaller natures must inevitably have lost patience long since. He waits because He loves; and yet this is the very characteristic that men count upon in order to sin against Him, as they hope, with impunity. Were it clearly understood by any that God's longsuffering would reach its term this very night, where is there one who would dare to defy the Majesty of heaven? Surely there cannot be any meanness so repulsive. Common manhood should lead us to say, "I can't be at one and the same moment the pensioner of God's bounty and the enemy of His authority." But what are the facts of the case? What is more common than to meet with utterly godless people, who have the fullest intention of turning to God some day or other, most probably in a dying hour! But if we can't be put out of conceit with this, by considering its meanness and unmanliness, it may be well to remember that God's goodness is not weakness, that even His forbearance must have its term. "Because I have called, and ye refused," &c. (Prov. i. 24–28). He who attempts to mock God finds in the end that he is only mocked himself. It is not that you evade or escape the penalty of your base ingratitude and perfidy, but it is that you treasure it up (ver. 5). Just think of the possibility of laying up treasure in hell! II. ITS USE. The history of sin dates from the first suspicious thought of God. This thought Satan delights in cherishing, until those who yield to his influence get to think of God as if He were a pitiless tyrant, ever ready to diminish our happiness. On the other hand, a real repentance begins with the repudiation of all such false views of God, and to such a repentance the goodness of God, revealed in all His dealings with us, is intended to lead; and surely it will if we will only let it speak to our heart. How can God be stern and unsympathetic when He gives us so much to enjoy? 1. If He provides for the gratification of every sense with which He endows us, multiplying the fair sights and sweet sounds of nature, and sometimes stirring all our being with the vision of the beautiful or the sublime, how can He be the enemy of our happiness? 2. Or, if He enriches you with all that social wealth accumulated through the ages, so constituting society that man may become a source of untold gratification to his fellow-man, surely His goodness in all this must needs show that He is the Friend and not the enemy of human happiness. Is it not to Him that we owe music, art, literature, science, and philosophy? and how much of enjoyment do all these add to life? 3. It is from Him that we derive both our faculties of loving and all those tender relations of home and friendship which call forth our love and which contribute so much to increase the joy of life; surely, then, we wrong Him when we shrink from Him as though He were the enemy of our happiness. 4. But is there not one supreme manifestation of His goodness which should move us more than all the rest and bring us to repentance? "God so loved the world," &c. He let His own Son suffer to spare you suffering! Let His goodness carry the day triumphantly. (*W. Hay Aitken, M.A.*) *God's goodness and repentance*:—I. THE ACTION SPECIFIED—"Repentance." 1. Its nature. 2. Its necessity. Why is it necessary? Not because it earns the favour of God or claims the pity, but because—(1) It shows a true desire to be His disciple. (2) It manifests a breaking with the world and the evil that is therein. (3) It brings the soul into harmony with the Divine purposes and plan. II. THE MOTIVE WHICH PROMPTS—"The goodness of God." 1. God never drives when He can lead. The grand principle of all His dealings is to lead His people, even as He led the children of Israel, by a cloud. 2. What it is to lead us to repentance. It is goodness, and the point of this goodness is that it is—(1) Undeserved. It is shown to rebels, enemies, and persecutors. (2) Continuous. Good is not one thing to-day and another to-morrow. (3) Unassuming. God, unlike some human patrons, does not make a mighty show of His goodness to sinners; He treats them with tenderness and gentleness. III.

THE CONDUCT ENJOINED. The apostle indirectly urges upon us all the duty of repentance. Not only the notoriously evil need repentance. The most humble Christian is constantly transgressing. And every act of benevolence we receive should awaken in us the sense of our deficiency and our sorrow therefor. For repentance is not a slavish, legal act. It is not degrading humiliation or desponding misery. It is a consciousness indeed of self-failure, but an expression of loved affection towards our heavenly Father. (*J. J. S. Bird, B.A.*) *The goodness of God designed to reclaim*:—It has this tendency—I. AS IT ENFORCES THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD. These are not merely the commands of one who governs by virtue of His power and supremacy, nor merely of one whom it is our interest or obligation to obey; they are the commands of our Benefactor. The God who, having made us of nothing, still keeps us; the God whose care and presence are ever surrounding us, who gives us friends, health, raiment, food; who provides salvation and offers heaven—it is this God who commands us to repent. Has such a God no claim on us by His mercies? II. AS IT APPEALS TO THE TENDEREST AND STRONGEST SENSIBILITIES OF OUR NATURE. There is no principle of human nature, fallen and degraded as it is, that is more obvious than that which leads us to requite kindness with kindness. Precisely on this principle does God assail the hearts of sinners. He does not rely merely on His authority over us, nor resort merely to His terrors to alarm us. He who searcheth the heart well knows that, amid all its darkness and corruptions, there is yet another and a surer spring that can be touched. God reveals Himself. God in Christ unfolds Himself in the attractive aspect of the God of mercy in order to touch sympathy, gratitude, and the secret place of tenderness and tears. III. AS IT DISCOVERS TO US THE TRUE CHARACTER OF GOD. God is love, and all the expressions of His kindness to us are only a manifestation, bringing that character before us. We may contemplate and admire moral excellence in another, who may never have been called to show kindness to us. But let us become the objects of that kindness, and we find a new and stronger emotion rising in our hearts, and fixing our strongest affection on Him. And if we have to such a friend been unfaithful, how will the tears of repentance flow when we come again, under a sense of his kindness! It is thus the goodness of God leadeth to repentance—it unvails in brightest manifestation the perfection of His character, directing all its cares, its solicitude, its tenderness to us. IV. AS IS SHOWN BY ITS EXPRESSIONS—1. In their number. Would we count them? As the sands of the sea, they are without number. And for what are they bestowed? Is it that we deserve them? No. Is it that He cannot strip us of every good thing, and leave us naked before the storm of His wrath? No; it is that He may prove to us how able, how content He is to bless. 2. In their nature. Not one, nor all of them, can become a satisfying portion, but they are exactly fitted to the great end for which they are given—our probation. Every blessing comes with this inscription, "Take not this for your portion, but receive it with thanksgiving, and use it with reference to your eternal well-being. Take all these gifts as the pledge of the love of the Creator to His own creature—the proof that He longs for thy love in return, and to flow forth on thee in a pure and abundant stream of good for ever." V. AS IS DEMONSTRATED BY FACTS. What illustrations of this have we while the Saviour was on the earth! In how many hearts did He plant the dominion of His love by acts of kindness! And what multitudes, from Saul of Tarsus downwards, have been actually led by it to repentance! (*N. W. Taylor, D.D.*) *God's goodness means salvation*:—The full force of the text cannot be made to appear except by reading the catalogue of crimes in chap. i. The apostle goes on to say, substantially, that it made no difference whether these things were committed by the Jew or the Gentile. Wrong is wrong without regard to nationality or anything else. Wrong is the violation of great laws, universal, perpetual, which defend themselves by penalties. If a man drugs himself, the drug vindicates its nature; if a man is selfish, the moral law carries a penalty of selfishness. If a man is good, the law brings forth the fruit of goodness to him. The only question is a question of how shall a man be restrained from the violation of the law of the moral economy; how shall he be developed so that he shall love the good rather than the evil? The apostle here declares that the presentation of the goodness of God is that which constitutionally tends to restrain men from evil, and to develop in them all goodness. Goodness is the working force of God's nature, and is to be made the working force of all government; but if God's goodness does not help men, His natural law goes right on to penalties without trial or sentence; the laws execute themselves in the moral kingdom. From this general exposition of this

passage I remark—I. GOD'S GOODNESS IS THE GRAND PRESENTATION OF HIM FROM WHICH THE MOST INFLUENCE AND BENEFIT IS TO BE EXPECTED. It has been a current idea that God's mercies are alternative, but that His justice is primary; that fear is the primary, mercy the secondary, instrument by which men are to work. But this is in flat contradiction of the whole tenor of Scripture. First, middle, and last, the Scripture teaches God's goodness as first to be preached, and if that does not avail, then the alternative comes, namely, the sure penalty of transgression. For example, let us go back to that memorable passage where Moses was about to legislate. He wanted to know (Exod. xxxiii. 13–15) what view of God's nature he was to employ, and wished to be filled to overflowing with that view. Then God said to him, "I will make all My goodness pass before thee," &c. Then comes the declaration in grand dramatic form, as recorded in Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. There is the staple view of the character of God. But if men will not see that, and go on still in their transgressions, let them understand that this goodness does not mean the abolition of distinctions between right and wrong. The great law of the universe will go on with its penalties, yea, by heredity for generations to come. The guilty cannot be cleared except upon their repentance and reformation. It is not a goodness that will clear a man and let him do just what he pleases, treating him as if he had been righteous and just. And so Paul at Lystra (Acts xiv. 17). It was the goodness of God that had to be preached to them first. And our text is the same thing. Coming in through the darkness of that terrific record of vices, Paul says that it was the goodness of God that should have led men to repentance. This is the doctrine not only of Scripture, but of good reason or philosophy; for—II. GOODNESS AND FEAR TOUCH HUMAN NATURE ON DIFFERENT AND OPPOSITE SIDES. The double being, man, the animal and spiritual, is approached on the upper and on the under side of his nature. Goodness develops what is of its own nature, touches the spiritual side of man. The presentation of goodness to the affections of a man's upper life helps them. When you present beauty to a man, you tend to develop the same quality in him. But the animal man cannot see anything in beauty. Such a man has to be touched and influenced by fear. You cannot teach duty to a horse or an ass, and so you put a bit and bridle in the mouth, and spurs in their sides, or make them afraid. The training of wild animals goes on wholly on the principle of fear. Therefore fear has in it a power of restraint, but not of development. All the conversions of men that have been the result of fear are hardly worth the letters that spell the story. Whenever the character of God is presented to us as goodness, it waters, stimulates, and develops that side of human nature which is most like God. But when men do not respond to that but range in their lower instincts, then you have got to bring in a restraint, and that restraint comes from fear; but it is secondary, it is alternative. Convicts who are in insurrection, are rushing out for their liberty, rush upon serried ranks of bayonets. "One step further and you are dead men, every one of you." They draw back, but they do not become law-keepers on that account. They are simply restrained. So, in the great moral government of God, men may be restrained from going further into trangression, but no man is converted by abject fear. If, therefore, human nature is to be developed in the direction of spiritual excellence, you must develop it by the presentation of those excellencies in their supreme forms in God. No view, then, of God, no view of the gospel, no view of the atonement as an element in the gospel, is a right one which does not present the hopeful side, the winning and the cheerful side. God loving and saving is the doctrine of the Bible. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *God's goodness in relation to man, and man's relation to it:*—I. DIVINE GOODNESS, IN ITS RELATION TO MAN, IS VERY EXTRAORDINARY—1. In its plentitude. "The riches of His goodness." See this—(1) In his constitution. The extent of God's goodness to a being may be determined by the capacities which He has given for happiness, and the provision He has made to supply them. How great, then, His goodness in the constitution of man! He has a capacity for sensational, intellectual, social, and religious pleasure. Beasts have a capacity for sensational pleasure, but not for intellectual; angels have a capacity for intellectual, but not for sensational; man has a capacity for both. He has powers to draw happiness from all the wells of enjoyment. (2) In His redemption. "God so loved the world," &c. "Herein is love," &c. 2. In its form. It is "longsuffering"—forbearance. God's goodness to brutes or angels is not "longsuffering." But His goodness to man is goodness holding back the arm of indignant justice. 3. In its design—to lead to "repentance"; to reform our souls. II. MAN'S CONDUCT, IN RELATION TO DIVINE GOODNESS, IS VERY

DEPRAVED. This is seen—1. In his inconsideration. "Not knowing." Men pay no attention to the moral meaning and design of all this goodness. 2. In his insensibility of heart. "Thy hardness and impenitent heart." Pharaoh a type. His heart grew stony under the rich showers of Divine goodness. 3. In his self-destructiveness. "Treasurest up wrath." He is transmuting those very streams of goodness into poison. See the electric cloud on the summer's sky. It was as small as a man's hand half an hour since, but it has grown wondrously. What is it doing? "Treasuring up." Every fresh particle swells and blackens it. It will burst in flame and thunder soon. That cloud is an emblem of the sinner. III. THE DAY OF JUDGMENT WILL BE VERY AWFUL IN RELATION TO SUCH CONDUCT. There will come such a day. There is historic, moral, and Biblical evidence enough to satisfy us of this. 1. This judgment will be a righteous judgment. "The righteous judgment of God." 2. A universal judgment. "Who will render to every man according to his works." How will the abuser of Divine goodness stand in this judgment? He will have "tribulation and anguish." (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Divine love*:—"God is love"; consciously to know this is life. "He that loveth is born of God." "Not knowing" it, the mind "despises" all the manifestations of God's goodness which are adapted to lead to repentance unto life. In what way, then, shall we get an influential conviction of the Divine love which tends to produce repentance? The love of God towards us, as spiritual beings, is manifested —I. IN THE CHARACTER AND OFFICE OF CONSCIENCE. Conscience is not a guide infallible. It is empowered only by faith in God, and it is true only by belief of the truth. This fact is one of the strongest testimonies for the necessity of revelation. With revelation conscience is—1. Moral admonition. When any sin is contemplated, it whispers, "Do not that wickedness and sin against God." 2. Moral impulse. It points to the path of duty and says, "That is the way, walk ye in it." "You have sinned, arise and go to your Father." Now the design of God is seen in conscience as clearly as the design of the maker in the regulator of a watch. The regulator was placed in the watch to govern its movements and keep the watch right. So was conscience in the soul. God in conscience shows His goodness by placing a power in the soul to deter us from known sin, and to lead us to repentance. Despise not His goodness! The best friend, though he follow the sinful many years, will turn back if his counsel be persistently rejected: so the voice of conscience will abate in the soul if we continue to resist its admonitions. II. IN THE CHARACTER AND DESIGN OF DIVINE REVELATION. The true test of benevolence is its design. What, then, is Revelation designed to accomplish for man? The greatest—1. Individual good. To love God and man is the soul's highest good here and hereafter. 2. Social good. Suppose a family obeyed the laws of God—"Husbands love your wives"; "Wives love and reverence your husbands"; "Children obey your parents in the Lord"—who will doubt but that such a family would experience the greatest good? 3. Universal good. If I loved others as myself, I should rejoice in their good as much as my own; and every blessing bestowed upon them would be bestowed upon me, and my blessings upon them. III. IN THE MOTIVES HE PRESENTS TO INCLINE US TO REPENT AND OBEY. The character of any mind is known by the character of the motives that it presents to influence other minds. Now, in the New Testament, the evil of sin and its final curse are presented to our fears to arrest us in the highway to hell. The purity and glory of heaven are presented to our hopes to induce us to repentance and faith. The heart is appealed to by infinite love. From the Cross the suffering Saviour cries, "Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die?" IV. IN THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST. A revelation of law does not lead us to love the law that we have transgressed; but a revelation of love, which offers pardon, leads us to love the lawgiver, and thus to honour and obey the law. "What the law could not do," &c. God could not make a law which would allow a single sin. But we are all sinners, and in our evil and helpless state Christ offers Himself "a propitiation for the sins that are past," "that God might be just and the justifier of him that believeth on Jesus." "In this was manifested the love of God" (1 John iv. 9). V. TO LEAD US TO REPENTANCE BY THE MERCY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT'S OPERATION. He convicts "the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment," *i.e.*, He shows them their sin, points to the true standard of righteousness, and admonishes them of judgment, in order thus to lead them to repentance. Then, in the heart of Christians, He "takes of the things of Christ and shows them" (John xvi. 14); and as the Christian sees, he repents, worships, and rejoices. In the conviction and indwelling of the Spirit are the love of God manifested to lead

men to repentance. (*J. B. Walker, M.D.*) *God's goodness to be reverenced:*—I remember well being taken one day to see a gorgeous palace at Venice, where every piece of furniture was made with most exquisite taste and of the richest material, where statues and pictures of enormous price abonnded on all hands, and the floor of each room was paved with mosaics of marvellous art and extraordinary value. As I was shown from room to room, and allowed to roam amid the treasures by its courteous owner, I felt a considerable timidity, I was afraid to sit anywhere, nor did I hardly dare to put down my foot or rest my hand to lean. Everything seemed to be too good for ordinary mortals like myself; but when one is introduced into the gorgeous palace of infinite goodness, costlier and fairer far, one gazes wonderingly with reverential awe at the matchless vision. "How excellent is Thy lovingkindness, O God!" "I am not worthy of the least of all Thy benefits. Oh! the depths of the love and goodness of the Lord." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Ver. 5. **But after thy hardness.**—*Hardness of heart:*—I. WHAT IT IS. 1. Not mere callousness or insensibility of feeling. 2. But entire obduracy of soul—not of one faculty, but of all. The same word is sometimes translated blindness and sometimes hardness. There are two words, πῶρος a stone, and πώρωσις, blindness or hardness (Mark iii. 5; Rom. xi. 25). This hardness, therefore—(1) Is blindness of the mind. (2) Is fixedness of the will in opposition to God and His truth. (3) Admits of degrees. (*a*) Disobedience and secret opposition to truth. (*b*) Zealous opposition and hatred of it, manifesting itself at length in blasphemy and persecution. II. THIS HARDNESS IS A SINFUL STATE. 1. From its very nature. 2. In its higher form it is the state or character of the lost and of Satan. 3. It is self induced. (1) As it is the natural effect of our depravity. (2) As it is the natural consequence of the indulgence of sin. As the natural consequence of the cultivation of virtue is virtue; of kindness is kindness, and so the natural consequence of the indulgence of sin is sin—a sinful hardening of the heart. III. IT IS NONE THE LESS A DIVINE JUDGMENT AND A PREMONITION OF REPROBATION. Any degree of it is reason to fear such reprobation. The higher forms of it are direct evidence of it. 1. God exerts no efficiency in hardening the heart of sinners, as He does in working grace. 2. But it is the punitive withdrawing of the Spirit; the inevitable result of which is obduracy. God let Pharaoh alone and the result was what it was. 3. In its last stage it is beyond the reach of argument, motive, discipline, or culture; and beyond our own power to cure or remove. Conclusion: 1. Dread it. 2. Withstand it. 3. Pray against it. 4. Avoid it by not grieving and quenching the Holy Spirit. (*C. Hodge, D.D.*) *Hardness of heart:*—This is the state of a person insensible alike to entreaties, expostulations, warnings, admonitions, and chastisements (Jer. v. 3). Men become obdurate—1. By separating themselves from God, the Source of all life, just as a branch dries up when detached from the tree, or as a limb withers when the connection between it and the heart ceases. 2. By a life of pleasure and sin, the effects of which may be compared to those of the river north of Quito, petrifying, according to Kirwin's account, the wood and leaves cast into its waters; or to those of the busy feet of passers-by causing the crowded thoroughfare to grow hard. (*C. Neil, M.A.*) *Hardening the heart:*—On a winter evening, when the frost is setting in with growing intensity, and when the sun is now far past the meridian, and gradually sinking in the western sky, there is a double reason why the ground grows every moment harder and more impenetrable to the plough. On the one hand, the frost of evening, with ever increasing intensity, is indurating the stiffening clods: on the other hand, the genial rays which alone can soften them are every moment withdrawing and losing their enlivening power. Take heed that it be not so with you. As long as you are unconverted, you are under a double process of hardening. The frosts of an eternal night are settling down upon your souls; and the Sun of Righteousness, with westering wheel, is hastening to set upon you for evermore. If, then, the plough of grace cannot force its way into your ice-bound heart to-day, what likelihood is there that it will enter to-morrow? (*R. M. McCheyne, M.A.*) *Conscience deadened:*—As the old historian says about the Roman armies that marched through a country burning and destroying every living thing, "they make a solitude, and call it peace," so men do with their consciences. They stifle them, forcibly silence them, somehow or other; and then when there is a dead stillness in the heart, unbroken by no voice of either approbation or blame, but doleful like the unnatural quiet of a deserted city, then they say it is peace. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) **And impenitent heart.**—*The impenitent heart* is one which—1. Has not repented. 2. Is not easily brought to repentance.

3. Is disinclined and unwilling to repent. 4. Is unable to repent. (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) *Impenitence*:—I. ITS NATURE. 1. We shall better understand this if we consider what is the nature of penitence, which is a clear view of our nature and conduct as tried by the pure and perfect law of God. Connected with this there is —(1) A consciousness that we are deservedly under the wrath of God, and the curse of that law which our sins have violated. (2) Alarm at sin and its consequences. (3) An ingenuous disposition to confess sin to God, without extenuation or self-defence. (4) Grief for sin. (5) A disposition to forsake it. (6) And there will be no true repentance where there is not faith in Christ, as the only way by which sin can be forgiven. 2. Now, impenitence means, of course, the opposite to this. The man who is not convinced of sin, &c., is impenitent, hard-hearted towards God and religion. 3. Mark the guilt of this. It really contains in itself every aggravation that sin admits of. It is—(1) Rebellion against the authority of God, who commands men everywhere to repent. (2) Great insult to God: for in proportion to the excellence of any being whom we may offend should be the promptness of our mind to confess the offence and mourn over it. (3) Great contempt of the law of God, that, after we have trampled it under foot, we should have no grief for the injury we have done it. (4) Total rejection of the whole scheme of mercy in the gospel. II. ITS CONSEQUENCES. 1. The time when the punishment will be inflicted. It is very true that the moment we die we enter into heaven or hell. But neither the happiness of the righteous nor the punishment of the wicked will be complete till the judgment. This is called—(1) "The day of wrath," and it will be to the wicked nothing but that. (2) A day of revelation. There will be a revelation—(*a*) Of God, in the wisdom of His plans, in His mercy to His people, in His justice of the punishment of the wicked. (*b*) Of Jesus Christ. No more shall it be doubted that He is the great God and our Saviour. (*c*) Of man. Millions of saints shall come out from their obscurity, and shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Millions of flaming but hypocritical professors shall stand at that day unmasked. (*d*) Of secrets—all the secrets of men's history. (3) But the text speaks of it as the revelation of righteous judgment that shall come on the wicked. There will be a revelation—(*a*) Of judgment itself. The punishment of the wrath of God is now revealed only partially; never, impenitent sinner, till the day of judgment will the greatness of thy iniquity be revealed. (*b*) Of righteous judgment; a complete manifestation of the justice of God in the punishment of the wicked. There shall be no infidels in hell: there shall none go from the judgment seat impeaching the justice of God. (*c*) Before the world. So that, while the righteous shall be honoured, the wicked will be punished before the universe. 2. Its nature. "Thou treasurest up wrath." Whose wrath? If it were the wrath of an angel there would be something tremendous in it. But—(1) It is the wrath of God —something more terrible than the imagination can compass! Solomon tells us that "the wrath of a king is as the roaring of a lion." But what is the wrath of a king to the wrath of God? But, perhaps, it may be said that it is only a taste of His wrath. The Scripture says wrath will come on the wicked to the uttermost; it will be unmixed wrath. Now God blends mercy with judgment: then mercy will retire. (2) It will be wrath felt, not merely threatened. Now it is threatened, and the wicked sport with the threat; but then it will be felt. (3) It will be everlasting wrath. What must it be to endure the unmitigated wrath of God for a moment, for an hour, for a week, for a year, for a century, for a thousand years, for a million of ages! But if, at that distance, there should be one gleam of hope appearing through the vista of darkness, hell would cease to be hell; hope would spring up; and the very idea of the termination of torment would sustain the soul under it. But oh, eternal wrath! To be obliged to cry out, How long? and to receive no answer but "For ever!" And after millions of ages have passed, and the question is again asked, How long? still to receive no answer but "For ever!" (4) This wrath is said to be wrath to come, and because it is to come, sinners will not believe it; because it is to come, they think it never will come. But it is perpetually drawing near. It is nearer this day than it was last Sabbath-day. 3. The proportion of the punishment. In the Hebrew Scriptures anything that is accumulative is accounted treasure. Hence, we read of the treasures of wickedness. The expression "treasurest up wrath" seems to be put in opposition to "the riches of His goodness." What an idea! Treasures of love! Heaps of wrath! And you will observe the sinner is represented as the author of his own punishment. The idea conveyed is this, that there is an accumulation continually going on as long as he sins. And then, as this proportion

will be according to the sin committed, so it will be according to the mercies abused and neglected. The sins of the poor heathen are light compared with ours, and the punishment will be light too. (*J. Angell James.*) **Treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath.**—*Amassing wrath:*—He who perseveres in sin is not only continuing in a dangerous state, but treasuring up unto himself wrath. As a man amasses a fortune by saving up certain sums from year to year, and more and more as he goes on, so this man goes on making the wrath that will come upon him at last heavier and heavier, by adding fresh sins day after day. God does not forget; He is ready to forgive, so entirely and freely to forgive that He calls it forgetting, but He does not let things pass by forgetfulness, and therefore our deeds are "treasured up" against the day of judgment, and He will then render to us according to them. Prudence would always lead us to think what we are treasuring up for ourselves, for whatever we do, we may be sure we are treasuring up something. Our daily life is adding by little and little to some kind of stock that is laid up for us. In this world, if we are regular and temperate in our living, we lay up for ourselves, ordinarily, health and length of life. If, on the contrary, we are irregular, self-indulgent, or intemperate, we lay up for ourselves an accumulating stock of weakness and disease, and a debt to our nature which we may have to pay by the cutting off of many days from our time here. If we are honest and industrious, we lay up for ourselves a treasure of good character, which will serve us more and more as we grow older; if we are dishonest and idle, we lay up for ourselves a bad character, which will tell more and more against us. If we are kind and good-tempered, we lay up a treasure of the good-will of our fellows; if we are proud and quarrelsome, we lay up enmities and dislikes, which may grow even to our ruin, and which may any day show themselves, all gathered into a mass, when we should most wish to be clear of them. And we know very well how it is sometimes when any person goes on behaving ill towards ourselves, disregarding our advice, disobeying our orders, reckoning upon our not choosing to punish; we go on a long time, it may be, to give him a chance of doing better, but at last he heaps up such an abundance and weight of misconduct, that we can bear it no longer, and we dismiss him from his employment with disgrace. So it is with a man who deals thus lightly with God, and presumes on His forbearance. God warns him again and again, but yet for a while does not execute judgment upon him. But at last comes the day of reckoning, and it is found that he has been all along heaping up for himself an evil treasure, a treasure of wrath against the day of wrath. The pleasures that are gone have left a sting behind them, the unjust gains, that seemed for a while to abide, are a witness against the covetous (James v. 2-4). (*C. Marriott, B.D.*) *Treasuring up wrath:*—This proves that sins will be punished according to their accumulation. A man is rich according to his treasures. The wicked will be punished according to the number and aggravation of their sins. There are two treasures, which Paul opposes to each other—that of goodness, of forbearance, and longsuffering—and that of wrath; and the one may be compared to the other. The one provides and amasses blessings for the creature, the other punishments; the one invites to heaven, the other precipitates to hell; the one looks on sin to pardon it on repentance, the other regards obstinate continuance to punish it, and avenge favours that are despised. God alone prepares the first, but man himself the second. (*R. Haldane.*) *Accumulating wrath:*—It is related that some years ago, in a mountainous region on the continent of Europe, an avalanche of snow—*i.e.*, an enormous mass of snow—came down from one of the overhanging rocks in such a vast body as entirely to dam up a river into which it fell. What was the effect produced? As the river could no longer flow, it went on forming itself into an extensive lake—threatening, whenever it should burst through its snowy barrier, to carry desolation and ruin upon men and villages in the country beneath. The larger the quantity of water suspended, the greater would be its violence when it obtained its liberty: and so it proved. The devastation caused was said to be terrible in the extreme. It is thus with every unconverted sinner. The longer he lives, the greater is the amount of wrath he is accumulating, or treasuring up, against his day of destruction. (*C. Clayton, M.A.*) **And revelation of the righteous judgment of God.**—*The revelation of God's righteous judgments:*—1. Further on in this epistle the contrast between darkness and light is employed to depict the difference between the present time and that which will succeed the second coming of Christ (chap. xiii. 12). We may have been compelled to tread a dangerous path under the guidance of an imperfect light, and we can recall the difficulty of distinguishing between substance and shadow, the bewildering sense of

insecurity, and our thankfulness when the day enabled us to see things as they really were. 2. The imagery then, of the apostle is exceedingly appropriate to our present condition. We are not in absolute darkness, for we have the Word of God, which is a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path. The road of safety is indeed sufficiently plain. But if we look beyond and around us, there are painful problems which we cannot solve, and huge difficulties which we cannot surmount. We cannot discern as yet the true proportions and nature of things; but when the day of eternity breaks, then the blinding, perplexing shadows will disappear. 3. These remarks will serve to introduce our topic. God is greatly misunderstood even by His own people. Witness the cases of Job, of Jeremiah, and of some of the Psalmists (Psa. lxxiii.). And if it be so with religious people, much more must it be true of the ungodly. But a day is coming when it shall be seen that He is holy in all His ways, and righteous in all His works. I. CONSIDER SOME OF THE DIFFICULTIES WHICH PERPLEX US. 1. Those which concern God's dealings with ourselves. Not unfrequently it happens that trials befall a Christian which he cannot interpret, and he is almost tempted to think that God is not the wise and loving Father he has been led to suppose. It may be, too, that the explanation will never come in this world. God would have His children trust Him without explanation. And then the only refuge is in the words "What I do, thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter." 2. Those connected with God's sovereignty and man's responsibility. (1) If there be one thing in Scripture more plain than another, it is that the offer of salvation is made to every man. And the blame of rejection is distinctly thrown upon the sinner: "Ye will not come unto Me that ye might have life." Now all this points to the responsibility of man. He might come, but he refuses to come. Here, then, is one side of the truth. On the other side we are just as plainly taught that no man cometh unto Christ unless the Father draw him; that repentance and faith are both the gift of God; and that Christians can take no credit to themselves for the position in which they are placed, but that they are "elect according to the foreknowledge of God," &c. In the matter of salvation He acts according to the good pleasure of His will. "Many are called, but few are chosen." "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy." Here, then, we have another side of the truth—the sovereignty of God. (2) Now you ask me to make these two statements consistent. I cannot comply with your demand. What I know is this, that I am bound to hold both truths without anxiety about consequences; and that there is a witness for both facts in the hearts of men. Never yet was a Christian found who would not admit that his salvation originated with God; and the man without faith in Christ, though he will say nothing, his conscience bears witness that he has been resisting by an act of his own will the gracious influences of God's Holy Spirit; and that if he should perish in his sins, he will have no one to blame for his ruin but himself. With these testimonies we may be satisfied, and look for the solution of the difficulty hereafter. The revelation that is coming will be a revelation of the "righteous" judgment of God. (3) With respect to this particular subject we may represent the two doctrines as two massive pillars standing face to face as if they were rivals. There they stand; and we look up at them, trying to trace out a point of contact. But they rise beyond our vision, and their majestic shafts are soon lost in dark mysterious clouds, and the eye can follow them no longer. But somewhere beyond the clouds—somewhere in the world of light above—we believe that they unite in some grand arch, and that there all appearance of antagonism disappears; and we believe also that that meeting-point will be seen at the manifestation of Jesus Christ. 3. Those connected with the broad subject of the Divine dealings with the human race. (1) There is one in the fact that so many centuries have elapsed since the sacrifice of Calvary, and yet so small a portion of the human race have heard the gospel. (2) There is another in the fact that those who die in their sins will be punished eternally. This topic is one so inexpressibly painful and puzzling that we do not much wonder at the theories which evade the force of the Scriptural statements. II. WITH RESPECT TO THESE DIFFICULTIES CONSIDER—1. That they are altogether inseparable from our present condition. Much as we should like to have everything made plain to us, it cannot be so; and it is well, too, that it should be so. We are in the night, not in the day; we have a glimmer, but not the full light; the full light comes in with the appearing of Christ. Moreover, this is the season of training. If everything were intelligible, where would be the exercise of faith? 2. That we are led to look forward to a day of explanation. A day of revelation is coming, which will be a day of revelation of the righteousness of the decisions and of the appointments of God.

Wait for that day patiently. Its bright light will solve all problems, and scatter the darkness of those mysteries which now perplex and distress the Christian mind. III. WHAT CONCLUSIONS SHALL WE DRAW FROM OUR SUBJECT? 1. That the belief of the coming of a day of explanation will operate to check all hasty theorising, all "judging before the time." Men yield to this temptation and invent systems of doctrine in the vain hope of escaping from the grand inconsistency of Holy Scripture. Like men in old times, occupied with squaring the circle, perpetual motion, or the method of turning everything into gold, they busy themselves with an unprofitable, because impossible, task. Yet again, men in their impatience to solve the problem of the Divine dealings with man have rejected the statements of Holy Writ. These theorists are bidden wait for the day of explanation that is coming. Thus there is in this view of the text a remedy for our natural impatience. 2. But more than this: there is much comfort in looking forward to such a time. A loving child may have most perfect confidence in his father. He is sure that what that father does is right and wise; yet he may be puzzled with the captious remarks of his father's enemies. So he looks forward to the day of explanation. He knows that then the character and acts of his parent will receive a most triumphant vindication, and that the mouths of all detractors will be silenced, and silenced for ever. Even so the Christian looks forward with delight to the second appearing of the Lord—the day of the revelation of the righteousness and holiness of God. 3. Yet in all perplexities we have an unfailing remedy available now. We can look to the Cross of Jesus Christ. Every murmur ought to be stilled, every doubt ought to be suppressed, every misgiving silenced—when we stand on the slope of Calvary. (*G. Calthrop, M.A.*)

Ver. 6. **Who will render to every man according to his deeds.**—*Well-doing rewarded:*—In some parts of the Bible the inheritance of the saints is set forth as the recompense of good works, while there are others in which it is represented as the free gift of grace, a thing that faith alone can receive. Without faith no one can hope to see heaven; neither can any one see it without good works, or, which is the same thing, without that newness of heart in which they take their rise. They are not related to heaven, however, in the same manner. I. ETERNAL LIFE CANNOT, IN ANY STRICT SENSE, BE SAID TO BE THE REWARD OF ANY WELL-DOING OR MERIT OF OUR OWN. For who is there that can look for anything at the hands of God, or even hope to stand in peace before Him, on the simple ground of his own character? Even the best parts of the very holiest of lives in this world cannot bear His rule of retribution. It is only of infinite grace that any one, even when he has done his utmost, can enter into the joy of the Lord. Eternal life is not wages, it is the gift of God through Jesus Christ. II. WHILE THE WORK OF OUR SAVIOUR ACCOUNTS FOR THE GIFT OF ETERNAL LIFE AS ENJOYED IN COMMON BY ALL THE SAINTS, IT LEAVES UNEXPLAINED THOSE DIVERSITIES BY WHICH THEIR LIFE IN HEAVEN IS CHARACTERISED. The ground on which the gift of life is given, is the meritorious work done by Christ in our behalf—a righteousness that is made ours by faith, and that comes up to all that the holy law of God can require of us. This righteousness is not only perfect in its nature, but also infinite in measure; so rich in merit that it can extend to any number of souls, and secure for us any degree, however high, in the joys of heaven. Its virtue is no wise dependent on the strength of the faith by which we embrace it, but is entirely inherent in itself, as the work of One in whom the Divine and the human are alike combined in all their fulness. Hence, if there is no other consideration to come into view, the honours and the enjoyments of heaven must be the same to all; there can be no degrees of blessedness; one saint cannot have a higher place in glory than another. But does this agree with what we are taught concerning the heavenly world? We read of diversities of gifts in the early Church, all proceeding from the same Spirit—some more, and some less honourable—some more, and some less profitable: diversities of somewhat the same kind prevail at this day. May we not expect that these distinctions in the Church on earth will give rise to corresponding distinctions in the Church in heaven, and that the various degrees of blessedness among the saints in light will have their root in those varieties of character and services by which Christians are distinguished in the present world? 1. As the believer is accepted in Christ, so all that is good in him, whether in heart or life, is accepted also, and not only accepted but rewarded. An illustration may be used, in the light of which eternal life as a free gift may be seen to be in perfect harmony with the idea of recompense. Take the case of some institution in this world, the inmates of which are received

into it not on the ground of anything meritorious in themselves, but simply by virtue of the free gift of some generous benefactor who procures the right of admission for them. Side by side with this, may there not be room in the internal arrangements of such an institution for various measures of benefit and various degrees of enjoyment, arising from diversities of character among those who have found a home in it? 2. Another reason why heaven will be richer in blessing to some than to others is, that many of the works in which they engage on earth are of such a kind that their results will meet them there, and thus prove a source of joy to them. The landscape glowing on the canvas is an object of pleasant interest to every one, but to none so much as to the artist whose taste, and skill, and patient labour have produced it. When a tract of waste and barren land has been reclaimed and brought under cultivation—when golden harvests and pleasant homes are seen to spread over a whole district where but lately there was nothing to meet the eye but crags and marshes—the contemplation of a scene like this will be a source of peculiar pleasure to the man to whose enterprise the change is due. One who spends his time and his means in civilising some rude and degraded tribe, secures for himself a pleasure of a higher kind. But of a still higher and more lasting nature must the pleasure be that is enjoyed by the man who is instrumental, under God, in reclaiming lost souls, and to whom it is given to behold peace and holiness where there was nothing but disorder and sin. For what is the utmost that a mere earthly civilisation can do for mankind, in comparison with those blessings to which they may be raised through the gospel—blessings imperishable as the soul and lasting as eternity? 3. A further reason why some will stand higher than others in the joy of heaven, is to be found in the larger capacity for spiritual enjoyment to which they have attained in their course on earth. The new man of the heart is capable of increase in knowledge, and power, and love, and holiness, and consequently in the capacity for happiness. This increase depends partly on the use we make of the means of grace, but also on the faithfulness with which we employ the powers we already have, both natural and spiritual, in doing the work that God has given us to do. Exercise is one of the indispensable conditions of the soul's growth: there must be a "patient continuance in well-doing." And the more we abound in those things by which man is blessed and God glorified, the more do we grow in sympathy with the Divine character, the purer is the joy we are capable of receiving, and the more meet do we become for the employments and the pleasures of a higher world; so that on this principle well-doing has a part in working out its own recompense. (*G. Hutchison, D.D.*) *Divine justice* is —I. ESSENTIAL—proved *à priori* by—1. Revelation. 2. Reason. 3. Example. II. RETRIBUTIVE. 1. To the good, glory, &c. (ver. 7). 2. To the wicked, wrath (ver. 8). III. IMPARTIAL. To the Jews, &c., for there is no respect of persons with God (vers. 9-12). (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The final judgment*:—I. Its CERTAINTY, "will render." II. Its UNIVERSALITY, "to every man." III. Its EQUITY, "according to their deeds." (*Ibid.*) *Justification by faith and works*:—It has been asked how this maxim can be reconciled with the doctrine of justification by faith. There is only one answer to this question, viz., that justification by faith alone applies to the time of *entrance* into salvation through the free pardon of sin, but not to the time of judgment. When God of free grace receives the sinner at the time of his conversion, He asks nothing of him except faith; but from that moment the believer enters on a wholly new responsibility; God demands from him, as the recipient of grace, the fruits of grace. This is obvious from the parable of the talents. The Lord commits His gifts to His servants freely; but from the moment when that extraordinary grace has been shown, He expects something from their labour. Compare also the parable of the wicked debtor, where the pardoned sinner who refuses to forgive his brother is replaced under the rule of justice, and consequently under the burden of debt. The reason is that faith is not the dismal prerogative of being able to sin with impunity; it is, on the contrary, the means of overcoming sin and acting holily, and if this life-fruit is not produced it is dead, and will be declared vain (Matt. iii. 10; 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10; Gal vi. 7). (*Prof. Godet.*) *Deeds recompensed* according to—I. Their QUALITY. II. Their FREQUENCY. III. Their DEGREE. IV. Their CIRCUMSTANCES. V. Their EFFECTS. (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) *Deeds are seeds*:—The crop may extend through many generations. The consequences of our deeds may end only with the world. Men's example, instructions, institutions, written works. Believers' good deeds receive a righteous reward of grace (Matt. xxv. 34, 35; Heb. vi. 10); their evil ones though pardoned in Christ are visited with chastisements here. (*Ibid.*)

Vers. 7-10. **To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life.**—*Contrasts*:—I. IN AIM. II. IN CONDUCT. III. IN RESULT. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Well-doing*:—I. THE SUPREME DUTY OF LIFE. "Well-doing." Man only lives as he is active, and he only lives rightly and happily as he acts well. "Well-doing" does not mean the "well-doing" of one faculty, but of all faculties, not in one sphere of life, but in all spheres; it means doing everything from the right principle, supreme love to God. II. THE SUPREME DUTY OF LIFE REQUIRES CONTINUANCE. "Patient continuance." He that does not do well always, at all times, in all circumstances, does not do well at all. A man is either under the sovereignty of the right principle or not. If not, whatever he does is wrong-doing; if he is, whatever he does is right. "As a man thinketh in his heart so is he." Hold on to the principle, be ever loyal to it. III. CONTINUANCE IN THE SUPREME DUTY CALLS FOR PATIENCE. "Patient continuance is well-doing." Patience, because there are so many forces that obstruct, so many circumstances that try, so many agencies that are hostile. "Resist the devil," &c. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Well-doing*:—"Good work," as the Greek has it—not "works," but life-long work. Consider this—I. NEGATIVELY. It is not—1. Well-knowing. 2. Well-promising. 3. Well-professing. 4. Well-abstaining. II. POSITIVELY. It is well-doing; good. 1. As to the matter—prescribed by God and according to His will (Micah vi. 8). 2. As to the motive—done for God's glory and pleasure (1 Cor. x. 31; Col. iii. 23). 3. As to the manner—carefully, earnestly, heartily (2 Cor. ix. 7; Rom. xii. 11; Col. iii. 23). 4. As to its essential element—love (Matt. xxii. 37-39; Rom. xiii. 10). 5. As to its example—Christ (1 Pet. ii. 21-23). III. RELATIONALLY. Well-doing is agreeable. 1. To the nature God has given us. 2. To the relation in which we stand to God and our fellow-men. 3. To the rule God has given us in Scripture. Conclusion: 1. Well-doing is the effect of grace alone (Rom. iii. 12; Eph. ii. 9). 2. Man is renewed in Christ for this purpose (2 Cor. v. 17; Eph. ii. 10). 3. Believers are required to abound in it (Col i. 10; 1 Tim. vi. 18). 4. Well-doing alone will be rewarded. "Well done thou good and faithful servant." (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) *Patient continuance in well-doing*:—As the sun never leaves off shining, though clouds sometimes obscure its light, so we must never cease to do well, even to our enemies and persecutors. *The reward of patient effort*:—If we look back to the history of efforts which have made great changes, it is astonishing how many of them seemed hopeless to those who looked on at the beginning. Take, *e.g.*, the effort after the unity of Italy. Look into Mazzini's account of his first yearning, when he was a boy, after a restored greatness and new freedom for his country, and of his first efforts as a young man to rouse the same feelings in other young men, and get them to work towards a united nationality. Almost everything seemed against him; his countrymen were ignorant or indifferent, governments hostile, Europe incredulous. Of course the scorners often seemed wise. Yet you see that the prophecy lay with him. (*George Eliot.*) *Perseverance: its value and effects*:—It is only by slow stages that we can rear a monument whose proud boast it shall be that it is *ære perennius*. The constant dropping of water, says one proverb, hollows out the stone, and another that "he who goes slowly goes long, and goes far." No work is well done that is done by fits and starts. Steadfast application to a fixed aim is the law of a well-spent life. When Giardini was asked how long it would take to learn the violin, he replied, Twelve hours a day for twenty years. Alas! too many of us think to play our fiddles by a species of inspiration. The Leotards and Blondins—what painful diligence must they have exhibited! The same adherence to a settled purpose might assuredly have made them benefactors of mankind had they been animated by a nobler impulse. In music, take the examples of Malibran and Pasta; in painting, of Titian and Raffaelle; in letters, of Lord Lytton and Carlyle; in science, of Laplace and Faraday; and you will find that the great results which have surrounded their names with imperishable honour, were wrought out by the most wonderful constancy of labour, and the most heroic energy of patience. Nothing can be a greater mistake than to suppose that genius dispenses with labour. What genius does is to inspire the soul with a power to persevere in the labour that is needed; but the greater geniuses in every art invariably labour at their art far harder than all others, because their genius shows them the value of such patient labour, and aids them to persist in it. (*W. H. D. Adams.*) *Good works must be continuous*:—No grace, no, not the most sparkling and shining grace, can bring a man to heaven of itself without perseverance; not faith (which is the champion of grace), if it be faint and fail; nor love (which is the nurse of grace), if it decline and wax cold;

nor humility (which is the adorner and beautifier of grace), if it continue not to the end; not obedience, not repentance, not patience, no, nor any other grace, except they have their perfect work. It is not enough to begin well except we end well. Manasseh and Paul began ill, but ended well; Judas and Demas began well, but ended ill. (*T. Brooks.*) *The constancy of holiness:*—Holiness consists not in the rushing of intense resolve, which, like Kishon, sweeps everything before it, and then subsides, but in the constant flow of Siloah's still waters, which perpetually make glad the city of our God. Holiness is no blazing comet, amazing nations with a transient glory; it is a fixed star that, with still, calm radiance, shines on through the darkness of a corrupt age. Holiness is persevering obedience; it is not holiness at all if it be occasional zeal and sensational piety. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The permanent determination to realise goodness:*—The notion of patient continuance is emphasised here, not only in opposition to the idea of intermittent moral efforts, but to indicate that there are great moral obstacles to be met on this path, and that a persistent love of goodness is needed to surmount them. The apostle says literally; perseverance in "good work." In verse 6 he had used the plural. He now comprehends this multiplicity of "works" in the profound principle which constitutes their unity—the permanent determination to realise goodness. What supports a man in this course is the good which he has constantly before him: "glory," an existence without defilement or weakness, resplendent throughout with the Divine brightness of holiness and power: "honour," the approbation of God which forms the eternal honour of its object: "incorruptibility," the absolute impossibility of any wound, interruption or end to this state of being. The "and" between the last two substantives, shows a certain degree of emotion; the accumulation of terms arises from the same cause. In all human conditions there are souls who contemplate the ideal here described, and which, ravished with its beauty, are elevated by it above every earthly ambition and the pursuit of sensual gratifications. These are the men who are represented under the figure of the merchant seeking goodly pearls. For such is the pearl of great price—"life eternal!" This last word, laden, as it were, with all Divine riches, denotes the realisation of the ideal just described; it worthily closes this magnificent proposition. (*Prof. Godet.*) *The beatitude of patient courage:*—I. THE IDEAL CHRISTIAN LIFE. "Patient continuance in well-doing." 1. The feverish ambition which must see its name in the newspaper and be congratulated in public meetings, is in great danger of exhausting its reward before the day of judgment (Matt. vi. 2–5). Happier far is he who hears with glad surprise the Master's "Well done," and finds that the work which was unnoticed on earth was seen and remembered in heaven. 2. Spasmodic effort, brief fervour followed by long languor, wins no enduring honour either in this world or the next. Steady, brave, unremitted work is that which pays best, both here and hereafter. How many teachers have for years toiled on receiving scant recognition on earth, yet day by day preparing for that time when their pound shall have gained ten pounds! There was a teacher at East Grinstead who for fifty-seven years had been present at his post twice every Sunday with few exceptions. "He has in his class the grandchildren of those he once taught. He does not remember a single occasion on which he has been late." It would be hard to find a more apt illustration of patient continuance in well-doing. 3. Patient continuance means more than patience, perseverance, endurance. It is heroic patience, strong both to bear and to do, which, like love, "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things" and "never faileth." There are many short cuts to success in Christian work, but this is the only true way. Let us seek it earnestly, and tread it consistently. II. THE REWARD. 1. What they seek they win. Eternal glory, the honour that cometh from God, a life that knows no decay, these are the objects of Christian ambition, and they who patiently seek shall find them. God giveth to such eternal life—not simply unending life, but life in all its glorious fulness. This is the end of patient Christian toil. 2. There is a way which to the natural man seemeth dull, hard, uninviting, unhonourable, "but the end thereof are the ways of" life (Prov. xiv. 12). The loftiest end is reached by the lowliest path. 3. Eternal life, with all its unutterable joy and glory, awaits the faithful Christian worker in every field. It is not well to dwell exclusively upon the things that God hath prepared for them that love Him, but it is surely well ever and anon to glance upward for a moment to that crown which the man with the muck-rake neither sought nor saw. These things are made known to us, not that we may become careless or boastful, but that we may be strengthened and heartened. (*A. E. Gregory.*) *High life:*—I. THE GRANDEUR OF THE AIM—"Seek for glory, honour, immortality."

What great words these! Some wish to take them out of the vocabulary, and out of human life—they deride such ideas. But we need them, and cannot get on without them. We go into the fields, and there grows a modest simple daisy. But think what a costly flower it is! It owes its shape to the action of the vast terrible law of gravitation working through all the realms of space; to refresh it the ocean must yield its virtue; to vivify it the electrical forces must sweep through the planet; to colour it millions of vibrations must shoot through the light ether; to build it up, unfold it, perfect it, it requires an orb ninety-five millions of miles away, five hundred times bigger than all the planets put together—a million and a half times bigger than the earth itself. "Vain little daisy, will not less than this do for you," says the sceptical critic. No; less will not do. So man may seem a poor creature in infidel eyes, but if he is shut out from large ideas and hopes he loses the fulness of life and happiness. Take these words, "glory, honour, immortality," out of the vocabulary, and what is the effect on—1. Character? It is all very well to attempt to shut men up to beef and beer, but we shall never get large, strong, beautiful life out of that. It is certain that where these words have been most laid to heart, the rarest, purest graces have bloomed. Some horticulturists hold that roses grow best on their own roots. I am quite sure that God's roses grow best so; and whenever they are severed from their own roots, grafted into some wild briar of the wilderness, and planted on secular ground, the moss-rose of the garden becomes the dog-rose of the hedge. No; you only get noble, tender, pure, beneficent character out of a lofty faith and a glorious hope. 2. Experience? Will the spirit of man be content without these words? No, say the men of the world, but they can find glory, honour, immortality within the worldly life. Can they? "Glory" means solidity, reality, durability; have they these? Certainly not. According to their philosophy, man is a soap-bubble, and, pricked by death, where is he? "Honour," have they that? If you take the soul out of man he is but one of the beasts which perish, and social honours are his golden shoes, his jingling bells. Is this honour? "Immortality," have they that? Yes, fame. Fame! a death's-head decked with a fading wreath. No, they have not these things, they have only the words. There is no lofty, luminous character, no rich, satisfying experience, except as we recognise our share in the Divine and the eternal. "To them who seek glory, honour, immortality, eternal life." God goes beyond our utmost ideas. In the lips of men these words shrink to nothing, but God fills them to overflowing with glorious meaning. Aim at the highest. When a great ideal slips out of a man's soul he begins to rot; only as he cherishes grand thoughts does he find rest to his soul, and come to the stature of a perfect man. II. THE SIMPLICITY OF THE PATHWAY. "By patient continuance in well-doing." There is something quite startling between the aim and the condition. "Well-doing." Men have sought "glory," &c. in many strange paths, but the true plain path is here—well-doing. Not *brilliant* doing in trade, war, scholarship, but *well*-doing. Doing the work of life with a willing mind, a loving heart, with both hands earnestly—diligence in getting good, being good, doing good. In this world all the grand prizes go to a few brilliant people. It was so at school. The brilliant boys carried off the prizes. It is the same in the big world, which likes genius, brilliance, audacity. But what a blessing it is to us, the dim million, to know that God recognises patient merit, and that the grandest prizes of all are kept not for the brilliant, but for the faithful. God recognises—1. The greatness of simple character. We are apt to overlook great character in humble guise, but God does not. We look at the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart. I do not want anybody to tell me about the man who spoke prose for forty years without knowing it. Scores of men speak poetry for forty years without knowing it, nay, act splendid poetry without knowing it, and God shall surprise them with a splendid reward. "Then shall the righteous answer Him, saying, Lord, when saw we Thee an hungered," &c. Thousands of lowly men think but little of themselves and their doings, but God knows their measure and shall surprise them with glory, honour, immortality beyond their most glowing dream. 2. The greatness of simple duty. The cynic loves to show how mean splendid things are when critically examined. Such substances as clay and flint form the basis of nearly all the precious stones. But so far from showing the meanness of magnificence, he shows the magnificence of meanness. So men of a certain temper love to show how all the business of life is vulgar and insignificant; but if our daily tasks are viewed in regard to the will of God, the fashioning of our character and destiny, they are solemn and momentous. Angels and shopkeepers, archangels and manufacturers, belong to the same celestial

hierarchy as they stand before God's face and do His bidding. "There is no difference, for God is no respecter of persons." 3. The greatness of simple suffering. One of our writers said the world just now wants heroes. It altogether depends what kind of heroes they are. Some of these make a great stir for small advantage. The most illustrious of heroes are often those of "obscure life." All around us simple people bear uncomplainingly the most bitter suffering; nobly resist the most terrible temptation; sustain with silence the heaviest burdens. Gordon flashed a splendid figure on the imagination of the world, but there are many Gordons unknown to fame, but who are known to God, and shall not lose their appropriate reward. Conclusion: Let us be content with our place and work however coarse and common. If we cannot be flowers of the garden, of the aristocracy of flowers, let us be flowers of the grass, very beautiful in the eyes of Him who makes the grass to grow upon the mountains. It is not in brilliance that we shall be saved, but by pegging away in simple, honest work. But let us feed our soul with high beliefs and hopes. Let us talk to ourselves all the day long about glory, honour, immortality, eternal life; so shall our path of life, however lowly, be a royal pathway, brighter and brighter, to a perfect day! (*W. L. Watkinson.*) *The Christian's great aim:*—I. THE OBJECT OF THE CHRISTIAN'S PURSUIT. A triple crown—a crown of "glory and honour and immortality." But does not this reduce their virtue to a thing of hollow utility? No; as will appear if we consider their motive, which is that they may cast their crowns at Jesus' feet. They seek—1. A glorious position—"glory," "majesty." The inhabitants of heaven are all glorious within, and all glorious without. 2. The highest praise, "honour." Courtiers have spent years to insinuate themselves into the favour of their king; while vast numbers have not spent an hour in seeking the smile of God. And yet to have the approbation of the highest potentate of earth, is nothing compared with the approbation of the King of Glory. 3. To hold this position and this praise in perpetual possession. There is here a contrast between the things of earth and of heaven. Here, the leaf must wither and the flower must die; there, the leaf is evergreen and the flower amaranthine. II. THE MEANS EMPLOYED TO OBTAIN THIS OBJECT. 1. There is the performance of good works. This universe is an infinite conjugation of the verb "to do." And it is either conjugated ill or well. By the Christian, it is conjugated well. 2. The patient performance of good works. "Good doing" in this world is climbing the steep, often with bleeding feet. Hence, Christians require the Divine virtue of patience; and patience is true heroism. 3. Perseverance in the performance of good works. Our life must resemble the sun in his commencement, continued course, and consummation. We must travel onward and upward to "the perfect day" of knowledge, of purity, of joy. III. THE OBJECT OBTAINED BY THE MEANS EMPLOYED. Those who seek in the way described not only find what they seek, but much more—eternal life. This life is—1. Pure. 2. Progressive. 3. Permanent. (*J. Dunlop.*) *Seeking for glory, honour, and immortality:*—How? 1. As one who feels the want of those blessings (Luke xv. 14; Eccles. i. 2; Jer. ii. 13). 2. As one who discerns their surpassing excellence and worth (Matt. xiii. 44; Phil. iii. 7, 8). 3. As one who is willing to strive for them in the appointed and proper way, and to accept them upon the terms offered (2 Tim. ii. 5; Isa. lv. 1). 4. As one who is prepared to make any self-sacrifice, brave all dangers and oppositions, and never to be deterred by failure (Acts xxi. 13). (*C. Neil, M.A.*) *Glory*, or splendour, is here as often elsewhere in Scripture, specified as the distinguishing characteristic of that celestial state in which the holy find their everlasting award. "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (Matt. xiii. 43; *cf.* Rom. v. 2, ix. 23; Eph. i. 18; 1 Tim. iii. 16; 2 Tim. ii. 10; Heb. ii. 10; 1 Pet. v. 1, 4, 10). On earth the righteous may have their lot in the midst of the mean accompaniments of poverty. In heaven everything around as well as within them will be lustrous and glorious. (*J. Morison, D.D.*) *Honour*:—This is another fold of the manifold excellency of the heavenly state. It is kindred to "glory." Its idea, however, has more of relativity about it. One may be absolutely glorious. God from everlasting was so. But one can have "honour" only when others esteem and prize and praise. Hence the connection of the Greek word (τιμή) with price (see 1 Cor. vi. 20, vii. 23; Matt. xxvii. 6; and compare the German *preis*, and the English "prize" and "praise.") Relative "honour" as well as essential glory awaits the holy. They will bask in the Father's approbation and complacency. Angels will rejoice in their companionship. They will be "kings unto God," and will "reign with Christ" (Rev. v. 10). (*Ibid.*) *Immortality* naturally looks back to "glory" and "honour,"

and contrasts the permanence of the celestial with the fleeting shadows of the terrestrial. The "inheritance" is "incorruptible." The diadem that encircles the brows of the glorified heirs is amaranthine. It "fadeth not away." (*Ibid.*) *Labouring for eternity*:—"There," exclaimed an artist, on finishing a perishable work on perishable material, "it is done!—and it has been thirty years in doing!" We labour for eternity; and shall we think a life long to devote to endless results? (*A. Reed, D.D.*) *Working for eternity*:—Apelles, the Grecian painter, when asked why he touched and retouched his pictures with so much care, answered, "Because I paint for eternity." **But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation, and wrath.**—*Factiousness and its punishment*:—I. THE CHARACTER DESCRIBED. 1. Factious. (1) The expression is literally "those who are 'of' a factious spirit." Descent or parentage is suggested as in "him who is of faith," "them who are of the circumcision" (*cf.* also Gal. iv. 10; John xviii. 37), and in "children of light," &c. (Eph. ii. 2, 3, v. 8; 1 Pet. i. 14; 2 Thess. ii. 3). In all such expressions the outstanding idea derived from the universally recognised law of like begetting like, is that of predominant characteristic. (2) The word itself denotes a spirit of faction, but always with a vile implication of interested and selfish aims. The apostle's reference, therefore, is not to mere political sectarianism, or national bigotry. His mind has before it the conception of God's vast moral empire. Faction in it is opposition to the monarch of the universe; opposition that springs from a base desire to gratify the lower principles of the nature. It is in fact a covert kind of rebellion; only it is rebellion animated by the most ignoble aims. 2. The factious are disobedient to the truth. Such, indeed, is implied in their factiousness. "The truth" is personified as a lady or mistress who ought to be obeyed. The truth is disobeyed when there is a wilful refusal to have the life, at once in its inner thoughts and feelings, and in its outer acts, conformed to the rule which it embodies. The rule is imperative. For moral, religious, evangelical truth is revealed just in order that the living mind may live in conformity with it, and thus in consonance with the will of Him whose voice truth is. 3. The factious while disobedient to the truth are obedient to unrighteousness—the counterpart idea which is the complement of the preceding clause. The lawful sovereign of the soul being disobeyed, subjection is transferred to a usurper's sway. Unrighteousness has doubtless its usual import as the antithesis of moral rectitude, and is not to be regarded as doctrinal error. It is the case, however, that just as "the truth" received is the kernel of that of righteousness, without which no one can be meet to enter into the kingdom of heaven; so unrighteousness is a husk within which will be found the primal seed of error. II. ITS PUNISHMENT. 1. "Wrath and indignation" from God. The one word reverberates on the other. The two are an intensification of the idea of each. 2. The suffering of tribulation and anguish. (*J. Morison, D.D.*) *The mercenary spirit*:—Contentions is mistranslated on the supposition that it has something to do with ἔρις—strife—whereas it comes from ἐρίθος, a day-labourer, a hireling. The word ἐριθεία is used of those who canvass for office, and form cabals and parties to accomplish their ends. Hence, in the largest sense it will signify those who labour for their own private and selfish ends; and it is remarkable that this should be contrasted with the patient continuance in well-doing, as containing in itself every form of evil. The words would be properly translated, "those who are of a mercenary spirit." (*Bp. Thirlwall.*) *Obedience to unrighteousness, i.e.*, revolting against what is good, and becoming slaves to what is evil. Here a striking contrast is indicated between that contentious spirit which disobeys the truth, and yet obeys unrighteousness. The one denotes an extraordinary haughtiness, and an exceeding boldness, and the other extreme meanness and servility of soul. They who do not choose to serve God as their legitimate sovereign become the slaves of a master who is both a tyrant and usurper. (*R. Haldane.*) *Indignation and wrath* mark the greatness of God's anger proportioned—1. To the dignity of the Sovereign Judge of the world. 2. To the authority of those eternal laws which have been violated. 3. To the favours which sinners have received. 4. To the unworthiness and meanness of sin. (*Ibid.*) **Tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil.**—*Tribulation and anguish*:—Tribulation means pressure, which, when extreme, as in various modes of torture, causes excruciating pain. Anguish means straitened room—straits—the source of utter despair and ruin when one is pursued by an invincible antagonist. The latter is stronger than the former (*cf.* 2 Cor. iv. 8)—in every way troubled and hard pressed, but not reduced to absolute straits. Here the one term simply intensifies the other; and the two in

union are a representation of the award of woe which hangs over the persistently wicked. They represent the award as it terminates in the persons judged; whereas "indignation and wrath" represent it as it emanates from the Judge. (*J. Morison, D.D.*) *The punishment of sin*:—I. ITS NATURE. 1. Tribulation. By—(1) Exclusion from God's presence and the bliss of heaven. (2) Confinement to the society of the devil, his angels, and wicked men. (3) The absence of all that can afford comfort and pleasure. (4) The presence of all that can occasion misery. Outer darkness: furnace and lake of fire; undying worm; bottomless pit, are its emblems. 2. Anguish. From—(1) Experience of God's anger. (2) Sense of abhorrence of all holy beings. (3) Consciousness of moral loathsomeness and corruption. (4) Working of uncontrolled passions and ungratified desires. (5) Sense of all being self-caused and justly deserved. (6) Inability to escape or obtain mitigation. (7) Knowledge that all is everlasting. II. ITS CHARACTERISTICS. 1. Universality. "Every soul that doeth evil." 2. Suitability. "The soul"—(1) The chief seat of suffering as the chief agent in sinning. 2. Especially capable of realising the Divine anger. 3. Impartiality. "The Jew first and also the Gentile." (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) *The retribution of sin mercifully revealed*:—I do not accept the doctrine of eternal punishment because I delight in it. I would cast in doubts, if I could, till I had filled hell up to the brim. I would destroy all faith in it, but that would do me no good; I could not destroy the thing. I cannot alter the stern fact. The exposition of future punishment in God's Word is not to be regarded as a threat, but as a merciful declaration. *If*, in the ocean of life, over which we are bound to eternity, *there are* these rocks and shoals, it is no cruelty to chart them down; it is an eminent and prominent mercy. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The law of consequences*:—After a service in a place where the people had been a good deal bewildered by a young preacher, who accepted only so much of the Bible as suited his whims, and who was wont to make merry over the idea of future punishment, a man stepped up to me and said in a bantering voice: "Bishop, do you believe in hell?" I said, "Are you anxious to know what I think of hell?" "Yes," said he. "Well," said I, "the best answer I ever heard came from a poor negro woman. She had a young niece, who sorely tried the poor soul. The more she struggled to keep this wilful charge in the right way the more she seemed to wander. One day, after hearing a new preacher, the niece came bounding into the room and said: 'Aunty, I ain't gwine to believe in a hell no more. Ef dar is any hell, I jest wants to know where dey gets all de brimstone for dat place; dat's 'zactly what I would like to know.' The old woman fixed her eyes on her, and with a tear on her cheek, said: 'Ah, honey darlin', you look out you don't go dere, for you'll find dey takes dere own brimstone wid 'em.'" I then said, "Is there any other question in theology you would like to ask?" "No," said he. And he went home, I hope, with a new idea that sin brings sorrow, and that to be saved we need deliverance from sin. Some men carry "their own brimstone" even in this world. (*Bp. Whipple.*) *The end of sinful pleasures*:—Be assured, a serpent lurks at the bottom of guilt's sweetest pleasure. (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) **But glory and honour and peace to every man that worketh good.**—*Glory, honour and peace*:—This is the echo of verse 7. "Peace" is added in contrast to "anguish." He who is pursued by an antagonist with whom he cannot cope in strength, he who while thus pursued, finds himself shut in within some strait place, either on land or sea, can have no repose of spirit. But in heaven there are no foes to pursue, and no straits into which to be pursued. "Honour and glory" shall be enjoyed in uninterrupted peace. "On earth," says Chrysostom, "whatever good things a man has, he has with many troubles, even though he be rich and powerful, or even a king. Although, too, he may have no dissensions with others, he has them often with himself: there is war within his own thought. But in heaven all is reversed. There is calmness and freedom from trouble, and genuine peace." (*J. Morison, D.D.*) *The blessings God has in store*:—I. THEIR NATURE. 1. Glory. 2. Honour. 3. Peace. II. THEIR OBJECTS. Those who work good. III. THEIR IMPARTIALITY. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The glory of heaven*:—We know not, and never shall know until experience strips the bandages from our eyes, what new methods of participation of the Divine nature, and new possibilities of intimacy and intercourse with Him may be ours when the veils of flesh and sense and time have all dropped away. New windows may be opened in our spirits, from which we shall perceive new aspects of the Divine character. New doors may be opened in our souls, from out of which we may pass to touch parts of His nature, all impalpable and inconceivable to us now. And when all the veils of a dis-

cordant moral nature are taken away, and we are pure, then we shall see, then we shall draw nigh to God. The thing that chiefly separates man from God is man's sin. When that is removed, the centrifugal force which kept our tiny orb apart from the great central sun being withdrawn, we shall, as it were, fall into the brightness and be one, not losing our sense of individuality which would be to lose all the blessedness, but united with Him in a union far more intimate than earth can parallel. (*A. Maclaren.*) *The glory of heaven*:—The glory of heaven is such that it can never be fully known till it is fully enjoyed. And yet if heaven were ever made crystally transparent to you, if ever God opened you a window into it, and then the eyes of your faith to look in by that window, think what it is that you there discovered, what inaccessible light, what cherishing love, what daunting majesty, what infinite purity, what overloading joy, what insupportable and sinking glory, what rays and sparklings from crowns and sceptres; but more from the glances and smiles of God upon the heavenly host, who for ever warm and sun themselves in his presence; and when you have thought all this, then think once again that all your thoughts are but shadows and glimmerings, that these are dust and ashes in the eye of your faith that makes all these discoveries come infinitely short of the native glory of these things, and then you may guess, and somewhat near, what heaven is. (*Bp. Hopkins.*)

Ver. 11. **For there is no respect of persons with God.**—*God no respecter of persons*:—I. IT NEEDS BE SO, for God rules us all. II. It MAY WELL BE SO, for God is good to all. III. It OUGHT TO BE SO, for God has made all. IV. It MUST BE SO, for God is just to all. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *God no respecter of persons*:—Impartiality is one of the chief qualifications of a judge. Without it no amount of knowledge or ability can inspire confidence. Yet it is by no means a common quality. Even where a judge is truly conscientious, he is made partial by common prejudices, and by the law itself, which, in many instances, favours the rich above the poor. But God is strictly impartial, and the law affords shelter for no rich sinner, nor can any outlet be found for him who has broken it. And yet, there is an appearance of partiality. The good are the objects of God's peculiar regard. But such is no partiality. He favours the good because they are good. He, who is righteous Himself, could not favour the unrighteous without being implicated in their sin. But God's impartiality is seen by the fact that any one can become a participator in His goodness. This impartiality is shown in—I. THE COMMON DECLARATION OF SIN AFFIRMED OF ALL. On this the whole Word of God is uniform. Now, strong as the assertion here may seem, one moment's reflection will show its righteousness. With one consent men declare they have done wrong. Should one affirm that his life was perfect, he would be laughed at, so utterly at variance is it with the common experience of men. Here, then, is the impartiality of God. For His own honour it would seem that the faults of those who were His favourite servants should be concealed; but no, all is told. II. THE COMMON SAVIOUR PROVIDED FOR ALL. No man could save himself, because all had sinned. Then all must rely on this one great Mediator, who was to die for the sins of the whole world. The Jew, as a Jew, was not the object of His life and death, but the Jew, as a man, and the Gentile as a man. III. THE COMMON CONDITION REQUIRED OF ALL. It is usual in man-made religions so to frame the condition of salvation in favour of the rich and influential. But no such thing can be found in God's Word. All may be saved from the common evil by one way only. It tells all that they must submit themselves to God, and that submission is shown and obtained by repentance and faith. IV. THE COMMON REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS ADJUDGED TO ALL. This was beautifully taught by our Lord in the parable of Lazarus and Dives. God purposes that all should possess the blessings of eternal life, irrespective of their condition. The truly loving, faithful heart, wherever it may be found, shall be taken into Abraham's bosom; while the disobedient, the unbelieving, will be subject to eternal death. V. THE COMMON REVELATION GIVEN TO ALL. It is in one book, which may be read and understood by all who can read. In our own country, every man cannot be his own lawyer, and so at great cost has to employ a lawyer; hence, the rich can obtain the best advice and knowledge, while the poor cannot obtain counsel at all. Such is not the case with God's law. The book is given into our hands. (*H. W. Butcher.*) *God no respecter of persons*:—Whatever apparent varieties there may be in Divine dispensations, they do not affect the perfect rectitude of God's moral administration, and every one will be harmonised by the decisions of the judgment-day. It will be seen, then, that the judgment of God is according to truth, for

He will render to every man according to his deeds. A superficial inspection of His government often leads men to a different conclusion; and nothing is more natural than that the government of an infinite Being should present mysteries to finite minds, for it is an obvious impossibility that we should comprehend all the reasons by which an infinite Spirit is actuated; but until we can do so, we are not in a position to form a correct estimate of His proceedings. But whatever is mysterious to us, may yet be in strict accordance with the rectitude of the Divine character. "His ways are not as our ways, nor His thoughts as our thoughts." He treats men differently. There is an immense variety in His dealings with His creatures, so that the experience of no two men is exactly alike; yet whatever differences exist, they do not trespass on equity; His punishments never exceed the demands, and His mercy is never exercised without a sacred regard to the rights of justice. Let us examine—I. THE TESTIMONY OF SCRIPTURE; and we shall perceive more clearly wherein the Divine impartiality consists. 1. God hath not that respect for outward appearances which man has. In the selection of instruments to accomplish His purposes, He has respect solely to moral qualities. This is seen in the selection of David instead of Eliab. "The Lord looketh on the heart." 2. While there is great variety in His providential government, with regard to different nations, yet it arises not from partiality; and though the Jews had put this interpretation on the Divine conduct, they were taught by Paul that both Jew and Gentile would be recompensed according to their works. And Peter, having imbibed the prejudices of his nation, was taught to acknowledge that "God is no respecter of persons." 3. Rank, riches, honour, &c., do not affect the moral character of the Divine administration. The king and his subjects, the master and his servants, are treated on the same equitable principles. 4. We often form a too favourable estimate of those we love; our partiality conceals their defects, and magnifies their excellencies; but not so with God. 5. We cannot conceive of an infinitely perfect moral governor, and divest him of this impartiality. (1) To suppose Him destitute of it, would be to imagine some defect in His perfections. He is infinitely wise, so that He cannot possibly mistake the characters of men. He is "a God of knowledge; by Him actions are weighed." Partiality might be shown unwittingly, as when it arises from defective information; but intentional partiality must have a motive, and is ordinarily connected with a feeling of interest arising from the limitations and weakness of authority. But no such motive can operate with the Divine Being. The independence of Jehovah is a security for His impartiality. As He has no natural inducements to it, so partiality could only result from moral obliquity. But He has no tendency to depart from perfect uprightness; He naturally and necessarily esteems that which is good and excellent in itself, and dislikes that which is evil. "The righteous Lord loveth righteousness." (2) As His infinite perfections are a security for the impartial administration of His government, so the inspired writers have inferred it from the common relation in which He stands to all men. He is our Creator; and it may be fairly inferred, that those who stand in a common relation will be treated on common principles. As our universal Parent, He will display the parental character to all; and whatever diversities obtain in His administration, they are not violations, but different manifestations, of the strictest impartiality. Thus God will not regard the rich more than the poor, because He is the Maker of them all. II. ILLUSTRATIONS FROM THE GREAT FEATURES OF GOD'S GOVERNMENT OF THE WORLD. 1. His providential dispensations are, notwithstanding their great variety, impartial. (1) There is perfect equality in the principal facts of man's history; and all the varieties of providence are trifling when compared with the points in which men's experience agree. Men enter into life in the same state of helpless infancy; they are subject to similar diseases; and the characteristic joys of different periods of life are much the same in all countries. There is great sameness in the occupations of men; and while there are differences of rank and station, the advantages and disadvantages of each are so nicely poised, that it is difficult for us to say, when we contemplate the whole of our being, which is to be preferred. (2) Human life, in itself considered, presents no essential difference. It is preserved and sustained by means which have all the regularity of laws; and the actions of the body and mind are obviously essentially the same in all men. And while there is no important distinction in the physical or mental constitution of mankind, the external world stands in the same relation to all, quite irrespective of persons or character. The sun shines on the evil and the good; God sends His rain upon the just and upon the unjust. The same physical laws are in operation with regard to all men; and the natural results of conduct are experienced over the whole world. In all ordinary circumstances, "He

becometh poor that is slothful, and the hand of the diligent maketh rich." As the whole character of man's existence is strikingly similar, so in death there appears a similar equality. (3) God's experimental probation of His intelligent creatures is perfectly adapted to the infinite variety of mind and character. He governs them by one law, which, by its contractile and expansive force, is a perfect law of equity to every individual He has formed. "Unto whomsoever much is given, of him much will be required." There is nothing in God's law which respects only a portion of our race; it is of universal obligation, and of common concern to every individual. It is accompanied by the same rewards and punishments to all men. Its sanctions are of universal application, and constitute encouragements to obedience, and motives against transgressions. There is not one kind of reward for the rich and another for the poor. 2. The doctrine of the text is illustrated by the universal aspect of the gospel to all mankind. "God so loved the world," &c. 3. In the final decisions of the judgment day it will be seen that God is no respecter of persons. None will be exempted from judgment; they will all have to appear at the same tribunal, before the same Judge, and their judgment will proceed on the same principles of equity and truth. Conclusion. Let the doctrine of the text—1. Guard us against a rash and hasty judgment of any part of the Divine conduct. We see but small parts of an immense and combined system of operation, and are incompetent to decide upon the character of any one event without knowing vastly more than we do in the present state. 2. Guard us against presumption. Men cherish undefined notions of the goodness of God, that induce them to suppose He will not be strict to mark iniquity. Other men presume on their self-righteousness. Another class are hypocritical professors, who name the name of Christ, but depart not from iniquity. 3. Direct us to the only ground of hope and confidence towards God. There is no respect of persons with Him: nothing in our external condition or relations will induce Him to form a judgment of us contrary to truth. The universal condition of salvation is faith in Christ Jesus. (*S. Summers.*) *God no respecter of persons*:—Even those works of God, with which we seem the most familiar, are replete with mystery; much more is this true of the moral world, which the mind of God administers and directs. We see, *e.g.*, virtue prostrated with calamity, while ungodliness "prospers in the world." And yet we are told that "there is no respect of persons with God." How, then, are we to reconcile what we see, and feel, with what we read? In order to a complete view of the subject, I shall—I. ASSIGN THE REASONS WHY THERE IS APPARENTLY "RESPECT OF PERSONS" HERE. Now it is popularly, but mistakenly assumed, that differences of outward circumstances is an evidence of "respect of person"; because we are in every instance what God has made us, and have in every instance what He has given us; and He hath given to some pre-eminence over others in personal endowments, in worldly possessions, and in honour among mankind. For this, however, we may assign the following reasons—1. That such has been the order of nature, throughout all God's works, from the beginning. And not only has it been the order of nature that there should be degrees of beauty in the vegetable, and of strength in the animal world; that trees, *e.g.*, should be of different height, flowers of different hues, and fruits of different flavour, and that the irrational creatures should vary in the measure of instinct; but the same wise Creator ordained a difference also in the first living pair whom He was pleased to form in His own image. But from the first fatal act of disobedience, both were alike involved in the common transgression, and both are alike capable of realising the proper deliverance. Hence says St. Paul, "There is no difference between male and female." 2. That inequality among individuals conduces to the general good. And this connects itself with the former. Some men, indeed, raise the absurd and senseless cry of universal equality; forgetting that such a state of things could not possibly exist, unless all mankind were exactly equal in strength, and talent, actuated by the very same propensities, and in pursuit of the same objects. So long as there are some formed by natural endowments to lead, and others to follow, so long must there be some to exercise command, and others to render obedience. And could we balance the advantages of either state, we should find it very difficult to determine on which side the scale preponderates. David, the innocent youth, keeping his father's sheep, with not an enemy upon earth, and with God for his Friend in heaven, was assuredly not less happy than David, king of Israel. Again, what was the result of the attainment of royal dignity to Saul? The nation, indeed, required one to lead them against the Philistines; and for their sake, but not for his own, was Saul exalted out of the people; but for his own sin, not for theirs, were the weapons of his warfare broken. 3. That the worldly condition, whatever it be, is the trial of

faith, and the probation for eternity, best suited to him who occupies it. Some are born, as it might seem, to do—others to suffer—the will of God; but if action is more profitable to others, endurance is most assuredly not the least profitable to ourselves; and only towards that man could God be said to act with partiality, to whom He should deny the power of doing His will, and the opportunity of attaining to the perfect bliss of the righteous. But God has done this to none. Whether we are possessed of the one talent, or of the two, or of the ten, is comparatively of inferior moment; since a man is "accepted according to that he hath, and not according to that he hath not." Thus St. Paul "charges them that are rich in this world, that they do good, that they be rich in good works," &c.; but even if they attain to this, it is not a higher degree of attainment than to suffer patiently the will of God. Had Dives given half his goods, like Zaccheus, to the poor, we have no warrant whatever for supposing that this would have been more acceptable than the patient self-devotion of the beggar. Lazarus could not act, indeed, but he could suffer; he could not relieve the distress of others, but he could, and did, exhibit a shining example of long-suffering and patience. And thus every one placed in a humble sphere ought to consider whether that situation is not the best calculated to advance his highest and most enduring interests; whether if God were to bestow upon him worldly prosperity, his heart might not thereby become hardened, or his spiritual perceptions obscured. The fact of an eternal existence must be taken to be the true test of the interests of time. Hence, again, "there is no respect of persons with God," because He will judge all by what they have done, and by what they have suffered for Christ's sake; not by what they have enjoyed or possessed. II. AFFORD THE EVIDENCE WHY THERE IS REALLY "NO RESPECT OF PERSONS WITH GOD," BECAUSE THERE SHALL BE NONE HEREAFTER. And this evidence is also threefold. 1. Because the distinctions to which men attach so much importance are transient and precarious. Whatever difference there may be in the character of our path through life, there is none whatever in the nature of the end. One "house" is "appointed for all living"; and no sooner do we enter that common tenement than all are on the same level. And what is the undying soul? It is either rejoicing in God's manifested presence, or it is an outcast from the glories of redemption. Then, if not before, it will be seen that the fancied advantages on account of which we "call the proud happy," are far more than counterbalanced by the downward tendency of wealth. It may, indeed, cost an effort on the part of those who are daily struggling with privation to suppress the rising wish that they had been born to opulence, but never let them harbour for an instant the vain imagination that it is because they are of less estimation in the sight of God. They ought to consider that if they have not the advantages, neither have they the trials of the affluent; if they have not their means of doing good, neither have they their responsibilities for leaving good undone. Nay, they ought to consider that the very necessity of daily toil is a preservative against sin; and though necessities and distress may plant their path with thorns, they at least diminish the attractions of things below, and point the soul to things above. The "good part" is that "which cannot be taken away"; and while "the world passeth away, and the lust thereof, he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." 2. Because all, whatever they possess, are alike responsible to their Judge. "Every one of us," said St. Paul, "must give account of himself to God." To whom little is given, of him is little required, while "to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more"; and so it is with God. 3. Because, as to all there is a common Saviour, there must be a common salvation. All, therefore, who shall be convened before the tribunal of the Judge, whether those who reigned or those who served, those who smiled or those who suffered—all shall be separated into two classes, and only two. (*T. Dale, M.A.*) *The Divine impartiality*:—How is this possible, since all men are what God made them, and since no one thing can more differ from another than one person seems to differ from another? 1. As to the body, one is defective, and another well-formed; one is deprived of some of the senses, or hath them in low degree, another enjoys them all in their full vigour; one is weak and sickly, another healthy and strong; one hath length of days, another is cut off in the flower of youth. 2. As to circumstances; one is poor, and another rich; one unfortunate, another successful; one is doomed to obscurity, another is powerful and in high station. 3. As to temper; one is easily satisfied, and possesses serenity of mind; another is anxious or melancholy, and is plagued with forebodings. 4. As to the passions; they seem to be more impetuous in some, whilst others find them more compliant. 5. As to natural abilities; one hath a strong memory, a lively fancy, a good judgment, a fine taste, and a large capacity; another is

deficient in all these respects. 6. As to the external advantages, of country, situation, and education, upon which so much depends; one is placed in a land of liberty, learning, religion, and good manners, and wants no helps of enlarging the mind and improving the heart; another hath his hard lot in regions quite the reverse. To clear up the Divine impartiality from objections consider—I. WHAT IS RESPECT OF PERSONS, and distinguish between matters of favour and matters of justice. 1. Amongst men, gifts to which another person hath no claim, are free, and none can be accused as a respecter of persons who makes one rather than another the object of his kindness, if he is guided by prudence or by innocent affection. As in the choice of friends or servants, or in beneficence, we cannot keep company with, or employ, or assist every one, and we may prefer one deserving person to another equally deserving, without being respecters of persons. But in points of justice and matters of trust, whosoever favours the guilty hurts the innocent, or gives or refuses contrary to the eternal rules of right, such an one is a respecter of persons. 2. The same distinction holds true in relation to God's dealings with His creatures. His giving them more or less, His placing them here or there, is a matter of favour, and respect of persons hath nothing to do with it. But in His behaviour to His creatures consequent to their behaviour towards Him, in this He acts by the rules of justice, and in this His justice shall be so manifest as to clear Him from all imputations of partiality. 3. If you examine the Scripture where God is said to be no respecter of persons, you will find that it is as He is Ruler and Judge, and dispenser of rewards and punishments; and so with relation to men, when they are commanded not to respect persons, they also are considered, not as doing favours, but as exercising acts of authority and justice, in a public or private character. II. THE PRESENT DIVERSITY OF CONDITION AMONGST MEN IS SO UNCERTAIN AND VARIABLE, AND LASTS FOR SO VERY SHORT A SPACE, THAT IT BECOMES IN THIS VIEW FAR MORE INCONSIDERABLE THAN IS USUALLY IMAGINED. 1. Man is called into this world for a few years, and then to depart into eternity. One flourishes, and another struggles with adversity; and whilst we gaze with envy upon the one, and pity on the other, the scene closes, and the vision fades away. It is our future lot alone that can determine us happy or unhappy upon the whole. 2. Even the present condition of men is perpetually varying. All men, more or less, pass through the vicissitudes of what we call good and evil. 3. Even temporal happiness depends not so much upon externals. Many other circumstances are to be taken into account; and of two persons, of whom the one passes for happy, and the other for unhappy, perhaps the sum total of their pleasure and pain is nearly equal. 4. Natural evil, such as poverty, pain, and disappointments, is not always a real calamity, but rather discipline, tending to make the sufferer better, and to guide him to happiness. III. THE EVILS OF WHICH MEN COMPLAIN ARE OFTEN OF THEIR OWN PROCURING. Virtue has a natural connection with happiness. This connection is sometimes suspended and interrupted by accidental causes; but it holds good on the whole, and vice has the same connection with misery. If the evils to which men were obnoxious were traced up to their causes, we should find that the greater part of them are the consequences either of thoughtless folly or wickedness. Therefore these sufferings are not to be charged to the Divine administration. IV. THE IMPARTIALITY OF PROVIDENCE, WHATSOEVER DIFFICULTIES MAY ATTEND IT IN THE PRESENT STATE, WILL BE FULLY CLEARED UP IN THE NEXT; and we must wait with patience to that time for the fuller solution of some of our doubts. As to the temporals there is no reasonable objection to the Divine impartiality. It is the moral and religious difference between men that creates the main difficulty. One hath an opportunity of religious improvement, and is a good Christian; another is deprived of this advantage, by no fault of his own, but by having his hard lot in the dark regions of rudeness and of ignorance. In answer to this, the Scripture saith that God will judge the world in righteousness, and deal with every one according to his talents, and to the use which he hath made of them. 1. All men have it in their power to do what God requires. 2. All those who in the main act suitable to their abilities have a secret influence of God to help them so far as is needful. 3. All such have Christ for their Redeemer, though He never was revealed to them. 4. All those who have thus behaved themselves shall enjoy the beneficial effects of it hereafter, according to the extent of their desires and capacities, and shall have the means of making greater progress in goodness and happiness. 5. All they who by their own perverseness have abused the talents committed to them, shall suffer for it in such manner as the Supreme Wisdom shall judge expedient. Unto whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required; and unto whomsoever little is given, of him little shall be

required. This is the voice of reason, this is the express declaration of our Saviour. V. MEN, IN MANY RESPECTS, AND WITH A FEW EXCEPTIONS, ARE RATHER MORE UPON THE LEVEL THAN WE USUALLY IMAGINE. 1. All men have a mortal body, an immortal soul, the same senses, and much the same powers and faculties. 2. All have the same earth to feed them, the same sun and stars to shine upon them, the same air to breathe, and the same heavens to cover them. 3. All have the same ordinary means and methods to improve themselves, such as diligence, application, sobriety, civility; and all suffer by the contrary vices. 4. As they are reasonable creatures, they have the same great law of reason, or natural religion, to guide and instruct them. 5. As they stand equally in need of the Divine assistance, they all may secure it, if they behave themselves suitably to their situation and circumstances. 6. They are all subject to one supreme Governor, to whom they are answerable, not according to their rank or possessions, but according to their use or abuse of the Divine blessings. 7. Christianity, indeed, hath not been revealed to all; but this arises from other causes, and not from anything in its nature. It is plainly intended for universal use, and where revealed, it is for all classes and conditions. VI. GOD IS AND MUST NEEDS BE IMPARTIAL, FROM HIS OWN NATURE AND PERFECTIONS. 1. All partiality arises either from vice, weakness, or ignorance; consequently it can find no access to an all-perfect Being. 2. As God is almighty, self-existing, eternal, and independent, all His creatures are at the same infinite distance below Him. Compared with each other, they differ in a vast variety of degrees; but compared with Him, they bear no proportion at all. Therefore He must behold them all as they are created beings, with the same disposition. 3. As He is perfectly wise, He must treat them according to the laws of wisdom and justice. 4. As He is perfectly good, He considers them all as His offspring. He created them to do them good, and nothing can hinder Him from exerting this beneficence, except their undutiful behaviour. Conclusion: Let us imitate God in this perfection. It is indeed extremely difficult for man to be impartial, and therefore we must divest ourselves of those qualities which lead us to unfairness, such as pride, selfishness, party zeal, anger, envy, indolence of temper, capriciousness, &c. (*J. Jortin, D.D.*) *The Divine impartiality*:—This was a bold and startling declaration to make at Rome, to a community whether of Romans or of Jews; for these two nations were each, above all others at that moment, convinced that such a respect did actually exist in their special favour. The Roman deemed his own the favoured race, and regarded the extent of his dominion as a conclusive proof of it. The Jew, with no less complacency, maintained that the Divine preference of himself was intimated by the spiritual advantages he manifestly enjoyed, and the glorious hopes proclaimed to him. To require the Jew and the Roman each to surrender the assurance on which he relied, and admit the other to an equal footing in Divine favour, was indeed a bold undertaking. But between the Jew and the Roman there stood also the Greek, and the Epistle of St. Paul was addressed to the Greek equally with both the others; perhaps, indeed, to the Greek more directly than to either of them, inasmuch as the Grecian element in the early Roman Church was larger probably than either of the others. The Greek, too, had a pride of his own, a pride in his intellectual culture; and he looked down from his own point of view with equal scorn on both the Roman and the Jew. He, too, would despise, if he dared not resent, the apostolic declaration of a universal equality of the races. (*Dean Merivale.*) *No partiality with God*:—A little black girl, eight years old, was setting the table, when a boy in the room said to her, "Mollie, do you pray?" The suddenness of the question confused her a little, but she said, "Yes, every night." "Do you think God hears you?" the boy asked. She answered promptly, "I know He does." "But do you think," said he, trying to puzzle her, "that He hears your prayers as readily as those of white children?" For full three minutes the child kept on with her work; then she slowly said, "Master George, I pray into God's ears, and not His eyes. My voice is just like any other little girl's, and if I say what I ought to say, God does not stop to look at my skin." *No respect to person*:—M. Boudon, an eminent surgeon, was one day sent for by the Cardinal du Bois, Prime Minister of France, to perform a very serious operation upon him. The Cardinal, on seeing him enter the room, said to him, "You must not expect to treat me in the same rough manner as you treat your poor miserable wretches at your hospital of the Hôtel Dieu." "My lord," replied M. Boudon, with great dignity, "every one of those miserable wretches, as your Eminence is pleased to call them, is a Prime Minister in my eyes."

Ver. 12. **For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law:**

and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law.—*The law and sin* :—All sin—I. IMPLIES LAW. II. MUST BE MEASURED BY THE LAW UNDER WHICH IT IS COMMITTED. III. MUST BE VISITED ACCORDINGLY. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The responsibility of man* :—I. THE TEXT DIVIDES THE RACE INTO TWO CLASSES—those who have sinned without law and those who have sinned in the law. What is meant by law? Rule. Here, then, are some without and some within rule—the Gentiles not having and the Jews having a revealed rule. II. THE TEXT NEXT AFFIRMS A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF OBLIGATION CONNECTED WITH EACH DIVISION; for we cannot understand those who have sinned and shall consequently perish without law to mean a class to be judged without any standard whatever by which to try their guilt or innocence. As between man and man we insist, before judgment is passed upon us, on having the opportunity of knowing the rule by which we are to be judged. Before the statute law of this country is proclaimed no one is guilty of any violation of it, and of course it must be the same as between God and man; and so the passage before us would appear to direct our attention to law of some kind applying to each party, and therefore human responsibility appears to arise. III. HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY SEEMS TO ARISE FROM THE RELATION IN WHICH BOTH CLASSES STAND TO GOD. The law revealed to the Gentiles is the law of nature, that to the Jews is the law of the Word of God. Now if both are in substance the same, then we must admit that the responsibility resting on man in a state of nature is as decidedly proved as that resting on him when under revelation. 1. Nature discovers indications of kindness on the part of a fatherly Creator, and of brotherhood among the creatures. Everything is so constructed that all must harmonise to a certain extent with one another or perish together. Different countries have different climates and productions that there may be an intercommunity between the various regions, from all which we conclude that it is the duty and interest of this common family to connect their common wants, safety, and comforts, that they may rejoice together in the same grace of life. To infringe, therefore, this law of nature is to rebel against God, and consequently to incur responsibility for this rebellion. Can we look out on nature, and see what its Author meant, and then set that meaning at naught, and say that we will follow the bent of our own minds and passions, and then say that we feel no accusation of ourselves in our own hearts? We cannot. There is a sense of responsibility to God when we discover what God intends. 2. But to rise into a higher sphere. Are there not intimations in nature that we owe to God an acknowledgment of His being and a veneration for His character? Are there not, *e.g.*, feelings that indicate to us the duty of children to respect their parents? Well, surely we are as much bound to honour the Universal as the particular parent; and so we further establish the responsibility of man, which, when we come to Scripture, is confirmed beyond question. IV. BUT IT MAY BE SAID THAT, ADMITTING ALL THIS, THERE MAY BE AN INTERNAL INABILITY TO MEET THE RULE SO CLEARLY SEEN. The heathen may see that God is his Father, has kindness and authority, but he may feel within him an indisposition to act accordingly because he is corrupt, and the same may be said about a man who has God's Word in his hands. Does this, then, relieve from responsibility? Let the answer be derived from individual experience. For what is responsibility? That state which is created by a clear discovery of law to one who is a free agent. And what is inability? A man is physically unable to walk, *e.g.*, when he is chained to his prison, in which case he cannot be blamed for his inability, because it arises from another, not from himself, and this other has the responsibility for all the consequences of his bondage, *i.e.*, whenever the inability is external, and comes not from ourselves, the responsibility is not recognised. So morally, if a man is bound by another his responsibility is at an end. But where is the man whose moral faculty is bound by another? You can tie your neighbour's hand, but you cannot bind his will. You can work upon the outward, but you cannot touch the inner man. The moral inclination of man is his own, and can be restrained by none. Why, then, if man is thus free, does he not obey the law? Because he is corrupt, and acts according to his own nature; and is responsible because he so acts. He acts under no foreign influence, but according to the principles by which his own normal nature is moved. And so—to return to our text—those who have had no revelation will be tried by the illustrations of their duty which nature gives, and those who have by the illustrations of duty which it furnishes. And if they are found guilty it will be found to arise, not from inability, but from dislike; and let no man say because he dislikes God therefore he is unaccountable—a delusion which is in itself absurd and an encouragement to all wickedness. Conclusion: Let us acknowledge our responsibility. This will lead

us to ask for and to secure power to discharge it, and to find in its discharge peace of conscience in this life and an eternal reward in the life to come. (*J. Burnet.*) *Future of the heathen*:—A clergyman once travelling in a stage-coach was abruptly asked by one of the passengers if any of the heathen would go to heaven. "Sir," replied the clergyman, "I am not appointed Judge of the world, and consequently I cannot tell; but if ever you get to heaven you shall either find some of them there or a good reason why they are not there"—a reply well fitted to answer an impertinent question, dictated, at best, by an idle curiosity.

Ver. 13. **For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.**—*Hearers*:—What the apostle says about the Jews is equally applicable to many so-called Christians. Multitudes justify themselves by attendance on a gospel ministry; God only justifies those who practise what they hear. Our congregations are made up of—I. THOSE WHO HEAR—1. But do not understand. Often, doubtless, this is the preacher's fault, who fails because he is not clear or lacks the power to awaken the dormant intelligence; but it often arises from a want of spiritual perception of, or interest in, the truth by those who hear. 2. Or only admire, the object being in some cases the mere beauty of the truth itself, in others the grace of its setting and the charm of its delivery. 3. Or criticise, the object being the statement in some instances, the method or manner in others. II. THOSE WHO HEAR AND DO. Amongst such are those who are—1. Anxious to understand. They want to know in order that they may do. Hence they bring all their intellectual and spiritual powers to bear upon the message declared. Such seldom go away unsatisfied or become "unfruitful" hearers. 2. Believe the truth. While not insensible to its intrinsic beauty or to the grace of the form in which it is presented, they regard it as a solemn message from God having a direct bearing on life and destiny. They desire, therefore, not only to understand it, but to assimilate it and make it a power for action. 3. Who reduce the truth to practice. This is the true criterion of hearing which is acceptable to God. Many understand clearly enough, many thoroughly believe as far as intellectual conviction goes—how few "do"! Let this be a matter of self-examination to thoughtful and orthodox hearers! (vers. 17–23). III. THOSE WHO NEITHER HEAR NOR DO. One might almost say, Who do not because they do not hear, but for the fact that hearing is not the only source of knowledge. Conclusion: 1. Hearing is a great privilege. 2. As a privilege it involves responsibility. 3. For the manner in which we have heard we shall be called into judgment, and judged accordingly. (*J. W. Burn.*) *Hearing and doing*:—A consideration—I. FOR THOSE SEEKING SALVATION BY THE LAW. The whole law must be done, not simply heard. Who has, who can do it? Sin has so corrupted our moral nature that we are "without strength," and therefore so cannot obtain salvation. II. FOR THOSE SEEKING SALVATION THROUGH AN INFLUENTIAL GOSPEL. The principle of the text applies much more here. There is no salvation even by the gospel save by acting on its terms—"believe," "receive," "repent," &c. III. SUGGESTING THE VANITY OF AN EVANGELICAL PROFESSION WITHOUT AN EVANGELICAL LIFE. The gospel has its laws as well as Judaism. (*R. Glover.*) *Hearing without doing*:—It is a strange folly in multitudes of us to propound no end in the hearing of the gospel. The merchant sails, not only that he may sail, but for traffic, and traffics that he may be rich. The husbandman ploughs, not only to keep himself busy, but in order to sow, and sows that he may reap with advantage. And shall we do the most excellent and fruitful work fruitlessly?—hear only to hear, and look no further? This is indeed a great vanity and a great misery, to lose that labour which, duly used, would be of all others most gainful; and yet all our meetings are full of this! (*T. Leighton.*)

Vers. 14, 15. **For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these . . . are a law unto themselves.**—*Man without the Bible*:—"Law" means God's special revelation through the Bible. This contains the moral code of Moses, exhibited in prophetic teaching, inculcated in the instructions, illustrated in the life and death of Christ. It is here suggested that man without the Bible—I. HAS BIBLE MORALITY WRITTEN ON HIS SPIRITUAL NATURE. 1. "The law written in their hearts." The great cardinal principles of morality are in every man's soul, and the ethics of the Bible are but a transcript of them. Christ, who was the living exemplar of the moral code of the universe, reduced it to supreme love for the great Father of all and unselfish love for all His children; and in every heart these two elements are found—moral reasoning and conduct.

"Socrates speaks of the unwritten laws which were held in every country, and mentions as samples honour to parents and the prohibition of incest. He says that since these laws are universally held, and are evidently not the result of human legislation, they must have been made by the gods." Sophocles speaks of "the unwritted and indelible laws of the gods in the hearts of man," and Plutarch of "a law which is not outwardly written in books, but implanted in the heart of man." The moral Governor of the universe, then, has written in the constitution of all the subjects of His empire the eternal laws that should govern them. II. CAN PUT INTO PRACTICE IN HIS DAILY LIFE THE BIBLE MORALITY THAT IS WRITTEN ON HIS NATURE. "For when the Gentiles," &c., "are a law unto themselves." "Do by nature," *i.e.*, by the outworking of those moral elements within them"—not by written directions, but by moral intuitions. The bee that constructs her cells and lays up honey proves thereby the existence within her of architectural principles. She works out the laws which her Maker imprinted upon her constitution. Thus, heathens who have no Bible can work out the moral principles of their nature, and often do to an extent that may well out to blush the conduct of those who possess a written revelation. In estimating their responsibility it is well to remember both I. and II. They are rather the objects, therefore, of honest denunciation than of sentimental pity if they pursue an immoral or ungodly life. III. WILL BE INWARDLY HAPPY OR MISERABLE AS HE PUTS IN PRACTICE OR OTHERWISE THE BIBLE MORALITY WRITTEN ON HIS NATURE. "Their conscience also bearing witness," &c. 1. Psychologists supply different and conflicting definitions of conscience. Is it a distinct faculty of the soul, or its substratum—that in which all the faculties inhere? Whatever it is, it is that within us which concerns itself, not with the truth or falsehood of propositions or the expediency or inexpediency of actions, but with the right and wrong of conduct. If a heathen acts up to his ideas of right, it blesses him with peace; if he does not, it scourges him with anguish. 2. The "accusing" power of conscience was seen in the Pharisees who brought to Jesus the woman taken in adultery (John viii. 9); in Felix, when he trembled before Paul the prisoner; in Pilate, when he called for a basin of water to wash his hands. 3. Conscience can "excuse," *i.e.*, make righteous allowances; she vindicates as well as condemns. "Who can tell the sacred calm which fills the soul when Conscience, sitting on her great white throne, pronounces the sentence of approval of any one single act or thought, and assures the misunderstood, or misrepresented, or calumniated, or even self-doubting servant of God, 'Herein you are free from blame'?" Conclusion: Several things may be deduced from this subject. 1. The identity in authorship of human souls and Divine revelation. The grand rudimental subjects of the Bible are love, retribution, God; and these are written in ineffaceable characters on the tables of the human heart everywhere. 2. The impossibility of atheism ever being established in the world. The human soul is essentially theistic and religious. 3. The responsibility of man wherever he is found. 4. The duty of missionaries in propagating the gospel. Let those who go forth to the heathen not ignore the good in the human heart on all shores and under all suns, but let them—(1) Recognise it; (2) honour it; (3) appeal to it; and (4) develop it. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Gentile obedience to the law:*—They do (literally) "the things which are of the law," *i.e.*, which are agreeable to its prescriptions. They do not observe the precept as such, for they have it not, but they fulfil its contents; *e.g.*, Neoptolimus in Philoctetes, when he refuses to save Greece at the expense of a lie; or Antigone, when she does not hesitate to violate the temporary law of the city to fulfil the law of fraternal love; or Socrates, when he refuses to save his life by escaping from prison, in order to remain subject to the magistrates. Sophocles speaks of these "eternal laws," and contrasts this internal and Divine legislation with the ever-changing laws of man. (*Prof. Godet.*) *The natural feeling of right and wrong: its analysis:*—These verses reveal that feeling in three states or stages. 1. The unconscious stage, in which the Gentiles not having the law show its real though latent existence in their own hearts, of which—2. They have a faint though instinctive perception in the witness of conscience, which—3. Grows by reflection into distinct approval or disapproval of their own acts and those of others. (*Prof. Jowett.*) *Natural morality:*—1. It is a common impression that we are dependent for all our knowledge of moral duty upon the Bible, or at least that there are no motives to moral goodness worth speaking of apart from it. But just think what the latter means. It means that unless a man has faith in God, reverence for His authority, dread of His anger and desire of His approval, there is no strong motive to prevent him from being a liar and a villain.

The former lands us in still more startling results, viz., that a man who has not, or disbelieves in, the Bible cannot see that lying, &c., are bad things, and that truthfulness, &c., are good things, *i.e.*, that he can see no difference between vice and virtue. But you know that among your own acquaintances there are non-religious men who abhor lying, &c., as much as you do, and in the old heathen world there were illustrious examples of lofty virtue. 2. Christ has ennobled our conception of morality and brought new motives and aids to right-doing, but He always assumed that man had a knowledge of duty and recognised its authority. The gospel itself assumes this, for it is a declaration that God is willing to forgive sin; but it could have no meaning for men who did not know that they had done wrong. If the natural conscience were murdered, and men lost the distinction between right and wrong, the gospel would have nothing to take hold of. 3. Some say that religious faith is the foundation of morals: it would be nearer the truth to speak of morals as the foundation of religion; for the grounds of our trust in God are not His infinite power, which, if not governed by justice and goodness, would fill us with terror, nor His infinite knowledge, which might fill us with wonder but could not command affection and confidence—we trust and reverence Him because of His righteousness, truth, and love—his moral perfections, which we see are admirable in themselves. We cannot trust God until we know that He is trustworthy. 4. St. Paul believed that heathens not only knew many of their duties, but discharged them. The subject is not a speculative one merely. One great defect of the Evangelical revival was that it failed to afford its converts a lofty ideal of practical righteousness and a vigorous moral training, with the result that Evangelical Christians have the poorest conceptions of moral duty and the weakest moral strength. To remedy this defect we must think more about Christian ethics, which we cannot do to any good purpose unless we begin with St. Paul by recognising the power which belongs to man to distinguish between right and wrong. 5. This power is one of the noblest of our prerogatives, but it is forgotten that, like every other faculty, it needs training. Many suffer from colour-blindness, but experiments have proved that this arises, not from any disease or malformation of the eye, but from want of education; and it has been cured by teaching the colour alphabet. Skeins of wool of different colours have been displayed and their differences slowly learnt. Most of us learn this without systematic instruction, but drapers and milliners, who have to notice the finer gradations of tints, obtain the power of discriminating the difference between shades of blue and scarlet which seem to ordinary eyes alike. Their eyes are not better than ours, but they have been better taught. And so most of us, if we have lived among good people, learn without regular teaching to distinguish in a rough way between right and wrong. But if the conscience is to have a keen vision, and if its discrimination between right and wrong is to be unaffected by the cross-lights of interest and passion, it must be more perfectly trained, and surely it is worth it; and if you are careful to train your child's memory and voice, why not its conscience, which is infinitely more deserving of your care? 6. There is a bad way of teaching morals as there is of teaching arithmetic. In a bad school the rule is given and the child works his sum blindly, accepting the rule on the authority of the teacher. If his mind is sharp, he may puzzle out its reason; if not, he is left to mark it in the dark. So some people teach morality. They give the child God's rules of conduct, and happily the conscience may discover for itself their nobleness; but if it does, no thanks to the teacher. Having been told the rule, the child is warned that God will punish disobedience; but if from this motive only the rule is obeyed, it is not obedience, but servile superstition. The appeal to God's authority should only be occasional, or the moral sense will be disabled or checked in its growth by so tremendous a conception. When we follow a guide who never leaves us we are likely to take no notice of the path, and our knowledge of it will be no greater at the end than at the beginning. 7. For the education of the conscience we need teaching that is really moral, and not religious, that trains the mind to recognise for itself the obligation to do right because it is right. The vessel of human nature, when exposed to storms of temptation, needs more than one strong cable. Religious faith is the great security; but all the anchors are sometimes wanted, and we have no right to refuse the aid of such guarantees of safety as a genuine love of righteousness for its own sake, a deep hatred of wrong, a dread of moral shame. It is, however, alleged that apart from the Divine authority it is impossible to enforce the obligations of virtue. The objection is put in this form: "You say to a boy that he ought to tell the truth; suppose he asks, 'Why?' what can you answer except that God commands it?"

But suppose the boy asks, "Why should I do what God commands?" will you say that because if he does not he will be punished?—a very mean and sandy foundation for morals, for it is no man's duty to do anything simply because he will suffer for not doing it. A rule must be right in itself, or else it is a crime to punish men for disobeying it. If a child asks, "Why ought I to obey God or to tell the truth?" you must answer, "Because you *ought*." But neither question will be asked if we have done our duty by our children. If they have learnt from us who God is, if they have heard us speak of Him with reverence and trust and love, they will know that they ought to obey Him; and if we are truthful at the impulse of a hearty love and admiration for truth, and put in their way stories about heroic truthfulness, they will know for themselves that lying is wrong and shameful. 8. I have pleaded for the education of the conscience in the interest of morality; I also plead for it in the interest of religion. Why should I trust, obey, and worship God? Because I ought. And wherever that answer is not given by the human soul, no appeal to hope or fear or gratitude will be effective. Mere terror is not without its uses. It may break the strong cords of immoral habits and paralyse for a time the baser passions, and may so give the conscience which has been trampled under the brutal hoofs of insolent vice the chance of asserting its authority. But I believe that as a general rule the nobler power has been in alliance with the terror from the very first. However this may be, I do not believe that religious faith can have any secure hold of man except it is confederate with conscience; and a man who has learned to revere his minister is most likely to revere God Himself. (*R. W. Dale, LL.D.*) *The moral constitution of man*:—The question which the apostle was obliged to argue was largely the condition of the heathen world. He argues both sides of it; and in chap. i. that they were to be condemned on substantially moral grounds, and that yet they must be condemned in much less measure than the Jews—a peculiarly offensive turn to the argument, because the Jew held that he had a right to superiority before God, no matter how he lived. The fact that men were now Jews, though they might be virtuous and devout, was enough. The apostle, therefore, is obliged to go against this stupid bigotry: "It is not they that *hear* the law that are the safest, but they that *do* it." "Ah! but the Gentiles never had it, and of course they did not do it." "But," says Paul, "nevertheless, if they do those things under the light of nature which the law commands, that shall suffice. If you, with the law, sin, and they sin without it, they will stand, for that very reason, higher than you do." This question, historically considered, was local, but the apostle settles it upon a ground which makes it universal; for he here takes ground with the moral constitution of man—that man has in himself, not as a full revelation, but in a rudimentary form, an interpreting nature, by which he knows what is right and wrong, by which he accuses or excuses his conduct. He declares that men receive a revelation, not for the sake of creating a moral sense, but for the sake of guiding a moral sense already created; that religion is not a thing superinduced upon the moral constitution of man, but the right unfolding of that constitution. Let us follow this line out. 1. The essential truths of religion are natural, constitutional, organic. They were not first created when declared by inspired men. Mental philosophy does not create mind, and the law of conscience did not create conscience. All those great Bible truths which involve the nature of right and wrong, of inferiority and superiority, of submission, of obligation—all that goes to constitute what we call moral sense—has a foundation in the nature of things; and if man only had the wisdom to know what he was and how to unfold his moral constitution, every man would work from his own moral consciousness to substantially the same ground which is open to him in Scripture. So that, when I preach the gospel, particularly in its relations to duty and obligation, I feel strong, not only because I believe the Word of God, but because, tracing the Word back, I find it written again in you. Studying man as I do, and studying the Word of God, I find the two are respectively witnesses of each other, and both together are stronger than either alone; and all the way through the Word of God appeals to this consciousness of men to bear witness to its essential truth. 2. On the other hand, a right-minded man, if he had no revelation, but had power to keep his mind clear and sensitive and his conduct in harmony with his higher nature, would go up on to the plane of the gospel. Hence, the gospel is not a superaddition to nature. It is the opening of nature, the blossom of that which belongs to the race; nature being understood to mean, for the most part, that condition which God first intended. 3. From this fundamental view, it will appear right and wrong in human conduct, in the main, are not conventional, not things of mere custom.

There are a thousand things in life which may be changed, and which are different in different nations. But the great fundamental principles of right and wrong—truth, justice, purity, and love—these are the same in every age and everywhere. It makes no difference how much men may philosophise about them. A man may have any theory he pleases of digestion, but digestion does what it pleases. A man may believe that there is a brain in his head, or that there is nothing in it; but his belief makes no difference with the facts. And so with moral theories: they touch not moral facts in the least degree. 4. Men are not released from obligations to virtue and religion simply by keeping away from the church, &c. There are many who think that if they shut out disturbing truths they will have rest. No. The Word of God comes as your friend to help you, by giving you the state of facts; but if you throw the facts away, you simply throw the help away. A man lies sick, and sends for his physician. The physician prescribes such and such remedies, and forbids the use of such and such articles of food, &c., &c. But after the physician has gone the man says to his attendant, "Go, tell him not to come again—to keep his advice and his medicines away." And then he says, "There! I have dismissed my doctor." If you could only dismiss your disease as easily as you can your doctor, it would be all very well; but to dismiss your doctor and keep your disease is not wise. The fever is a fact, and does not depend on quarrelling schools of medicine. A man says, "The Churches are all by the ears, and I am going to take my own way. I will manage my case myself." You may in that way get rid of Churches and of a thousand disagreeable circumstances; but will any men get rid of that nature in which the law is written, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," &c., "and thy neighbour as thyself"? Go out, now, into the world to get gain, to be happy. Wind yourself up with the key of selfishness. Try to make your own powers serve you faithfully in harmony with each other. They are at a jangle with themselves. And you are not any better off because you have put the Church away from you; for the obligations rest not on the Church, but on you. Not they alone who have made a profession of religion are bound by its duties: they are binding upon every man. A man does not see any better for being in an oculist's establishment. The necessity or the desirableness of his seeing does not arise from the fact that he is there, but from the nature of things. And if a man has ophthalmia the necessities of his eye and the laws of sight are just the same as though he were under medical treatment and care. And yet there are people who seem to think that of course a man ought to do certain things because he is a member of the Church. No, the obligations came long before the Church could have imposed them upon him. You say, "I am not a member of the Church, and you ought not to expect that of me." But are you not born? Have you not that law of God written in you? I preach right, purity, holiness to you, because you are men. If you had never seen a Bible, these obligations would have rested on you by the very primal conditions of your creation. 5. There is an impression among many that freedom is gained by going out of the sphere of religious teaching into infidelity; and they laugh and say, "I used to feel guilty if I broke the Sabbath, but I do not now; I used to think that I ought to pray, but prayer is a superstition." And so men go on setting aside point after point of fundamental religious belief; and they think they are becoming more and more free, and they ridicule Christians, whom they think to be bound hand and foot. Now, I do not say that the Churches have the perfect view of religion; but I do affirm that the faith which is held by all Christians is in the main a guide and a light. You and another man are walking in a troublous path. There are precipices on the right and left, and deep morasses below. Your companion is walking with a little lantern, containing only a tallow candle, and, taking one step at a time, manages to pick his way, though with some difficulty. You, who are so bold as to venture without any light, say to him, "Your tallow candle makes a miserable pretence of giving light; of all absurd things, the greatest is the attempt to make one's way through the world with such a light as that"; and you knock it into the mud. It may be that the lantern could have been improved; but is it improved by darkness? Now the man has nothing to guide himself with. The light he had was feeble, but it was enough to guide him safely; and now he makes a misstep, and plunges headlong down the precipice and perishes. Suppose all is true that you say of Churches: after all, are they not better than nothing? Do not they attempt to take hold of those fundamental instincts which belong to men, and which must be cared for and satisfied? And do not they go a certain way toward satisfying them? And does not infidelity bring men into bondage and darkness

instead of into liberty and light? 6. By throwing off religious faith and the restraint of the Church men do not escape conviction of sin, nor a sense of guilt, nor unhappiness (chap. i. 20). If there were not a Church, nor a Bible, nor a teacher; if there were nothing but the sun and the stars and the rolling seasons; and if there were but a single man living, he would be without excuse; for God has made the heavens and the glimmering light of nature, and these are enough to hold a man responsible for his character and conduct. And then in the text he says, "When the Gentiles which have not the law," &c. There is no man of any degree of reflectiveness or sensibility who is not made unhappy in himself by the way in which he is living. In the excitement of a career of business, in the intoxication of pleasure, men drown their unhappiness; but the moment there comes a leisure moment there comes a time for thought. A man's reason looks over his life, and he says, "I have toiled fifty years, and I have built my house and furnished it, and I have a place among men; but, after all, what am I profited? If I might live again, would I live over the same life? Have I satisfied my early aspirations, realised my own ideal?" Or, if he looks more closely at himself, he says, "Am I selfish, or am I not? I have learned to wield the pen; I know how to paint; I can carve; I am able to build a house; I can handle the sword; I have power to manage anything in this world almost; but myself I cannot manage. My conscience jangles with my feelings; I am often carried away by temptation. Everything is wrong. There is nothing that I make such poor business in dealing with as myself." A man reads this, not out of the Bible, but out of his own soul. And if a man's faculties do not live in harmony, then his own thoughts accuse him, and his judgment judges him, and his moral sense brings him under condemnation. It is in such cases that the gospel way is shown to men; and though they may set aside the revelation of mercy, they cannot set aside this judgment that is perpetually going on in their consciences. 7. The gradation in condemnation is a matter for thought. Those who have been taught the truth, and who then sin, are condemned in the greatest measure. But let no man say, "I was born of ignorant parents, remote from instruction, and I cannot be condemned." According to your measure you will be condemned; but the lowest grade of condemnation will be more than you can bear. No one can afford to be sick. All the contrivances of nature have never made anybody attempt to be sick. You can make the body love odious things, you can modify the digestive powers, but no sort of treatment ever made sickness an agreeable thing. And by no means can a soul that is out of order be happy. There is a condemnation that rests upon it just so long as it is in that state. And now comes the declaration of the gospel, "Except a man be born again," &c. It rests not alone upon those that have been instructed, but upon everybody. 8. This moral constitution is not a mere thing of time. It is not an arrangement for a special occasion, nor for a transitory scene. The testimony of the Saviour and the New Testament all through is that right and wrong are eternal; that the moral constitution which divided men in this world divides them in the other. As on the one hand he that in this world loves, seeks, and so far as in him lies does the right, goes on for ever with increasing blessedness, so, on the other hand, he who in this world perverts his body and soul grows worse and worse; and the evil effects of his misspent life do not drop off from him when he dies, but go on with him. You are not sinful, then, because you have been preached to or because the Bible says so and so, but on account of the perversion of that nature which God gave you. But when an offer is made to you of pardon for the past, and God in His infinite mercy through Jesus Christ gives you a remedy for your sins thus far if you will forsake that which is evil, if you turn away from Him you are destroyed. Men are very much like lunatics in hospitals. All their wants are provided for, and yet they set fire to the institution and burn it up. They are not made well by this deed. It is simply a part of their insanity to do it. (*H. W. Beecher.*)

Ver. 15. **Which show the work of the law written in their hearts.**—*The work of the law written in the heart:*—"I know and approve the better, and yet follow the worse," said one of the wisest heathens; yet it did not require any superlative wisdom to arrive at that conclusion. Dr. Livingstone tells us that he found the rudest tribes of Africa ready to admit that they were sinners. Indeed they hold almost everything to be sin which, as such, is forbidden by the Word of God. Nor is it possible to read his clear statement on that subject without arriving at this interesting and important conclusion, that the decalogue is but the copy of a much older law—that law which his Maker wrote on Adam's heart, and which, though

sadly defaced by the Fall, may still, like the inscription on a time-eaten, moss-grown stone, be traced on ours. See how guilt reddens in the blush, and consciousness of sin betrays itself in the downcast look of childhood. Even when they wallow in sin as swine in the mire, there is a conscience within men which convicts of guilt and warns of judgment. Dethroned, but not exiled, she still asserts her claims, and fights for her kingdom in the soul; and resuming her lofty seat, with no more respect for sovereigns than beggars, she summons them to the bar, and thunders on their heads. Felix trembles; Herod turns pale, dreading in Christ the apparition of the Baptist; while Cain, fleeing from his brother's grave, wanders away conscience-stricken into the gloomy depths of the solitudes of the unpeopled world. Like the ghost of a murdered man, conscience haunts the house that was once her dwelling, making her ominous voice heard at times even by the most hardened in iniquity. In her the rudest savage carries a God within him, who warns the guilty, and echoes those words of Scripture, "Depart from evil and do good." (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) *The law written and rewritten in the heart:*—The moral law is interwoven in man's moral constitution. Man was created in God's image (Gen. i. 27); so in knowledge and holiness (Col. iii. 10; Eph. iv. 24). The expression "written" is an allusion to the two tables of stone (Exod. xxxii. 15, 16), perhaps also to Roman laws written on brass. God's law is rewritten in the renewed heart (Jer. xxxi. 33; Heb. viii. 10). In creation it is written as a light to direct and convict; in regeneration it is rewritten as a power to govern and transform. In creation it is written so as to be known and felt; in regeneration it is rewritten so as to be known and loved. (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) **Their conscience also bearing witness.**—*The witness of conscience:*—At the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every matter be established. The three in regard to men are God, the Bible, conscience. The latter is—I. AN INWARD witness. Other witnesses are outside, and so may be set aside. One witness may be produced against another, or circumstances may destroy the testimony given, but it cannot be so with the witness within. A man may as soon fly from God or himself as from conscience. Now that which is thus within a man has the greatest influence upon him either for comfort or terror: so that we had better have all men and all devils for our enemies than our own conscience! II. A KNOWING AND INTELLIGENT witness. None can know what conscience knows but He who knows all things. Human witness are sometimes set aside on account of intellectual feebleness, but conscience penetrates into the secret windings of our hearts; and as—Its discernment is clear, so its judgment is generally true, and what it once knows it never forgets. III. An AUTHORISED AND CREDIBLE witness. Witnesses are sometimes disallowed on the ground of moral blemish; but conscience is the King's witness, so that he who heareth conscience, heareth God (Rom. ix. 1). IV. A FAITHFUL AND TRUE witness. It will not be bribed: like its Master it accepts of no man's person. It deals impartially with the monarch and the slave; and though it may sometimes speak amiss, yet never contrary to its judgment. V. A LOUD witness. The deaf shall hear the voice of conscience. Like the voice of God, it is terrible and full of majesty. Cain found it so. The cry of conscience was as loud as that of his brother's blood. Judas thought it so when he went and hanged himself. How loud does it sometimes speak on a sick-and dying bed! The law thunders, and conscience is but the echo of its voice. The law speaks by terrible things in righteousness, and conscience does the same. The law says, "The soul that sinneth it shall die"; and conscience says, "Thou art the man!" Many endeavour to drown it in riot, and the hurry of business, but their efforts will be ineffectual. When God bids it speak, it will speak to purpose; and those who would not hear the voice of parents, ministers, providences, or even of the Divine Word, yet shall hear the voice of conscience. VI. A SUFFICIENT witness. It will silence all pleas and excuses, put an end to all subterfuges and evasions, and leave a man self-judged and self-condemned, It is sufficient now; there is no refuting its testimony, or setting aside its verdict, and it will be so at the last day. VII. An ETERNAL witness. If all other witnesses were dead, conscience lives, and will hereafter bear its testimony unrestrained. Its language will be, "Son, remember"! (Prov. v. 12). Conclusion: 1. Let us take care of sinning against conscience. It is an enemy that no bolts nor bars can keep at a distance. The approbation of conscience, next to God's, is the greatest blessing this side of heaven. 2. Let us endeavour to keep conscience tender, then attend to its motions, and hearken to its remonstrances. Tenderness is its perfection. God takes notice of it (2 Chron. xxxiv. 27). 3. Above all, let us have our hearts purged from an evil conscience by the blood of Christ.

4. Let wicked men remember that if conscience be ever so silent now, it will be vociferous enough at the great day. As the spectre said to Brutus, "I will meet thee at Philippi," so conscience says, "I will meet thee at judgment-seat!" Good men, who at times suffer much from the lashes of their own consciences, learn the importance of having always "a conscience void of offence" (1 John iii. 21). (*B. Beddome, M.A.*) *Conscience*:—The apostle is explaining how the heathen, who had not the written law of God, were yet amenable to an unwritten law impressed on the hearts of all mankind. Their conscience is a witness for or against them. I. ITS NATURE AND OFFICE. 1. God has given man a written law as the supreme standard, whose object is to educate and confirm him in his duty to God and man. This law, however, is—(1) Of late communication. The Old Testament, given only gradually through centuries. The New Testament only when the world was already old. (2) Of only local extent. Before Moses there was none. In St. Paul's day it was known only to the Jews. In our day vast regions and even in our own country too many have no knowledge of it. If, then, there were only God's written law, the mass of men, in the past and still, would have no standard of right and wrong—their passions unchecked. Society would be impossible. 2. But the existence of a written moral law implies an already existing moral sense, or unwritten law. Without this our obedience to any law would want a moral character. It would be either mere training and discipline, or submission to force. There would be no sense of obligation to keep it, no choice of the will and heart in doing so. 3. An unwritten law of God, however, does exist. In every race there is an instinct which—(1) Condemns evil. The judgment day not only in the future. The great white throne, and He that sits on it, are in effect set up in every bosom. No deception is possible. No outward position screens us. (2) Vindicates the right. The answer of a good conscience is the support of the soul under any trial. Of old it sustained the saints in their fiery trials. Fidelity to principle still bears up many a one. It is the greatest solace in the retrospect of life. (3) Is given to receive and act up to the higher teachings of the written law. "By manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." Imposes on us the duty of learning all the bearings of our obligations. II. HINDRANCES TO ITS HEALTHFUL VIGOUR. 1. Ignorance. In savage life, obscured and limited in its range by circumstances. Imperfect conception of relative duties from the struggle for self-preservation. Now long reign of selfish passion. Violence and hereditary darkness. In criminal life amongst ourselves. The child of a thief, what can it know of right and wrong in some directions? 2. Perversion. Education colours our estimate of the character of acts in many cases. Pascal speaks of morality as varying with latitude and longitude. This is seen—(1) In religion. Inquisitors torturing and burning for the greater glory of God. Whitefield defending slavery. Paul thinking he honoured God by helping to stone St. Stephen. (2) In business. Conventional or trade morality. Men do in business what they would shrink from in private life. 3. The seared conscience. The religious faculty may be well-nigh extirpated by neglect; like eyes of cave insects and fishes. 4. The weak conscience. A failing that leans to virtue's side. Troubles itself and others by making a principle of what is really indifferent. The disputes in Paul's Epistles, new moons, eating flesh, Levitical laws, &c. So some object to matters of no moral moment. III. CHARACTERISTICS OF A HEALTHY CONSCIENCE. 1. It accepts and acts on principle, not its accidental illustration. It guards itself in great matters by fidelity in all. Its rule is, "He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much." 2. It is not content with profession, but carries its convictions into practice; not "go" and "went not." 3. It is always humble. Feeling its own weakness and constant need of strength. 4. It is manly. Will not yield to custom, favour, gain. 5. It bases its action on the law of Christ as the ideal of morality. 6. It keeps the example ever before it, and remembers its obligations to honour Him by loyal duty. Conclusion: One may strengthen and enlighten conscience. In any case it grows with the wider realisation of the breadth and sweep of God's law. In our own day it has widened its sphere. Needs still further quickening in each walk of life; especially in the vital matters of the soul. The deputy of the Almighty. Bring your soul before it. As it asks you, "Guilty, or not guilty?" answer. If guilty, repentance and a holy life, looking to the great salvation of Christ, will reverse the verdict. (*C. Geikie, D.D.*) *Conscience*:—I. ITS OFFICES. 1. It is an ever present, true and helpful friend. One who will not be afraid to speak plainly, and whose counsels will be to the point, and, as a rule, wise, kind, true, and good. 2. It is an ever observant and faithful witness—one out of

whose sight we can never get, who is diligent to record, careful to remember, and ultimately faithful to bear its testimony. 3. It is an impartial judge. It not only bears witness, but acquits or condemns. 4. In regard to the impenitent, it will be the righteous executioner fulfilling the behests of the Great Judge of all, and the punishment itself—the worm that never dies. II. THE SEASONS AT WHICH IT EXECUTES ITS SEVERAL OFFICES. 1. To an extent at all times—with more or less efficiency. 2. To a more powerful degree—(1) After some special act of sin. (2) Under some specially awakening sermon. (3) Under some severe affliction. (4) At the hour of death. III. THE CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH MAY FOR A TIME INTERFERE WITH ITS EFFICIENT ACTION. 1. It may be misinformed or ignorant. Conscience can only condemn a man for what he himself believes to be wrong. 2. It may be warped or swayed—(1) By prevalent customs and notions. (2) By a man's interest, passions, tastes. (3) It may be partially stifled and benumbed. Tampering with conscience will enfeeble its action. A watch-dog gave notice of danger to the inhabitants of a log hut; they were disturbed by his bark, and, annoyed, they silenced him—but only when too late. The Indians were upon them, their hut was burned, and their lives sacrificed. Conclusion: 1. Do not trifle with conscience. 2. Seek its enlightenment. 3. Remember that conscience after all is less rigid than the law of God (1 John iii. 20). 4. Let it lead you not only to tremble, but to the Cross. (*G. J. Adeney, M.A.*) *Conscience*:—We all know that the word comes from *con* and *scio*, but what does that *con* intend? Conscience is not merely what I know, but what I know with some other; for the prefix cannot be esteemed superfluous, or taken to imply merely that which I know with or to myself. That other knower whom the word implies is God. His law making itself known and felt in the heart; and the work of conscience is the bringing of the evil of our acts and thoughts as a lesser, to be tried and measured by this as a greater—the word growing out of and declaring that awful duplicity of our moral being which arises from the presence of God in the soul—our thoughts, by the standard which that presence implies, and as a result of a comparison with it, "accusing or excusing one another." (*Abp. Trench.*) *Conscience quickened by the Holy Spirit*:—The Holy Spirit is to the moral sense what the warm breath of spring is to the hidden seeds of things. This brings them out, this unfolds them into flower and fruit, this makes of a barren expanse a landscape of beauty, fertility, and gladness. (*T. Griffith.*) *Conscience: its power*:—This is—I. DISCRIMINATING. By it man—1. Discovers the reality of moral law. 2. Determines his character according to it. II. BINDING. Conscience—1. Tells us that we are under obligation to God's law. 2. Produces consciousness of obligation. III. JUDICIAL. 1. As a witness. 2. As a judge. Inferences: 1. The reality of conscience. 2. Its originality. 3. Its universality. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Conscience: susceptible of improvement and injury*:—I. It may be IMPROVED. 1. By use. 2. By reflecting on the moral character of our actions. 3. By obedience to its admonitions, or conscientious acting. 4. By meditating on characters of pre-eminent moral excellence. II. It may be INJURED. 1. By disuse. 2. By neglecting to reflect on the moral character of our actions. 3. By disobedience to its admonitions, or want of conscientiousness. 4. By frequent meditation on vicious characters and actions. "Vice seen too oft, familiar with its face, we first endure, then pity, then embrace." (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) *Conscience*:—Nothing has done so much to perplex men's speculations about conscience as certain fundamental mistakes respecting its proper nature and functions. 1. In the first place, conscience is not a law, but a faculty; not the decision pronounced in a particular case, but the faculty which pronounces the decision. 2. Again, this faculty is susceptible of instruction and improvement, like other faculties of the human mind; like the understanding, for example, or the taste. 3. There is also another important distinction to be made in respect to conscience. Its authority is sometimes said to be supreme and final. And so it is, in a certain sense; that is to say, it is supreme over every other kind of human motive and inducement; should a conflict arise, our sense of what is right ought to prevail, in all cases, over our sense of what is expedient or agreeable. But the authority of conscience is not final in such a sense as to forbid conscience itself from, if need be, reversing its own past decisions. I may appeal at any time from my conscience less instructed to my conscience more instructed, and under these circumstances what was right to me yesterday may become wrong to me to-day; and what is right to me to-day may become wrong to me to-morrow. 4. But if conscience itself is an improvable faculty, and if, in its legitimate action to-day, it can revise and reverse its own decisions of yesterday, the question naturally arises, Is there anything in conscience which is

fixed and absolute? I answer, Yes. The things which are fixed and absolute in conscience—that is to say, the things which are the same in all consciences, and the same in every conscience at all times—would seem to be these three. In the first place, all consciences make a distinction between actions as being right or wrong; secondly, the notion of right, as such, or of wrong, as such, is identical to all minds; and, thirdly, all concur in the feeling that they ought to do what they believe to be right. Each man's conscience is a special development of our common moral nature; and each man's duty in respect to it is, to take care that this special development shall be more and more complete, and more and more effective; in short, that he may have a better conscience to obey, and obey it more faithfully. 5. It remains to consider the means by which this twofold improvement in conscience and in conscientiousness may be promoted. The first condition is, a habit of attending to the moral aspects of things, and especially of our own dispositions and conduct; in one word, moral thoughtfulness. A second necessary condition of the moral progress required—of progress in both conscience and conscientiousness—is found in a determination to do right, cost what it may; in other words, to moral thoughtfulness we must add an invincible moral purpose. The progress insisted on in this discourse supposes another condition; namely, that we not only obey conscience, but obey it as an echo of the Divine will: in other words, to moral thoughtfulness and a moral purpose we must add a sense of the authority and sanctions of religion. One condition more. To make us more observant of conscience, and, at the same time, to make conscience what it ought to be, we must take our standard of righteousness from the New Testament. (*Jas. Walker.*) *The law of conscience* (with John viii. 9):—Like every other mental and moral power, conscience has its own distinct function. It is that faculty of our moral nature which perceives the right and wrong in our actions, accuses or excuses, and anticipates their consequences under the righteous government of God. I. CONSCIENCE IS AN ORIGINAL LAW IN MAN'S MORAL NATURE. Being so, it is the same in all men, civilised and uncivilised. It cannot be educated any more than the eye can be taught to see, or the ear to hear. The only training a man can be given is in applying the law of conscience to the conduct, and in the art of subjecting the other powers of the soul to its authority. When conscience is spoken of as enlightened and unenlightened, there is applied to it what properly belongs to some of the other powers with which it is associated, particularly the understanding. Being intended for all classes the Scriptures are written not in metaphysical, but in popular language, and therefore, while it is proper to make such distinctions as those we have just indicated, we shall at present treat of conscience in the popular, that is in the Bible, sense. "Their own conscience" is an expression which suggests these two things, viz., that every man is endowed with this faculty, and that it is an essential part of his being, so really his own as to be inseparable from him, and indestructible. But conscience is not now in any man what it originally was. In consequence of sin, the moral law written at first on the fleshly tables of the heart had lost much of its clearness and certainty, like a scarcely legible inscription on a decaying gravestone. It had therefore to be deeply graven by the finger of God on tables of stone, and afterwards given in the imperishable Book, which could be read in every tongue throughout the habitable globe. But while conscience is not now in any one what it once was, and has in some reached its lowest possible degree of weakness, in different persons it may exist in different states. Paul speaks of some who had their conscience seared with a hot iron. As that part of the flesh becomes insensible to pain, so conscience, under the habit of sinning, comes to be so familiar with evil that its accusing voice is, if at all, but faintly heard. It is past feeling. Jude speaks of some ungodly men in his day as being twice dead, implying that their conscience had been once quickened, but that it had again sunk into its previous condition of torpor and paralysis, which was little different from death. Having been dead before, it was thus twice dead. The man whose conscience is in this condition will practise lying, dishonesty, intemperance, and uncleanness, without often thinking he is doing wrong, and without at all dreading the consequences of his wrong-doing. A more hopeful condition of conscience is that which is described as a pricking in the heart. This was how the first converts on the day of Pentecost were affected. A more appropriate phrase could not easily be found to portray the same moral change in any who undergo it. Piercing sorrow, sharp mental pain, is what it points to. Yet, distressing though it be, this is an interesting and hopeful state of mind. The thunder is not a more certain presage of a pure and settled atmosphere; the storm is not the more certain forerunner of a calm; the opening buds and genial breezes

of spring are not the surer signs of retreating winter than are those prickings of heart, the signs of a spiritual winter breaking-up in the soul, and of a spring of life and growth and beauty having come. Then there is also the peaceful conscience. True peace can come from only one source. When a man sees that Jesus Christ has by His obedience unto death borne the penalty of his sin, and when he accepts of God's forgiveness through Christ, his fears leave him, his conscience is pacified, hope springs up in his breast. He may now and again have his regrets and his fears, but as his knowledge of the Saviour and of His work with his own purity of heart and life increases, so does his peace become fuller and more settled. II. IT IS BY CONSCIENCE THAT CONVICTION OF SIN IS PRODUCED. There are no doubt other powers which co-operate with it to bring about this result. There is the understanding. Truth and duty must be known before they can be believed and practised. A man cannot rightly realise his sinfulness until he knows what God's law requires of him, nor believe the gospel, which is God's great revelation to us, before he knows what it means. Without a knowledge of its truths there cannot be faith, and without an increasing knowledge of its truths there cannot be much progress in goodness. There is also the will. The renewal of our moral nature presupposes as one of its conditions the subduing of the will, and the bringing of it into harmony with the will of God. There are, it is true, preliminary steps in this inward change, such as the enlightening of the mind with regard to sin and salvation, and the melting of the heart into penitence and contrition, but there is, besides, the bending of the will to choose and to follow the Divinely appointed way of deliverance. And, humanly speaking, it is here the greatest difficulty in the work of conversion is met with. The hardest of all struggles is to conquer a man's self-righteous pride, that he may humbly and thankfully accept eternal life as God's free gift to the undeserving who believe in His Son. III. IT IS BY THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL THAT CONSCIENCE IS AWAKENED. The teachings of science and philosophy are powerless here. Only the truth as it is in Jesus can work its way into the deep recesses of man's nature, stir into life its slumbering activities, meet all its wants, and satisfy its highest aspirations. No other truth can give us a fixed and unchanging standard of duty outside of ourselves and not subject to our variations, show us how far we come short of it, and set before us with certainty the fixed and indissoluble connection there is between cause and consequence in the moral universe. No other truth has the same self-evidencing power. (*Jas. Black, D.D.*) *Conscience: its uses and perversions*:—The world is under a solemn conomy of government, discerning, approving, or condemning. Now it was requisite there should be something in the soul to recognise this; a faculty to feel obligation to, and apprehension of a greater power. And that which makes a man feel so is a part of himself, so that the struggle against God becomes a struggle with man's own soul. Therefore conscience has been often denominated "the God in man." I. THIS INTERNAL JUDGE HAS NOT BEEN ALTOGETHER IN VAIN. 1. Many men have wished they could be rid of it, and in most it may be presumed, therefore, that conscience has had some restraining effect. Criminals would have been still more criminal but for this. It has been one dissentient power among man's faculties, as if among a company of gay revellers there should appear one dark and frowning intruder whom they could neither conciliate nor expel. It has struck on the soul, and said, "Listen to that!—that belongs to thee!" 2. It has often compelled confessions of great importance to truth and justice. Very generally, in the last scene of life, it has constrained even bad men to give testimony to religion and the guilt and wretchedness of trifling with it. 3. It has often been made effectual to urge men to a persevering application to Divine mercy, as acting through the mediation of Christ. The guilt is too deep for Divine justice to pardon. There must be some grand expedient as a medium of mercy, and here it is. 4. In good men it has been mighty in trial and temptation, consolatory under injustice, and a sublime energy under persecution. II. BUT THERE IS A DARKER SIDE OF THE SUBJECT, *i.e.*, the view of its perversions and frustration. 1. With by far the greatest number of men conscience has been separated from all true knowledge of God. Now God is both the essential authority of conscience and the model for its rectitude. What is its condition then where the one true God is lost from human knowledge? and instead, a tribe of deities whose characters exemplify all varieties of iniquity, dictating absurdities and abominations, blended, indeed, with some better things which are spoiled in such combination. Or (paganism being disclaimed), there is a falsified notion of God, and a perverted apprehension of His will. Think what an authority for conscience to acknowledge. What should it do

but correspond to its authorities? "He that killeth you shall think he doeth God service." A perpetrator in the St. Batholomew massacre said, "God was obliged to me that day." 2. Conscience has often been beguiled to admit trifling ceremonies as an expiation of great sins, when, had it been in its right state, it would have shaken the whole soul. 3. Conscience may suffer itself to be very much conformed to prevailing customs and notions. That which ought to ever look to the throne and law of God may be degraded to this most irreligious homage to man. So that the superior and eternal order of principles is nearly out of sight, as in some countries they rarely see the sun or the stars. (1) When, at moments, conscience does attempt to resume a little of the genuine spirit of its office, it is solicited to look out on the world and see whether the common estimates and practices do not warrant that which it is disposed to accuse. (2) The next consequence is that it will have little to take account of short of positive vices. Therefore it will begin with slight censures at a point where very grave ones are deserved. Supposing the whole of what the Divine law condemns to be measured by a scale of one hundred degrees of aggravation, then, the censure beginning at one, will become extremely severe by the time of rising to fifty. But let this first fifty be struck off as harmless in accommodation to the general notions, then conscience will but begin, and in slight terms, its censures at the fifty-first degree, and so, at the very top of the scale, will produce with but just that emphasis which was due at the point where it began. 4. Conscience is extremely liable to be accommodated to each man's own interests, passions, and tastes. What will he not do to reconcile it or make it submit to them? He will not part with them, and consequently has great advantages against his conscience. The favourite interest or inclination he sets in the fairest light; palliations of what is wrong in it multiply; it is far less culpable than many things in others which they think very venial, and there is such and such good to which it will turn to account. Now it is not strange if, by this time, his conscience has come to speak in a much more submissive voice. And, melancholy as the fact is, there are few things that gratify a corrupt mind more than to have gained a victory over conscience. 5. Conscience may, in a great degree, be turned to a judgment on bare external actions. Now conscience has a great advantage as a judge over outward observers. It is seated, with its lamp, down in the hidden world among the thoughts, motives, intentions, and wishes. The greater the grievance! but how to obviate it? Labour to think that what is practical is of far greater importance than feelings and thoughts. These are varying and transient; actions substantial and permanent. Inward principles within do injury to none; the right actions do much good. Thoughts and movements within are much involuntary; the outward conduct is the result of will and effort. Look so much on the best parts of conduct as to become emboldened to make the inference—"the case is not so wrong within as conscience had attempted to charge," for "by their fruits shall men be known." Thus, in a measure, may conscience be beguiled out of its inward watching place, to be content to look only at the outside. 6. When conscience is seriously alarmed, it may be quieted by delusive applications. "There will be time enough yet." Sometimes these alarms are frustrated by treacherous presumptions as to the way of propitiating the Divine Justice; men may reconcile God by repentance; satisfy His demands by a reformed conduct; secure final safety by a careful obedience instead of faith in Christ. This last is a deadly treachery practised on conscience; for it is quieting its alarms by inducing it to abjure that very law which is its appointed standard, and of which it is its very office to be the representative and sanction. 7. Conscience can be reduced to a state of habitual insensibility. This is attained by tampering and equivocating with it; by a careful avoidance of all that might alarm it; continual neglect of its admonitions; a determined resistance and repression; and habits of sin. The result of this will be a deep torpor and stupefaction. Think of the advantage of being able to look at others who are troubled by a wakeful, interfering conscience! But why does this dead stillness appear an awful situation? Because it will awake! and with an intensity of life and power proportioned to this long sleep, as if it had been growing gigantic during its slumber. It will awake! —probably in the last hours of life. But if not, in the other world there is something which will certainly awake it. III. THE RIGHT TREATMENT OF CONSCIENCE, 1. It should be regarded with deep respect—even its least intimations attended to, not slighted as scrupulous impertinencies, blown away, &c. 2. We should diligently aim at a true judgment of things, because our judgment is the rule by which conscience will proceed. There must be much reflection and retirement.

3. We shall recollect always that the most judicial conscience is less rigid and comprehensive than the Divine law. "If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart." Therefore in consulting conscience we should endeavour to realise to ourselves the Divine presence, and implore that our consciences may ever be in the Divine keeping rather than our own. 4. As we often speak of improvements in the Christian life be it remembered that one of them is an improvement in the discerning sensibility, and extent of jurisdiction of conscience. And if this involves an increase of solicitudes, pains, penitential emotions, so much the more desirable will appear that better world where there is no possibility of sin, where the continued improvement of spiritual perception will be a continually augmented exquisiteness of the felicity. (*John Foster.*)

Ver. 16. **In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men.**—*The future judgment:*—I. THE GRAND SUBJECT OF INQUIRY. "The secrets of men." A phrase to be understood in its utmost latitude, including not only matters known only to God and our own consciences, but also things which escape ourselves, or the nature of which may be undiscovered. The hypocrite, who either deceived others or deluded himself, shall then be laid open. And the good actions of the sincere Christian, uncharitably mistaken by the world, or unreasonably censured by his own conscience, shall be vindicated. The expression does not exclude public actions (Eccles. xii. 14), which are, in a sense, a secret as to their nature, motives and consequences. Our secret sufferings will also be judged; what we have endured, and in what spirit, whether with resignation toward God, and with gentleness towards men; all which is difficult to determine now. II. THE PERSON WHO WILL JUDGE THE SECRETS OF MEN. 1. God who alone—(1) Has a right to judge them; it is His law that is broken. (2) Can judge them; none other has power to assemble the living and the dead; wisdom, to know all the individuals and their actions, words, thoughts, &c.; holiness to hate sin; justice to pass an equitable sentence. 2. By Jesus Christ (John v. 22; Matt. xxviii. 18; Rev. i. 18; Matt. xvi. 27; xxv. 31; Acts x. 42; xvii. 31; 2 Thess. i. 7). (1) This appointment is reasonable, as a reward of His obedience and sufferings. If He reward us for ours, how much more is He, who was "made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death," worthy to be "crowned with glory and honour" (Phil. ii. 6–10). (2) This perfect honour is appropriate to Him. The powers of hell employed their force and fraud in opposing the kingdom of Christ, and it is fit He should pass sentence upon them (Rev. xvii. 13, 14). (3) With respect to His followers also, it is fit that He should acquit them, who bore their sins; that He should determine their happiness, who purchased heaven for them with its various mansions; that He should present them faultless, who preserved them from falling; that He should judge those who were under His government while on earth. (*Joseph Benson.*) *Coming judgment of the secrets of men:*—I. ON A CERTAIN DAY GOD WILL JUDGE MEN. 1. A judgment is going on daily. Every deed is recorded in the register of doom. (1) This session of the heavenly court is like the daily sessions of our local magistrates, and does not prevent but rather necessitates the holding of an ultimate great assize. (2) As each man passes into another world an immediate judgment is passed upon him; but this is only the foreshadowing of the final judgment. (3) There is a judgment also passing upon nations, for as nations will not exist as nations in another world, they have to be judged now, and history shows how sternly justice has dealt with empire after empire, when they have become corrupt. Where is Assyria, Babylon, Rome, &c.? The world is full of monuments of the mercy and justice of God: the very monuments of His justice being proofs of His goodness; for it is mercy to put an end to evil systems when, like a nightmare, they weigh heavily upon mankind. We have often laughed at the idea of the New Zealander sitting on the broken arch of London Bridge sketching the ruins of St. Paul's. But is it quite so ridiculous as it looks? What is there about London that it should be more enduring than Rome? If we rebel, God will not hold us guiltless. 2. Though such judgments proceed every day, yet there is to be a day in which more distinctly and finally God will judge men. We might have guessed this by the light of nature and of reason. Even heathen peoples have had a dim notion of a day of doom; but we are solemnly assured of it in Holy Scripture. (1) By judging is here meant all that concerns the proceedings of trial and award. (*a*) There will be a session of majesty, and the appearing of a great white throne, surrounded with pomp of angels and glorified beings. (*b*) Then a summons will be issued, bidding all men come to judgment. (*c*) Then the indictment will be read, and each one examined. (*d*) Then the books

shall be opened, and everything recorded there read. (*c*) Then the great Judge shall give the decision, pronounce sentence and execute it. (2) This will be so, and it ought to be so: God should judge the world, because He is the universal ruler and sovereign. (*a*) There has been a day for sinning, there ought to be a day for punishing. (*b*) It ought to be so for the sake of the righteous. The best have had the worst of it, and there ought to be a judgment to set these things right. Besides, the festering iniquities of each age cry out to God that He should deal with them. (3) Why doth it not come at once? And when will it come? It is idle and profane to guess at it, since even the Son of Man, as such, knoweth not the time. It is sufficient that it will surely come; sufficient also to believe that it is postponed. (*a*) To give space for repentance. (*b*) That the Church may be completed. The Lord keeps the scaffold standing till He hath built up the fabric. Not yet are all the redeemed with blood redeemed with power and brought forth into the holiness in which they walk with God. But do not deceive yourselves. The great day of His wrath cometh on apace, and days of reprieve are numbered. II. GOD WILL JUDGE THE SECRETS OF MEN. 1. By these are meant—(1) Those secret crimes which hide themselves away by their own infamy, which are too vile to be spoken of. (2) The hidden motives of every action; for a man may do that which is right from a wrong motive, and so the deed may be evil in the sight of God, though it seem right in the sight of men. Oh, think what it will be to have it proven that you were godly for the sake of gain, that you were generous out of ostentation, or for love of praise, &c. (3) The sensual desires and imaginings. (4) Secrets, that were secrets even to the sinners themselves, for there is sin in us which we have never yet discovered. 2. Why God should judge the secrets of men. Because—(1) There is really nothing secret from God; for all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. (2) Often the greatest of moral acts are done in secret. The brightest deeds that God delights in are those that are done by His servants when they have no motive but to please Him, and when they studiously avoid publicity. It were a pity that such deeds should be left out at the great audit. Thus, too, secret vices are also of the very blackest kind, and to exempt them were to let the worst of sinners go unpunished. (3) Besides, the secret things of men enter into the very essence of their actions. An action is, after all, good or bad very much according to its motive. So, if God did not judge the secret part of the action He would not judge righteously. (4) The secret thing is the best evidence of the man's condition. Many a man will not do in public that which would bring him shame. That which a man does when he thinks that he is entirely by himself is the best revelation of the man. III. GOD WILL JUDGE THE SECRETS OF MEN BY JESUS CHRIST. This will be—1. For the display of His glory. What a difference there will be then between the Babe of Bethlehem's manger and the King of kings and Lord of lords; between the weary man and full of woes, and He that shall then be girt with glory, sitting on a throne encircled with a rainbow! From the derision of men to the throne of the universal judgment, what an ascent! This, too, will finally settle the controversy about our Lord's Deity. 2. Because men have been under His mediatorial sway, and He is their King. We have been placed by an act of Divine clemency, not under the immediate government of an offended God, but under the reconciling rule of the Prince of Peace. 3. That there may never be a cavil raised concerning that judgment. Men shall not be able to say, We were judged by a superior being who did not know our weaknesses and temptations, and therefore judged us without a generous consideration of our condition. The Judge was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. He is our brother, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, partaker of our humanity, and therefore understands and knows what is in men. 4. This judgment by Christ puts beyond possibility all hope of any after-interposition. If the Saviour condemns, and such a Saviour, who can plead for us? If He that bled to save men at last comes to this conclusion, that there is no more to be done, but they must be driven from His presence, then farewell hope. 5. Does not this also show how certain the sentence will be? for this Christ of God is too much in earnest to play with men. If He says, "Come, ye blessed," He will not fail to bring them to their inheritance. If He be driven to say, "Depart, ye cursed," He will see it done, and into the everlasting punishment they must go. 6. It seems as if God in this intended to give a display of the unity of all His perfections. In Christ you behold justice and love, mercy and righteousness, combined in equal measure. He turns to the right, and says, "Come, ye blessed," and with the same lip, as He glances to the left, He says, "Depart, ye cursed." IV. ALL THIS IS ACCORDING TO THE GOSPEL.

There is nothing in the gospel contrary to this solemn teaching. Men gather to hear us preach of infinite mercy, and our task is joyful; but oh, remember that nothing in our message makes light of sin! There is grace for the man who quits his sin, but there is tribulation and wrath upon every man that doeth evil. The gospel is all tenderness to the repenting, but all terror to the obstinate offender. The background of the Cross is the judgment-seat of Christ. "According to my gospel," saith Paul; and he meant that the judgment is an essential part of the gospel creed, and in times of righteous indignation its terrible significance seems a very gospel to the pure in heart. I have read this and that concerning oppression, slavery, the treading down of the poor, and the shedding of blood, and I have rejoiced that there is a righteous Judge. Thousands of men have been hanged for much less crimes than those which now disgrace gentlemen whose names are on the lips of rank and beauty. Where this is not preached, I am bold to say the gospel is not preached. It is absolutely necessary to the preaching of the gospel that men be warned as to what will happen if they continue in their sins. Surgeon, you hope to heal the sick without their knowing it. You therefore flatter them; and they die! Your delicacy is cruelty; you are a murderer. Shall we keep men in a fool's paradise? Shall we lull them into soft slumbers from which they will awake in hell? (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The secrets of men disclosed and judged*:—Secrets of—I. CONDUCT. Those actions we concealed from friendship and from man, proclaimed on the housetop. How many secrets are now in progress in the world! Secrets of—1. Ambition, where the man is sacrificing all for it. 2. Covetousness; call them secrets of trade if you like, but there are many practices countenanced which cannot bear the light. How have you held back from the widow, and passed by the orphan? 3. Sensuality. In darkness, not to be named in public. Look in your closets; how have your consciences been contaminated. 4. Envy: I cannot go into your closets; but what has God seen there! II. CHARACTER. Character is formed by principle. Now this can only be known to Him who searches the heart. I know not the springs of your conduct, nor the principles on which your character is formed. Though Jesus says we may know the tree by the fruit, yet there is not always a faithful correspondence between principles and practice. How few seek only the glory of God. Self is a subtle principle. In private a man will blush at his own hypocrisy; and Satan, helping him, may make him a self-deceiver. But every motive will then start up! How many actions now under the garb of humility will then be seen to have originated in pride! How many blazoned deeds from self-love! How many actions, which seem under the motive of zeal to God, like those of Jehu, are prompted by interest! III. INATTENTION. A large portion of our actions are thought to be venial, trifling, &c. "For every idle word which men shall speak, they shall give account in the day of judgment." IV. INFLUENCE. We are members one of another. We are always, when in society, doing either good or harm. 1. Little do we know how many are they on whom we have in some way exerted an unhallowed influence. In that day the author of blasphemous works will answer for all the evil he has done. 2. At the same time, many secrets of prayer will then be found, many tears, &c. Conclusion: 1. This subject requires deep self-examination. What secrets will this night conceal! 2. What will be the effects of this judgment? (1) The shame of exposure. What would you not give here to avoid exposure? (2) Besides shame, the agony of remorse, the horror of despair. "Some shall awake to shame and everlasting contempt." (*J. Summerfield, A.M.*) *Judgment of our thoughts*:—1. Thoughts are amongst the secrets of men. They are what men cannot be sure of in each other. They are what men often seem to imagine that even God cannot behold. 2. Whence is it that the thoughts arise which will be called to account? "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts" (Matt. xv. 19). Out of the heart also it is that good thoughts, by God's good grace, spring up. 3. And this make it so needful for them to be judged hereafter. They prove what is the inward disposition of the soul, what there is of good or evil there. 4. But though it is easy to see why the thoughts must be judged; yet it is not easy to think as if they would be. How few think continually such thoughts as they would wish to have entirely laid open unto those amongst whom they live! How few such as are fit to be beholden by Him to whom all thoughts are open! How few that God will judge them! I. WHAT ARE THE THOUGHTS THAT WILL BE JUDGED. 1. Selfish thoughts. For what are the thoughts which God commands us to cherish towards each other? (see Matt. xix. 19; Rom. xii. 10; Phil. ii. 4). Consider how far are your thoughts guided by these rules? 2. Proud thoughts. The pattern set before a Christian is as follows: "Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart"

(Matt. xi. 29). The rule laid down for his thoughts of others is, "In lowliness of mind," &c. (Phil. ii. 3). How often is this rule violated; how seldom this pattern followed! There is, indeed, a great variety in rank, ability, &c., and it would be but a pretence to humility for a man to profess himself inferior in a point where he cannot help to know his own advantages. But whatsoever be his comparative advantages, let him fix his attention rather on his own actual defects—his sins, wasted opportunities—and he will scarcely think highly of himself. 3. Angry thoughts. These are closely connected with pride and selfishness. He that thinks highly of himself covets largely for himself, and must, therefore, often be disappointed and affronted. Thus spring up angry thoughts; and though neither unkind words or actions follow, the thoughts alone are sinful, and will be judged. The most secret thoughts Christ would have to be now gentle and charitable. 4. Impure thoughts (Matt. v. 27, 28). Let no one imagine himself innocent, merely because his conduct is respectable. The fear of shame, the lack of opportunity, may preserve the outward character, but they cannot secure the favourable judgment of Him who sees the heart to be sensual. Thus not only he who follows after strong drink in excess, but he also who fain would do so if he could is a drunkard in the sight of the Almighty. Thus in another sin, "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer" (1 John iii. 15). 5. Worldly thoughts. We learn that a Christian should set his "affections on things above" (Col. iii. 2), and not be anxious for this world's morrow (Matt. vi. 25–34). How, then, can they answer for it hereafter, whose whole minds are occupied with the business of the world they live in; with scarcely one reflection in the day on the world which they so soon must enter? Are not these things among those secrets of men which God will judge? II. WHAT SHOULD WE DO IN VIEW OF THIS? 1. Besides the times which you set apart for prayer, &c., you must endeavour to cherish thoughts of heaven in the midst of your attention to the business of earth. Say you are engaged in work. Why should you not relieve your toil by thinking of what awaits you when life shall end? 2. Set before yourselves your Christian calling. Keep in view the condemnation from which you have been delivered, and the dealings of Him who has delivered you (Phil. iv. 8). And think further of what God has yet in store for us in the world which now we see not. Let us more stedfastly believe that we shall dwell in heaven, and we shall think more frequently of dwelling there. Let us believe more firmly that Christ died for our sins, and we shall think of Him both more often and more thankfully. Then shall we less fear to have our secrets judged, when we have not a thought which is not beforehand submitted to our Judge, suggested by His Spirit, guided by His Word, or devoutly surrendered to His will. (*C. Girdlestone, M.A.*) *The secrets of the soul*:—I. WE LIVE IN A STRANGE SECRECY, EVEN HIDDEN FROM OUR MOST INTIMATE FRIENDS. 1. If any one of us were asked to relate his own life, he might relate two lives which would seem all but independent of each other. He might tell when he was born, where he had lived, what he had done, &c. He might anticipate the future, calculate what were his chances of success, and how he expected to end his days. Or, again, he might tell quite a different story. What he remembered of his own early character; what were his real affections; what did he secretly like, and pursue, and hope for; what changes had passed over him; what events had influenced the general current of his thoughts; what struggles he had been engaged in, and their issue. He might tell of the very beginnings, unknown to all save himself, of habits of sin never since quite shaken off; of deeds done in darkness; why some names, associations, memories make him uncomfortable without any visible reason; why he wishes, in his secret heart, some subjects to be forbidden, and is always conscious of an effort to seem indifferent when they are mentioned. 2. Now how different these two lives would often be! How events of the highest importance, and persons who play a large part in the one would disappear in the other! How strange it would be to see that a man who had succeeded in the eyes of his friends in a particular path had meanwhile been cherishing within him quite foreign thoughts and other longings! How strange to find that a fair character was only fair outwardly! Those who had been praised would, in many cases, win pity; and some few who now suffer from showing ill would be found to rank far above the level at which they had always been placed. Often the recital of a man's secret life would completely change our opinion of him. But still more often we should be astonished to see how these two lives seemed to run side by side almost without mingling. II. THE REVELATION WILL ONE DAY BE MADE, AND CHRIST WILL DECIDE, AND HE ALONE CAN DECIDE, ON THE EVIDENCE WHICH EACH WILL GIVE. 1. Neither tells the whole man. (1) The outer life only tells what we are

under all the influences of the eyes of others, which eyes call into use a completely different set of faculties and motives—the desire to be thought well of, to please, to win popularity or love, then begin to act. Our consciences, too, are strengthened in some ways by the sight of each other; and there are some duties which we see much more clearly. (2) On the other hand, the inner life tells what we are when quite left to ourselves, but no man is complete when alone. There is a large part of his nature which is made to fit into the society of his fellows; and if this part of him does not find its proper complement, the nature of the man is not all called out. Moreover, what goes on in our secret lives is, to a great extent, the very consequence of our believing that it will end where it begins. Many a man indulges passing thoughts, who would not put them into deeds even if tempted by the certainty of perpetual concealment. It would not be possible, therefore, to judge a man either by the secret life or by the public. But Christ will unveil them both, and we shall see and feel the justice of His decision. 2. Now we can see why God has thus shut up a large and important part of our lives in this absolute secrecy. God has made us to be members one of another; but He will not have us to be nothing but members one of another. Every soul shall have an individual life, with an individual history, and shall come at last to an individual judgment. God requires that each soul shall have a separate strength supplied by Himself alone. The Church is much. But the Church shall not be everything. You shall, if you are to call yourself a servant of Christ, give something which you and you alone can give, which you and you alone can know whether you give or not. From this responsibility you cannot escape. Another may ask you whether you have done it, but he must depend for his answer on what you tell him, and he cannot know whether your answer is the whole truth. God alone can tell that; and between yourself and God the secret must remain till the judgment-day. 3. God has hidden a part of our lives; and this concealment we can cast over much more than He has hidden. But again and again are we warned against it. It is the man whose deeds are evil that loves darkness rather than light. And what is the voice of God's Word is also the voice of natural feeling. The man who is fair outside and foul within is condemned of all men as a hypocrite. Men reserve all their strongest terms of reprobation for the dark, reserved, and secret sinner. Men refuse their love to the reserved and secret character. Nature and revelation both warn us against the danger we run if we pollute our inner and secret life with what we dare not tell. 4. In view of this awful coming judgment let us determine to force all our faults outwards. At whatever cost let us keep sacred to God that inner shrine which He has thus hidden with a secrecy of His own making. Let us avoid a secret sin with a hundred times more eager avoidance, just because it is secret. If we can be fair anywhere let it be in that which God has reserved for Himself, and where Christ is willing to dwell. (*Bp. Temple.*) **According to my gospel.**—*St. Paul and his gospel:*—It is impossible to tell what it cost Paul to write Chapter I. It is a shame even to speak of the things, but Paul felt that it was necessary to break through his shame, and to speak out concerning the hideous vices of the heathen. Monsters that revel in darkness must be dragged into the open, that they may be withered up by the light. After Paul has thus written in anguish he bethought himself of his chief comfort. He clings to the gospel with a greater tenacity than ever. Here he did not speak of it as "the gospel," but as "my gospel." He felt that he could not live in the midst of so depraved a people without holding the gospel with both hands, and grasping it as his very own. "My gospel." Not that Paul was the author of it, not that Paul had an exclusive monopoly of its blessings, but that he had so received it from Christ Himself, and so fully taken it into himself that he could not do less than call it "my gospel." In another place he speaks of "our gospel"; to show how believers identify themselves with the truth which they preach. 1. He had a definite form of truth, and he believed in it beyond all doubt; and therefore he spoke of it as "my gospel." Herein we hear the voice of faith, which seems to say, "Though others reject it, I am sure of it," "Should all the forms that men devise," &c. 2. Is not this word "my gospel" the voice of love? Does he not by this word embrace the gospel as the only love of his soul—for the sake of which he had suffered the loss of all things, and for the sake of which he was willing to proclaim, even in Cæsar's palace, the message from heaven? Though each word should cost him a life, he was willing to die a thousand deaths for the holy cause. 3. Does not this show his courage! As much as to say, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ." 4. There is a touch of discrimination about the expression. Paul perceives that there are other gospels, and he makes short work

with them. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The Pauline gospel*:—Twice in this epistle the apostle uses this remarkable expression; here and in chap. xvi. 25. Now, it would be obviously arrogant for any ordinary preacher to use such an expression. We dare not speak of it so as to imply that it has acquired some distinctive character from our way of putting it. But in Paul's case we may feel sure that this expression was not used presumptuously. 1. Not only was he a chosen apostle, but there was given to him such excellency of knowledge in the mystery of Christ, that it is impossible to see how Christianity could have become the religion of all men but for Paul. Peter may have been qualified to open the door of faith to the Gentiles, and may have struck the first blow at the middle wall of partition, but it was through Paul's preaching that this middle wall was broken down effectually and finally, and the last trace of the long inferiority of the Gentile to the Jew completely effaced. 2. Then, again, it is Paul who has shaped all our formal theology as such, and given the life of Christ in the soul that articulate form without which it would soon die away into a vague and bodiless sentiment. It is Paul who has opened up the types, and linked Old Testament and New together. 3. All philosophy and all history may be said to stream out of the teaching of this the greatest of the apostles, like those rivers which flowed out of Eden and parted into four heads. As for the philosophy of history, it may be said to take its rise from the Epistle to the Romans, in the same way as it has been said that history itself was born on the night of the Exodus. 4. I dare not make use of this expression. And yet I feel irresistibly attracted to use it, though in a much lower sense. My justification for preaching at all is, that there is a sense in which any true teacher has a message from God which may be said to be distinctively his own. Every man must be fully persuaded in *his own* mind, and then declare his own mind to others. (*J. B. Heard, M.A.*)

Vers. 17–29. **Behold, thou art called a Jew.**—*The Jews also without excuse*:—Hitherto the apostle, in seeking to shut up the Jew unto the faith of Christ, has contented himself with an enunciation of the equitable principles on which the final judgment shall proceed, simply affirming, of both rewards and punishments, that they shall be to the Jew first, but also to the Gentile. He now proceeds, in a direct appeal to the Jew, to indicate to him the folly of any hope of escape but in the free grace of God as revealed in the gospel. I. THE APPEAL IS MADE TO THE JEW AS TO THE PRACTICAL EFFECT OF THE RELIGION OF WHICH HE MADE HIS BOAST UPON HIS OWN CHARACTER AND CONDUCT. 1. Did it make him to become a wiser or better man? If not, of what avail could it be in the day of final account? "For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law," &c. (ver. 25). Circumcision therefore is not itself a saving rite, but the sign and seal of a salvation already secured by faith (chap. iv. 10, 11). But, if a man's life proclaims his profession of faith false, then the sign becomes a falsehood, and the seal a delusion and a snare. The sign is not the thing signified; nor does the thing signified of necessity wait upon the sign. The seal is not the treasure sealed; and neither is it produced by the magic influence of the sealing; nor does it of necessity remain so long as the seal remains. Marvellous it is that men should ever have imagined that God could be bound, by this mere external rite, to deliver men from the just punishment of their sins. How different the faith and reasoning of the great Father of the faithful! With him it was not a question of circumcision, but of righteousness (Gen. xviii. 24, 25). 2. But if an uncircumcised Gentile should practically meet the law's requirement he should be accounted as a circumcised person, and his conduct would condemn that of the unfaithful Jew (vers. 26, &c.). The inward and spiritual character of the religion required both by the Abrahamic covenant and the Mosaic law had been distinctly insisted upon by all the inspired writers, and the one ever-recurring complaint was that of Stephen, "Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye" (Acts vii. 51). By the testimony of Moses, and all the prophets, such circumcised ones were really and before God uncircumcised. But could an uncircumcised Gentile remaining uncircumcised, secure a position of grace equal to that which the disobedient Jew forfeited? By consenting to be circumcised he confessedly might. For that express provision had been made. But besides proselytes there were great numbers of Gentiles like the "devout" centurion (Luke vii. 1, &c.), and "devout" Cornelius, who were truly godly men and accepted of God, and whose circumcision was that of the heart (Acts x. 34). And why should the reference be restricted even to these? Surely there are men, even in purely heathen lands, who turn from sin seeking for redemption. And shall it be said that because they do not possess the

light of revelation, and cannot exercise an intelligent personal faith in the Saviour of men, they must therefore be cut off from all interest in His great redeeming work? But if men, under such disadvantages, should become circumcised in heart and accepted of God, their fulfilment of the law would indeed judge those who, with all the advantages of revelation, continued still to be transgressors of the law. II. OBJECTIONS TO THE CONCLUSIVENESS OF THE ARGUMENT ARE ANSWERED (chap. iii. 1, &c.). 1. If a Gentile, by keeping the law, might become, in the estimation of God, a Jew, while the Jew, through disobedience, might be reduced to the position of a sinful Gentile, then what profit could there be in circumcision? The advantage was much every way. First, indeed, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God. The question to be solved was not how could a man be assured of perfect immunity from punishment, but how could he be most effectually rescued from the love and the practice of sin? For this Gentilism had no aptitude or power, but rather the contrary; while Judaism had both. In its sacred oracles, the need, the grace, the way, and the sure promise of salvation were made abundantly plain; so that, if the Jew did not secure it, he was without excuse. Then it is demanded —2. If some of the Jews did not believe those sacred oracles, so as to secure possession of the promised salvation, would their unbelief invalidate the promise of God? Most surely not. For the fact that He had given the promise to believing and holy Israel could not be supposed to bind Him to insure salvation to every descendant of Abraham, whether believing and obedient or not. In respect to that, "Let God be true, and every man a liar." David (Psa. li. 4) would have vindicated God for excluding him from salvation, because of his sin; and he sought the restoration of the joy of that salvation only on the ground of the promise which free grace had made to the penitent. But now—3. "If our unrighteousness (who, being Jews, fail to manifest the faith and obedience of the covenant people) commend the righteousness of God," establish and make it more conspicuous, what shall we say? "Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance" upon us whose very iniquities have served to promote His glory? "(I speak as a man) God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world?" If He must needs exempt from punishment all who contribute to His glory, then none can possibly be condemned. For His real glory is that He deals impartially with men according to their true characters, and not according to accidental relationship; and if it were possible for Him to depart from this rule, then the glory would also depart. "For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto His glory, why am I yet to be judged as a sinner?" Clearly because I am a sinner. If otherwise, "why should we not say, as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we do say, Let us do evil that good may come?" To that Jesuitry which carried out to its logical results would justify any crime, the apostle deigns no other reply than that the damnation of its promulgators is just. III. AS TO ACTUAL MORAL AND RELIGIOUS CHARACTER, THE JEW MUST STAND SIDE BY SIDE WITH THE GENTILE, AS A SINNER, AND EXPOSED TO JUST CONDEMNATION (ver. 9, &c.) (*W. Tyson.*) *The advantages of the Jews* consisted in their—I. BEARING THE NAME OF JEW, which embraces three significations—confession, praise, and thanksgiving, by which that people was distinguished from all other nations. The Jew alone had been chosen as the confessor of God, while all the rest of the world abjured His service; he alone was appointed to celebrate His praises, while by others He was blasphemed; he alone was appointed to render thanksgiving to God for multiplied benefits received, while others were passed by. II. HAVING RECEIVED THE LAW. They had no occasion to study any other wisdom or philosophy (Deut. iv. 6). In this they "rested." 1. Labour was spared them of employing many years and great endeavours, and travelling to distant countries, as was the case with other nations in acquiring knowledge and certain rules of direction. 2. They had an entire confidence in the law as a heavenly and Divine rule which could not mislead them, while the Gentiles could have no reliance on their deceitful philosophy. III. HAVING THE TRUE GOD AS THEIR GOD, while the Gentiles having only false gods were "without God in the world." They had, therefore, great reason to glory in Him, and on this account David said, that in God was his strength and his refuge (Psa. xviii., lxii. 7, cxliv.). IV. KNOWING HIS WILL, and that not by a confused knowledge, such as the Gentiles had by the revelation of nature, but a distinct knowledge by the revelation of the word, which the Gentiles did not possess (Psa. cxlvii. 19, 20). V. DISCERNING WHAT IS EVIL. They knew the will of God, and consequently what was contrary to it, *i.e.*, what He condemns. VI. THEIR ABILITY TO TEACH AND GUIDE OTHERS. The law not only instructed the Jews for themselves, but also for others, and in this

they held that they enjoyed a great superiority over the other nations, who are here called blind, for with all the lights of their philosophy, laws, and arts, being without true religion, they had no true saving light. (*R. Haldane.*) *Jewish boasting:*—I. THE JEWS' GROUNDS OF DEPENDENCE. 1. Their covenant relation. The Jew expected salvation because he was a Jew. Denominationalism, rather than the living personal Christ, is too often made a ground of trust. They rested in the law as their confidence, and boasted that God was their God and they His people. 2. Their superior knowledge. Divine things had been specially revealed to them; on this ground they expected special favour of God. They forgot that superior knowledge often enhances the guilt of sin, and increases the certainty, necessity, and severity of punishment. It should make us first anxious to do right ourselves and then to lead others right. 3. The fact of circumcision. II. THE JUST PRINCIPLES OF DIVINE JUDGMENT. These are to be men's works or character, and the standard of judgment, the light we all severally enjoy. This is true both of Gentiles and Jews. The one will be judged precisely by the same principles as the other (vers. 28, 29). (*C. Higgins.*) *The need of spiritual religion:*—Paul now addresses the Jew direct. I. THE FALSE CONCEPTIONS OF THE JEWS. 1. The Jews were—(1) Overweeningly proud of their national name. To be entitled to the name of "Jew" was the highest of earthly honours. To be an Athenian, or a Roman, was a much inferior distinction. Nor without reason; yet they should not have carried it to so ridiculous an excess. Alas! how has the fine gold now become dim (Deut. xxviii. 37). (2) Boastful of their religious privileges, and vainly built upon them their confidence of final safety and present acceptance with God. He possessed the law, &c. With such distinguishing favours he gave himself wondrous airs of self-importance; and looked down upon Grecian sages and Roman legislators with contempt. As to the common people among the uncircumcised, they were mere dogs and swine. (3) Thought themselves at liberty to indulge in all manner of unrighteousness with impunity. As the special favourites of heaven, God would be tolerant of their vices, and readily sanction them in their evil propensities. What would be a damnable crime among the heathen would, in a Jew, be a small and venial offence scarcely needing forgiveness. 2. Accordingly, the apostle boldly assails their refuges of lies, and shows them that their transgressions were as abhorrent to God as the corresponding iniquities of the heathen. And here he establishes the principle, that circumcision was never meant to be a substitute for personal holiness, and can never be accepted as such, while uncircumcision will not place at a disadvantage any virtuous and well-meaning Gentile. And why? Because God regards the heart rather than the outward appearance. The sign of the covenant is of little worth unless the terms of the covenant have been apprehended and accepted by the inner man. "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly," &c. 3. All that is essential in this teaching belongs to us, as professedly a Christian people. We have the form of saving truth and knowledge as well as they; and we are in the same danger of resting in that form, and then making it an excuse for sin and a cloak to our unrighteousness. Baptism stands in the place of circumcision. Do we not need, then, to be taught that he is not a Christian who is one outwardly only (1 Pet. iii. 21). 4. This doctrine was, indeed, taught in the Old Testament, and the prophets severely rebuked their contemporaries for resting in the outward law, and thereby causing the name of Jehovah to be evil spoken of among the heathen, who, of course, judged of Him and His requirements by the conduct of His professing people (Deut. x. 16, xxx. 6; Ezek. xxxvi. 16–21, 25–27). II. THE INWARD, TRUE, AND SPIRITUAL RELIGION, on which the apostle so forcibly insists. 1. Its seat is in the heart. There is an outward form which is not to be despised; for wherever there is the power of godliness there will also be its appropriate expression, because a good tree must bring forth good fruit, and a pure fountain send forth pure streams. A piety which consists wholly of frames and feelings, and articles of belief, is a delusion and a snare. Yet, on the other hand, there may be an imitation of the form of godliness where its power is entirely absent. Sometimes there is a consciousness of hypocrisy, and a man puts on the livery of religion with the deliberate purpose of imposing on the world; but more frequently the error is the result of self-delusion. People observe the external proprieties of Christianity, while their hearts are utterly dark and dead. The difference between a formal Christian and a real one is that the one is an artificial tree, made of dead wood and wire, on whose branches oranges and apples are mechanically hung; while the other is a tree which bringeth forth his fruit in due season. The one is a painted fire, while the other is an altar on whose sacred hearth the flame truly

burns. 2. It is not ours by nature, but it is the gift of God. By nature we have no religion, but we can, even if left to ourselves, easily acquire one. That which is outward is within the compass of our natural powers; but that which is inward and spiritual is like the flames which licked up Elijah's altar, which only Jehovah could flash forth. It is not enough that you read the Bible, say your prayers, &c. Are you the subject of a direct Divine working, changing your inward character? Is your circumcision, your consecration to God, that of the heart, "in the spirit and not in the letter: whose praise is not of men but of God"? 3. Let us delineate it. Circumcision was the sign of the covenant with Israel. God pledged Himself to be their King and Father. They, on the other hand, were to be willing to obey and serve Him. Our consecration is to be substantially of the same order. Let us view it as relating to—(1) The will. As God's creatures, we ought to be subject to His will. Nor should this be a hardship when we reflect on His perfect wisdom, goodness, and righteousness. Yet, man is a self-willed creature. This tendency reveals itself in earliest childhood. And then, afterwards, when our thoughts are directed to a higher quarter, when we become aware of a God whom it is our duty to honour and obey, the guilty struggle is renewed. Or, perhaps, we try to put Him off with a half-hearted and pretended service. The necessity of religion and the triumph of grace is to subdue this mutinous spirit, and make us willing and ready to say, "Father, not my will, but Thine be done." Now, this subjection of the will to God shows itself in submission to His dealings with us, and obedience to His requirements of us. (2) The motives follow the will. It is true that the will is influenced by motives; but it is also true that the will has a prior power of choosing its own motives. Now, ordinarily, men are constrained by a love of money, pleasure, power, &c. The man of God may be the subject of the same tendencies and incentives so far as they are in themselves lawful and right; but then he will not yield himself up to them blindly or absolutely; he will subordinate the whole to the supreme principle of seeking first the Divine glory and being actuated by love to God (Cor. x. 31). (3) The affections participate in the effects of inward holiness. (*a*) Love is an acknowledged necessity of our existence. If carnally minded, our love will be impure, misleading, dangerous; but if spiritually minded, its great and all-satisfying object will be God Himself. (*b*) Closely allied to love is fear; for what we love we fear to lose. And if we love God we shall fear to offend or displease Him; and having that we need have no fear beside. (*c*) Where our love and fear centre thither will our desires ascend. (*d*) From this feeling will spring both trust and hope. We shall confide with unfaltering affiance in Him whom our soul loveth. We shall have boldness before His presence, and know that, as He liveth, we shall live also. We shall not be dismayed by the prospect of death, or tremble when we think of judgment. Conclusion: Such is spiritual religion, the "circumcision of the heart." It is produced within us by the Holy Ghost. The instrument is the Word of truth. And especially does He employ and apply to our hearts those doctrines which relate to the atoning sacrifice of Christ, to God's readiness to be a Father to us and acknowledge us as His children, and to the dread realities of the world to come. Let us again ask ourselves if we possess real, inward, and spiritual religion? If not, a mere form and profession will be found in vain. (*T. G. Horton.*) *The nominal Christian*:—I. WHAT HE BOASTS (vers. 17–20). II. WHAT HE DOES (vers. 21–24). III. WHAT IS THE RESULT. He is condemned—1. By his own principles. 2. By the upright heathen. 3. By the gospel law. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The professor*:—1. His exalted privileges. 2. His honourable calling. 3. His faithless conduct. (*Ibid.*) **And approvest the things that are more excellent.**—*Sensitiveness of moral sense*:—The phrase is explained by Alford as "provest (in the sense of sifting and coming to a conclusion on) things which differ"; and by Vaughan as—1. "Discernest things that differ; art able to discriminate, as by an infallible test, things true and false, right and wrong. 2. Approvest things that excel" (*cf.* Phil. i. 10; Rom. xii. 2). The boast, here, clearly refers to accuracy of judgment and to the sensitiveness of the moral sense. As the wild huntsman can hear a footfall at incredible distances; as the Indian of the prairie can track a trail, which to a dull-eyed European is invisible; as the connoisseur can distinguish the slightest shades of flavour in food and in wines of various vintages; as the artist can at a glance decide if a picture be that of a master or not; so the Jew boasted he could discern the good from the bad, the right from the wrong, and unloose all kind of casuistical knots of morality. (*C. Neil, M.A.*) **And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind.**—*Jewish treatment of Gentiles*:—Four terms set forth the moral treatment to which the Jew, as the

born physician of mankind, subjects his patients, the Gentiles, to their complete cure. "Thou art confident" describes his pretentious assurance. And, first, he takes the poor Gentile by the hand as one does "a blind man," offering to "guide" him; then he opens his eyes, dissipating his "darkness" by the "light" of revelation; then he "rears" him, as one who would bring up a being yet "without reason"; finally, when through all this care he has come to the stage of the "little child" (one who cannot speak—a designation of proselytes), he initiates him into the full knowledge of the truth, by becoming his "teacher." (*Prof. Godet.*) *Unsaved workers*:—Now, I should like to ask a question of two or three classes, and then send you home. There are a great many of us here to-night who are teachers of others. Some of you are deacons, elders, Sunday-school teachers, street-preachers. I thank God that you are a busy people, and you are doing much for Christ. There is a question I want to ask of you and of myself: Are we who teach others sure that we have believed in Christ ourselves? It is well to ask that question; it is a very dangerous thing indeed for an unsaved man to begin to work for Christ, for the probabilities are that he will take for granted what he ought diligently to have proved. In many cases he never will seek to be saved; but go on, on, on, never pausing to examine himself, and so, while professing to work for God, he may be a stranger to the work of God on himself. There is an old story I recollect reading somewhere of a lunatic in an asylum, who one day saw a very lean cook. Accosting him, he said, "Cook, do you make good food?" "Yes," said the cook. "Are you sure?" "Yes." "And does anybody get fat on it?" "Yes," again was the reply. "Then," said the man, "you had better mind what you are after, or else, when the governor comes round, he will put you in along with me, for if you make good food, and yet are so thin yourself, you must be mad, for you do not eat it, or else you would get fat too!" There is some sense in that. You teach others, you say; you give them spiritual food; but why not feed on it yourselves? Master, what right hast thou to teach if thou wilt not first learn? Physician, physician, heal thyself! Brother, it will go hard with you and with me, if we are lost. What will become of us teachers of others, if, after having led others to the river, we never drink; after bringing others the heavenly food, we perish of spiritual famine ourselves? (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) **An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes.**—*The Sunday-school teacher*:—I. HIS WORK AND OFFICE. "An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes." 1. In these words this is comprehensively described, both as respects the material upon which the teacher has to work, and the appliance which he brings to bear upon it. He has to deal with human nature in its ignorant and helpless condition: to make the naturally foolish "wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus." (1) "The foolish!" According to Scripture, the natural state of mankind is one of folly, and the way of sin the way of foolishness. And right reason agrees with this; for surely it is folly to neglect the great end of a man's being, and to come short of eternal happiness. Surely it is a gross infatuation to risk that precious jewel, the soul, in seeking to grasp the pomps of the world, or to grovel in the dust of its pollutions. And this foolishness, though not so exaggerated as in more advanced years, is incident to the years of childhood. It is "bound in the heart of a child"; "childhood and youth are vanity" (Prov. xxii. 15; Eccles. xi. 10). It is so in the very nature of things. Impressible for good as the mind of a child unquestionably is, and free as it is from the prejudices of riper age, still when left to itself it will invariably take the wrong direction, and by degrees develop its sinful tendencies. The soil of the heart, if it be not cultured for the good seed of the Divine word, will be speedily sown with evil principles, and bring forth an abundant measure of foolish and evil habits. (2) Thus "foolish," the young are mere "babes" as far as regards spiritual health and strength. This designation sufficiently expresses men's natural inability to recover themselves out of the way of folly, and advance in the true life of God (Jer. x. 23). And, if this is true of man in mature life, how much truer must it be of his childhood. But the Sunday-school teacher has to deal literally with babes, and needing as much care, in a moral point of view, as the very babe which hangs upon its mother's breast. They are the lambs of the flock, the young and tender, who stand in need of kind assistance, of gentle leading, of suitable provision. They are those of whom the good Shepherd spake (John xxi. 15). 2. The office must be of the last importance. It is to "train the little ones in the way they should go"; to "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." The Sunday-school is a nursery for heaven. It is true that it has afforded a means of education to many a poor child; but its grand object is to make scholars in the school of

Christ. This may be done now with greater ease than at any other time. The young plant may be trained to assume almost any shape, if bent and turned while it is yet flexible. To pre-occupy and cultivate the ground should be the aim of the Christian philanthropist: it will not long lie fallow; for Satan and his agents will be assiduous enough in their endeavours to plant it with tares. If we do not train the foolish and helpless for God, Satan will train them for himself (Deut. vi. 6, 7; Psa. lxxviii. 3-7; Eph. vi. 4; Prov. xxii. 6). II. THE SPIRIT IN WHICH HE SHOULD ENGAGE IN HIS WORK. 1. Sincere desire to promote the spiritual well-being of the children. What we want is to Christianise our people, and when is this so likely to be brought about as in youth? Do not think, then, that you have done enough when you have taught them to read the letter of the Bible: you must seek to imbue them with its spirit. But here an inquiry will naturally be suggested, are you competent for this, *i.e.*, are you a converted character, or only a professor. Here is your test. Thus, only as you are led by the Spirit of God are you fit to be "an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes." 2. Self-denial, patience, and perseverance. There will always be much to try and discourage you: the waywardness of some, the dulness of others, and the uncertainty of not a few. There is much call for gentle and cautious treatment: the variety of dispositions and capacities must be noted, and dealt with in various ways; and the difficulty of so doing will often occasion discouragement. Some require to be urged on, while others must rather be restrained (Gen. xxxiii. 13). You are sorely tried on account of the little impression which seems to be made upon your children; but little is manifest as the result of your teaching; do not despair, the seed often remains a long time in the soil before it begins to fructify: if you work in a proper spirit, "your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord" (Eccles. xi. 1). You cannot expect to do everything at once. 3. Unwavering dependence upon Divine aid. While on the one hand the inquiry may be made, "Who is sufficient for these things?" on the other hand, it may be confidently, though humbly, urged, "I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me." He whom we serve has all hearts and all things at His disposal: He can overturn or remove this or that obstacle, and make our way smooth before us, and so interpose as to leave us without excuse, if we grow weary or faint in our duty. Hence we must fervently pray for Divine enlightenment and teaching. We want wisdom as well as strength. And in seeking for the guidance of the Spirit, we are not to despise or pass by all proper human aids. We may the more confidently crave the teaching of the Spirit, when we have duly sought after available knowledge; for the Divine blessing is invariably given in the use of means. 4. A single eye to the Divine glory. When the Christian sets this before him as the end of his life, he will not regard ordinary difficulties. This will lead him to strive after the conversion of souls. III. THE ENCOURAGEMENTS. 1. The general assurance of success. Enough is said to encourage every labourer to prosecute his work with assiduity. And not a few instances might here be recorded of pleasing results. Not only have children been instructed and converted to God, but they have proved the means of instruction and conversion to their parents and others. How many who now occupy stations of eminence and usefulness owe their all, under God, to Sunday schools. 2. Personal benefit. In many cases the instructor has been savingly taught himself, while teaching others. And where he has been truly pious, when engaged in the work, the graces of the Christian's life have been called into exercise, and their growth promoted. 3. The final reward (Matt. xxv. 40). (*J. S. Broad, M.A.*) *Ineffectual opinions*:—Opinions may play upon the surface of a man's soul, like the moonbeams on the silver sea, without raising its temperature one degree or sending a single beam into its dark caverns. And that is the sort of Christianity that satisfies a great many of you, a Christianity of opinion, a Christianity of surface creed, a Christianity which at the best slightly modifies some of your outward actions, but leaves the whole inner man unchanged. (*A. Maclaren.*) **Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?**—*The teacher taught*:—In His conversation with Nicodemus our Saviour enunciated the principle to which all Christian usefulness must eventually be referred (John iii. 11). The model Pharisee asserted for himself the most edifying orthodoxy, flawless morality and eminent devotion; he claimed extraordinary keenness in discrimination, approving only what was excellent; he could inform the ignorant, illumine the darkened, give counsel to illumined adults, and help forward untaught children. Yet with all these assumptions the apostle seems to have discovered that which led him to rate such a creature as a mere spiritual quack. This man, so earnest against thieving, had a touch of dishonesty; so stern in pressing the penalties of the seventh

commandment, had some sins which would look ill under scrutiny. In a word, he was instructing others with no word for himself. And so St. Paul reiterates the grand principle of the gospel: religious instruction is to be indorsed by the living experience of the instructor. Consider:—I. THE GREAT COMMON NEED UNDER WHICH HUMANITY LIES. It has pleased God to make men instruments of good to each other. Hence the proclamation of the gospel is necessarily experimental. "Come all ye that fear God, and I will declare what He hath done for my soul." Naaman was just the person to tell lepers of the prophet who had bidden him go wash in the Jordan. Bartimeus was just the right one to lead blind men to Jesus, who had opened his eyes. Hence, it is perfectly natural that we demand of him who teaches that he should first have felt the truth he proffers. Otherwise he lays himself open to the taunt, "Physician, heal thyself!" II. THE AIM OF ALL RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION. The conscience must be reached, and through its monitions the entire life must be influenced, or else all teaching is wasted. Nothing is so mysterious as the forms of operation which this inner monitor chooses. Sometimes it seems to render a man harder and more violent; and yet at that very wildest moment he is nearer yielding than ever before. Sometimes it melts a man into deep emotion; and yet we painfully discover afterward that this has been mere ebullition of excited feeling. Now, we cannot grow skilful in distinguishing these external shows, without diligent study of our own experience. Conscience must be watched in its working within our hearts. "As in water, face answereth to face; so the heart of man to man." That truth is most effective which, having proved itself forceful in reaching our own consciences, goes from its success there upon the intrenchments of another. III. THE VARIETY OF FORMS EMPLOYED IN SCRIPTURE INSTRUCTION. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine," &c. But then, how much there is of it! and what room for skill in discriminating what doctrine, principle, or precept to apply in each given case. Now, many of our Sunday-school teachers are at a loss here. When the tossed vessel is drifting, and a passenger lies at the point of death, are there none who hurry to the Bible, as a sailor to the medicine-chest; and yet stand appalled at the formidable array of spiritual drugs, any one of which possibly might be helpful or hurtful, if only they could know which? How can we learn what phases of truth to present? Let the Scriptures be studied experimentally. Let the Christian teacher re-work every principle he offers to others, first into his own mind, and out-work it into his own life. IV. THE POWER OF A GODLY EXAMPLE. Men are imitative, and in nothing so much as religious observance. Moreover, they insist upon identifying a moral teacher with what he teaches. They will not suffer a limping man to propose an effective cure for lameness. Hence there can be no failure more ridiculous in the eyes of the world than that of a man who urges a truth and lives a lie. But, on the other hand, whenever fully possessed of the power of the gospel, and radiant with its light, a grand life goes about doing good, that life has a majestic driving force to it almost unlimited. V. THE LAW OF THE HOLY SPIRIT'S ACTION. Truth is propagated not by transmission through mere symbols, but by radiation through conductors in contact. The lens of a burning-glass will not only suffer the free passage of the sun's rays, but will concentrate them, until what they fall upon bursts into flame; meanwhile the lens itself will remain perfectly cool. Wonderful experiments of this sort have been performed with even a lens of ice, which kindled a fire and continued unmelted. You can find nothing, however, in religious matters to which this phenomenon would answer. The torch, not the burning-glass, is the emblem of spiritual life; it flames while it illumines, and is warmed as it sets on fire. He influences others most who has been nearest in contact with Christ. No religious teacher can give more than he gets. Conclusion: Whichever way we look, then, we reach the same conclusion. The heart lies behind the hand which proffers religious truth. 1. We learn here the proper use to make of the Scriptures. All religious instruction must be received experimentally. Thus the Bible becomes personal in every one of its utterances. How is it now (see Isa. xxix. 11, 12)? What renders the learned and the unlearned together so at fault is not want of education, but want of experience. It may be worth knowing, as a geographical fact, that there is no water in the Kidron valley save after a shower: it may be important to learn, as a historic fact, that Capernaum was located at Khan Minyeh; but this is not what is going to save souls. We must embody truth in life, and reduce vague information to vital and available help. 2. We learn to distinguish between *gift* and *grace*. Mere intellectual gift sometimes even hinders grace. "Christ," said Legh Richmond, "may be crucified between classics and mathematics." It is not our want of aptitudes for doing good

which stands in our way, half so much as it is our want of communion with God. The rule is, "Oh! taste and see that the Lord is good!" Out of this experimental acquaintance with truth grows our power fitly to offer it. Scholarship is only a means to an end. The gospel light is much like the solar light; its beauty is not its efficiency. You may divide the sunbeam into seven beautiful colours, and not one alone nor all together will imprint an image on a daguerreotype plate. Just outside the spectrum, in the dark, there is one entirely invisible ray, called the chemical ray, which does all the work. No man ever saw it, no man every felt it; and yet this it is which bleaches and blackens a dull surface into figures of loveliness and life. I care not how luminous a man's personal or intellectual qualities may be; if he lacks, amid the showy beams that are shining, this one which is viewless—this efficient but inconspicuous beam of spiritual experience—all his endeavours will surely prove inoperative for good. 3. We learn here the advantage of seasons of discipline. In all the round of God's dealing with His children, there is nothing like suffering as an educator. Anything that loosens the hold of the soul on earthly things, and shuts it up to God, is valuable; but, as a preparation for usefulness, is priceless. Any man expert in sea-life could have said all that the apostle said when he came forth to quiet the sailors in the midst of a shipwreck. The force of his counsel lay not so much in the prudence of what he suggested, as in the experience which was embodied in it—that "long abstinence" in which he had received his vision. One mysterious but remembered hour there was which gave his speech all its efficiency (Acts xvii. 22–25). It is just this which is the element of power in any counsel. The angel of experience is sent to one, and then he is ready to say, "I believe God!" 4. We learn the secret of all success, and the explanation of all failure. It would seem at first sight that truth is efficient in itself. But now we understand that first it must pass through the teacher's experience. When the plague was raging in Ireland, the priests gave out that if any man would take from his own fire a piece of burning peat and light his neighbour's fire with it, he would deliver the family from an attack of the disease. The whole region was instantly alive with brands passing to and fro. Oh! if superstition could do this much, ought not zeal to do more? But the kindling was to come from one's own hearth-stone then; and the kindling must come from one's own heart now. Calvin's seal-motto was a hand holding a heart on fire, with the legend, "I give thee all, I hold back nothing!" What we need is to have our entire level of Christian experience lifted. We are too busy about appliances and places and theories. 5. We learn the last essential of preparation for teaching. We must have the presence of the Holy Ghost. You see this most evidently in the case of Paul. They called him Paullus, because he was little. He had a distemper in his sight. His bodily presence was said to be weak, and his speech contemptible. But no man ever equalled him in power as a religious teacher. (*C. S. Robinson, D.D.*) *The teacher animated and urged to duty*:—I. Let us attempt to produce ANIMATION by an appeal to you as teachers of others. "Be not weary in well-doing"; implies that in well-doing we may be weary—though sinners are not often weary in ill-doing. 1. Fill your minds with the magnitude and importance of your work. (1) When you look upon your little charge, you are not merely to regard them as beauteous shells scattered on the shore of the ocean, but as each a pearl of incalculable value. When you are called to be "teachers of babes," you are not called to play with toys. (2) But, as an incalculable value is impressed upon them, so they are exposed to imminent danger. Though naturally depraved, this depravity is increased by indulgence, and rivetted by practice; and, if you interpose in time, you may rescue many. (3) Recollect that God calls the greater part of His people in early life. 2. Let me charge on your consciences your obligations to attend to the work. (1) Think that you are all now listening to Him who says, "Lovest thou Me?—feed My lambs." The Saviour takes a little child in His arms, and He says, "Suffer little children to come unto Me," &c. "He that receiveth one such little child in My name, receiveth Me." While others look at the Saviour, as He issues His command, and say, "Is this all? our imaginations are filled with something greater, we would be preachers, writers, missionaries, martyrs—anything but teachers of babes":—you say, "What! disdain to stoop to babes, when Christ takes the little ones up in His arms." (2) And while Christ thus aims to bind you by a sense of obligation, let me remind you what He has done for you. Has He not, as it were, washed your feet? and should you not wash the feet of His meanest disciples? 3. Recall to your grateful recollection the blessings with which God has crowned this work. "Train up a child in the way that he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."

Some may say that they have turned out ill who were brought up well; but we may say, "Be of good cheer; for I believe God that it shall be even as it was told me." Let us then look round, and see what blessings have attended the instruction of the rising race; and, while we look around, let us inquire, "What hath God wrought?" (1) Take this school and all the children who have been instructed in it—add to them all in the metropolis—in the kingdom—in the world. (2) And such being the numbers of those collected in Sabbath schools, think how many blessings have been carried into families. Consider how the first tidings of salvation have been thus conveyed. 4. Tremble at the thought of neglecting this work. Woe to us if Sunday schools should expire! We have waked up the world so completely that it will not soon go to sleep again. We have taught this generation that they must teach the next. We must go on: we have advanced too far to recede. The great enemy of man is at work to ruin the world, by the very same means which we employ to benefit the world. II. Attend to the EXPOSTULATION which is contained in the second part of the text, "Teachest thou not thyself?" I would expostulate with you. 1. With regard to over-enlisting. Sabbath schools are at once our glory and our shame. We should earnestly wish their extinction; it is a disgrace to us that they are needed. When the children of pious and instructed parents are sent to a Sunday school, it is a perversion of things. There should be a Sunday school in every house. There are but two exceptions to this—the first is where the parents are so ignorant that they need instruction themselves; the children of these you ought to take and instruct. The other is where the parents have small families, and can take their children with them to a Sunday school: thus they may instruct the children of the poor and their own children at the same time. No mortal living has a right to transfer the care of his children to others, while he can take care of them himself. 2. Against over-working. Over-doing is often undoing. All should be anxious to do as much as possible; but you must remember that the Lord's day was intended to be a day for the rest and edification of your own souls. Let there be no long singing, long prayers, long lessons. For the children's sakes, as well as for your own, avoid over-working. As long as you can keep the attention judiciously awake, you do good; but when you see the spirits flagging you may be certain very little will be done. 3. Beware of over-valuing. Nothing is more common than for persons to think highly of that in which they are engaged. 4. Beware of under-valuing. Do not suppose that because a man is wise to his own salvation he is therefore wise enough to teach others. (1) You should know much; you should have some time for study; and all your knowledge should be made subservient to your grand design. (2) And then there must be, also, the art of teaching. This must be acquired, or, with all your knowledge, you will not be wise to win souls. (3) There must be the art of ruling: if you have not the ability to hold sway over your own spirits, the children will soon perceive it, and will soon manage you. (*J. Bennett, D.D.*) *Teaching and example*:—He that giveth good precepts, and follows them by a bad example, is like a foolish man who should take great pains to kindle a fire, and, when it is kindled, throws cold water upon it to quench it. (*Abp. Secker.*) *Teaching and practice*:—The contradiction between the two is—1. Common. 2. Inexcusable. 3. Damnable. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The responsibility of the teacher*:—A misplaced switch or a wrong signal may send hundreds into eternity unprepared. *Truths best taught by life*:—In how quick a time a man can take round the hands of a watch when he has the key! But who can tell the hour from that? It is a different thing when slowly, moment by moment, the machinery within works them round so that every hour and every minute is marked correctly. So a man may run the whole round of Christian doctrines in speech, but it is not half so effective as when he lives and shows them forth day by day, and as events arise, in this difficult life of ours. *The teacher must make the truth part of his inner experience*:—I am afraid that very often the truth which we deliver from the pulpit—and doubtless it is much the same in your classes—is a thing which is extraneous and out of ourselves, like the staff which we hold in our hand but which is not a part of ourselves. We take doctrinal or practical truth as Gehazi did the staff, and we lay it upon the face of the child, but we ourselves do not agonise for its soul. We try this doctrine and that truth, this anecdote and the other illustration, this way of teaching a lesson and that manner of delivering an address; but so long as ever the truth which we deliver is a matter apart from ourselves and unconnected with our innermost being, so long it will have no more effect upon a dead soul than Elisha's staff had upon the dead child. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?—*Sacrilege*:—That the Jew of

Paul's time, and for generations long before, abhorred idols there can be no question. In the Babylonish captivity, the nation became so disgusted with idolatry that the hatred of it then engendered was left as a legacy to all time. But did the Jew at the same time commit sacrilege? To answer this question we must first clearly understand what we mean by sacrilege. 1. We may take the alternative reading, "Dost thou rob temples?" And then the inference would be that this hater of idolatry was none the less sometimes profiting by it, stealing the gifts of Pagans from their altars, and turning them to his own account; as we may suppose in our own time one who should inveigh fiercely against the liquor traffic, and derive a part of his income from the rental of a spirits vault. 2. Leaving this, however, and accepting the text as it stands, our idea of sacrilege is that of the profanation of sacred things. Uzziah, *e.g.*, assuming priestly functions, or Belshazzar using the sacred vessels in the orgies of a bacchanalian revel. To speak more generally, sacrilege is diverting from its Divine purpose anything that God has given us. The undue exaltation of sacred things may be sacrilege, and herein the Jew might commit idolatry in the spirit while he vehemently protested against it in the letter. A superstitious reverence for sacred things, such as, *e.g.*, the worship of the brazen serpent in Hezekiah's time. 3. Herein we think the integrity of the antithesis that runs through the questions from the 21st verse is sustained, "Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? . . . Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou—by thy foolish superstitions, by using and exalting some of thy sacred things in a way never intended by the Lord as well as in degrading them to common purposes—dost thou commit sacrilege, and so in spirit fall into that sin of idolatry against which thou criest out so loudly?" And now to turn this question to good account. Is it possible for us who have renounced idolatry to commit sacrilege in the sense of becoming idolaters in spirit, while in the letter we denounce it? I think it is—I. WE MAY COMMIT SACRILEGE WITH DIVINE ORDINANCES, with baptism and the Lord's Supper, *e.g.*, by investing them with a mechanical efficacy never intended by their Author. II. SELFISHNESS IS SACRILEGE, self-worship being one of the worst and most subtle forms idolatry can take. 1. "Know ye not, brethren, that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost, that you are not your own, but bought with a price," and, if this be so, what greater sacrilege or idolatry can any man commit than to use his God-given powers and faculties as if they were his own? Selfishness, self-worship, is a kind of sacrilege that brings with it its own most certain retribution. No leprosy may break out upon our persons as in the case of Uzziah; no handwriting may appear upon the wall as in the case of Belshazzar; but, none the less, the retribution will surely come. 2. Selfishness is sacrilege in relation to others as well as to ourselves, for what right have we to use our fellows for our own selfish ends and purposes? How dare we make capital out of other's weaknesses? Every man's person is sacred; he is an image of God. Wherefore let us honour all men, recognise the sacred uses and possibilities that are in them, lest losing reverence for the human we lose it also for the Divine. 3. Selfishness is sacrilege against God, too, for in His great house we are all of us vessels of gold, or of silver, of wood, or of stone, and if we use ourselves as for ourselves, forgetful of His sacred service, we are like servants that waste their master's goods, like priests who desecrate all sacred things, and abuse their solemn functions. III. THE LOVE OF OTHERS, where it leaves in the soul no room for love to God, IS SACRILEGE. We may degrade them, and so fall into this sin, but we may also so exalt them as to fall into the same. When we hear it said that a woman is "devoted" to her child, or that she "idolises" her husband, if we were to adhere to the letter we should say that this is sacrilege. We do not think upon the whole that we are in very much danger of loving our dear ones either unwisely or too well. We can love the Lord our God with all our hearts, and also yet love our husbands, our wives, our children, as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it. We are more likely on the whole, I think, to become sacrilegious by loving them too little than too much. Yet if it should be so with any of us that these relationships come between us and our God, then indeed do we commit sacrilege against them as certainly as against Him. IV. WORLDLINESS OF SPIRIT, the excessive love of this world's goods IS SACRILEGE and idolatry. If we are the devotees of fashion or of pleasure, if the shows of this world so engross us as to leave no time nor heart for the spiritual, then we are committing sacrilege. The most common gifts, the most earthly things are amongst the "all things" that work together for our good, but they work together for our harm when, instead of using them for God, we use them for mean

purposes. The silver and the gold are the Lord's, and we may be sacrilegious if we discern not this and use them not for Him. Whether we waste our money or hoard it, we are committing sacrilege with it, for money answereth all things, even the ends of grace as well as the means of ruin. Let us reverently handle even our money, using it as God Himself would have us use it, and so in things sacred or in things secular, it will be consecrated to Him in a true life service. V. THE LOVE OF NATURE TO THE EXCLUSION OF THE LOVE OF GOD, the worship of mere material forms, IS SACRILEGE. The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof; the heavens declare His glory, &c., and to see nothing beyond this state of things is to commit sacrilege. For these do as truly reveal Him as does the Bible. But just as we may be bibliolatrous, so there is a nature-worship which, while it seems to elevate, does but desecrate and degrade. (*J. W. Lance.*) *Sacrilege—i.e.*, temple robbery. I. THE JEWS WERE GUILTY OF IT. 1. In reference to heathen temples (Acts xix. 37). 2. In withholding or misappropriating tithes and offerings (Mal. iii. 8). 3. In not giving God the glory which is His due. They made the temple a den of thieves (Jer. vii. 11; Matt. xxi. 13), and were charged with offering the blind and lame for sacrifice (Mal. i. 8). Thus they abhorred false gods, but robbed and dishonoured the true God. II. WE MAY COMMIT SACRILEGE by—1. Withholding what is God's. 2. Appropriating to our own use what properly belongs to God in regard—(1) To property: a portion claimed for His service (Mal. iii. 10). (2) To time: the whole of the weekly Sabbath claimed as His own (Exod. xx. 8). It is sacrilege, therefore, to appropriate any part of it to business or pleasure (Isa. lviii. 13). Conclusion: 1. Sacrilege the climax denoting intense coveteousness. 2. Unrenewed men only substitute one idol for another. (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) **For the name of God is blasphemed among the heathen through you.**—*Nominal Christians, the occasion of blasphemy to the heathen:*—If the fifth commandment be "the first with promise," the third is the first with threatening. In no point is the Almighty so sensitive as the honour of His name. Hence His Son has taught us to pray, "Hallowed be Thy name." And in no sin is God more provoked than in that which brings dishonour upon His name. Hence this charge, which we shall illustrate—I. IN ITS APPLICATION TO ISRAEL. 1. It is essential to remember that Israel were God's chosen, peculiar, separate people, whom He had called forth in order that He might make them the lamp into which He would introduce the light of revelation for a lost world. To them He committed all the institutions of His holy worship, and all the laws of His Divine will. To the world at large, they were as Goshen in the midst of the land of Egypt in the plague of darkness. So that the whole earth borrowed what little light streaked its dark horizon from the solitary lamp lighted upon Zion; and just in proportion as that lamp cast forth its beams was the moral darkness relieved, and the Gentile nations came to the brightness of the hope that was in Zion. 2. We must remember, further, that for a lengthened period the people of God were not missionaries, sent abroad to communicate their prophecies, laws, and ordinances to the Gentile lands; but rather the people from afar, hearing the fame of what God had done for Israel, came up to Jerusalem to inquire and worship, even as the Ethiopian eunuch came. And many were the proselytes that were led to join themselves to the people of the God of Israel. But in process of time God lifted up His hand to scatter them among the nations, so that long ere their final dispersion at the destruction of Jerusalem, there was scarcely a known spot where some of the wanderers of Zion were not to be found. And how did they go? They went still as the people of God. And consequently the heathen could not but regard them with deep curiosity and attention, in order that they might trace in them the character of their faith. 3. And what was the consequence? When the heathen saw that their vices were dark as their own, whilst they were puffed up with pride, because of their privileges, then it came to pass that the name of God was blasphemed among the Gentiles through the people of God (Ezek. xxxvi. 19, &c.). And the apostles had to encounter no obstacle in the progress of the truth that was more fatal than the dark misconduct of the scattered Israelites. II. IN ITS APPLICATION TO OUR OWN FAVOURED LAND. 1. Englishmen undoubtedly stand nearest to the condition of the ancient people of God. If Israel stood in the relation of a covenant people to God, so do we. We are a baptized, as they were a circumcised, people; and if all their rebellion and inconsistency did not loose the bond of the covenant, but God spoke of them as His people, is it not so with ourselves? However deeply we may disgrace the name of Christians, that name is fastened upon us. He has taken

this nation into peculiar union with His truth and His faith; He has identified us with His cause. And have not other lands looked to us as their example, and sought us for light and holy knowledge? And then God has brought us into contact with all nations. As of old the Jews were everywhere intermingled, so has it come to pass with the English. But Israel was scattered by the sword; they were exiles and wanderers, despised and cruelly entreated. But our sons are abroad through the richness of the blessing of God given to their mother land; so that her merchants visit every shore, her travellers explore every waste, her mariners are on every sea and in every haven—and over the whole world an Englishman's name constitutes a passport. And everywhere, too, our land has a mighty influence, and an empire so vast, that the sun never sets upon its limits. One fourth of the whole family of the earth acknowledges the sway of our Queen, and the other three-fourths are more or less influenced, and mightily too, by our land. 2. What ought to have been the results of such unexampled influence? It ought to have been that wherever Briton's sons went they should have carried the blessed savour of Britain's truth; and wherever they planted their feet, they should be recognised at once as witnesses for Christ. Alas! the charge brought against Israel may with equal emphasis be brought against ourselves. "The name of God hath been blasphemed among the Gentiles" through us. What has been our colonisation but, to a terrific extent, an annihilation of the tribes whose lands we have usurped, and whose homes we have ravaged? Our missionaries, one and all, concur in telling us that the most fatal and formidable obstacle in the way of the reception of Christ's gospel among the Gentiles is the blasphemy occasioned to the name of our Redeemer by those who bear it but to defile it. And until this great stumbling-block be removed, the gradual progress of Divine truth must be retarded; that we could only have our mariners, merchantmen, travellers, and colonial settlers going forth as "living epistles, known and read of all" the heathen lands through which they pass, then indeed would there go forth from Britain's shore a voice which would come home to every heart—the voice of a godly life. 3. Then, if such be the application of this solemn charge against our own favoured land, it follows that there is not a more pressing or urgent claim upon Christian restitution, Christian justice as well as Christian sympathy and Christian zeal, than that every means should be used to redeem our title to the Christian name. (*Canon Stowell.*)

Inconsistency: its evil effects:—How many sinners every year are driven away from all thought of religion by the inconsistency of professors! And have you ever noticed how the world always delights to chronicle the inconsistency of a professor! I saw only yesterday an account in the paper of a wretch who had committed lust, and it was said that "he had a very sanctified appearance." Ay, I thought, that is the way the press always likes to speak: but I very much question whether there are many editors who know what a sanctified appearance means! at least they will have to look a long time among their own class before they find many that have any excess of sanctification. However, the reporter put it down that the man had "a sanctified appearance"; and of course it was intended as a fling against all those who make a profession of religion, by making others believe that this man was a professor too. And really the world has had some grave cause for it, for we have seen professing Christians in these days who are an utter disgrace to Christianity, and there are things done in the name of Jesus Christ which it would be a shame to do in the name of Beelzebub. There are things done, too, by those who are accounted members of the Church of our Lord Jesus, so shameful that, methinks, Pandemonium itself would scarcely own them. The world has had much cause to complain of the Church. O children of God be careful. The world has a lynx eye: it will see your faults, it will be impossible to hide them; and it will magnify your faults, making much of little, and of much a boundless mass. It will slander you if you have no open faults; give it, at least, no ground to work upon; "let your garments be always white"; walk in the fear of the Lord, and let this be your daily prayer, "Hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Inconsistency hinders the spread of Christianity:*—When Brainerd was among the American Indians, he stopped at a place where he offered to instruct them in Christianity. He was met by the retort, "Why should you desire the Indians to become Christians, seeing that the Christians are so much worse than the Indians? The Christians lie, steal, and drink worse than the Indians. They first taught the Indians to be drunk. They steal to so great a degree, that their rulers are obliged to hang them for it; and even that is not enough to deter others from the practice. We will not consent, therefore, to

become Christians, lest we should be as bad as they. We will live as our fathers lived, and go where our fathers are when we die." By no influence could he change their decision.

Vers. 25-29. **For circumcision verily profiteth if thou keep the law.**—*Circumcision in relation to baptism:*—I. ITS INSTITUTION (Gen. xvii. 9). It is called "the covenant," and "the token of the covenant," which God established with Abraham and his seed. So circumcision was not of man's invention, but of God's appointment. And baptism is not a ceremony introduced into the Church by the invention of man. Christ said, "Go and baptize all nations," &c. II. THE HISTORY OF THE ORDINANCE. 1. It commenced with adults (Gen. xvii. 23). We do not read about the state of mind of all these adults. It is certain that Ishmael differed exceedingly from Isaac and from his father. So baptism was first amongst adults. You remember the instance of Lydia. She having her heart opened, was afterwards baptized, and her house, without any specific mention of the character of the parties composing her household. 2. It continued not amongst adults, but on children (Gen. xxi. 4). And this became a custom in Israel. Korah, Dathan, and Abiram were as truly circumcised as Moses and Aaron; Jeroboam and Ahab as David or Hezekiah. And thus it came to pass, by the continuance of the outward ordinance, not waiting upon the individual character, but taking its rise on the eighth day of the child's age, there came to be an Israel in two senses—spiritual, inclusive of that chosen people that God reserved to Himself; and national, inclusive of the others, together with the mixed multitude which knew not God. And so the apostle tells us, "All are not Israel that are of Israel." Now the analogy here again is perfect. Baptism, which commenced with adults, soon proceeded among the children; the children of the baptized converts were themselves baptized. There is no especial commandment for the purpose. None was needed, because the earliest Christians, who were Jews, regarded their children as entitled to the same privileges as themselves. It would have been strange if Christianity, placing before them greater privileges in every other respect, had restricted them in this. They were in the habit of bringing their children as Jews; to do so as Christians, at the same age, was natural. But if instead of presenting them at eight days old, they were to keep them back till they had formed some judgment of their character, then, indeed, a special commandment would have been required, because they would have been called to change their already established practice. The same consequences would naturally follow which followed in the case of Israel. There would grow up a baptized community, a variety of characters. All would not be Christians which were of Christendom; as all were not Israelites, indeed, who were of Israel in the flesh. III. THE NATURE OF THE ORDINANCE AND THE ABUSE OF IT (Rom. iv. 11). 1. Here faith is distinguished from circumcision. It was enjoyed by Abraham previous to the circumcision; and he received the circumcision—a sign, and declared also to be a seal, to him of the righteousness of the faith which he had before. Nothing less than this could ever have been supposed to belong to circumcision by any believing Israelite. Remembering it was a seal to his father Abraham of the righteousness of faith, he would look upon it as a seal to himself in like manner, and would ask for it as a seal upon his child also, and would give thanks unto God that his infant might be sealed in like manner. He would presently find, indeed, that many have the seal who grow up without the faith. But would their falling off alter his view of the ordinance of God? No. He would be called to distinguish between the ordinance itself and the abuse of it, into which the nation had fallen; and he would endeavour, amidst all the degeneracy of the people around him, to rise into holy confidence that God would bless His own ordinance, and as he found that faith working within him, he would appeal to that ordinance as a proof of God's lovingkindness to him. Now here the analogy is the same. Baptism was, indeed, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which the first adult Christian had, being yet unbaptized. It does not follow that no persons were baptized except true believers. We know of one who was baptized, and the apostle told him that he had "neither part nor lot in the matter." But all who made a profession of faith were baptized. If the answer were the answer of a good conscience, then baptism was all that it was intended to be—a seal to them of the righteousness of the faith which God had given them. But afterwards, when the infants of those believing parents were baptized, it would presently appear that many were baptized in the flesh who lived without God in the world: and the faith of the believer would then be put to a

trial. Baptism has been abused, as circumcision was. 2. See, then, how circumcision was abused. It is the nature of the human heart to desire to escape punishment without desiring to avoid sin; and therefore the tendency of man always has been to substitute some form for real religion. The Jews boasted of being the children of Abraham, and placed their confidence in that for escape from punishment. There is nothing that the Scripture is more express against than this resting in outward privileges, as if they could give them safety with God (Matt. iii. 8, 9; John viii. 33, &c.; Acts vii. 51; Rom. ii. 28, 29). How awful is the analogy here. With regard to the outward forms of religion, there remains a large class of persons amongst ourselves who place the same sort of bold reliance upon the outward ordinance of baptism that the Jews placed upon their being the children of Abraham. Read from ver. 17 in its application to yourselves: most remarkable it is, by the transposition of a few words—changing "Jew" for "Christian" and changing "circumcision" for "baptism." Oh, be assured that while circumcision was a seal of the righteousness of Abraham's faith, the baptism which is of the heart is the purifying power of God. (*H. McNeill, D.D.*) *Religious forms:*—1. Are intended to promote holy living. 2. If this end be accomplished they are invaluable. 3. If not our very religion becomes irreligion. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) **For he is not a Jew that is one outwardly.**—*Outward and inward religion:*—I. MERELY OUTWARD RELIGION IS NO TRUE RELIGION AT ALL. 1. The apostle is proving that both Jews and Gentiles are all under sin. He has shown this respecting the Gentiles. He next comes to the Jew, and there is a harder task, for the Jew was so blinded, prejudiced, and self-righteous. There was nothing which the Jew more gloried in than in that of circumcision. God having, as they said, promised Abraham that, if his children transgressed, He would remember their compliance with this ordinance, and deliver them on account of the merit of circumcision. They accounted this one rite equal to the keeping of all the commandments of God. But in this they showed a lamentable ignorance of their own Scriptures (Deut. x. 16; Jer. ix. 25, iv. 4). Surely these are sufficiently plain as to the utter outward worthlessness of circumcision. So, with regard to the other rites, when the Jews would substitute them for true religion, then they became an object of aversion to God (Isa. i. 13, &c.). What is there in outward rites and practice which, of itself, can be acceptable to God, who is a Spirit. Worship offered to the Divine being must have some correspondence to His nature, and accordance with His will and Word. If God had a body, and were not a Spirit, then a religion of bodily exercise might serve without any regard to the inward state of the worshipper's mind and heart. But God has no corporeal form, and therefore bodily service, without spiritual worship, is no worship at all. If, again, God were a stock or a stone, then a religion which exercises neither the mind nor the spirit might satisfy His claim. But when God is a pure Mind, a great Spirit—when God is love, and claims all souls as His, then to attempt to put Him off with outward forms is an insult to His spiritual character and His holy majesty. 2. Are there none of you who have thought that, if you came to church once or twice a week, this alone proved that you were good Christians? And yet it might be that there was only a bodily attendance: your minds might have been at home, or with your business, or with the last pleasure. And so with baptism, which has taken the place of circumcision. The Scripture itself guards us against not resting in the mere outward form or outward rite (1 Pet. iii. 21). And yet many, if baptized with water, never examine themselves as to whether they have also been baptized with the Holy Spirit. And so the spirit of formality can turn even the Lord's Supper, which is meant to deepen penitence, and to call forth simple glory in the Cross of Christ, into self-righteous formality and a judaizing ceremony. II. THE ABSOLUTE NECESSITY OF AN INWARD WORK OF DIVINE GRACE. "For he is a Jew which is one inwardly," &c. 1. This may be learned from the Old Testament. Moses taught (Deut. xxx. 6) that true circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, a Divine work, inwardly wrought. 2. What was the design of this peculiar rite? (1) St. Paul says, "Abraham received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, being yet uncircumcised." So, in Gen. xvii., God calls it a token of the covenant betwixt Him and Abraham. In that covenant God had engaged to make Abraham a father of many nations; to be a God to him and his seed after him, and in this all blessings are comprehended; and if Abraham had not believed God, he would not have complied with a rite so painful to flesh and blood. Thus, in its very origin, this rite was connected with faith, and if used without faith, it did not answer its original design. (2) But,

again, this rite also denoted that man is by nature, from his very birth, a sinner; that the covenant of grace requires blood to be shed in order to atone for him; that there must be the inward mortification of the body of sin; and that there must be a marked distinction in spirit between the people of God and the children of the world. It especially set forth Christ the Mediator of the covenant who should arise of the seed of Abraham, who should shed His blood in atonement for sin, through whom also should be given the Holy Spirit, who should impart a new nature, a new heart, and should enable men to mortify their sinful lusts, and thus to become a peculiar people, separate from the world indeed, zealous of good works. But all this spiritual meaning was lost where men used only the outward form. Hence the declaration of vers. 25-29. 3. To this rite of circumcision our Lord personally submitted. He had not the personal need which others had. It was because He had consented to be made under the law, to be obedient unto the law for men, yea, to shed His blood for the atonement of the sins of men. As He ended, so He began His life, with shedding His sacred blood. Here was part of the vicarious obedience paid by Christ to the law, whence our safety, our peace, our happiness, our salvation. 4. But now, under the gospel, the outward rite is gone with the types of the ceremonial law, but the inward blessing is as important as ever. We are by nature born in sin; we have to look with faith to the blood of the everlasting covenant; we have, through the help of the Holy Spirit, to mortify our members which are on earth; we have to come out of the world. Especially we have to receive Jesus as the Messiah in all His offices, and we are to depend on Christ, in the fulness of His grace, for the help of the Holy Spirit, to regenerate, to mortify, and to sanctify. These things are not less essential to our religion than they were to the Jew; without them our Christianity is nothing worth. Whatever outward things the Christian may do, he will never allow himself to forget the necessity of inward piety. But in his zeal for spiritual religion he need not neglect the few or simple ordinances of religion; but while using all means must trust to Christ only. (*J. Hambleton, M.A.*) *Church privileges no sign of grace*:— This point deserveth a lively discovery, because it is the only evidence of most Christians for heaven. And whereas in other things they would judge a title without reality to be a miserable comfort, yet in religion they are strongly contented to have the repute of Christians, baptized persons, professors of Christ's doctrine, and yet know not the power of these things, being like a dead corpse with sweet flowers strewed upon it. 1. Therefore to explicate this necessary point, consider some things by way of foundation. (1) We find it such a sin that generally the people of Israel were guilty of, insomuch that the great contestation between the prophets in the Old Testament and the Israelites living then, between Christ and His apostles and the Jews living then, to have been upon this very particular. No minister, no sermon, could take them off from this, that because they had the external privileges, therefore they did belong to God, and were the children of Abraham. (2) If you look over all Christianity you shall find this the universal sin, whereby Christ and regeneration with powerful godliness is wholly neglected, and a fleshly carnal confidence in the titles and ordinances of Christianity established. (3) To demonstrate the connaturality of this sin, observe how ingenious the fleshly minds of men have been by arguments and opinions to encourage a carnal confidence in these externals. 2. While we give this explication, you must by way of caution take heed of two other extremes. (1) To cry down the very being and use of these external ordinances as being but forms, and the spiritual frame of the heart is made all in all. (2) We are also deficient when, although we do not cry down forms wholly, yet we give too little to these institutions of Christ. 3. Consider why people are so apt to rest upon these as comfortable testimonies, and there are several reasons. (1) Because they being duties commanded, when performed, that gives some ease and comfort to a natural conscience. (2) We are apt to rest in these things because they are easy to be done; whereas the way of mortification is tedious to flesh and blood. Hence it is called crucifying the flesh, and cutting off the right hand, and pulling out the right eye. (3) Men rest upon these because they are ignorant of the work and necessity of regeneration. The apostle calls circumcision of the heart, circumcision made without hands; and so baptism and the sacraments in the heart, which are not visible in the eyes of the world, make us esteemed before God. Be not, then, idol Christians that have eyes and see not, hearts and understand not the inward virtue and spiritual efficacy of Christ in His ordinances. (4) They put confidence in them because they are ignorant of the righteousness by faith in Christ. (5) Men rest on them because they look on

these duties as satisfactory and compensatory to God. (6) Carnal people rely on these because they mistake the nature of them. They look upon them as those things which will of themselves make them acceptable to God, notwithstanding any preparation or spiritual managing of them. Whereas setting aside the Word of God that works the first grace in us, all other duties they are but as garments to the body, which cannot warm a dead body, but if there be life in the body to heat them first, then they will increase the heat. And thus it is here: if there be spiritual life in thee, and thou put it forth in these duties, then these duties will corroborate and strengthen it more. (*A. Burgess.*) *The having and enjoying such seals is not sign sure enough for our being in the state of grace:*—1. That they are not may appear in that the Scripture makes it not only possible for such to be damned, but doth foretell even actual damnation, and that to the greater part of such persons. 2. The Scripture reckons the condition of a man with these privileges and one without them in the same condition if there be not holiness. Thus Jeremiah makes the uncircumcised in heart, though circumcised in flesh, all one with the worst of heathens, the Moabites and the Ammonites. And to this purpose, also, the apostle in the verses before, "Shall not thy circumcision be accounted uncircumcision if thou keep not the law?" So that as long as wickedness is in thy life, thy baptism doth no more advantage thee than the heathen's no-baptism. 3. The Scripture goeth higher, and doth not only make them equal with pagans, but God professeth His abomination of all their religious service, and thy wickedness is more noisome than all thy religion is well-pleasing. See Isa. i., how God expresseth Himself concerning the sacrifices and new moons of the sinful Israelites. He hated them; they were an abomination to Him. It was like cutting off a dog's head. Oh, how contrary are God's thoughts and thy thoughts about the same religious duties! The prophet Haggai also (Hag. ii.) doth by an excellent instance show, that if a man be unclean and sinful, his holy services do not take off from his uncleanness, but his uncleanness defiles them. 4. These are so far from being signs without grace, that they will be aggravations of thy condemnation. As in some countries when their malefactors were to be burnt at the fire, they poured oil and pitch to increase their torment the more, so will every sacrament, every prayer, every church privilege, make hell the hotter for thee. (*Ibid.*) *Outward and inward religion:*—I. THERE ARE SOME WHO ARE ONLY CHRISTIANS OUTWARDLY, AND OTHERS WHO ARE ALSO CHRISTIANS INWARDLY. This difference appears—1. In the different characters given those who profess the same faith and true religion (Matt. xiii. 47, 48). The tares and the wheat and the goats and the sheep, the wise and the foolish (Matt. xxv.), are in the Church. 2. In the different effects religion has on the lives of those who are called Christians. There are some whose religion makes them holy, others who have nothing but an idle form (2 Tim. iii. 5). The knowledge of some is confined to their heads, it never gets down to their hearts (Tit. i. 16). Others, by reason of their light, dare not venture on an ill thing, more than on a precipice. The pretended religion of others leaves them loose. 3. In the different acceptance which persons' prayers get. Some are very pleasing, others God abhors (Prov. xxviii. 9; Isa. lxvi. 2, 3, i. 11). 4. From the different feeling which those have of the advantage of religion, the ordinances and duties thereof. Some are acquainted with the gain of religion, and, from their own experience, can give a solid reason why they follow it (1 Tim. vi. 6). But unto others all these things are but as empty husks (Prov. xiv. 10). They abide in the outer court of religion all their days. 5. In the different effects of the religion which those profess. Grace is of a growing nature (Prov. iv. 18). And the longer that saints have a standing in religion they will be the more firmly rooted (Psa. xcii. 13, 14; Prov. xxvi. 14). But others think they are right, and they seek no farther, and some, instead of growing better, grow worse and worse (Rev. iii. 16). 6. In the different passage which those have out of time into eternity. Death is the point at which we all meet; but it is the point where outside and inside Christians part for ever (Psa. xxxvii. 37, 38). II. THE CAUSES OF THIS DIFFERENCE. 1. The different way that persons come by their religion. There is a difference—(1) In the weight which their entering on their religion had on their spirits. Some come very lightly by their religion; hence it sits lightly upon them, and often goes as lightly from them. They venture upon building a tower without counting the cost. To others it is not so easy, but they are brought to the utmost seriousness in the matter (Luke xiv. 28, 29); hence they go to the bottom of the matter, while others satisfy themselves with superficial work. (2) In the depth of their conviction and humiliation (Luke vi. 48, 49). The plough of conviction lightly going over the

fallow ground of the heart is sufficient to make an outside Christian (Matt. xiii. 5, 20). But it must be carried deeper to make an inside Christian, even to the root of the most inward beloved lust, and to the discovery of Christ for sanctification, as well as justification. (3) In the issue of their exercises about their soul's case. In the one they have issued in the change of their nature (Ezek. xxxvi. 26); but in the other, whatever stir has been made in the affections, the stony heart has remained untaken away (Matt. xiii. 5). 2. The different ways in which professors follow religion. (1) Some make religion their main business (Gen. v. 24). And this makes an inside Christian (Psa. cxix. 6). Others make religion but a bye-work; their main business is of another kind. In regard to the one, all things else about him bow to his religion; whereas, as to the other, he makes his religion bow to his other designs. (2) They follow religion from different principles, motives, and ends. (*a*) Some follow it from a natural conscience. Fear of punishment, or hope of reward, are powerful enough to make an outward Christian. But an inside Christian has a gracious principle of love to God and holiness implanted in him which incline him unto holiness. (*b*) Some aim at approving themselves to men in their religion (Matt. vi. 2), and others study to approve themselves to God (2 Cor. v. 9). III. WHAT IS THE OUTSIDE AND LETTER OF RELIGION WHICH ONLY MAKES AN OUTSIDE CHRISTIAN, AND WHAT IS THE INSIDE AND SPIRIT OF IT WHICH MAKES A CHRISTIAN? 1. The outside of religion is that part of it which lies open to the view of the world by which men form their estimate, not God (1 Sam. xvi. 7). It comprehends all Church privileges, duties, and attainments lying open to the view of men. 2. The letter of religion is that part of it which is agreeable to the letter of the law, whether in externals or internals. And it comprehends not only the outside, but internal dispositions and attainments as to the matter of them; for example, Judas's sorrow for sin, the stony ground's joy at receiving the seed of the Word, and the hypocrite's delight in approaching God (Isa. lviii.). 3. The inside of religion is that part of it which is open to the all-seeing eye of God (Matt. vi. 4). 4. The spirit or spirituality of religion is the eternal grace joined to the external performance (John iv. 24; 1 Tim. i. 5). IV. NOT THE FORMER, BUT THE LATTER, SORT OF RELIGION MARKS A TRUE CHRISTIAN. This is evident if we consider—1. That there is nothing in the outside or letter of religion but what man may reach in an unregenerate state, in which no man can ever please God (Rom. iii. 8). 2. That the outside and letter of religion may be without any true love to God in the heart, which yet is the substance of practical holiness and the comprehensive duty of the whole law (Ezek. xxxiii. 31). 3. That the outside and letter of religion may consist with the reign of sin in the heart (2 Tim. iii. 5). 4. That men are in religion only what they are before God, not what they are before men (Gen. xvii. 1). (*T. Boston, D.D.*)

Outward and inward religion:—Though the apostle here addresses Jews, yet his words concern us. Change Jew into Christian, and circumcision into baptism, and those outward duties and privileges which we set so high a value upon, and the text will fit us. As they believed themselves secure of God's favour, merely because they had all the external characters of Judaism upon them, so do we, too, often presume upon an outward Christianity. Note—I. THE PARALLEL BETWEEN OUTWARD JUDAISM AND OUTWARD CHRISTIANITY. 1. The Jews place their confidence in being the seed of Abraham, being circumcised, and having the true religion and worship of God among them, and consequently despised all the world besides, and thought that therefore they should certainly be saved, let them lead what lives they would. It is this notion that the Baptist tacitly reproves in Matt. iii. 8, 9. But many among us build upon no better a foundation. What great difference is there between being natural-born Jews and being born of Christian parents? between an outward circumcision and an outward baptism? between an external profession of the law of God given by Moses and an external profession of the gospel of Christ? And yet are there not too many of us that hope to be saved merely on account of these things? Far am I from undervaluing these privileges, but to rest upon them alone is just the folly of a man, that, being born to a good estate, riotously spends it all, and yet thinks to die rich. Baptism and the profession of a holy religion are unspeakable blessings; but they were granted us that we might be obliged to forsake the devil and all his works, and follow the example of our Lord. If we do not make use of our baptism and profession, they will signify nothing to us. 2. The Jews boasted in being skilful in the knowledge of their law (vers. 19, 20), and the more they excelled in this the better Jews they took themselves to be, and the more acceptable to God, and the more they despised their inferiors in this knowledge

(John vii. 49). Hence, instead of practising the law their study was taken up in speculations about it. And are there not some now that make Christianity little more than a mere speculation, or a set of orthodox opinions? And too many, who read the Word of God, but with no intent to better their lives, but merely for the confirmation of some notion they have taken up? Others study Scripture merely for the sake of its language, which they so wretchedly misapply that it is little better than jargon and cant. With some of these, to be a good Christian is to be able to dispute about articles of faith. With others of them, Christianity is but talking warmly in Scripture phrase about matters they never troubled to understand—such regard with contempt those plain simple Christians that heartily believe their creed, and endeavour to serve God, but yet trouble not about points of speculation. This is the worst representation of Christianity that can be (Rom. ii. 13; John xiii. 17, ii. 3, 4). 3. The Jews had an extraordinary zeal for things indifferent, and not commanded of God (Mark vii. 7–9). What a stir did they make about their phylacteries, which they were abundantly more careful to have tied on their heads than to have the law of God written upon their hearts. What conscience did they make of cleansing cups and platters, &c. (Matt. xv. 1; Mark vii. 2). We who know better are apt to deride these superstitions; but are not many of us as foolish? Is it not as great a piece of superstition to make it a matter of conscience to forbear the use of an indifferent thing when God hath not forbid the use of it, as it is to make it a matter of conscience to use an indifferent thing when God hath not commanded it? And those who think to recommend themselves to God merely by a conformity to the forms prescribed in the worship of God, without any inward devotion, are as much devoid of the life of God as any I have now represented. 4. The Jews showed a greater zeal for rituals than for the moral duties of the law (Matt. xxiii. 23, vi. 5; Luke xviii. 12; Matt. xv. 8). Now, consider whether we also do not frequently thus play the Jews with God. Hath not the world experience of some who would not, for any consideration, swear an oath, that yet will make no scruple of using very indirect arts for the promoting their own interests? These are those who are very strict in keeping the Lord's day; but yet they are not so strict in keeping faith and trust, and preserving their minds from worldliness and sensuality. II. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF INWARD RELIGION. 1. The inward Jew is one who is "an Israelite indeed" (John i. 47). A true disciple of Christ is one who is so far from vaunting himself in the outward privileges he enjoys, that he draws from hence an argument of working out his salvation with greater fear and trembling, knowing that the greater advantages he enjoys above others involve him in greater obligations to outstrip them in holiness. 2. He is one that hath quitted his mind of all its sinful prejudices, so that he is always prepared to receive any truth of God, though conveyed to him by mean instruments, and though never so disagreeable. 3. He is one that gives every duty its due and just place in his esteem, preferring inward acts of piety, and so ordering his devotions towards God that they promote the duties he owes to his neighbour. 4. He is one who endeavours to yield a universal obedience to the laws of God, not picking and choosing those that are easiest and least repugnant. 5. He seeks not the praise of men, but hath a mighty care to approve himself to God. 6. He is one that, when he hath done all, is yet humble, not pretending to merit anything at the hand of God (Luke xvii. 10; Psa. cxv. 1). (*Abp. Sharp.*) *Outward and inward religion*:—Would the washing of the windows of a house make the inhabitants thereof clean? Yea, does the painting and ornamenting of the exterior of a mansion make the dwellers in it healthier or holier men? We read of devils entering into a clean-swept and garnished house, and the last end of that man was worse than the first. All the outward cleansing is but the gilding of the bars of the cage full of unclean birds; the whitewashing of sepulchres full of rottenness and dead men's bones. Washing the outside of a box will leave all the clothes inside as foul as ever. Remember, therefore, that all that you can do in the way of outward religion is nothing but the sacrifice of the fat of rams, and "to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Outward and inward religion*:—The Egyptian temples were very beautiful on the outside, but within you shall find nothing but some serpent or crocodile. (*M. Mede.*) *Artificial religion*:—When Archdeacon Hare first visited Rome, some of his Protestant friends, it is said, who knew his love of art, and the personal sympathy which he had with the Eternal City, trembled for the effect it might produce upon his mind. These fears were groundless. Rome was all, and more than all, he had imagined. But the splendid vision left him a stronger Protestant than it found him. "I saw the Pope," he used

to say, "apparently kneeling in prayer for mankind; but the legs that kneeled were artificial—he was in his chair. That sight was enough to counteract all the æsthetical impressions of the worship, if they had been a hundred times stronger than they were." Thus it is with all mere ritualism and other formalism—the legs which kneel are artificial. *The mere routine of religion*:—Richard Knill notes in his journal the following amusing incident of the force of habit, as exemplified in his horse. "Mr. and Mrs. Loveless would have me live with them, but they charged me very little for my board, whereby I was enabled, with my salary, to support seven native schools. These were so situated that I could visit them all in one day. My horse and gig were seen constantly on the rounds, and my horse at last knew where to stop as well as I did. This nearly cost a Bengal officer his life. Captain Page, a godly man, who was staying with us until a ship was ready to take him to the Cape, one morning requested me to lend him my horse and gig to take him to the city. The captain was driving officer-like, when the horse stopped suddenly, and nearly threw him out. He inquired, 'What place is this?' The answer was, 'It's the Sailors' Hospital.' They started again, and soon the horse stopped suddenly, and the captain was nearly out as before. 'What's this?' 'A school, sir,' was the reply. At last he finished his business, and resolved to return another way. By doing this he came near my schools, and again and again the horse stopped. When he got home, he said, 'I am glad that I have returned without broken bones, but never will I drive a religious horse again.'" Persons who go to places of worship from mere habit, and without entering into the devotions of the service, may here see that their religion is only such as a horse may possess, and a horse's religion will never save a man. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The true Christian described; the hypocrite detected*:—I. HE IS NOT A TRUE CHRISTIAN WHO ONLY BEARS THE VISIBLE BADGES OF CHRISTIANITY, BUT HE WHO, WITH THE VISIBLE BADGES, ALSO PARTAKES OF THE INVISIBLE GRACE (Mark xvi. 16). 1. One may be baptized in the name of Christ, and yet be even at the last only an outside Christain (as in our text, and Acts viii. 13, 21). But he is a true Christian who has the invisible grace signified by baptism. See the difference in this (Matt. iii. 11, and 1 Pet. iii. 21). 2. Persons may be admitted to the Lord's table, and yet not be true Christians. They may be admitted to an external partaking of the children's bread, and yet be but dogs in the sight of the heart-searching God (Luke xii. 26; Matt. xxii. 13). But he is a true Christian who is admitted to communion with God in that ordinance (Cant. v. 1; John vi. 57). The one is held in the outer court, the other is admitted into the inner, and is there feasted. II. HE IS NOT A TRUE CHRISTIAN WHOSE OUTWARD MAN ONLY IS CLEANSED FROM THE POLLUTIONS OF THE WORLD, BUT HE WHOSE INWARD MAN IS ALSO CLEANSED. Saving grace penetrates to the inside (Psa. xxiv. 3, 4; Luke xxviii. 11; 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10). A blameless life in the world, though good in itself, yet comes not the length of true Christianity. 1. There are several things that may in some measure cleanse the conversation from gross pollutions. (1) Good education and company, as in the case of Joash under the tutorage of Jehoiada. This may chain men's lusts, though it cannot change their nature. (2) A good natural temper and disposition. But no man is born a true Christian, as he is with his natural temper; religion is a supernatural temper (2 Pet. i. 4). (3) Their being kept out of the way of temptation. The outward cleanness of many is owing more to circumstances than to any gracious disposition. Many have kept right as long as they were not tried, but so soon as the trial comes they give way. (4) The workings of a natural conscience under a rousing ministry (Mark vi. 20). (5) Self-love, fear of punishment, and hope of reward, are powerful incentives, where God's authority is but little valued (Matt. vi. 2; Ezek. viii. 12). 2. But the true Christian has this cleanness of the outward conversation, and goes farther. (1) He joins internal purity to external (Psa. xxiv. 4; Matt. v. 8; Gal. v. 24). (2) Even his external purity is from religious motives, springs, and principles (Gen. xxxix. 9). III. HE IS NOT THE TRUE CHRISTIAN WHO ONLY PERFORMS THE DUTIES OF EXTERNAL OBEDIENCE, BUT HE WHO ALSO WITH THEM JOINS THE DUTIES OF INTERNAL OBEDIENCE. (1) A man may perform the external duties of morality towards his neighbour, and yet be no more than an outward Christian. He may be just in his dealings with men (Luke xviii. 11), and be liberal towards the needy (1 Cor. xiii. 3). True Christianity makes a good neighbour; but when a man is nothing else he is but half, and hardly half, a true Christian. (2) A man may perform the outward duties of piety towards God, yet after all be but an outside Christian. (*a*) Persons may be very punctual in their attendance at public ordinances, and behave themselves gravely and attentively (Isa. lviii. 2; Ezek. xxxiii.

31), and be at much pains in following ordinances from place to place (John vi. 24, 26), and talk well of what they hear (1 Cor. xiii. 1), and after all be but outside Christians. (*b*) They may be praying persons, and so carry religion into their families, and into their closets (Jer. xii. 2; Heb. xii. 17). (*c*) They may also be sufferers for religion (1 Cor. xiii. 3). Hypocrisy is such a salamandar as can live in the fire of persecution; and many whom the violent wind of persecution has not been able to drive off the Lord's way, the warm sun of prosperity has done their business. (3) They may join both the outward of the first and second tables, and yet be but outside Christians (Luke xviii. 12; Phil. iii. 6). All this may be, and yet not beyond the boundaries of Pharisaical righteousness (Matt. v. 20). 2. The inside exceeds the outside Christian. (1) He performs the duties of evangelical obedience, in subjecting his whole heart and soul to the Lord, as well as the outward man (John iv. 23; Phil. iii. 3; Gal. v. 24). (2) He is unreserved and universal in his obedience, which the outside Christian never is. (3) His obedience is son-like, the other is servile and slavish. The highest principle with the hypocrite is fear of punishment, and hope of reward (Hos. x. 11), their highest end is themselves (Hos. x. 1). Jehu professed zeal for the Lord, but in effect it was but zeal for a kingdom. The inside Christian serves God as a son does his father. Prompted by love to Him, and aiming at His honour (1 Cor. x. 31). IV. HE IS NOT A TRUE CHRISTIAN WHO HAS INSIDE RELIGION ONLY IN THE LETTER OF IT, BUT HE WHO ALSO HAS IT IN ITS SPIRITUALITY. 1. A man may carry his religion into internals, and yet be but a Christian in the letter. He may do and have that in religion which no eye but God sees or can see, and yet be no true Christian (Jer. xvii. 9, 10, iii. 10). (1) A natural conscience may check for sins that no eye sees but God's (Rom. ii. 15). (2) An unsanctified desire of salvation, in the way of the covenant of works, may carry a man to the internals in religion (Rom. x. 3). Observe the case of the young man in Matt. xix. 16–20. (3) Light may be strong, and kept strong by the common operations of the Holy Spirit, in an unholy heart. Thus, Balaam durst not entertain a thought of cursing Israel; though he would fain have gained the wages of unrighteousness. 2. The true Christian has inside religion, not in the letter only, but in the spirituality thereof (Phil. iii. 3), which consists—(1) In the graciousness of the principle (1 Tim. i. 5). Their inward religion is the fruit of their new nature; it is natural, and not forced by terrors or necessity. (2) In the holiness of their aim (Col. i. 10). (*T. Boston, D.D.*)

But he is a Jew which is one inwardly.—*A Jew in the true sense*:—A man may be born an Englishman or become naturalised, and yet be un-English in his thoughts and habits and character, and disloyal in his conduct; while a foreigner may be English in his sympathies and behaviour, and deeply attached to the crown. Which of the twain is the true Englishman? Which of the twain would be the most acceptable to the Sovereign? The former represents the case of the unfaithful Jew, while the latter that of the believing Gentile. (*C. Neil, M.A.*) *Profession and reality*:—If the idea we have of a philosopher and his profession were merely to wear a cloak and a long chain, those who do so may be entitled to the name; but if it be rather to keep himself free from faults, why are not those who do not fulfil the profession deprived of the title? When we see one handle an axe awkwardly we say, "This man is no carpenter"; and when we hear one sing badly we say, "This fellow is no musician"; so shall it be with philosophers who act contrary to their profession. (*Epictetus.*) *Literal and spiritual obedience*:—There are two kinds of obedience to law—the literal and the spiritual. The former depends upon specific directions; it is doing just as much as is in the letter, and because it is in the letter. This obedience is merely outward and mechanical; it is in the knee, tongue, or head, but not in the heart. It is always a burden. This was the observance of the Jews. The other is spiritual. Supreme love to the Lawgiver is the motive and inspiration. This is happiness. There are two sons, children of the same father, living under the same roof, subject to the same domestic laws; one has lost all filial love, his father has no longer any hold upon his affections. The other is full of the sentiment; the filial instinct in him is almost passion. How different is the obedience of these two sons! The one does nothing but what is found in the command, and does that merely as a matter of form; he would not do it if he could help it. The other does it not because it is in the command, but because it is the wish of him he loves. He goes beyond the written law; he anticipates his father's will. Obedience is burden in the one case, but delight in the other. (*H. Allon, D.D.*) *Spiritual Judaism*:—To be a Jew in the proper sense was a high privilege indeed. It was to bear "the highest style of man." St. Paul could give no sadder state of the unevangelised Gentiles than that

they were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. On the road to Damascus he had beheld the True Jew. This was the Messiah Himself, the only type and model henceforth of a Jew. Saul's zeal for Judaism was not diminished but rather increased by the heavenly vision. Yet it took a wholly new direction from the fundamental change in his conception of what Judaism was. True Judaism has three characteristics:—1. It is not a thing of mere observances, but a hidden life, a sanctification of the affections, right direction of the will, a regal power which holds all inferior faculties in subjection, which mortifies all worldly and carnal lusts, and is in all things obedient to God's blessed will. 2. It is spiritual, not a literal Judaism, not in bondage to statutes and rules, but taking the principle of the law, which being written on the heart, the Lawgiver's intention is carried out in life. It is an energy which goes beyond the rules of justice to the unconstrained works of reverence, love, and pity. 3. And then, just because it is thus hidden and spiritual, the being and the beauty of it are manifest to God rather than man. Let us come to our Great High Priest for this circumcision of the heart. (*Homilist.*) *Inward religion is found in*:—I. The state of THE UNDERSTANDING. "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened." It is in this faculty that the work of grace commences, in order to bring into a right state this leading power by which all the rest are governed. If we are Christians inwardly, then our understandings will be so enlightened as that all the truths of God essential for us to know shall be so clearly discerned as to exercise an influence as powerful as their importance demands. Here is the great cause of error in those who fancy they have already acquired a right knowledge of the truth because they have been instructed in the Christian theory. They rest in the knowledge of some general propositions; and this is perfectly consistent with complete spiritual blindness. Christ prayed for His disciples, "Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth." The truth of God, when apprehended by the understanding in the light of the Holy Spirit, exerts its own sanctifying influence on the soul. II. In the state of THE JUDGMENT. "And this I pray," said the apostle (Phil. i. 9, 10), *i.e.*, that we may come to such conclusions in our judgment respecting the truth which our understanding has admitted as shall render our knowledge of the truth practical. What is faith, in fact, intellectually considered, but an expression of our judgments on Divine truth? What is the faith of credit but the expression of our judgment on the credibility of that which we believe? And what is the faith of trust and reliance which justifies but the expression of our judgment that the great truths of Christianity are worthy of being admitted into our spirit, and rested and acted upon? It is here that we find a great difference between outward and inward Christians. The judgment of the former respecting Divine things seldom, if ever, amounts to more than a general belief of their truth. But he who possesses inward religion has been brought to this serious judgment, that he must be born again, or he cannot enter the kingdom of God; that Christ must be received, and His atonement embraced personally; that he must yield obedience to His laws. And thus it is that the state of our religion is, to a great extent, regulated by the state of our judgment in Divine things. If this judgment is weak and feeble there is little effect produced. If it is strong, and the truth of God form the continual basis of our judgment, there will be a decision of mind which operates as a principle, and rapidly becomes a habit. III. In the state of THE WILL. When this is right, it will be clearly manifested in—1. Submission to the Divine authority—*i.e.*, a full acknowledgment that we belong to Christ, and have no right to ourselves. When we are brought to this state, everything that God has fixed as the object of our choice will be accepted by us readily, constantly, and fully. 2. Acquiescence in all the dispensations of Providence, even in the infliction of pain and trouble. Inward religion always brings us to imitate Him who said, "Nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt." IV. In the state of our PRINCIPLES. All are men of principle, some way or other. Sometimes the principles may be right, sometimes wrong. It is only he who is a Christian inwardly that has a principle capable of universal reference, and thus of uniform operation. The grand principle on which the men of the world act is to live to themselves. The blindness of their understanding conceals from them those true and holy principles which ought to govern their feelings and life. If we are Christians inwardly, new principles are fixed in our heart and are operating there; and they all resolve themselves into this: "We are not our own; we are bought with a price," &c. And how easy of application this is! What a universal rule it affords for the government of all our actions! If this great principle entirely governs us, it is impossible for us to be practically wrong. V. In the state of THE

FEELINGS. There are some who deny that feeling forms any essential part of religion. They might as well say, either that man has no feelings, or that there is one faculty of the mind which religion does not control. We do not say that these deep emotions are always visibly expressed, but wherever there is true piety there will be strong feelings. Look at man as God has made him, and then say if it would not be strange if the great things of eternity could be set before him, and cordially believed by him, without producing lively and constant emotion. Whatever danger may be ascribed to religious emotions, the real danger will be found to be, not so much in the emotion itself, as in the opinions and principles by which it is directed. The feelings that arise from right principles and opinions will seldom be wrong. Conclusion: As an inference from this passage, I would say—1. That those external things which do not promote this state of mind are, as to us, whatever they may be to others, of no value at all (ver. 25). No person derives benefit merely from having heard the name of Christ, by being acquainted with the doctrines of Christianity. This doctrine of the difference between a merely outward religion, and one which is enthroned in the heart and reigns over the whole man, separates the chaff from the wheat, and ought to lead to the inquiry, in what manner we are affected by our external privileges. 2. Let not those be discouraged who find that their understandings, judgments, will, principles, and feeling are not yet exactly in the state that has been described, if they are penitently and earnestly seeking inward religion. God will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax. 3. When we thus bring our character and experience to the test of God's holy Word, there is an impression which may almost naturally be made on our mind. We may think these requisitions of Almighty God to be somewhat severe and rigorous. But let us correct ourselves. He requires all this of us, not only as He is our Judge, but as He is our Saviour. (*R. Watson.*) *Inward religion its own evidence*:—A Roman Catholic priest, a Protestant minister, a farmer, and an atheist were in a railway carriage together. The atheist commenced the conversation by asking the priest this question, "What, in your opinion, is sufficient proof of the truth of the Christianity which you profess to believe and teach?" The priest began to talk of councils, of the traditions of the Church, and so on; but the atheist had been all over that ground before, and soon replied to the arguments advanced. He then turned to the Protestant minister and asked the same question. The minister talked of external evidences, of internal evidences, of collateral evidences, and so forth; but the infidel had also considered all these arguments, and had his answer ready. The minister then referred the atheist to the old farmer, whom he happened to know. The farmer's indignation had been welling up for a considerable time at hearing his Lord and Master reviled, and when the atheist said, with a contemptuous air, "Well, my man, what in your opinion is sufficient proof of the truth of the Christianity you profess to believe?" the farmer answered earnestly, "Sir, I feel it!" The atheist was surprised at the reply, and said, "Gentlemen, I can't answer that!" (*Gervase Smith, D.D.*) **And circumcision is that of the heart.**—*The circumcision of the heart*:—In general it is that habitual disposition of the soul which is termed holiness, and which consists in being cleansed from sin and being endued with those virtues which were in Christ. To be more particular, it implies—I. HUMILITY. Humility, a right judgment of ourselves, cleanses our minds from those high conceits of our abilities and attainments which are the fruit of a corrupted nature. It convinces us that in our best estate we are of ourselves sin and vanity; that we are insufficient to help ourselves; that without the help of the Spirit of God we can do nothing but add sin to sin; that it is He alone who works in us to will or do that which is good. A sure effect of having formed this right judgment will be a disregard of the honour that cometh of men. II. This knowledge of our disease disposes us to embrace with a willing mind that FAITH which alone is able to make us whole. The best guide of the blind, the surest light of those who sit in darkness, the most perfect instructor of the foolish, is faith. But it is such a faith as is mighty to the overturning of all the prejudices of corrupt reason, all false maxims and evil customs and habits. All things are possible to him who thus believeth. The eyes of his understanding being enlightened he sees what is his calling, viz., to glorify God who hath bought him with a price. He feels what is the exceeding greatness of His power who is able to quicken the dead in sin. This faith is not only an assent to all, even the most important, truths of Scripture, but the conviction of Christ's personal love who "gave Himself for me." Such a faith cannot fail to show evidently the power of Him who inspires it, by delivering His children from the yoke of sin, and

"purging their consciences from dead works." III. Those who are thus by faith born of God have also strong consolation through HOPE—even the testimony of their own spirit with the Spirit which witnesses in their hearts that they are the children of God. It is that Spirit who works in them that clear and cheerful confidence that their heart is upright toward God; who gives them the expectation of receiving all good things at Christ's hand; who assures them that their labour is not in vain. IV. Yet lackest thou one thing. If thou wilt be perfect add to all these LOVE, and thou hast the circumcision of the heart. Love is the fulfilling of the law, the end of the commandment. 1. To God. 2. To our neighbour. 3. To our brethren in Christ. (*J. Wesley, M.A.*) *Circumcision of the heart essential*:—It is not merely true that your sabbaths and sacraments may be as useless to you as the rite of circumcision ever was to the Jews; that the whole ceremonial of Christianity may be duly and regularly described on your part, without praise or without acceptance on the part of God; that worship may be held every day in your own houses, and your families be mustered at every recurring opportunity to close and unfailing attendance on the house of God. But it is also true that all the moral honesties of life may be rendered, and yet one thing may be lacking. The circumcision of the heart may be that which you have no part in. All its longings may be towards the affairs and the enjoyments and the interests of mortality. Your taste is not to what is sordid, but to what is splendid in character; but still it is but an earthly and a perishable splendour. Your very virtues are but the virtues of the world. They have not upon them the impress of that saintliness which will bear to be transplanted into heaven. The present and the peopled region of sense on which you expatiate, you deck, it is true, with the lustre of many fine accomplishments; but they have neither the stamp nor the endurance of eternity. And, difficult as it was to convict the Hebrew of sin, robed in the sanctities of a revered and imposing ceremonial, it is at least a task of as great strenuousness to lay the humiliation of the gospel spirit upon him, who lives surrounded by the smiles and the applauses of society—or so to awaken the blindness, and circumcise the vanity of his heart, as to bring him down a humble supplicant at the footstool of mercy. What turns the virtues of earth into splendid sins is that nothing of God is there. It is the want of this animating breath which impresses upon them all the worthlessness of materialism. It is this which makes all the native loveliness of our moral world of as little account, in the pure and spiritual reckoning of the upper sanctuary, as is a mere efflorescence of beauty on the face of the vegetable creation. It serves to adorn and even to sustain the interests of a fleeting generation. Verily it hath its reward. But not till, under a sense of nothingness and of guilt, man flies him to the Cross of expiation; not till, in the attitude of one whose breast is humbled out of all its proud complacencies, he receives the atonement of the gospel, and along with it receives a clean heart and a right spirit from the hand of his accepted Mediator; it is not till the period of such a transformation, when he is made the workmanship of God in Christ Jesus, that the true image of moral excellence which was obliterated from our species at the fall, comes to be restored to him, or that he is put in the way of attaining a resemblance to his Maker in righteousness and in true holiness. (*T. Chalmers, D.D.*) **Whose praise is not of men, but of God.**—*The praise of true religion*:—The love of praise is a natural passion. We see it in children, young people, and adults. Its highest earthly form is ambition, or the love of fame. Among other things men praise religion; but that which the world commends is only an outward religion, one that can be seen, is profuse and sanctimonious in pious exercises, or which is charitable to the poor. True religion is abhorrent to the world. I. MEN DO NOT PRAISE IT. 1. They have a difficulty in understanding it. It consists so much of feelings and experiences with which they have no sympathy. 2. They fail to appreciate what they cannot understand. Surely it is enough to do good, and harm nobody, and there can be no need for so much praying, crying, and love. 3. They make its possession no standard of worth. Their heroes are of quite another order. If they should admire a philanthropist, it will be because they view his public usefulness quite apart from his spiritual principles. 4. They often bitterly hate and persecute it. II. ITS PRAISE IS OF GOD. 1. Why does He commend it? Because—(1) Of its intrinsic excellence. There is an inherent worth about humility, goodness, devotedness to God, self-surrender to Him, the entire circumcision of the heart. (2) It is the produce of His own grace and power. Wherever spiritual religion exists it has been imparted supernaturally by the power of the Holy Ghost. (3) It reflects His own image and character. God must approve Himself, and therefore He must admire all that

resembles Himself. 2. How does He show it? (1) By the inward witness of His Spirit; giving to the humble and happy soul a sweet and secret sense of His approval. (2) By outward tokens of success and prosperity, as in the history of Abraham, Moses, David, and Daniel. (3) Hereafter by open acknowledgment of His own elect in the day of judgment. Conclusion: The love of praise will influence you, among other motives, in matters of religion. Will you, then, seek to please men or God? If you please men, you must displease God; and what will their commendation and applause do for you in the article of death, or in the hour of judgment? Therefore—1. Seek only to please God. 2. Be satisfied with His approval. 3. Thus overcome the worldly lust of fame. 4. And enjoy perfect peace. 5. And show yourself a pattern of high and genuine heroism. (*T. G. Horton.*)

CHAPTER III.

VERS. 1, 2. **What advantage then hath the Jew? . . . chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.**—*Moral advantage*:—I. THERE IS MUCH ADVANTAGE TO THOSE FAVOURED WITH CLEARER LIGHT AND HIGHER PRIVILEGE, IN EVERY RESPECT. They have the advantage—1. Of feeling that God cares for them. The heathen had, some of them, lost the knowledge of God altogether, and others were only dimly conscious of His goodness. 2. Of a superior temporal condition. They are delivered from the miseries inflicted by cruel superstitions, are able to check the progress of debasing immoralities, and to promote freedom, comfort, peace, and brotherhood. 3. Of better opportunity of performing what their better position demands. The man who possessed five talents had the advantage over his fellow. He had a better command of the market, and could stand a greater shock of adverse circumstances. They would help each other to grow; for five united are more than five times as strong as one, and more than two-and-a-half times as strong as two. An Israelite or a Christian may walk uprightly in his noonday light more easily than a heathen may walk at all in his dim twilight. 4. Of attaining, if faithful, an absolutely higher reward. As two statesmen of equal desert, and equally in favour, take higher and lower positions on account of their different capacities, so those who receive equally the King's commendation, "Well done, good and faithful servant," shall yet differ, as one star differeth from another, in glory. II. THE GREATEST ADVANTAGE IS TO HAVE THE ORACLES OF GOD. 1. The knowledge they impart is a blessing. As day is more blessed than night; as freedom for thought is better than the fetters of ignorance, so the possession of these oracles is unspeakably better than deprivation of them. 2. It is a blessing to have assured Divine communication. As the spirit of a plebeian is lifted by a word or a look from his king; as the heart of an absent child is gladdened by the outside of his father's letter, so is man blessed by the fact that God has spoken to him. 3. It is an advantage to be thus taken into peculiar covenant relationship to God. Every precept of these oracles is a condition of some blessedness which God pledges Himself to bestow; and every promise contains God's oath of faithfulness to all to whom these oracles come. It is a high advantage to know that we are God's and God is ours, as we grasp in faith and obedience His sacred Word. Over our higher privileges it becomes us to "rejoice with trembling." With all thy responsibilities, thy greater required service, and thy heavier doom if faithless, still "Happy art thou, O Israel," "satisfied with favour, and full with the blessing of the Lord." (*W. Griffiths.*) *Moral advantage*:—1. Man has unspeakable advantage in the possession of the oracles of God. 2. May lose it through unbelief. 3. Cannot thereby invalidate God's faithfulness. 4. Must ultimately confess and justify it. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The surplus of privilege*:—The following supposed cases may serve to explain the force of the question raised, and replied to in the text: If the scholarships at Oxford or Cambridge are given away irrespective of the seminaries from which the candidates come, what relative advantage has a youth educated at one of our public schools over and above another who is self-taught, and with few helps? Much every way; for he has had the best text-books, skilled masters, and the like. Or, again, suppose a philanthropist should undertake the reformation of the waifs and strays of society in his own neighbourhood, and for this purpose were to select

certain youths whom he received into an institution where they were fed, clothed, and specially trained. Now if, after a while, the person in question should throw open the doors of this establishment, would not there still be a surplus of privilege belonging to those whom he had first admitted?—would not the care and instruction which they had already enjoyed raise them above their fellows, and fit them for being the most qualified instruments in the carrying out of their benefactors' liberal-minded and large-hearted designs? (*C. Neil, M.A.*) *The advantages of Christians over heathens*:—I. WHAT THEY ARE. 1. A guide for faith. 2. A warrant for hope. 3. A rule for conduct. II. THE IMPROVEMENT WE SHOULD MAKE OF THEM. 1. Study. 2. Obey. 3. Diffuse. (*C. Simeon, M.A.*) *The advantage of possessing the Holy Scriptures*:—I. THE APPELLATION HERE GIVEN TO THE HOLY SCRIPTURES—the oracles of God. 1. There seems to be an allusion to the heathen oracles. These were, indeed, merely pretended communications from gods that had no existence; or, perhaps, in some instances real communications from demons, and the answers which were given were generally expressed in such unintelligible, or equivocal phrases as might easily be wrested to prove the truth of the oracles whatever the truth might be (Acts xvi. 16). 2. But the apostles, when they term the Scriptures "oracles" (Acts vii. 38; Heb. v. 12; 1 Pet. iv. 11), signify that they are real revelations from the true God. These were communicated—*viva voce*, as when God spake to Moses face to face—in visions, as when a prophet in an ecstacy had supernatural revelations (Gen. xv. 1, xlvi. 2; Ezek. xi. 24; Dan. viii. 2)—in dreams, as those of Jacob (Gen. xxviii. 12) and Joseph (Gen. xxxvii. 5, 6)—by Urim and Thummim, which was a way of knowing the will of God by the ephod or breastplate of the high priest. After the building of the temple, God's will was generally made known by prophets Divinely inspired, and who were made acquainted with it in different ways (Chron. ix. 20, 21). 3. The apostles, giving the Scriptures this appellation, show that they considered them as containing God's mind and will (2 Tim. iii. 16; 1 Pet. i. 10–13, 23, 25; 2 Pet. i. 19–21). And these apostles, being themselves inspired (John xiv. 17, 26, xv. 26, xvi. 13) could not be mistaken. Christ Himself has borne a clear testimony to the truth and importance of the Scriptures of the Old Testament (John v. 39, x. 35; Luke xvi. 29, 31). 4. Other proofs of their inspiration are—the majesty of their style; the evident truth and authority of their doctrines; the harmony of all their parts; their power on the minds of myriads; the accomplishment of their prophecies; the miracles performed by their authors. If these things can be affirmed of the writing of the Old Testament, how much more of the New, which consist of the discourses of God's Incarnate Truth (Heb. i. 1), and of His Divinely commissioned servants (Eph. iv. 7–13). II. THE ADVANTAGES THOSE HAVE ABOVE OTHERS, WHO ARE FAVOURED WITH THEM. 1. There are many truths of vast importance which may be known from God's works (chap. i. 19, 20); nevertheless, matter of fact has proved that even as to the most obvious and primary truths, all flesh have corrupted their way. If the existence of a Deity has been generally acknowledged, yet His unity and spirituality has not, but the most civilised nations have multiplied their gods without end (chap. i. 21–24; hence Isa. xl. 19, 20, xli. 6, 7, xliv. 12–20). As to the accountableness of man, fatalism on the one hand, and self-sufficiency on the other, prevailed even among the Greeks and Romans; as to the distinction between vice and virtue, we refer to the apostle (chap. i. 26–32). And as to a future state of happiness or misery, they were in general "without hope." 2. But if these and such like truths could have been discovered by the light of nature, they are taught in Scripture much more clearly and fully; with more authority and certainty; and in a way more adapted to the condition of mankind, who in general have neither capacity nor time for deep and difficult research. Many other truths of equal importance, which are not known at all by the light of nature, are clearly revealed in the Scriptures. 3. The oracles of God may well be called by St. Stephen "lively." God's word is a "hammer and fire," "quick and powerful" (Heb. iv. 12), "spirit and life" (John vi. 63). They partake of the spiritual, living, and powerful nature of Him, from whom they proceed. The God who gave them is still at hand to give the right understanding and feeling of them (Luke xxiv. 45; 2 Pet. i. 20), and still works by and with them. Hence men, from age to age, have been "pricked," "cut to the heart" (Acts ii. 37, v. 33), "begotten" (James i. 18), "born again" (1 Pet. i. 23), "set free" (John viii. 32), "made clean" (John xv. 3), "sanctified" (John xvii. 17; Eph. v. 26), built up and made perfect by them (Eph. iv. 12; 2 Tim. iii. 15). 4. But here arises a grand objection; the Jews, though favoured with the oracles of God, were as wicked as the Gentiles (chap. ii.); professing Christians are

as wicked as the heathen. This is by no means the case. A very favourable change in the manners of men in general has been wrought where the Scriptures have been received; and myriads, both Jews and Christians, have thereby been made truly pious persons in all ages; and with respect to the rest, "if some did not believe, shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?" (ver. 3). III. OUR OBLIGATION TO IMPROVE THIS ADVANTAGE FOR OURSELVES AND TO COMMUNICATE IT TO OTHERS. 1. The oracles of God can only profit those who believe them (Heb. iii. 11, iv. 2). They must also be considered and laid to heart, otherwise they cannot profit an intelligent and free being, for they do not work upon our minds mechanically. We must bring to their consideration a teachable and serious mind; must receive them with reverence, gratitude, and affection; practise the religion they describe; and, in order to all this, pray to Him that gave them, that He may impart to us the Spirit by whose influences alone we can either understand or comply with them. 2. With respect to others—the oracles of God are equally necessary and designed for all men (Psa. xxii. 27; Isa. ii. 2; Mic. iv. 1; Isa. xi. 9, lx. 8, 9; Luke xxiv. 47; Mark xvi. 15; Rom. i. 5; Rev. xiv. 6, 7). All professing Christians are under an obligation to aid their circulation, that their endeavours may be consistent with their prayers, for they pray that His "kingdom may come." (*Joseph Benson.*) *The advantages and disadvantages of having the Divine oracles compared: a plea for missions:*—I. TO WHOM MUCH IS GIVEN MUCH WILL BE REQUIRED; THE QUESTION, THEN, IS WHETHER IT IS BETTER THAT IT SHALL BE GIVEN OR WITHHELD. 1. The Jew, who sinned against the light of his revelation, will have a severer retribution than the Gentile who only sinned against the light of his own conscience; and the nations of Christendom who have rejected the gospel will incur a darker doom than the native of China, whose remoteness, while it shelters him from the light of the New Testament in this world, shelters him from the pain of its fulfilled denunciations in another. And with these considerations a shade of uncertainty appears to pass over the question—whether the Christianisation of a people ought at all to be meddled with. 2. But without an authoritative solution of this question from God, we are really not in circumstances to determine it. We have not all the materials of the question before us. We know not how to state what the addition is which knowledge confers upon the sufferings of disobedience; or how far an accepted gospel exalts the condition of him who was before a stranger to it. It is all a matter of revelation on which side the difference lies; and he who is satisfied to be wise up to that which is written will quietly repose upon the deliverance of Scripture on this subject. "Go and preach the gospel to every creature under heaven," and "go unto all the world, and teach all nations." These parting words of our Saviour may not be enough to quell the anxieties of the speculative Christian, but they are quite enough to decide the conduct of the practical Christian. 3. But the verses before us advance one step farther, and enter on the question of profit and loss attendant on the possession of the oracles of God; and to decide, on the part of the former, that the advantage was much every way. And it is not for those individuals alone who reaped the benefit that the apostle makes the calculation. He makes an abatement for the unbelief of all the others; and, balancing the difference, he lands us in a computation of clear gain to the whole people. And it bears importantly on this question; for surely we may well venture to circulate these oracles when told of the most stiff-necked and rebellious people on earth, that, with all their abuse of them, they conferred a positive advantage on their nation. And yet what a fearful deduction from this advantage must have been made by their wickedness. It were hard to tell the amount of aggravation upon all their sin, in that it was sin against the light of the oracles of God; but the apostle tells us that, let the amount be what it may, it was more than countervailed by the positive good done through these oracles. II. A FEW REMARKS BOTH ON THE SPECULATIVE AND ON THE PRACTICAL PART OF THIS QUESTION. 1. The Bible, when brought into a new country, may be instrumental in saving those who submit to its doctrine; and, in so doing, it saves them from an absolute condition of misery in which they were previously involved. If along with this advantage to those who receive it, it aggravates the condition of those who reject it, it does not change into wretchedness that which before was enjoyment; and the whole amount of the evil that has been rendered is only to be computed by the difference in degree between the suffering that is laid upon sin with, and sin without the knowledge of the Saviour. We do not know how great the difference is, but we gather that it was better for the Jews, in spite of all the deeper responsibility and guilt which their possession of the Old Testament laid upon the disobedient, yet that a nett accession of gain was thus rendered to the

whole—then may we infer that any enterprise by which the Bible is more extensively circulated, or taught, is of positive benefit to every neighbourhood. 2. Though in Jewish history they were the few to whom the oracles of God were a blessing, and the many to whom they were an additional condemnation—yet, on the whole, the good so predominated over the evil, that it on the whole was for the better and not for the worse that they possessed these oracles. But the argument gathers in strength as we look onward to futurity, as we dwell upon the fact of the universal prevalence of the gospel of Christ. Even in this day of small things, the direct blessing which follows in the train of a circulated Bible and a proclaimed gospel overbalances the incidental evil; and when we think of the latter-day glory which it ushers in, who should shrink from the work of hastening it forward, because of a spectre conjured up from the abyss of human ignorance? Even did the evil now predominate over the good, still is a missionary enterprise like a magnanimous daring for a great moral and spiritual achievement, which will at length reward the perseverance of its devoted labourers. There are collateral evils attendant on the progress of Christianity. At one time it brings a sword instead of peace, and at another it stirs up a variance in families, and at all times does it deepen the guilt of those who resist the overtures which it makes to them. But these are only the perils of a voyage that is richly laden with the moral wealth of many future generations. These are but the hazards of a battle which terminates in the proudest and most productive of all victories—and, if the liberty of a great empire be an adequate return for the loss of the lives of its defenders, then is the glorious liberty of the children of God, which will at length be extended over the face of a still enslaved and alienated world, more than an adequate return for the spiritual loss that is sustained by those who, instead of fighting for the cause, have resisted and reviled it. III. CONCLUDE WITH A FEW PRACTICAL REMARKS. 1. It is with argument such as this that we would meet the anti-missionary spirit. Not long ago Christianising enterprise was traduced as a kind of invasion on the safety and innocence of paganism, and it was affirmed that, though idolatry is blind, yet it were better not to awaken its worshippers, than to drag them forth by instruction to the hazards and the exposures of a more fearful responsibility. But why should we be restrained now from the work by a calculation, which did not restrain the missionaries of two thousand years ago? 2. If man is to be kept in ignorance because every addition of light brings along with it an addition of responsibility—then ought the species to be arrested at home as well as abroad in its progress towards a more exalted state of humanity; and such evils as may attend the transition to moral and religious knowledge, should deter us from every attempt to rescue our own countrymen from any given amount of darkness by which they may now be encompassed. 3. However safe it is to commit the oracles of God into the hands of others, yet, considering ourselves in the light of those to whom those oracles are committed, it is a matter of urgent concern whether, to us personally, the gain or the loss will predominate. It resolves itself, with every separate individual, into the question of his secured heaven, or his more aggravated hell—whether he be of the some who turn the message of God into an instrument of conversion; or of the many who, by neglect and unconcern, render it the instrument of their sorer condemnation. (*T. Chalmers, D.D.*) *The oracles of God*:—I. THEIR LEADING CHARACTERS. 1. Absolute truth and wisdom. The word "oracles" signifies a "Divine speech or answer." Words professing to be from God ought to have strong evidence; and how mighty and commanding is the evidence—attested by miracle, ratified by the fulfilment of prophecy, continuing when they have for ages reproved the world, giving life and salvation to this hour. If, then, they are from God, the question of their wisdom and truth is settled. And here is the advantage of possessing these oracles. There is not a question relating either to duty or salvation to which there is not here an answer. Are you an inquirer? There is the oracle. Consult it; for "it shall speak, and shall not lie." 2. Infinite importance. On those questions which are merely curious the oracle is silent, but on no subject which it behoves us to know, *e.g.*, the character of God; the laws by which we are governed; the true state of man; rescue and redemption; the practical application and attainment of this mercy. 3. Life. Hence they are called "lively" or living oracles, or as our Lord says, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." No other book has this peculiarity. Show me one which all the wicked fear; which cuts deep into the conscience, and rouses salutary fears; which comforts and supports; and whilst its blessed truths quiver on the lips of the dying, disarms death of its sting. Show me a man who, when he discourses,

awakens souls from deadly sleep; who to a trembling spirit says, "Believe, and live," and he actually believes and lives; whose counsel effectually guides, quickens, and comforts; and you show me one who speaks only as the oracles of God. Among all who have been celebrated for oratory, who ever professed to produce effects like these? Nothing explains this but the life which the Spirit imparts. With the oracles of God the Author is present. You cannot avoid this power. It will make the Word either "a savour of life unto life, or a savour of death unto death." 4. They make all other oracles vocal. (1) Nature has its solemn voice, but it is not heard where the gospel is not. In heathendom the very heavens are turned into idols, and God is excluded from the thoughts of men. But whenever the living oracles come, then every star, and mountain, and river, proclaims its glorious Maker: "day unto day uttereth speech." (2) The general providence of God in the government of nations is intended to display the wisdom, power, goodness, justice, and truth of God; and terminate in the conversion of all nations to the faith of Christ. Yet all this is unknown to those who are destitute of the Divine oracles. To them it appears that one event happens to all. Every occurrence is either attributed to chance, to blind fate, or to the caprice of deities without wisdom, and without mercy. The living oracle gives a voice to all this. Instructed by it we mark the design of God, "who worketh all in all." We see all things tending to one end, "the glory of the Lord shall be revealed; and all flesh shall see it together." (3) There is also a particular providence which appoints us our station in life, our blessings and our sorrows. Many lessons this providence is intended to teach us. "The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance." But till the living oracle speaks, all is silence; and we derive no lessons of true wisdom from the events of life. When we acquaint ourselves with God in His Word, then everything ministers to our "instruction in righteousness." 5. Variety. Here we have history, proverbs, poetry, examples, doctrine, prophecy, parable, allegory, and metaphor. 6. Fulness of truth. Great as are the revelations, nothing is exhausted. As in Christ the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily, to be eternally manifested; so in His Word there is a fulness of truth. And hence the Bible is always new. (1) In regard to morals, we have principles, as well as acts, applicable for ever. (2) Who can exhaust the doctrine of Holy Scripture? Doctrines especially relating to God, and Christ, and the depth of all-redeeming love. (3) The effects of the whole scheme will be developing for ever. In a very important sense the Bible will be the oracles of God to the Church above. II. THESE ORACLES ARE "COMMITTED" OR entrusted TO YOU. 1. To be read and understood, consequently there is great guilt in treating them with indifference and neglect. 2. To interpret honestly. They are "the oracles of God"; and it is a sin of no ordinary magnitude to pervert their meaning. 3. To make them known to others. It is a great sin to restrain the Scriptures. III. THEIR ADVANTAGE. 1. Instruction. 2. Direction. 3. Salvation. (*Richard Watson.*)

The oracles of God:—I. THE ORACLES OF GOD. 1. The meaning of the term. (1) Among heathen the word was first used to denote the answers supposed to be given by their gods, and was afterwards applied to the shrines where such answers were given. Whether these answers were forged by the priests, or were the results of diabolical agency, it is not necessary to inquire. Suffice it that though proverbially obscure, they are regarded with veneration and confidence. No enterprise of importance was undertaken without consulting them; splendid embassies, with magnificent presents, were sent from far distant states, with a view to obtain a propitious answer; and contending nations often submitted to them the decision of their respective claims. With these facts the Gentile converts were acquainted; in these opinions they had participated. The word, therefore, could scarcely fail to excite in them some of the ideas and emotions with which it had been so long and intimately associated. No title, then, could be better adapted to inspire them with veneration for the Scriptures. (2) Nor would it appear less sacred, or important to the Jew, associated as it was with the Urim and Thummim, and with those responses which Jehovah gave from the inner sanctuary. In our version this place is frequently styled The Oracle; and the answers which God there gave to the inquiries of His worshippers were full, explicit, and definite; forming a perfect contrast to the oracles of paganism. By employing this language, he did in effect say to the Gentile converts, All that you once supposed the oracles of your countrymen to be, the Scriptures really are. With at least equal force did his language say to the Jews, The Scriptures are no less the Word of God than were the answers which He formerly gave to your fathers from the mercy seat. 2. This title is given to the Scriptures with perfect truth and propriety. They do not,

indeed, resemble in all respects the heathen oracles. They were never designed to gratify a vain curiosity; much less to subserve the purposes of ambition or avarice, and this is, probably, one reason why many persons never consult them. But whatever a man's situation may be, this oracle, if consulted in the manner in which God has prescribed, will satisfactorily answer every question which it is proper for him to ask; for it contains all the information which our Creator sees it best that His human creatures should, at present, possess. II. THEIR SURPASSING VALUE. 1. In possessing the Scriptures we possess every real advantage that would result from the establishment of an oracle among us; and more. For wherever the oracle might be placed, it would unavoidably be at a distance from a large proportion of those who wished for its advice. But in the Scriptures we possess an oracle, which may be brought home to every family and every individual at all times. 2. But in consequence of having been familiar with them from our childhood, we are far from being sensible how deeply we are indebted to them. We must place ourselves in the situation of a serious inquirer after truth, who has pursued his inquiries as far as unassisted intellect can go; and that he now finds himself bewildered in a maze of conflicting theories into which the researches of men unenlightened by revelation inevitably plunge them. To such a man what would the Scripture be worth? He asks, "Who made the universe?" A mild, but majestic voice replies from the oracle, "In the beginning, God created the heavens, and the earth." Startled, the inquirer eagerly exclaims, "Who is God—what is His nature?" "God," replies the voice, "is a spirit, wise, almighty, holy, just, merciful and gracious, longsuffering," &c. The inquirer's mind labours, faints, while vainly attempting to grasp the Being, now, for the first time disclosed. But a new and more powerful motive now stimulates his inquiries, and he asks, "Does any relation subsist between this God and myself?" "He is thy Maker, Father, Preserver, Sovereign, Judge; in Him thou dost live, and move, and exist; and at death thy spirit will return to God who gave it." "How," resumes the inquirer, "will He then receive me?" "He will reward thee according to thy works." "What works?" "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart," &c. "Every transgression of this law is a sin; and the soul that sinneth shall die." "Have I sinned?" the inquirer tremblingly asks. "All," replies the oracle, "have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." A new sensation of conscious guilt now oppresses the inquirer, and with increased anxiety he asks, "Is there any way in which the pardon of sin may be obtained?" "The blood of Jesus Christ," replies the oracle, "cleanseth from all sin. He that confesseth and forsaketh his sins shall find mercy." "But to whom shall I confess them? where find the God whom I have offended?" "He is a God at hand," returns the voice; "I, who speak to thee, am He." "God be merciful to me a sinner," exclaims the inquirer, not daring to lift his eyes towards the oracle: "What, Lord, wilt Thou have me to do?" "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," answers the voice, "and thou shalt be saved." "Lord, who is Jesus Christ? that I may believe on Him?" "He is My Beloved Son, whom I have set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood; hear thou Him, for there is salvation in no other." Such are, probably, some of the questions which would be asked by the supposed inquirer; and such are, in substance, the answers which he would receive from the oracles of God. Who can compute the value of these answers. III. THEIR INEXHAUSTIBLENESS. But why should those consult them who are already acquainted with the answers which they will return? 1. Has the man who asks this drawn from the Scriptures all the information which they contain? It may reasonably be doubted whether any one would have discovered that the declaration of Jehovah, "I am the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob," furnishes a conclusive proof of the after existence of the human soul. And how many times might we have read the declaration, "Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec," before we should have suspected that it involves all those important consequences deduced from it in the Epistle to the Hebrews? And many other passages remain to reward the researches of future inquirers. 2. Many of the oracles contain an infinity of meaning which no mind can ever exhaust. What finite mind will fully comprehend all that is contained in the titles given to Jehovah and Christ, or in the words, "eternity," "heaven," "hell"? Now he who most frequently consults the oracles will penetrate most deeply into their unfathomable abyss of meaning. He may, indeed, receive the same answers to his inquiries; but these answers will convey to his mind clearer and more enlarged conceptions of the truths which they reveal. His views will resemble those of an astronomer, who is, from time to time, furnished with

telescopes of greater power; or what at first seemed only an indistinct shadow, will become a vivid picture, and the picture will, at length, stand out in bold relief. The lisping child and the astronomer use the word "sun" to denote the same object. The child, however, means by this word, nothing more than a round, luminous body, of a few inches in diameter. But it would require a volume to contain all the conceptions of which this word stands for the sign in the mind of the astronomer. IV. THEIR VITALISING POWER. It may, perhaps, be objected that, as the Scriptures do not speak in an audible voice, their answers can never possess that life which attends the responses of a living oracle, such as was formerly established among the Jews. On the contrary, they are well termed lively or "living oracles"—"alive and powerful." "The words," says Christ, "that I speak unto you, are spirit, and they are life." The living God lives in them, and employs their instrumentality in imparting life. Take away His accompanying influences, and the living oracles become "a dead letter." But he who consults them aright does not find them a dead letter; he finds that the living, life-giving Spirit, by whom they were and are inspired, carries home their words to him with an energy which no tongue can express. V. THE MANNER IN WHICH THEY ARE TO BE CONSULTED. Thousands, of course, derive no benefit, and receive no satisfactory answers, for they do not consult them, as an oracle of God ever ought to be consulted. 1. They do not consult them with becoming reverence. They peruse them with little more reverence than the works of a human author, as they would consult a dictionary or an almanac. 2. Nor is sincerity less necessary than reverence—a real desire to know our duty, with a full determination to believe and obey the answers we shall receive. If we consult the oracles of God with a view to gratify our sinful inclinations, or to justify our questionable pursuits, practices, or favourite prejudices, the oracle will be dumb. The same remark is applicable to every one who consults the Scriptures, while he neglects known duties, or disobeys known commands. We may see these remarks exemplified in Saul. He had been guilty of known disobedience; and therefore, when he inquired of the Lord, the Lord answer him not. 3. There are others whose want of success is owing to their unbelief. As no food can nourish those who do not partake of it; as no medicines can prove salutary to those who refuse to make use of them; so no oracles can be serviceable to those by whom they are not believed with a cordial, practical, operative faith. The Scriptures are able to make us wise unto salvation only through faith in Christ Jesus. 4. Many persons derive no benefit from the oracles of God, because they attempt to consult them without prayer. Consulting an oracle is an act which, in its very nature, implies an acknowledgment of ignorance, and a petition for guidance, for instruction. He, then, who reads the Scriptures without prayer, does not really consult them. (*E. Payson, D.D.*) *The oracles of God: accessible to all:*—A priest observing to William Tyndale, "We are better without God's laws than the Pope's," "I defy the Pope and all his laws," he replied; and added, "If God spare my life, ere many years I will cause the boy which driveth the plough to know more of Scripture than you do." (*Quarterly Review.*) *The oracles of God: accessible to all:*—A Roman Catholic priest in Ireland recently discovered a peasant reading the Bible, and reproved him for daring to peruse a book forbidden to the laity. The peasant proceeded to justify himself by a reference to the contents of the book, and the holy doctrines which it taught. The priest replied, that the doctrines could only be understood by the learned, and that ignorant men would wrest them to their own destruction. "But," said the peasant, "I am authorised, your reverence, to read the Bible; I have a search-warrant." "What do you mean, sir?" said the priest, in anger. "Why," replied the peasant, "Jesus Christ says, 'Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me.'" The argument was unanswerable. *The oracles of God: how to consult:*—"How am I to know the Word of God?" By studying it with the help of the Holy Ghost. As an American bishop said, "Not with the blue light of Presbyterianism, nor the red light of Methodism, nor the violet light of Episcopacy, but with the clear light of Calvary." We must study it on our knees, in a teachable spirit. If we know our Bible Satan will not have much power over us, and we will have the world under our feet. (*D. L. Moody.*) *The oracles of God: may be consulted with perfect confidence:*—If a man in the night, by the light of a lamp, is trying to make out his chart, and there is storm in the heavens and storm upon the sea, and some one knocks that lamp out of his hand, what is done? The storm is above and the storm is below, and the chart lies dark, so that he cannot find it out—that is all. If it were daylight he could see the chart well

enough; but there being no light, and the lamp on which he depended for light being knocked out of his hand, he cannot avail himself of that which is before him. And the same is true concerning much of the Bible. It is an interpreter. It is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. And those truths which have their exposition in the Bible, and which are a revelation of the structure of the world and of the Divine nature and government, do not depend for their truth upon the Bible itself. They are only interpreted and made plain by it. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The oracles of God: never consulted in vain:*—How marvellous is the adaptation of Scripture for the race for whom it was revealed! In its pages every conceivable condition of human experience is reflected as in a mirror. In its words every struggle of the heart can find appropriate and forceful expression. It is absolutely inexhaustible in its resources for the conveyance of the deepest feelings of the soul. It puts music into the speech of the tuneless one, and rounds the periods of the unlettered into an eloquence which no orator can rival. It has martial odes to brace the warrior's courage, and gainful proverbs to teach the merchant wisdom; all mental moods can represent themselves in its amplitude of words. It can translate the doubt of the perplexed; it can articulate the cry of the contrite; it fills the tongue of the joyous with carols of thankful gladness; and it gives sorrow words, lest grief, that does not speak, should whisper to the heart, and bid it break. Happy we, who, in all the varieties of our religious life, have this copious manual Divinely provided to our hand. (*W. M. Punshon.*) *The oracles of God: suppose they should be taken away:*—I thought I was at home, and that, on taking up my Bible one morning, I found, to my surprise, what seemed to be the old familiar book was a total blank; not a character was inscribed in or upon it. On going into the street I found every one complaining in similar perplexity of the same loss; and before night it became evident that a great and wonderful miracle had been wrought in the world; the Hand which had written its awful menace on the walls of Belshazzar's palace had reversed the miracle, and expunged from our Bibles every syllable they contained—thus reclaiming the most precious gift Heaven had bestowed and ungrateful man had abused. I was curious to watch the effects of this calamity on the varied characters of mankind. There was, however, universally an interest in the Bible, now it was lost, such as had never attached to it while it was possessed. Some to whom the sacred book had been a blank for twenty years, and who never would have known of their loss but for the lamentations of their neighbours, were not the less vehement in their expressions of sorrow. The calamity not only stirred the feelings of men, but it immediately stimulated their ingenuity to repair their loss. It was very early suggested that the whole Bible had again and again been quoted piecemeal in one book or another; that it had impressed its image on human literature, and had been reflected on its surface as the stars on a stream. But, alas! on inspection it was found that every text, every phrase which had been quoted, whether in books of theology, poetry, or fiction, had been remorselessly obliterated. It was with trembling hand that some made the attempt to transcribe the erased texts from memory. They feared that the writing would surely fade away; but, to their unspeakable joy, they found the impression durable; and people at length came to the conclusion that God left them at liberty, if they could, to reconstruct the Bible for themselves, out of their collective remembrances of its contents. Some obscure individuals who had studied nothing else but the Bible, but who had well studied that, came to be the objects of reverence among Christians and booksellers; but he who could fill up a chasm by the restoration of words which were only partially remembered was regarded as a public benefactor. At length a great movement was projected amongst the divines of all denominations to collate the results of these partial recoveries of the sacred text. But here it was curious to see the variety of different readings of the same passages insisted on by conflicting theologians. No doubt the worthy men were generally unconscious of the influence of prejudice; yet somehow the memory was seldom so clear in relation to texts which told against us in relation to those which told for their several theories. It was curious, too, to see by what odd associations of contrast, or sometimes of resemblance, obscure texts were recovered. A miser contributed a maxim of prudence which he recollected principally from having systematically abused. All the ethical maxims were soon collected; for though, as usual, no one recollected his own peculiar duties or infirmities, every one kindly remembered those of his neighbours. As for Solomon's "times for everything," few could recall the whole, but everybody remembered some. Undertakers said there was "a time to mourn," and comedians said there was "a time to laugh";

young ladies innumerable remembered there was "a time to love," and people of all kinds that there was "a time to hate"; everybody knew that there was "a time to speak," but a worthy Quaker added that there was also "a time to keep silence." But the most amusing thing of all was to see the variety of speculations which were entertained concerning the object and design of this strange event. Many gravely questioned whether it could be right to attempt the reconstruction of a book of which God Himself had so manifestly deprived the world; and some, who were secretly glad to be relieved of so troublesome a monitor, were particularly pious on this head, and exclaimed bitterly against this rash attempt to counteract the decrees of Heaven. Some even maintained that the visitation was not in judgment but in mercy; that God in compassion, and not in indignation, had taken away a book which men had regarded with an extravagant admiration and idolatry; and that, if a rebuke at all was intended, it was a rebuke to a rampant Bibliolatry. This last reason, which assigned as the cause of God's resumption of His own gift an extravagant admiration and reverence of it on the part of mankind—it being so notorious that even the best of those who professed belief in its Divine origin and authority had so grievously neglected it—struck me as so ludicrous that I broke into a fit of laughter, which awoke me. The morning sun was streaming in at the window and shining upon the open Bible which lay on the table; and it was with joy that my eyes rested upon those words, which I read with grateful tears—"The gifts of God are without repentance." (*H. Rogers.*) *The Bible*:—I. ITS POSSESSION IS AN IMMENSE "ADVANTAGE" TO ANY PEOPLE. What distinguishes it from all other books, and gives it transcendent worth, is that it contains the "oracles of God." 1. They are infinitely valuable in themselves. They are infallible truth. The "oracles" of the heathen world were gross deceptions, that of Apollo at Delphi was a notorious imposture. They give—(1) A true revelation of God to man. (2) A true revelation of man to himself. Who can estimate the transcendent worth of such revelations? 2. They are infinitely valuable in their influence. (1) Intellectually. They quicken reason and set the wheels of thought agoing. (2) Socially. They unseal the fountains of social sympathy, and bless the people with philanthropic societies and institutions. (3) Politically. They break down tyrannies, promote wholesome laws, and foster fair dealing, peace, and liberty. (4) Spiritually. Their great work is to generate, develope, and perfect the highest spiritual life. II. THERE ARE THOSE WHO LACK TRUE FAITH IN IT. "What if some did not believe?" Though the Jews, as a people, had the "oracles," there were multitudes amongst them who were destitute of faith. Their conduct during their pilgrimage, their whole history in Canaan, and the rejection of the true Messiah, all proved they had little or no faith in the "oracles" they possessed. How few, to-day, who possess the Bible have any true faith in the Divine "oracles." To such the Bible—1. Is of no real spiritual "advantage." It can convey no real benefit to the soul, only so far as its truths are believed and realised. Unless it is believed it has no more power to help the soul, the man, than the genial sunbeam or the fertilising shower to help the tree that is rotten at its roots. 2. It ultimately becomes a curse. It heightens responsibility and augments guilt. "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not known sin." III. THE LACK OF FAITH IN IT NEITHER AFFECTS ITS REALITY NOR LESSENS ITS IMPORTANCE (ver. 3). Man's lack of faith will neither affect nor nullify the faithfulness of God. Facts are independent of denials or affirmations. What if some say there is no God? Their denial does not destroy the fact, He still exists. What if some say there is no hell; hell still burns on. Though all Europe denied that the earth moved, it still pursued its course circling round the sun. But though our states of mind, whether credulous or incredulous, in no way affect those facts, they vitally affect our own character and destiny. What if we do not believe? It matters nothing to the universe or to God, but it matters much, nay everything to us. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The Bible given for guidance*:—Here is a man going over a mountain. Night falls and he is lost. He sees a light in a cabin window. He hastens up to it. The mountaineer comes out and says, "I will furnish you with a lantern." The man does not say, "I don't like the handle, and I don't like the shape of this lantern; it is octangular; it ought to be round; if you can't give me a better one, I won't take any." Oh, no. He starts on with it. He wants to get home. That lantern shines on the path all the way through the mountain. Now, what is the Bible? Have we any right to say we do not like this or that in it, when God intended it for a lamp for our feet and a lantern for our path to guide us through our wilderness march, and bring us at last to our Father's house on high? (*T. De Witt Talmage.*) *The use of the*

Bible:—The Rev. E. T. Taylor, commonly known as Father Taylor, addressing a number of sailors, said, "I say, shipmates, now look me full in the face. What should we say of the man aboard ship who was always talking about his compass, and never using it? What should you think of the man who, when the storm is gathering, night at hand, moon and stars shut, on a lee shore, breakers ahead, then first begins to remember his compass, and says, 'Oh, what a nice compass I have got on board,' if before that time he has never looked at it? Where is it that you keep your compass? Do you stow it away in the hold? Do you clap it into the forepeak?" By this time Jack's face, that unerring index of the soul, showed visibly that the *reductio ad absurdum* had begun to tell. Then came, by a natural logic, as correct as that of the school, the improvement. "Now, then, brethren, listen to me. Believe not what the scoffer and the infidel say. The Bible, the Bible is the compass of life. Keep it always at hand. Steadily, steadily fix your eye on it. Study your bearing by it. Make yourself acquainted with all its points. It will serve you in calm and in storm, in the brightness of noonday, and amid the blackness of night; it will carry you over every sea, in every clime, and navigate you, at last, into the harbour of eternal rest." *The Bible a national advantage*:—Father Hyacinthe, an eloquent and fearless priest in Paris, while recently preaching a charity sermon in Lyons, in behalf of the asylum for the poor, having asked his audience, which was composed of the principal Roman Catholic families, if they knew why Prussia triumphed on the field of battle in the war with Austria, said, "It is because the nation is more enlightened, more religious, and because every Prussian soldier has the Bible in his knapsack. I will add, that what produces the power and superiority of Protestant peoples is, that they possess and read the Bible at their own firesides. I have been twice in England, and have learned that the Bible is the strength of that nation."

Vers. 3, 4. **For what if some did not believe?**—*Man's unbelief and God's faithfulness*:—I. MAN'S UNBELIEF; its various forms; impenitence; scepticism. II. GOD'S FAITHFULNESS; His Word remains true; cannot fail of effect; must be glorified. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *God justified though man believes not*:—We have here—I. A SORROWFUL REMINDER. There always have been some who have not believed. 1. This is stated very mildly. The apostle might have said "many" instead of "some." Remember that all but two who came out of Egypt fell in the wilderness through unbelief; but the apostle does not wish to unduly press his argument, or to aggravate his hearers. Even in his own day he might have said, "The bulk of the Jewish nation has rejected Christ. Wherever I go, they seek my life, because I preach a dying Saviour's love." Yet this is a very appalling thing, even when stated thus mildly. If all here except one were believers, and it was announced that that one would be pointed out to the congregation, we should all feel in a very solemn condition. But there are many more than one here who have not believed. If the unconverted were not so numerous they would be looked upon with horror and pity. As they are so numerous, there is all the greater need for our compassion. 2. The terms of Paul's question suggest a mitigation of the sorrow. "What if some did not believe?" Then it is implied that some did believe. Glory be to God, there is a numerous "some." 3. Yet it is true that, at times, the "some" who did not believe meant the majority. Read the story of Israel through and you will be saddened to find how again and again they did not believe, and it may be that, even among hearers of the gospel, the unbelievers preponderate. 4. This unbelief has usually been the case between the great ones of the earth. In our Saviour's day they said, "Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on Him?" The gospel has usually had a free course among the poor, but "not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble," are called. 5. Some who have not believed have belonged to the religious and to the teaching class. The Scribes and Pharisees rejected Christ, although they were the religious leaders of the people. And now we may be preachers, and yet not preach the gospel of Christ; we may be members of the Church, and yet not savingly know it. 6. The same may be said if we take the whole range of the nations favoured with the gospel. 7. "What, then, if some do not believe?" Then—(1) They are lost. "He that believeth not is condemned already." (2) There still remains, to those who hear the gospel, the opportunity to believe; and, believing, they shall find life through the sacred name. (3) Let us, who do believe, make them the constant subject of our prayers; and bear our witness to the saving power of the gospel. II. A HORRIBLE INFERENCE, viz., that their unbelief had

made the faith, or the faithfulness of God, without effect. 1. Some will say, "If So-and-so and So-and-so do not believe the gospel, then religion is a failure." We have read of a great many things being failures. A little while ago it was a question whether marriage was not a failure. I suppose that, by and by, eating and breathing will be a failure. The gospel is said to be a failure, because certain gentlemen of professed culture and knowledge do not believe it. Well, there have been other things that have not been believed in by very important individuals, and yet they have turned out to be true. Before the trains ran, the old coachmen and farmers would not believe that an engine could be made to go on the rails, and to drag carriages behind it. According to the wise men of the time, everything was to go to the bad, and the engines would blow up the first time they started with a train. But they did not blow up, and everybody now smiles at what those learned gentlemen ventured then to say. Look at those who now tell us that the gospel is a failure. They are in the line of those whose principal object has been to refute all that went before them. If any of you shall live fifty years, you will see that the philosophy of to-day will be a football of contempt for the philosophy of that period. I have to say, with Paul, "What if some did not believe?" It is no new thing; for there have always been some who rejected the revelation of God. What then? You and I had better go on believing, and testing for ourselves, and proving the faithfulness of God. The gospel is no failure, as many of us know. 2. Has God failed to keep His promise to Israel because some Israelites did not believe? Paul says, No. He did bring Israel into the promised land, though all but two that came out of Egypt died through unbelief in the wilderness. A nation came up from their ashes, and God kept His covenant with His ancient people; and to-day He is keeping it. The "chosen seed of Israel's race" is "a remnant, weak and small"; but the day is coming when then they shall be gathered in; then shall also be the fulness of the Gentiles when Israel has come to own her Lord. 3. Because some do not believe, will God's promise therefore fail to be kept to those who do believe? I invite you to come and try. When two of John's disciples inquired of Jesus where He dwelt, He said to them, "Come and see." If any here will try Christ, as I tried Him, they will not tolerate a doubt. One said that she believed the Bible because she was acquainted with the Author of it, and you will believe the gospel if you are acquainted with the Saviour who brings it. 4. Will God be unfaithful to His Son if some do not believe? I thank God that I have no fear about that. "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied." Suppose that you wickedly say, "We will not have Christ to reign over us." If you think that you will rob Him of honour by your rejection, you make a great mistake. If you will not have Him, others will. This word shall yet become true, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ," &c. 5. If some do not believe, will God change the gospel to suit them? Ought we to change our preaching because of "the spirit of the age"? Never; unless it be to fight "the spirit of the age" more desperately than ever. We ask for no terms between Christ and His enemies except those, unconditional surrender to Him. The gospel cannot be altered to your taste; therefore alter yourself so as to meet its requirements. III. AN INDIGNANT REPLY to this horrible inference. 1. Paul gives a solemn negative: "God forbid." All the opponents of the gospel cannot move it by a hair's breadth; they cannot injure a single stone of this Divine building. 2. He utters a vehement protestation: "Yea, let God be true, but every man a liar." You know that if the majority goes in a particular direction, you are apt to say, "It must be so, for everybody says so." But what everybody says is not therefore true. If God says one thing, and every man in the world says another, God is true, and all men are false. God speaks the truth, and cannot lie. We are to believe God's truth if nobody else believes it. 3. He uses a Scriptural argument. He quotes what David had said in the Fifty-first Psalm, "That Thou mightest be justified in Thy sayings, and mightest overcome when Thou art judged." (1) God will be justified in everything that He has said. God shall also be justified when He judges and condemns men. (2) A very startling expression is used here: "That Thou mightest overcome when Thou art judged." Think of this enormous evil; here are men actually trying to judge the Divine judgments, and to sit as if they were the god of God. Still the verdict will be in God's favour. It would be proved that He had neither said anything untrue, nor done anything unjust. Conclusion: 1. I want the Lord's people to be brave about the things of God. There has been too much of yielding, and apologising, and compromising. 2. If you are opposed to God, I beseech you give up your opposition at once. This battle

cannot end well for you unless you yield yourself to God. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) **Let God be true, but every man a liar.**—*God true* :—The primary meaning of "truth" in Greek is openness: what is not concealed; but in Hebrew, that which sustains, which does not fail or disappoint our expectations. The true therefore is—I. THAT WHICH IS REAL as opposed to what is fictitious or imaginary. Jehovah is the true God, because He is really God, while the gods of the heathen are vanity and nothing. II. THAT WHICH COMPLETELY COMES UP TO ITS IDEA, or what it purports to be. A true man is a man in whom the idea of manhood is fully realised. The true God is He in whom is found all that Godhead imports. III. THAT IN WHICH THE REALITY CORRESPONDS TO THE MANIFESTATION. God is true because He really is what He declares Himself to be; because He is what He commands us to believe Him to be; and because all His declarations correspond to what really is. IV. THAT WHICH CAN BE DEPENDED UPON, which does not fail, or change, or disappoint. In this sense God is true as He is immutable and faithful. His promise cannot fail. His word never disappoints: it "abideth for ever." (*C. Hodge, D.D.*) *God's truth* :—1. Will survive all human lies. 2. Will be amply justified. 3. Will be triumphantly vindicated. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Standing to what God has said* :—I admire the spirit of the boy who mentioned something which his mother said. One said, "It is not so," and he said, "It is so; my mother said it." "But," said the other, "it is not so." Says he, "If mother said it, it is so; and if it is not so, it is so if mother said it." And I will stand to that with God. If God has said it, it is so, and you shall prove to a demonstration if you like it is not so; but it is so, and there will I stand. "And be a fool," says one. Yes, a fool; for such hath He chosen to seek to do things that make others who do not believe stand aghast: only believe thou, and stand thou to it, and it shall be impossible for thee, a child of God, to be driven to distrust thy Father. It ought to be so. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The goodness and wisdom of God's law unimpeachable* :—It has ever been held the highest wisdom for a man not merely to submit to necessity—necessity will make him submit—but to know and believe well that the stern thing which necessity had ordered was the wisest, the best, the thing wanted there. To cease his frantic pretension of scanning this great God's-world in his small fraction of a brain; to know that it had verily, though deep beyond his soundings, a just law, that the soul of it was good—that his part in it was to conform to the law of the whole, and in devout silence follow that; not questioning it, obeying it as unquestionable. (*T. Carlyle.*) *Ideal standards of duty* :—The apostle had been showing the Jews that they had utterly failed of becoming truly religious by means of the old law. And the question arose, "What! was the law, then, good for nothing?" The law was good, but man was weak; therefore it did not work out that which its interior spiritual tendency would have wrought out if it had been unchecked. But then God attempted to do what He was unable to do! If the law was dishonoured in the conduct of the Jews, how should the Lawgiver retain honour? The tendency of the Jewish objector was to defend himself by bringing down the character and government of God; and the apostle answered, "Let the justice and goodness of God remain untarnished, however it may affect men's reputation." And the doctrine which we deduce from this passage is—I. THE TENDENCY OF THE HEART TO SEEK TO DIMINISH THE INTENSITY OF SELF-CONDEMNATION BY LOWERING THE STANDARD OF DUTY. All sense of self-condemnation arises from a comparison of one's deeds, character, life and motives, with certain standards of duty. If there had been no law, there could have been no sense of violating law, and none, therefore, of sin. There is one thing which we bear less willingly than any other—namely, a sharp sense of shame in self-condemnation. There is no other feeling that seems to suffocate a man more than to be worried by his own accusing and condemning conscience. While, then, this feeling is so unbearable, it is scarcely surprising that men attempt to get rid of it. They pad their conduct, as it were, that the yoke may not bear so heavily where they feel sore. Therefore, men tell themselves more lies in this direction than in any other. They deliberately fool themselves—and for the same reason that men take opiates. "It is not good," said the physician, "that you should take opiates to remove that sharp pain. You had better remove the cause, and so get rid of the pain." "But," you say, "I must pursue my business; and, though it may not be the best thing, give me the opiate." Men will not, if they can help it, bear the ache of self-condemnation; and by every means in their power they are perpetually trying to get rid of it. The ordinary method is to impair that rule of conduct, or that ideal of light, which condemns them. They

attack that which attacks them. Men plead the force of circumstances for breaking the laws which are most painful to them. They attempt to show that they are not to blame. They plead that breaking the law is not very sinful. That is, to save themselves, they destroy the dignity and the importance of the law. Let us trace this tendency. 1. It begins in early life. (1) A child that will not obey his parents' injunctions begins, after a while, to find fault with the rigour by which he is held in check; and as he gets older he finds fault with, and endeavours to throw off, parental authority. "To be sure," he says, "I have gone forth at untimely hours, had my own way in contravention of express authority; but then, I am not so much to blame. Who could live in a family screwed up as this is? A man must have some room." What is all this but an attempt to excuse his own disobedience, by inveighing against the law under which the obedience takes place? (2) When the young go forth to the training ground of life, they manifest the same tendency. The truant and dullard at school turns against the master, and at last against the school. He declares that it is not his fault. Or, if he admits that it is his fault in part, he pleads the provocation; and so the rebellious boy at school tarnishes the good reputation of the teacher, and inveighs against the school. 2. It runs through industrial forms. (1) If in a trade or profession, a man prefers to sport rather than to work, and is indolent, and unsteady, when the pressure of blame and condemnation begins to come on him, he turns instantly to blame everybody and everything but his own self. Or perhaps the plea is urged that such and such a calling cannot be successfully followed without moral obliquity. What is this but destroying their reputation for the sake of shielding their own? 3. It finds its way into social relations. When men defy the public sentiment which expresses the social conscience of the community, and come under its ban, and begin to smart, they attack that sentiment. If it be a course of impurity that they have pursued, they charge sentiment with prudery; if they have been going in ways in which they have left truth far behind, they charge it with fanaticism. And, more than that, they do not believe there is anything in the community better than they are. 4. It pervades the pleas by which criminals seek to defend themselves. As men begin to violate the laws of the community, as they begin to suffer under the loss of reputation, they seek to excuse themselves from blame, and to fix it upon others. Even when the law cannot get its hand upon them; or when, getting it upon them, it cannot hold them; and when they begin to feel that the unwritten law, which no man can escape, the judgment of good men's thoughts, the wintry blast of good men's indignation round about them, and they are called "sharpers," and are treated as such, they complain that it is an indignity heaped upon them; that it is a wrong done to them, and say, "Society is wrongly organised. If it were better organised, business would be conducted differently, and men would act differently. But how can you expect that a man will be right when everything is organised on wrong principles?" 5. It manifests itself in men's arguments on the subject of vice. (1) Here is a man who says, "I am no more intemperate than anybody else. I am frank and open. I drink, and show it. Just go behind the door and see what those temperance men do." What is this but the plea of a man who, not satisfied with being a drunkard, is destroying the very ideal of temperance? (2) Here is a man who has utterly gone from chastity. That is bad enough; but that is not all. He says, "Impure, am I? Well, I think I have company enough in this world. No one is pure. It is because they cannot, and not because they will not, that they do not run into excesses." Such men stand inveighing against the memory of their very mother, and whelming the reputation of pure and noble sisters, and a man who has lost respect for womanhood in actual life may be considered as given over. (3) There are those who pursue the same course in regard to probity. They are not themselves truth speakers; neither do they believe that any man does speak the truth. "I am a swindler," says one. "But who is not? Every man has his price." And what does he do? He destroys the very ideal of honesty by declaring that nobody is honest. 6. It may also be traced in men's reasonings on the subject of religious truth. Men care very little what theology teaches, provided it does not come home to them, either as a restraint or as a criterion of judgment; but when they begin to be made uncomfortable; when for one or another reason the pulpit is a power, and they find it in the way of their ambition, or gain, or comfort; when theology begins to stir them up, and sit in judgment on them, then there is a strong tendency developed in them to find fault with the truth, and to justify themselves by adopting what they are pleased to call "a more liberal view." And so men find

fault with the fundamental principles of a moral government. And under such circumstances they go from church to church to find a more lenient pulpit. II. THE IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING OUR IDEAL OF DUTY IN SPITE OF ALL HUMAN IMPERFECTIONS. The destruction of ideal standards is utterly ruinous to our manhood. 1. What is an ideal? A perception of something higher and better than we have reached, either in single actions, or in our life and character. Do I need to ask you what your ideal is, ye that have sought in a thousand ways to reach that very conception? The musician is charmed with the song that he seems to hear angels sing; but when he attempts to write it down with his hands he curses the blundering rudeness of material things, by which he cannot incarnate so spiritual a thing as his thought. The true orator is a man whose unspoken speech is a thousand times better than his utterance. The true artist is a man who says, "Oh! if you could see what I saw when I first tried to make this, you would think this most homely." This excelsior of every soul; this sense of something finer, and nobler, and truer, and better—so long as this lasts a man can scarcely go down to the vulgarism. A man who is satisfied with himself because he is better than his fellow-men. You never thought as well as you ought to think. You never planned as nobly as you ought to plan. You never executed as well as you ought to execute. Over every production there ought to hover, perpetually, your blessed ideal, telling you, "Your work is poor—it should be better"; so that every day you should lift yourself higher and higher, with an everlasting pursuit of hope which shall only end in perfection when you reach the land beyond. 2. But what if some mephitic gas shall extinguish this candle of God which casts its light down on our path to guide us, and direct our course up? What if the breath of man, for whom it was sent, should blow it out, and he be left in darkness to sink down toward the beast that perishes? Woe be to that man whose ideal has gone out and left him to the vulgar level of common life without upward motive. And yet, that which our text reveals, and revealing condemns, is universal—namely, the attempt of men to find fault with law, or with God, the fountain of law, with the ideal of rectitude, rather than find fault with themselves. Nay, "Let God be true, but every man a liar." (*H. Ward Beecher.*)

Vers. 5–8. **But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say?**—*Man's sin and God's righteousness*:—1. Our unrighteousness may possibly commend the righteousness of God. 2. This result is involuntary, not meritorious. 3. Hence to suppose that sin is less punishable because good follows is a grievous error. 4. To persist in sin that good may come, is positively blasphemous and wicked. 5. Therefore God will righteously punish those who do so. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Man's sin and God's righteousness*:—1. Man's sin has occasioned the displays of God's righteousness. 2. Does not thereby lose its enormity. 3. Must, if not repented of, be avenged. 4. Otherwise all righteous judgment must cease. (*Ibid.*) **Is God unrighteous that taketh vengeance?** (text, and Gen. xviii. 25).—*God's attitude towards sin*:—1. God makes the wickedness and unbelief of men subservient to His glory. 2. Holds them responsible for their sins, notwithstanding the result. 3. Teaches that the morality of an action depends not upon the consequences of it, but upon its agreement or disagreement with His law. 4. Condemns the slanderous importation that the gospel sanctions the principle of doing evil that good may come. (*Ibid.*) *God's attitude towards sin*:—He—1. Overrules it; 2. Judges it; 3. Utterly condemns it. (*Ibid.*) *The heart's rest in the righteousness of God*:—Thousands of years part those two questions, yet in substance they are the same. The first occurs in a tender, sublime intercession; the second in a hard, fiery argumentation. Note—I. THAT BOTH REFER TO THE RETRIBUTIVE PROVIDENCE OF GOD AS DECLARED IN PARTICULAR AND DECISIVE ACTS. Both acts were determined by the moral conditions of men, though their effects operated in different spheres. One was temporal, the other a spiritual judgment. 1. Let us try and get their position. Think of Abraham when God divulged to him His appalling purpose. Think of Paul writing with the full knowledge that God had placed Israel under a ban. In different ways these two men were bidden look into the treasure-house of Divine wrath. They had to stand on the shadowed side of the providence of God. And the hand of Him they knew as love placed them there. 2. Both felt the moral pressure upon their reason and conscience, and were compelled to ask, Is it right for God to do this? One tried to turn judgment aside, so forcibly did the difficulty press itself home. Paul's perplexities were more intricate, and his endeavour to extricate his reason and conscience is one great

wrestling with the Spirit of Truth. 3. Now, looking into these difficulties of Abraham and Paul, do we not recognise our own? Our thoughts and feeling form themselves, almost without our will, into the old interrogation, "Wilt Thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?" Are we not ready to expostulate, "That be far from Thee to do after this manner"? In how many sweeping calamities the righteous are slain with the wicked. Earthquake, storm, flood, fire, make no elections; they take any and all alike. In a commercial crisis often some of the best men are among the wreckage, ignominiously huddled with the rogues. Where is the answer to this? I do not find one in the Old Testament narrative. There is one streak of light. Lot was saved. Yet, in view of the after history, one is ready to ask, Why? And if we take Paul's questions of sin, responsibility, and punishment, our bafflings are, if anything, increased. The impenetrable facts are with us. The fact of sin: what theologians call original sin, and men of science heredity. Millions are born castaways, come into the world under wrath. What about their responsibility? What about their destiny? II. THE ULTIMATE TRUTH UPON WHICH THOSE WHO PUT THEM RELIED FOR A SOLUTION. God did not leave them without answer; nor has He left us without one. Their answer is ours, for the Bible is for all time. We shall find our answer in the questions themselves; for they contain a truth quite equal to the removal of doubts, though not of difficulties. 1. Abraham and Paul grasped the eternal righteousness of God. That became a formulated conception of God's character. Reason and conscience built on it, and could not be shaken. It is for us to make that our own. Before we pass judgment, or seek to form a judgment on any section of human history, or any problem of human life and destiny, let us take fast hold of the manifested truth—God is righteous. That is larger than the statement—God does righteously. It means more than He does no wrong things. It means, He cannot do a wrong thing. And then, moreover, His wisdom is such that He cannot commit a blunder. 2. These questions not only express a truth of God's character, but also the moral requisition of the creature-consciousness. Reason and conscience both demand that the Judge of all the earth shall be righteous. And God has not so constituted man that he may mock Him. And notice in connection with this that "The Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" Does not that look as if God craved the sympathy and approval of man? He would not have those intuitive demands which He has put into souls violated by deeds of His. The Creator would be justified in the eyes of His creature. God does not rebuke the demand that He shall do right. And when we fully apprehend, as did these men, that God is righteous, every special act of His will be tried by that conclusion. The thorniest questions that can ever arise must have their answers in the righteousness of God. III. THE PROFOUND MORAL ACQUIESCENCE IN THE DIVINE WILL WHICH THE TEXTS REVEAL. The harassed reason of patriarch and apostle found rest in the eternal righteousness of God. 1. We must always start there, and take it as our lamp to light our feet along winding and perilous paths, and seldom shall we stumble or lose our way. It is not a truth for reflection alone, but for practical guidance, and should command our acquiescence in the Divine will. 2. Not that we are to cease inquiry. Only we should question with faith in our hearts; especially the faith that God is righteous. 3. The acquiescence spoken of does not mean unconcern as to the fate of men. It does not mean indifference to sin and sorrow, and suffering and destiny. Abraham cared. How he pleaded! Clearly we are now amid the overwhelming mysteries of moral government. We see that men may become so bad that nothing is left, even for God, but a determining stroke of wrath. But we must not be content to leave men to their doom. There must be no willingness that they should perish. God's will is that they should be saved. Paul said, "I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart concerning reprobated Israel." (*W. Hubbard.*) **God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world?**—*God's righteousness and future judgment*:—God's righteousness—I. IS THE BASIS OF THE HOPE OF FUTURE JUDGMENT. Things are not right now if viewed from a strictly temporal standpoint; for the good often get the worst of it, and the bad the best of it. The hope that these inequalities will be adjusted at the Judgment has been the comfort and mainstay of God's saints under both dispensations. II. NECESSITATES THIS JUDGMENT. 1. If the world's affairs are administered by a Righteous Governor, then the things that are now manifestly wrong *must* at some period be put right, and the date assigned by the Righteous Governor of the world is the Day of Judgment. 2. Having assigned that date, God's righteousness pledged Him to keep it. God is, so to speak, committed to it, and He is not "the son of man that He

should repent." III. WILL GOVERN ITS DECISIONS. Men will be judged equitably. Judicial decisions are now often inequitable—because some legal technicality stands in the way; or because all the facts are not forthcoming, or some of them are not placed in their true light; or because the eloquence of the advocate, or something about the accused, influences the jury. But then the awards will be according to the merits of the case, all the circumstances of which will be naked and open. Conclusion: We may take comfort from this doctrine—1. Amid all the perplexities of the present. We do not estimate things by their momentary appearance, nor a man by a solitary action. We must therefore estimate God and His procedure comprehensively. He has all eternity to work in, and when we take the larger view we shall acknowledge that the Judge of all the earth will do right. 2. Amid all the perplexities concerning the future. Whatever becomes of the wicked the Judge of all the earth will do right. (*J. W. Burn.*) *Justice and judgment*:—The following story is told of Judge Gray, now in the United States Supreme Court:—A man was brought before him who was justly charged with being an offender of the meanest sort. Through some technicality the judge was obliged honourably to discharge him, but as he did so he chose the time to say what he thought of the matter. "I believe you guilty," he said, "and would wish to condemn you severely, but through a petty technicality I am obliged to discharge you. I know you are guilty, and so do you; and I wish you to remember that you will some day pass before a better and a wiser Judge, when you will be dealt with according to justice, and not according to law." *The standard of God's justice*:—In the reign of King Edward the First there was much abuse in the traffic of all sorts of drapery, much wrong done betwixt man and man by reason of the diversity of their measures, every man measuring his cloth by his own yard, which the king perceiving, being a goodly proper man, took a long stick in his hand, and having taken the length of his own arm, made proclamation through the kingdom, that ever after the length of that stick should be the measure to measure by, and no other. Thus God's justice is nothing else but a conformity to His being, the pleasure of His will; so that the counsel of His will is the standard of His justice, whereunto all men should regulate themselves as well in commutative as distributive justice, and so much the more righteous than his neighbour shall every man appear, by how much he is proximate in this rule, and less righteous as he is the more remote. (*J. Spencer.*)

Ver. 8. **And not rather. . . . Let us do evil that good may come.**—*Doing evil that good may come*:—I. ALMIGHTY GOD CAN AND OFTEN DOTH OVERRULE EVIL ACTIONS TO HIS OWN GLORY, AND CAUSE BAD MEANS TO CONDUCE TO A GOOD END. 1. This is sufficiently intimated in the beginning of this chapter, which gave occasion to the reflection made in the text. The Jews had been favoured with special advantages for the knowing the Messiah, yet they rejected Him to their ruin. But yet their sin illustrated God's justice in punishing them for their crime; and by giving occasion to the apostles to turn from them to the Gentiles, it proved a means of advancing God's glory. The Gentiles, on the other hand, had been grievous sinners; yet upon their hearing the gospel preached many of them embraced it, which likewise gave occasion to the magnifying the grace of God towards them in forgiving and receiving them into His favour. This proved the—1. Occasion of the Jews imputing to Paul the principle of doing evil that good may come (*cf.* chap. vi. 1). 2. Scripture furnishes many instances of the like kind. The book of Esther seems to have been written to declare the wisdom and goodness of God, in overruling the pride and malice of a wicked man to His own glory, and the good of His Church. The greatest sin that ever was committed, the crucifying the Son of God, was by the Divine wisdom and goodness overruled, to become a means of the greatest good. 3. And the reason of all this is evident. That Being who seeth all things at one view, who discerneth the tendency and consequence of every action, and who hath all power in His hands, can easily outwit and overreach the craftiest of men, and dispose their designs to other purposes. And as His goodness is equal to His power and wisdom, we may safely conclude that He will govern affairs in such wise as to bring good out of evil. So we argue from the perfection of His nature, that He never would have permitted evil to have come into the world unless He could have overruled it to wise and good ends. II. NOTWITHSTANDING ALL THIS, IT IS A DETESTABLE PRINCIPLE, THAT UNLAWFUL MEANS MAY BE USED IN ORDER TO THE BRINGING ABOUT AN END THAT IS GOOD. You see with what abhorrence the apostle in the text disclaims it. It is such an open

defiance to God and goodness; such a flat contradiction to truth and reason, as well as to Christianity, that it very well became him thus to express himself. 1. Paul has elsewhere testified his sense of this matter (Acts xxvi. 11; 1 Tim. i. 13). And Christ also (John xvi. 2). And as the New, so the Old Testament also hath fully born its testimony (Job xiii. 7-11). 2. But, indeed, we may certainly conclude without the affirmation of an apostle or prophet, that this is a detestable principle. It is absurd and self-contradictory. To design, and to do good, is the proper business of a reasonable being. It is the glory of God Himself, and is what He requires of all, whom He hath made after His own image. Now that is good, either to design or do, which is according to the will of the Creator; so that to do evil, in order to the doing good, is to contradict and thwart His will in order to the performing it; it is to break His commandments in order to the keeping them. In a word, it is to do that which is directly opposite to the end we profess to aim at. For no evil has in its own nature a tendency to good, but to the contrary. III. IT IS A SLANDEROUS, AND THEREFORE AN UNJUST AND DETESTABLE PRACTICE, TO CHARGE THIS PRINCIPLE UPON THOSE WHO NOT ONLY DISOWN IT, BUT WHO GIVE NO JUST OCCASION FOR SUCH AN IMPUTATION. This is in truth so lewd a principle that those who do act upon it will probably not own to it. But, however, if they do act upon it, then it is no injustice to say they do. But if, on the contrary, they not only disavow the principle, but give no just ground for such a charge, then it is without all question a slanderous report. So St. Paul affirms in the text, using the same word, which, when applied to God, is rendered "blasphemy"; and when to men, "evil-speaking," or "calumniating." And those Jews who raised this slanderous report, when they knew, or at least might easily have known that it was a slander, were justly liable to damnation for so doing; so that God would punish them, not only for rejecting the gospel when preached to them, but also for calumniating the doctrine of Christianity, and slandering its preachers. (*Bp. Bradford.*) *Doing evil that good may come impossible*:—He who does evil that good may come, pays a toll to the devil to let him into heaven. (*Guesses at Truth.*) *We must not do evil that good may come*:—I. This will appear from THE NATURE OF MORAL GOOD AND EVIL. 1. To denominate an action morally good there must be a concurrence of all conditions requisite thereunto. If the object be lawful, the manner of the performance regular, and it be fitly circumstantiated, yet if it be done for a wicked end, this mars the action and renders it sinful; and for the same reason let the intention be never so good, the end never so excellent, yet, if the thing we do is forbidden by God's laws, it is a vicious action. 2. Nay, further, such is the contrariety between the good and evil, that what is really evil cannot be chosen as a fit means to produce good, any more than darkness can beget light, or false premises infer a true conclusion, or an evil tree bring forth good fruit. To do evil to obtain good is as if a man should put his hand into the flame to cool it. II. To do evil that good may come is A GREAT AFFRONT TO AND DISTRUST OF THE DIVINE PROVIDENCE AND GOVERNMENT OF THE WORLD. So saith Job, "Will ye speak wickedly for God, and talk deceitfully for Him?" (xiii. 7). 1. Doth He stand in need of our sins to help Him out at a dead lift to bring His designs to pass? Cannot He preserve His religion without our venturing on a special occasion to strain a point, and transgress our duty for the sake of it? 2. This is seen in those who, fondly imagining that our Saviour and His apostles had not wrought miracles enough for confirmation of their doctrine, have coined other miracles; which pious frauds are most highly dishonourable to our Saviour, intimating as if His gospel had been imperfect, unless men had interposed their own wit and knavery to complete it. 3. Let us but suppose God to have done wisely and considerately in all that He hath commanded or forbidden, and it must then necessarily follow that we must never go against His will, though it may seem to tend to never so great or good an end. III. Add to this THE EXAMPLES IN SCRIPTURE OF GOD'S CONDEMNING WHAT HATH BEEN DONE AGAINST HIS COMMAND, THOUGH WITH A GOOD INTENTION AND FOR A WORTHY END. In the Old Testament, not to insist on the case of Uzzah, you find King Saul (1 Sam. 15) receiving commandment from God to destroy all Amalekites. He very zealously sets about the work, but saves the best and fattest of the cattle to offer them for a sacrifice. This one act of disobedience, notwithstanding the piety of his intention, cost him his kingdom. "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice," &c. In the New Testament we read of Peter, who, out of great love to his Master when apprehended, "drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest's, and smote off his ear." It was done in defence of Christ; it was against unjust violence. Yet mark our Saviour's rebuke (Matt. xxvi. 52). IV. THE ILL CONSEQUENCES OF

SUCH A CONCESSION AS THIS, that evil may be done for a good end. This one principle sets us free from all authority either Divine or human, and every one may do whatever he thinks fit, so his intention and end be but good. 1. What we are to do, or to avoid, if this doctrine be admitted for true, we are not to learn from God's law. Things are either good or evil according as they seem to us, and our own judgment is the measure of lawful and unlawful, and thus we are wholly our own masters and lawgivers. 2. Nay, this principle plainly overthrows all justice and faith amongst men, all peace and security in societies, and makes all government precarious, since every one is an arbitrary subject, and may obey or resist the laws as they appear to himself to be for or against the common good; and every man's life and fortune is at my disposal, if once I think it most for the glory of God and the safety of religion that they should be taken away. You know our Saviour tells His disciples of some that should arise, who would think they did God good service in killing them. According to this doctrine St. Paul was innocent when he was so mad against the Church. (*B. Calamy, D.D.*) *Right not to be attained by doing wrong*:—We ought to think much more of walking in the right path, than of reaching our end. We should desire virtue more than success. If by one wrong deed we could accomplish the liberation of millions, and in no other way, we ought to feel that this good, for which perhaps we had prayed with an agony of desire, was denied us by God, was reserved for other times and other hands. (*Channing.*) *Right should not connive with wrong*:—Yield to no established rules if they involve a lie. Do not do evil that good may come of it. "Consequences!"—this is the devil's argument. Leave consequences to God; but do right. If friends fail thee, do the right. If foemen surround thee, do the right. Be genuine, real, sincere, true, upright, godlike. The world's maxim is trim your sails and yield to circumstances. But if you would do any good in your generation, you must be made of sterner stuff, and help make your times rather than be made by them. You must not yield to customs, but, like the anvil, endure all blows until the hammers break themselves. When misrepresented, use no crooked means to clear yourself. Clouds do not last long. If in the course of duty you are tried by the distrust of friends, gird up your loins, and say in your heart, I was not driven to virtue by the encouragement of friends, nor will I be repelled from it by their coldness. Finally, be just and fear not; "corruption wins not more than honesty"; truth lives and reigns when falsehood dies and rots. (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*)

Vers. 9–20. **What then? Are we better than they? No, . . . they are all under sin.**—*Nominal Christians compared with heathen*:—1. Have much advantage every way (ver. 2). 2. Are no better. 3. Are all alike under sin. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Man under sin*, inasmuch as—I. He is UNDER THE IMPUTATION OF SIN. And whose sin? Adam's; for he had been placed by his Maker in the situation of head and representative of all his descendants. And because he rendered himself guilty, therefore we, being in him and identified with him, were made sharers of his guilt. This, of course, is a statement against which the pride of human reason will rebel. But if you will listen to the Word of God, turn to chap. v. 12, &c. And what puts this matter beyond all doubt is the way in which all through that passage Paul represents our sin and condemnation in Adam, as parallel and as correspondent to our righteousness and salvation by Christ. He tells you here, that just as believers are accounted righteous in Christ's righteousness, so they were held as sinners on account of Adam's sin. As Christ's obedience now justifies them, because accounted theirs, so was Adam's disobedience. II. HIS NATURE IS UNDER THE DEGRADING AND POLLUTING INFLUENCE OF SIN. Now this also he inherits from Adam. "Original sin is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam; whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil" (Art. ix.; Gen. vi. 5, viii. 21; Psa. li. 5; Rom. vii. 18, viii. 7). In support of this we may appeal—1. To the individual conscience. 2. To the page of history. 3. To the witness of travellers. 4. To the reports of newspapers. III. HE IS HELD IN BONDAGE BY THE TYRANNY OF SIN. This is more than being depraved and corrupt: it is a positive enslaving of the will. Man cannot of himself turn from evil to God. The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and good works, to faith and calling upon God. Wherefore we have no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us when we have that good will" (Art. x.; Rom. v. 6;

Eph. ii. 1; 1 Cor. ii. 14). 1. Well may this thought stir us earnestly to cry to God to send down His Spirit, and give us the strength He only can communicate. 2. Sin, indeed, would whisper, "You can do nothing, and therefore you need not care; the fault is not your own." Perish the thought! No, rather say, "I can do nothing; therefore, O God, create Thou a clean heart and renew a right spirit within me." IV. HE IS UNDER THE CONDEMNATION AND THE CURSE OF SIN. 1. As a partaker of Adam's guilt, he is included in the sentence of Adam's punishment. 2. As he is corrupt, he incurs the wrath due to his own iniquity. 3. As one sold under sin, he must, if left to himself, be consigned to a hopeless state of misery (Eph. ii. 3; Rom. vii. 5, vi. 23). Conclusion: 1. Have we felt these truths so as to cry, "What must I do to be saved"? That is the question which constitutes the first step in the way of salvation. 2. The gospel brings us instead of Adam's guilt, Christ's righteousness; instead of inherent corruption, the counteracting balm of the Holy Spirit; instead of the bondage of sin, "the glorious liberty of the children of God"; instead of "the wages of sin," which "is death," the "gift of God, eternal life." (*J. Harding, M.A.*) *Sin as revealed by conscience and Scripture*:—I. PAUL HAD APPEALED TO THE CONSCIENCE OF THE JEWS, and in chap. ii. affirmed and enlarged upon their guilt. He can scarcely be said to have proved it; he had only charged them with it; and yet through the conscience of those whom we address it is possible that a charge may no sooner be uttered than conviction may come on the back of it. There is often a power in a bare statement which is not at all bettered but rather impaired by reasoning. If what you say of a man agree with his own experience, there is a weight in your simple affirmation which needs no enforcing. It was this which mostly gained acceptance for the apostles. They revealed to men the secrets of their own hearts; and what the inspired teachers said they were, they felt themselves to be. This manifestation of the truth unto the conscience is the grand instrument still. That obstinacy of unbelief, which we vainly attempt to carry by the power of any elaborate demonstration, may give way, both with the untaught and the cultivated, to the bare statement of the preacher, when he simply avers the ungodliness of the human heart. II. HE NOW REFERS THE JEWS TO THEIR OWN SCRIPTURES, and, in so doing, he avails himself of a peculiarly proper instrument. Thus Christ expounded what was written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in almost every interview the apostles had with the Hebrews, you will meet with this as a peculiarity which is absent when Gentiles only are addressed—*e.g.*, Stephen, Peter, Paul at Antioch, Thessalonica, &c. He who was all things to all men was a Jew among the Jews. He reasoned with them on their own principles, and nowhere more frequently than in this Epistle. III. IT IS THIS AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE BIBLE AND CONSCIENCE WHICH STAMPS UPON THE BOOK OF GOD ONE OF ITS MOST SATISFYING EVIDENCES. It is this perhaps more than anything else which draws the interest and the notice of men towards it. For there is no way of fixing the attention of man so powerfully as by holding up to him a mirror of himself; and no wisdom which he more prizes than that which by its piercing and intelligent glance can open to him the secrecies of his own heart, and force him to recognise a marvellous accordancy between its positions and all the varieties of his own intimate and home-felt experience. The question, then, before us is, Does this passage bear such an accordancy with the real character of man? It abounds in affirmations of sweeping universality, and a test of their truth or of their falsehood is to be found in every heart. The apostle has here made a most adventurous commitment of himself; for the matters here touched upon all lie within the well-known chambers of a man's own consciousness, and one single case of disagreement would be enough to depose him from all the credit which he has ever held in the estimation of the world. Of course, from the nature of the case, a withdrawment must be conceded in behalf of those who are under the gospel, yet we are prepared to assert that Paul has not overcharged the account that he has given of the depravity of those who are under law—whether it be the law of conscience, or of Moses, or even of the purer morality of Christ—insomuch that all who refuse the mysteries of His grace are universally in the wrong. Be assured, then, that there is a delusion in all the complacency associated with self-righteousness. It is the want of a godly principle which essentially vitiates the whole: and additional to this, with all the generosities and equities which have done so much for your reputation among men, there is a selfishness that lurks in your bosom; or a vanity that swells and inflames it; or a preference of your own object to that of others, which may lead you to acts or words of unfeeling severity; or a regard for some

particular gratification, coupled with a regardlessness for every interest which lieth in the way, that may render you, in the estimation of Him who pondereth the heart, as remote a wanderer as he on the path of whose visible history there occurred in other times the atrocities of savage cruelty and savage violence. It were barbarous to tell you so had we no remedy to offer. Life has much to vex and to trouble it; and it were really cruel to add to the pressure of a creature so beset and borne in upon by telling him of his worthlessness, did we not stand before him charged with the tidings of his possible renovation (vers. 21-26). (*T. Chalmers, D.D.*) *Sin: revealed by conscience*:—A fashionable lady entered church in a strange place, and heard a sermon on human depravity. During the week the preacher called upon her, when she told him she did not believe in the doctrine of his sermon. He asked the lady to test the subject by reviewing her life, alone before God, to see if all her acts had been done from right motives, which she promised to do. The next day the preacher called again, when the lady confessed that she did not find one bright spot of conscious love to God in all her past life. A look within had convinced her of the truth of the doctrine. Feeling now the disease of sin, she went to the Great Physician and found a cure. *Sin: revealed by grace*:—When the light of God's grace comes into your heart, it is something like the opening of the windows of an old cellar that has been shut up for many days. Down in that cellar, which has not been opened for many months, are all kinds of loathsome creatures, and a few sickly plants blanched by the darkness. The walls are dark, and damp by the trail of reptiles: it is a horrid, filthy place, which no one would willingly enter. You may walk there in the dark very securely, and, except now and then for the touch of some slimy creature, you would not believe the place was so bad and filthy. Open those shutters, clean a pane of glass, let a little light in, and now see how a thousand noxious things have made this place their habitation! Sure, it was not the light that made this place so horrible; but it was the light that showed how horrible it was before. So let God's grace just open a window, and let the light into a man's soul, and he will stand astonished to see at what a distance he is from God. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The reign of sin*:—I. UNIVERSAL. 1. Over all men. 2. Over every faculty of man. II. RUINOUS. 1. To happiness. 2. To peace. 3. To moral power. 4. To hope. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Superior sinners*:—I remember a gentleman taking exception to an address based upon this text. He said, "Do you mean to say that there is no difference between an honest man and a dishonest one; between a sober man and a temperate man?" "No," I remarked, "I did not affirm that there was no room for comparison between such cases; but my position is that if two men were standing here, the one intemperate and the other sober, I should say of the one, "This is an intemperate sinner, and the other a sober sinner." My friend did not know how to meet the difficulty, but answered, "Well, I don't like such teaching." Very quietly I replied, "Then I will make some concession, and meet your difficulty. I will admit that there are many 'superior sinners,' and that you are a 'superior sinner.'" I shall not soon forget my friend's expression of countenance when he had taken stock of the argument. (*H. Varley.*) *Human depravity*:—I. UNIVERSAL. Jew and Gentile. None righteous, wise, faithful. II. TOTAL. In—1. Word; 2. Deed; 3. Thought; 4. Purpose. III. RUINOUS. All—1. Guilty; 2. Condemned; 3. Without hope. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Human depravity*:—I. WHEREIN IT CONSISTS (vers. 9-18). II. HOW IT IS DEMONSTRATED. By the law (ver. 20). III. WHAT IS THE EFFECT (ver. 19)? (*Ibid.*) *Human depravity: its deceitfulness and the occasion of its manifestation*:—In a vessel filled with muddy water, the thickness visibly subsided to the bottom, and left the water purer and purer, until at last it seemed perfectly limpid. The slightest motion, however, brought the sediment again to the top; and the water became thick and turbid as before. "Here," said Gotthold, when he saw it, "we have an emblem of the human heart. The heart is full of the mud of sinful lusts and carnal desires; and the consequence is, that no pure water—that is, good and holy thoughts—can flow from it. It is, in truth, a miry pit and slough of sin, in which all sorts of ugly reptiles are bred and crawl. Many a one, however, is deceived by it, and never imagines his heart half so wicked as it really is, because sometimes its lusts are at rest, and sink to the bottom. But this lasts only so long as he is without opportunity or incitement to sin. Let that occur, and worldly lusts rise so thick, that his whole thoughts, words, and works show no trace of anything but slime and impurity. One is meek as long as he is not thwarted; cross him, and he is like powder ignited by the smallest spark, and blazing up with a loud report and destructive effect.

Another is temperate so long as he has no jovial companions; a third chaste while the eyes of men are upon him. *Human depravity: its outward development from latent germs of evil*:—A few years ago, a house was built at Newcastle-upon-Tyne; and the earth which was dug out of the foundations was thrown over a piece of ground in front, intended for a garden. The following spring a number of caper plants came up: they were not common in that part of the country, and their appearance excited great surprise. Upon inquiry, it was found that, years before, that ground had been a public garden: it therefore appeared certain that those seeds had remained dormant while buried deep in the earth, and had sprung to life as soon as they were brought within the influence of heat and light. How like to our hearts! What seeds of evil may lie dormant in them! (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Human depravity: its universality*:—The greatest of unregenerate men are as much in need of new hearts as the meanest of their fellows. There be some men that are born into this world master-spirits, who walk about it as giants, wrapped in mantles of light and glory. I refer to the poets, men who rise aloft, like Colossi, mightier than we, seeming to be descended from celestial spheres. There be others of acute intellect, who, searching into mysteries of science, discover things that have been hidden from the creation of the world; men of keen research, and mighty erudition; and yet, of each of these—poet, philosopher, metaphysician, and great discoverer—it must be said, "The carnal mind is enmity against God!" Ye may train an unrenewed man, ye may make his intellect almost angelic, ye may strengthen his soul until he shall unravel mysteries in a moment; ye may make him so mighty, that he can read the iron secrets of the eternal hills, tearing the hidden truth from the bowels of ancient marvels; ye may give him an eye so keen that he can penetrate the arcana of rocks and mountains; ye may add a soul so potent, that he may slay the giant Sphinx, that had for ages troubled the mightiest men of learning; yet, when ye have done all, his mind shall be a depraved one, and his carnal heart shall still be in opposition to God, unless the Holy Spirit shall create him anew in Christ Jesus. (*Ibid.*) *The importance of civil government to society*:—I. THE APOSTLE'S CONCLUSION IS, THAT BEFORE GOD ALL THE WORLD IS GUILTY, and if we single out those verses which place man in his simple relationship to God, we shall see the justice of the sentence. 1. "There is none righteous, no, not one." To be held as having kept the law of our country, we must keep the whole of it. It is not necessary that we accumulate the guilt of treason, forgery, murder. One of these acts is enough to condemn. A hundred deeds of obedience will not efface or expiate one of disobedience; and we have only to plead for the same obedience to a Divine that we render to a human administration, to prove that there is none righteous before God. 2. "There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God." No man who has not submitted himself to the doctrine of justification by faith has any clear knowledge of the ground on which he rests his acceptance with God. He may have some obscure conception of His mercy, but he has never struck the compromise between His mercy and His justice. What becomes of all that which stamps authority upon a law, and exhibits the Majesty of a Lawgiver, is a matter of which he has no understanding, and he does not care to understand it. He is seeking after many things, but not seeking after God. When did your efforts in this way ever go beyond an empty round of observances? 3. "They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable, there is none that doeth good; no, not one." We do not say that they have gone out of the way of honour, equity, or neighbourliness. But they are all out of the way of godliness. The prophet does not affirm that we have turned every one to a way either of injustice or cruelty; but he counts it condemnation enough that we have turned every one to his own way—a way of independence of God, if not of iniquity against our fellows in society. It is this which renders all the works of mere natural men so unprofitable, that is, of no value in the reckoning of eternity. They want the great moral infusion which makes them valuable. There is nothing of God in them. II. We now pass onward to another set of charges—which may not be so easy to substantiate—of OFFENCES AGAINST THE DEAREST INTERESTS OF SOCIETY. It is true that the apostle here drops the style of universality, and quotes David's charges, not against the race, but against his enemies. But yet it will be found that though the picture of atrocity may not in our day be so broadly exhibited as in ruder periods, yet that the principles of it are still at work; that though law and civilisation and interest may have stopped the mouth of many a desolating volcano, yet do the fiery materials still exist in the bosom of society. So that our nature, though here personified by the apostle into a monster, with a throat like an

open sepulchre, emitting everything offensive; and a tongue practised in the arts of deceitfulness; and lips from which the gall of malignity ever drops in unceasing distillation; and a mouth full of venomous asperity; and feet that run to assassination as a game; and with the pathway on which she runs marked by the ruin and distress that attend upon her progress; and with a disdainful aversion in her heart to peace; and with an aspect of defiance to the God that gave all her parts and all her energies—though this sketch was originally taken by the Psalmist from prowling banditti, yet has the apostle, by admitting it into his argument, stamped a perpetuity upon it, and made it universal—giving us to understand that if such was the character of man, as it stood nakedly out among the hostilities of a barbarous people, such also is the real character of man among the regularities and the monotonous decencies of modern society. To illustrate: Oaths were more frequent at one time than they are now, but while there may be less of profaneness in the months, there may be as much as ever in the heart. Murder in the act may be less frequent now, but if he who hateth his brother be a murderer, it may be fully as foul and frequent in the principle. Actual theft may be no longer practised by him who gives vent to an equal degree of dishonesty through the chicaneries of merchandise. And thus may there lurk under the disguises of well-bred citizenship enough to prove that, with the duties of the second table as with the first, man has wandered far from the path of rectitude. III. ALL THIS, WHILE IT GIVES A MOST HUMILIATING ESTIMATE OF OUR SPECIES, SHOULD SERVE TO ENHANCE TO OUR MINDS THE BLESSINGS OF REGULAR GOVERNMENT. Let our police and magistrates depose to the effect it would have upon society, were civil guardianship dissolved. Were all the restraints of order driven in, conceive the effect, and then compute how little there is of moral, and how much there is of mere animal restraint in the apparent virtues of human society. There is a twofold benefit in such a contemplation. It will enhance to every Christian mind the cause of loyalty, and lead him to regard the power that is, as the minister of God to him for good. And it will also guide him through many delusions to appreciate justly the character of man; to distinguish aright between the semblance of principle and its reality. IV. Learn THREE LESSONS from all that has been said. 1. As to the theology of this question. We trust you perceive how much and how little it is that can be gathered from the comparative peace and gentleness of modern society; how much is due to the physical restraints that are laid on by this world's government, and how little is due to the moral restraints that are laid on by the unseen government of Heaven: proving that human nature is more like the tractableness of an animal led about by a chain, than of an animal inwardly softened into docility. On this point observation and orthodoxy are at one; and one of the most convincing illustrations which the apostle can derive to his own doctrine may be taken from the testimony of legal functionaries. Let them simply aver what the result would be if all the earthly safeguards of law and of government were driven away; and they are just preaching orthodoxy to our ears. 2. The very same train of argument which goes to enlighten the theology of this subject, serves also to deepen and establish the principles of loyalty. That view of the human character, upon which it is contended, by the divine, that unless it is regenerated there can be no meetness for heaven, is the very same with that view of it upon which it is contended, by the politician, that unless it is restrained there will be no safety from crime and violence along the course of the pilgrimage which leads to it. An enlightened Christian recognises the hand of God in all the shelter that is thrown over him from the fury of the natural elements; and he equally recognises it in all the shelter that is thrown over him from the fury of the moral elements by which he is surrounded. Had he a more favourable view of our nature he might not look on government as so indispensable; but, with the view that he actually has, he cannot miss the conclusion of its being the ordinance of Heaven for the Church's good upon earth; and he rejoices in the authority of human laws as an instrument in the hand of God for the peace of His sabbaths, and the peace of His sacraments. 3. Let our legislators recognise the value of true religion. When Solomon says that it is righteousness which exalteth a nation, he means something of a deeper and more sacred character than the mere righteousness of society. Cut away the substratum of godliness, and how, we ask, will the secondary and the earth-born righteousness be found to thrive on the remaining soil which nature supplies for rearing it? But with many, and these too the holders of a great and ascendant influence in our land, godliness is puritanism; and thus is it a possible thing that in their hands the alone aliment of public virtue may be withheld, or turned into poison. The patent way to disarm Nature of her ferocities

is to Christianise her. For note—(1) Though social virtue and loyalty may exist in the upper walks of life apart from godliness—yet godliness, in the hearts of those who have the brunt of all the common and popular temptations to stand against, is the main and effective hold that we have upon them for securing the righteousness of their lives. (2) The despisers of godliness are the enemies of the true interest of our nation; and it is possible that, under the name of Methodism, that very instrument may be put away which can alone recall the departing virtues of our land. (3) Where godliness exists, loyalty exists; and no plausible delusion—no fire of their own kindling, lighted at the torch of false or spurious patriotism, will ever eclipse the light of this plain authoritative Scripture—"Honour the king, and meddle not with those who are given to change." (4) Though Christianity may only work the salvation of a few, it raises the standard of morality among many. The reflex influence of one sacred character upon his vicinity may soften, and purify, and overawe many others, even where it does not spiritualise them. This is encouragement to begin with. (5) Alarming as the aspect of the times is, and deeply tainted and imbued as the minds of many are with infidelity, and widely spread as the habit has become of alienation from all the ordinances of religion, yet the honest and persevering good-will of one imbued with the single-hearted benevolence of the gospel will always meet with respect. He who, had he met a minister of religion or of the state, would have cursed him, had he met the Sabbath-school teacher who ventured across his threshold might have tried to bear a repulsive front against him, but would have found it to be impossible. Here is a feeling which even the irreligion of the times has not obliterated, and it has left, as it were, an open door of access, through which we might at length find our way to the landing-place of a purer and better generation. (*T. Chalmers, D.D.*) **There is none righteous, no, not one.**—*None righteous:*—Had there been one righteous, God would have found him out. (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) **There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.**—*Human ignorance and perversity:*—I. THERE IS NONE THAT UNDERSTANDETH. 1. What? Ignorance is not affirmed of many things of more or less importance. A man may be an accomplished scientist, a profound scholar, widely read in general literature, and yet not understand—(1) His guilt; (2) His duty; (3) His responsibility; (4) His Saviour; (5) His destiny. 2. Why? Because—(1) He does not want to. Ignorance is fancied bliss. He is not troubled by qualms of conscience, a sense of God's anger, an anticipation of judgment. A practical knowledge of these things would trouble him. (2) He will not; and that in spite of the witness of both Nature and Revelation. He might understand if he would. II. THERE IS NONE THAT SEEKETH AFTER GOD. There are many who "seek after" matters infinitely less important—temporal profit, pleasure, &c. 1. The folly of this. (1) The sick will not seek after their Physician. (2) The ignorant after their Teacher. (3) Sinners after their Saviour. 2. The necessity and blessedness of reversing this. (1) God must be sought, for men have lost Him. (2) When sought, God will be found—and as all that the soul can possibly want. (*J. W. Burn.*) **They are all gone out of the way.**—*Practical error:*—I. Its SOURCE. II. Its MANIFESTATIONS. III. Its PREDOMINANCE. IV. Its EFFECTS. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Progress in sin inevitable:*—Every sin we commit is like taking a step further back from God: and return is rendered impossible without Divine assistance, as Satan cuts the bridges behind man in his retreating downward path; and also as every false step necessitates another—rather indeed many—as the author of Waverley Novels knew to his cost, and left it on record: "Oh, what a tangled web we weave, when first we practise to deceive!" Or again, as Schiller more philosophically puts it: "This is the very curse of evil deed, that of new evil it becomes the seed." *The sin and folly of ignoring God:*—Why did you not think of God? One would deem that the thought of Him must, to a serious mind, come second to almost every other thought. The thought of virtue would suggest the thought of both a lawgiver and a rewarder; the thought of crime, of an avenger; the thought of sorrow, of a consoler; the thought of an inscrutable mystery, of an intelligence that understands it; the thought of that ever-moving activity that prevails in the system of the universe, of a supreme agent; the thought of the human family, of a great father; the thought of all-being, of a creator; the thought of life, of a preserver; and the thought of death, of an incontrollable disposer. By what dexterity of irreligious caution did you avoid precisely every track where the idea of Him would have met you, or elude that idea if it came? And what must sound reason pronounce of a mind which, in the train of millions of thoughts, has wandered to all things under the sun, to all the permanent objects or vanishing appearances in

the creation, but never fixed its thought on the supreme reality; never approached, like Moses, "to see this great sight." (*J. Foster.*) **Their throat is an open sepulchre.** —*The throat of an ungodly man compared to an opened sepulchre* :—I. I have to mention some particulars in which the throat of man is "an open sepulchre" in regard to THAT WHICH IT RECEIVES: I mean, in regard to the air we breathe, and the food and beverage we eat and drink. 1. This is true universally of every unregenerate man. Every breath of air that is breathed by a man who is not born of God, and every morsel of food that he eats, is but like the carrying a putrid corpse into a vault. He is supporting his body for the dishonour of God. It is not in the service of his heavenly Father, but in the service of his Father's enemies, that he uses all his strength and health, and all his bodily powers; he is guilty of abusing God's gracious gifts; he is steadily going forward into increased corruption. 2. But if in this way it holds good of all who are not restored to God, even the most abstemious, that "their throat is no better than an opened sepulchre," how much more does it give us a striking view of the wretched state of the intemperate: the gluttonous and the drunkard? Well does the wisdom of God compare the throats of all such wretched sinners to an opened selpulchre, corrupt in themselves, infectious to others, and offensive to God. Can such a man expect to dwell with God in holiness and glory? Would you yourselves consent to have an "opened sepulchre," with all its abominations, in your house? Would you tolerate anything so offensive? Much less can you suppose that God will suffer a drunkard to be anywhere but in the depths of hell. II. I now proceed to enumerate a few particulars in which the throat of every unregenerate man is also like "an open sepulchre" in that which PROCEEDS OUT OF IT. 1. But let me first say a word generally to those who are Christians in name only. As in regard to what goes in, so in regard to what comes forth from your throat, it is still but an "open sepulchre." 2. In descending to particulars, I must be content to mention only one of the multitude of sins that make the "throat of sinners an open sepulchre"; and that is, the sin of blasphemy, and swearing, and profaneness. And if an opened sepulchre is odious because it sends forth the smell of death, well may we say that the mouth of the profane is like it, for it breathes the breath of spiritual and eternal death. (*John Tucker, B.D.*) *Dignity of human nature shown from its ruins* :—1. A most dark and dismal picture of humanity, and yet it has two aspects. In one view it is the picture of weakness, wretchedness, and shame; in the other it presents a being fearfully great; great in his evil will, his demoniacal passions, his contempt of fear, the splendour of his degradation, and the magnificence of his woe. 2. It has been the way of many to magnify humanity by tracing its capabilities and its affinity with God and truth; and by such kind of evidences they repel what they call the insulting doctrine of total depravity. And not without some show of reason, when the doctrine is asserted so as to exclude the admission of high aspirations and amiable properties; for some teachers have formulated a doctrine of human depravity in which there is no proper humanity left. 3. Now one of these extremes makes the gospel unnecessary, because there is no depravation to restore; the other makes it impossible, because there is nothing left to which any holy appeal can be made; but I undertake, in partial disregard of both, to show the essential greatness of man from the ruin itself which he becomes; confident of this, that in no other point of view will he prove the spiritual sublimity of his nature so convincingly. I. WE FORM OUR CONCEPTIONS OF MANY THINGS BY THEIR RUINS. 1. Of ancient dynasties. Falling on patches of paved road leading out from ancient Rome, here for Britain, here for Germany, here for Ephesus, &c.; imagining the couriers flying back and forth, bearing the mandates of the central authority, followed by the military legions to execute them; we receive an impression of the empire which no words could give us. So, to form some opinion of the dynasty of the Pharaohs, of whom history gives us but the obscurest traditions, we have only to look on the monumental mountains, and these dumb historians in stone will show us more of that vast and populous empire than history and geography together. 2. Of ancient cities. Though described by historians, we form no sufficient conception of their grandeur till we look upon their ruins. Even the eloquence of Homer yields only a faint, unimpressive conception of Thebes; but to pass through the ruins of Karnac and Luxor, a vast desolation of temples and pillared avenues that dwarf all the present structures of the world. This reveals a fit conception of the grandest city of the world as no words could describe it. So Jonah endeavours to raise some adequate opinion of Nineveh, and Nahum follows, magnifying its splendour in terms of high description; but no one had any proper conception of

it till a traveller opens to view, at points many miles asunder, collects the tokens of art and splendour, and says, "This is the 'exceeding great city.'" And so it is with Babylon, Ephesus, Tadmor of the Desert, Baalbec, and the nameless cities and pyramids of the extinct American race. II. So IT IS WITH MAN. Our most veritable, though saddest impression of his greatness, we shall derive from the magnificent ruin he displays. 1. And this is the Scripture representation of man, as apostate from duty and God. How sublime a creature must that be who is able to confront the Almighty and tear himself away from His throne! And, as if to forbid our taking his deep misery and shame as tokens of contempt, the first men are shown as living out a thousand years of lustful energy, and braving the Almighty in strong defiance to the last. We look upon a race of Titans who fill the earth—even up to the sky—with demoniacal tumult, till God can suffer them no longer. So of the picture in chap. i., and the picture in the text corresponds. 2. But we come to the ruin as it is, and we look—(1) Upon the false religions of the world; pompous and costly rites transacted before crocodiles and onions; magnificent temples built over monstrous creatures, carved by men's hands; children offered up by their mothers; gorgeous palaces and majestic trappings studded all over with beetles in gold, or precious stones, to serve as a protection against pestilences, poisons, and accidents. A picture of ruin—yet how magnificent! For how high a nature must that be that it must prepare such pomps, incur such sacrifices, and can elevate such trifles of imposture to a place of reverence! If we say that in all this it is feeling after God, then how inextinguishable and grand are those religious instincts by which it is allied to Him! (2) The wars of the world. What opinion should we have of the fearful passion of a race of animals, who marshal themselves by the hundred thousand, marching across kingdoms and deserts, "swift to shed blood," and strewing leagues of ground with dead? (ver. 16). One race there is that figure in these heroics, viz., the tiny race of ants, whom God has made a spectacle to mock the glory of human wars. Plainly enough man is a creature in ruins, but how magnificent! Mean as the ant in his passions, but erecting, on the desolations he makes, thrones of honour and renown; for who of us can live content without some hero to admire and worship? (3) The persecutions of the good; poison for Socrates, a cross for Jesus. What does it mean? No other than this, that cursing and bitterness, the poison even of asps, and more, is entered into the heart of man. He hates with a diabolical hatred. And what a being is this that can be stung with so great madness by the spectacle of a good and holy life! The fiercest of animals are capable of no such devilish instigation. (4) The great characters of the world. On a small island of the southern Atlantic is shut up a remarkable prisoner, wearing himself out there in a feeble mixture of peevishness and jealousy, solaced by no great thoughts and no heroic spirit. And this is the great conqueror of the modern world; a man who carried the greatest victories, and told the meanest lies; who, destitute of private magnanimity, had stupendous powers of understanding and will. How great a being must it be that makes a point of so great dignity before the world, despite of so much that is contemptible! But he is not alone. The immortal Kepler, piloting science into the skies, and comprehending the vastness of heaven, only proves the magnificence of man as a ruin, when you discover the strange ferment of irritability and "superstition wild," in which his great thoughts are brewed, and his mighty life dissolved. So also Bacon—"The greatest, wisest, meanest of mankind." Probably no one has raised himself to a higher pitch of renown by his superlative genius than Shakespeare; flowering out, nevertheless, into such eminence of glory, on a compost of buffoonery, and other vile stuff, which he so covers with splendour, and irradiates with beauty, that disgust itself is lost in the vehemence of praise. III. BUT WE MUST LOOK MORE DIRECTLY INTO THE CONTENTS OF HUMAN NATURE, AND THE INTERNAL RUIN BY WHICH THEY ARE DISPLAYED. And notice—1. The sublime vehemence of the passions. (1) What a creature must that be who, out of mere revenge, will deliberately take the life of a fellow-man, and then despatch his own to avoid the ignominy of a public execution! No tiger is ever instigated by any so intense and terrible passion. (2) Or take the passion of covetousness. How great a creature must that be who is goaded by a zeal of acquisition so restless, so self-sacrificing, so insatiable! The poor, gaunt miser were even the greatest of heroes if he could deny himself with so great patience in a good cause. (3) The same is true even of the licentious lusts. No race of animals can show the parallel of such vices, because they are none of them instigated by a nature so great in wants that find no good to satisfy them. 2. The wild mixtures of thought displayed both in the waking

life and the dreams of mankind. How grand! how mean! It is as if the soul were a thinking ruin. The angel and the demon life appear to be contending in it. And yet a ruin which a Nineveh or a Thebes can parallel only in the faintest degree; comprehending all that is purest, brightest, most Divine; all that is worst, meanest, most deformed. 3. The significance of remorse. How great a creature must that be that, looking down upon itself from some high summit in itself, withers in relentless condemnation of itself, gnaws and chastises itself in the sense of what it is! 4. The dissonance and obstinacy of his evil will. It is dissonant as being out of harmony with God and the world, and all beside in the soul itself—viz., the reason, the conscience, the wants, the hopes, and even the remembrances of the soul. How great a creature is it that, knowing God, can set itself off from God and resist Him! "There is no fear of God before their eyes." In one view there is fear enough, the soul is all its life long haunted by this fear, but there is a desperation of will that makes it as though it were not. 5. The religious aspirations and capacities of religious attraction that are garnered up, and still live in the ruins of humanity. IV. THE PRACTICAL ISSUES OF OUR SUBJECT. 1. It is a great hope of our time that society is going to slide into something better—by education, public reforms, and philanthropy. We have a new gospel that corresponds, which preaches faith in human nature, that proposes development, not regeneration. Alas, that we are taken with so great folly. As if man, or society, crazed and maddened by the demoniacal frenzy of sin, were going to reconstruct the shattered harmony of nature. As soon will the desolations of Karnac gather up their fragments. Nothing meets our case but to be born of God. He alone can rebuild the ruin. 2. The great difficulty with Christianity in our time is that it is too great for belief. After all our supposed discoveries of dignity in human nature, we have commonly none but the meanest opinion of man. How could we imagine that any such history as that of Jesus Christ is a fact, or that the infinite God has transacted any such wonder for man? God manifest in the flesh! It is extravagant, out of proportion, who can believe it? Any one who has not lost the magnitude of man. To restore this tragic fall required a tragic salvation. Nor did ever any sinner, who had felt the bondage of his sin, think for one moment that Christ was too great a Saviour. Oh, it was an almighty Saviour that he wanted! none but such was sufficient! Him he could believe in, just because He was great—equal to the measures of his want, able to burst the bondage of his sin. 3. The magnitude and real importance of the soul are discovered in the subject as nowhere else. The soul appears under sin, all selfish as it is, to shrink and grow small in its own sight. Perhaps this is due, in part, to the consciousness we have, in sin, of moral littleness and meanness. Whereas, in another sense, sin is mighty, God-defying. Just here is it that you will get your most veritable impressions of your immortality; even as you get your best impression of armies, not by the count of numbers, but by the thunder-shock of battle, and the carnage of the field when it is over. In the tragic desolations of intelligence and genius, of passion, pride, and sorrow, behold the import of his eternity. And yet, despite all this, you are trying and contriving still to be happy—a happy ruin! The eternal destiny is in you, and you cannot break loose from it. With your farthing bribes you try to hush your stupendous wants. Oh, this great and mighty soul, were it something less, you might find what to do with it. Anything would please it and bring it content. But it is the godlike soul, capable of rest in nothing but God; able to be filled and satisfied with nothing but His fulness. (*H. Bushnell, D.D.*) *Wickedness in word and deed*:—I. IN SPEECH. These verses refer to the different organs of speech, and show them all exercising their power to hurt, under the dominion of sin. 1. The throat (larynx) is compared to a sepulchre; this refers to the language of the gross and brutal man, of whom it is said in common parlance—it seems as if he would like to eat you. The next characteristic is a contrast—the sugared tongue, which charms you like a melodious instrument. Both of these are taken from the description of David's enemies in Psa. v. 9. 3. The next is taken from Psa. cxl. 3—the calumny and falsehood which malignant lips give forth, as a serpent infuses its poison. (4) Ver. 14. The wickedness which is cast into your face by a mouth full of hatred or bitterness (Psa. x. 7). II. IN DEED (vers. 15-18). Of the four propositions the first three are borrowed from Isa. lix. 7, 8. 1. The feet as the emblem of walking symbolises the whole conduct. 2. Man acts without regard to his neighbour, without fear of compromising his welfare or even his life (Prov. i. 16). He oppresses his brother, and fills his life with misery, so that the way marked out by such a course is watered with the tears of others. 3. No peace can exist either in the heart of such men, or in their neigh-

bourhood. 4. And this overflow of depravity and suffering arises from a void; the absence of that feeling which should have filled the heart—"the fear of God." This term is the normal expression for piety in the Old Testament; it is that disposition which has God always present in the heart, will and judgment. The words "before their eyes" show that it belongs to man freely to evoke or suppress this inward view of God on which his moral conduct depends (Psa. xxxvi. 1). (*Prof. Godet.*) **The poison of asps is under their lips.**—*Poisonous speech*:—Poison concealed in a bag under a loose tooth or fang: the fang pressing the bag, the poison is emitted with the bite. Honey *on* the lips, poison *under* them. Poison conveyed—1. In ordinary conversation. 2. In wanton and licentious songs. 3. In profane and blasphemous expressions. 4. In infidel and unscriptural teaching. 5. In corrupting works of fiction. 6. In the language of the drama. (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) *The poison of the tongue*:—Suppose I open a bag of serpents, and let them out where children are playing, or in a camp where there are soldiers, and I say of myself, "Madman! fool!" and go to hunt my snakes? I cannot find them. It was mine to let them out, but it is not mine to catch them and put them in the bag again. Now there never was a bag of snakes in this world like a man's mouth. To open it is in your power, but to shut it again upon all that you have emitted from it is not in your power. I am not referring to cases in which a man himself suffers directly from the evil that he has done; but to those worse cases in which others suffer from the evil that we have done. For, as a man grows spiritual, as a man goes toward God he comes to feel that the mischiefs done on another are unspeakably worse than those done on himself; and that no unrepentable transgressions are as bad as those by which he has struck the welfare of another. Parallel with these, although differing from them, are those things by which men wound the hearts of those whom they should shield. Your anger may sting venomously. Your jealousy may do a mischief in one short hour that your whole life cannot repair. Your cruel pride may do a whole age's work in a day. You cannot take back the injuries that you have done to those whose hearts lie throbbing next to yours. Ah! when winter has frozen my heliotropes, it makes no difference that the next morning thaws them out. There lie the heliotropes—a black, noisome heap; and it is possible for you to chill a tender nature so that no thawing can restore it. You may relent, but frost has been there, and you cannot bring back freshness and fragrance to the blossom. You cannot sweeten the embittered heart to which your words have been like scorpions. It is a terrible thing for a man to have the power of poisoning the hearts of others, and yet carry that power carelessly. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Immoral authors and their poisonous effects*:—It is a remarkable fact that the poison of the rattlesnake is even secreted after death. Dr. Bell, in his dissections of the rattlesnakes which have been dead many hours, has found that the poison continued to be secreted so fast as to require to be dried up occasionally with sponge or rag. The immoral author, like these rattlesnakes, not only poisons during his lifetime, but after death: because his books possess the subtle power of secreting the venom to a horrible degree. A moral sponge is constantly called into requisition to obliterate his poison for many years after he himself has been dead. (*Louis Figuier.*) **Their is no fear of God before their eyes.**—*Impenitent men destitute of holiness*:—The text gives us man's native character. Such he is till the Spirit of God has sanctified him. I. MANY HAVE MISTAKEN THE NATIVE CHARACTER OF MAN, FROM HAVING SEEN HIM CAPABLE OF AFFECTIONS AND DEEDS THAT ARE PRAISEWORTHY. We do not deny that there has been seen in men not sanctified. II. MEN HAVE BEEN LED TO CONTROVERT THIS DOCTRINE BECAUSE THEY ARE NOT CONSCIOUS OF THE WRONG MOTIVES BY WHICH THEY ARE ACTUATED. What the prophet says of the idol-maker is more or less true of all unregenerate men in all ages, "A deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?" They do not consider it important to know what their designs are, and have not that familiarity with their hearts that would render it easy to discover. III. THE DOCTRINE OF THE TEXT IS OFTEN CONTROVERTED TO SUPPORT SCHEMES WITH WHICH THIS SENTIMENT WOULD NOT COMPARE. The sinner's entire depravity is a fundamental doctrine on which there can be built only one, and that the gospel system. Make this doctrine true, and it sweeps away, as with the besom of destruction, every creed but one from the face of the world. It settles the question that God may righteously execute His law upon all unregenerate men; that "by deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified"; that the doings of unregenerate men are unholy; that an atonement, such as God has provided, is the only medium through which we can purge our consciences from dead works to

serve the living God. IV. THIS DOCTRINE HAS BEEN CONTROVERTED THROUGH THE PRIDE OF THE HUMAN HEART. Depravity is a most degrading doctrine, and entire depravity intolerable, till the heart has been humbled by the grace of God. There is in apostate men great pride of character. With the promptness with which we fly the touch of fire does pride resist imputation. Hence inquires the unregenerate man, Would you deny me the credit of loving my Creater, Preserver, and Benefactor? Do I never obey His law, or do a deed from motives that please Him? And is there, among my noblest actions of kindness to men, nothing that amounts to love? V. I PROCEED TO OFFER SOME REASONS FOR ESTEEMING IT A VERY IMPORTANT DOCTRINE. 1. The fact that it is plainly revealed testifies to its importance. God would not have cumbered His Word with a doctrine of no value. 2. The doctrine of the text is esteemed important, as it is one of the first truths used by the Spirit of God in awakening and sanctifying sinners. 3. The doctrine of the text is esteemed important, as it lies at the foundation of the whole gospel scheme. (*D. A. Clark.*)

Vers. 19, 20. **Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law.**—*The law*:—I. ITS CLAIMS—are universal. II. ITS TEACHINGS—distinct and authoritative. III. ITS EFFECTS—condemnation, complete and without exception. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Law, and the law*:—For the most part the word "law" refers to the general principle "Do this and live"; the words "the law," to the historical and literary form in which this principle took shape in the ears, eyes, and thoughts of the Jews. (*Prof. Beet.*) *The convincing power of the law*:—1. "The things which the law saith"—its holy precepts, solemn sanctions, awful sentences—constitute the instrument of its power. They are the hand which grasps, the arm which conquers the transgressor. 2. The extent of their operation is to "all those who are under the law." Are they obedient? Then it is a means of life and peace. Are they disobedient? Then it is the instrument of their condemnation and death. 3. Its convincing power is displayed either in the day of grace to bring to Christ, or in the day of judgment to banish from Him. 4. It is the agency of the Holy Spirit. In His hands it is living and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword, but in itself it is a dead letter. I. THE THINGS OF WHICH THE LAW IS MADE TO CONVINCE THE SINNER. "It saith"—1. "Do this, and thou shalt live"; but "whosoever offendeth in one point is guilty of all." The law claims an entire, perpetual, and spotless obedience, and in the exercise of its convincing power it compares the sinner's life with the strictness of its demands. It thus brings to view his obliquity by laying down its perfect and unbending rule upon the crookedness of all his conduct. It accuses him of—(1) Presumptuous sins. (2) Sins of inadvertence and ignorance. (3) Secret sins, corrupt thoughts, unholy desires. (4) Omission of holy duties. (5) Deficiencies in the spirit which prompts to action. (6) A corrupt nature in a state of rebellion against God. 2. "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." By this it convinceth the sinner of his exposure to the wrath of God. The condemnation of the ungodly is not future but present. The transgressor is "dead already," and though, like a convict in his cell, he has a respite before execution, his case is to be regarded as altogether disposed of. He may be ignorant of his condition, and may deny it; but this is one of the things that the law saith, and its work is to make the sinner believe it, and behold his danger. But though under this operation he groans in anguish, he is no more in condemnation than before. He was asleep, but is now awakened. The lightning which makes a benighted traveller see the precipice in front of him does not make the danger, it only reveals it. 3. "Moses describeth the righteousness which is by the law, that the man which doeth these things shall live by them." "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." By these "things" the law convinces of the impossibility of self-justification. (1) It proposes but two possible methods whereby man shall be just with God: it offers life to those who have perfectly obeyed its precepts; it presents liberty to all who have fully endured its penalties. Under which can there be hope for man? (*a*) He can never obtain acceptance by his obedience—for there is imperfection and defilement in every duty. (*b*) He cannot be justified by making satisfaction for disobedience, for no satisfaction can be received short of the entire penalty—everlasting death. (2) The convinced sinner sees this hopeless state, and is compelled to renounce all effort at legal justification. A knowledge of pardon and life must come from the revelation of a Redeemer who, as the sinner's surety, has obeyed the precepts and endured the penalty. II. THE PERSONS TO

WHOM IT MUST BE APPLIED. "To them that are under the law"—the Jew, of course, but all mankind are born under the obligations of the law, and the things it saith, it saith to the whole family of man. And if there be not an individual who is released from the obligation of loving God with all his heart, there is not one who is not justly accused of transgression, and therefore condemned. "All have sinned," &c. The proper operation of the law as a convincing power is, therefore, upon every human being. III. THE RESULT TO WHICH IT LEADS. 1. "That every mouth may be stopped." Unconvinced sinners complain of the unreasonable strictness and severity of the Divine commandments, and invent a thousand excuses for sin and pleas of exemption from punishment. But when the law discharges its convincing office, the justice of God became so apparent, guilt so clear, that they are incapable of complaint or excuse. 2. "And all the world become guilty before God"—consciously and penitently. (*S. H. Tyng, D.D.*) *Appeal to the law*:—The new Collector of the Port of New York is not harassed by disputes as his predecessors were. He has had all the books regulating the customs service placed within his reach, and when appealed to for his decision his clear grey eyes brighten as he replies: "The law says so and so about that question, does it not?" He is generally answered in the affirmative, and without more ado he dismisses his visitor, saying: "The law on the subject was made for me to follow, and follow it I shall." (*Christian Herald.*) *The authority of the Scriptures*:—I feel profoundly that that word "authority" is a vital word in all considerations about the Scriptures. There are controversies about inspiration and its mode, controversies which are legion, but they may circle, like waves around a rock, round the question of authority. That which separates the Bible from all other books, however elevating, is, after all, not so much that it contains such treasures of historic information, of poetic beauty, of moral analysis, as that it contains the authority of God and the certainty of His Word. Yes, it is this, after all. There are other books, for which God be thanked, written in other ages, which have had their influence on the elevation of man, but the difference between them and this Book is, that no conceivable amount of information or influence from them, as such, is binding on the conscience; but we claim for this Book that when we have once ascertained the meaning of it, it binds us. It is not merely attractive and elevating—it is all this—but it is binding upon us; it says in the name of a greater than itself, "Believe this, because I say it; do this, because I command it." (*H. G. C. Moule, M.A.*) **Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified.**—*Justification by works impossible*:—I. THE ASSERTION OF THE TEXT IS, THAT OUR WHOLE RACE IS INCAPABLE OF EVER BEING JUSTIFIED ON THE GROUND OF HAVING KEPT THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE MORAL LAW OF GOD. 1. This may be easily illustrated by a reference to Scripture. (1) It declares that the moral law, under which we have been created, commands us to love the Lord our God with all our heart, and to love our neighbour as ourselves. (2) It also asserts that man is destitute of that love; and that, in the place of it, he cherishes a spirit of enmity to his Maker; and the constitution of civil society everywhere proceeds upon the assumption that men are selfish, faithless, violent, and cruel, and laws are everywhere made to counteract those hateful tendencies. (3) It reveals to us that our first parents disobeyed God, and transmitted a sinful taint to their posterity. Thus we see that sin is not an accident to, but a universal fact in, human nature. "By one man, sin entered into the world," &c. Such are the declarations of Scripture, and to the truth of them our own consciousness bears undoubted testimony. As soon as any one of us begins to compare himself with the law under which he is created, or even with the imperfect moral standard held forth by his own conscience, he acknowledges himself a sinner, coming short of the praise of God. Nor does any one find himself alone in this condition. He is surrounded by just such beings, an inhabitant of a world lying in wickedness. II. BUT HERE THE QUESTION ARISES, SINCE WE CANNOT BE JUSTIFIED ON THE GROUND OF INNOCENCE, MAY WE NOT BY SOME WORKS OF OUR OWN? This question, from the beginning, has deeply agitated the human soul. 1. The first expedient, which seems universally to have suggested itself, was the offering of expiatory victims. But such an expedient as this inevitably loses its efficacy as soon as man listens to the voice of his own consciousness. He then feels that guilt is a personal thing, and that he himself is a sinner. It is he, in his own person, that must answer at the bar of offended justice. Guilt cannot be transferred to a brute, nor can it at will be laid upon the conscience of another. Hence the worshipper returned from the sacrifice unsatisfied and unblessed. The Jew confessed that it was not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sin. The pagan retired from the flowing liba-

tion and the smoking hecatomb bearing about within him a conscience still burdened with the guilt of unpardoned sin. 2. Another expedient has been to offer reparation to the violated law by repentance and reformation. But if this doctrine be true—(1) It must proceed upon an entire change of the moral law. The law which the Scriptures have revealed is, that the wages of sin is death. To declare, however, that if a man repents, he is entitled to justification, is to introduce another law, and to declare not that sin of itself is deserving of death, but only sin unrepented of. Now, I ask, where do we find the authority for announcing such a law? Revelation does not teach it. No government on earth could be administered upon this principle. (2) It would lead to new views of Divine justice. If a sinner can claim justification at the hands of God in virtue of repentance, then there would seem but little distinction to exist between innocence and guilt. He who had kept the whole law without fault, and he who had broken every commandment through life, and at last repented, would both stand in the same moral condition before God; both, on the ground of their own doings, being entitled to be treated as innocent. (3) It would lead us to believe that God Himself entertained no moral displeasure against sin, but only against sin unrepented of. The announcement of His law would seem to be, that holiness and sin repented of were equally lovely in His sight, inasmuch as they were by His law entitled to the same reward. The Deity would thus seem to entertain less abhorrence to sin than the penitent himself. (4) It would defeat its own object; for, were this the law, repentance would be impossible. Repentance can only arise from a conviction of the moral turpitude of sin; it is an abhorrence of the act purely on account of its moral wrong. But, upon the supposition in question, sin itself is not wrong, or odious in the sight of God, but only sin unrepented of. But, if the act itself be not morally detestable, of what is there for us to repent? We are to be penitent not for the act, but for our impenitence, while penitence itself is impossible, because the act is not in itself worthy of condemnation. To me, then, the Scriptures seem to assert that repentance can offer no atonement for sin. If the law be holy, and just, and good, it is holy, and just, and good, that it be enforced. If a man repent of his sins, this is right; but under a system of law, this can make no reparation for past transgression. The man confesses that the law is just; but this confession does not render it less just. He acknowledges that he deserves to perish; but this does not alter his desert. "Therefore, by the deeds of the law can no flesh be justified," &c. III. THE GOSPEL IS AN OFFER OF UNIVERSAL PARDON THROUGH THE MEDIATION OF CHRIST. 1. To reveal this great and astonishing truth is the great design of revealed religion. Natural religion intimated to us our sin, and dimly foreshadowed our doom. But from natural religion itself no news of reconciliation could proceed. It is the gospel alone that brings life and immortality to light. 2. For the announcement of this great central truth, the whole previous history of our world was one magnificent preparation. 3. Although, then, by the deeds of the law no flesh can be justified, yet we may not despair, "for our help is laid upon One that is mighty," One who is able to save to the uttermost every one that believeth. (*F. Wayland, D.D.*) *Legal justification impossible* because—I. MAN IS FLESH. 1. Depraved by original corruption. 2. Obnoxious by actual transgression. II. THE BEST OBEDIENCE TO THE LAW THAT HE CAN PERFORM IS IMPERFECT. III. ALL THAT HE DOES OR CAN DO IS A DUE DEBT HE OWES TO THE LAW. 1. He owes all possible obedience to the law as a creature. 2. But by performing all his debts as a creature he can never pay his debts as a transgressor. 3. Christ alone is able to justify him. (*W. Burkitt, M.A.*) *Works cannot justify*:—No matter how much he (Luther) studied and prayed, no matter how severely he castigated himself with fasting and watching, he found no peace to his soul. Even when he imagined that he had satisfied the law, he often despaired of getting rid of his sins and of securing the grace of God. *A moralist condemned*:—Dr. Rogers, of Albany, gives an account of the conversion of a moralist by a dream. The man thought he died, and, coming to the door of heaven, saw over it, "None can enter here but those who have led a strictly moral life." He felt perfectly able on that condition, but was stopped by one and another whom in some way he had wronged. He was in despair, till the words over the door gradually faded away, and in their place came, "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." He awoke, and realised that without forgiveness through an atonement there was no hope for man. (*Seeds and Sheaves.*) **In His sight.**—*Man in the Divine judgment*:—In the judgment of God—an addition of solemn import! The all-searching Eye will try our inward as well as outward acts. None can stand out of Christ the Divine scrutiny. The world may canonise and immortalise, extol and

deify her heroes; but God will perceive in a moment their defects, like the artist who, when a piece of marble had been selected as perfectly suitable for his sculpturing, in an instant detected a slight flaw that had escaped all notice, rendering, in his eyes, the block useless; and he refused to employ his time and his tools, his pains and his genius, upon it. (*C. Neil, M.A.*) **For by the law is the knowledge of sin.**—*The knowledge of sin by the law:*—I. THE NATURE OF THE LAW. 1. Sin has no existence but in relation to the law; for "where there is no law, there is no transgression." The law may be compared to a straight rule. Sin is the deviation from this rule, and the enormity of the sin may be measured by the degree of obliquity in any act. 2. Laws are of different kinds, according to the nature of their subjects. The universe is under law, for the Creator is a God of order. But our inquiry relates to the law given to man, as an accountable moral agent. This law was originally written on the human heart, but, as through the prevalence of ignorance and error, this law has been greatly defaced; it pleased God to make a full revelation of it, under two great commandments, enjoining love to God and our neighbour. But as the spiritual and perfect nature of the law was misapprehended by the Jews, and many of the precepts were set aside by false glosses, our Lord gave its true interpretation. 3. Many entertain very inadequate ideas of the nature and obligations of the law. (1) By some it is believed that its strictness is now relaxed, and that a more indulgent rule has succeeded. But no conclusion is more certain than the immutable nature of the law. It arises from the nature of God, and the relation of man to Him. As God is infinitely holy, He never can require less holiness in His creatures than they are capable of. The idea of bringing down the law to adapt it to the ability of fallen man is absurd. (2) Antinomians hold, that in consequence of Christ's perfect obedience, the law has no demands on those in whose place He obeyed. This is a gross abuse of a cardinal doctrine. And if the thing were true, it would be no privilege, but a real detriment to the believer; for he finds that the keeping of the commandments of God is attended with a great reward. (3) Others, again, entertain the opinion that the law was altered and improved by our Lord; and they refer to the Sermon on the Mount. But the alteration is not in the law itself, but in the interpretation of the law. Reason dictates that a rational, choosing agent should employ all his faculties, and direct all his actions, to the glory of his Creator; and as this end can in no other way be attained than by obeying the will of God, therefore the manifestation of the Divine will must be the law of all rational creatures. 4. That the law of God requires perfect obedience is self-evident. To suppose that any law could be satisfied by an imperfect obedience involves the absurdity that the law requires something which it does not require. If it should be alleged that uniform perfection of obedience ought not to be insisted on, since man is a fallible, erring creature, I would reply, that if any indulgence to sin be allowed, there can be no limit fixed to which it should be extended. Such a principle would destroy the obligation of the moral law. Again, these frailties belong not to our nature, as it came perfect from the hand of the Creator, but belong to our sinful nature, to which a holy law can show no indulgence. The ground of difficulty is in our depraved nature, which has lost all relish for the service of God. To a soul rightly constituted, the most intense exercise of holy affection is so far from being felt as a burden or task, that it affords the sweetest pleasure of which we ever partake. To be perfectly obedient to the commandments of God is to be completely happy. Surely no one ought to complain of being required to pursue his own greatest happiness. II. "BY THE LAW IS THE KNOWLEDGE OF SIN." 1. If our actions had always been conformable to the precepts of God, the closest application of that law would produce no conviction of sin. And that such perfection of obedience is possible to human nature is manifest by the example of Christ. 2. Human nature may be compared to a complicated machine, which has within it powerful springs to keep it in operation. But such a machine requires a balance or regulator, which may preserve all the parts in their proper places, and give due energy and direction to every part. If the balance wheel be taken away, the machine loses none of its power, but its action becomes irregular, and no longer subserves the purpose for which it was put in motion. It moves, it may be, more rapidly than before, but to its own ruin. So it is with man. He is an agent, possessing powers, appetites, affections, and passions which require to be regulated and properly directed; otherwise, their most powerful action will be of a ruinous character. Two things are necessary to give harmony and a right direction to the complex faculties and affections of man. The first is, light; the second, love—an enlightened conscience, and uniform and constant love to God. But when sin was introduced,

the mind was blinded, conscience misdirected, and the love of God in the soul was extinct. 3. Although the mind of man has fallen into an awful state of blindness and disorder, yet conscience is not obliterated: as far as it has light, it still remonstrates against sin. Happily some actions are intuitively seen to be morally wrong; but in regard to a large part of sinful acts, or omissions, most men remain ignorant of them, because they know not the extent and spirituality of the law. Mere theoretical knowledge of the law is not sufficient: it requires the convincing light of the Holy Spirit to shine in upon the conscience, and to cause the mind to view itself, as it were, in the mirror of God's holy law. This conviction by the law is the common preparatory work before mercy is bestowed. Conclusion: 1. Let us endeavour to get clear views of the extent, spirituality, and purity of the moral law, in order that we may know something of the multitude and malignity of our sins. And, as all true spiritual knowledge is from the Holy Ghost, we should incessantly pray for this inestimable blessing. 2. As the law convicts every man of sin, justification by it is impossible; for even one sin would render it impossible for the transgressor to receive a sentence of acquittal; how much more impossible is it when our sins are literally innumerable! 3. If the law discovers sin of every kind to be a base and odious thing, we should be solicitous to be cleansed from its defilement; and, in order to this, should come often to the fountain for sin and uncleanness, opened by the death of Christ. 4. A spiritual knowledge of the law is the true source of evangelical repentance. 5. The knowledge of sin, produced by the law, will have a tendency to make the true penitent desirous of the perfect holiness of heaven. 6. The most important benefit of the knowledge of sin, by the law, is, that it shows us our absolute need of a better righteousness than our own, and impels us to look for salvation to the Cross of Christ. (*A. Alexander, D.D.*) *The knowledge of sin by the law*:—"Sin," in the New Testament, means, literally, "missing that which is aimed at." A sin done for the sake of happiness never brings happiness; and if man's true aim is the glory of God, certainly no sin ever reaches that mark. "Sin is the transgression of the law," for if there were no "law," there would be no "transgression." "Transgression" is a stepping over a certain line, and the only line is "the law." I. THERE ARE MANY "LAWS." 1. The natural "law" of conscience. By this the heathen are governed—for they, "having not the law, are a law unto themselves," &c. The transgressors of this law will be "beaten with few stripes." 2. The Old Testament "law," which is chiefly negative. "Do not." This law is higher than the law of nature, more clear, minute, stringent. 3. But above both there is the "law" of love—the law of the gospel. God loves you, love Him back, and show your love by obedience. II. AS THESE LAWS RISE IN THEIR CHARACTER, SO DO THEY ALSO IN THEIR OBLIGATION UPON US; and the sins committed against them grow in the same proportion. By the higher standard we shall be judged! Now I do not speak of the grosser sins forbidden by the Ten Commandments, but of such as appear, to some, almost to be no sins at all, but which, measured by the law of the gospel, are perhaps most grievous to God. As is the light, so is the shadow; and the comparatively small sin of a son grieves a father more than the greatest sin of a stranger. From this point of view, then—1. It must be a sin in a Christian not to be happy. For this must be because you do not trust the Father, who has said that your sins were "blotted out." 2. Or, if believing that you love and are loved by God, you are anxious, you not only disobey a command, but question a Father's care and promise. 3. Or, if your religion is only a religion of fear, obedience without affection, it is in God's sight worth nothing, for "Love is the fulfilling of the law." Therefore it is sin. 4. Or, if you love the world as much as you love God, how can the great God who says, "Give Me thy heart"—not a part of it—be satisfied? And if He is not satisfied that is a sin. III. IF YOU WOULD MEASURE SIN, CALCULATE IT IN EDEN, OR ON MOUNT CALVARY. In Eden, one bit of forbidden fruit ruined the world! On Calvary, it needed the death of the Son of God to repair the wreck. Remember this the next time you are tempted to sin. Think—"If I do that sin, it will cost the blood of the Son of God to wash it out." That is the law of heaven; and by that law we know sin. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *The office of the law*:—The wife of a drunkard once found her husband in a filthy condition, with torn clothes, matted hair, bruised face, asleep in the kitchen, having come home from a drunken revel. She sent for a photographer, and had a portrait of him taken in all his wretched appearance, and placed it on the mantel beside another portrait taken at the time of his marriage, which showed him handsome and well dressed, as he had been in other days. When he became sober he saw the two pictures, and awakened to a consciousness of his condition, from which he arose to a better life. Now, the

office of the law is not to save men, but to show them their true state as compared with the Divine standard. It is like a glass, in which one seeth "what manner of man he is." (*D. L. Moody.*) *The knowledge of sin by the law*:—When we are told what we ought to do, we learn that we are not doing as we ought. 1. The faintest spark of natural conscience in a savage bosom serves this end at least, that the barbarian's grosser acts of treachery or cruelty seem evil even to himself. The educated conscience of an old Greek or Roman imposed on him a severer standard and made him ashamed of less flagrant crimes. Moses' nobler code, given by Jehovah Himself, trained the Hebrew people by degrees to regard as sinful practices which neighbouring nations called innocent, and exalted every instinctive vice of the blood into the express transgression of a recorded statute. The New Testament morality has made the modern conscience quicker than ever to detect, and louder than ever in condemning what is false, dishonourable, impure, and ungenerous. Thus each addition to revealed law widens men's knowledge of what is sinful, and pushes forward the frontier of the forbidden a little nearer to that ideal line which God's nature prescribes. 2. Again, when a law has succeeded in educating one's conscience to recognise that what is forbidden is in itself evil, that what is commanded is right, there follows a certain desire to keep that law—an effort even after keeping it. We cannot approve what is good and not wish to pursue it. The moral pressure thus put upon a man's natural likings serves, in many an instance, to reveal to himself his moral impotence. The good he fain would do in his better moods he fails to do in the moment of temptation; and when the recoil comes, and desire has burnt itself down to white cold ash, and the law awakes afresh within the conscience to judge the man for that weak and wicked yielding to an improper desire, then comes a new and very bitter knowledge of sin. It is the knowledge of sin as a strong thing, stronger than I am—a hateful, hostile power, an alien despot, that has entrenched itself within my nature, and lords it there over everything that is wholesome in me. 3. Suppose, further, that a man is become so far a creature of the law that through long education he has been trained to walk contentedly within its close fences—he has got used to curb his temper and choke down his passions, and always to wear a smooth decorous face; suppose he is thus all that the law can make him, irreproachable in the presence of society, fair spoken, scrupulous, "as touching the law blameless"—why then he is only on the road to a still more profound knowledge of sin. For such a man, if he is honest and thorough, will admit to himself, that deep down beneath this blameless exterior the old passions will not be quenched, nor the old self-will slain. He will admit that in doing violence to his tastes he has not changed them. He has merely drilled himself into outward prosperity, but at the root remains ungodly. Is it unfair to say that such righteousness is little better than a mask, useful in society, but sure to be detected by the judgment of Heaven? that the heart of such men resembles a volcano over which the lava has in the meantime cooled? What a terrific knowledge of sin is here! What a discovery of the incurableness of the heart's evil! What a revelation of the impotence of law and the unattainableness of genuine righteousness under any system of legal repression! Surely by the law, do as you will, there is no path to a satisfying righteousness in the sight of God, but only to a deeper and ever deeper knowledge of sin! (*J. Oswald Dykes, D.D.*) *The law the standard*:—When Chicago was a small town it was incorporated and made a city. There was one clause in the new law that no man should be a policeman who was not a certain height—five feet six inches, let us say. When the Commissioners got into power, they advertised for men as candidates, and in the advertisement they stated that no man need apply who could not bring good credentials to recommend him. I remember going past the office one day, and there was a crowd of them waiting to get in. They quite blocked up the side of the street; and they were comparing notes as to their chances of success. One says to another, "I have got a good letter of recommendation from the mayor, and one from the supreme judge." Another says, "And I have got a good letter from Senator So-and-so. I'm sure to get in." The two men come on together, and lay their letters down on the Commissioners' desk. "Well," says the officials, "you have certainly a good many letters, but we won't read them till we measure you." Ah! they forgot all about that. So the first man is measured, and he is only five feet. "No chance for you, sir; the law says the men must be five feet six inches, and you don't come up to the standard." The other says, "Well, my chance is a good deal better than his. I am a good bit taller than he is." He begins to measure himself by the other man. That is what people are always doing, measuring themselves by others. Measure yourself by the law of God, and if you will do that you

will find that you have come short. He goes up to the officers and they measure him. He is five feet five inches and nine-tenths. "No good," they tell him; "you're not up to the standard." "But I'm only one-tenth of an inch short," he remonstrates. "It's no matter," say they, "there's no difference." He goes with the man who was five feet. One comes short six inches, and the other only one-tenth of an inch, but the law cannot be changed. And the law of God is, that no man shall go into the kingdom of heaven with one sin on him. He that has broken the least law is guilty of all. (*D. L. Moody.*) *The knowledge of sin only by the law*:—All that the law does is to show us how sinful we are. Paul has been quoting from the sacred Scriptures; and truly they shed a lurid light upon the condition of human nature. This light can show us our sin; but it cannot take it away. The law of the Lord is like a looking-glass. Now, a looking-glass is a capital thing for finding out where the spots are on your face; but you cannot wash in a looking-glass, you cannot get rid of the spots by looking in the glass. The law is intended to show a man how much he needs cleansing; but the law cannot cleanse him. The law proves that we are condemned, but it does not bring us our pardon. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Vers. 21–26. **But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested.**—*The righteousness of God* is—I. PREPARED BY GOD. Devised; approved; conferred by Him. II. ATTESTED BY THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS. III. SECURED BY CHRIST. Free grace; redemption; propitiation. IV. DESIGNED FOR ALL. All need it; all are creatures of God. V. RECEIVED BY FAITH. Without merit; without works. VI. DOES NOT MAKE VOID, BUT ESTABLISH THE LAW. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The righteousness of God*:—The apostle shows—I. THAT IT IS A DIVINE RIGHTEOUSNESS, not a human. That righteousness which we had lost in Adam was but a human thing, finite like him who lost it; but that which we gain is Divine and forms an infinite compensation. It is called the righteousness of God, because it is—1. Provided by Him. 2. Founded on the doings and sufferings of the Son of God. 3. Provides such a compensation for human unrighteousness, that it not only takes it all away, but brings in a new and far higher and surer footing for the sinner to rest on. II. THAT IT IS A RIGHTEOUSNESS WITHOUT THE LAW. Not an unlawful righteousness—one not based on law, or one in providing which law has been set aside, but one which, in so far as we are concerned, has nothing to do with law at all. It is not a righteousness which asks any doing or obeying on our part to complete it, for then it would cease to be "the righteousness of God," and would become "the righteousness of man." In so far as God and Christ are concerned, it has everything to do with law, but in so far as we are concerned it has nothing to do with it. III. THAT IT HAS BEEN "MANIFESTED." It is not a thing hidden from view. God has been at infinite pains to bring it forward both on our account and on His. IV. THAT IT IS A RIGHTEOUSNESS WITNESSED BY THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS. It is not something now come to light for the first time; it is something which has been proclaimed from the beginning. To this the eye of every saint, from Abel downward, has been directed—on this the feet of every saint have stood, this every type and prophecy and sacrifice has set forth. V. THAT IT IS A RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH IS BY THE FAITH OF JESUS CHRIST. It is not our faith that is our righteousness. If it were so, then faith would be a work, and then should we be justified by our own acts. It is by believing that we are identified with Christ, so that His doing becomes ours; His suffering ours; His fulfilling of the law and obedience ours. VI. THAT IT IS A RIGHTEOUSNESS FOR THE UNRIGHTEOUS. "For there is no difference: for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." It is our unrighteousness that fits us for this. How foolish, then, to say, "I am too great a sinner to be forgiven." It is like the sun. It is one sun, yet it is enough for and free to every one. (*H. Bonar, D.D.*) *The righteousness of God*:—In various places this phrase signifies either that holiness and rectitude of character which is the attribute of God, or that distributive justice by which He maintains the authority of His law; but where it refers to man's salvation it signifies, as in ver. 21, that fulfilment of the law or perfect conformity to it in all its demands, which, consistently with His justice, God has appointed and provided for the salvation of sinners. This implies that the infinite justice of His character requires what is provided, and also that it is approved and accepted; for if it be God's righteousness it must be required and accepted by the justice of God. The righteousness of God, which is received by faith, denotes something that becomes the property of the believer. It cannot, then, be here the Divine attribute of justice, but the Divine work which God has wrought through His Son. This is,

indeed, the righteousness of God, for it has been provided by God, and from first to last has been effected by His Son Jesus Christ, who is the mighty God and the Father of eternity. To that righteousness is the eye of the believer ever to be directed; on that righteousness must he rest; on that righteousness must he live; on that righteousness must he die; in that righteousness must he appear before the judgment-seat; in that righteousness must he stand for ever in the presence of a righteous God (Isa. lxi. 10). This righteousness differs essentially from all other righteousness—I. In its AUTHOR, for it is the righteousness not of creatures, but of the Creator (Isa. xlv. 8). 1. It is the righteousness of God in the sense in which the world is the work of God. The Father created it by the Son in the same way as by the Son He created the world; and if the Father effected this righteousness because His Son effected it, then His Son must be one with Himself (2 Pet. i. 1). 2. It was during His incarnation that the Son of God wrought out this righteousness. Before He acted as the Creator and Sovereign of the world—but afterwards as a servant. Before that period He was perfectly holy, but that holiness could not be called obedience, for it was exercised in making the law, and by it governing the world. But in His latter condition He became subject to the law, and in our nature conferred more honour on the law than the obedience of all intelligent creatures, and more honour than it had received of dishonour from all its transgressors (Isa. xlii. 21). 3. The obedience of Jesus Christ magnified the law because it was rendered by Divine appointment (Zech. ii. 10, 11). It is impossible therefore to entertain too exalted an idea of the regard which God has for the character of His holy law. II. In its NATURE this righteousness is twofold, fulfilling both the precept and its penalty. This, by any creature the most exalted, is impossible. The fulfilment of the precepts is all that could be required of creatures in their sinless condition. But the state of the Second Man was essentially different. Christ was made under the law, but it was a broken law; and, consequently, He was made under its curse (Gal. iii. 13). Justice, therefore, required that He should fulfil also the penalty. A mere creature may obey the precept of the law, or suffer the penalty it denounces, but he cannot do both. But Jesus was capable at the same moment of suffering at the hand of God, and of obeying the precept to love God. This was made manifest during the whole period of His incarnation as well as at His death. By the sufferings of Christ the execution of the law was complete; while no punishment which creatures could suffer can be thus designated. It is He only who could put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. By enduring the threatened punishment He fully satisfied justice. In token of having received a full discharge He came forth from the grave; and when He shall appear the second time it shall be without sin—the sin which He had taken upon Him and all its effects being for ever done away. But if nothing beyond the suffering of the penalty had taken place men would only have been released from the punishment due to sin. If they were to obtain the reward of obedience its precepts must also be obeyed; and this was accomplished to the utmost by Jesus Christ. III. In its EXTENT. Every creature is bound for himself to all that obedience to his Creator of which he is capable. He is under the obligation to love God with all his heart, &c., and beyond this he cannot advance. It is evident, therefore, that he can have no superabounding righteousness to be placed in the way of merit to the account of another. And, besides this, if he has sinned, he is bound to suffer for himself the whole penalty. But the obedience of Jesus Christ, who is Himself infinite, as well as the punishment He suffered, being in themselves of infinite value, are capable of being transferred in their effects without any diminution in their respective values. IV. In its DURATION. The righteousness of Adam or of angels could only be available while it continued to be performed. The moment, therefore, in which they transgressed, the advantages derived from all their previous obedience ceased. But the righteousness of God, brought in by His Son, is an "everlasting righteousness" (Dan. ix. 24). It was performed within a limited period of time, but in its effects it can never terminate (Isa. li. 6, 8; Psa. cxix. 142; Heb. x. 14, ix. 12). V. In its INFLUENCE. It is the sole ground of reconciliation of sinners with God, and of their justification, and also of their intercession (1 John ii. 1). It is the price paid for those new heavens and that new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. Man was made lower than the angels, but this righteousness exalts him above them. The redeemed people of God stand nearest to the throne, while the angels stand "round about" them. They enter heaven clothed with a righteousness infinitely better than that which angels possess, or in which Adam was created. (*J. Haldane.*) *God's righteousness man's fear and*

man's hope:—A poor man who had spent a life of ignorance and sin was found by a London clergyman apparently dying in a miserable garret. He was in great anxiety of mind from an apparently accidental cause. A stray leaf torn from a Testament met his eye. It was part of this chapter. He had read the vivid description of a sinner and had applied it to his own case. But where was the remedy? where the gospel? Alas! the paper ended, "But now the righteousness of God without the law is" . . . "Is what?" said the anxious man. "Do the next words give any hope for such a sinner as I am?" The remainder of the chapter was read and explained to him, and the good news was as cold water to his thirsty soul. (*W. Baxendale.*) *God's method of righteousness*:—There is not a more interesting episode in English history than the story of the siege of Calais by Edward III. The king had beleaguered the town for a year, when the garrison surrendered, and the incensed monarch demanded that six of the principal citizens should be sent to him with the keys of the town, having halters about their necks. Six brave men volunteered to go on this cruel embassy, and were instantly ordered to execution. Queen Philippa, however, strenuously interceded for them, obtained their release, entertained them, and dismissed them in safety. Now compare this much vaunted instance of human clemency with that of God and then you will confess how unlike His ways are to our ways, and His thoughts to our thoughts. Those burgesses deserved not to suffer, and the king only granted them their lives in sullen submission to the importunity of his queen. And she did not make them her friends, but only dismissed them in a manner honourable to herself. With how much greater love has our offended God dealt with us! We appeared before Him as culprits condemned, and if He had ordered our instant execution we could not have impugned His justice. Not waiting to be moved, He was the first to ask us to be reconciled; and then forgiving us our sins He receives us as children. Note —I. THE RELATION WHICH SUBSISTS BETWEEN GOD AND MAN. 1. God is a great King; and we all are His natural subjects. This is quite independent of our choice or suffrages. A person born in England finds himself hedged about with laws which were neither of his devising nor of his adopting, yet to which he is bound under penalty to conform. By a like anterior necessity he is born under a system of physical laws. From that which is human and political we can escape; but from that which is Divine and natural there is no escape. Now just as you are of necessity born into the midst of these two systems of laws, so are you also born under subjection to a third, possessing a higher and more awful character. You are amenable to God's moral laws, which are more searching in their application, more stringent in their requisitions, more tremendous in their sanctions, more enduring in their operation than the other two. You may get away from the coils of national law by journeying to another country; and you will be released from physical laws when death shall transfer you to another world; but you will not even then escape from the control of God's moral law. 2. The whole world is proven guilty in God's sight. (1) We resent His authority and feel submission a hardship, simply because we are conscious rebels before Him. Ours are the feelings of culprits who hate the laws which they have broken, and the breach of which has brought them into trouble. This is true of all mankind, without limitation or exception. This is the truth which St. Paul demonstrates in chaps. i. and ii. (2) But another mode of reasoning is adopted in chap. v. There Paul boldly announces, as a fundamental principle of God's dealings with mankind, the organic unity of our race. Therefore, if any part be naturally foul and vile, all is so too; if one be guilty before God, all must be the same. We are a sinful race as inheriting the sin of Adam. II. Such being the case, let us ask, "HOW CAN A MAN BE JUST WITH GOD?" The answer constitutes the very marrow and pith of the gospel. And what we learn is—1. That God can save us from our sins and recover us to His favour. 2. That He can do this by freely and generously forgiving us all our sins, and absolutely remitting their penalty. 3. That this forgiveness of man's sins is not a wanton and arbitrary act of the Divine clemency which might outrage His own holiness and dishonour His law. 4. Nor is it the reward, merited or unmerited, of works of righteousness and legal obedience, which we can render in the future as a counterbalance and set-off against our transgressions in the past. 5. But it is rendered possible by the sacrificial sufferings and death of His Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave Himself as a ransom for our souls. 6. That this benefit accrues to us simply and solely on the condition of faith or trust in the blood of Christ, assuming only that we have a true knowledge of sin which leads us heartily to repent of it, and to seek deliverance from the curse of a broken law. 7. That this is a mode of making us righteous

in God's sight in complete harmony with His own perfect righteousness of character and law. 8. That this method of justification appertains alike to all mankind, for as there is no essential difference in their sinfulness, so there is none in the way of their recovery to holiness and life. 9. That this plan of mercy leaves no ground of boasting to man, but ensures all the glory to God. 10. That it is the same which has existed from the beginning, being spoken of, however dimly, by both Moses and the prophets. The inference is plain that none need despair; that all may be saved; that the blame of any man's being lost, to whom the word of this salvation is sent, must rest with himself and not with God; and that it is the duty of those who are entrusted with the ministry of reconciliation to proclaim a free and full and present salvation to every one that believeth. (*T. G. Horton.*) *How to attain righteousness*:—This passage contains the pith and kernel of the whole Epistle. All that precedes just clears the ground for it. All that follows is related to it as explanation, illustration, confirmation, or application. I. RIGHTEOUSNESS IS THE GREAT END OF THE GOSPEL. This is taken for granted throughout the Epistle. 1. With inspired insight Paul surveyed the condition of mankind, and put his finger at once on its great root-evil. This was not poverty, pain, death, but moral corruption. He saw that that was the greatest gospel which could lift men out of the mire of wickedness and set their feet on the rock of righteousness. 2. Their righteousness is real righteousness—not the covering of the leper with a fair robe, but the curing of the leprosy. The righteousness of the gospel is indwelling goodness out of which all virtues flow. Nothing short of this will satisfy—(1) The requirements of God. He will not endure sham goodness. The God of truth, hating all lies, cannot see a man to be righteous who is not righteous. (2) The ends of redemption. That would be a most immoral gospel which promised remission of the penalty leaving the disposition of wickedness uncorrected. The true purpose of the gospel is (Titus ii. 14). (3) The needs of our own souls. Ever since the war between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent began, mankind has felt that sin was misery, and righteousness blessedness. The hunger and thirst for righteousness may be stifled with morbid cravings for evil things. But in our better moments it wakes up, and then we feel that it is not enough for the skin to be safe if the heart is diseased. We do not want merely not to be hurt. We want "to be good." 3. Paul sometimes uses "righteousness" in the "forensic" sense, *i.e.*, to treat as righteous rather than to make righteous (chaps. iv. 1–3; v. 1). But he knew that "to justify" meant both to make righteous and to forgive; and so he passes from one to the other with little apparent discrimination, because he sees that they are only two faces of the same fact. On the one hand, the act of forgiveness is the most powerful inducement to a change of character. They who are forgiven most love most. Thus justification produces righteousness. On the other hand, since God is aware of this influence of forgiveness He must confer the pardon with a reference to it. He must see that in forgiving the sinner He is taking the best step towards destroying the sin. II. RIGHTEOUSNESS IS A GIFT OF GOD. St. Paul has demonstrated the impossibility of man's acquiring righteousness by himself. Night cannot produce day. Water will not rise above its level. Marah will never sweeten itself. We cannot grow righteous by natural development, since you can only evolve what has been previously involved, and we have all lost the goodness of original innocence. History has proved that the best of laws could not secure this end. Law is good for detecting wickedness. It is the standard by which we are measured, but it has no power for lifting us up to that standard. Now we can see the value of the great promise of the new dispensation, of a righteousness of God—made by God, given by God. This is the essential idea of the religion of grace. Therefore the great requisite is to be in such relations with God that we may receive the gift. If we are far from or at enmity with Him, we are shut out from it. We therefore need to be reconciled to God. Consequently—III. RIGHTEOUSNESS IS RECEIVED THROUGH FAITH IN CHRIST. This faith is not the mere belief in a doctrine, but active trust in Christ, practical reliance on His grace, obedient loyalty to His will (John xv. 10). 1. By faith in Christ as the sacrifice for sin we are reconciled with God. Christ having offered Himself to God on our behalf we are called to look to Him as "the Way" to the Father. If through pride or unbelief we think that we can dispense with a Saviour, we must not be surprised if God rejects our overtures towards reconciliation (Acts xiii. 38, 39). The offering of Christ not only secures forgiveness, but through this cleanses our conscience from dead works to serve the living God (Heb. ix. 14). 2. By faith in Christ as the revelation of God we grow into the Divine image. Christ is the pattern man because He is the Son of God. To be

righteous is to be like God, like Christ. When we trust to Him faithfully, we shall walk in His footsteps in the irresistible desire to be near Him, and thus we shall unconsciously grow up into the likeness of Him and share His righteousness. 3. By faith in Christ as our Lord and Master we are led into obedient loyalty to His will. He who trusts Christ must trust Him in all His relations. Thus the faith which is reliance on a Saviour becomes loyalty when it turns to a King. Then the righteousness which refused to come at the cold, stern bidding of law springs forth as a very passion of devotion. (*W. J. Adeney, M.A.*) *The announcement of righteousness by faith*:—I. THAT NONE CAN BE JUSTIFIED IN THE SIGHT OF THE LAWGIVER BY THE LAW IS EVIDENT; for—1. No man has done the deeds of the law. 2. The law, when brought into contact with the deeds of men, always discovers sin and pronounces condemnation. 3. The law is law only; a rule of life merely, and in no sense or manner a means of restoration to a blameless state. II. THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OR FREEDOM FROM CONDEMNATION WHICH THE GOSPEL DISPENSATION REVEALS, IS A RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH—1. God designs; the plan is of His devising. 2. God provides; the preparation of it is of His working. 3. God confers; the bestowal is of His grace and sovereignty. 4. God approves; He accepts it as complete in His sight, and will accept it in the last day. It is a blamelessness, righteously—(1) Procured. (2) Bestowed. (3) Regarded as perfect blamelessness. III. THIS RIGHTEOUSNESS IS "WITHOUT THE LAW"; entirely distinct from it and its purposes, belonging to another province altogether. 1. It is not provided for by the law. 2. It derives no aid, direction, efficiency of any kind from the law. 3. It has no reference to, or connection with the law, except as the law shows the necessity which has to be met. III. IT IS WITNESSED OR TESTIFIED TO AS A DIVINE PROVISION, both by the law which reveals the sin, and by the prophecy which denounces it. 1. As being needed. The law, in the book or in the heart, gives silent assent to its necessity, by being dumb with regard to any other means of justification. 2. As being possible. In all the voice of the law, as God has spoken it, there is mingled an intimation of a possible pardon, not from the law, but from the mercy of God. 3. As being provided. In all the written law and prophecy of the Old Testament free pardon, as righteousness of God, is formally announced. The "righteousness" of the gospel pardon—(*a*) Is no new thing. Obtained by Abel, Enoch, Abraham, "without the law." (*b*) Is manifested now in the means of its provision, the fulness of love that provides it, the signs and seals of its Divine approval, and the completeness of its restoration to favour and privilege. (*c*) Is in perfect harmony with the law, though belonging to another sphere; since it recognises, respects, and meets the claims of the law, and provides for its maintenance as a righteous rule of life; so the law readily witnesses it. IV. THIS "RIGHTEOUSNESS" HAS ALWAYS BEEN OBTAINED BY FAITH (see chap. iv.). Now by faith which rests not only in God as the pardoner, but also in Christ as the procurer of pardon. Faith—1. Assents to the necessity and sufficiency of this righteousness. 2. Consents to its bestowal. 3. Relies on the work of Christ and the word of promise. 4. Claims, seeks, grasps, and holds this righteousness. V. IT IS BROUGHT UNTO ALL IN THE GOSPEL MANIFESTATION, AND CONFERRED UPON ALL THAT BELIEVE, WITHOUT DISTINCTION. 1. The need is universal; so the remedy. 2. No distinction in the condemnation (see chap. ii. 6–11); none in the justifying. 3. Faith a condition of which all are capable; and the only thing of which any are capable (ver. 28). (1) All have actually transgressed. (2) All have thus "fallen behind in the race" for the Divine approval, or giving of glory (chap. i. 10). (3) All have made it impossible that they should be justified by law. (4) God, therefore, since the provision is as large as the need, puts it within the reach of all. (*W. Griffiths.*) *Justifying righteousness*:—Of all the subjects there is none so important as—How can man be just with God? and yet there is none as to which men are so easily deluded. Conscience tells the man that he has sinned, and yet, when asked, How do you expect to obtain future happiness?—he either evades the question, or shelters himself in some refuge of lies. And the reason is that the man is utterly blind to his true condition, he knows not the malignity of the disease, and cannot, therefore, apprehend the remedy. Ere a sinner can even understand the gospel, he must see and realise his own true position under the government of God. His position is plainly this: he has transgressed the law, and lies under sentence of death. How, then, can he be restored to the favour of God? How can the government of God remain unchangeable whilst this creature is saved? To this question you have the answer, that the sinner is justified and saved by means of a righteousness. This appears from the text, and from the nature of the case. It was righteousness that

God required of man at first, it was failing to yield it that he lost his title to life; and as the character of God is unchangeable, it is only when he can plead a righteousness ample as the demands of the law that he can be restored to favour. I. THIS RIGHTEOUSNESS IS NOT THE SINNER'S OWN, BUT THAT OF ANOTHER (see also chap. i. 17, 18; iii. 20). And yet, in the face of this, multitudes seek to enter heaven by a door which their own sins have closed against them. Ask that man of the world what is the foundation of his hope for eternity, and his answer is, that he has never yet been guilty of open, flagrant transgression. Ask that sensualist, and his answer is that he trusts his charitable deeds will atone for these infirmities. The professor of religion answers that he does his best, that he is sincere, and that he trusts God will take the will for the deed. But ye who would be justified by your obedience to the law, have ye really considered what the law requires? It demands perfect obedience, and condemns the least transgression. Have you such a righteousness as this? Is it not, therefore, clear, that if ever the law relaxes its hold of you, the reason must be not your righteousness, but the righteousness of another? II. THIS RIGHTEOUSNESS CAN ONLY BE KNOWN BY REVELATION. Being a righteousness provided by God, none but God can discover it. It was revealed at first in Eden as the ground of the sinner's hope—the Jewish ritual was a continued revelation of it—the prophets bore testimony to it, speaking of Him who should magnify the law, and make it honourable, and the whole New Testament is a bright revelation that God has provided a righteousness, through which He can be just when He justifies the ungodly. An awakened conscience tells the sinner that he has no resources of his own wherewith to meet the demands of a violated law; and, if he looks around and puts the question to all creation, How can God be righteous, and I be saved? Creation remains silent, and is covered with darkness. But a voice comes from the Bible which saves him from despair (chap. x. 6–9). III. THIS RIGHTEOUSNESS WAS WROUGHT OUT IN HUMAN NATURE. The circumstances rendered this necessary. It was on earth that God was dishonoured, and on earth therefore must He be glorified. "The children were partakers of flesh and blood," and their Redeemer therefore "must take part of the same." The first revelation of this righteousness, accordingly, was made in the promise, that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head; and, in due time, this promise was fulfilled in the Second Adam, standing in the room of His people as their representative and head (chap. v. 19). He who was thus born of a woman, was "made under the law"; that is to say, He met the law as His people's surety, and fulfilled to the uttermost all its demands against them. IV. THIS RIGHTEOUSNESS IS THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD. True, the Redeemer was a man; but under that veil of humanity, faith beholds Jehovah. Without this were the case, the salvation of His people was impossible. He had to make atonement for their sin, but the righteousness of a mere creature would have been utterly insufficient, for a creature owes to God already all the obedience he can yield. The righteousness, therefore, through which the sinner is justified is the righteousness of a Divine person. You accordingly read that this is the name wherewith He shall be called, Jehovah our Righteousness. It is the righteousness of the Mediator, of God manifest in the flesh, of Him who is God and man in two distinct natures and one person; and as such it answers, yea, more than answers, all the demands of a violated law. For what higher honour can the law receive than that God Himself became its servant, and obeyed all its commands? V. THIS RIGHTEOUSNESS "IS UNTO ALL." It is so completely put within the sinner's reach, that if he once hears of it he cannot perish, without putting it from him and rejecting it. The brazen serpent was God's free gift to all—all were commanded to look to it; and just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so has the Son of Man been lifted up, &c. The cities of refuge were open to every manslayer. And so it is with the righteousness of Christ; every sinner who hears of it is invited and commanded to flee for refuge. VI. THIS RIGHTEOUSNESS IS UPON ALL THAT BELIEVE. The believer is clothed and covered with it. Being one with Christ by faith, Christ's righteousness is his own; he is dealt with as one who obeyed when Christ obeyed, as one who suffered when Christ suffered, as one who is, therefore, as righteous as Christ is. (*A. M. McGillivray.*)

Ver. 22. **The righteousness of God which is by the faith of Christ unto all and upon all them that believe.**—This *righteousness* is—I. DIVINE in its nature. II. FREE in its dispensation — unto and upon all them that believe. III. UNLIMITED in its offer—there is no difference. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *God's grace abundant*;—God's grace resembles a flood of water, which not only reaches *to*

believers, but comes *upon* them like the waves of the sea, to cover all their unrighteousness and drown all their guilt. Their sins sink into its depths like stones in the midst of the ocean, to be remembered against them no more for ever. (*T. G. Horton.*) For there is no difference.—*All involved in the same peril*:—When the ship is wrecked what difference does it make that some should be drowned far out at sea, and others come nearer land, and there be lost? or even that one is within arm's length of the shore when he sinks for ever out of sight? What does it avail? They are all lost. This world is a wrecked world; the strongest soul cannot reach the haven of a perfect state of being in his own strength. We are all helpless against the storm of lightning and wind and waves. "There is no difference, for all have sinned." (*H. Elvet Lewis.*) *The right platform*:—1. The truth laid down here and in ver. 23 is of immense moment. You must take your right position if you wish to journey in a right direction. At a great railway junction the main thing is to get on to the right platform for the station you want to reach. So with all who wish to reach heaven. But what is that platform? That of self-condemnation. It is the laying aside of every self-righteous, self-excusing plea, and taking the place of a sinner in God's sight. 2. The Old Version, "There is no difference," scarcely puts the truth so clearly as the New. There is a wide difference between one and another as to the measure of responsibility and the amount of guilt. Great is the difference between an Englishman and an Arab; between a youth yielding for the first time to some subtle temptation and the hoary-headed sinner who has been the means of stumbling to multitudes. 3. But in spite of these differences "there is no distinction." There is not one who has kept the law. "All have fallen short of the glory of God." At a match in archery many try their skill and some come nearer than others; but the only matter of importance is whether any one actually hits the eye. If otherwise all alike fail. In the matter before us perfect holiness is the end of God's law. But who has reached it? No doubt some may come nearer than others, but where is one who has never failed? 4. Own this before God. Do not put in any claim for arrest of judgment. Do not try to lull conscience to sleep by imagining yourself no worse than others. One sin is enough to prove you guilty, how much more thousands? 5. Therefore learn the lesson. Stoop and take the lowest place—willing to be saved on the same footing as a criminal. "God be merciful to me a sinner" must be your only plea. Then you are in the right direction. Keep on that line and you will reach your journey's end. (*G. Everard, M.A.*)

Ver. 23. For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.—*Sin as a fact*:—I. THE NECESSITY OF A CLEAR SENSE OF SIN. 1. The gospel is a glorious remedy for a universal and otherwise incurable disease; and the first step must ever be to make us sensible of that disease. For one of its most dangerous symptoms is, that it makes men insensible of it. And, seeing that the remedy is not one which can be simply taken once for all, but requires long application, a man must be very thoroughly persuaded that he has the disease before he will take the necessary trouble to be cured of it. Let us try and see what "all having sinned" means. 2. When any of us looks out upon mankind, or within himself, one thing can hardly fail to strike him. It is the presence of evil. From the first, man's history has been a history of going wrong and doing wrong. From the first, our own personal history has been a history of interrupted good and interfering bad. 3. Some have said, "Don't tell people about it; forget that there is evil in yourself; and you and they will become good. It may be true that there is such a dark spot in nature; but gazing upon it is painful and useless; look at the bright side." But do you suppose that evil in our nature can be thus got rid of? Try it for a day—for an hour; then take strict unsparing account. And if more time is wanted, try it for a year; then retire and trace your path during the time. Does not every man see that it would be simply the tale of the silly ostrich over again, which imagines itself safe from the hunter by hiding him from its sight? No; a man who wants to get rid of evil must open his eyes to it, stand face to face with it, and conquer it. II. SIN IS DISTINGUISHED FROM EVERY OTHER EVIL. 1. There are bodily pain, discomfort, misery, common to us and to all. Now, if we can manage to flee away from them, we thereby get rid of them. We need not study their nature. But the man who wishes to avoid evil in this world must be awake and alive to the forms and accesses of evil. His very safety consists in it. Therefore evil is a matter of a totally different kind from bodily pain, misery, or death. 2. Evil is not by any means our only inward source of annoyance and

hindrance. Every one has defects and infirmities. But none of these do we look upon as we look upon evil. Let it be shown that we are dull, or feeble, or inferior to some others, we put up with it, we excuse it, we make ourselves as comfortable as we may under it; but let it be once shown that we have wished, said, done, that which is evil, and we know at once that there is no excuse for it. We may try to show that we did it inadvertently, or by force of circumstances, or in some way to lessen our own share in it, but the very labour to construct an excuse shows that we hold the evil itself, as evil, to be inexcusable. So far, then, this evil is something which our nature itself teaches us to revolt from and abhor. No son of man ever said or could say, from his inmost heart, "Evil, be thou my good." It requires more than man ever to say this. III. SIN IS THE TRANSGRESSION OF LAW. 1. What we have said shows that there is a law implanted in our nature by which evil is avoided and good desired. All our laws, public opinion, even our ways of thinking and speaking, are founded on this. 2. Now, when man says or acts evil, what sort of a thing does he do? Is it a necessary condition of our lives that we must enter into compact with evil? Certainly not. Every protest against, resistance to, victory over it, proves that evil is not necessary to our being. But true as this is, the freedom from and victory over evil is not that after which all men are striving. One man seeks sensual gratification; another wealth; a third power; a fourth reputation, &c., &c.; and so, not man's highest aim to be good, but an aim very far below this is followed by even the best of mankind sometimes. Now every one of these lower objects, if followed as an object, does necessarily bring a man into contact and compromise with evil. Greed, intemperance, injustice, unkindness, overweening opinion of self, and a hundred other evil things beset every one in such courses of life. 3. When a man lives such a course he is disobeying that great first law of our being by which we choose the good and abhor the evil. Now, whenever we do this we sin. "All sin is transgression of law." 4. Now, sin is committed against a person. And this law of good and evil of which we have been speaking, springs from that Holy and Just One who hath made us and to whom we are accountable. All sin is against Him. IV. ALL HAVE SINNED. And in dwelling on this, the fact that all men have inherited the disposition to sin, necessarily comes first. And, inheriting this disposition, but with it inheriting also the great inward law of conscience warning us against evil, we have again and again followed, not the good law, but the evil propensity. In wayward childhood this has been so; in passionate youth; in calm, deliberate manhood. Now, then, this being so, can sin be safe? Can a sinner be happy? Sin is and must be the ruin of man, body and soul, here and hereafter. (*Dean Alford.*) *The charge of sin universal*:—I. THE CHARGE here brought is that of having sinned, and a most solemn and awful charge it is. "Fools," indeed, "make a mock at sin"; and that they do so, is a proof of their folly. God is love; and consequently His law requires love. To love God with all the heart, and their fellow-beings as themselves, is the essence of that law. To break this law is sin; and sin produces only misery and ruin. To charge a person with having sinned is to charge him with having acted contrary to the purpose for which he was made; with having failed to love and obey the best and greatest of beings; with being guilty of the same conduct with that which cast the angels out of heaven, and man out of Paradise. Surely this is a solemn charge. Do we want other examples of the evil of having sinned? Why the Flood? why the fire upon the people of Sodom and Gomorrah? &c. Because they had sinned. Or, to give a more awful and decisive example, why did the Son of God die on the Cross? Because He had taken upon Himself the nature and the cause of sinners. II. THE PERSONS against whom it is brought. "There is no difference; for all have sinned," in their progenitor and representative, and in their own persons also. But this is a truth unpalatable to the pride of man. And under the influence of this principle he will be disposed yet further to ask, "What! is there no difference? no difference between righteous Abel and wicked Cain? between impenitent Saul and contrite David? Are they all equally guilty before God?" In one sense all these persons are not alike. They have not all sinned in the same manner, in the same measure, to the same degree. Here there is a wide difference between them. But in the sense spoken of in the text they are all alike. They have all sinned; and here there is no difference. Though they may not be equally guilty, yet they are all guilty before God. III. THE EXTENT of the charge here brought. "All have sinned, and," by so doing, "have come short of the glory of God." This expression signifies—1. To fall short of rendering to God that glory to which He is entitled. He requires that all

His creatures shall glorify Him. He has created them for His glory; and when they fulfil the purpose for which He created them, then they do glorify Him. Thus "the heavens declare the glory of God." What, then, was the end and purpose for which man was made? To love, obey, and serve his Maker. By opposition to His will he comes "short of the glory of God." Man, a living, rational being, is placed, not like the other works of creation, under a law of necessity which he cannot break, but under a moral restraint, by which he ought to be kept in the path of duty. But he is not so kept by it. He dishonours God in his very gifts, and endeavours, according to his power, to introduce confusion into His works, and to defeat His great and gracious designs. 2. The failing to obtain that glory which God originally designed for man. God originally designed man for a glorious immortality. But by sin he fell short of that glory; he forfeited and lost it. This, indeed, was the consequence of not rendering to God the glory due to Him. Having been unwilling to glorify God, he could no longer expect to be glorified with God. Conclusion: Perhaps you say, "Why, this doctrine takes away all hope. Would you drive us to despair?" No, not to a despair of salvation, but to a despair of justifying yourselves before God. But in Christ there is a full and gracious pardon for all your sins; there is glory offered to you again. (*E. Cooper.*) *The test of a sinner*:—A young man once said to me, "I do not think I am a sinner." I asked him if he would be willing his mother or sister should know all he had done or said or thought—all his motives and desires. After a moment he said, "No, indeed, not for all the world." "Then can you dare to say, in the presence of a holy God, who knows every thought of your heart, 'I do not commit sin'?" (*J. B. Gough.*) *Man's sinfulness and inability*:—I. IT IS UNIVERSALLY ADMITTED THAT THERE IS SOMETHING WRONG IN MAN'S NATURE. 1. In every one of us there is a something good which perceives a something bad; also something which whispers of an ideal state—a kind of reminiscence of a lost condition. 2. To account for this it suffices if we think of our nature as having had, originally controlling it, a supreme love which has been largely but by no means entirely lost. That in us which accuses us when we do wrong and commends us when we do right cannot be sinful, but must be holy. And so there is in us all a viceroy asserting kingship in the name of the true Sovereign of our souls. As a matter of fact we look upon one another as beings not entirely trustworthy. If man be not a depraved creature, why this universal suspicion? And yet we are not so depraved as not to know that we are depraved. 3. It is often argued that we are here in a state of probation. But man as man has had his probation and has fallen. Adam's "tree of knowledge of good and evil" tested his obedience. Our Tree of Life—Jesus Christ—tests our obedience. Only with a difference. The first man, knowing only good, wanted to know what evil was. We, having in ourselves the knowledge of good and evil, are put upon trial, whether we will adhere persistently to that which is good—good personalised in Christ. II. WHAT DOES THIS CONDITION MEAN? 1. There is suggested the explanation of incompleteness. Our nature, say some, is moving on gradually towards perfection. Give it time and it will come out according to the highest idea that the best and most intelligent man has of it. Unhappily, except under certain conditions, and in a certain environment, man as he grows older does not grow better. And this idea does not account for our sense of guilt. It leaves out too much. There are too many facts which lie outside of it. It only covers a part of the ground. 2. It needs along with it the idea of depravation. The sense of not being right, of being wrong, is in us all. And it is an internal trouble which men would get away from if they could. But no man can get away from himself. No external condition can eradicate it. Men try all sorts of devices to rid themselves of it. Sometimes they change their opinions, but that does not alter the inward condition. The bad consciousness is there all the time, and there is no other word but sinfulness which will express its nature. For it is certain that there are in man not only defects which mean weakness, but also a parent defect which means guilt. III. THIS DEGENERATION IS TOTAL. It affects the whole nature. Our nature is so connected, part with part, that degeneration in one region means degeneration in every region. If a man be unjust in his feelings he will be unjust in his thinking and action. It is the merest rubbish to talk of a man being good at heart and bad everywhere else. Whatever affects the centre of our nature affects also every part of it to the outermost extremities. If there be impure blood in the heart there will be impure blood in every vein. And there is no kindness in any teaching which leads men to assume that sinfulness is only an

eruption on the skin and not a disease of the heart. Only "fools make a mock at sin." IV. THE VIEW WE TAKE OF THIS FACT OF SINFULNESS WILL INFLUENCE OUR ESTIMATE OF EVERY OTHER VITAL TRUTH. If sinfulness be only ignorance we need only a Teacher; if only disease, a Physician; if only error, an Example. But if it be something more, we need in Him who is to deliver us from it a power other than that possessed by the Teacher, &c. Sinfulness means ignorance, error, disease; but it means a great deal more. In many a case it means that state of heart in which the idea of God is more hateful than the idea of the devil. I have known fallen men and women who never ceased praying "God be merciful to me a sinner," and I cannot forget Christ's words—"The publicans and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you." There are sins of the flesh which destroy reputation, which bring misery, social degradation, and much else. There are sins of the spirit which bring none of these, and yet which put men and women at even a farther distance from God. Of what condition of heart is he who is amiable and placid until some one speaks to him such a truth as "God is Love," "God is Light," "God so loved the world"? &c. To err is human, but to contemn and reject the claims of Deity, that is not human, but fiendish. No one has ever taken a true measure of what sinfulness is until he has considered it in this, its most terrible form. I want you to feel "the exceeding sinfulness of sin," for only then will you be able to appreciate the exceeding goodness of God who "willeth not the death of a sinner, but that all should come to repentance." "Where sin abounded grace did superabound." No man who looks away from his sin to his Saviour need despair, but then he must look to Him as Saviour. If a man can grow out of this condition of sinfulness by natural development; if every old man be nearer to the ideal of manhood than when he was young, then a Teacher, &c., is needed; but if man is helpless to deliver himself from sinfulness, then he who is to meet the necessities of the case must be human to understand him, but more than human to deliver him from an enemy stronger than man himself. (*Reuben Thomas, D.D.*) *Coming short of God's glory*:—Different persons, according to the difference of their habits of thought, or their education, or their moral attainments, take a very different standard of what sin is. But here we have God's definition—whatever "comes short of the glory of God," that is "sin." I. GOD MEASURES SIN BY THE DEGREE IN WHICH THE ACT, OR THE WORD, OR THE THOUGHT, INJURES OR GRIEVES HIM. This must be so. The only true rule for the estimate of any sin must be taken from the mind of Him whose mind is law, and whom to offend against constitutes sinfulness. Do not say, "Are not we forbidden to seek our own glory? How, then, can God seek His own glory?" For the reason why no creature is to seek his own glory is because all glory belongs to the Creator. What does it mean to "come short of the glory of God"? It may mean to come short of heaven, or to be unworthy of any praise from God, or to come short of that which is indeed God's glory—His perfect image and likeness; to fail to reach, in its purity, the only motive which God approves—a desire for His own glory. It appears to me that though all the other senses are included in the words, yet that their great primary intention is the last. II. This brings me to THE MOTIVE OF HUMAN ACTION. 1. You, who can read only what speaks to the outward senses, think most of words and actions. And, as naturally, God will look at the sources more than at the streams of every man's moral being. So it will be at the last great account. All the deeds and sayings of a man will then stand forth to give evidence to a certain inward state of the man, according to which every one will receive his sentence. 2. And yet even we judge of things by their motives. Why do we value the most trivial gift, the act of a moment, a smile, a glance of the eye, more than all the treasures of substance? 3. Note some of the legitimate motives which may actuate us. (1) It is legitimate to wish to be happy. Therefore God stirs us up by promises, and lifts us up by beatitudes. It would be contrary to common sense to say that we may not do anything for the sake of going to heaven. (2) It is a step above that—to do or bear with the desire that we may become holier. (3) But higher, because less selfish, ranges the motive of a true ambition to make others happy. (4) And still higher the lofty, Christ-like focus, concentrating the whole will upon this—"Father, in me glorify Thyself." 4. To all these principles of action, except the last, there attaches a shadow. The wish to be happy, even where the things we desire are spiritual, may degenerate into religious selfishness. The longing to be holy will often turn into morbid self-examination and a restless disquietude. The ambition to be useful easily becomes vitiated with—I will not say the love of human applause—but a desire to be liked. But the motive to do anything for

God's glory has no shadow, and is that which makes all the other motives right. It is right to endeavour to be happy, mainly because our happiness gives glory to God as the result of the finished work of Christ. It is right to study to be holy, because where God sees holiness He sees His own reflection, and He is satisfied. It is right to set ourselves to be useful, because it extends the kingdom of God. Here, then, lies the wrongness of everything that is done on any inferior principle—it "comes short of the glory of God." (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *Missing the mark:*—The word "sin" alike in the Hebrew and the Greek means "missed the mark," as an archer might. When one is interested in rifle shooting the picture is easily realised and not easily forgotten. I. THE MARK, THE CENTRE, THE BULL'S-EYE, THAT MAN IS TO MAKE HIS AIM THROUGH LIFE, IS "THE GLORY OF GOD." 1. And what is that? The outshining of God's attributes; Christ is the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person. We can, at best, be but broken images, interrupted rays of His light. But still that is what we are to aim at—becoming ourselves, and reflecting to the world around us some images of the holiness, goodness, and love of God. 2. In this shooting we are a spectacle to men. See us they will, and judge from us the character and the worth of the religion we profess. The various professions or trades we may follow are but the courses which our bullets take amidst the various influences to the right or to the left, to be allowed for by the shooter. Our bullets must pass through them without erring, and in all alike the aim is to be one—to manifest the character of the God we serve. Those occupations are not in themselves the true centre to be aimed at—they are but the means of reaching the glory of God. II. MISSING THIS MARK IS SIN. St. Paul lays it to the charge of all alike. 1. The standard is a high one—to aim directly and always at God's glory. But, then, man occupies a high position, made above all creation, blessed with faculties above all creatures for being the glory of God; placed with opportunities of being so now, and the promise of being more so hereafter. 2. Shall we complain that we are so high in the creation, or complacently stoop down from it and forfeit the crown held out for us to take, like Bunyan's man with the muck-rake? Was not he missing the mark of life? He took up, as many do, a handful of dirt—he lost the crown of gold. We speak of men having made a good hit when they have succeeded in a telling speech, or a successful speculation, or a fortunate match, but what have they hit if they have not sought to honour God? Certainly not the glory of God, nor have they advanced the true purposes of life. 3. Now a rifle is made to shoot straight; if it will not do so, however perfect the polish of its barrel, or the finish of its lock or stock, it is useless, and you throw it on one side or break it up. The more complete it seems the more vexed you are with it for its utter failure in the one work for which you had it made. God has made us for the one object of glorifying Him, and if we fail in that, then whatsoever else we have which decorates us—intellect, politeness, science, art, position, wealth—all tend not to diminish but to increase our condemnation. 4. What our condemnation may be I do not pretend to fathom; but if the words mean no more than that having been made for the highest purpose, and then having utterly failed, we are henceforth cast on one side as useless, our powers broken up, and our opportunities taken from us, they will mean enough to stir us to redeem the time. We should not like to meet the exposure of such a shame. Pindar describes the return of a combatant from the great National Games. He speaks of him as hiding himself along the byways, not venturing to enter by the gates into his city, or to be seen in any public place. Why? Because he had missed the mark. He went out in the name of his city, equipped by his fellow-citizens, to win honour for their name, and to give them glory. But he has failed, and he dare not meet them. We have failed, and we must "all appear before the judgment-seat, that every one may receive the things done in his body." III. TO WHAT DOES THIS LEAD US? 1. We must realise more and more our condition as sinners. Let any man solemnly ask himself, How much of God has the world seen in me? How much of His glory have I reflected? 2. We must go back to the same butts and shoot again for a truer aim. Go to your seat in Parliament, or your books, or your shop, and there aim afresh at rising to the glory of God, "forgetting those things which are behind," &c. True, it will not be so easy now that one's hand is unsteadied by neglecting to aim aright; true, it will not be so simple now that many are looking on and wondering what in the world you are changing for, to shoot straight under their critical eye; but such sense of sin, such turning from it to God in Christ again, such trusting hope that with His aid we may succeed, will bring with it His forgiveness for the past and His guidance for

the future; and we may yet, with His encouragement, hit the mark and glorify Him. (*Canon Morse.*)

Ver. 24. **Being justified freely by His grace.**—*Justification*:—I. Its MODE—"freely." It is not a matter of wages, it is a free gift. II. Its ORIGIN—"His grace." God's free good will inclining Him to sinful man to bestow on him a favour. There is no blind necessity here. We are face to face with a generous inspiration of Divine love. III. The MEANS. The deliverance wrought in Jesus Christ. (*Prof. Godet.*) *Justification*:—I. THE BENEFIT SPOKEN OF—Justification. In this there is—(1) The forgiveness of sins. "The remission of sins." 2. A restoration to God's favour. 3. A treatment of the pardoned and accepted person as righteous. II. Its ORIGINAL SPRING, or first moving cause, and the free grace of God (Rom. xi. 6). 1. By God's grace, which excludes all merit. 2. Freely, which excludes all conceit. III. Its MERITORIOUS OR PROCURING CAUSE. "The redemption that is in Jesus Christ." IV. THE ORDINATION OF GOD ABOUT IT. He hath "set Christ forth to be a propitiation." The word "set forth" signifies that—1. God hath purposed in Himself that Christ should be a propitiation for sin (Eph. i. 9; 1 Pet. i. 18-20). 2. God has exhibited and proposed Christ to us to be a propitiation. (1) He set Him forth beforehand, in the promises, types, and prophecies (ver. 21; John v. 46; Acts x. 43). (2) And when the fulness of time was come, God actually exhibited Him in the flesh (Gal. iv. 4, 5). (3) Then the great decree broke forth, and the promised Saviour came to take away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. (4) He is now set forth as a propitiation in the clear discoveries which are made of Him in the gospel (1 Pet. i. 20; Rom. iii. 21; Gal. iii. 1). (5) And this is proposed to our faith for the remission of our sins and acceptance with God (chap. i. 17). 3. God has preferred Christ as a propitiation to all things else. The sacrifices under the law could not possibly take away sin. God did not take any pleasure in them for that purpose; but in Christ His soul is well pleased, and His offering is of a sweet-smelling savour to God (Eph. v. 2). V. THE WAY IN WHICH WE ARE MADE PARTAKERS OF THIS BENEFIT—"through faith in His blood." Conclusion: 1. This gives us a lively view of the great evil of sin and the exceeding riches of God's grace. 2. Here is no room for any to encourage themselves with hopes of pardon and acceptance with God while they go on in sin. 3. Here is a blessed ground of relief for poor convinced sinners who are discouraged with fears, as if there could be no pardon for their sins. 4. Here are the richest consolations and the highest obligations to those who have obtained this blessing. (*J. Guyse, D.D.*) *Of justification*:—I. WHAT IT IS TO JUSTIFY A SINNER. Justification is a law term taken from courts of judicature, wherein a person is accused, tried, and, after trial, absolved. Thus it is opposed to accusation and condemnation (chap. viii. 33, 34; Deut. xxv. 1). And so it is declared to be a sin to justify the wicked (Prov. xvii. 15), not to make them righteous but to pronounce them righteous. Hence it follows that justification—(1) Is not a real but a relative change of the sinner's state. 2. Is an act done and passed in an instant in the court of heaven, as soon as the sinner believes in Christ, and not a work carried on by degrees. II. THE PARTS OF JUSTIFICATION. 1. That we may the more clearly take up this matter, we must view the process of a sinner's justification. (1) God Himself sits Judge in this process. He gave the law; and as He is the Lawgiver so He is the Judge. And He only can justify authoritatively and irreversibly. For—(*a*) He only is the Lawgiver, and He only has power to save or to destroy, and therefore the judgment must be left to Him (James iv. 12). (*b*) Against Him the crime is committed, and He only can pardon it. (2) The sinner is cited to answer before God's judgment-seat by the messengers of God, the ministers of the gospel (Mal. iii. 1). Every sermon is a summons put into the sinner's hand to answer for his sin. But, alas! sinners are so secure that they slight the summons and will not appear. Some keep themselves out of the messenger's way; some never read the summons; others tear it in pieces, or affront the messengers (Matt. xxii. 6). And so they act till Death bring them under his black rod before the tribunal in another world, where there is no access to justification. (3) The Judge sends out other messengers who apprehend the sinner to carry him before the judgment-seat. And these are, the spirit of bondage and an awakened conscience (John xvi. 8, 9; Prov. xx. 27; Jer. ii. 27). They apprehended Paul, and left him not till he appeared and submitted himself. But some when caught are unruly prisoners, and strive against the Spirit and their own consciences (Acts vii. 51); they go no further with them than they are dragged. They get the mastery at length, and get away to their own

ruin; like Cain, Saul, Felix, &c. (4) When at length the prisoner, in chains of guilt, is brought to the bar (Acts xvi. 29, 30), what fear and sorrow seize him while he sees a just Judge on the throne, a strict law laid before him, and a guilty conscience within! (5) Then the indictment is read, and the sinner is speechless (Rom. iii. 10–19). And sentence is demanded agreeable to the law (Gal. iii. 10). (6) Then the sinner must plead guilty or not. If he were innocent he might plead not guilty, and thereupon he would be justified. But this plea is not for us. For —(*a*) It is utterly false (Rom. iii. 10; Eccles. vii. 20; James iii. 2). (*b*) Falsehood can never bear out before God's judgment-seat. There is no want of evidence. Conscience is as a thousand witnesses, and the Judge is omniscient. The sinner then must needs plead guilty. (7) The sinner being convicted is put to it to plead, why the sentence should not pass against him. Shall he plead mercy for mere mercy's sake? Justice interposes that the Judge of all the earth must do right. The truth of God interposes that the word already gone out must be accomplished—That without shedding of blood there is no remission. Whither shall the sinner turn now? Both saints and angels are helpless. So—(8) The despised Mediator, the Advocate at this court, who takes the desperate causes of sinners in hand, offers Himself now, with His perfect righteousness, and all His salvation. The sinner by faith lays hold on Him, renounces all other claims, and betakes himself to His alone merits and suretyship. Now has the sinner a plea that will infallibly bring him off. He pleads, he is guilty indeed; yet he must not die, for Christ has died for him. The law's demands were just, but they are all answered already. (9) Hereupon the judge sustaining the plea passes the sentence of justification on the sinner, according to the everlasting agreement (Isa. liii. 11), who is now set beyond the reach of condemnation (chap. viii. 1). 2. This great benefit consists of—(1) The pardon of sin (Acts xiii. 38, 39). Here I shall show—(*a*) What pardon is. It is not the taking away the nature of sin; God justifies the sinner, but will never justify his sin. Nor is it the removing of the intrinsic demerit of sin; it still deserves condemnation. Nor is it a simple delay of the punishment; a reprieve is no pardon. There are four things in sin:—Its power, which is broken in regeneration (Rom. vi. 14); its blot and stain, which is taken away in sanctification (1 Cor. vi. 11); its indwelling, which is removed in glorification (Heb. xii. 23); its guilt. Now pardon is the taking away of guilt, the dreadful obligation to punishment. Pardon cuts the knot whereby guilt ties sin and wrath together, cancels the bond obliging the sinner to pay his debt, and puts him out of the law's reach. (*b*) Its properties—full (Micah vii. 19; Col. ii. 13); free; irrevocable (Rom. xi. 29). (*c*) Its names discovering its nature. It is a blotting out of sin (Isa. xliii. 25), an allusion to a creditor who, when he discharges a debt, scores it out of his count-book; a not imputing of sin (Psa. xxxii. 2), a metaphor from merchants, who, when a rich friend undertakes for one of their poor debtors, charge their accounts no more upon him; a taking of the burden of sin from off the sinner (Psa. xxxii. 1; Hos. xiv. 2); a washing of him (1 Cor. vi. 11; Psa. li. 2; Isa. i. 18; 1 John i. 7); a dismissing or remission of sin (Matt. vi. 12; Rom. iii. 25), as the scape-goat bore away the iniquities of the people; the dispelling of a thick cloud (Isa. xliv. 22), which pardon, like the shining sun, breaks through and dissolves, or, like a mighty wind, scatters; a casting of sin behind the Lord's back (Isa. xxxviii. 17); a casting it into the depth of the sea (Micah vii. 19); a covering of sin (Psa. xxxii. 1); a not remembering of sin (Jer. xxxi. 34). (2) The acceptation of the person as righteous in the sight of God (2 Cor. v. 21; Rom. iv. 6, v. 19). There is a twofold acceptation which must be carefully distinguished. First, of a man's works as righteous (Gal. iii. 12). Works in a full conformity to the law are thus accepted. But since God's judgment is according to truth, He cannot account things to be what really they are not; it is evident that even a believer's works are not righteous in the eye of the law. So that this acceptation has no place in our justification. Secondly, of a man's person as righteous (Eph. i. 6). This may be done, and is done, to the believer. This is an unspeakable benefit; for thereby—(*a*) The bar in the way of abounding mercy is taken away, so that the rivers of compassion may flow towards him (chap. v. 1, &c.; Job xxxiii. 24, &c.). (*b*) He is adjudged to eternal life (2 Thess. i. 6, 7; Acts xxvi. 18). (*c*) The accusations of Satan and the clamours of evil conscience are hereby to be stilled (Rom. viii. 33, 34). (*T. Boston, D.D.*) *Justification: a change of state accompanied by a change of character*:—There may amongst men be a change of state without any change of character. A prisoner may be dismissed from the bar, acquitted of the charge; or he may be convicted, but pardoned; but he may go with all

the principles of wickedness as strong as ever within him. His condition is changed, but not his character. But it is never so in God's dealings with men. In every case in which there is justification, sanctification accompanies it. Wherever there is the change of state there is the change of character. (*R. Wardlaw, D.D.*) *Justification by grace*:—I. THE REDEMPTION THAT IS IN OR BY CHRIST JESUS. When a prisoner has been made a slave by some barbarous power, a ransom price must be paid. Now, we being, by the fall of Adam, virtually guilty, Justice claimed us as his bond slaves for ever unless we could pay a ransom. But we were "bankrupt debtors"; an execution was put into our house; all we had was sold, and we could by no means find a ransom; it was just then that Christ paid the ransom price that we might be delivered from the curse of the law and go free. Note—1. The multitude He has redeemed, "a multitude that no man can number." 2. This ransom was all paid, and all paid at once. The sacrifice of Calvary was not a part payment. The whole of the demands of the law were paid down there and then. So priceless was the ransom one might have thought that Christ should pay it by instalments. Kings' ransoms have sometimes run through years. But our Saviour once for all gave Himself a sacrifice, leaving nothing for Him or us to do. 3. When Christ paid all this ransom He did it all Himself! Simon, the Cyrenian, might bear the cross, but not be nailed to it. Two thieves were with Him there; not righteous men, lest any should have said that their death helped the Saviour. He trod the wine press alone. 4. It was accepted. There have been prices offered which never were accepted, and therefore the slave did not go free. But this was accepted, and the proof of that is—(1) His resurrection. (2) His ascension into heaven. II. THE EFFECT OF THE RANSOM "being justified freely by His grace." 1. What is the meaning of justification? There is no such thing on earth for mortal man, except in one way—*i.e.*, he must be found not guilty. If you find him guilty, you cannot justify him. The Queen may pardon him, but she cannot justify him. It remained for the ransom of Christ to effect that which is an impossibility to earthly tribunals. Now see the way whereby God justifies a sinner. A prisoner has been tried and condemned to death. But suppose that some second party could be introduced who could become that man, he, the righteous man, putting the rebel in his place, and making the rebel a righteous man. We cannot do that in our courts. If I should be committed for a year's imprisonment instead of some wretch who was condemned yesterday, I might take his punishment, but not his guilt. Now, what flesh and blood cannot do, that Jesus by His redemption did. The way whereby God saves a sinner is not by passing over the penalty, but the putting of another person in the rebel's place. The rebel must die. Christ says, "I will be his substitute." God consents to it. No earthly monarch could have power to consent to such a change. But the God of heaven had a right to do as He pleased. 2. Some of the characteristics of this justification. (1) As soon as a repenting sinner is justified, remember, he is justified for all his sins. The moment he believes in Christ, his pardon at once he receives, and his sins are no longer his; they are laid upon the shoulders of Christ, and they are gone. (2) But what is more, he becomes righteous; for in the moment when Christ takes his sins he takes Christ's righteousness. (3) This is irreversible. If Christ has once paid the debt, the debt is paid, and it will never be asked for again; if you are pardoned, you are pardoned once for ever. III. THE MANNER OF GIVING THIS JUSTIFICATION. 1. "Freely," because there is no price to be paid for it; "By His grace," because it is not of our deservings. If you bring in any of your deservings, or anything to pay for it, He will not give it. Rowland Hill at a fair noticed the chapmen selling their wares by auction; so he said, "I am going to hold an auction too, to sell wine and milk, without money and without price. My friends over there find a great difficulty to get you up to their price; my difficulty is to bring you down to mine." So it is with men. If I could preach justification to be bought, or to be had by walking a hundred miles, or by some torture, who would not seek it? But when it is offered freely men turn away. But may I not say, "Lord, justify me because I am not so bad as others"; or "because I go to church twice a day"; or "because I mean to be better"? No; it is "by His grace." You insult God by bringing your counterfeit coin to pay for His treasures. What poor ideas men have of the value of Christ's gospel if they think they can buy it! A rich man, when he was dying, thought he could buy a place in heaven by building a row of almshouses. A good man said, "How much are you going to leave?" "Twenty thousand pounds." Said he, "That would not buy enough for your foot to stand on in heaven; for the streets are made of gold there, and therefore of what value can your gold be, it would be accounted nothing of, when the

very streets are paved with it?" 2. But how is it to be got? By faith. There is a story told of a captain of a man-of-war whose little boy ran up the mast till at last he got on to the maintruck. Then the difficulty was that he was not tall enough to get down from this maintruck, reach the mast, and so descend. He was clinging to the maintruck with all his might, but in a little time he would fall down on the deck a mangled corpse. The captain shouted, "Boy, the next time the ship lurches, throw yourself into the sea." The poor boy looked down on the sea; it was a long way; he could not bear the idea of throwing himself in. So he clung to the maintruck, though there was no doubt that he must soon let go and perish. The father, pointing a gun at him, said, "If you don't throw yourself into the sea, I'll shoot you!" Over went the boy splash into the sea, and out went brawny arms after him, and brought him on deck. Now we, like the boy, are in a position of extraordinary danger. Unfortunately, we have some good works like that maintruck, and we cling to them. Christ knows that unless we give them up, we shall be dashed to pieces. He therefore says, "Sinner, let go thine own trust, and drop into the sea of My love." We look down, and say, "Can I be saved by trusting in God? He looks as if He were angry with me, and I could not trust Him." Ah, will not mercy's tender cry persuade you?—"He that believeth shall be saved." Must the weapon of destruction be pointed directly at you? Must you hear the dreadful threat—"He that believeth not shall be damned"? You must let go or perish! That is faith when the sinner lets go his hold, drops down, and so is saved; and the very thing which looks as if it would destroy him is the means of his being saved. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The mode and means of pardon*:—I. JUSTIFICATION. 1. Negatively is not declaring just—(1) By proof that sins so called were no sins; they are as abominable as ever. (2) By proof that sins in the accusation were never committed; all are proved and confirmed. (3) By proof that such sins do not involve the sinner in guilt and condemnation; wrath is revealed against them to the uttermost. 2. Positively. It is a declaring just, while pardoning, by proof that the necessities arising in the case, for the maintenance of law and exhibition of justice, are satisfactorily met by other means than the culprit's punishment. Pardon is not slovenly and careless mercy, and it does not come through the hushing up or cloaking under of the sinner's sin. II. IS A FREELY GRACIOUS ACT AND GIFT. 1. It is not purchased by the offender. 2. It is not procured by any means that recompense the Pardoner. 3. It is not constrained in Him by any interested motive; He has no peril from the guilty or gain from the pardoned. 4. It is not begrudged, delayed, sold, or bartered. III. COMES THROUGH CHRIST'S REDEMPTION, or paying of a price. 1. Not to conciliate Satan or sin. 2. Not to conciliate God in His manner of feeling towards us. 3. Not to give to the Pardoner an equivalent in value for the pardon. 4. But paying down His own life, as that which the Kingly Judge required, ere as a Kingly Father He could permit His willing mercy to flow—a payment which has all the effect, and something of the nature, of a ransom price paid for a lawful captive. IV. THE REDEMPTION IS EFFECTED BY THE SETTING FORTH OF CHRIST A PROPITIATION (ver. 25). Christ is set forth—1. In His Divinity, as all in all, and all-sufficient. 2. In His humanity, as one with us in nature, sympathy, and devotion to us. 3. In His spotless purity and innocence, as owing nothing to justice, and having a precious life to give. 4. In His propitiatory work, as being sacrificed, as accepted of God, as exalted where the redemption in Him affects all the Divine counsels and administrations. His propitiation does not appease any ill-will or thirst for vengeance in God, for none existed; it meets those requirements that justice dictated. Thus God is not made propitious in His feelings; but being already propitious in Himself, He can now be propitious in His Kingly actions. V. THIS PROPITIATION IS EFFECTUAL TOWARDS AND UPON US, THROUGH FAITH IN CHRIST'S BLOOD. 1. That blood is the central thing in the propitiatory work; for the blood is the life, and in it that life was poured forth which was accepted in the place of our forfeited life. 2. That shed blood is the basis of the promise of pardon. 3. Faith that it has been shed, shed for me, and that it does acceptably propitiate, brings to me the pardon for which it provides. VI. THE EXPRESS PURPOSE OF THE PROPITIATION IS THE DECLARATION OF GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS. 1. To show while He pardons that He was in earnest in His condemnation of sin and sentence of death, and that He has unexceptionable grounds for pardoning sin. 2. To make such exhibition of His justice that sin may not seem to be encouraged or winked at. 3. To justify His seeming leniency in the long-suffering and pardon shown towards sinners in the past, before Christ. To declare in all time present and to come, that while He justifies He is just. (*W. Griffiths.*) Through the redemption that is in Christ

Jesus.—*Redemption* :—By an image, forceful, because true, Holy Scripture speaks of us "as slaves of sin," "sold under it," "slaves of corruption." We were not under its power only, but under its curse. From that guilt and power of sin we were redeemed, ransomed, purchased; and the ransom which was paid was "the Precious Blood of Christ." It has been said, "Scripture is silent, to whom the ransom was paid, and for what." Scripture says "for what," the forgiveness of sins. "In whom," *i.e.*, in Jesus, "we have redemption through His Blood, the remission of our sins, according to the riches of His grace." It says, "from what." For it says, "Christ purchased us out of the curse of the law." It says to whom when it says, "ye were redeemed by the precious blood of Christ as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot." For sacrifice was offered to God alone. (*E. B. Pusey, D.D.*) *Redemption* : setting free, on payment, or by payment of a price. It combines the ideas of liberation and price. 1. In some cases the context suggests the liberation of captives on payment of a ransom. But here the next verse reminds us that the word was frequently used for those on whom the Mosaic law had a claim, but whom it released for a price or a substitute. *E.g.*, God claimed the firstborn, but waved His claim on payment of five shekels apiece (Exod. xiii. 13; Numb. xviii. 15). The word may also be studied in Lev. xxvii. 27–33; Numb. iii. 46–51. Like most words which denote a combination of ideas, it is sometimes used where only one of the ideas is present, viz., liberation (Exod. vi. 6; xv. 13, &c.). But in the case of those whom the Mosaic law claimed, liberation was effected only by payment of a price. We therefore inquire whether it is so in this case. The words which follow, and the teaching of Paul and of the entire New Testament, give a decisive answer. We are constantly taught that salvation is by purchase; and that the blood and life of Christ are our ransom (1 Cor. vi. 20; Gal. iii. 13; 1 Tim. ii. 6; Matt. xx. 28; Rev. v. 9). 2. Again, the idea of a price is that of exchange. The price takes the place of what is bought. Therefore, that Christ's life is our ransom is explained and confirmed by the passages which teach that He died in our stead (2 Cor. v. 21; Gal. iii. 13). Paul's words therefore imply that in Christ there is a setting free brought about by some one or something taking our place. By this means believers are justified. (*Prof. Beet.*) *The cost of redemption* :—Yonder ermine, hung so carelessly over the proud beauty's shoulder, cost terrible battles with polar ice and hurricane. All choicest things are reckoned the dearest. So is it, too, in heaven's inventories. The universe of God has never witnessed aught to be reckoned in comparison with the redemption of a guilty world. That mighty ransom no such contemptible things as silver and gold could procure. Only by one price could the Church of God be redeemed from hell, and that the precious blood of the Lamb—the Lamb without blemish or spot—the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. (*T. L. Cuyler.*) *Redemption: glory of* :—I can conceive that to the mind of God, looking upon a single soul, and unrolling it as it shall be disclosed through the cycles of eternity, there may come, in the far perspective, such a thought of the magnitude of a single soul, as that in the view of God that soul shall outweigh in importance the sum total of the governments and populations of the globe at any particular period of time. I can understand that God may sound a soul to a depth greater than earth ever had a measure to penetrate, and find reasons enough of sympathy to over-measure all the temporal and earthly interests of mankind. And I can conceive that God should assume to Himself the right to execute His government of love by suffering for a single soul in such a way as quite to set aside the ordinary courses of the secular and human idea of justice. This is to my mind the redemptive idea. I do not believe it is a play between an abstract system of law and a right of mercy. I think that nowhere in the world is there so much law as in redemption, or so much justice as in love. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Redemption: gratitude for.*—Is there anything that is comparable with the love and gratitude of the soul that feels himself redeemed from death and destruction? With almost an agony of love, such an one clings to his deliverer. There be those that cling to the minister of Christ who, as an instrument and representative of the Master, has been the means of opening their eyes, and bringing them out of darkness into light. And there is nothing more natural or more noble than this instinctive desire of one that has been saved from ruin to be ever present with his benefactor. And when a soul is brought back from destruction, how natural it is that it should wish, and that it should pray, that it might be with Him by whom it has been rescued! (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 25. **Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation.**—*The true propitia-*

tion:—I. SPEAK OF CHRIST AS A PROPITIATION, or show what His being said to be a propitiation for sin may imply in it—1. That He was appointed by God the Father to make an atonement for the sins of men. 2. That He was substituted in the room of sinners, and in suffering and making satisfaction to Divine justice for their sins, represented their persons, and was considered as one with them in the eye of the law. 3. That He condescended to take upon Him all the guilt of His people. 4. That He suffered the punishment which His people deserved on account of their sins. 5. That all who have an interest in His death, and the sacrifice which He offered, are freed from the guilt of sin, and are no more liable to the punishment of it. 6. That by suffering the death threatened in the law for the transgression of it, and satisfying the demands of justice in the room of sinners, He laid the foundation of a throne of grace, to which the most destitute, yea, the most guilty belonging to the fallen race of Adam have free access, and from which God dispenses to them all blessings, without eclipsing the glory of His justice, holiness, and other glorious perfections. II. CHRIST'S BEING SET FORTH AS A PROPITIATION, for the benefit of sinners guilty before God, and condemned to everlasting death by His law. 1. Christ may be said to have been set forth to be a propitiation in the purpose and decree of God from eternity. 2. Christ was exhibited as a propitiation in the first gospel promise (Gen. iii. 15). 3. Christ was set forth as a propitiation in all the types and ceremonies belonging to the Old Testament economy, particularly in the legal sacrifices, all which were typical of that great sacrifice which the Son of God, the promised Messiah, was to offer in the human nature for expiating the guilt of sin. 4. Christ was exhibited as a propitiation in the several prophecies and promises respecting Him that were delivered to the Church under the Old Testament dispensation. 5. Christ was set forth as a propitiation in His incarnation and assumption of the human nature. 6. The Lord Jesus is exhibited, or set forth, as a propitiation in the dispensation of the everlasting gospel. The very design of the gospel is to exhibit a crucified Redeemer to guilty sinners. Hence the preaching of the gospel is called the preaching of the Cross, and the preaching of Christ crucified. 7. Christ is set forth as a propitiation in the sacraments of the New Testament, particularly in the Lord's Supper. III. CONFIRM THE DOCTRINE, or show that as Jesus Christ is by the authority and appointment of the great Jehovah set forth to guilty sinners as a propitiation, all to whom the gospel comes, may warrantably claim the benefit of that propitiation in a way of believing. This is abundantly evident from the words of the text; for the gospel is preached by Divine appointment to every creature, and in it Christ is set forth as a propitiation to every sinner that hears it. It is further evident—1. From the types that prefigured Him under the Old Testament economy. The manna which was rained from heaven for nourishing the Israelites in the wilderness (Exod. xiv. 13–16) was a remarkable type of Christ, who is the Bread of Life; is such as a propitiation, for He is said to have given His flesh, namely by offering it as a sacrifice to expiate the guilt of sin, for the life of the world (John vi. 51); and it was what every one belonging to the camp of Israel might warrantably gather and apply to his own use (Exod. xvi. 15). The brazen serpent was also a type of Christ, and that was lifted up on a pole for the benefit of all belonging to the congregation of Israel, so that every one of them that had been wounded by the fiery serpents was authorised to look to it in order to his being healed (Numb. xxi. 8, 9; John iii. 14,1 5). The scape-goat was also a remarkable type of Christ, and designed to prefigure the efficacy of His death for procuring the remission of sins to all who believe in Him. 2. That all who hear the gospel may warrantably claim the benefit of the New Testament propitiation spoken of in the text, or trust in the Lord Jesus for the remission of sins, is evident from the similitudes under which Christ and His grace are set forth to us in Scripture (Zech. xiii. 1; Rev. xxii. 2; Isa. xxv. 6; Prov. ix. 1–5; Matt. xxii. 4). 3. The truth of the doctrine is further evident from the very nature of the gospel, which is not a system of precepts requiring of men obedience to the law of God, to any law whatsoever, as the condition of life, but consists wholly of gracious promises exhibiting life, salvation, and all spiritual blessings freely, as the gift of God to perishing sinners. 4. The same thing is evident from the declared end and design of the gospel, which is that sinners may believe in Christ revealed and exhibited in it (John xx. 31). 5. That all who hear the gospel have a sufficient warrant to claim the benefit of the propitiation spoken of in the text, or to apply Christ and the benefits of redemption to their own souls, appears from the many gracious calls and invitations addressed to sinners in the gospel. 6. The peremptory command of God binding it upon all the hearers of the gospel, as their indispensable duty, to believe on the name of His

Son, puts the matter beyond all debate (1 John iii. 23). IV. PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT of the doctrine. 1. The great error of Socinians who deny that Christ died to make an atonement for sin, and satisfy the justice of God in the room of sinners, by suffering the punishment which their sins deserved; or that the sacrifice which He offered was a proper sacrifice. 2. Hence we may learn, that men by nature are in a most wretched and deplorable condition. They are under guilt and wrath, otherwise there would have been no need to offer a propitiatory sacrifice for them. 3. Hence let us take occasion to admire the love of God toward sinners of mankind, manifested in providing such a sacrifice. 4. Hence we may see what was the great end of the Redeemer's incarnation, and of His taking our nature into a personal union with Himself. 5. Hence we may learn what was the nature, end, and use of all the sacrifices that were offered by Divine appointment under the Old Testament dispensation. They had no merit or efficacy for satisfying the justice of God and appeasing His wrath. They were only typical of that sacrifice which the Messiah was to offer in the fulness of time for these ends. 6. From what has been said we may see that the dispensation of the gospel in purity is a great privilege, an inestimable blessing. (*D. Wilson.*) *Propitiation through faith in Christ's blood*:—I. CHRIST, A PROPITIATION. Sin draws on the sinner the holy anger of God, although it cannot quench the love of God. And that it could not quench His love is shown by His providing and setting forth as a propitiation His own Son, through whom He can look on us with anger no more, but with complacency. This He has done. It often costs us much, we have often got much to get over in order to let the affection that there is in our heart towards some human being have its way, to help and succour him on account of some waywardness in him. What would not the father or mother of a profligate child give to be able to lavish on the degraded being tokens of affection as freely as they did when they folded him in their arms a happy innocent child, if they felt they could do so without their goodness being abused by him to his own hurt and to their shame, or being regarded by him as a proof that they did not look on his vices with any great detestation or sorrow? What the sacrifice of God's only-begotten and well-beloved Son involved to Him, we vainly attempt to conceive. "He spared not His own Son, but gave Him up to the death for us all." Mark that it is not said here that the Saviour has made propitiation, but that He is a propitiation. So speaks also the Apostle John: "He is the propitiation for our sins." In the Saviour Himself, in the living person of the God-man, is found the ground of pardon and acceptance. The virtue of His obedience and death is centred in His person, and radiates from it. II. THE WAY IN WHICH PROPITIATION IS EFFECTED. Christ is a propitiation "through faith in His blood." By His blood and by faith—not faith in His blood—but by His blood, by which He expiated sin, He is a propitiation by faith as the subjective means of appropriation of this propitiation. You must look, on the one hand, to Christ's sacrificial death, and on the other to faith in Christ, in order to account for the sinner being received into the favour of God and being reconciled to Him. 1. It was by the giving of His holy life in sacrifice that Jesus propitiated God on our behalf, or appeased the wrath, and delivered us from the curse of God due for sin. 2. Christ is only actually and effectually a propitiation to you and to me, if we believe in Him. He is a propitiation only through faith. In this the righteousness of God is also seen. It were unrighteous to justify any but him who believed in Jesus, or for God to be propitiated through Christ on behalf of any one who did not believe on Christ. For through faith we come into a life-union with the Son of God. III. CHRIST, AS OUR PROPITIATION, IS SET FORTH BY GOD. That type of Christ of old, which furnishes the name and explains the aspect under which Christ is set forth here, the propitiation, propitiatory, or mercy-seat, was hid in the innermost shrine of the dwelling-place of God. It was seen by no mortal eye but that of the high priest, and that only when, once a year, he entered with awed spirit behind the veil. But Jesus Christ, the great reality, of which that golden throne of grace was the sign and shadow, is not hidden, but is openly set forth. In word and ordinance He is exhibited. 1. There is the Bible, about which such daring opinions nowadays are ventured, and of which, in their secret hearts, many have doubts and sentiments which they would not dare to utter; which many, who read so much that is deleterious, never or rarely open; which many read so carelessly and to so little purpose! My friend, hast thou ever thought that in that Book God has set forth His Son as a propitiation? This is the great end for which it is written. 2. There is the everlasting gospel, which is of small account with many, a weariness, a superfluity, which even in their view might be banished from the sanctuary; or, if it cannot be banished, may be thrust as far as

possible into a corner, and its place supplied very pleasantly by something that will soothe and regale the senses and the taste. But oh! see that you are not blind to what is set forth in the garb of His words and thoughts—Jesus Christ the propitiation through faith in His blood. See above all that you do not forget that, though with man's voice, and in man's language, and often with much weakness, yet God is really setting forth Christ as a propitiation. 3. In the sacraments God so sets forth His Son. (*W. Wilson, M.A.*) *Christ the propitiation*:—I. As set forth by God. 1. The words "set forth" signify "fore-ordained"; and also "places in public view"; as goods are exposed for sale, or as rewards of victory were exhibited in the Grecian Games. So has God made conspicuous Jesus as the propitiation of sin. (1) By Divine decree. Christ did not take upon Himself the office of High Priest without being chosen thereunto. But this was not independent of His own choice, for in the volume of the Book it is written of Him, "I delight to do Thy will, O God." (2) In His promises before the Advent did not God speak constantly, by verbal and typical promises, to multitudes of holy men the coming of Him who should bruise the serpent's head, and deliver His people from the power of the curse? (3) When Christ came God set Him forth by angelic messengers, and by the star in the East. Throughout His life, how constantly did His Father set Him forth! The voice of God was in the voice of John, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." And on the Cross itself, "when it pleased the Father to bruise Him, and put Him to grief," what an exhibition was there to the eye of Jew and Gentile of the propitiation! (4) When the Holy Ghost came down on Pentecost! And what have all conversions been since but repeated seals to the same testimony? (5) In you God has graciously fulfilled the text. 2. What it is that God has so manifestly set forth. The Greek word may mean—(1) A mercy-seat. Now God hath said to the sinner, "Do you desire to meet Me? would you be no longer My enemy? would you receive My blessing? I set forth Christ to you as being the Mercy-seat, where I can meet you and you Me." (2) A covering; as the mercy-seat covered the tables of the law, and so covered that which was the cause of Divine ire, because we had broken His commandment. "Wouldst thou have anything which can cover thy sin from Me, so that I need not be provoked to anger; from you so that you need not tremble? Wouldst thou have a shelter which shall hide altogether thy sins? I set it forth to thee in Jesus. Trust in His blood, and thy sin is covered." 3. God has set forth Christ before every one of you, in the preaching of the Word, and in the Inspired Book, as dying, that your sins might die; buried, that your iniquities might be buried; risen, that you might rise to newness of life; ascended, that you might ascend to God; received in triumph, that you might be received in triumph too; made to reign, that you might reign in Him; for ever loved, for ever crowned, that you in Him may be for ever loved and for ever crowned too. II. As looked upon by the believer. 1. We may mistake the proper object of faith. We may look on—(1) Repentance as a grace, indeed, without which there can be no salvation, but an act which may be substituted for faith in the propitiation. (2) Evidences. Evidences are good as second things, but as first things they are usurpers, and may prove anti-Christs. (3) God's promises. I know many Christians who, when they are in distress, take up the Bible to find a promise—a very good plan, if they go to Christ first. There is a man who very much desires an estate, at the same time his heart is smitten with the beauty of some fair heiress. He gets the title-deeds of her estate. Well, the title-deeds are good, but the estates are not his, though he has got the title-deeds. By and by he marries the lady, and everything is his own. Get the heiress and you have got the estate. It is so in Christ; promises are the title-deeds of His estates. A man may get the promise and not get Christ, then they will be of no use to him. 2. God has set forth Christ to be the propitiation through faith in His blood, and we ought to accept that as being—(1) An all-sufficient propitiation. We have never got the full idea of Christ till we know that every sin of thought, of word, of deed finds its death. (2) An immutable propitiation. Our standing before God, when we have believed in Jesus, depends no more upon our frames and feelings than the sun depends upon the clouds and darkness that are here below. III. As set forth by us, and looked upon by God. 1. If in this pulpit Christ be set forth, God will look down upon that Christ set forth, and honour and bless the word. I might preach clear doctrine, but God might never look down upon doctrine, nor upon moral essays, nor upon philosophy. God will not look down on any man's ministry unless that man sets forth what God sets forth. Then His Word shall not return unto Him void; it shall prosper in the

thing whereto He hath sent it. 2. As in the case of the ministry, so you in your pleadings for souls must set forth Christ. Abel's blood demanded vengeance; Christ's blood demands pardons and must have it. 3. As in pleading for the souls of others, so in pleading for our own we must set forth the propitiation. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Christ the propitiation*:—In the only other place where the word occurs in the New Testament (Heb. ix. 5) it is rendered "mercy-seat." I. To THE INSTITUTION OF THE "MERCY-SEAT," therefore, we must look, that we may rightly understand the allusion (Exod. xxv. 17). It is from this description that the appellation is given to Jehovah of the God that "dwelleth between the cherubim," an appellation, therefore, equivalent in import to "the God of mercy," "the God of all grace," "the God of peace": and the position of "the mercy-seat" or propitiatory, upon "the ark of the testimony," seems to indicate that His appearing, in this benign character, to commune with guilty creatures, was in full consistency with the claims and sanctions of His perfect law; so that when Jehovah thus manifested Himself, "Mercy and truth met together, righteousness and peace embraced each other." All this cannot fail to remind us of Him who "received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." It is in Him, as the subject either of promise, of prophecy, of type, or of direct testimony, that God has from the beginning made Himself known to men in the character of "the God of peace." It is "in Him" that He "reconciles sinners to Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." II. Had nothing more been said of the "mercy-seat," we might have been led to conclude that Jehovah appeared there in the exercise of mere mercy, apart from any satisfaction for sin. We must, therefore, connect this description of the mercy-seat with THE ACCOUNT GIVEN OF THE MANNER IN WHICH IT WAS TO BE APPROACHED by the worshipper (Lev. xvi. 2, 11, 12). It was to be approached with the blood of "atonement" (vers. 6, 30, 34), which was sprinkled on and before "the mercy-seat"; and while the sacrificial blood was thus presented, the burning incense was to diffuse its grateful odour, in emblematic testimony of the Divine satisfaction; which is, accordingly, elsewhere expressed in connection with the sacrifice of Christ, and the offerings by which it was typified, by Jehovah's "smelling a sweet savour" (*cf.* Gen. viii. 21 with Eph. v. 2; Rev. viii. 3; and see also Psa. cxli. 2). The "mercy-seat," then, in order to Jehovah's appearing there, consistently with the glory of His name, as the God of grace, must be stained with "the blood of sprinkling," the blood "that maketh atonement for the soul"; and in this is set before us the necessity of the shedding of the blood of Christ, in order to God's being "in Him well-pleased." And, agreeably to this, the Divine declaration "from the excellent glory," of satisfaction in His well-beloved Son, was made in connection with the subject of conference on the holy mount—"the decease which Jesus was to accomplish at Jerusalem." III. THE PROPER IDEA OF "PROPITIATION" IS, RENDERING THE DIVINE BEING FAVOURABLE. 1. We must, beware, however, of understanding by this anything like the production of a change in the Divine character; as if God required an inducement to be merciful. We ought to conceive of Jehovah as eternally compassionate and merciful. But while God is infinitely and immutably good, He is at the same time infinitely and immutably holy and just and true. Never ought we to speak of Him as acting at one time according to mercy, and at another according to justice. His attributes, though we may speak of them distinctly, are inseparable in their exercise. 2. What, then, is the light in which the idea of atonement places the Divine Being? As a righteous Governor Jehovah is displeased with His guilty creatures; while, at the same time, from the infinite benignity of His nature, He is inclined to forgiveness. But if His government is righteous, its claims, in their full extent, must of necessity be maintained inviolate. The great question, then, on this momentous subject comes to be: In what manner may forgiveness be extended to the guilty, so as to satisfy the claims of justice? The rendering of the Divine Being propitious, in this view, refers, it is obvious, not to the production of love in His character, but simply to the mode of its expression. The inquiry is, How may God express love so as to express at the same time abhorrence of sin; and thus, in "making known the riches of His mercy," to display the inflexibility of justice and the unsullied perfection of holiness? When we say that God is displeased with any of His creatures, we speak of them not as creatures, but as sinners. He hath "no pleasure in the death of the wicked," but He hates sin; and the punishment of it is required both by the glory of His righteousness and by a regard to the general happiness of the intelligent creation,

which sin tends directly to destroy. It is in this view that the blessed God is said to be "angry with the wicked every day," to "hate all the workers of iniquity"; to have "revealed from heaven His wrath against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men": and when He forgives iniquity He is, in consistency with such expressions, described as having "His anger turned away." This is propitiation; and it is in Christ Jesus, in virtue of His atoning sacrifice, that God is thus propitious to sinners. The animal sacrifices of the Old Testament, of which the blood (because it was the life) was declared to be "the atonement for the soul," were all intended to prefigure the true "propitiation for sin." (*R. Wardlaw, D.D.*) *The history of God's relations with human sin*:—I. ANTECEDENTLY TO THE DEATH OF CHRIST, THE SINS OF MEN WERE PASSED OVER IN THE FORBEARANCE OF GOD, *i.e.*, God suffered them to go by unavenged. He "winked at the times of ignorance." So far was this strange toleration carried, that the very justice of the Divine Judge came in some danger, and were there no judgment to come, men really could not affirm that the world was ruled on principles of perfect righteousness. In the providence of the world vengeance limps but tardily in the footsteps of crime; while, not to speak of the impenitent who go unpunished, what shall we say of pre-Christian penitents who asked pardon for their sins, yet found no expiation for them? The blood of bulls and goats could never take away sin. The Divine policy was to let sin pass, neither avenged nor atoned for, leaving still an open reckoning. II. AT LAST GOD CLEARED HIS CLOUDED ADMINISTRATION AND VINDICATED HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS (ver. 25). He held forth to public gaze an expiation of sin which did satisfy justice and demonstrate the severe impartial rectitude of the Divine judgments. The death of Jesus Christ is "set forth" as a public act done by God Himself for the illustration of His own justice. The word "propitiation" (or propitiatory) may either mean a victim offered in sacrifice for the recovery of Divine favour, or it may refer to the golden lid of the ark in the holy of holies, where God sat enthroned and propitious because on it was yearly sprinkled the blood of an atoning sacrifice. The death of Christ is in either case the one sacrifice through which the sins of the world have been expiated and God has been enabled to extend favour to His guilty creatures. And this solemn and unparalleled act is at the same time the most impressive exhibition of the Divine vengeance against sin. Rather than that sins passed over so long should go altogether unavenged, God offered His Son for their expiation. By this He has cut off from men the temptation to misconstrue His earlier toleration of sins, or His unwillingness to forgive them. He did pretermit sin in His forbearance; but it was only because He had purposed in His heart one day to offer for it a satisfaction such as this. For this He could hold His peace through long centuries under injurious suspicion, because He knew that one day the awful Cross of His own Son would silence every cavil and give to the universe emphatic demonstration that He is a just God, who will by no means clear the guilty. III. Let us look at THE BEARING OF CHRIST'S DEATH ON "THIS PRESENT SEASON." The same public satisfaction for sin is adequate to justify God in forgiving sin now (ver. 26). Before His attitude to sin was one of forbearance. More than that it could not be, because no proper satisfaction for sin had as yet been offered. But now, since Christ has died, God has no need to "wink at" sin, and pass it by. He no longer holds out to penitents as He used to do a hope that it will one day become possible for Him to blot their sins. For He is now able to deal finally and effectually with sin. Justice has received all the satisfaction it needs or can ask for. No shade of suspicion, whether of feebleness or of injustice, can rest upon the Divine character, in acquitting at once any man for whose guilt Christ has made complete atonement. Now, therefore, God is in a position, not to pretermit sins only, but to remit them; not to promise forgiveness merely, but to confer it. This new attitude it is worth while to trace out in detail. 1. This propitiation having been amply adequate to vindicate Divine justice, Christ's death becomes obviously our redemption; *i.e.*, it serves as a ransom, an offering in consideration of which we who were held in custody as sentenced prisoners of justice may now go free. The Son of Man has given His life as a ransom price in the stead of many; and that atoning ransom being adequate, we have "redemption through His blood—even the forgiveness of sins." So that it is so far from being unjust in God to acquit those for whom Christ's death is pleaded, that it would be plainly unjust to do anything else. The Deliverer has paid the price of blood for forfeited lives of guilty men; and Justice herself will now fling wide open her prison-gates, tear across her handwriting of condemnation, and proclaim the ransomed to be justified from sin. This St. Paul terms "the

redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (ver. 24). 2. On the ground of this redemption, such a justifying must be entirely gratuitous (ver. 24). It must be so, because it is obviously independent of any action of men's own. It manifested the judicial impartiality and uprightness of the Lawgiver; but it was done at the bidding of love for the condemned, and its issue is free, unstinted grace to the undeserving. God must be just; but He chose this way of manifesting His justice, that through it He might also manifest mercy; and mercy rejoiceth over judgment. 3. A way of being justified which is so entirely gratuitous must be impartial and catholic. It is offered on such easy terms, because on no harder terms could helpless and condemned men receive it. Heathen or Jew, there is no distinction between men (ver. 22) such as could limit a gratuitous righteousness to one set of them rather than to another. All of them alike sinned; therefore they must be justified on a ground which cuts away every distinction of better or worse among them, of more deserving or less deserving. A righteousness which is given away gratuitously must be meant for all. 4. Yes, to all who will trust in it (ver. 26). For our justification is limited to faith, and that just because it is limited to the work of Christ. Our faith is the natural counterpart to Christ's atonement; it is our response to His sacrifice; it is our acceptance of God's terms. God offers to justify us, but He does so only because Christ has propitiated for our sins. If we accept His offer, we consent to be justified on that same ground of Christ's propitiation, for nothing else is offered. The very terms on which God historically vindicated His justice and wrought redemption tie us down and limit us to such faith as rests on Christ as the instrument of our justification. (*J. Oswald Dykes, D.D.*)

Through faith in His blood.—*The blood of Christ:*—Listen, apart from all argument, to what Christ says of it, and think, Is it possible that all this can mean no more than what men say who do not believe in its atoning power, as shed for us? They will sink deeper in your minds, if studied in God's Word. But look at this barest outline of them. They will be the meditation and praise and thanksgiving of eternity; and in all eternity we shall long to thank more and more for them, when our whole being will be thanksgiving and love. "We were far off [from God], but were made nigh [to Him] by the Blood of Christ" (Eph. ii. 13); "we were justified by His blood" (chap. v. 9); "He suffered, that He might sanctify us by His blood" (Heb. xiii. 12); "we have," as a continual possession, "redemption through His blood, the remission of sins" (Eph. i. 7); "the blood of Christ who, through the Eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God, purifieth our consciences from dead works to serve the living God" (Heb. ix. 14); "the blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John i. 7); "we have been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ" (1 Peter i. 18, 19); "He has purchased the Church with His own blood" (Acts. xx. 28); "God made peace through the blood of His Cross, through Him, as to the things on earth, and the things in heaven" (Col. i. 20): "Christ, by His own blood, entered once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption" (Heb. ix. 12). "We," too, ever since "have boldness to enter the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He hath consecrated for us through His flesh" (Heb. x. 19, 20). We are "elect, according to the foreknowledge of God, in sanctification of the spirit, unto obedience and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. i. 2). "We are come to Jesus, the Mediator of the new Covenant, and the blood of sprinkling which speaketh better things than that of Abel" (Heb. xii. 22-24). And when the beloved disciple saw heaven opened, he saw "the Faithful and True, the Word of God, clothed with a vesture dyed with blood" (Rev. xix. 13), and he heard the new song of those who sang, "Thou wast slain and didst purchase us to God by Thy blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation" (Rev. v. 9); and he heard that they had "washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Rev. vii. 14), and had "overcome the accuser by the blood of the Lamb" (Rev. xii. 11). And St. John's doxology is, "To Him who loveth us and hath washed us from our sins in His own blood, to Him be glory and might for ever and ever. Amen" (Rev. i. 5). (*E. B. Pusey, D.D.*)

Ver. 26. **To declare, I say, at this time His righteousness.**—*The Cross a manifestation of the Divine righteousness:*—I. How. In two ways so closely united that either of them separated would lose its value. 1. By the very fact of Christ's sacrifice and bloody death. If Paul does not see in this punishment a quantitative equivalent of the treatment which every sinner had incurred, this is what clearly appears from such sayings as 2 Cor. v. 21; Gal. iii. 13. Now herein precisely

consists the manifestation of the righteousness wrought out by the Cross. God is here revealed as one against whom no sinner can revolt without meriting death; and the sinner is here put in his place in the dust as a malefactor worthy of death. Such is the *objective* manifestation of righteousness. 2. This demonstration, however, would be incomplete without the *subjective* or moral manifestation which accompanies it. Every sinner might be called to die on the Cross; but no sinner was in a condition to undergo this punishment as Jesus did, accepting it as undeserved. This is what He alone could do in virtue of His holiness (John xvii. 25). The calm and mute resignation with which He allowed Himself to be led to the slaughter, manifested the idea which He Himself formed of the Majesty of God and the judgment He was passing on the sin of the world; from His Cross there rose the most perfect homage rendered to the righteousness of God. In this death the sin of mankind was therefore doubly judged, and the righteousness of God doubly manifested,—by the external fact of this painful and ignominious punishment, and by the inward act of Christ's conscience, which ratified this dealing of which sin was the object in His Person. II. BUT WHAT RENDERED SUCH A DEMONSTRATION NECESSARY—because of the tolerance of sins past. For four thousand years the spectacle presented by mankind to the whole moral universe (*cf.* 1 Cor. iv. 9) was, so to speak, a continual scandal. With the exception of some great examples of judgments, Divine righteousness seemed asleep; men sinned and yet they lived. They sinned on, and yet reached in safety a hoary old age. Where were the *wages of sin?* It was this relative impunity which rendered a solemn manifestation of righteousness necessary. God judged it essential, on account of the impunity so long enjoyed by these myriads of sinners who succeeded one another on the earth, at length to manifest His righteousness by a striking act; and He did so by realising in the death of Jesus the punishment which each of these sinners would have deserved to undergo. But if it be asked why Paul refers only to sins of the past and not to those of the future, the answer is easy: the righteousness of God once revealed in the sacrifice of the Cross this demonstration remains. Whatever happens, nothing can again efface it from the history of the world, nor from the conscience of mankind. Henceforth all sin must be pardoned or judged. (*Prof. Godet.*) **That He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.**—*Justice satisfied* (text, and 1 John i. 9). I. HOW HAS JUSTICE BEEN SO SATISFIED THAT IT NO LONGER STANDS IN THE WAY OF GOD'S JUSTIFYING THE SINNER? The one answer to that is, through the substitution of Christ. When man sinned the law demanded his punishment. The first offence was committed by Adam, the representative of the race. When God would punish sin, He thought of the blessed expedient, not of punishing His people, but their representative, the second Adam. He died—"the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." Let us show how fully the law is satisfied. Note—1. The dignity of the victim. The eternal Son of God condescended to become man; lived a life of suffering, and at last died a death of agony. If you will but think of the wondrous person whom Jesus was, you will see that in His sufferings the law received a greater vindication than it could have done even in the sufferings of the whole race. There is such dignity in the Godhead that all it does is infinite in its merit; and when He stooped to suffer, the law received greater honour than if a whole universe had become a sacrifice. 2. The relationship which Jesus Christ had towards the Great Judge. Brutus was the most inflexible of judges, and knew no distinction of persons. But when he sentenced his own son, we see that he loved his country better than his son, and justice better than either. Now, we say, Brutus is just indeed. Now, if God had condemned each of us one by one, or the whole race in a mass, justice would have been vindicated. But lo! His own Son takes upon Him the sins of the world, and "it pleased the Lord to bruise Him." Surely, when God smites His Son, only begotten and well-beloved, then justice has all that it could ask; and this Christ freely gave. 3. The agonies of Christ, which He endured in the place of sinners. All I ought to have suffered has been suffered by my substitute. It cannot be that God can smite me now. Justice itself prevents, for when justice once is satisfied it were injustice if it should ask for more. God can be just, and yet the justifier. II. IT IS AN ACT OF JUSTICE ON GOD'S PART TO FORGIVE ON CONFESSION OF SIN. Not that the sinner deserves forgiveness. Sin can never merit anything but punishment. Not that God is bound from any necessity of His nature to forgive every one that repents, because repentance has not in itself sufficient to merit forgiveness. Yet it is true that, because God is just, He must forgive every sinner who confesses his sin. Because—1. He has promised to do so; and a God who

could break His promise were unjust. Every word which God utters shall be fulfilled. Go, then, to God with—"Lord, Thou hast said, 'He that confesseth his sin, and forsaketh it, shall find mercy.' I confess my sin, and I forsake it; Lord, give me mercy!" Don't doubt but that God will give it you. You have His own pledge in your hand. 2. Man has been induced to act upon it; and therefore, this becomes a double bond upon the justice of God. God has said, "If we confess our sins and trust in Christ, we shall have mercy." You have done it on the faith of the promise. Do you imagine when God has brought you through much pain of mind to repent and rely on Christ He will afterwards tell you He did not mean what He said? It cannot be. Suppose you said to a man, "Give up your situation and take a house near me, and I will employ you." Suppose he does it, and you then say, "I am glad for your own sake that you have left your master, still I will not take you." He would reply, "I gave up my situation on the faith of your promise, and now you break it." Ah! but this never can be said of God. 3. Christ died on purpose to secure pardon for every seeking soul. And do you suppose that the Father will rob Him of that which He has bought so dearly? III. THE DUTIES TAUGHT IN THE TWO TEXTS. 1. Confession. Expect not that God will forgive you until you confess. You are not to confess to a man, unless you have offended against him. If you have, leave thy gift upon the altar, and go and make peace with him, and then come and make peace with God. You are to make confession of your sin to God. You cannot mention every offence, but do not hide one. 2. Faith. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Justice and redemption*:—What was the main purpose of Christ's sufferings? I. THE QUESTION IS ANSWERED IN VERY VARIOUS WAYS. 1. There are those who say that they had no purpose, but were brought about by the operation of blind forces, which act sometimes through the working of inanimate nature, sometimes through the malignity of human wills. We need not look beyond them to account for the spectacle of the best of human lives ending as though it had been the worst; for that anomaly, that while Tiberius was enthroned in Rome, Jesus should have been crucified in Jerusalem. To discuss this would be to open the question whether there is any Divine government at all. Suffice it to say, that if there is a Being who is almighty, and has a moral character, then the world is governed by Him. If a great deal is permitted to go on in it which is a contradiction to the moral nature of such a ruler, this only shows that, from certain reasons, He has allowed sin to enter into and to mar His work, and in its train, pain, and death. The sufferings of Christ are thus only an extreme illustration of what we see everywhere around us on a smaller scale, but they afford no ground for the opinion that human lives drift helplessly before forces which are as entirely without moral purpose as the wave or the hurricane is void of intelligence or of sympathy. 2. A more satisfactory account of the sufferings of our Lord is that they were the crowning feature of the testimony He bore to the sacredness of truth. This, it may be truly urged, is His own account of the matter. "To this end was I born . . . that I might bear witness unto the truth." But the question is whether this was the only or the most important object. If it was, then He does not differ from sages, prophets, and martyrs, who have all done this service to truth. There is a more important purpose in the death of our Lord which distinguishes it from every other. II. THE TRUE ANSWER IS THAT CHRIST'S DEATH WAS INTENDED TO SET FORTH IN ACTION AN ATTRIBUTE OF GOD. 1. This attribute is not, as we might expect, God's love or mercy, although we know that if God gave His only begotten Son to die, it was because "He so loved the world"; but the attribute of which St. Paul is thinking is God's righteousness or justice. 2. When we speak of righteousness we presuppose the existence of a law of right, a law which justice upholds. This law has its witness partly in the structure of society, partly in the conscience of man. If human society is largely unfaithful to this law, it cannot altogether neglect it without going to pieces, sooner or later. And the conscience of every man attests the existence of right, as opposed to wrong. Without doing violence to the mind which God has given us, we cannot conceive of a time when right was not right, and when justice was not a virtue; and if so, then right and justice are eternal; and since nothing distinct from God can be conceived of as eternal—for in that case there would be two eternals—it follows that right and justice belong to God's essential nature. To think of God as unrighteous is only a mode of thinking of Him as not existing at all. 3. This great truth it was a main purpose of the Jewish revelation to teach. From generation to generation its voice is, "Righteous art Thou, O Lord, and true is Thy judgment." Its law was a proclamation of righteousness applied to human life; its prophets were preachers of righteousness;

its penalties were the sanctions of righteousness; its sacrifices were a perpetual reminder of the Divine righteousness; its promises pointed to One who would make clearer than ever to man the beauty and the power of Divine righteousness. And so when He came He was named the "Just One" and "Jesus Christ the Righteous," and it was but in accordance with these titles that both in His life and in His death He revealed to man the righteousness of God as it had never been revealed before. III. BUT HOW WAS THE DEATH OF CHRIST A DECLARATION OF GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS? 1. Here we must consider that righteousness is an active attribute. There is no such thing as a working distinction between a theoretical and a practical justice. And if this is true in man, much more true is it in God. To conceive of God as just in Himself, but as indifferent to the strict requirements of justice, would, one might think, be impossible for any clear and reverent mind. And yet many a man has said, "If I were God, I would forgive the sinner, just as a good-natured man forgives a personal offence, without expecting an equivalent." Here is a confusion between an offence against man and one against God. An offence against us does not necessarily involve an infraction of the eternal law of right. But with the Master of the moral universe it is otherwise. That violations of right must be followed by punishment is as much part of the absolute law of right as is the existence of right itself. If the maxim holds in human law, that the acquittal of the guilty is the condemnation of the judge, it holds true in a higher sense of Him whose passionless rectitude is as incapable of being distorted by a false benevolence as by a prejudiced animosity. 2. The death of our Lord was a proclamation of God's righteousness in exacting the penalty which is due to sin. If we would take the measure of moral evil, let us not merely track it to the workhouse, the prison, the gallows, not even to the eternal condition of the lost; let us stand in spirit on Mount Calvary, and there look how Christ is "made to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." 3. But here it will be asked whether God's justice is not compromised in the very act of its assertion, whether the penalty paid by the sinless Sufferer is not inconsistent with the rule of justice that the real sinner should be punished for his sins. But consider—(1) That a vicarious penalty is not unjust, *e.g.*, when the person who pays it has a natural title to represent the criminal. Natural and civil law are agreed in making a father responsible for the son's misconduct, and in exacting from him the payment which the boy himself cannot produce. On the other hand, a parent's conduct, good or bad, affects profoundly the destiny of his descendants. Their temperate habits or their loose way of living have a present effect on our lives; and the good or bad name which a parent leaves to his children colours and shapes their lives in a thousand ways. To be the son of David procured for Solomon the delay of the penalty which his own misdeeds had deserved. To be descended from Jeroboam was to ascend a throne which was already forfeited. The Romans welcomed with enthusiasm the worthless son of Marcus Aurelius, though they already knew something of his character. The death of Louis XVI. was not wholly due to Jacobin ferocity, nor to his own misconduct, but to the policy of ancestors who had bequeathed the fatal legacy of the disaffection and discontent of a great people. Certainly the application of this principle is modified partly by the gospel doctrine of individual responsibility: but it is not abrogated or forgotten. St. Paul applies this consideration to the relation of our first parent to the whole human family. "By one man's disobedience many were made sinners." Adam's representative relation made his acts representative, and every child of Adam must consequently say, "Behold, I was shapen in wickedness, and in sin hath my mother conceived me." This representative character belonged to our Lord not less truly than to our natural parent Adam. This is the deepest meaning of His name—the Son of Man—and this is why St. Paul calls Him the second Adam. There are, of course, important differences. Adam represents all the descendants who derive their physical life from him; Christ represents all who derive their spiritual life from Him. But the representation is as real in the one case as in the other, and it relieves our Lord's vicarious sufferings of the imputation of capricious injustice. He is "the Everlasting Father," or the parent of the coming age, who pays the penalty for the misdeeds of His children; and in claiming by faith our share in His work we are falling back on a law of representation which is common to nature and to grace, and which can only be charged with injustice if God is to be debarred on some arbitrary ground from treating His creatures as members of a common body, as well as in their individual capacity. It was Christ's good pleasure to take our place upon the Cross. Surely there is no injustice in accepting a

satisfaction which is freely offered. When a savage tribe would expiate its offences by the sacrifice of a victim against his will, this destruction of a life against the will of its owner would alone involve the forfeiture of any moral value attaching to the proceedings. If we could conceive any compulsion in our Lord's case, it would be impossible to make good a moral basis for the atoning virtue of His death; but "No man," He said, "taketh My life from Me, but I lay it down of Myself." "Christ through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God"; and, therefore, because our Lord took a nature which represented the race, and freely willed the act, and suffered in that nature as its representative, His death has without any slur on the law of justice a propitiatory virtue. 4. But how could the penalty paid by one man be accepted as a penalty sufficient to atone for the sins of millions, the sins of the centuries that may be to come as well as of the ages that are past? Had the life which was offered been only a human life, it could not have made any such atonement. He who died on Calvary was more than man, and it is His higher and Divine nature which imparts to all that Christ did and suffered an infinite value. If we contemplate the infinitude of God, our wonder will be not that the death of Christ should have effected so much, but rather so far as we know it should have effected so little. I say so far as we know, for it may have had relations to other worlds of which we know nothing, although it may have had no effect beyond the redemption won for and offered to man. To achieve that redemption it was plainly more than equal. How large a number of blossoms drop off without bearing fruit; how few seeds fall where they can germinate, and of those which do take root how small a proportion do anything more; how out of all proportion to the lives which actually survive, are the preparations for life in the animal world! These things have led people to ask whether it would not have been better to create only so much life as was wanted. This is the reasoning of a finite creature surveying from his petty point of view the boundless resources and the magnificent profusion of the great Creator. And if, as we may think, He does more than He need do in order to save us without tampering with His own eternal law of right, it is because His resources, and His ungrudging generosity, are alike without limit. At any rate, if the death of our Lord offered more than a satisfaction, there can be no question that the satisfaction which it offered was fully adequate, that the blood of Him, the Son of God, cleanses from all sin. (*Canon Liddon.*)

The necessity of the atonement:—I. THE ATONEMENT WAS NECESSARY ENTIRELY ON GOD'S ACCOUNT. It is easy to see that it could not be necessary on the account of sinners. When Adam sinned, God might have destroyed him and the race, or He might have saved them in a sovereign manner, without doing injustice to them or any other created beings. But the apostle assures us that an atonement was necessary on God's account, that He might be just, and the justifier. II. WHY THE ATONEMENT WAS NECESSARY ON GOD'S ACCOUNT. 1. If we can only discover why Adam, after he had sinned and incurred the penalty, despaired of pardon, we shall see this. Adam knew that God was good, but he knew, too, that God was just; that it was morally impossible that He should exercise His goodness inconsistently with His justice; and that His perfect justice implied an inflexible disposition to punish the guilty. It is not probable that Adam thought of an atonement; and if he did, he could not see how an atonement could be made. Now as God could not have been just to Himself in forgiving Adam, so He cannot be in forgiving any of His guilty posterity without an atonement. And as God did determine to show mercy to sinners, so it was absolutely necessary that Christ should make an atonement for their sins, and its necessity originated entirely in His immutable justice. There was nothing in men that required an atonement, and there was nothing in God that required an atonement, but His justice. 2. Now there never was any difficulty in God's doing good to the innocent, nor in His punishing the guilty; but there was a difficulty in forgiving the wicked. (1) God's goodness is a disposition to do good to the innocent; His justice a disposition to punish the guilty; and His mercy a disposition to pardon and save the guilty. The great difficulty, therefore, was to reconcile God's disposition to punish with His disposition to forgive. (2) This was a difficulty in the Divine character, and a still greater difficulty in the Divine government. For God had revealed His justice in His moral government. There was a clear exhibition of retributive justice in the first law given to man. "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." This law, clothed with all the authority of God, man violated, and involved all his posterity. What now could be done? The fallen angels had been doomed for their first offence. But how could pardoning grace be displayed? This none of the intelligent creation could

tell. The angels of light could not tell; for they had seen those who kept not their first estate, excluded from heaven. Man could not tell. This question God alone was able to solve. He knew that He could be just to Himself, if His justice were displayed by the sufferings of a proper substitute in the room of sinners. Christ was the only substitute to be found who was competent to the great work. Him, therefore, the Father set forth to be a propitiation, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins. III. WHAT FOLLOWS? If the atonement of Christ was necessary entirely on God's account, that He might be just in exercising pardoning mercy, then—1. It was universal, and sufficient for the pardon of all. What can be more unjust than to punish sinners for not accepting a salvation which was never provided for them? And it never was provided for them, if Christ did not, by His sufferings and death, make atonement for them. 2. It did not satisfy justice towards sinners themselves. Nothing which Christ did or suffered altered their characters, obligations, or deserts. His obedience did not free them from their obligation to obey the Divine law, nor did His sufferings free them from their desert of suffering the penalty. 3. Christ did not merit anything at the hand of God for Himself, or for mankind. There is no phrase more misunderstood than "the merits of Christ." Though Christ suffered the just for the unjust, yet He did not lay God under the least obligation, in point of justice, to pardon. God is above being bound by any; and He cannot bind Himself otherwise than by a free, gratuitous promise. God's promise to pardon is an act of grace, and not an act of justice. Accordingly, the apostle says that believers are "justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." And as Christ did not merit pardon for believers by His sufferings, so He did not merit a reward for them by His obedience. It is true, God has promised to reward Him for His obedience unto death, but His promise is a promise of grace, and not of justice. So He has promised to reward every man for the least good he does, even for giving a cup of cold water in sincerity. But His promise is a promise of grace, not of justice, and without the least regard to Christ's obedience as the ground of it. By obeying and suffering in the room of sinners, He only rendered it consistent for God to pardon or to reward. 4. God exercises the same free grace in pardoning sinners through the atonement, as if no atonement had been made. 5. It is absurd to suppose that the atonement was merely expedient. There was no other possible way of saving sinners. There is no reason to think that God would have subjected the Son of His love to the Cross if He could have forgiven it without such an infinitely costly atonement. 6. We may safely conclude that the atonement consisted in Christ's sufferings, and not in His obedience. His obedience was necessary on His account, to qualify Him for making atonement for the disobedient; but His sufferings were necessary on God's account, to display His justice. 7. God can consistently pardon any penitent, believing sinners on account of Christ's atonement. He can now be just, and be the justifier of every one that believeth. (*N. Emmons, D.D.*).

Vers. 27-30. **Where is boasting then? It is excluded.**—*Boastfulness—Jewish and Christian*:—I. BOASTFULNESS WAS A JEWISH NATIONAL CHARACTERISTIC of a peculiar species, for it took the form of religious conceit. 1. They could not boast of being rich or strong; but when their fortunes were at the lowest they had one source of national pride left to them to buoy up their self-importance. In being the selected favourites of heaven, they found a consolation so flattering, that they looked down upon their conquerors as outcast aliens from God. Now, there was just sufficient foundation for this pride to make it very excusable in them, although in the case of many it took a shape which proved fatal to religious life. 2. Having reached the natural termination of his own argument, namely, that God, through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, is able to justify all who trust in Him, Paul suddenly halts, as though he were looking for something that had vanished, and abruptly asks, "Where, then, is the boasting of the Jews?" Answer—There is no more room left for it. But what shuts it out? Not the law of works, which is understood to prescribe obedience as a means of reward; for if a man earned reward, then, of course, he has some ground for boasting. No; boasting is really excluded only under the new and better way of being just before God. That new principle of acceptance with God cuts self-righteousness down to the roots as nothing else does. That leaves him a debtor to sovereign grace alone. II. THIS VICIOUS BOASTFULNESS IS NOT A THING ESSENTIALLY JEWISH. AT BOTTOM, IT IS THE CHILD OF HUMAN PRIDE. No man likes to own that he has literally not an inch of

ground to stand on before the judgment-seat of God, nor a scruple's weight of merit to plead there. There is nothing a man dislikes more than that. However ragged our righteousness may be, or however filthy, we cannot let it go to stand in utter shame, unscreened to the light, or defenceless before the judgment that we have deserved. Can we not? Then there is no salvation for us. Salvation is for men who trust in God's way of finding mercy, and that principle shuts boasting out. Alone, naked, excuseless, condemned, a sinner simply you must feel and confess yourself to be. III. THIS SELF-JUSTIFYING BOASTFULNESS FEEDS UPON EVERY POINT OF ADVANTAGE WHICH IS SUPPOSED TO LIFT ONE SINNER A LITTLE ABOVE HIS FELLOW SINNER. It lives by making invidious comparisons. There are diversities among men in the degree of their moral depravity, and God's providence gives to some an immense advantage over others in respect of religious privilege. But when God singles out one race from other races, or one class in society before another class, or one individual from among others, for exceptional religious advantages, He certainly does not mean to puff up the favoured one with spiritual conceit. It is nothing but the abnormal working of man's own evil nature that perverts what God thus meant for a blessing. Therefore we can afford to throw no stones at ancient Israel. Do we Christians never boast of being far above the benighted Jew or heathen? Your Israelite long ago conceived himself safe for eternity, because he had been duly circumcised and observed the festivals. Does your Christian never build any hope of heaven upon his good churchmanship or his unchallenged Christian profession? The Jews toiled hard to deserve paradise by a great zeal for orthodoxy, and by leading a scrupulous life. Does no one ever hear of any Christian doing the like? For you, as well as the Jew, it is fatally easy to miss the humble road that leads to life through a lowly trust in Christ. For you, too, it is perilously easy to build your religious confidence upon a righteousness of your own. IV. AGAINST THIS ASSUMPTION SEE WHAT MIGHTY ENGINES PAUL BRINGS TO BEAR. 1. The argument is one to this effect. "If I am wrong in saying that every man is to be justified apart from the law—and if you are right in thinking that the observance of Mosaic rites is the ground of your acceptance, then in that case God is only the God of the Jews, since it is only to Jews that He has given this Mosaic law. But is not this dead against the very prime point of your confession as against polytheism, that there is one living true God of all men alike? The foundation of this reasoning lies in monotheism, the doctrine of the unity of God, and His common relation to all. The cleft which cuts the human race into Jews and Gentiles cuts far down; but it cannot cut so far as the fundamental question of the sinner's acceptance with his Maker. How shall man have peace with God? is a problem which can only have one answer—not two. The same one God, just and merciful to all His children, must justly justify every sinner in the same way. 2. But the levelling argument of the apostle is good for more than Jews. Just look at our own position in the light of this argument. We are privileged men—as Christians, as Englishmen, as the children of devout parents who saw to our being early baptized in the faith and nurture of the saints. Shall we then rest with boastful confidence in this, and deem that the gate of life is less straight for us than for idolaters or outcasts? Is not that to repeat the blunder of the Jew, to postulate, as it were, a two-faced God?—one God who apportions to ignorant and wicked people their own share of grace, as a thing that they have no claim on, out of pure regard to the work of Jesus Christ, but who receives respectable Christian people on another and easier footing altogether. I have no fear that any of you will say such things. But what I fear is that some of you may gradually harbour a self-righteous confidence in your position and character, which would substantially mean the same thing. Against such a self-confident temper, therefore, I fight with the weapon of St. Paul. God has not two ways of saving men. (*J. Oswald Dykes, D.D.*) *Boasting excluded*:—1. The term "law" may mean more than an authoritative rule; it may signify the method of succession by which one event follows another; and it is thus that we speak of a law of nature, or of mind. Both the law of works and the law of faith may be understood here in this latter sense. The one is that by which a man's justification follows upon his having performed the works; the other is that by which a man's justification follows upon his faith—just as the law of gravitation is that upon which every body above the surface of the earth, when its support is taken away, will fall toward its centre. 2. Now the aim of the apostle is to prove that by the law of works none is justified, and I want you to notice how those who dislike the utter excluding of works endeavour to evade this. I. THEY HOLD THAT THE AFFIRMA-

TION OF PAUL IS OF THE CEREMONIAL AND NOT OF THE MORAL LAW. They are willing enough to discard obedience to the former, but not to the latter. All rites, be they Jewish or Christian, have a greatly inferior place in their estimation to the virtues of social life, or to the affections of an inward and enlightened piety in a man, even though a stranger to the puritanical rigours of the Sabbath and of the sacrament. 1. We are far from disputing the justness of their preference; but we would direct them to the use that they should make of it when applying to it the statement that from justification all boasting is excluded. Does not the statement point the more to that of which men are inclined to boast the more? To set aside the law of works is not to exclude boasting, if only those works are set aside which beget no reverence when done by others, and no complacency when done by themselves. The exclusion of boasting might appear to an old Pharisee as that which swept away the whole ceremonial in which he gloried. But for the same reason should it appear to the tasteful admirer of virtue to sweep away the moral accomplishments in which he glories. In a word, this verse has the same force now that it had then. It then reduced the boastful Jew to the same ground of nothingness before God with the Gentile whom he despised. And it now reduces the boastful moralist to the same ground with the slave of rites, whom he so thoroughly despises. 2. But that Paul means the moral law is plain, because in the theft and adultery and sacrilege of chap. ii., and in the impiety and deceit and slander and cruelty of chap. iii., we see that it was the offence of a guilty world against it which the apostle chiefly had in his eye; and when he says that by the law is the knowledge of sin, how could he mean the ceremonial law, when they were moral sins that he had all along been specifying? 3. This distinction between the moral and ceremonial is, in fact, a mere device for warding off a doctrine by which alienated nature feels herself to be humbled. It is an opiate by which she would fain regale the lingering sense that she so fondly retains of her own sufficiency. It is laying hold of a twig by which she may bear herself up, in her own favourite attitude of independence of God. But this is a propensity to which the apostle grants no quarter whenever it appears; and never will your mind and his be at one till reduced to a sense of your own nothingness, and leaning your whole weight on the sufficiency of another, you receive justification as wholly of grace, and feel on this ground that every plea of boasting is overthrown. II. THEY AT TIMES ALLOW JUSTIFICATION TO BE OF FAITH WHOLLY, BUT MAKE A VIRTUE OF FAITH. All the glorifying to the law associated with obedience they would now transfer to acquiescence in the gospel. The docility, attention, love of truth, and preference of light to darkness confer a merit upon believing; and here would they make a last and a desperate stand for the credit of a share in their own salvation. 1. Now if this verse be true, there must be an error in this also. It eaves the sinner nothing to boast of at all; and should he continue to associate any glorying with his faith, then is he turning this faith to a purpose directly the reverse of that which the apostle intends by it. There is no glory, you will allow, in seeing the sun with your eyes open, whatever glory may accrue to Him who arrayed this luminary in his brightness and endowed you with that wondrous mechanism which conveys the perception of it. And be assured that in every way there is just as little to boast of on the part of him who sees the truth of the gospel, or who relies on its promises after he perceives them to be true. His faith, which has been aptly termed the hand of the mind, may apprehend the offered gift and may appropriate it; but there is just as little of moral praise to be rendered on that account, as to the beggar for laying hold of the offered alms. 2. And to cut away all pretensions to glorying, the faith itself is a *gift*. The gospel is like an offer made to one who has a withered hand; and power must go forth with the offer ere the hand can be extended to take hold of it. It is not enough for God to present an object, He must also awaken the eye to the perception of it. (*T. Chalmers, D.D.*) *Grace exalted—boasting excluded*:—Pride is most obnoxious to God. As a sin, His holiness hates it; as a treason, His sovereignty detests it, and the whole of His attributes stand leagued to put it down. The first transgression had in its essence pride. The ambitious heart of Eve desired to be as God, and Adam followed; and we know the rest. Remember Babel, Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, Sennacherib, and Herod. God loves His servants, but pride even in them He abhors. Think of David and Hezekiah. And God has uttered the most solemn words as well as issued the most awful judgment against pride. But to put an everlasting stigma upon it He has ordained that the only way in which He will save men shall be a way by which man's pride shall be humbled in the dust. Note here—I. THE REJECTED PLAN. There are two ways by which a man might have

been for ever blessed. The one was by works—"This do and thou shalt live; be obedient and receive the reward"; the other plan was—"Receive grace and blessedness as the free gift of God." 1. Now God has not chosen the system of works, because it is impossible for us. (1) For the law requires of us—(2) Perfect obedience. One single flaw, one offence, and the law condemns without mercy. And if it were possible to keep the law in its perfection outwardly, it is required to keep it in the heart as well. (2) Because if up to this moment your heart and life have been altogether without offence, yet it is required that it should be so even to your dying day. But think of the temptations to which you will be subject! (3) Remember, too, that we are not sure that even this life would end that probation, for long as thou shouldst live duty would still be due, and the law still thine insatiable creditor. Now in the face of all this, will any of you prefer to be saved by your works? Or, rather, will you prefer to be damned by your works? for that will certainly be the issue, let you hope what you may. 2. Now I suppose that very few indulge a hope of being saved by the law in itself; but there is a delusion abroad that perhaps God will modify the law. (1) That He will accept a sincere obedience even if it be imperfect. Now against this Paul declares, "By the works of the law shall no flesh living be justified," so that that is answered at once. But more than this, God's law cannot alter, it can never be content to take less than it demands. God, therefore, cannot accept anything but a perfect obedience. (2) But some say, "could it not be partly by grace and partly by works?" No. The apostle says that boasting is excluded; but if we let in the law of works, then man has an opportunity for self-gratification as having saved himself. (3) "Well," says another, "I don't expect to be saved by my morality; but then, I have been baptized; I receive the Lord's Supper; I go to church." These ordinances are blessed means of grace to saved souls; but to the unsaved they can have no avail for good, but may increase their sin, because they touch unworthily the holy things of God. (4) Others suppose that at least their feelings, which are only their works in another shape, may help to save them; but if you rely upon what you feel, you shall as certainly perish as if you trust to what you do. (5) There are others who rely upon their knowledge. They have a sound creed, and hold the theory of justification by faith and exult over their fellow professors because they hold the truth. Now this is nothing but salvation by works, only they are works performed by the head instead of by the hand. II. BOASTING IS EXCLUDED—GOD HAS ACCEPTED THE SECOND PLAN, namely, the way of salvation by faith through grace. The first man that entered heaven entered by faith. "By faith Abel," &c. Over the tombs of all the godly who were accepted of God you may read the epitaph—"These all died by faith." By faith they received the promise; and among all yonder bright and shining throng, there is not one who does not confess, "We have washed our robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." As Calvin says, "Not a particle of boasting can be admitted, because not a particle of work is admitted into the covenant of grace"; it is not of man nor by man, not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy, and, therefore, boasting is excluded by the law of faith. III. Have no merits of their own. THE VERY GATE WHICH SHUTS OUT BOASTING SHUTS IN HOPE FOR THE WORST OF SINNERS. You say, "I never attend the house of God, and up to this time I have been a thief and a drunkard." Well, you stand to-day on the same level as the most moral sinner and the most honest unbeliever in the matter of salvation. They are lost, since they believe not, and so are you. When we come to God the best can bring nothing, and the worst can bring no less. I know some will say, "Then what is the good of morality?" I will tell you. Two men are overboard there; one man has a dirty face, and the other a clean one. There is a rope thrown over from the stern of the vessel, and only that rope will save the sinking men, whether their faces be fair or foul. Do I therefore underrate cleanliness. Certainly not; but it will not save a drowning man, nor will morality save a dying man. Or take this case. Here we have two persons, each with a deadly cancer. One of them is rich and clothed in purple, the other is poor and wrapped about with a few rags; and I say to them, "You are both on a par now, here comes the physician, his touch can heal you both; there is no difference between you whatever." Do I therefore say that the one man's robes are not better than the other's rags? Of course they are better in some respects, but they have nothing to do with the matter of curing disease. So morality is a neat cover for foul venom, but it does not alter the fact that the heart is vile and the man himself under condemnation. Suppose I were an army surgeon. There is one man there

—he is a captain, and a brave man—and he is bleeding out his life from a terrible gash. By his side there lies a private, and a great coward too, wounded in the same way. I say to them, "You are both in the same condition, and I can heal you both." But if the captain should say, "I do not want you; I am a captain, go and see to that poor dog yonder." Would his courage and rank save his life? No; they are good things, but not saving things. So it is with good works. IV. THE SAME PLAN WHICH SHUTS OUT BOASTING LEADS US TO A GRACIOUS GRATITUDE TO CHRIST. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) **By what law? . . . the law of faith.**—*Boasting excluded by the law of faith:*—I. FAITH A LAW. 1. As God's appointed way of acceptance. 2. As an economy according to which God deals with men. 3. As a binding rule to which we owe subjection. 4. As having justification connected with it as a sure result. II. THIS LAW EXCLUDES BOASTING. 1. From the nature of faith. Faith simply trusts, accepts a proffered gift. There can be no boasting in believing that God speaks the truth; nor in a helpless sinner leaning on omnipotence; nor in a beggar receiving alms. Faith looks entirely away from itself to another, viz., Christ. Eyes only Christ's righteousness, not its own; comes empty-handed and receives out of Christ's fulness (John i. 16); is the window through which the light passes, not the light; glories in Christ's obedience, but not in its own. Therefore faith is a humble, depending, self-renouncing grace. 2. From God's procedure in justifying by it. All are regarded on the same footing as guilty sinners, for men are justified as ungodly (chap. iv. 5), the greatest sinner as freely and fully as the least (1 Tim. i. 15). Crimson, double-dyed sins are no hindrance to acceptance (Isa. i. 18; 1 Cor. vi. 9–11); nor nature's highest attainments a furtherance of it (Mark x. 17–22). All equally need salvation and all are welcome to it. The one ground of acceptance for all is Christ's righteousness, for the wedding garment was for the poorest as well as for the richest (Matt. xxii. 11, 12). 3. From the origin of faith itself. Faith to receive is Christ's gift (Heb. xii. 2; Eph. ii. 8; Phil. i. 20). The withered hand restored to accept the proffered bounty. (*J. Robinson, D.D.*)

Ver. 28. **Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.**—*Justification:*—I. THE TERMS OF THIS CONCLUSION. 1. "Justification" signifies, literally, acquittal. In a court of law such acquittal may be made on the ground of—(1) Innocence. (2) Of a sufficient satisfaction. The Scripture view of justification is acquittal on grounds consistent with the demands of justice. 2. "Deeds of the law." "Law" is the will of a superior properly sanctioned; and Paul employs the term to denote generally the will of God. (1) As made known by some deep and powerful impression where a written revelation has not been given. (2) As having been made known by a written record. The whole may be called the moral law; and when the apostle speaks of "deeds of the law," he refers to conformity to its requirements, the acting in consistency with the law written in the heart on the part of the Gentiles—the acting in consistency with the law inscribed on tables of stone by the Jews. 3. "Faith" is a repose upon Jesus Christ as given for us and offered to us—an appropriating confidence on the fact that He died for us, for me. II. THE MODE BY WHICH THE APOSTLE ARRIVES AT THIS CONCLUSION. The apostle has shown—1. That mankind are all sinners. (1) That the Gentiles are so morally fallen that there is scarcely a single crime which may not be charged upon them. (2) The Jews are no less criminal. Now, look how this stands as part of the argument. If a man is justified by the deeds of the law his whole conduct must be conformed to law. It follows, therefore, that if mankind have all broken the law, a man cannot be justified by the deeds of the law. But it is more important that we make an application of this to ourselves. 2. That we are justified solely by Christ, and, consequently, by faith. The slightest attention to the perfections of God must convince us that He can never dispense mercy except in connection with His justice and truth. God, having given us a law, and that law having been broken, was bound in His righteousness to punish the sinner, unless some one were to be punished for him, and He, in His infinite wisdom and love, was pleased to set forth Jesus Christ to be a propitiation. Now it follows that if we are to be saved alone through our Lord Jesus Christ, we can only be righteous through trusting in Him. III. THE IMPROVEMENT WHICH THE APOSTLE MAKES OF THIS DOCTRINE. 1. He vindicates the subject from the charge of novelty. Anything perfectly new in religion must be false. Paul shows that the doctrine was as old as Abraham, and that it entered into the whole Jewish system. He then cites the case of David (Psa. xxxii.), and shows that, as it was the

experience of David, it was the doctrine of the Jewish Church generally. 2. He guards the subject against licentious abuse. What has an immoral tendency in religion must be assumed to be fallacious. It was a very natural conclusion for some people to arrive at: "Why, if we are not justified by the deeds of law there is no use for law." (1) "On the contrary," says he, "we establish the law." We are justified by faith in Him who endured the penalty of the law for us. The law is thus made good, as it was fully honoured by Him on whom we repose, who was made our Substitute. (2) We "establish the law" in another way, for it immediately brings the soul into union with God, and God sends forth the Spirit of His Son into the heart; and as soon as we feel that we love God. Here is the principle of all holiness. There is nothing so powerful in the world as love: "faith works by love." 3. He uses the subject to excite confidence. "Is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not of the Gentiles also?" (*A. E. Farrar.*) *Justification:*—Our position in the sight of God, and our relation to His government, are of supreme importance to us. 1. We are just what God sees us to be. We are not necessarily what we think ourselves to be, because our judgment may be erroneous. We may be ignorant of what constitutes a true Christian. Or, knowing what a true Christian is, we may look too favourably upon certain false signs of religious life, and may thus, in either case, decide that we are Christians when we are not. In like manner our fellow-men may be mistaken about us. But God makes no errors. 2. And we shall be just what God's dealings with us tend to make us. Our future will be the fruit and the effect of God's dealings with us here. And yet we often think more of being justified by man than by God. The reason of this is that we are unduly influenced by the present. The insignificant face of a man within a few feet of you will hide the face of the infinite and eternal God. But as we read the Scriptures, and as we open our hearts to the Spirit of God, our attention is called away from men to God, and from man's judgment to God the Judge of all. 3. The words before us are a conclusion derived from two propositions. (1) The universal unrighteousness of man, as seen in the Gentiles, as exhibited by the Jews, as declared by God's Word, and as made manifest by God's law. (2) The provision which God has made for free justification. If it be true that all men are unrighteous; that "God hath set forth Christ a propitiation," &c., it is not possible that a man can be justified by the deeds of the law. Look—I. AT THE MEANS OF JUSTIFICATION HERE REJECTED. "The deeds of the law." 1. The deeds of the law are the natural means of justification. Angels are justified by them, and so was Adam. Righteous means too are these and necessary. Why do men in their attempts to magnify the gospel denounce the law? Is not the Lawgiver the redeeming God, and the redeeming God the Lawgiver? And if the gospel be the glorious gospel, the commandment is holy and just and good. 2. But we are in such a position that we cannot use these means for justification. And why not? Because by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, and because individually we have followed our first father. II. THE MEANS ACKNOWLEDGED AND EXHIBITED. What would be our position if we had simply a revelation telling us that we cannot be justified by the deeds of the law? By imagination place yourselves in this position. It is sometimes necessary for the rich to put themselves by thought in the position of the poor in order to awaken thankfulness for their mercies. Now do this with regard to the grace of God. Just think of yourselves as before Sinai; think as though you had never seen Calvary, and then you will be better able to appreciate all the blessedness involved in the words, "A man is justified by faith," &c. 1. By faith in what? Not faith in anything. You may have faith in God and in many of God's words, and yet not be justified. The faith to which Paul directs your attention here is faith in the manifestation of the righteousness of God without the law. 2. Faith in what sense and to what extent? Not the belief that such a manifestation has been made, but such a belief as leads to the use of it. "Faith without works is dead." The faith to which Paul here points is faith that does work, that is work. It is the sort of faith which a starving man will have in the supply of food that you bring him. Conclusion: Now, supposing this to be the doctrine of the text, what do we learn? 1. Guilt does not of itself prevent justification. Your sins will not ruin you, but your unbelief. 2. No circumstances of any kind in the case of those who hear the gospel constitute an exception to the mode of justification. Say that you are the children of godly parents, that you have always been remarkable for morality, you must still be justified by faith without the deeds of the law. But justification is within reach of all who can believe. It is present privilege. (*S. Martin.*) *Justification by faith:*—St. Paul is emphatically the apostle of the Reformation,

of the vigorous, intellectual, Western races, and of the advancing civilisation of the world. Few understood him in his own day. The Church soon dropped a veil over his teaching, and developed the idea of sacramental grace, whose fundamental principles his very soul abhorred. For fifteen hundred years the dust of time settled on his doctrine; then Luther with one bold movement scattered it, and translated man once more out of a world of lifeless formalities into a world of vivid, spiritual life. The Churches, Jewish and Roman, had dead works; Christianity has lively faith. And as dead works breed nothing but corruption, while living faith is fruitful of all excellent graces, you may estimate how much they are severally worth to the world. I. TO UNDERSTAND THE ARGUMENT WE MUST FIRST GRASP THE VITAL DISTINCTION BETWEEN WORKS AND FRUITS. Suppose you are crippled, and need constant attention. A servant for good pay may afford it; but there will be a certain hardness in it, and his work will be the basis of a claim. But if you have a wife or child, whose one desire is to be the minister of your needs, her joy in any alleviation she is able to afford rises into quite another region. The only return such service craves is that which it creates, increase of love. Now man's world is full of works; God's is full of fruits. How much of man's work is under hard compulsion—work for hire, which gold repays! But in God's great world we come into another region. The fields groaning with harvests, the trees bending with fruit, the birds carolling matins at heaven's gate, the insects humming eve's lullaby, do glad service to their Maker; and their reward is the mantle of beauty which His smile flings over all the worlds. And in this we have the key to the two theologies. Religion in Jewish and Roman schools is a working; in Paul's school, in Christ's, it is a life. II. AND NOW LET US APPLY THIS TO THE MATTER IN HAND. The works of the Pharisaic school are sketched by an unerring hand (Matt. xxiii. 23–27). Their works were abundant, their fruit nowhere. All within them that could bear fruit was dead. The evil in the Church began probably from a misreading of St. James. What St. James calls "faith and works," Paul calls faith—that is, faith which is alive, and can prove its vitality by its fruitfulness. But the Church soon began to lay the chief stress on the works. They are the part of the matter with which a priesthood can most profitably concern itself. Follow the track of Tetzel, and see what the Pharisaic doctrine of work inevitably grows to in time. And the fruit of it is twofold. To the earnest, life becomes a weary, hopeless drudgery—a "yoke" which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear; with which compare Luther's description of his agony of mind while a Roman monk; while with the sensual it develops a reckless profligacy which, by a little clever arrangement with the Chancery of heaven, can all be set right at last. III. "WHEREFORE WE CONCLUDE THAT A MAN IS JUSTIFIED BY FAITH WITHOUT THE DEEDS OF THE LAW," and we step out at once into a new and heavenly world (Gal. iii. 10–14, 21–29). Paul's position and Luther's is that a soul in anguish on account of transgression must sweep clean out all anxieties as to what it can do to please the Father, beyond the filial act of looking to Him through Him who came to reveal Him. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." 1. Well but, said the Judaising theologians to St. Paul, and the Romanising theologians to Luther, this is to do away with the very foundations of morality. But this depends wholly on what we mean by faith. If it be simply a mental consent to Scriptural statements then the Judaisers and the Romanists are right. But if we believe with Paul and Luther, that the act of faith is a vital act whereby the sinner becomes "dead to sin, but alive to God through Jesus Christ his Lord," then you have a guarantee for the fruits of faith, which may be regarded as the nobler works of the law, transfigured, glorified by life. It is a great mystery; so is the life of nature. It is the gift of God; so is the life of nature. As God has ordained the law by which the life of nature is quickened in the embryo, so has He ordained that in the spiritual sphere the "just by faith shall live." 2. And Paul's conception of the meaning of justification was very large and grand. Justified by faith the law has no claim against you, the devil no accusation. God beholds you as you are in Christ, whose image, forming within, shines through all the follies and weaknesses that defile your frail humanity, and obliterates them to heavenly sight. Your title to the name of son, and the son's inheritance, is absolute. You have not to win it. One thing alone vitiates it—unbelief. Let faith fail, the life fails. Fix the eye of faith again on Christ, cry to Him, "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief," and the life rises again in the springs. Good works will flow from you as summer fruits from the sunny earth, music from a harp full strung, or light from the fountain of day. And they are beautiful to Him, for He creates them; what glory is in them,

the newborn lay as tribute at His feet. (*J. Baldwin Brown, B.A.*) *Justification by faith*:—I. WHAT IS MEANT BY JUSTIFICATION. The justification here meant—1. Is not—(1) That which comes upon all men, even infants, through the righteousness of Christ (Chron. v. 14, 15, 18). (2) That which shall take place at the day of judgment (chap. ii. 13–16; Matt. xii. 37), which will be, not indeed by the merit (chap. vi. 23), but by the evidence of works (Rev. xx. 12; xxii. 12). 2. But that which the true people of God possess on earth (1 Cor. vi. 11; Tit. iii. 7); which is —(1) Not the declaration of innocence, which is the meaning of the word in courts of law (Psa. cxliii. 2; Chron. iii. 20). (2) Not the being made innocent or holy, which would confound it with regeneration or sanctification. (3) But the having righteousness accounted to us; sin not imputed, sin pardoned; or the sentence of condemnation against us reversed, and our obligation to punishment cancelled by a judicial act of God. This implies, and draws after it, acceptance and adoption. II. IN WHAT SENSE WE ARE TO BE "JUSTIFIED BY FAITH." When the apostle says we are "justified by faith—1. He does not speak of—(1) The moving cause of justification which is Divine grace; and hence we are said to be justified by grace (ver. 24; Tit. iii. 4–7). (2) Nor of the meritorious cause, which is the redemption of Christ (ver. 24, 25; Isa. liii 11; 2 Cor. v. *ult.*); and hence we are said to be "justified by Christ" (Gal. ii. 17). (3) Nor of the efficient cause, either of the preparation necessary, as conviction and repentance for sin, or of a sense of this justification; this is the Holy Spirit (Tit. iii. 7). (4) Nor of the instrumental cause on the part of God, which is part of His Word, viz., His declaration and promises respecting pardoning the penitent (John xv. 3). 2. But of the instrumental cause on our part, which is faith—in Christ, as the Son of God, the Messiah, the Saviour, able and willing to save (John iii. 16–18; Gal. ii. 16); this implies—(1) That we come to Him (John vi. 37. vii. 37; Matt. ix. 28). (2) That we trust in Him as "delivered for our offences" (chap. iv. 25), trust in His blood (chap. iii. 25). (3) That we receive Him (John i. 12) in God (chap. iv. 24), in His mercy and promises through Christ (chap. iv. 17–23). Those who have this faith are justified, and none without it. Thus, in different senses, we are justified by grace, by Christ, by the Spirit, by the Word, by faith. III. HOW THIS IS "WITHOUT THE DEEDS OF THE LAW." (*J. Benson.*) *Justification by faith*:—I. THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION. 1. On this subject great misconception prevails. There are two extremes into which men are betrayed. (1) That justification originates with the creature, instead of the Creator. (2) The exclusion of man from all active concern in the reception of the boon. In the former, sinners, like ancient Israel, attempt to establish a righteousness of their own; in the latter, justification is regarded as an act of the Divine government, irrespective of the production of moral character in the predestinated objects of it. Against both delusions we ought to be on our guard. The one is fraught with legal confidence, the other with antinomian licence. 2. That we may attach distinct ideas to the justification, it is necessary for us to consider it in reference to the attributes and revealed will of the Divine Lawgiver. "It is God that justifieth"; and the principles accordingly by which His decisions are conducted are those of unerring wisdom and unchangeable excellence. Now, the revealed ground of justification, when man was in a state of innocency, was a perfect conformity to the will of his heavenly Father. And will the unchangeable God now be satisfied with a less pure devotion to His will? Impossible! But, in Adam's case, the righteousness was his own; now it is that of our Surety. Still, the principle of justification is one and the same, at once satisfying the claims of justice and vindicating the equity of the law. The patriarchal and Mosaic dispensations were at one with the Christian in the revealed ground of acceptance. The victim presented at the altar was a confession that the life of the offerer had been forfeited by sin, and that the law of righteousness was obligatory. True believers worshipped the holy Lord God as also merciful and gracious. To them, as to us, justification was granted as an act of forgiving love. 3. Justification includes pardon of sin and acceptance with God. Both are due to the voluntary substitution of the Son of God in our nature, who by active obedience fulfilled the law to the uttermost, and by penal suffering redeemed us from its curse. 4. From this scheme human works are completely excluded. The origin, the progress, the revelation, the execution of it are all alike Divine. It was devised in the counsels of unsearchable Wisdom, flows from the unmerited riches of sovereign compassion, and glorifies the Divine government in the estimation of all orders of intelligent beings. II. THE NATURE OF THAT FAITH BY WHICH WE ARE JUSTIFIED. 1. Note the relation which faith bears to the justifying act of God as an instrumental but

not efficient cause. A mariner falls from the vessel's side and is in imminent danger of sinking; a rope is thrown out to him; he believes that this presents a way for his escape, and his faith may be said to save him from a watery grave. Unless he had confided in the rope, death would have been inevitable. Now, it is in a sense analogous to this that we are "justified by faith." It is not our faith that imparts a right to the blessings of redemption. Faith simply connects the needy but unworthy recipient with the munificent Giver. It is the opening of the mouth for the bread of life; the stretching forth of the withered hand towards the Divine Physician; the putting on the protecting robe against the inclemency of the storm. 2. Note its properties. (1) Its Divine origin. Like every other good gift, it cometh from above. "No man," says our Lord, "can come to Me, except the Father, which hath sent Me, draw him." "By grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." Hence we perceive an important distinction between a merely speculative or historical assent to the truth of God and that holy exercise of man's heart with which he believeth unto righteousness. (2) Its appropriating character. We may admit the existence and value of many things in which we feel little personal interest. Without calling in question a single fact or doctrine of Holy Scripture we may be unmoved by its most solemn and touching representations. It is otherwise when the slumbers of spiritual death are broken. Instead of boasting as heretofore of good deeds and virtuous aspirations, the language is, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" But whither shall he take himself for remission? Will he be satisfied with mere generalities, as that Christ Jesus "came into the world to save sinners," and that he need not therefore despair of mercy? Assuredly not. He is not satisfied till he can say, "He loved me and gave Himself for me." (3) It is inseparably connected with all other Christian graces. Faith "works by love"; "purifies the heart"; is "the substance of things hoped for." (*J. Sawer, M.A.*) *The doctrine of justification by faith*:—I. THE JUSTIFICATION OF SINNERS BEFORE GOD ENTIRELY EXCLUDES THEIR OWN WORKS. 1. When he says a man is justified by faith without works, he does not mean that there are different means of justification for different sinners, but that every individual sinner of the human family who is justified obtains this privilege by faith. 2. The moral law could not justify sinners; for by it, says the apostle, is the knowledge of sin. It points out the evil of sin as opposite to itself and to the Divine nature; it criminates sinners for their offences, and threatens deserved punishment; things as opposite to justification as anything can be. 3. Sinners cannot be justified by the works of the moral law, because, in their natural condition, they cannot obey any of its precepts. Their nature is corrupted, and all their actions polluted with sin. But actions from an impure source cannot justify, but must render men liable to condemnation. Besides, all men in their natural condition are under the curse of the law. 4. If it be pleaded that sincere though imperfect obedience will justify sinners, let me ask, Hath Jehovah anywhere in His Word required sincere obedience, or any degrees of it, as the ground of acceptance? Or can it be proved from the sacred oracles that one individual sinner of the human race ever yielded sincere obedience to the Divine law, till once he was renewed by the grace of God, and accepted through the merit of Christ? It cannot. 5. It is worthy of observation on this subject, that all the good works performed by believers in Christ Jesus are as much excluded from being the ground of justification as the works of sinners previous to conversion. All works really and instrumentally good are performed in a state of justification, are the proper and natural effects of it, and therefore cannot be the cause of it. They are proper and requisite to evidence the reality of justification to the consciences of believers and to the world, but were never designed by God to be the foundation of this important privilege. II. THE EVANGELICAL DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH. 1. The righteousness which is the alone ground of the sinner's acceptance consists in the spotless and perfect righteousness of the Redeemer's nature and life, and in the complete satisfaction which He yielded to Divine justice. It glorifies the moral administration of Deity, and renders it amiably and awfully venerable. 2. Let us next inquire into the influence of faith on justification, and how it justifies. (1) This influence is pointed out by the apostle when he declares in the text, "A man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." It is not a natural but a saving faith that justifies. By a natural faith is to be understood that assent of the understanding to the truths of Divine revelation which sinners are capable of yielding in their natural and unrenewed condition. (2) Let us now ascertain the particular sense in which faith justifies. It does not justify merely as it is a grace implanted

in the heart, for in this respect it is the work of God, and not of man; though still the existence of the principle is necessary to all its subsequent operations, and lays a foundation for them in the soul. Nor does it justify by its own act, as separated from its object, the Redeemer's merit, as it is received by the believing sinner; for in this respect it is a duty, and as much excluded from the ground of justification as all other graces and duties are. Nor does it justify by any intrinsic merit in its principle or exercise, considered abstractly by themselves; for though it has in it a high degree of spiritual excellence, as a grace of the Spirit, yet the gifts of God can found no plea of personal merit in those who receive them. Neither does faith justify by assenting to this proposition, that the merit of Jesus is the only ground of the sinner's acceptance with God; for this doctrine may be assented to as a true doctrine by sinners who are never justified and saved. As in the former respects faith does not justify, in what determinate sense does it justify? I reply, that faith justifies, as it is the Divinely appointed mean or instrument, whereby the renewed sinner apprehends and applies the glorious Mediator in His all-perfect and meritorious righteousness for the pardon of sin, acceptance into the Divine favour, and as the ground of his title to all gospel blessings. The mediatorial righteousness is the object of justifying faith, and faith justifies as it is the instrument by which the believing soul takes hold of the Redeemer's righteousness as the alone ground of justification before God. The mediatorial righteousness justifies meritoriously, and faith instrumentally. It is necessary also to observe, that when faith justifies instrumentally, it is its primary act that justifies, and not any of its subsequent acts. By the continued actings of faith, sanctification is promoted, justification is evidenced, faith itself and the other Christian graces are invigorated, pious resolutions confirmed, communion with God maintained, the power and sweetness of religion experienced, Divine supplies are received, God and religion honoured, and the believer is gradually ripened for the inheritance of the saints in light. The more lively the actings of faith are, the more vigorous will the life of grace become in the soul, increasing degrees of Divine consolation will be felt, and the Christian will press forward with greater ardour to the glorious prize of his high calling. III. THE PECULIAR EXCELLENCIES OF THIS GOSPEL METHOD OF JUSTIFICATION. 1. It is an amazing device of infinite wisdom, by which the perfections and the government of God are eminently glorified. 2. It excludes boasting in believers, hides pride from their eyes, and leads them to a humble dependence on redeeming merit, which is a temper highly becoming sinful creatures, and suitable to their condition. 3. It places all the children of God upon the same level, so that they are all one in Christ Jesus, and none of them have any superiority over the rest. There are many other differences between them, but here there is none, as they all stand on the same immovable foundation. What a powerful motive arises from this to brotherly love, and to every office of the most endearing friendship! What a noble incentive to gratitude to God, and the Saviour, and to the cultivation of holiness in the heart and in life! 4. This Divine method of acceptance establishes the faith and hope of Christians upon an immovable and everlasting foundation. Had their own graces, frames, or duties, been the ground of pardon and acceptance, they must have been left in the greatest uncertainty about their interest in the favour of God, and had their hearts filled with perplexing doubts and fears. But the mediation and merit of Jesus removes all ground of uncertainty and perturbation. Believers neither need to turn inward to their graces and frames, nor outward to their duties, to find the matter of their justification. This is abundantly provided for them by the grace of God in the merit of Jesus Christ, whose spotless obedience and unequalled sufferings are, by the wise and benign appointment of Jehovah, the alone ground of pardon and life to guilty men. 5. This Divine plan of acceptance affords support, comfort, and tranquillity, to true Christians under the pressures of life, the revolutions of the world, and the challenges of conscience. 6. The doctrine of justification by faith in the merit of Christ affords the most powerful methods to love, gratitude, and obedience. Does not love naturally beget love? and shall not a display of the love of God in justifying the ungodly through the mediation of His Son beget love in the justified sinner? and if he love God, will not love constrain him to keep His commandments? (*P. Hutchinson.*) *Salvation by faith without the works of the law*:—The ark of Christ's gospel need carry no lifeboat of human making on board. (*Canon Miller.*) *Salvation by faith without the works of the law*:—Some years ago two men, a bargeman and a collier, were in a boat near the Niagara Falls, and found themselves unable to manage it, it being carried so swiftly down the current that they must both inevitably be borne down and dashed to pieces.

At last, however, one man was saved by floating a rope to him, which he grasped. The same instant a log floated by the other man. The thoughtless and confused bargeman, instead of seizing the rope, laid hold on the log. It was a fatal mistake, for clinging to the loose floating log he was borne irresistibly along and never heard of afterwards, while the other was saved because he had a connection with the people on the land. Faith has a saving connection with Christ. Christ is on the shore, so to speak, holding the rope, and as we lay hold of it with the hand of our confidence, He pulls us to shore; but our good works, having no connection with Christ, are drifted alone down to the gulf of fell despair. Grapple our virtues as tightly as we may, they cannot avail us in the least degree; they are the disconnected log which has no holdfast on the heavenly shore. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Marriage of faith and works* :—The second chapter of the Epistle by James seems, to my mind, to describe a spiritual wedding. We are "bidden to a marriage"; and, as at the older marriage in Cana of Galilee, the holy Master is present, and consummates the nuptials. The parties to be united are but symbolic personages, and yet are real and lifelike too. The bride is young and beautiful—ever young, and ever clothed upon with light as with a garment. Her face is clear as the day; her look is firm, and yet trustful. She is not of the earth, but heaven-born, and wears her celestial parentage in every lineament of her radiant countenance. Her name is "Faith." She is the daughter of God. And beside her stands one whose lusty form was made for deeds of daring and endurance. He is sinewy and athletic. There is valour in his eye, and "cunning in his ten fingers," and strength in his right arm. He was created to act, to do, to suffer. He was formed for strife and struggle. His name is "Action." With solemn rites the two are joined in wedlock. They are both to love, and both to obey. They are always to live and move and suffer and conquer together. They are to be the fruitful parents of everything good on earth. On them, while united, Jehovah pronounces a "blessing" richer than that which gladdened the nuptials of Isaac and Rebekah, or of Jacob and Leah. While united, they are to live and grow and conquer; when separated, they are to droop and perish. For each other, and in each other, and with each other, their days of struggle and victory are to be passed, until time shall be no longer. And so "faith" and "works" were coupled by infinite Wisdom; and in the presence of the world it was solemnly announced, "What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." (*T. L. Cuyler, D.D.*) *Creed and conduct* (text, and James ii. 14):—1. The Bible does certainly teach that a certain kind of faith, which even James would commend, is essential to salvation. (1) We see kindness and wisdom of God in this arrangement, inasmuch as it is a condition most easy to fulfil. And not only has man the capacity to believe, but he has a propensity to do so. He is a credulous being; he lives, and works, and hopes, and loves, and rests, by faith. Faith is the basis of society, the wheel of commerce, the tie of friendship, the channel of social intercourse. (2) Nor is it more kind than wise. I cannot see how man could have been saved without a certain kind of faith. Before he changes his character, he must have new convictions. Man must become a Christian, as he becomes a farmer, a mariner, a physician—by faith. 2. It has been thought by some that James disparages faith, and places himself in antagonism to Paul. But note—(1) The difference in the mental tendencies of the apostles. The natural tendency of Paul's mind was speculative. He delighted in the science of religion. The tendency of James was practical. He thought more about acts than ideas. He estimated the creed of a man by his works. With this mental difference, whilst both would hold the same great vital truth, one would be naturally more taken up with the speculative aspect, and the other with the practical. (2) The difference in the characters to whom the apostles wrote. Paul had in view the legalist; James had in view those who combined an orthodox creed with an unorthodox practice. One was against legalism, and the other against antinomianism. In further illustration of the real harmony between the two inspired men, note—I. THAT THERE MAY BE A CERTAIN KIND OF WORK IN CONNECTION WITH RELIGION WHERE THERE IS NO GENUINE FAITH. Those which spring —1. From the feeling of merit. Such were the works of the old Pharisees. What a deal of work there is done in connection with religion from this feeling now! 2. From a sympathy with the feelings and doings of others. It is customary in the circle to which the man belongs to attend places of worship, and to contribute to religious institutions; and he of course must do the same. Certain religious doings are fashionable; and the love of fashion and the fear of singularity will prompt them. 3. From official position. A man takes some office in connection

with Christianity—Sabbath-school teacher, deacon, &c.—and he may do the duties of his office without any genuine faith. 4. From the love of a sect. The partisan feeling in religion is ever wondrously active. II. THERE MAY BE A CERTAIN KIND OF FAITH IN CONNECTION WITH RELIGION WHERE THERE IS NO GENUINE FAITH. There is a kind of faith something like that sentimental charity that will talk fluently and tenderly about the sufferings of the poor, but will do nothing to relieve their sufferings. 1. A traditional faith. Such as people get from their parents, their sect, which is adopted without any honest searching in the light of common sense and the Bible before God. People whose faith is of this description, had they been born in Turkey, would have been Mohammedans; in India, Hindoos. This faith is a serious evil: it warps the intellect, shuts out new truth, and obstructs free thought, piety, and progress. It is everlastingly quarrelling—anathematising heretics. 2. A speculative faith. Persons of this faith believe in God, Christ, heaven, and hell as propositions, but do not realise their bearing on themselves. 3. A sentimental faith. Persons of this class are carried about with every wind of doctrine; they are taken up with this preacher to-day, and that to-morrow. They are Arminians one Sunday, and Antinomians the next. These are mental children —clouds without water; the creatures of clap-trap and novelty. III. THAT NEITHER THE WORKS UNCONNECTED WITH GENUINE FAITH, NOR THE FAITH UNCONNECTED WITH GENUINE WORKS, ARE OF ANY MORAL SERVICE. 1. The works unconnected with genuine faith are of no moral service. Because—(1) The worth of a work in the sight of God is the motive. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." (2) The happiness of a work is in the motive. In the employment of man the outward act gives value to your service. So long as you can plough, sow, and build well, it does not matter what you think or feel. But, in religion, the feeling of the act is everything. The widow's mite is "more than all." 2. The faith unconnected with good works is of no moral service. What is a seed worth if it has not the germinating principle? What is the salt worth without its savour? What we want now is to have the creed of Churches worked out. This will do more against infidelity than all your libraries. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord," &c. IV. THAT THE FAITH OF THE GOSPEL WILL NECESSARILY LEAD TO GOOD WORKS, AND THE WORKS OF THE GOSPEL NECESSARILY SPRING FROM GOSPEL FAITH. AND THUS PAUL AND JAMES AGREE. 1. The nature of the case shows this. Faith in the gospel is faith in the infinite love of God for sinners. Can a man really believe in this without love rising in his heart to God? What is the first question of love? How shall I please? &c. 2. The biographies of believers show this. "When it pleased God," says Paul, "to reveal His Son in me, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood," &c. James preached against the mere creedist, and Paul against the mere workmonger; and such preachers every age requires. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*)

Vers. 29-31. **Is He the God of the Jews only?**—*The Divine unities*:—I. One GOD. II. One LAW. III. One FAITH. IV. One ULTIMATE PURPOSE. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) **Is He not also of the Gentiles?**—*The universal Father*:—The writings of Paul have met with a singular fate. They were intended to reveal the Father's universal and impartial love; they have been used to represent Him as an exclusive and arbitrary Sovereign. They were designed to open the kingdom of God to all men; and they have been so distorted as to shut it on the many and confine it to the few. The great design of Paul was to vindicate the spiritual right of the race against the exclusive bigotry of the Jews; to manifest God as the Father of all men, and Christ as the Saviour, not of one narrow nation, but the whole world. Note, then, from the text—I. THE DOCTRINE THAT GOD IS "THE GOD OF THE GENTILES." To understand the full import of this, we must consider that to the Jew the Gentiles were odious. He thought it pollution to eat with them. He called them dogs. He claimed God as exclusively his God. Could we fully comprehend this, we should be filled with admiration for the moral grandeur manifested in the text. Paul, in writing them, not only offered violence to all his earliest and deepest impressions, but put his life in peril. 1. God is "the God of the Gentiles," and do we not respond to this truth? The heathen had indeed wandered far from God; and to the Jews He seemed to have forsaken them utterly. But how could the universal Father forsake the millions of His creatures? Judæa was but a speck on the globe. Was the Infinite One to be confined to this? Could His love be stinted to the few to whom He had specially revealed His will? In the very darkest ages God was "the God of the Gentiles." They had their revelation,

Light from heaven descended into their souls. They had the Divine law "written in their hearts." God keep us from the horrible thought that the myriads who are buried in heathen darkness are outcasts from His love! Their spiritual wants should indeed move our compassion; and the higher light is given us that we may send it to these brethren. 2. That God is "the God of the Gentiles," we learn from the wonderful progress which human nature made in heathen ages. Remember Greece. God's gift of genius—one form of inspiration—was showered down on that small territory as on no other region under heaven. To Greece was given the revelation of beauty, which has made her literature and art, next to the Holy Scriptures, the most precious legacy of past ages. In that wonderful country amidst degrading vices were manifested sublimest virtues. Undoubtedly Grecian philosophy was an imperfect intellectual guide, and impotent as a moral teacher. But was not God the God of the Gentiles when He awakened in the Greeks such noble faculties of reason, and by their patriotic heroism carried so far forward the education of the human race? 3. God is "the God of the Gentiles"; and He was so just when He separated from them His chosen people. For why was the Jew set apart? That "all families of the earth might be blessed." Judaism was a normal school to train up teachers for the whole world. The Hebrew prophet was inspired to announce an age when the knowledge of God was to cover the earth as waters cover the sea. Nothing in the history of the Jews shows them to us as God's personal favourites, for their history is a record of Divine rebukes, threatenings, and punishments. Their very privileges brought upon them peculiar woes. In ages of universal idolatry they were called to hold forth the light of pure Theism. They betrayed their trust, and when the time came for the "partition wall" to be prostrated, and for the Jews to receive the Gentile world into brotherhood, they shrank from their glorious task; and rejecting mankind, they became themselves the rejected of God. Meanwhile, faith in the one true God has been spread throughout the Gentile world. Thus we see that, in the very act of selecting the Jew, the universal Father was proving Himself to be the God of the heathen, even when He seemed to reject them. 4. This doctrine is one which we Christians still need to learn. For we are too apt, like the Jew, to exalt ourselves above our less favoured brethren. It is the doctrine of the mass of Christians even now that the heathen are the objects of God's wrath. But how can a sane man credit for an instant that the vastly greater portion of the human race is abandoned by God? But Christianity nowhere teaches this horrible faith. And, still more, no man in his heart does or can believe such an appalling doctrine. II. THE UNIVERSAL PRINCIPLE CONTAINED IN THIS DOCTRINE. The language of the text contains an immutable truth for all ages, viz., that God loves equally all human beings; that the Father has no favourites; that in His very being He is impartial and universal Love. 1. This grand truth is taught in nature. God's works are of the same authority with His Word. The universe teaches that God is the God of all, and not of the few. God governs by general laws, which bear alike on all beings, and are plainly instituted for the good of all. We are placed under one equitable system, which is administered with inflexible impartiality. This sun, does he not send as glad a ray into the hovel as into the palace? Does the rain fall upon a few favoured fields? or does the sap refuse to circulate except through the flowers and trees of a certain tribe? Nature is impartial in her smiles. She is impartial also in her frowns. Who can escape her tempests, earthquakes, raging waves? Young and old, the good and evil, are wrapped in the same destroying flame, or plunged in the same overwhelming sea. Providence has no favourites. Pain, disease, and death break through the barriers of the strong and rich, as well as of the humble and the poor. 2. In religion the universal Father is revealed as working in the human soul, and as imparting to man His own Spirit. God's Spirit knows no bounds. There is no soul to which He does not speak, no human abode into which He does not enter with His best gifts. From the huts of the poor, from the very haunts of vice, from the stir of very active business, as well as from the stillness of retired life, have come forth the men who, replenished with spiritual gifts, have been the guides, comforters, lights, regenerators of the world. III. THIS PRINCIPLE AS APPLIED TO OURSELVES. 1. Is God the Father of the rich only? Is He not also the Father of the poor? The prosperous are prone to feel as if they are a different race from the destitute. But to the Possessor of heaven and earth, how petty must be the highest magnificence and affluence! Does the Infinite Spirit select as His special abode the palace and fly from the hut? On the contrary, if God has a chosen spot on earth, is it not the humble dwelling of

patient, unrepining, trustful, virtuous poverty? From the dwellings of the downcast, from the stern discipline of narrow circumstances, how many of earth's noblest spirits have grown up! May we not still learn a lesson of Divine wisdom from the manger at Bethlehem? 2. Is God the God of the good only, or is He not also the God of the wicked? God indeed looks, we may believe, with peculiar approval on the good. But He does not desire spiritual perfection and eternal happiness for them more than He does for the most depraved. The Scriptures even seem to represent God as peculiarly interested in the evil. "There is joy in heaven over," &c. The good do not and ought not to absorb God's love. We in our conceited purity may withdraw from them, may think it pollution to touch them, may say, "Stand off." But God says to His outcast child, "Come near." Do I speak to those who have escaped gross vice? Bless God for your happiness, but set up no insuperable barrier between yourself and the fallen. In conclusion, let us ask ourselves, What was the guilt of the Jews against which the apostle protested? What was it that scattered their nation like chaff throughout the earth? Their proud separation of themselves from their race. And will not the same spirit bring the same ruin upon us? Separation of ourselves from our race is spiritual death. It is like cutting off a member from the body; the severed limb must perish. This spirit of universal humanity is the very soul of our religion. As yet its heavenly power is scarcely felt. Therefore it is that so few of the blessings of Christianity appear in Christendom. We hold this truth in words. Who feels its vitalising power? When brought home as a reality in social life it will transform the world. All other reforms of society are superficial. But a better day is coming. Cannot we become the heralds of this better day? Let our hearts bid it welcome! Let our lives reveal its beauty and its power! (*W. E. Channing, D.D.*) *The gospel for all mankind*:—It happened one evening, soon after I began my journey up the country, that I found my way to the homestead of a Dutch Boer, of whom I begged a night's lodging. It was nightfall, and the family must soon go to rest. But first, would the stranger address some words of Christian counsel to them? Gladly I assented, and the big barn was resorted to. Looking round on my congregation, I saw my host and hostess with their family. There were crowds of black forms hovering near at hand, but never a one was there in the barn. I waited, hoping they might be coming. But no; no one came. Still I waited as expecting something. "What ails you?" said the farmer. "Why don't you begin?" "May not your servants come too?" I replied. "Servants!" shouted the master; "do you mean the Hottentots, man? Are you mad to think of preaching to Hottentots? Go to the mountains and preach to the baboons; or, if you like, I'll fetch my dogs, and you may preach to them!" This was too much for my feelings, and tears began to trickle down my cheeks. I opened my New Testament, and read out for my text the words, "Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from their master's table." A second time the words were read, and then my host, vanquished by the arrow from God's own quiver, cried out, "Stop! you must have your own way. I'll get you all the Hottentots, and they shall hear you." The barn soon filled with rows of dark forms, whose eager looks gazed at the stranger. I then preached my first sermon to the heathen. I shall never forget that night. (*Dr. Moffat.*) *God's favours not to be limited to a single people*:—But, clearly, such a gospel as this was not meant for one or two men, or for a company of men, or for a favourite nation, or for a race. "Is He the God of the Jews only?" was St. Paul's indignant question, addressed to those who would have limited His favours down to a single people. Like the natural sun in the heavens, the Incarnate Son of Righteousness is the property—we may dare to use the word—He is the property of all the members of the human family. All have a right to the light and to the warmth which radiate from His sacred person and from His redeeming Cross; and this explains St. Paul's sense of the justice of proclaiming the good news of the reconciliation of earth and heaven by faith in Christ to all members of the human family. Every man, as such, has a right to his share in the gospel, just as every man has a right to air, and to water, and to freedom, and at least to sufficient food to preserve bodily life; and not to preach the gospel, and treat it as if it were the luxury of a small clique like any one of the old philosophies, like a rare book in a library, like a family portrait, was to offend against the sense of natural justice. (*Canon Liddon.*) **Do we then make void the law through faith?**—*Law and faith, the two great moral forces in human history*:—"The law" means that which is written in every man's soul, and republished on Sinai. "Faith" means the gospel, "the glad tidings" of

sovereign love to a ruined world. These two great moral forces of the world may be looked upon in three aspects. I. AS AGREEING IN SOME RESPECTS. 1. In authorship. Both are Divine. 2. In spirit. Love is the moral essence, the inspiration of both. 3. In purpose. The well-being of humanity is the grand aim of both. II. As DIFFERING IN SOME FEATURES. 1. One is older in human history than the other. The law is as old as the human soul. The gospel began with man after the Fall (Gen. iii. 15). 2. One addresses man as a creature, the other as a sinner. Law comes to man as a rational and responsible existent, and demands his homage; the gospel comes to him as a ruined sinner, and offers him assistance and restoration. 3. The one speaks imperatively, the other with compassion. "Thou shalt," "Thou shalt not," is the voice of law. The gospel invites, "Let the wicked forsake his way"; "Come unto Me"; "Ho, every one that thirsteth." 4. The "law" demands, the "gospel" delivers. The law says, Do this and that, or Desist from this or that, and will hear no excuse. The gospel comes and offers deliverance from the morally feeble and condemned state into which man has fallen. III. As CO-OPERATING TO ONE RESULT. The law prepares for the gospel by carrying the conviction of sin and ruin. The gospel exalts and enthrones the law. This is the point of the text, "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid." How does the gospel establish the law? 1. It presents it to man in the most commanding aspects. 2. It enthrones it in the soul. 3. It glorifies it in the life. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *How the law may be made void or established through faith*:—I. HOW IT MAY BE MADE VOID. 1. By not preaching it at all. 2. By teaching that faith supersedes the necessity of holiness. 3. By continuing in sin. II. HOW IT MAY BE ESTABLISHED. 1. By insisting on the whole doctrine of godliness. 2. By urging faith in Christ as a means to holiness. 3. By establishing it in our hearts and lives. (*J. Wesley, M.A.*) *The law made void and established*:—I. THE LAW IS MADE VOID—1. By imagining that the covenant in Christ is unconditional. 2. That justification is eternal. 3. Consequently that a believer is not under the law at all. II. THE LAW IS ESTABLISHED—1. In the heart. 2. As a part of the covenant. 3. By the obedience of faith. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The law established by faith*:—God cannot deny or contradict Himself. He cannot recall His own words or disannul His own law (Mal. iii. 6). Yet it might seem, at first sight, as if grace were opposed to law, so that whichever be established, the other must fall. St. Paul anticipates and meets this difficulty. Consider—I. THE GROUND OR OBJECT OF FAITH. 1. In the preceding verses we find two important points. (1) We "are justified freely by His grace" (ver. 24). God forgives us our sins in a most frank and absolute manner, without regard to any good works on our part, in the way of compensation. But (2) He does this "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Here we see the qualifying condition of the Divine clemency. He upholds His law. If He forgives us our sins, it is because He has first redeemed us by the sacrifice of His Son. God has made Him our substitute, and treated Him as we deserve to be treated. 2. Here two questions occur. (1) Is such a propitiation allowable in justice? We answer that it would be unjust for God to compel a third party to suffer for sinners; but when One comes forward willingly, it is no outrage to our sense of righteousness for His offer to be accepted. But still it might seem unjust for an innocent substitute to suffer the penalty for ever. We instinctively feel that the penalty must be temporary. But, further, if any sense of wrong should still linger it would surely be removed if we could see the substitute compensated for his self-sacrifice. Behold how these things all meet in Christ. As to voluntariness (see John x. 17, 18). As to the duration of Christ's sufferings, we know that, though terrible and severe, they were of short continuance. And then look at his ensuing reward. If there were "the sufferings of Christ," there was also the "glory that should follow." (2) Is this particular propitiation adequate to the occasion? If all that Christ suffered had been endured by a mere man, or even an angel, we should not feel convinced of its efficacy. But Christ is an incarnation of Deity. The immortal Creator cannot Himself die; but He can ally Himself to a human nature which may suffer and die, and in His suffering and death Jehovah Himself may be so implicated as to justify the expression that "God hath purchased the Church with His own blood," and that the Jews "crucified the Lord of glory." Here it is that we see the ground of the infinite meritoriousness and expiating efficacy of the death of Christ. Rather than the law should be broken, or that sin should go unpunished, God gives up His own Son. What than this can more effectually persuade us that the "wages of sin" is death? What than this can more vividly inspire us with hatred of sin, or more powerfully deter the tempted from rebellion, arrest the

criminal, or incite the obedient to watchful diligence and reverential fear? 3. Thus are the high ends of justice secured by the death of Christ: and thus is the law established in its broadest moral commands, and satisfied in its deepest moral requirements. From this it will be easy to see how also in a lower sense the law is established by faith. (1) Do you speak of the ceremonial law? It was the shadow of good things to come: its substance is Christ, and now He has come it has passed away, so far as its form is concerned; but it still lives in its substance and antitype, by whom it has been ratified. (2) Similarly with the prophetic Scriptures. The prophets all testified of Christ, and in Him their word is at once accomplished and confirmed. And thus, in every sense, we may boldly say with Paul, "We establish the law." II. THE CONDITIONS AND OPERATIONS OF FAITH. Here the same principle holds good. 1. In the act of faith the penitent trusts in the atoning death of Jesus Christ as the ground of his acceptance. Now this act of faith—(1) Is in accordance with God's command (John vi. 29). Thus is faith essentially obedience to God's law, and by it the authority of God in His law is acknowledged and established. (2) It acquiesces in Christ's atoning work: as an arrangement which vindicates the Divine righteousness. It thus acknowledges the validity of God's law, and the need of sustaining its authority. 2. The preliminary condition of faith is repentance. It is not the hardened unhumbled sinner who is told to believe in Christ, but those who acknowledge that the law is holy, and tremble and weep to think how they have broken it. 3. So with the fruit of faith. When we are forgiven it is that we may serve sin no more (Titus ii. 11–15). Conclusion: 1. The greatest sinner may be forgiven (1 Cor. vi. 9–11). 2. The least sinner must be saved by grace through faith. 3. See the guilt of refusing to be justified by faith. 4. The duty of the forgiven man to run in the way of God's commandments (1 Pet. i. 13–16). (*T. G. Horton.*) *The law established through faith*:—I. THE OBJECTION STATED. Faith supersedes—1. The authority of the law by releasing the sinner from its curse. 2. The righteousness of the law as a basis of justification. II. THE OBJECTION OBVIATED. Faith establishes the law by restoring—1. Its power of command. 2. Its power of condemnation. III. THE OBJECTION RETORTED. The objector who blends faith and works undermines. 1. Its power of condemnation. 2. Its power of command. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The law established through faith*:—I. FAITH ESTABLISHES THE LAW. 1. In its character as holy. 2. In its claims as just. 3. In its threatenings as sure. II. OBEDIENCE TO THE LAW IS PROMOTED BY THE GOSPEL. 1. In the motives it supplies. 2. In the strength it supplies. (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) *The law established through faith*:—1. The apostle here means that the Divine law must be regarded by us as immutable, and that any interpretation of the gospel at variance with that fact must be a false interpretation. The distinctions between right and wrong are everlasting, and that law of which the apostle speaks helps us to make the distinction. 2. You stand related to—(1) A holy Being. Then you ought to reverence that Being because of His rectitude and truthfulness. (2) A good Being: well, you ought to love that goodness. Conceive of a holy and good Being to have put forth these properties to shield you from evil, and of conferring upon you much good—why, then, ought you not to feel grateful toward that Being? One thing more. Suppose that Being to be infinitely good and holy, and suppose Him to have put forth those perfections to secure for you, either in fact or purpose, infinite blessings, then ought you not to reverence and love Him with all your heart, and soul, and mind, and strength? 3. I need not remind you that such is the character of God, and that such are the relations in which we stand to Him. (1) And while those last, so long must that law be binding upon us which requires our utmost consecration to Him simply as an act of right, giving to God the things that are God's. God's rectitude, therefore, binds Him to vindicate His law and punish wrong. (2) His benevolence must bind Him to this. For sin is not simply the putting of so much wrong in the place of so much right; it is the putting of what defiles God's work in the place of what gives to it beauty; of deformity and misery in the place of that which would give nobleness and blessedness to His creatures, and the threadwork of retribution that is wrought in with the forms of sin in this world are such as clearly to mark how He abhors this evil. See how drunkenness and licentiousness make the very flesh of men to cry out against the wrongs that are done to it; and how those evil passions of the soul, such as pride, anger, malice, and the like, are made to be as very scorpions to the nature in which you find them. Yes, God has constituted the nature of the human spirit thus, that it shall find happiness only where He finds happiness; that it shall know how to do homage to right, and to love the good. In other words, this law

of God is what it is because God is what He is. It comes from His own nature, and it is designed to uphold the God-like. 4. Now there are those who look on the gospel as at variance with the law. This cannot be. (1) Faith is the gift of God; and if the law comes from His nature, and this faith also comes from His nature, He cannot be a fountain sending forth sweet waters and bitter. (2) Faith is obedience to the Divine command; and if the mandate is that we are to believe on His Son Jesus Christ, there can be nothing inconsistent between the conformity to a law that comes from Him, and obedience to this particular mandate that comes from Him. (3) The things that are created from the very act of believing ensure that this shall not be so. For to believe in Christ is to believe in His teaching, *e.g.*, the doctrine of ruin by sin. Well, sin is transgression of the law. Belief in Christ is belief in redemption from sin, from the condemnation that sin has brought upon us. If the condemnation that has come npon me from sin be not just, then the redemption that is said to have been brought to me by Christ must be superfluous; so that faith in Christ comes necessarily of belief in law. You cannot receive the gospel without receiving the law; you cannot understand the one without apprehending the other. (4) Then the very truths that are apprehended have in them a natural fitness so to change the spirit of man that he who is at enmity with law is brought back to loyalty. The purpose of these things is to make the disobedient obedient. (5) Added to this we are assured that any obedience possible to us in any form, whether in a converted or unconverted state, is never to be allowed to come into the place—imperfect as it must necessarily be—of that perfect righteousness which the law demands. And you cannot make void the law more than by attempting to put yonr own real or supposed obedience in the place of that perfect obedience which the law requires. 5. Now, I do not mean to say that there is not a right state and tendency of mind in the experience of the man who believes in Christ: it must be a state of mind right in itself—right from God's command, right from the nature of the thing; then like will produce like. But though there is a rightness—or righteousness—in faith and flowing from faith which are good as far as they go, what man wants to meet the claims of the Divine law is not a rightness good as far as it goes, but a rightness good altogether. The law is made void, put aside, comes to nothing, when you get rid of the necessity of the perfect obedience which it demands. Any attempt to build upon your own personal sanctity as a ground of acceptance with God must be a mistake. If we trust in the righteousness of Christ at all we cannot presume to think that it needs to be eked out and to be made perfect by ours. (*R. Vaughan, D.D.*) *The law established by faith:*—I. THE DOCTRINE OF FAITH is the doctrine of salvation through the blood and righteousness of the Son of God. No good disposition or qualification whatever, nothing, in short, that distinguishes one man from another, can be joined with the righteousness of Christ as the ground of our confidence towards God. Here there is no room for boasting. We must be saved either completely by grace, or completely by our own works. II. TWO WAYS IN WHICH THE LAW MAY BE SAID TO BE DESTROYED, OR MADE VOID. 1. In principle; when any doctrine is taught which, in its just consequences, has a tendency to relax our obligations to obey the law of God. 2. In practice; when persons take encouragement from mistaken views of gospel truths to continue in sin, or to be less punctual in discharging the duties which they owe to God or their fellow-creatures. III. THE LAW OF GOD IS NOT MADE VOID, BUT ESTABLISHED THROUGH FAITH. 1. The sacred authority and perpetual obligation of the law of God are vindicated in the strongest manner by the doctrine of faith. 2. There are new obligations superadded by the gospel to enforce obedience. (1) A conviction of its infinite evil must surely be allowed to be a powerful motive to depart from sin. But by what means can this conviction be produced to such a degree as by a firm belief of the doctrine of faith relating to the sufferings and death of Christ. (2) Just apprehensions of the holiness of God have always been found to produce correspondent effects on the characters of the persons who entertain them. Now, the doctrine of faith gives us the highest display of this glorious attribute of the Divine nature. (3) The motives which are chiefly insisted upon in the New Testament, and which the gospel in a peculiar manner inspires, are love and gratitude. Now, where can we find such objects to awaken our love and gratitude as in the gospel of Jesus Christ? 3. The law is established through faith, because obedience is one of the principal ends for which we are called to believe in the gospel of Jesus Christ. 4. The law is established through faith, because the doctrine of faith furnishes the believer with the most powerful encouragements, in his endeavours to attain holiness. (1) From what has been

said, you may judge whether you are possessed of true faith in the gospel. Has it come to you, not in word only, but in power also, and in the Holy Ghost? (2) From this subject let me exhort true believers to justify the sincerity of their profession by the holiness of their lives. (*D. Black.*) *The law established through faith:*—Faith—1. Better explains it. 2. Better enforces it. 3. Better secures the ends it proposes. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The moral law established by faith in Christ:*—The ceremonial law was a mere law of expediency, and served to answer the Divine purposes in the times of Jewish ignorance, until the bringing in of a better covenant to which the types pointed; and when they were swept aside as a handwriting of ordinances, there was no infringement made on the moral law, which, as an unchangeable code of moral requirements, was to stand in full force to the end of time. I. THIS MORAL LAW IS—1. Transcendently exalted in its source. It is a transcript of the Divine nature. And as, from His infinite perfections, God can only will what is right, so all created intelligences are bound to obey His commandments. 2. Reasonable in its requirements. All laws ought to be for the welfare of the subjects, and the dignity of the throne, so that self-interest might prompt to obedience, and a love to the monarch lead to all due respect for the administration. Jehovah's laws will be found admirably adapted to accomplish these ends, for they only enjoin what contributes to our happiness, and prohibit what would tend to our misery. "Blessed are they that keep His commandments." 3. Universal in its application. It requires no more than man should perform; viz., to love the Lord his God, &c. 4. Unchangeable in its nature. For being holy, just, and good, Jehovah could as soon change the perfections of His nature as to change the purity of the moral law, or to substitute an opposite one in its stead. 5. Indispensable in its demands. It must be obeyed; its violation must be pardoned, or its penalty must be endured. II. FAITH ESTABLISHES THE LAW. 1. As a rule of moral action throughout our whole probation. (1) Christ could be the author of no system of salvation that would supersede it. For otherwise His mission would be a curse instead of a blessing, by favouring wickedness in abolishing that standard of righteousness that would deter from sin. (2) And if we deny that we are bound to fulfil that law, then we have no infallible standard by which to measure moral actions. For conscience, except it be regulated by the law of morality, is no sure guide. This is fully established by experience; for when the revealed rule is set aside, men, with the approbation of their own consciences, often run to the most disgraceful extremes. 2. As a medium of happiness (Psa. i. 1–3). In every circumstance of life the law of God will beam a light on our path that cannot be dimmed by the trials and sorrows through which we may pass. And while we are walking according to this rule, "all things will work together for good to them that love God." Obedience brings an evidence of God's love, a peace of conscience, a joy in the Holy Ghost, and a clear prospect of heaven. 3. As an infallible standard in the day of judgment, by which we shall be tried, approved, or condemned. This strict procedure of that day calls for a proper standard by which good and evil shall be discriminated and judged. 4. As a correct and eternal standard of the proper amount of rewards and punishments. (*W. Barns.*) *The doctrine of justification by faith only vindicated from the charge of encouraging licentiousness:*—I. THE OBJECTION, THAT FAITH MAKES VOID THE LAW. 1. The moral law is that rule to which from our relation to God we are obliged to conform. This obligation is founded on the nature of things, which nothing ever can dissolve. Should a doctrine, then, tend to warrant the inference that it might be relaxed, this would constitute sufficient ground for rejecting it. But such is not the tendency of our doctrine. On the contrary, it presupposes this obligation. There would have been no occasion for such a method of deliverance from the penal effects of offences committed against the law, but on the supposition of the antecedent obligation to obey the law. And is the sinner less bound to render obedience when he is pardoned, than when he was in a state of guilt? 2. In respect to the measure of the required obedience the objection falls to the ground. This law requires universal, unsinning obedience, and accounts every deviation to be sin. Should any interpretation, then, of Scripture be advanced, which shall reduce this measure of obedience, it would be justly rejected, as being dishonourable to God, contradictory to the Scriptures, and to the interests of morality. But the tendency of our doctrine is the exact opposite. It teaches us that we must be justified by faith, because the unsinning obedience required by the law renders it impossible that we can ever be justified by works. Were the law less holy, less rigorous in its demands, there would then be no necessity for this method of justification. But

since righteousness cannot be attained by the law, the righteousness of faith is manifested in the gospel. Does faith, then, make void the law? No. It implies in the strongest manner the extensive nature of that obedience which the law requires. 3. But may not the doctrine supersede the necessity of any obedience at all? No; for—(1) Mark the grounds on which the necessity of obedience to the moral law is founded. Because without it man would be unfit to enter into the presence of God, and unable to participate in the holy felicity of heaven (Heb. xii. 14; Matt. v. 8). (2) Advert next to the particular nature of justification. It is simply one part of salvation—that part by which the guilt of sin is removed, and the sinner is reconciled to God. While it declares that no holiness has any share in atoning for sin, or in reconciling us to God, it does not therefore intimate that no holiness is requisite to qualify us for the enjoyment of our purchased inheritance. An invalid criminal receives a pardon. If we should assert that the state of his health had no connection with the mercy received, such an assertion could never be construed to imply that his recovery from sickness was unconnected with his future happiness. Because his obligation to punishment has been remitted by an act of grace, it cannot therefore be inferred that health is unnecessary to his enjoyment of the royal bounty. Nay, we should rather say that his deliverance from the sentence rendered the removal of his disorder a blessing more than ever desirable. So justification provides a remedy for the penal consequences which past disobedience has incurred; but it leaves the necessity of personal holiness to rest on the same foundation on which it always had rested, on the impossibility of holding communion with God, and of partaking in His felicity, without possessing corresponding dispositions, and being made partakers of His holiness. If, then, the method of justifying the sinner by faith only tends neither to weaken the obligation to obey the moral law, nor to reduce the measure of the required obedience, nor to supersede the necessity of obedience, in what sense does it make void the law? In no sense whatever. II. THE ASSERTION THAT FAITH ESTABLISHES THE LAW. Far from producing effects unfavourable to the cause of morality, it tends to strengthen and promote it by motives of the most exalted nature, and of the most constraining obligation. 1. What is the state of the justified sinner? Under a conviction of the danger and misery of sin, looking unto Jesus, he has found peace and joy in believing. The ground of all his present peace and future prospects is a comfortable hope of his acceptance in the beloved. Let this hope be once destroyed, his peace is broken, his prospects are clouded. Still he is under condemnation. To keep alive, then, this hope is one leading object which the justified sinner has constantly in view. But how is the object to be accomplished? Doubtless the Holy Ghost is the author of this blessed experience, "who beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God." But He usually evidences to us our adoption by reflecting light on His own work of grace in the heart, and thus by enabling us to trace out the existence of the cause by the effects evidently produced. Sanctification, as it is the earnest of future glory, so it is an evidence, because a consequence, of our present reconciliation with God. Deliverance from the power of sin is a blessing annexed by promise to a state of justification (chap. vi. 14). Observe what a constraining motive is thus provided to the attainment of universal holiness. The peace, the hope, the joy of a sinner are inseparably connected with the evidence of his interest in Christ. 2. But the faith which leads a sinner to Christ for justification includes a conviction, not only of the danger, but also of the demerit of sin. In what light does he view himself? As a brand plucked out of the fire; as a pardoned criminal, as a rebel graciously invested with all the privileges of a loyal subject. What sentiments of love, gratitude, obedience, does this view inspire! 3. These sentiments are still greatly augmented by a consideration of the means which have been employed in this work of mercy (Gal. iii. 13). Redeemed with such a ransom, shall sinners refuse to give their lives to Christ? (1 Cor. vi. 20; Titus ii. 14). (*E. Cooper.*) *The gospel salvation confirms obedience*, by furnishing—I. NEW VIEWS OF TRUTH. The believer receives new views of—1. The perfection of the law in itself. His natural heart rebelled against it, and longed for some standard which should grant indulgence to his sinful infirmities. Even the letter of the law was too strict, and from the breadth of its spiritual application he recoiled. He hated the commandments for their purity. In a renewed heart this spirit is entirely subdued, and that the law is holy and just and good is thankfully acknowledged. There are, therefore, now new and strong inducements to follow after the holiness which it exhibits, and thus the gospel has not destroyed but confirmed the law. 2. His own character and life. His proud and self-confident spirit is broken down under the

consciousness of guilt, which quickens the desire for holiness, and increases the abhorrence of transgression. Hence to lower the standard of obedience would bring no gratification. He longs to do the perfect will of God, and is contented only as he can put off the old man and put on the new, which is renewed in holiness. 3. Christ and His Cross. In this there is no countenance given to sin. (1) It is the most solemn manifestation of God's justice in dealing with sin. Beholding the justice and severity of God thus displayed the justified sinner feels the abhorrence of sin more deeply impressed; and as he looks upon his crucified Lord put to death by sin and for sin the law gains a new power over him. (2) It is the most amazing manifestation of the love of God for guilty man. The believer, therefore, rejoicing in the confidence that His blood was shed for him that he might not come into condemnation—how shall he by continuing in sin crucify the Son of God afresh? II. NEW MOTIVES OF CONDUCT. 1. Sincere gratitude and love to Christ who has redeemed him from the bondage of the law. He looks upon himself as a captive, bought with a price, and love for his Redeemer constrains him to serve and please Him. By this he is led to "perfect holiness in the fear of God." 2. Consciousness of exalted privilege. He is a pardoned man, and all his fear of the consequences of his past guilt are replaced by the hope of heaven. He is adopted into God's family, and therefore has all the rights attaching to Divine Sonship, &c. What an assemblage of motives to holiness! How can a man make void the law who has such privileges? 3. The perfect purity of heaven. The justified man looks forward to this as the perfection of character, and consequently longs for the personal purity which alone can meeten him for it. How, then, can faith make void the law when obedience to it is the only preparation for the inheritance which faith expects? III. NEW MEANS OF ATTAINING THIS OBEDIENCE. The work of the Holy Spirit is peculiar to the gospel, and whatever holiness any man attains is given by Him. In his own nature man has no strength to obey the law; but the whole influence of the heavenly Agent is directed to the ultimate point of man's entire obedience to God. To attain this He maintains an unceasing warfare within the renewed soul, and having brought him to the glorious privilege of being a child of God, He enables him to walk worthy of his high vocation. (*S. H. Tyng, D.D.*) *Religion and morality*:—1. There are many who cannot see the difference between criticising a weak argument and attacking the thing it purposes to prove. St. Paul had here been saying severe things of that spurious morality which consists simply of obedience to outward rules; and there were foolish auditors who concluded that he was assailing the moral law, the thing expressed in these rules. His answer is, that he was attacking not law, but legalism. St. Paul maintains that, by trying to substitute the principle of faith for that of blind obedience to an external rule, so far from making void the law he was really establishing the law. 2. The question here discussed, from a modern point of view, is one as to the relation between religion and morality. Can a man be virtuous who is not pious, or, if he can, does his virtue lack a quality which only piety can infuse into him? There are few who would maintain that the Christian religion has had a bad influence on virtue; they only contend that virtue is independent of religion. And I think there are many plausible considerations which lend, at least, a colourable pretext to this contention. (1) No one, *e.g.*, will question that there are not a few of blameless lives who entertain grave doubts as to the Christian faith. Are we to deny the reality of these men's virtue; or, if not, are we to conclude that it makes no difference whether a man is a religious man or no? Again, it has been often urged, that whilst conduct is a test, religious character and belief is not. Sometimes religious belief is a mere accident. How many of those who conform to the faith and worship of our country would have given an equally firm adherence to the faith and worship of another country? (2) On the other hand, do we never find that religion may exist without morality? Is there not some ground for the assertion that it is in the religious and *not* in the secular world that intolerance, uncharitableness, and the like often attain their rankest growth? 3. Are we Christians, then, driven to the admission that there is no connection between our Christian faith and our goodness of life? Or, at least, are we driven to the confession that morality gains nothing from religion? No. All the apparent incongruities notwithstanding, I maintain that religion and morality are inseparably united; that that morality is at the best a poor, shallow thing which is not fed from the fount of a genuine Christian faith. Whenever, in its power and reality, the faith of Christ takes possession of a soul, we find that it transfigures into new beauty and nobleness all the higher elements of our nature, expanding the horizon of intelligence, kindling the spiritual imagina-

tion by a vision of a fairer than earthly beauty, infusing a new and keener sensitiveness into the conscience, a new tenderness into the affections, arming the will with a new commanding power over the passions, breathing, amidst all our struggles and efforts in this passing life, a sweeter, serener peace into the heart, and shedding over all the dim, dark future the light of a diviner, heavenlier hope. 4. There are many ways in which the influence of Christian faith on the moral life may be shown, as, *e.g.*, by pointing out the influence of the sense of God's redeeming love in Christ Jesus, and of the hope of immortality on the moral life; but passing by these I fix attention on the fact that—I. THE FAITH OF CHRIST REVEALS TO US A NEW AND INFINITE IDEAL OR STANDARD OF GOODNESS. 1. Eighteen hundred years ago there broke upon the world a vision of human perfection, a revelation of the hidden possibilities of our nature, transcending far all that the race had ever witnessed or conceived; and if we ask to-day what is the secret of the wondrous power over the hearts and lives of men the Christ-life has had, shall we answer that Christ set us simply a perfect example of human virtue? Had it been nothing more, I believe that there are dim aspirations in these breasts of ours which had never started into life; that there are secret anticipations of an immortal destiny which would never have awakened within us. But I believe that the secret of the transforming power of the life of the Son of God lies simply in this, that it calls us to be sons of God. 2. I can well conceive that to many this conception of the religious life may have an air of extravagance. When one thinks of the multitudes who are sunk in ignorance and vice, and of the dull routine of commonplace respectability, which is the best that most of us can boast of, it may seem the excess of fanaticism to talk of such a nature that its proper destiny is nothing less than sharing in God's life. And yet think for a moment. Outside of the sphere of religion there are in souls indications of infinitude—a sense of a nature that is one with God. (1) When, *e.g.*, the book of nature becomes intelligible, when beneath seemingly orderless confusion, or contingency and accident in the phenomena and facts of the world, the man of science begins to comprehend the presence of unseen but eternal laws shedding the light of design, of order, of reason over the visible world, what is the meaning of all this? What but this: that in the study of nature I am simply thinking God's thoughts after Him; I am simply proving that the mind within me responds to the mind that is impressed on all things without me. (2) What, again, is the meaning of that even deeper sympathy with nature which finds expression in what we call the sense of the beautiful, the feeling of sensitive persons, with a kind of ecstasy when they look upon the grander scenes of this glorious world? What but this, that man cannot merely observe the glory and beauty of nature but, as face answers to face in a glass, the soul of man is strung in sympathy with the very mind that made it. (3) So in the sphere of a higher and diviner art, in the life of endeavour after goodness. How shall we explain this, that the better a man is the less content is he with himself? Why is it that in the moral life our aspirations become more elevated, and ever as we ascend we see the moral life unscaled rising before us? Why, but for this reason, that the soul of man was made for God, that with nothing less than a Divine perfection can it ever be satisfied? II. The religion of Christ not only reveals to us an infinite ideal of goodness, but it ASSURES US OF THE POWER TO REALISE IT. It says to you not merely, "This is what you ought to be," but, "This is what you may and can be." Apart from this, the gospel would be no good news. As you know that the first ray of light your eye catches, gilding the eastern horizon in the morning, is to you the sure pledge and prophecy of the coming perfect day; or, as you know, that the future plant is potentially contained in the little seed or germ, so the first movement in a human breast of true spiritual life, the first throb of genuine self-devotion to Christ is fraught with the newborn perfection and beauty of the life that is hid with Christ in God. The religious life indeed, like other life, is progressive, and here, as elsewhere, effort, struggle, conflict are the inevitable conditions of progress. Here lies the power over evil, the conquering impulse of the Christian life, that if only we be true to God and ourselves the final victory is sure. The sun and rain and dew, all the genial influences of nature, will not make a stone grow, but the tiniest germ, the fragile plant, just peeping above the soil, has in it a secret principle which can transmute air, earth, sunlight, moisture into means of its development, and so the heavenborn life has in it the vitalising, the assimilating forces that will make "all things" in this our earthly existence, "all things" in the moral atmosphere, "work together for its good," and bear it onward to perfection. If the Spirit of Christ dwell in your heart to-day and mould your life, nothing

in heaven or earth or hell can ever, ever baulk you of your Christian hope. (*Principal Caird.*)

CHAPTER IV.

VERS. 1–25. **What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?**—*Lessons from the case of Abraham*:—I. HOWEVER MUCH THE MOST PERFECT OF THE SPECIES MAY HAVE TO GLORY OF IN THE EYE OF HIS FELLOWS, HE HAS NOTHING TO GLORY OF BEFORE GOD. The apostle affirms this of Abraham, whose virtues had canonised him in the hearts of all his descendants, and who still stands forth as the embodiment of all the virtues of the older dispensation. But of his piety we have no account, till after that point which Paul assigns as the period of his justification. And whatever he had antecedently of the virtues that are useful to and call forth the praise of man, certain it is, that with every human being, prior to that great transition in his history, God is not the Being whose authority is recognised in any of these virtues, and he has nothing to glory of before God. Here we are surrounded with beings, all of whom are satisfied if they see in us their own likeness; and, should we attain the average character of society, its voice will suffer us to pass. But not till the revelation of God's likeness is made to us do we see our deficiency from that image of unspotted holiness—to be restored to which is the great purpose of our dispensation. Job protested innocence and kindness and dignity before his friends, but when God, whom he had only before heard of by the hearing of the ear now appeared before his awakened eye, he abhorred himself and repented in dust and in ashes. This is the sore evil under which humanity labours. The magnitude of the guilt is unfelt; and therefore does man persist in a most treacherous complacency. The magnitude of the danger is unseen; and therefore does man persist in a security most ruinous. II. THIS DISEASE OF NATURE, deadly and virulent as it is, and that beyond the suspicion of those who are touched by it, IS NOT BEYOND THE REMEDY PROVIDED IN THE GOSPEL. Ungodliness is this disease; and it is here said that God justifies the ungodly. The discharge is as ample as the debt; and the grant of pardon in every way as broad and as long as is the guilt which requires it. The deed of amnesty is equivalent to the offence; and, foul as the transgression is, there is a commensurate righteousness which covers the whole deformity, and translates him whom it had made utterly loathsome in the sight of God, into a condition of full favour and acceptance before Him. Had justification been merely brought into contact with some social iniquity, this were not enough to relieve the conscience of him who feels in himself the workings of a direct and spiritual iniquity against God. It is a sense of this which festers in the stricken heart of a sinner, and often keeps by him and agonises him for many a day, like an arrow sticking fast. And there are many who keep at a distance from the overtures of mercy, till they think they have felt enough and mourned enough over their need of them. But we ought not thus to wait the progress of our emotions, while God is standing before us with a deed of justification, held out to the *ungodliest of us all.* To give us an interest in the saying, that God justifieth the ungodly, it is enough that we count it a faithful saying, and that we count it worthy of all acceptation. III. WHILE THE OFFER OF A RIGHTEOUSNESS BEFORE GOD IS THUS BROUGHT DOWN TO THE LOWEST DEPTH OF HUMAN WICKEDNESS, AND IT IS AN OFFER BY THE ACCEPTANCE OF WHICH ALL THE PAST IS FORGIVEN—IT IS ALSO AN OFFER BY THE ACCEPTANCE OF WHICH ALL THE FUTURE IS REFORMED. When Christ confers sight upon a blind man, he ceases to be in darkness; and when a rich individual confers wealth upon a poor, he ceases to be in poverty—and so, as surely, when justification is conferred upon the ungodly, his ungodliness is done away. His godliness is not the ground upon which the gift was awarded, any more than the sight of him who was blind is the ground upon which it was communicated, or than the wealth of him who was poor is the ground upon which it was bestowed. But just as sight and riches come out of the latter gifts, so godliness comes out of the gift of justification; and while works form in no way the consideration upon which the righteousness that availeth is conferred upon a sinner, yet no sooner is this righteousness granted than it will set him a-working. (*T. Chalmers, D.D.*) *A crucial case*:—1. St. Paul has just shown how the gospel method of justification shuts out the usual Hebrew boast

in the Mosaic law as a pathway to eternal life. But some might ask, Did it not set it aside altogether? 2. To this there were two answers possible. (1) The most obvious would be this: The law had other ends to serve (Gal. iii. 19, 23, 24; Rom. iii. 19). (2) Here, however, Paul answers by alleging the case of Abraham. The force of the argument may be somewhat like this: The reward which the Jew hoped to secure for himself through his circumcision and his observance of the Mosaic law was the national blessing which God had originally conferred by covenant upon the ancestor and representative of his race. It was in his character as a descendant of Abraham that each Jew received in his flesh the seal of the national covenant, or had a right to aspire after the national hope. Nothing higher, therefore, could be looked for by any Israelite than to attain to the blessedness of his forefather Abraham (Luke xvi. 22). Yet this favour had been promised to and received by him, not in consequence of his observance of the Mosaic law, which was not given for a great while after, not even in consideration of his being circumcised, but solely because he was a believer. Instead of God's covenant with Israel resting on the law, the law on the contrary rested on the covenant. That covenant was, to begin with, one of grace, not of works. So far, therefore, from Paul's doctrine of justification upsetting the Mosaic law, it was just the old teaching of the very earliest "Book of the Law." "Do we, then, make the law of Moses void? God forbid. On the contrary, we establish that law; since we find for it its ancient basis on which alone it can serve those helpful uses for which it was given." 3. The case of Abraham was thus, as St. Paul clearly saw, a crucial instance in which to test his doctrine of justification by faith. Abraham was not merely the first of Israelites or the greatest of them; he was all Israel in his single person. It would never do for a Jew to pretend that a principle which ruled the relations of Abraham to Jehovah could by any possibility make void the law of Moses. 4. But the example of Abraham proves fruitful for Paul's purpose in more ways than one. I. HIS CONTROVERSY UP TO THIS POINT HAS INVOLVED TWO MAIN POSITIONS. The first is chap. iii. 28. The second, chap. iii. 30. Both positions he now proceeds to illustrate and confirm by the case of Abraham. 1. It was by his faith Abraham was justified, not by his works of obedience (vers. 1–8). Paul finds a remarkable proof-text in Gen. xv. 16. (1) The religious life of Abraham gathers round three leading moments. The first, when God bade him emigrate to Canaan (Gen. xii. 1–5); the second, at Mamre, when God first made with the childless and aged man a covenant that he should have a son, &c. (Gen. xv.); the third, when, after the first portion of this promise had been fulfilled, as well as the whole of it sealed by circumcision, Jehovah commanded the child of promise to be sacrificed (Gen. xxii.). At all these three turning-times in Abraham's history his confidence in God appeared as the most eminent feature of his character. But plainly, the first of these was preliminary to the second, which conveyed to him the promises of God; and the third was a consequent of the second. The central point, therefore, in the patriarch's history is to be sought in the second, to which St. Paul here refers. On God's side there was simply a word of promise; on the man's side, simply a devout and childlike reliance upon that word. God asked no more; and the man had no more to give. His mere trust in the Promiser was held to be adequate as a ground for that sinful man's acceptance into friendship and league with the eternal Jehovah. (2) The apostle's argument is a very obvious one. There are only two ways of obtaining Divine approval. Either you deserve it, having earned it; then it is a pure debt, and you have something to boast in. Or else you have not earned the Divine approval, but the wages of sin, which is death; only you trust in the promised grace of One who justifies the ungodly; then it may be said that this trust of yours is reckoned as equivalent to righteousness. Now, Abraham's acceptance was plainly of this latter sort. He therefore, at least, had no ground for boasting. His, rather, was such blessedness as his great descendant David sang of so long after (Psa. xxxii. 1, 2). 2. Abraham was justified by his faith, not as a circumcised man, but as an uncircumcised (vers. 9–16). It lies in the very idea of acceptance through faith, that God will accept the believer apart from nationality, an external rite, or church privilege, or the like. This inference Paul has been pressing on his Jewish readers, and here is a curious confirmation of it. Abraham, through whom came circumcision, &c., was taken into Divine favour previous to his circumcision. Circumcision came in simply to seal, no to constitute, his justification. And the design of such an arrangement was to make him the type and progenitor of all believers—of such believers first, as are never circumcised at all, since for thirteen years or more he was himself an uncircumcised believer; then

of such also as are circumcised, indeed, yet believers. He is "the father of us all." The only people whom his experience fails to embrace, whose "father" he really is not, are those Jews who trust in their lineage and their covenant badge, and expect to be saved for their meritorious observance of prescribed rules, but who in the free and gracious promises of Abraham's God put no trust at all. (1) Having got thus far, St. Paul has reached this notable conclusion: that so far from his doctrine making the law of Moses void, it is the Jewish figment of justification by the law which makes void God's promise, and Abraham's faith, and the whole basis of grace on which the privileges of the Hebrew people ultimately reposed. Here, therefore, he fairly turns the tables upon his objectors (ver. 14). (2) Nay, more, another conclusion emerges. It turns out now that instead of St. Paul being a disloyal Jew for admitting believing Gentiles to an equal place in the favour of Israel's God, it is his self-righteous countryman, who monopolises Divine grace, that is really false to the original idea of the Abrahamic covenant. All who have faith, whatever their race, are "blessed with faithful Abraham," and he, says Paul, writing to a Gentile Church, "is the father of us all." The apostle has now completed his polemic against Jewish objectors. Before, however, he is done with the case of Abraham, there is a further use to be made of his bright exemplar. II. THE FATHER OF BELIEVERS STANDS OUT AS NOT SIMPLY A SPECIMEN OF THE FAITH THAT JUSTIFIES, BUT AS THE HIGHEST PATTERN AND LESSON IN THIS GRACE TO ALL HIS SPIRITUAL PROGENY (vers. 17–25). 1. I spoke of three leading moments in the spiritual life of the great patriarch. In the roll of heroes in faith given in Heb. xi., stress is laid upon the first and upon the last. Here, it is the second; and it is this proof of faith, therefore, which Paul now proceeds to examine. The particular promise was that when he was ninety-nine, and his wife ninety, a son should be born to them. On this child of promise were made to depend all the other promises —numerous descendants—the land of inheritance—a perpetual covenant—seed, in whom all earth's families should be blessed. To believe in this explicit word was to believe substantially in the whole of God's grace to men as far as it was then revealed. It was gospel faith so far as there was yet any gospel on earth to put faith in. Dimly and far off Abraham saw the day of Christ, and at God's bare word he risked his spiritual life upon that hope. This was his faith. 2. Now note its characteristics. On the one side lay the improbabilities of an unheard-of miracle, to be believed in before it happened; a needless miracle, too, so far as man's reason could discern; for was not Ishmael already there? On the other side, what was there? Nothing but a word of God. Between these two conflicting grounds of expectation a weaker faith than his might have wavered. But Abraham was not weak in faith. Therefore he did not shrink from considering the physical obstacles to the birth of a son. On the contrary, he could afford to fasten his regard on these, without his confidence in the promise suffering any diminution; since he kept as clearly in view the character of the Almighty Promiser. God is the Quickener of the dead. He can give a name and virtual existence to the yet unbegotten child. Isaac lives in God's counsel and purpose before he has actual being. So Abraham dared to trust in the hope of paternity given him of God, and gave God glory, by honouring the truthfulness of His word and the power of His grace. Such is faith; so it always works. Without calling its eyes off from the objections and difficulties which are present to sense, it fastens itself, nevertheless, on the veracity of Him who speaks words of grace to men. 3. These things were not written for Abraham's sake alone, but for ours. Abraham trusted in God to quicken his unborn son—by and by to raise him (if need were) from the dead. We trust Him who did raise from the dead His own Son Jesus. The gospel facts, the promises, and blessings of the new covenant in Christ are to us what the birth of Isaac was to Abraham: things all of them beyond the reach of experience or against it; resting for their evidence solely on the word of the living God. Such a faith in God is reckoned for righteousness to every man who has it, as it was to Abraham, the father of all believers. (*J. Oswald Dykes, D.D.*) *No room for glorying*:—That workman should do ill who, having built a house with another man's purse, should go about to set up his own name upon the front thereof; and in Justinian's law it was decreed that no workman should set up his name within the body of that building which he made out of another's cost. Thus Christ sets us all at work; it is He that bids us to fast, and pray, and hear, and give alms, &c.; but who is at the cost of all this? whose are all these good works? Surely God's. Man's poverty is so great, that he cannot reach a good thought, much less a good deed; all the materials are from God, the building is His; it is He that paid

for it. Give but, therefore, the glory and the honour thereof unto God, and take all the profit to thyself. (*J. Spencer.*) **What saith the Scripture?**—*What saith the Scripture?*—I. WHAT IS MEANT BY THE SCRIPTURE? Paul referred simply to the Old Testament. But we are not to suppose that the Old and New Testaments are different Scriptures. The only difference is that in the New we have a clearer explanation of that which may be found in the Old. II. WHAT IS THE AUTHORITY OF THE SCRIPTURE? The difference between this and the best of other books is that it was written, not by man, but by God; though holy men of old wrote the Book, they wrote it as they were moved by God the Holy Ghost. This Divine authority is supported by ample evidence. 1. Historical. 2. Experimental. III. WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE? 1. For the head. It unfolds—(1) The doctrine of the Trinity. (2) The plan of salvation. (3) The judgment to come. (4) The eternity of future rewards and punishments. 2. For the heart. (1) It proclaims every kind of encouragement to turn from the error of our ways. It assures us of—(*a*) The love of God to each soul. (*b*) His forbearance with sinners. (*c*) His desire to make men happy. (2) It secures for those who have turned—(*a*) The sympathy of Jesus. (*b*) The comfort of the Holy Ghost. 3. For our life—our way of living. It testifies—(1) To the impossibility of a double service. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." (2) To the necessity of holiness. Without it "no man shall see the Lord." (3) To the vanity of this world compared with the next. "What shall it profit a man?" &c. IV. HOW ARE WE TO KNOW THESE SCRIPTURES? By searching them—1. Prayerfully. 2. Daily. Conclusion: What an awful responsibility rests upon every man who does not consider what the Scripture saith! It is just as if you were walking in a dark place, not knowing your road, and some one were to offer you a light, and you were to refuse to take it. Not long ago I happened to be visiting in a great castle, situate on the top of a hill, near which there was a very steep cliff, and a rapid river running at the bottom. A person, anxious to get home from that castle late one night in the midst of a violent thunderstorm when the night was blackness itself, was asked to stop till the storm was over. She declined. She was begged to take a lantern, that she might be kept in the road, but she said she could do very well without it. She left, and, perhaps frightened by the storm, she wandered from the road and got upon the top of the cliff; she tumbled over, and the next day the lifeless body of that foolish woman was found washed ashore from the swollen river. Ah! but how many such foolish ones are there who, when the light is offered, and they have only to ask, "What saith the Scripture?" are prepared to say, "I have no need of that Book; I know right from wrong; I am not afraid; I fear not the end." (*Bp. Villiers.*) *What saith the Scripture?*—I. AS A REVELATION. On some subjects it is the sole authority. Without it man has no light whatever, or only the dimmest light, on the nature of God, His relations to man, the method of reconciliation, immortality. On these subjects its testimony is full, clear, authoritative. How important, then, that man, a spiritual being, with an immortal destiny, should ask, "What saith the Scriptures?" II. AS A COUNSELLOR. Man is a traveller in an unknown way, and needs a guide, or the chances are he will go astray. There are many candidates for the office—many sincere, and desirous only to secure his good; many insincere, seeking their own advantage: all fallible, and liable to give the wrong advice. The Scripture alone is infallible; it displays every step of the way, so that a wayfaring man, if he accepts its guidance, though a fool, will not err. How important, then, that as regards the path of duty and the way to heaven, young and old should ask, "What saith the Scriptures?" III. AS A STANDARD. Weights and measures in ordinary use may be right or may be wrong. Some are wrong, being too heavy or too light, too long or too short, too large or too small. So it is necessary again and again to apply the "standard" test of weight, measurement, &c. So the Churches, theological schools, &c., may be right or may be wrong in their enunciation of doctrine, and moralists in their statement of ethics. But the Scripture is the authoritative standard of faith and practice, and to it all teaching is to be referred. The Thessalonians received or rejected Paul's doctrine without referring to the standard; the Bereans were "more noble," in that they "searched the Scriptures whether these things were so." IV. AS A JUDGE. The Scripture will judge those to whom it has been given at the last day. The Books will be opened, and this amongst them. It will be in vain then for man to plead that he has consulted the Church, human opinion, &c. What will Scripture say then? "Come, ye blessed," or, "Depart, ye cursed." (*J. W. Burn.*) *The Bible alone:*—1. "Scripture" means writing. Generally, when the Bible, as a volume,

is spoken of, the expression "the Scriptures" is used, because it is made up of many writings. When some particular part is alluded to, then it is said "the Scripture." For instance (John v. 39), Christ said, "Search the Scriptures," because the whole Bible, from first to last, more or less testified to Him. But when He selects any particular part, then He says, "that Scripture" (Matt. xii. 10). Now in the text Paul does not say, "What saith the Scriptures?" speaking of the whole Bible, but "What says this particular part of Scripture which I am now quoting?" 2. From this we gather that the Bible is infallible. When Jesus quotes it, it is with a view to settle all dispute; or when Paul has proved what he has to say by the Bible, he has decided the matter which is in controversy. "To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to that Word it is because they have no light in them." Note—I. WHAT THE TEXT DOES NOT SAY. It does not say—1. "What says reason?" Many a man says that. Appeal to their reason and they are satisfied. But what is reason? That which is reason to one man is not reason to another. Must I listen to any infidel who chooses to put the Bible aside and say, "Listen to me, I am reason"? It is true that one man has more mental faculty than another. But when we come to weigh mind against mind, who have displayed greater powers of mind than those who have believed the Bible? And am I to set aside the reason of these men, and take up the reason of other men who are immeasurably their inferiors, and be told that the Bible is not a book to be believed because it is contrary to reason? To me it is the most reasonable thing to believe in the Bible. 2. "What saith science?" Some men say they can disprove the Bible by scientific discoveries. One geologist will tell you that the Bible has false statements with regard to the antiquity of the world; but another says that science and the Book of God are in perfect harmony. Well, then, which am I to believe? Science is always changing. Until Galileo made his discovery that the earth moved round the sun, science declared that the earth stood still and the sun moved round it. 3. "What saith the Church?" "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation. In the name of the Holy Scripture do we understand those canonical books of the Old and New Testament, of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church." Good; that is the doctrine of all the Churches that hold the "truth as it is in Jesus." And right that they should do so. They do not bring a man's interpretation, creeds, decrees, and councils, and say, "Take this to be your faith." But they all say, "What saith the Scripture?" II. WHAT THE TEXT DOES SAY. 1. As to doctrine, Abraham believed God, and it was "counted to him for righteousness." There is the doctrine, then; it is salvation "by faith" alone, "without the deeds of the law." Now many object to this, and say, "That is unreasonable; God will expect me to do something." "No," the Scripture saith, and with reason. If you look to the law, you must do all the works of the law, or none—"Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things in the law." As one leak will sink a ship, so one sin will damn a soul. But is not this a dangerous doctrine? Does it not make a man neglect good works? I cannot help that. Men may abuse the doctrine, as they do other good things, but that is no valid objection against the doctrine itself. 2. As to duty. Having taught that doctrine, we proceed to say that faith will never be without works. As there will always be light and heat in the rays of the sun, so there will always be works following and accompanying faith. "Faith worketh by love." "Love is the fulfilling of the law." What saith the Scripture? "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour." But there are those who speak of faith but show no works. Now, that is not the faith of God's elect. You will find it described in James ii. 20-23. This bears upon the subject. The Holy Ghost says that although Abraham was accounted righteous in the sight of God by faith, he justified his character in the sight of men by works. What, then, saith the Scripture to that man who lives as most men live; to that man who is neglectful of secret prayer, who is living in sin, serving divers lusts and pleasures, setting his affection on things below? Why, they condemn him from first to last. "He that believeth not is condemned already." He is not a believer; his life proves it. According to the Word of God, where there is faith there will be works. (*R. W. Dibdin, M.A.*) *The Christian oracles:*—1. This question is highly characteristic of St. Paul. If a Grecian statesman like Solon had been in a difficulty, his question would have been, "What saith the oracle?" If a Roman general like Cæsar, his would have been, "What say the victims?" But the Christian apostle's is, "What saith the Scripture?" 2.

Universal has been the confession of human ignorance, especially regarding the future. The numerous oracles of antiquity, of which there were twenty-two sacred to Apollo alone, are manifest acknowledgments of this. But those oracles did not arise merely out of a consciousness of human ignorance; they had their origin likewise in a reverence for the gods and a respect for their religion, such as it was. 3. This being the case, let us contrast the oracles of the heathen with the oracles of God. At Delphi was the most famous oracle. In the innermost sanctuary there was the golden statue of Apollo, and before it there burnt upon an altar an eternal fire. In the centre of this temple there was a small opening in the ground, from which an intoxicating smoke arose. Over this chasm there stood a high tripod, on which the Pythia took her seat whenever the oracle was to be consulted. The smoke rising under the tripod affected her brain in such a manner that she fell into a state of delirious intoxication, and the sounds which she uttered in this state were believed to contain the revelations of Apollo. In the long experiment of heathenism it may be truly said that men groped after God, "if haply they might find Him." Think of them solemnly examining the entrails of a beast, or studying the intersections of a cobweb; think of them trying to discover the mind of God from dreams or the sounds of the wind among the rustling leaves; and then reflect on our greater light and privileges, for we have the oracles which holy men wrote as they were inspired by the Holy Ghost. As we have a nobler oracle, let us consult it with a nobler curiosity and on nobler subjects than the Gentiles did. It is the boast of some natural theologians that they could do without the Bible. But in the full light of nature men acted as we have observed, and therefore something more luminous and powerful was necessary to the renovation of humanity. That one thing needful was a revelation—and that we have got; for "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God." "What saith the Scripture" on—I. THE ORIGINAL AND PRESENT STATE OF MAN? It tells us we were created upright, that man is fallen and degenerate, and that we are now in a state of sin and death. II. THIS PRESENT WORLD. How are we to interpret it? Now, just as there is an intended distance for judging of a picture, so there is a right position and attitude for judging this world. A man comes close up to a masterpiece of Rubens, and pronounces it a daub. Let him stand back, and the picture will come out even to his unskilful eye. Just so with the world. You cannot judge it rightly while you are near it, amidst its fascinations. You must retire and prayerfully consult the Word of God. That is the right position and attitude for judging of the world. Many a thoughtful man asks himself, "Why has God set me down here in the world? What does He want me to do?" If he went to the Bible he would get these questions satisfactorily answered; but perhaps he comes to the easy conclusion that he ought to enjoy himself, and straightway plunges into the stream of pleasure, and basks for a little in her fitful sunshine. He is destined to experience what a million experiences fail to prove to the imprudent, that the pleasures of the world turn to acids. "What saith the Scripture?" It tells us that man is here on probation, that this is a life of discipline preparatory to another stage of existence, that this life is not our home, but that our home is in heaven. III. THE SUBJECT OF HAPPINESS. It is not to be found in the world. Knowledge will not give happiness; for "he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow." Wealth will not give happiness. A rich man, when he was dying, cried out for his gold. It was brought to him, and he put it to his breast. "Take it away! take it away!" he shrieked; "that won't do!" Greatness cannot give happiness. Once a friend called to salute a prime minister, and wished him a happy new year. "God grant that it may be!" said the poor great man; "for during the last year I have not known a happy day." A real Christian is the happiest style of man. Thus saith the Scripture, "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but in Me ye shall have peace." IV. OF THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL. How unsatisfactory is mere reason here! But Christ has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. Conclusion: 1. We should receive the responses of God's oracle with meekness. 2. Consider your responsibility. Shall not the heathen rise up in the judgment and condemn us? For they listened for the voice of Deity among the rustling leaves or the cooing of the doves, but many of us despise the voice that speaketh from heaven. 3. Consider the perpetuity of the Word, and tremble. Its reviler has long been in his grave; but the Word of God liveth and abideth for ever. (*F. Perry, M.A.*) **Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.**—*The faith of Abraham:*—1. A simple childlike dependence on the naked Word of God. 2. An acceptance of, and trust in, God's promised Saviour. 3. A renouncing of his own works as

meritorious. 4. A faith that wrought by love, making him the friend of God. 5. One that overcame the world, leading him to seek a better country. 6. One that evidenced its reality by a self-denying obedience. (*T. Robinson, of Cambridge.*) *The faith of Abraham*, though not the same with a faith in Christ, was analogous to it—1. As it was a faith in unseen things (Heb. xi. 17–19). 2. As it was prior to and independent of the law (Gal. iii. 17–19). 3. As it related to the promised seed in whom Christ was dimly seen. (*Prof. Jowett.*) *Abraham's faith*:—I. WHOM did he believe? God, as infinitely powerful—who could quicken the dead, and who had merely to will that beings and events should be, and they immediately came into existence (ver. 17). II. WHAT did he believe? What God was pleased to reveal. What is mentioned here is that he should become the father of many nations; but that was only a small part of what was revealed and what he believed. He believed in effect—for this was the sum of what God revealed to him—that one of his descendants was to be the promised Saviour of men; and that both he and his spiritual seed were to be saved by faith in Him. The revelation was comparatively indistinct, but this was its purport. III. WHY did he believe this? Just because God had said it. He had no other ground for it. Everything else would have led him to doubt or disbelieve it. IV. What were the CHARACTERISTICS of this faith? It was—1. Firm faith (ver. 21). 2. Hopeful faith (ver. 18). 3. A faith that no seeming impossibilities could shake (ver. 20). (*J. Browne, D.D.*) *Abraham's faith*:—I. ABRAHAM WAS A MAN OF FAITH. 1. His faith was not—(1) Assent to a creed; (2) Nor an intelligent conviction of any plan of salvation to be accomplished centuries later in the sacrifice of Christ. 2. It was a grand, simple trust in God. It was shown in—(1) His forsaking the idols of his forefathers and worshipping the one spiritual God. (2) In his leaving home and going he knew not whither in obedience to a Divine voice. (3) In his willingness to sacrifice his son. (4) In his hope of a future inheritance. 3. Such a faith is personal reliance, leading to obedience and encouraged by hopeful anticipation. 4. This faith is a model faith for us. For faith is to rely upon Christ, to be loyal to Christ, to hope in Christ, and to accept the fuller revelations of truth which Christ opens up to us as Abraham accepted the Divine voices vouchsafed to him. The contents of faith will vary according to our light; but the spirit of it must be always the same. II. HIS FAITH WAS RECKONED TO HIM FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS. The special point in Abraham's character was not his holiness, but his faith. God's favour flowed to him through this channel. It was the way through which he, imperfect and sinful as are all the sons of Adam, was called to the privileged place of a righteous man. This is recorded of him in the sacred history (Gen. xv. 6), and therefore should be admitted by all Jews. The reasons for our relying on faith are—1. Historical. Faith justified Abraham, therefore it will justify us. 2. Theological. Faith brings us into living fellowship with God, and so opens our hearts to receive the forgiveness that puts us in the position of righteous men. 3. Moral. Faith is the security for the future growth of righteousness; with the first effort of faith the first seed-grace of righteousness is sown. III. PARTICIPATION IN ABRAHAM'S FAITH IS THE CONDITION OF PARTICIPATION IN ABRAHAM'S BLESSING. The Jews claimed this by birthright, but Abraham had it by faith. Only men of faith could have it. Therefore Jews who lost faith lost the blessing. But all men of faith are spiritual sons of Abraham (ver. 12). The finest legacy left by the patriarch was his faith. (*W. F. Adeney, M.A.*) *The nature of faith as illustrated in the case of Abraham*:—I. FAITH. The Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and English words hover between two meanings—1. Trustfulness, the frame of mind which relies on another. 2. Trustworthiness, the frame of mind which can be relied upon. Not only are the two connected together grammatically, as active and passive senses of the same word, or logically, as subject and object of the same act; but there is a close moral affinity between them. Fidelity, constancy, firmness, confidence, reliance, trust, belief—these are the links which connect the two extremes, the passive with the active meaning of "faith." Owing to these combined causes, the two senses will at times be so blended together that they can only be separated by some arbitrary distinction. When the members of the Christian brotherhood, *e.g.*, are called "the faithful," what is meant by this? Does it imply their constancy, their trustworthiness, or their faith, their belief? In all such cases it is better to accept the latitude, and even the vagueness, of a word or phrase, than to attempt a rigid definition which after all can only be artificial. And indeed the loss in grammatical precision is often more than compensated by the gain in theological depth. In the case of "the faithful," *e.g.*, does not the one quality of heart carry the other with

it, so that they who are trustful are trusty also; they who have faith in God are steadfast and immovable in the path of duty? II. IN ABRAHAM THIS ATTITUDE OF TRUSTFULNESS WAS MOST MARKED. By faith he left home and kindred, and settled in a strange land; by faith he acted upon God's promise of a race and an inheritance, though it seemed at variance with all human experience; by faith he offered up his only son, in whom alone that promise could be fulfilled. This one word "faith" sums up the lesson of his whole life. As early as the First Book of Maccabees attention is directed to this lesson (chap. ii. 52), and at the time of the Christian era the passage in Genesis relating to it had become a standard text in the Jewish schools for discussion and comment, and the interest thus concentrated on it prepared the way for the fuller and more spiritual teaching of the apostles. Hence we find it quoted by both Paul and James. While the deductions drawn from it by them are at first sight diametrically opposed in terms, and as long as our range of view is confined to the apostolic writings, it seems scarcely possible to avoid the conclusion that James is attacking the teaching of Paul. But when we realise the fact that the passage in Genesis was a common thesis in the schools, that the meaning of faith was variously explained, and diverse lessons drawn from it—then the case is altered. The Gentile apostle and the Pharisaic rabbi might both maintain the supremacy of faith as the means of salvation; but faith with Paul was a very different thing from faith with Maimonides. With the one its prominent idea is a spiritual life, with the other an orthodox creed; with the one the guiding principle is the individual conscience, with the other an external rule of ordinances; with the one faith is allied to liberty, with the other to bondage. Thus, and since the circles of labour of the two apostles were not likely to intersect, St. James's protest against reliance on faith alone is more likely to have been levelled against the Pharisaic spirit which rested satisfied with a barren orthodoxy than against the teaching of Paul. (*Bp. Lightfoot.*) *Abraham, the model of faith*:—I. THE FAITH OF ABRAHAM WAS A SIMPLE FAITH—a faith which asked for nothing but the word of God to rest upon. II. IT WAS AN OBEDIENT FAITH. It led him to do whatever God told him to do. And our faith is good for nothing unless it leads us to be like Abraham in this respect. III. IT WAS A CONQUERING FAITH—a faith which helped him to overcome the greatest difficulties. IV. ABRAHAM'S FAITH WAS A COMFORTING FAITH. (*R. Newton, D.D.*) *Difficulties overcome by faith*:—Bishop Hall has only overstated a fundamental fact when he says, "There is no faith where there is either means or hope." Means and hopes may be "mixed with faith," but undoubtedly the mightiest deliverances ever wrought have been by faith alone. Difficulties and apparent impossibilities are the food on which faith feeds. *Believing God*:—Abraham was the head of a wandering tribe, with probably only such small ambitions as were common to his station; a man of purer life, of higher purposes, perhaps, than his neighbour chiefs, and yet with nothing very marked to distinguish him from them. God calls this man, instructs him, leads him, and as he hears, believes, obeys, he becomes quite another man. In this is the whole source of Abraham's greatness. It was not in his natural gifts that he was distinguished above all other men of his day; others may have been as intelligent and as forceful as he. Nor was it in his great opportunities that he excelled. There is nothing very wonderful in his history, if you take away from it his faith and its influence on his life. He wandered farther than many of the men of his day; but they were all wanderers. He fought his petty battles; so did they. But the one thing which raised him above them all, the thing which makes us know that there was such a man at all, is only this, that he believed God. There is nothing small in such a life, for its whole business is to follow God's call. The same transformation is wrought to-day over the man who, like Abraham, believes God. It does not come from believing that God is, or believing in God, or on God, but by simply, lovingly, believing God; believing what He says, and all He says, and because He says it. It makes a man a saint if you look at him from the side of personal purity of character and life. It puts him under the holiest influence which can move a mortal man. God has said, "Without holiness no man can see the Lord," and he believes God; and having "this hope in Him, purifieth himself, even as He is pure." It makes a man a hero, if you look at him from the side of his daring or endurance. He believes God. It makes no difference to him what any man, what all men say. What are men's words against the Word of God? (*Christian World Pulpit.*) *Folly of self-righteousness*:—"By the works of the law there shall no flesh living be justified"; and in the teeth of that millions of men say, "We will be justified by the works of the law"; so,

coming to God with the pretence of worshipping Him, they offer Him that which He abhors, and give the lie to Him in all His solemn declarations. If God says that by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified, and man declares, "But I will be so justified," he maketh God a liar; whether he knoweth it or not, his sin hath that within it. Man is much like a silkworm, he is a spinner and weaver by nature. A robe of righteousness is wrought out for him, but he will not have it; he will spin for himself, and like the silkworm, he spins and spins, and he only spins himself a shroud. All the righteousness that a sinner can make will only be a shroud in which to wrap up his soul, his destroyed soul, for God will cast him away who relies upon the works of the law. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Ver. 5. **But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.**—*Justification of the ungodly*:—The first sound of these words is startling. What! is it, then, the idle or the vicious person, he that does nothing or nothing that is good, and merely has faith or belief, who is to be treated as righteous? And is God the justifier, not of the godly, but of the ungodly? A moment's examination of the words will show that the apostle never entertained the sentiments which at first sight they appear to exhibit. 1. The very expression, "His faith is counted for righteousness," intimates that righteousness is essentially worthy and acceptable. If faith is received in the stead of righteousness, then surely righteousness is of as much value, at least, as that which is accepted in its place. If righteousness be the debt which man owes to God, and it pleases God, in consideration of man's failure, to take his faith as an equivalent, it is clear that righteousness, the debt, is even of more value than faith, which is taken, in kindness and pity, as an equivalent. And a clue is here put into our hands by following which, with the context to aid us, we shall no doubt be guided to a satisfactory interpretation, and a clear result. 2. "His faith is counted for righteousness." But what righteousness? The righteousness which ought to have been; which is due; which is not paid. He who "worketh not" owes long arrears of righteousness; he has been a sinful man; he is a debtor to a large amount. But when he turns away from sin, and believes heartily and truly on God, then his faith, which is a pledge of future righteousness, is graciously credited to him for those long arrears, and the debt remains no more against him. "By grace are we saved through faith." The single consideration, then, that it is past righteousness which is intended in the text, lights it up at once with a holy, and cheering, and satisfying light. 3. And that this consideration is introduced, not only allowably but necessarily, appears from the context (vers. 6–8). To "impute righteousness without works" is evidently synonymous with forgiveness of sin; it is to treat one who has not worked as if he had worked. But then there is a condition—faith, which, working by love, produces henceforth the fruits of righteousness. So the imputation of righteousness without works, or the non-imputation of sin, is by no means a dispensation from future righteousness, but exactly the contrary. This is the doctrine of St. James, as well as of St. Paul; the doctrine of our Saviour and of His most touching parable of the prodigal son; and is the doctrine not only of the New Testament, but of the Old. Abraham, before he knew and believed in God, was not the righteous man that he was after he believed in Him; and his faith was counted to him for righteousness; his past sins were forgiven. Since Jesus came and died, there is a louder call to repentance and a stronger array of motives, and a more general justification. A sincere and earnest faith in Him will move, if anything can move, the heart to love and gratitude, and the life to duty. And the heart being thus moved to love and gratitude, and the life to duty, past sin is forgiven, the ungodly is justified, and faith is counted for righteousness; not, surely, because this powerfully moving faith dispenses with righteousness, or is above righteousness, but because it moves to it and secures it. (*F. W. P. Greenwood, D.D.*) *Justification by faith*:—I. THE GENERAL GROUND OF THE DOCTRINE. 1. Man was made in the image of God, holy as He is holy, and perfect as He is perfect. To man, thus upright, God gave a perfect law, to which He required a perfect obedience, which man was capable of rendering. To this was superadded the commandment not to eat of "the fruit of the tree," with death as the penalty annexed. 2. Man disobeyed, and the sentence began to take effect. His soul died, being separated from God, his body became mortal, and he hastened on to death everlasting. Thus, "by one man sin entered into the world," and we have inherited the sin and penalty of our representative. 3. In this state we were when

God gave His Son to be a second general Parent and Representative, and as such "He bore our sins," and by that one oblation of Himself He has redeemed all mankind. In consideration of Christ's death God has reconciled the world unto Himself, not imputing their former trespasses. II. ITS NATURE. 1. Not the being made righteous; that is sanctification, which follows justification, but is a distinct and inward gift. 2. Nor the clearing us from the accusation—(1) Of Satan. (2) Of the law—theories found nowhere in the Bible. 3. Nor that which implies that God is deceived in those He justifies, viz., accounting them to be otherwise than what they are. 4. But that act of God the Father, whereby, for the sake of Christ's propitiation, He forgives sin (vers. 6, 7). III. ITS SUBJECTS. 1. The ungodly and only such. As the righteous need no repentance, so they need no forgiveness; which contradicts the absurd supposition that holiness is necessary to justification. Only sinners can be forgiven. 2. Him that worketh not. But do not men feed the hungry, &c., before justification? Yes, and these may in a sense be called good works—"good and profitable to men"—but no work is good which is not done as God wills and commands, and God hath willed that all our works should be done in charity, *i.e.*, that love to Him from which love to man proceeds. But none of our works can be done in this love while the love of the Father is not in us. IV. ITS CONDITION. Faith, *i.e.*, a sure trust and confidence that Christ died for my sins, and loved me, and gave Himself for me. This is the only but the necessary condition, for "he that believeth not is condemned already." (*J. Wesley, M.A.*) *Justification the gift of grace received by faith*:—1. The man who has obtained justification may be looked upon as in possession of a title-deed, which secures to him a right to God's favour. The question is, How comes he into possession of this title-deed? Did he work for it, and thus receive it as a return for his works? No; he did not work for it; and thus it is that justification is to him who worketh not—that is, he did nothing antecedent to his justification to bring this privilege down upon him; nor subsequently, for it is a contradiction to allow that he has to work to obtain what he already has; nor at the time, for he came to it by believing. But then, as in the case of a man coming into an estate, no sooner does he lay hold of the deed than he begins, and that most strenuously, to qualify himself for the possession: and, with a foot which touches lightly that earth from which he is to ascend so soon into the fields of eternal glory that are above him, to aspire after the virtues which are current there; and, by an active cultivation of his heart, labour to prepare himself for a station of happiness and honour. 2. But beware of having any such view of faith as will lead you to annex to it the kind of merit which is annexed to works under the law. It is God who justifies. He drew up the title-deed, and He bestowed it. It is ours simply by laying hold of it. Ye are saved by grace through faith. By which is a house enlightened by the sun, or by an open window? The answer may justly enough be that it is by the window—and yet the window does not enlighten the house—it is a mere opening for the transmission of the light of the sun. Christ hath wrought out a righteousness for us that is freely offered to us of God. By faith we discern the reality of this offer; and all that it does is to strike out, as it were, an avenue of conveyance, by which the righteousness of another passes to us; and through faith are we saved by this righteousness. (*T. Chalmers, D.D.*) *The fitness of faith in order to justification*:—1. It is obviously the only way in which a testimony can be received; and God has been pleased to appoint that such only as receive His testimony shall reap the benefit of what it reveals. 2. It is a medium of justification by which the whole glory is secured, as it ought to be, to "the God of all grace"; agreeably to the nature and design of the whole scheme of redemption, by which "the loftiness of man is bowed down, and the haughtiness of man is laid low; and Jehovah alone is exalted." 3. It is a method of justification which unites it inseparably with sanctification. The truth must be received by faith into the mind in order to its operating with its holy influence on the affections and desires of the heart. (*R. Wardlaw, D.D.*) *Salvation not by works*:—Observe what happens when the cry rises at sea, "A man overboard!" With others on deck, you rush to the side; and, leaning over the bulwarks, with beating heart you watch the place where the rising air-bells and boiling deep tell that he has gone down. After some moments of breathless anxiety, you see his head emerge from the wave. Now, that man, I shall suppose, is no swimmer; he has never learned to breast the billows; yet, with the first breath he draws, he begins to beat the water. With violent efforts he attempts to shake off the grasp of death, and by the play of limbs and arms to keep his head

from sinking. It may be that these struggles but exhaust his strength, and sink him all the sooner. Nevertheless, that drowning one makes instinctive and convulsive efforts to save himself. So, when first brought to feel and cry, "I perish!" when the horrible conviction rushes into the soul that we are lost. When we feel ourselves going down beneath a load of guilt into the depth of the wrath of God, our first effort is to save ourselves. Like a drowning man, who will clutch at straws and twigs, we seize on anything, however worthless, that promises salvation. Thus, alas! many poor souls toil, and spend weary, unprofitable years, in the attempt to establish a righteousness of their own, and find in the deeds of the law protection from its curse. (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) *Faith a universal possibility*:—Faith is natural to man; the mightiest principle in the soul. It is the foundation of trade; the wheel of commerce; the bond of social life; the abiding root of the family tree. And such is the faith that reposes on the Son of God. Faith is not the creation of theology or Christianity. It is older than either. It is not something supernaturally implanted in a man when he becomes a Christian. It is no new faculty bestowed. That principle which trusts a parent's love, and produces obedience to a parent's will, is the same principle exercised in another region which makes us one with God. Thus, the salvation which God has provided for all becomes a salvation not only worthy the acceptance of all, but possible to be accepted by all. Salvation becomes a universal possibility, because it is offered to a capacity which all men possess and exercise. (*R. Henry.*) *The way of salvation*:—I. THE WAY OF THE NATURAL MAN. "Worketh." He wishes it to be of desert. II. THE BETTER WAY—by faith. This is—1. The old way. (1) Abraham's. (2) David's. 2. The blessed way. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*)

Vers. 6–8. **Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works.**—*Imputed righteousness defended against its caricatures*:—It has been represented as—I. A LEGAL FICTION. We protest against this if the expression be meant anything unreal or untrue. 1. We make this statement with a limitation because there are some "legal fictions" which are very far from being unreal. It is "a legal fiction" to say that "the king can do no wrong"; for unquestionably in his private and personal capacity he may even be guilty of crime; but in his public and official capacity, as the head of the State, he is held in the law of this country to be irresponsible, and the errors or crimes of the government are imputed to his constitutional advisers, who are regarded, by reason of their official position, as alone answerable for them. It is a "legal fiction" to say that "the king never dies"; for as an individual he cannot escape the doom of the meanest of his subjects; but royalty survives the person of the monarch. It is a "legal fiction" to say that the Commons of England are assembled in Parliament; for they are there only in the persons of their representatives; and yet the whole nation is bound by their acts, and subject to be governed, taxed, fined, and imprisoned, or even put to death, according to their laws. It is a "legal fiction," and a far from seemly one, to speak of the omnipotence of Parliament; yet that irreverent expression contains the important truth that the supreme power, which must exist in every form of government, and from whose judgment there is no appeal, is vested in the legislative and executive authorities of the State. Is constitutional government, therefore, "a legal fiction," in the sense of being unreal or unconnected with grave responsibilities? Or was adoption, according to the Romish Jurisprudence, which regarded one as the son of another in law who was not his son by birth, a "legal fiction," or a privilege of no real worth when it constituted a new relation between those who were not related before, and conveyed a legal right of inheritance? Or is the rule that the wife is one in law with her husband an unreal thing, when it invests him with serious liabilities? These examples should dispel the prejudice which is excited against imputation when it is described as a "legal fiction," since although "legal fictions" they express important truths. 2. Suppose that it were justly described as a "legal fiction" it might still represent an important truth, under the scheme of God's moral government. (1) If He has promulgated His law in a covenant form, as a law for the race at large, and imposed it on the first Adam as their representative, then that constitution must be productive of results in which they as well as he will be found to participate; and yet these consequences, so far from being mere "legal fictions," are assuredly very solemn realities: the curse on the ground, the doom of death, the loss of God's image, the forfeiture of His favour, and all the evils which have followed in the train of sin,—all these are brought upon us under the operation of that law, and

every one of them is real. (2) In like manner if God has promulgated a scheme of redeeming mercy, and this, too, in a covenant form, through the second Adam as the representative of His people, imposing upon Him the fulfilment of its conditions, and securing to them the benefits of His work on their behalf, then this constitution must be productive of results, in which they as well as He will be found to participate; and yet these results, so far from being "legal fictions," are substantial blessings of the highest and most permanent kind: pardon, the restoration of God's favour, renewal in His image, adoption, eternal life. Hence it is vain to talk of "legal fictions" whether under law or gospel; for while condemnation on the one hand and justification on the other are strictly forensic acts, and must necessarily have some relation to the justice of God, and while the representative character both of the first and second Adam, and the consequent imputation of their guilt and righteousness to those whom they represented, can only be ascribed to the sovereign will of God, yet the results are real and not fictitious. II. A THEORY invented by man to account for these results. A similar prejudice exists against all the peculiar revelations of Scripture, as if they were matters of speculative interest, rather than of practical importance. Yet nothing is more remarkable in the doctrines of Christianity than this, that every one of them is simply the statement of a fact, and that they all relate either to substantive beings—God, angels, and men, or to real events, past, present, or future. What is the doctrine of God but the revelation of His existence, and of the perfections which belong to Him as the Creator and Governor of the world? What is the doctrine of the Trinity but the statement of a fact respecting the existence of distinct hypostases in His one undivided Godhead. What is the doctrine of the Incarnation but the statement of a fact respecting the union of the Divine and human natures in the Person of our Lord? And in like manner, what is the doctrine of Imputation, whether of sin or righteousness, but the statement of a fact respecting the relation in which we stand to the first or second Adam, and the consequences which result to us from the disobedience of the one, and the obedience of the other? No doubt, when these facts are revealed, and become the subjects of human thought, they may occasion speculation, and speculation may give birth to wild theories, when unrestrained by faith; but let the facts be believed on the testimony of the Revealer, let them be duly realised in their full Scriptural meaning, and in their application to our own souls—and we may safely discard every human theory, and adhere only to the truth as it has been taught by God. (*R. Buchanan, D.D.*) *The pleading of poverty in order to salvation*:—There is a legal process in which a person pleads before the court in what is called *in forma pauperis*, that is, he pleads as a poor man, he pleads his poverty; and there are certain privileges allowed to those who thus plead *in forma pauperis* which are not accorded to the wealthiest persons in the land. This is the only successful way in which to plead with God: we must come as paupers, having nothing of our own; giving up every pretence of right or claim of deserving. We must cry, "Lord, I am lost! I am lost! I am lost! but Thou hast lived and Thou hast died; Thy life, Thy sufferings, Thy griefs, Thy groans, Thy death, all these were for those who needed such a sin-atoning sacrifice, and on that sacrifice by blood I rest; I cast myself, lost and ruined, upon the work which Jesus Christ has done for me!" (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) **Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven.**—*Forgiveness*:—I. ITS NATURE. 1. A non-imputation of the offence. 2. A covering of its guilt. 3. A remission of its punishment. II. THE ACT. 1. Divine. 2. Just. 3. Through faith in Christ. III. ITS BLESSEDNESS. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Aspects of forgiveness*:—Sin—I. FORGIVEN, as a debt we are unable to pay. II. COVERED, as an object not to be looked upon by a holy God (Hab. i. 13). III. NOT IMPUTED, as a crime deserving eternal death (chap. vi. 23). (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) *Forgiveness of sin*:—True happiness consists not in beauty, honour, riches (the world's trinity), but in the forgiveness of sin. The Hebrew word signifies to carry out of sight (Jer. l. 20). This blessing is the foundation for all other mercies. I. IT IS AN ACT OF GOD'S FREE GRACE. The Greek word deciphers the original of pardon: it ariseth not from anything inherent in us, but is the pure result of free grace (Isa. xliii. 25). When a creditor forgives a debtor, he does it freely. Paul cries out (1 Tim. i. 13), "I obtained mercy" (Gr., "I was be-mercied"). He who is pardoned is all bestowed with mercy. When God pardons a sinner, He does not pay a debt, but gives a legacy. II. IT IS A REMISSION OF GUILT AND PENALTY. Guilt cries for justice, but in remission God indulges the sinner. He seems to say, Though thou hast fallen into the hands of justice and deservest to die, yet I will absolve thee, and whatever is

charged upon thee shall be discharged. III. IT IS THROUGH THE BLOOD OF CHRIST. Free grace is the impulsive cause; Christ's blood is the meritorious (Heb. ix. 22). Justice would be revenged either on the sinner or on the surety. Every pardon is the price of blood. IV. IT MUST BE PRECEDED BY REPENTANCE. Therefore both are linked together (Luke xxiv. 47). Not that repentance merits forgiveness: Christ's blood must wash our tears; but repentance is a qualification though not a cause. He who is humbled for sin will the more value pardoning mercy. V. GOD HAVING FORGIVEN SIN WILL CALL IT NO MORE INTO REMEMBRANCE (Jer. xxxi. 34). The Lord will make an act of indemnity. He will not upbraid us with former unkindnesses, or sue us with a cancelled boud (Micah vii. 19). Sin shall not be cast into the sea as a cork which riseth up again, but as lead which sinks to the bottom. (*T. Watson.*) *The blessedness of conscious forgiveness*:—There is no true felicity but what is enjoyed, and felicity cannot be enjoyed unless it is felt; and it cannot be felt unless a man know himself to be in possession of it; and a man cannot know himself to be in possession of it if he doubt whether he has it or not; and therefore this doubting of the remission of sins is contrary to true felicity, and is nothing else but a torment of the conscience. For a man cannot doubt whether his sins are pardoned or not, but the thought of his sin will strike a great fear in him; but the assurance of his pardon will fill him with joy unspeakable. (*W. Perkin.*) *Iniquities forgiven*:—Sometimes men complain of the doctrine of a regenerated life as if it were a requisition; it is not—it is a refuge. Oh, what would not a criminal who, at thirty-five years of age, found himself stung with disgrace, and overwhelmed with odium, give if, in the policy of human society, there should be any method by which he could begin back again, as if he had not begun at all, and with all his accumulated experience build his character anew! But in the economy of God in Christianity there is such a thing as a man at fifty and sixty years of age—hoary-headed in transgression, deeply defiled, struck through and through with the fast colours of depravity—having a chance to become a true child again. God sets a partition wall between him and past transgressions, and says, "I will remember them no more for ever." (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The blessedness of forgiveness*:—It is a blessed thing for a man to have all his sins forgiven, and thus to be rescued from the curse of a broken law, and the apprehension of future wrath—and that blessedness is yours. It is a blessed thing for an apostate, alienated creature to be reconciled to the great Creator, and, in the spirit of adoption, to look up to Him as his Father, to whose favour he has been graciously restored, and from whom he shall be estranged no more—and that blessedness is yours. It is a blessed thing to be delivered from the tyranny of unholy passions, and from the dominion of an ungodly world, and to come into the glorious liberty of the moral nature, wherewith Christ makes His people free—and that blessedness is yours. It is a blessed thing to look abroad upon the face of nature, and after gazing with a delighted eye on the beauties that adorn the earth, and on the magnificence that covers the heavens, to rejoice in them as the works of Him who has called you back to the walk, and the privileges of His children, and to say with the glow of filial affection, "My Father made them all"—and that blessedness is yours. It is a blessed thing, amidst the trials, and difficulties, and distresses with which humanity has to struggle in this weary world, to be upheld by Divine power, to be guided by infinite wisdom, to be cheered by heavenly consolations, and to gather righteousness and joy even from the scene of tribulation in which you dwell—and that blessedness is yours. It is a blessed thing to be able to contemplate death, without being subject to the bondage of fear, to anticipate the grave as a resting-place from sin and sorrow, to lie down in its peaceful bosom, with a prospect of a resurrection to life and immortality—and that blessedness is yours. It is a blessed thing, when one looks forward to the judgment and to eternity which await us all, to realise in Him who is to pronounce our doom the Saviour to whom we have committed the keeping of our souls, and in whose blood we are already washed from our sins, and to cherish the hope founded on His own faithful promise, that the portion assigned us is everlasting life—and that blessedness is yours. And, if in this state of darkness and imperfection, where our views are too often clouded, and our faith too often grows feeble, and the heart too often forgets the Rock on which it has placed its confidence for eternity—if, in these circumstances, it is a blessed thing to have access to those ordinances which have been appointed for refreshing our decayed spirits, for casting a clearer light upon the path of our pilgrimage, for bringing us nearer to the fountain of grace and comfort, and for reviving and strengthening "the things that are ready to die"—that blessedness also is yours.

(*A. Thomson, D.D.*) **And whose sin is covered.**—*The covering of sin*:—There is a covering of sin which proves a curse (Prov. xxviii. 13), which consists in not confessing it, or denying it—Gehazi's covering, which was by a lie; and by justifying ourselves in it. All these are evil coverings, and he that thus covereth his sin shall not prosper. But there is a blessed covering of sin, when God hides it out of sight by forgiving it. (*R. Alleine.*) **Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.**—*How does the non-imputation of sin involve and imply the imputation of righteousness?*—Because—I. THERE IS NO VACUUM IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD. As Dean Alford says, "There is no negative state of innocence—none intermediate between acceptance for righteousness and rejection for sin." II. THE NEGATIVE PROCESS OF REMISSION OF SIN AND THE POSITIVE PROCESS OF IMPUTATION OF RIGHTEOUSNESS ARE REALLY ONE, and only capable of being separated in thought. To say that the bucket has been let down into the well when not dry is the same as to say that the bucket is full of water. III. BOTH OF THESE PROCESSES PRESUPPOSE EACH OTHER, like the rising of one scale presupposes the falling of the other, and *vice versâ*. Righteousness could not be imputed unless sin be forgiven; while sin could only be forgiven in view of the righteousness provided and imputed. (*C. Neil, M.A.*) *The blessedness of justification*:—Pardon of sin is the general wish of gospel hearers; and it is also the general hope of all, live as they may. But bare wishes and hopes effect nothing; they do not prevail over sinners in general to seek for pardon in God's appointed way; and yet they are generally blessed who are pardoned. I. THE MAN WHO IS PARDONED IS BLESSED—1. With respect to God in the person of the Father, as the moral Governor, and as the God of salvation. God has forgiven all his sins—past, present, and to come. 2. He is blessed by God, in the person of the Son, with perfect Christian liberty and freedom from all the demands of law and justice. 3. He is blessed by God the Holy Ghost, who effects that work in him by which he receives Christ, and the pardon of sin with Him; and the Spirit makes his body a temple to dwell in. 4. He is blessed with perfect deliverance from all danger by Satan, that cruel and bitter enemy who has destroyed so many. 5. He is blessed with perfect deliverance from the danger of sin, which has been the ruin of all who have perished, and will be the ruin of all who shall perish. 6. He is blessed with deliverance from the second death. 7. He is graciously blessed with grace in the heart. This is the leaven which will not cease. Every grace now takes root in the soul; and the believer learns to exercise each in its proper place. 8. Now he can lay hold of the promises in Christ as his own; and, while he can act every spiritual grace in measure and degree, he lives by faith in the Lord Jesus, and has an interest in "the great and precious promises, by which he is made partaker of the Divine nature," and is blessed with the enjoyment of all the promises, which "all in Christ are yea, and in Him amen, unto the glory of God by us." 9. He is blessed with the law of God "written in his heart," and has a right to enjoy all the blessings of the covenant which is "ordered in all things and sure." He is daily conforming more and more to the Divine image, and is daily more and more "made meet to be partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light." II. THE MEANS BY WHICH THIS BLESSEDNESS IS OBTAINED ON OUR PART IS FAITH. 1. To ascertain this principle we must consider the doctrine of regeneration, by which we understand a saving change effected in the believer by the gracious influences and operations of the Holy Spirit, for Christ's sake. 2. When this saving change is effected, the believer is considered in Scripture as "a new creature"—a "new man"—"created in Christ Jesus unto good works"; and the confidence and reliance of this new man upon the Lord Jesus Christ is called faith. (*Jas. Kidd, D.D.*) *Non-imputation of sin*:—Mr. Lyford, a Puritan divine, a few days previous to his death, being desired by his friends to give them some account of his hopes, replied, "I will let you know how it is with me, and on what ground I stand. Here is the great punishment of sin on the one hand; and here am I, a poor sinful creature, on the other; but this is my comfort, the covenant of grace, established upon so many sure promises, hath satisfied all. The act of oblivion passed in heaven is, 'I will forgive their iniquities, and their sins will I remember no more, saith the Lord.' This is the blessed privilege of all within the covenant, of whom I am one. . . . I know my interest in Christ. . . . Therefore my sins, being laid on Him, shall never be charged on me."

Vers. 9–12. **Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only? . . . Abraham . . . received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised.**—*Circumcision—sacramental efficacy and*

infant baptism:—Rightly have all Protestant churches maintained, as against Romanist, that there are only two sacraments, "symbolic acts, instituted by Christ Himself, and enjoined upon all His followers to the end of time." Baptism takes the place of circumcision as the rite of initiation into the Church—it is "the circumcision of Christ" (Col. ii. 11, 12). And the eucharist succeeds to the passover, in connection with that redemptive act to typify which the passover was instituted (1 Cor. v. 7, 8). The eucharist itself has become a sacrifice to be offered up by priestly hands. Note—I. THE SIGNIFICANCE AND EFFICACY OF CHRISTIAN BAPTISM AS IT STANDS RELATED TO CIRCUMCISION. 1. Circumcision did not confer on Abraham the righteousness of faith, nor was it a pre-required condition of it; it was simply given as "a sign" and for "a seal" of a righteousness which was already in possession. And so of baptism. This does not itself wash away sin; it is not a condition pre-required in order to this; but it is given as "a sign" and for a Divine "seal" of the fact that, for all believers, sin has been put away by the sacrifice of Christ. 2. But the following texts may be cited in opposition: Titus iii. 5; 1 Cor. xii. 13; Rom. vi. 3; John iii. 5. All this is quite true. But the water referred to is the water of which the water in baptism is but the outward sign; which really washes away sin, and secures the answer of a good conscience towards God. What this water is, of which that in baptism is but a type (1 Pet. iii. 21); of which the prophet Ezekiel declared that by the sprinkling thereof Jehovah would cleanse His people from all their filthiness and from all their idols (Ezek. xxxvi. 25); in respect to which David made earnest request (Psa. li. 7); may be sought for in that "water of purification" which was provided by mixing with clear water from a running brook the ashes of the burnt red heifer. The great reality will be found in that mingled stream of "blood and water" which flowed on Calvary (John xix. 34; 1 John v. 6–8). That "fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness" was the atonement completed. To be "born of water" is to have the atonement effectually applied. We maintain that the water and the Spirit, in regeneration, are distinct, and produce distinct results; that the water in baptism is significant, not of the renewing of the Holy Ghost, but of the forgiveness and purgation of sin; and moreover that the purgation always precedes the renewing. And so baptism with water is always associated with the remission of sins, as that which shall remove out of the way the fatal obstruction to the incoming of the quickening Spirit (*cf.* Mark i. 4; Acts ii. 38, and xxii. 16). 3. Baptism does not itself wash away the sin. It is not the medium through which the real Divine washing is imparted. But it is a "sign" that the washing is needed, and has been provided for; and, to all believers, it is a "seal," given by Christ Himself, that the iniquity is purged. As circumcision was to Abraham, so is baptism to the believer in Jesus—he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he already had before he was circumcised. II. THE BEARING OF THIS ON INFANT BAPTISM. 1. It is maintained that the Lord Jesus gave no authority for the baptism of any but actual adult believers. It is at once admitted that, when an assembly of adult Jews or Gentiles heard the preached gospel for the first time, the rite of baptism was only to be administered to those amongst them who were prepared intelligently to make this confession of faith. But it does not follow that the children of such individuals were not to be admitted with them to this sacred rite. We know that children were so admitted into the kingdom of God amongst the Jews; as we know also that all Hebrew-born male infants were required, by Divine command, to be circumcised when eight days old. And the apostles, being Jews, would doubtless continue to act as Jews, unless expressly forbidden so to act by the Master. We know of no such prohibition. Jesus encourages the little ones to be brought to Him, for that "of such is the kingdom of God." St. Paul addresses children in the church assemblies as if they, as a matter of course, constituted part of such assemblies (Eph. vi. 1–3; Col. iii. 20). And when we read of the apostles baptizing whole households, we are not told that the infants were excluded. 2. But is not this the word of the Master, "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved"? Truly. And is it not manifest that tender infants cannot believe? Certainly. But what follows? That infants ought not to be baptized, because they cannot believe? Must it then also follow that infants, dying in infancy, cannot be saved, because that they cannot believe, and because it is written, "He that believeth not shall be damned"? But in whose right, then, do they come to inherit eternal life? In their own? What then did Jesus mean when He said, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," &c., "Ye must be born again"? According to that teaching, not even infants can enter into the kingdom of God,

except they be born of water and of the Spirit. But if they need the thing signified by baptism; if that thing has been provided for them through the great Mediator; if, though they cannot personally believe, they are graciously susceptible of that thing; and if all who die in infancy do really become participators in it, then who is he that "shall forbid water," that they should not be baptized? 3. But "they ought not to be baptized, because they cannot make a personal profession of faith." Could then the infant children of Abraham and his descendants make a personal profession of faith? Clearly not. And yet, by God's own appointment, the "sign" and "seal" of "the righteousness of faith" was to be put upon every one of them when eight days old. Yet the children of Christian parents are as capable of the righteousness of faith as were the children of Hebrew parents. 4. The principle on which some Christians proceed is to exclude as many as possible from the Church. That of the Lord and His apostles was to include as many as possible. The former said, in respect to the "little children," "Of such is the kingdom of God"; and in respect to earnest adult workers in the cause of righteousness, "He that is not against us is on our part." And one of the latter states that "the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the (believing) wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the (believing) husband"; and he adds, "Else were your children unclean; but now they are holy" (1 Cor. vii. 14). Now, children who may be pronounced "holy" must be proper subjects of baptism. Why may they not have been consecrated and sealed as holy in baptism? But, assuming that both parents and children, admitted into the Church of Christ by baptism, are present in the Church assembly, while his pastoral is being read, the apostle would have them to remember that the fact that they are thus admitted and present, even though it be through the bath of baptism, does not do away with their reciprocal obligations, but renders them still more urgently imperative. Therefore the loving words of exhortation to both (Eph. vi. 1-4). (*W. Tyson.*) *Circumcision and infant baptism*:— 1. It looks a rational system to make sure of the thing signified ere you impress the sign. We read of this one convert and that other having believed and been baptized, and this should be the order with every grown-up person. But mark how it fared with Abraham and his posterity. He believed and was circumcised; and it was laid down for a statute in Israel that all his children should be circumcised in infancy. In like manner, the first Christians believed and were baptized, and then their children. Express authority is needed to warrant a change; but it is not needed to warrant a continuation. It is this want of express authority which stamps on the opposite system a character of innovation. When once bidden to walk in a straight line, it does not require the successive impulse of new biddings to make us persevere in it. But it would require a new bidding to justify our going off from the line. Had the mode of infant baptism sprung up as a new piece of sectarianism, it would not have escaped notice. But there is no record of its ever having entered amongst us as a novelty; and we have therefore the strongest reason for believing that it has come down in one uncontrolled tide of example and observation from the days of the apostles. And if they have not given us any authority for it, they at least, had it been wrong, and when they saw that whole families of discipleship were getting into this style of observation, would have interposed and lifted up the voice of their authority against it. But we read of no such interdict. We have therefore the testimony of apostolic silence in favour of infant baptism. 2. But is it not wrong when the sign and the thing signified do not go together? Yes. In the case of an adult the thing signified should precede the sign. But in the case of an infant the sign precedes the thing signified. The former has been impressed upon him by the will of his parent, and the latter remains to be worked within him by the care of his parent. If he do not put forth this care, he is in the fault. He is like the steward who is entrusted by his superior with the subscription of his name to a space of blank paper, on the understanding that it was to be filled up in a particular way, agreeable to the will of his lord; and, instead of doing so, has filled it up with matter of a different import altogether. The infant, with its mind unfilled and unfurnished, has been put by the God of providence into his hands; and after the baptism which he himself hath craved, it has been again made over to him with the signature of Christian discipleship, and, by his own consent, impressed upon it; and he, by failing to grave the characters of discipleship upon it, hath unworthily betrayed the trust that was reposed in him. The worthies of the Old Testament circumcised their children in infancy, and the mark of separation reminded them of their duty to rear them as a holy generation; and many a Hebrew parent was solemnised by this observance to say, like Joshua,

that whatever others should do, he with all his house should fear the Lord; and this was the testimony of God to Abraham, that He knew him, that he would bring up his children after him in all the ways that he had himself been taught; and it was the commandment of God to His servants of old, that they should teach their children diligently of the loyalty and gratitude that should be rendered to the God of Israel. And if this be enough to rationalise the infant circumcision of the Jews, it is equally enough to rationalise the infant baptism of Christians. The parent of our day, who feels as he ought, will feel himself in conscience to be solemnly charged that the infant whom he has held up to the baptism of Christianity, he should bring up in the belief of Christianity. It is well that there should be one sacrament in behalf of the grown-up disciple, for the solemn avowal of his Christianity before men, and the very participation of which binds more closely about his conscience all the duties and all the consistencies of the gospel. But it is also well that there should be another sacrament, the place of which in his history is at the period of his infancy, and the obligation of which is felt, not by his conscience still in embryo, but by the conscience of him whose business is to develop and to guard and to nurture its yet unawakened sensibilities. This is like removing baptism upward on a higher vantage ground. It is assigning for it a station of command and of custody at the very fountain-head of moral influence. 3. Baptism, viewed as a seal, marks the promise of God, to grant the righteousness of faith to him who is impressed by it; but, viewed as a sign, it marks the existence of this faith. But if it be not a true sign, it is not an obligatory seal. He who believes and is baptized shall be saved. But he who is baptized and believes not shall be damned. It is not the circumcision which availeth, but a new creature. It is not the baptism which availeth, but the answer of a good conscience. God hath given a terrible demonstration of the utter worthlessness of a sign that is deceitful, and hath let us know that on that event as a seal it is dissolved. When a whole circumcised nation lost the spirit, though they retained the letter of the ordinance, He swept it away. Beware, ye parents, who regularly hold up your children to the baptism of water, and make their baptism by the Holy Ghost no part of your concern or of your prayer—lest you thereby swell the judgments of the land, and bring down the sore displeasure of God upon your families. (*T. Chalmers, D.D.*) *The spiritual family of Abraham*:—Under the old covenant the ground of man's justification with God was the same as it is under the new, viz., faith. Ordinances varied, being but helpful accessories leading to, or resting upon, the one changeless basis of man's justification. I. FAITH ALONE COULD ADMIT JEWS OR GENTILES TO THE SPIRITUAL FAMILY OF ABRAHAM. 1. Faith was Abraham's sole ground of acceptance (ver. 9; Gal. iii. 6). The promises (Gen. xii. 3: xvii. 4–6) preceded his circumcision. 2. Faith was indispensable for the Jews, although descended from Abraham, and circumcised (ver. 12; chap. ii. 28, 29; ix. 6, 7). For neglecting this truth, and unduly trusting in their privileges of birth and circumcision, Christ rebuked them in Matt, iii. 9; John viii. 39; and in the parable of Dives and Lazarus (Luke xvi. 22, 23). 3. Faith admits Gentiles (ver. 11) into the family of Abraham (Gal. iii. 7, 9, 29), "who is the father of us all" (ver. 16). Zaccheus was thus admitted (Luke xix. 9). II. CIRCUMCISION HAD A TWOFOLD ASPECT. 1. To Abraham and adult proselytes it was a seal of antecedent faith (ver. 11). 2. To infants receiving it, as did Jesus when eight days old, it was the seal of their admission into covenant with God; an incentive and pledge of future faith. If a child did not receive it, "he hath broken My covenant" (Gen. xvii. 14). III. ANALOGY BETWEEN BAPTISM AND CIRCUMCISION. 1. St. Paul implies this when naming baptism (Gal. iii. 26, 27, 29) in connection with the Christian's adoption into the family of Abraham and heirship of the promises. 2. Thus, to adults, baptism is, as circumcision was to Abraham, a seal of antecedent faith (Mark xvi. 16; Acts ii. 41; viii. 12, 37). 3. To infants, baptism is, like circumcision, the seal of admission to covenant; pledge and incentive to future faith. The analogy of Gen. xvii. 14, "he hath broken My covenant," bears strongly on need of infant baptism. Conclusion: 1. Examine ourselves as to performance of covenant promises made to God in baptism and renewed in confirmation. 2. Shun Jewish error of resting on rites and on privileges while ignoring the spiritual root of the matter—faith (Gal. v. 6; vi. 15, 16). (*A. Scott Robertson, M.A.*) **That he might be the father of all them that believe.**—*The father of the faithful*:—Two points are involved in this name. I. ABRAHAM WAS HIMSELF FAITHFUL. In him was most distinctly manifested the gift of faith. In him, long before Luther, long before Paul, was it proclaimed that man is "justified by faith." "Abraham believed in the Lord and He counted it to

him for righteousness" (ver. xiii.; *cf.* Gen. xv. 6). Powerful as is the effect of these words when we read them in their untarnished freshness, they gain immensely in their original language, to which neither Greek nor German, much less Latin or English, can furnish any full equivalent. "He supported himself, he built himself up, he reposed as a child in his mother's arms" in the strength of God; in God whom he did not see, more than in the giant empires of the earth, and the bright lights of heaven, or the claims of tribe and kindred, which were always before him. It was counted to him for "righteousness." "It was counted to him," and his history seals and ratifies the result. His faith transpires not in any outward profession, but precisely in that which far more nearly concerns him and every one of us, in his prayers, in his actions, in the justice, the uprightness, the elevation of soul and spirit which sent him on his way straightforward without turning to the right hand or to the left. His belief, vague and scanty as it may be, even in the most elementary truths of religion, is implied rather than stated. It is in him simply "the evidence of things not seen," "the hope against hope." His faith in the literal sense of the word is only known to us through "his works." He and his descendants are blessed, not, as in the Koran, because of his adoption of the first article of the creed of Islam, but because he obeyed (Gen. xxvi. 5; xviii. 19). II. HE WAS THE FATHER OF THE FAITHFUL. In modern times it has too often happened that the doctrine of "faith" has had a narrowing effect on those who have strongly embraced it. It was far otherwise with Paul, to whom it was almost synonymous with the admission of the Gentiles. It was far otherwise with its first exemplification in Abraham. His very name implies this universal mission. "The Father" (Abba); "The lofty Father" (Ab-ram); "The Father of multitudes" (Ab-raham); the venerable parent, surveying, as if from that lofty eminence, the countless progeny who should look up to him as their spiritual ancestor. He was, first, the Father of the chosen people, the people who by reason of their faith, though in one sense the narrowest of all ancient nations, yet were also the widest in their diffusion and dispersion—the only people that, by virtue of an invisible bond, maintained their national union in spite of local difference and division. But he was much more than the father of the chosen people. It is not a mere allegory or accidental application of separate texts, that justify St. Paul's appeal to the case of Abraham as including within itself the faith of the whole Gentile world. His position, as represented to us in the original records, is of itself far wider than that of any merely Jewish saint or national hero; and he is, on that ground alone, the fitting image to meet us at the outset of the history of the Church. He was "the Hebrew" to whom the Arabian no less than the Israelite tribes look back as to their first ancestor. The scene of his life, as of the patriarchs generally, breathes a larger atmosphere than the contracted limits of Palestine—the free air of Mesopotamia and the desert—the neighbourhood of the vast shapes of the Babylonian monarchy on one side, and of Egypt on the other. He is not an ecclesiastic, not an ascetic, not even a learned sage, but a chief, a shepherd, a warrior, full of all the affections and interests of family and household, and wealth and power, and for this very reason the first true type of the religious man, the first representative of the whole Church of God. This universality of Abraham's faith—this elevation, this multitudinousness of the patriarchial character has also found a response in later traditions and feelings. When Mohammed attacks the idolatry of the Arabs, he justifies himself by arguing, almost in the language of Paul, that the faith he proclaimed in one supreme God was no new belief, but was identical with the ancient religion of their first father Abraham. When the Emperor Alexander Severus placed in the chapel of his palace the statues of the choice spirits of all times, Abraham rather than Moses was selected as the centre, doubtless, of a more extended circle of sacred associations. (*Dean Stanley.*) *Abraham's spiritual fatherhood:*—This idea was quite a familiar one to St. Paul. In Galatians he expands and illustrates it still more fully. It represents Abraham—I. AS A GRAND TYPE OR EXAMPLE OF BELIEVERS (*cf.* Gen. iv. 20, 21). II. AS THE FIRST OF THE SAINTS. No doubt Abel, Enoch, Noah, and Shem were saved by faith, but still it was not until the time of Abraham that one was chosen in whom this great truth should be clearly and conspicuously exemplified. III. AS THE FEDERAL HEAD of the faithful. All believers are accounted as his seed, so that the promises made to him are also made to them, and the covenant entered into with him is also the same as that entered into with them. We have now another head, that is, Christ, and in Him the promises of God assume a far higher and more spiritual aspect than they did in regard to Abraham; but still the headship of Abraham is not destroyed, but

absorbed. So far as God's covenant with him extended, it is still firm and binding, and it belongs to all his seed, even all believers. It was a germ, out of which has sprung the higher covenant of God in Christ; but still we shall find in it much which may excite our interest, provoke our gratitude and determine our conduct. (*T. G. Horton.*) *The true children of Abraham*:—I. HOW THEY ARE RECKONED. 1. Not by birth. 2. Not according to law. 3. But by faith. II. HOW THEY ARE DISTINGUISHED. 1. By the true circumcision of the heart, which is both a sign and a seal of the righteousness of faith. 2. By walking in the steps of Abraham's faith. III. WHAT ARE THEIR PRIVILEGES. 1. Adoption. 2. Inheritance. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) **Who walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham.**—*The faith of Abraham*:—This was—1. A simple child-like dependence on the naked word of God. 2. An acceptance of and trust in God's promised Saviour. 3. A renouncing of his own works as meritorious. 4. A faith that wrought by love, making him the friend of God (James ii. 23). 5. One that overcame the world, leading him to seek a better country (Heb. xi. 10). 6. One that evidenced its reality by a self-denying obedience (Heb. xi. 8, 17; James ii. 21). True Abrahamic faith is love in the battle-field. (*T. Robinson, D.D.*)

Vers. 13-15. **For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not . . . through the law.**—*The promise made to Abraham*:—I. THE PROMISE, "that he should be heir of the world," was made not entirely to Abraham, but to his seed also (ver. 16). This promise included—1. Both the earthly and the heavenly Canaan, for—(1) Abraham and the other believing patriarchs so understood it (Heb. xi. 8-10, 13-16). But no promise of it is to be found unless it was couched under that of the earthly Canaan as a type. The whole of the gospel revelation was then, and for many ages afterwards, under the veil of figurative language, and of typical rites, objects, and events. But that the promise was given was manifest from the passages from Hebrews just quoted, and also from Heb. vi. 12. (2) Believers in all ages are called heirs according to the promise of inheritance given to Abraham (Gal. iii. 18, 10; Heb. vi. 17-20). 2. But the word "world" means the whole inhabited earth that was to be the possession of Abraham's seed; and the possession of Canaan was but a small prelude to it. There is an obvious difference between a right and actual possession. The whole earth may be, by the gift or promise of God, the property of this seed, although they may not be for a good while invested with the actual possession of it. The view of "the promise," therefore, must be understood of the seed, collectively considered. Were we speaking of the wars in any former period of British history, we should say, without hesitation, "We were successful in such a battle." So we may, with perfect propriety, say that the promise spoken of is to us because it shall be verified to the seed of which we are a part. The following scriptures countenance this view of the promise (Psa. ii. 8, lxxii. 8; Dan. vii. 27; Isa. liv. 3). When "the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea," and thus the declaration be fulfilled, "in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed"; then the promise, that Abraham should be "the heir of the world," shall be fully verified, the whole earth becoming the possession of his seed—the people of God. II. In considering the extent of the promise, I have necessarily led you to anticipate my view of THE SEED HERE SPOKEN OF. Of this we have a plain infallible interpretation (Gal. iii. 16). That the name "Christ" is sometimes used as inclusive of His people, the Head being intended to express the whole body connected with it is evident from 1 Cor. xii. 12. It is so used in Galatians. For while Christ is here said to be the Seed, to whom the promises were made, it is said that believers are "Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise." And the reason of their being so called is their being "all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 28, 29). The passage before us likewise makes the same thing evident. The seed, in this verse, is that of which Abraham is the father, in the spiritual sense, even the seed spoken of in vers. 11, 12 consisting of "all them that believe." These passages show, then, that the promises contained in the Abrahamic covenant—1. Were both made to the same seed: "To Abraham and his seed were the promises made." There is no hint of the distinction that the temporal promise was made to the fleshly seed as such, and the spiritual promise to the spiritual seed as such. But the promises of that covenant, without difference, are declared to have been made, "not to seeds as to many, but as of one, 'and to thy Seed' which is Christ." 2. And if this be a just view of the matter, it follows that these promises were made on the same footing. None of them were given on the ground of law or personal obedience, but all by grace (Gal. iii. 16). Which

leads us to consider—III. THE GROUND ON WHICH THE PROMISE RESTS. The inheritance must certainly mean, in the first instance, the earthly inheritance; that which is literally specified in the promise. And it must have continued to be held not by law, but on the footing of the original grant made to Abraham and to the one seed here mentioned. The heavenly inheritance is admitted to be entirely a matter of free promise, and never can become, as to us, a matter or right on the ground of personal obedience or of law. Now, if it was otherwise with the earthly inheritance, the type fails in one of the most important and striking points of resemblance. But we are not left to inference. Recorded facts appear in perfect harmony with the apostle's statement. 1. What was the reason why the Israelites wandered forty years in the wilderness till the rebellious generation was consumed? It was unbelief (Heb. iii. 18, 19; iv, 2) which amounted to a rejection of the Word of God and a rejection of God Himself, as the God of their fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. 2. The Israelites are, indeed, spoken of as continuing to hold the land of Canaan in possession through obedience; but by this obedience we must understand "the obedience" of faith, that is, obedience springing from and evincing faith, for, "if the inheritance be of the law it is no more of promise"; and "if they who are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect." These expressions stand in perfect opposition to the idea of the land of Canaan being ever held as the reward of legal obedience. Many passages, accordingly, describe the obedience required of Israel as being inward and spiritual subjection, manifested by outward (Deut. x. 12-22; vi. 1-19). And such subjection is the fruit and evidence of faith. 3. The reason why the Jews were, with such awful judgments, at length cast out from the Land of Promise, and now continue "a proverb, and a bye-word, and a hissing among all nations," corresponds with these ideas. It was unbelief—rejection of the gospel of Jesus Christ (Rom. xi. 20, &c.; Luke xix. 41-44; Matt. xxiii. 34-39; 1 Thess. ii. 15, 16; Acts iii. 23, &c.). The curses which Moses so many hundred years before had denounced against them, if they should prove disobedient, were verified on account of their unbelief. Thus it appears that the promise was originally "through faith"—that it was as professors of Abraham's faith that the Israelites entered on the possession of Canaan—that the possession was continued through "the obedience of faith"—and that, on account of the opposite disobedience, judgments were threatened and inflicted. By faith the inheritance was obtained; by faith it was held; and by unbelief it was lost. (*R. Wardlaw, D.D.*) *Abraham's privilege and how he attained it:*—I. THE POSITION WHICH ABRAHAM ATTAINED. 1. He was made by God "the heir of the world." We must look upon the patriarch—(1) As the natural head of the nation. (2) As the federal head of a peculiar people, for all believers are styled the children of Abraham. "They which are of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham." "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." 2. It is necessary to keep these distinct, otherwise we shall confound the blessings peculiar to Israel with blessings peculiar to Christians. (2) There are certain "blessings" of a substantial nature, every one of which became secured by charter to the house of Israel. Do we not find Scripture portraying the beauty, the glory, and the fertility of that land which God was to give to His people? Do we not find promises of temporal protection—all of which are bestowed upon the natural children of Abraham? (2) Now ask whether this presents to us the blessings peculiar to the spiritual people? Where have we in the Word of God assurances that prosperity and worldly distinction are to belong to them? That they may belong to their condition is possible, but that they are not a necessary part of their present condition is very certain. A man may be a Lazarus in rags, lying at the rich man's gate, and he may be a child of God. But the blessings that God has prepared for the spiritual progeny of Abraham are those that, like so many stars in the firmament, are found to be studded in the rich constellations of this Epistle. 3. Both these sets of blessings were dependent upon Jesus; for Abraham was not the heir of the world absolutely; he was the figurative heir, the representative and the type of a greater One, whom God appointed Head of all things. The truth is this, that the world in its bankruptcy is to be reinstated by Christ and Christ alone. He is not only the world's grand Trustee, He is the world's mighty Heir. Everything has come into His hands; all power is given unto Him in heaven and in earth; and, therefore, as we have seen these double blessings, so we say that there is a double touchstone with regard to them. (1) Christ was the Touchstone to Israel. Its fortunes hung trembling in the balance when the Lord Jesus Christ came, and who can question that if Israel had received the long-expected One with open arms

Israel would have been the chief among the nations still? But it was a stumbling-stone, and they stumbled at it and missed the pathway to happiness, to glory, and to continued national blessedness, simply by the rejection of Christ. "Jerusalem, Jerusalem . . . how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not; . . . your house is left unto you desolate." (2) The same touchstone tells upon a believer still. Everything turns upon this: will you or will you not have Christ? II. How IT WAS HE BECAME POSSESSED OF IT. 1. It was impossible for him to attain it by law, for between Abraham and the giving of the law there was a long lapse of four hundred and thirty years. If the agency was not in existence the position could not be attributable to it. And even if the law had been in existence, Abraham by the law even then could not have become possessed of the position, because the condition of the law is faultless obedience, and Abraham was not faultless. Abraham could not have claimed his position by virtue of a law which he never could keep. 2. But there is another process by which men look for spiritual advantage, viz., through ordinances. You shall find men at the present day who will tell you that baptism is an ordinance of justification. Now circumcision is the correlative of baptism, and yet we find the apostle here laying particular stress on this, that Abraham's position was not dependent on his circumcision because the circumcision came subsequent to his gaining the position. 3. And then when we pass from the negative to the positive and ask ourselves how it was that he obtained it, the answer is, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." It is this that makes the simplicity of salvation! Whether in times patriarchal, Jewish, or Christian man has no other resort; and an appeal to the mercy of God through Christ Jesus is after all but putting into exercise that process whereby "being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (*Dean Boyd.*) *Abraham the heir of the world only through the righteousness of faith*:—Note—I. THE PROMISED INHERITANCE—"THE WORLD." 1. But in turning to the original covenant (Gen. xvii.), we find that only "the land of Canaan" was promised (Gen. xv. 18). Along with that, however, are the assurances of Gen. xii. 3; xxii. 15–18. On these rest all the predictions of the kingdom of the Messiah, even as these have their backward reference to Gen. iii. 15. Which also had its implicit reference to the original place of dominion over all the earth from which man by transgression fell. Of the restoration of that dominion Psa. viii. is a triumphant anticipation; while on the promise made to Abraham (Gen. xxii. 17, 18) is founded the assurance, given to the King of Zion, that Jehovah would give to Him "the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession" (Psa. ii. 8). On this also was made the similar announcements of (Psa. lxxii. 8; Zech. ix 10). And it is precisely upon this ground that St. Paul here assumes that the promise made to Abraham and his seed was a promise that they should inherit the world, of which Palestine was but a predictive type. The promise, therefore, clearly implied that so surely as the literal seed of Abraham were put in possession of the land of Canaan, so surely will the Christ Himself and His believing people, who are truly the Israel of God, be put into possession of the whole earth. For our Jesus, the seed of Abraham, shall "not fail nor be discouraged till He have set judgment in the earth," &c. (Isa. xlii. 1–4). He is the Heir of the world, and He shall yet have His inheritance. 2. But even this does not fill up or complete the promise. For that was the promise of eternal inheritance (Gen. xvii. 7, 8). Such possession is not possible in this probationary state. To Abraham himself there was given "none inheritance," though God had "promised" it (Acts vii. 5). He, and Isaac, and Jacob, who were "the heirs with him of the same promise," died without possession. Yet they lived and died in the confidence that the promise should be made good. And why? Because they looked for something better and more enduring, of which these earthly things were but the temporary types (Heb. xi. 10, 16). It was in recognition of this hope that the sublime predictions of Isaiah, concerning Messiah's kingdom, stretched out far away into the future, till they laid the foundations of and brought forth to perfection "the new heavens and the new earth" (Isa. lxv. 17, lxvi. 22; Dan. vii. 22, xii. 1–3; Heb. xi. 39, 40). In and with Christ, the Seed of Abraham and the Son of God, "whom He hath appointed heir of all things," we shall "inherit all things" (Rev. xxi.). II. THE HEIRS OF THIS INHERITANCE—Abraham and his seed. We must notice—1. Those who are not heirs, or are not included in this seed to which the promise was made. Abraham himself was not an heir nor the father of heirs, merely as a man, but only as a believing man. The promise was not made either to him or to his descendants through the law, which had no existence till some "four hundred and thirty years

after," and even if it had the promise must have been made of no effect; for the law, being transgressed, works only wrath. It was not conditional upon circumcision; for the promise was made before circumcision had been enjoined. It was not conditional upon natural descent; for then Ishmael and the sons of Keturah, and Esau with their descendents, must all have been included in the seed of promise—which they most certainly were not. Therefore the right of heirship did not pertain to the Jew as a Jew. It was needful that the nation, as a nation, should be maintained in possession of the land till the Christ should come, who was the true Seed of Abraham, and the appoined Heir of all things. But the promise apart from this would have received a true fulfilment, though the whole multitude of the seed had been gathered from amongst Gentile nations. For—2. The true heirs are the men who are made partakers of "precious faith," like that of Abraham. That promise was given to him and confirmed by an oath, as he was a believing and justified man. Had he fallen away the whole covenant must have been annulled so far as he was concerned, and his right to the inheritance cancelled. And the seed which was to share the promise and the inheritance with him was to be, not a natural, but a spiritual seed. If an Israelite attained to the righteousness of faith, then he became part of the seed of Abraham and an heir according to the promise. But the same thing might be truly affirmed of any and every Gentile who also became a believer. For "before God" Abraham is the father of all believers from amongst all nations, as it is written, "I have made thee a father of many nations." And, therefore, to whatever nation, tribe, or people they may pertain, those who have become one with Christ by faith have given to them this assurance (Gal. iii. 29). (*W. Tyson.*) **But through the righteousness of faith.**—*The righteousness of faith*:—1. There are two great streams of tendency at work on the ordering of human destinies. There is the current of things which makes for righteousness through the great universe, which is ultimately irresistible; and there lies in the mystery of human freedom the source of an effort and tendency which is ever striving against it, which brings men and human affairs into ceaseless collision with it, and which thereby fills the world with anguish and wreck. A new element is added to the anguish by the conflict which rages within man himself. The righteousness which reigns around has an awful witness within which cannot be silenced; and the inward protest is reinforced with terrible emphasis by all the misery with which unrighteousness never fails to chastise a people or a soul. Rest there cannot be while unrighteousness is regnant. The cry for righteousness is the strongest and most agonising cry of a man's awakened spirit. Till he has set himself with the stream, till he is borne up and on by the current, he cannot see even the beginning of peace. 2. There are mainly two methods in which the restoration seems feasible. There is the legal method which proceeds upon a strenuous effort of intellect and will to obey the commandment. "There stands the law against whose rigid breastwork you are constantly dashing; study it, mark well its lines, keep within its borders, and live." This method is now in full vogue in our agnostic schools. Sin is mainly ignorance; throw fresh light on things, educate, and save. By all means, is the response of the gospel; still "one thing thou lackest" if thou wouldst be saved—faith, the principle of a living rightcousness which satisfies God and satisfies the soul. The deepest principle of the Old Testament culture and discipline for man's spirit is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," &c. Loving Him we shall love His righteousness. And that the love might be profound and mastering, God lived amongst us. Was light needed, His life flooded the world with it; was love needed, the love that endured the cross-bound man by its cords to the Sufferer's heart of hearts. Was sacrifice needed, He made His soul an offering for sin, and reconciled the Father and the sinner on the basis of the perfect Sacrifice, which presented the righteousness from which man had revolted and to which man must be restored, invested in the glorious beauty and splendour of ineffable and infinite love. To believe is to open the heart to this world of purifying, uplifting, saving influence. To believe is to establish a vital link by which warm currents of quickening energy pass between the living soul and the living Saviour; so that He lives in us by His Spirit, and we live in Him. The germ of His perfect rightcousness by faith is within us; the full form of it will be developed as we grow into His likeness, behold His glory, and enter fully into the possession of His bliss. (*J. Baldwin Brown, B.A.*) **For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void.**—*Faith made void by the law*:—Law implies a right and a title; faith or grace a gift. If a person has duly purchased an estate, there is no need that he should put out his hands as a suppliant to receive the title deeds. And so if a

man looks for the heavenly inheritance by law, by compliance with the terms "This do and live," there is no longer any necessity for the kindly offices of faith which says, "Believe and live." If law enters upon the scene, faith's "occupation is gone"; it is emptied, drained of its contents, and rendered useless and worthless. (*C. Neil, M.A.*) **Because the law worketh wrath.**—*The law in its relation to salvation*:—I. IT PREPARES THE WAY. 1. It exposes sin. 2. Convinces of sin. 3. Disposes the sinner to receive mercy. II. IT CANNOT SAVE. 1. It gives no promise of mercy, and no power to obey. 2. But the more clearly it is revealed, the more powerfully it impels the sinner to Christ. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The condemning power of the law*:—The blessings which the heirs of the Divine promise receive can never be from the law, because "the law worketh wrath." To give life is in direct opposition to its very nature. To offer it to a sinner is like offering fire to a man perishing of thirst. For the innocent and obedient, indeed, it is ordained to life, and was so in the case of man before the Fall. Subsequently its operation was wrath alone. The law worketh wrath. I. IN THE OBEDIENCE IT DEMANDS. If it were a mere outward system, and referred wholly to open transgressions, it would rather encourage men to endeavour to meet its claims, that they might hope for the life which they would thus deserve. But "the law is spiritual." Such is the exceeding breadth of its requisitions, the perfect obedience which it claims, the heart-reaching power of its demands, that it charges man with guilt not only in his transgressions, but in his obedience. 1. If he loves God the law asks, "Does love rise to the full measure of the precept? Is it with all the heart," &c. If not, there is sin even in this best attainment, and so condemnation. 2. So in regard to all efforts to fulfil the commands of God. The law cannot receive the disposition in place of the act, or the desire instead of the duty. It allows no deficiency. It presents as its standard perfection of character, and denounces death as the only alternative. To this man can never attain, and so stands condemned. In thus shutting us out, however, from all hope in itself, it shuts us up to the Saviour. II. IN THE SENTENCE WHICH IT PASSES. In this, too, it urges man to flee from all attempts to obtain life by any personal satisfaction for his offences. The penalty of disobedience is death. But death is a state from which there is no return, but by the direct interposition of Divine power. Certainly God has provided a remedy but this is not in the law, or in man's obedience. It is in the perfect work and righteousness of Christ. In this man lives for ever; but in works of his own the curse abides, and the law offers no mitigation or redress. Thus it worketh wrath and wrath for ever. (*S. H. Tyng, D.D.*) *The condemning power of the law*:—Tell me, then, ye who desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? Does it say anything to you but "Do this and thou shalt live"? Does it set before you any alternative but "Cursed is he that continueth not in all things which are written in the Book of the law to do them"? Has it any other terms but these? "Do this," the wrath-working law proclaims; "Do it all from first to last and thou shalt live; but an everlasting curse awaits you if you offend in any one particular." Plead what you will, these denunciations are irreversible. You may say, "I wish to obey"; and it answers you, "Tell me not of your wishes, but do it." "I have endeavoured to obey." "Tell me not of your endeavours, but do it." "I have done it in almost every particular." "Tell me not what you have done almost; have you obeyed it altogether, and in all things?" "I have for many years obeyed it, and once only have I transgressed." "Then you are cursed; if you have offended in one point you are guilty of all. But I am sorry, I cannot regard your sorrow." "But I will reform, and never transgress again." "I care nothing for your reformation." "But I will obey perfectly in future, if I can find mercy for the past." "I can have no concern with your determinations for the future; I know no such word as mercy; my terms cannot be altered for any one. If you rise to these terms, you will have a right to life, and need no mercy. If you fall short in any one particular, nothing remains but condemnation." (*C. Simeon, M.A.*) **For where no law is, there is no transgression.**—*No law, no transgression*:—Would it not have been better, then, that man should have been left without law? Certainly not. For—(1) If there were no law there could be reward of obedience, and so the Christian religion would have lost part of its attractiveness. And—(2) It might well be that certain courses of conduct, though they could not properly be called transgression, would yet bring with them misery and suffering. I. THE GENERAL TRUTH OF THE ASSERTION. Where there is no law, there is—1. No prescribed mode of action. (1) In the physical world. Suppose that no path had ever been marked out, let us say, for a

planet, but that it had always travelled hither and thither in any direction. In such a case it could not transgress its law. To transgress is to pass over the boundaries, but with no boundaries determined that could not be. So it was when "the earth was without form and void"; before as yet out of chaos God had called the cosmos, with its light, its order, and its law. (2) In the social world. In certain low states of barbarism there is no such thing as government. No course of conduct is either prescribed or forbidden, but all actions are indifferent, so that whatever a man may do he does not transgress. (3) In the moral and spiritual world. There are in man moral distinctions, he knows what is good and what is evil. Because of this, those who have not the written law of God are, as the apostle teaches, a law unto themselves, for they have a conscience which approves or condemns. But suppose it otherwise; suppose man really did not know right from wrong; in such a case there would be neither law nor transgression. 2. No knowledge of sin. The law does not make man a transgressor, but it makes him know that he has transgressed. As Paul teaches: "I had not known sin but by the law"; "Without the law sin is dead"; "Sin is not imputed when there is no law." It prescribes righteousness, and in so doing proscribes sin. It is when the commandment comes sin revives, and is made to appear exceeding sinful. But as long as we are incapable of knowing, we are incapable of sinning. "We sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth." 3. No supreme authority to judge, to acquit or condemn. Transgression is disobedience, and this could not be except by reference to one who has authority to exact obedience. II. THE ASSERTION IN THE LIGHT OF CHRISTIANITY. So far we have referred to law generally, but we are under the highest and best law ever laid down for the guidance of human conduct—the law of Christ's love. This law is—1. Clearly stated. In earthly kingdoms it is often a very difficult thing to know what the law in a given case is; but we know the will of Christ, for we have His new commandment. 2. Widely known. Not yet universally, but wherever the gospel of Christ is preached. 3. Easily obeyed. It is not enough that a law be clearly stated and widely known. The behests of a tyrant might be that. But Christ said, "My yoke is easy." "His commandments are not grievous." The Psalmist said, "O how love I Thy law." "I love Thy commandments above gold, yea, above fine gold." And the law of Christ is better, holier, and more easily obeyed than that which the Psalmist thus esteemed. 4. Of beneficial tendency. In many earthly kingdoms there have been laws adverse to the prosperity of the subjects. But Christ's reign is both in righteousness, and for the highest benefit of His followers. They have liberty, life, peace, hope, &c. "Blessed are they that do His commandments." "In keeping of them there is great reward." III. HOW THIS OUGHT TO AFFECT OUR LIFE AND CONDUCT. The character of a people may be known by their laws. What manner of persons thus ought they to be who have become Christ's subjects? This great truth should lead to—1. Earnest solicitude. 2. Cheerful obedience. 3. Activity for the extension of Christ's rule. (*J. A. T. Skinner, B.A.*)

Ver. 16. **Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace.**—*How is salvation received:*—I. THE FACT. 1. It is of faith. And what is faith? It is taking God at His Word, and acting upon that by trusting in Him. Some of the Puritans used to divide it into three parts. (1) Self-renunciation, which is, perhaps, rather a preparation for faith than faith itself. (2) Reliance, in which a man trusts, and leaves his soul in the Saviour's hands. (3) Appropriation, by which a man takes to himself that which God presents in the promise. We shall, however, better understand what faith is as we consider—1. Abraham's case. (1) He believed the promise of God firmly and practically. He was in Chaldea when the Lord promised to give him a land and a seed, and straightway he went forth, not knowing whither he went. When he came into Canaan he had no settled resting-place, but still believed that the land wherein he sojourned as a stranger was his own. God promised to give him a seed, and he waited till he was a hundred years old and Sarah ninety when Isaac was born. Nor did he doubt when the Lord bade him take Isaac and offer him up as a sacrifice. (2) He had an eye to the central point of the promise, the Messiah. When the Lord said that He would make him a blessing, and in him should all the nations of the earth be blessed, I do not suppose Abraham saw all the fulness of that marvellous word; but our Lord declares, "Abraham saw My day and was glad." (3) He considered no difficulties whatever (vers. 18, 19). These were terrible difficulties; they were for God to consider, and not for him. (4) He gave glory to God (ver. 20). God had promised, and he

treated the Lord's promise with becoming reverence. He knew that Jehovah is not a man that He should lie, nor the son of man that He should repent. Abraham glorified the truth of God, and at the same time he glorified His power. It belongs to puny man to speak more than he can do; but is anything too hard for the Lord? (5) He rested upon the Lord alone (ver. 21). There was nothing whatever in his house, his wife, himself, or anywhere else, which could guarantee the fulfilment of the promise. He had only God to look to, and what could a man have more? And this is the kind of faith which God loves and honours, which wants no signs, evidences, or other buttresses to support the word of the Lord. Dictum! Factum! These twain are one with the Most High. 2. The faith of every man who is saved must be of this character. When we are saved—(1) We take the promise of God and depend upon it. (2) We believe in God over the head of great difficulties. If it was hard for Abraham to believe that a son should be born unto him, methinks it is harder for a sinner to believe the hopeful things which the gospel prophesies unto him. (*a*) Can the gospel message be true to such a worthless rebel as I am? Despite the trepidation of the awakened spirit, the Holy Spirit enables it to quiet itself with the firm persuasion that God for Christ's sake doth put away its sin. (*b*) Another miracle is also believed in, namely, regeneration. This is quite as great an act of faith as Abraham to believe in the birth of a child by parents who were advanced in years. The faith which saves believes in Jesus and obtains power to become children of God and strength to conquer sin. (*c*) Does it not seem incredible that such feeble, foolish creatures as we should continue in faith? Yet this we must do; and the faith which saves enables us to believe that we shall persevere, for it is persuaded that the Redeemer is able to keep that which we have committed unto Him. (*d*) We believe, according to God's promise, that we shall one day be "without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing." "Without fault before the throne of God." But how is this to be? Surely our confidence is, that He who has promised it is able to perform it. (3) This saving faith rests in the power of God as manifested in Jesus (vers. 24, 25). It is not to us a thing incredible that God should raise the dead; we therefore believe that because God has raised the dead He hath raised us also from our death in sin, and that He will raise our bodies too. II. THE FIRST REASON WHY GOD HAS CHOSEN TO MAKE SALVATION BY FAITH, "that it might be of grace." He might have willed to make the condition of salvation a mitigated form of works. If He had done so it would not have been of grace. As water and oil will not mix, and as fire and water will not lie down side by side in quiet, so neither will the principle of merit and the principle of free favour. Grace and faith are congruous, and will draw together in the same chariot, but grace and merit pull opposite ways, and therefore God has not chosen to yoke them together. 1. In Abraham's case, inasmuch as he received the blessing by faith, it is very evident that it was of grace. No man thinks of Abraham as a self-justifying person, saying, "God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men." His name is not "the father of the innocent," but "the father of the faithful." 2. Inasmuch as we are saved by faith, every believer is made to see for himself that, in his own instance, it is grace. Believing is such a self-renunciating act that no man who looks for eternal life thereby ever talked about his own merits. He cannot get away from simple faith, for the moment he attempts to do so he feels the ground going from under him. 3. Through the prominence given to faith, the truth of salvation by grace is so conspicuously revealed that even the outside world are compelled to see it, though the only result may be to make them cavil. 4. Moreover, faith never did clash with grace yet. When the sinner comes and trusts to Christ, and Christ saith to him, "I forgive thee freely by My grace," faith says, "O Lord, that is what I want." "But if I give thee everlasting life it will not be because thou deservest it, but for Mine own name's sake." Faith replies, "O Lord, that also is precisely as I desire." 5. Faith is the child of grace. The believer knows that his faith is not a seed indigenous to the soil of his heart, but an exotic planted there by Divine wisdom; and he knows too that if the Lord does not nourish it his faith will die like a withered flower. Faith is begotten and sustained by a power not less mighty than that which raised our Lord from the dead. III. A FURTHER REASON. "To the end that the promise might be sure to all the seed." For—1. It could not have been sure to us Gentiles by the law, because we were not under the law of Moses at all. The Jew, coming under the law, might have been reached by a legal method, but we who are Gentiles would have been altogether shut out. Therefore grace chooses to bless us by faith in order that the Gentile may partake of the blessing of the covenant as well as the Jew. 2. The other

method has failed already in every case. We have all broken the law already, and so have put ourselves beyond the power of ever receiving blessing as a reward of merit. What remaineth, then, if we are to be saved at all, but that it should be of faith? 3. It is of faith that it might be sure. Under the system of works nothing is sure. Suppose you were under a covenant of salvation by works, and you had fulfilled those works up till now, yet you would not be sure. But after all you have done for these long years you may lose everything before you have finished your next meal. But see the excellence of salvation by grace, for when you reach the ground of faith you are upon *terra firma*. 4. If the promise had been made to works there are some of the seed to whom most evidently it never could come. If salvation to the dying thief must come by works, how can he be saved? but he believed, cast a saving eye upon the Lord Jesus and said, "Lord, remember me," and the promise was most sure to him, for the answer was, "To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Salvation of faith, that it might be by grace*:—I. Because FAITH IS THE GIFT OF GOD, not the recompense of any previous desert. Were it otherwise, all would live and die in unbelief; for no one could deserve the gift, and no one would believe on whom it was not bestowed. Faith is a coming to Christ for life; but this coming is alone the effect of Divine influence (John vi. 65). The habit, the exercise, and the increase of faith, are all from God. II. FAITH IS A SUPPLIANT GRACE, sensible of its own poverty and inefficacy (Prov. xviii. 23). One of the most modest, and yet importunate suppliants was the woman of Canaan; and our Lord attributed her importunity to the strength of her faith. The prayer of faith is the least assuming, the most submissive. Its language is, Lord, save, or I perish. God be merciful to me a sinner. III. FAITH RECEIVES ALL FROM CHRIST; it is the empty hand extended towards Him for a full and complete salvation. Love may be said indeed to give, but it is the office of faith only to receive. Faith receives the truths and blessings of Christ Himself; and is constantly receiving out of His fulness, even grace for grace. It is also of the nature of faith to receive all with humility and self-abasement (Psa. cxv. 1; chap. iii. 27). IV. THE ENTIRE DEPENDENCE OF FAITH UPON THE WILL OF GOD. Its language is, Let Him do with me as seemeth good in His sight. If I am condemned, the sentence will be just; if saved, it will be owing to a multitude of tender mercies. Its hand is laid, not upon the duties it performs, but upon the head of the great atoning sacrifice. When it asks it is in the name of Jesus; what it expects is alone for His sake, both grace here and glory hereafter. V. THERE IS AN IMPERFECTION IN FAITH, WHICH SHOWS THAT IT CAN HAVE NO MERITORIOUS INFLUENCE ON OUR SALVATION. If faith has any strength, it arises not from itself, but from its object; it needs continual support, and is often ready to sink under the weight of objections and oppositions. It may in this respect be said of graces as it is of persons, God hath chosen the things that are weak and despised (1 Cor. i. 28, 29; xii. 24). VI. FAITH IS HUMBLE AND SELF-DENYING. Its language is, after all its laborious exertions, "Yet not I"—I can do nothing. It is Christ that has done, it is He that must do all. "I am not worthy that Thou shouldest come under my roof," says the centurion. "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel," replied the Saviour. It puts on the robe, but it did not weave it; it shows the debt paid, but did not discharge it. We are said to live by faith; yet faith says, It is not I, but Christ liveth in me. 1. If salvation be of faith, what will become of unbelievers (John iii. 18–36). 2. If salvation be of faith, that it might be by grace, then it is no wonder that Satan employs his utmost endeavours to prevent faith, and also to destroy it (2 Cor. iv. 4). 3. Let his malignant activity excite us to watchfulness and diligence, and to beware of his devices. (*B. Beddome, M.A.*) *Salvation by grace through faith*:—I. SALVATION IS BY FAITH in order—1. That it might be by grace, or pure favour and goodwill. Coming thus—(1) It honours God as an act of royal beneficence. (2) It honours man as making him the object, not of Divine justice and wisdom merely, but of Divine charity. (3) It blesses the recipient by culturing humility and gratitude. 2. That the promise may be sure to all—(1) Were it by works, however, some may fancy themselves able to gain it, the mass of mankind must despair. (2) Were it by works the original purpose of its provision could not be fulfilled, for the promise was to all nations. (3) Faith is a condition which all may fulfil; the feeblest as the strongest, the most guilty as the least guilty, the debtor of ten thousand talents as the debtor of an hundred pence. III. THIS FAITH IS EXEMPLIFIED IN ABRAHAM. He is the father of all who believe, as Tubal is the father of iron-workers, and Jubal of musicians. His faith is exhibited as—1. A faith that regarded God as the quickener of the dead and

Creator of things not existing—as a God with whom nothing was impossible. 2. A faith that looked for fulfilment of the promise when there was no probability of that fulfilment; as when he believed in his possession of Canaan. 3. A faith that expected when fulfilment seemed impossible; as when he believed the promise of a son to himself and aged, barren Sarah. 4. A faith that failed not when fulfilment seemed to be stopped by the acts of God Himself; as when the whole promised seed lay doomed to death upon the altar. 5. A faith that staggered not—a full persuasion of heart. 6. A faith that practically confided: as when he went forth from his father's house, and when he bound Isaac for death; thus a faith made perfect by works. His seed are all who imitate his faith. (*W. Griffiths.*) *Salvation by grace through faith*:—I. I. SALVATION IS BY FAITH. 1. A deliverance. 2. Effected for us. 3. Through faith. 4. In Christ. 5. Without merit. II. THAT IT MIGHT BE OF GRACE. 1. Received. 2. Felt. 3. Recognised. 4. Enjoyed as grace. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Salvation by grace*:—In a period of religious awakening, Sammy thought himself a subject of the work, and, with others, presented himself for admission to the Church. The office-bearers hesitated, on the ground that he might not have sufficient capacity to comprehend the doctrines of the gospel and the evidences of conversion. They concluded, however, to examine him, and began with the subject of regeneration. "Do you think, Sammy," said the pastor, "that you have been born again?" "I think I have," was the answer. "Well, if so, whose work is that"? "Oh! God did a part, and I did a part." "Ah! what part did you do, Sammy?" "Why, I opposed God all I could; and He did the rest." The result of the examination was, that, so far as they could judge, the Holy Spirit had been Sammy's theological teacher, and had indeed created him anew in Christ, "not of works, lest any man should boast." (*Christian Treasury.*) *Faith not meritorious, but effectual*:—It does not stand in the place of obedience, as the terms of a new bargain, that has been substituted in room of an old one. It is very natural to conceive that, as under the old covenant we had salvation for our works, so, under the new, we have salvation for our faith; and that, therefore, faith is that which wins and purchases the reward. And thus Heaven's favour is still looked upon as a premium, not for doing, it is true, but for believing. And this has just the effect of infusing the legal spirit into our evangelical system; and thus, not merely of nourishing the pride and the pretension of its confident votaries, but of prolonging the disquietude of all earnest and humble inquiries. For, instead of looking broadly out on the gospel as an offer, they look as anxiously within for the personal qualification of faith, as they ever did upon the personal qualification of obedience. This transfers their attention from that which is sure, even the promises of God—to that which is unsure, even their own fickle and fugitive emotions. Instead of thinking upon Christ, they perpetually think upon themselves. They ought surely to cast their challenged and their invited regards on Him, who calls them to look upon Him from all the ends of the earth and be saved! But no! they cast their eyes with downward obstinacy upon their own minds; and there toil for the production of faith in the spirit of bondage; and perhaps, after they are satisfied with the fancied possession of it, rejoice over it as they would over any other meritorious acquirement in the spirit of legality. This is not the way in which the children of Israel looked out upon the serpent in the wilderness. They did not pore upon their wounds to mark the progress of healing there; nor did they reflect upon the power and perfection of their seeing faculties; nor did they even suffer any doubt that still lingered in their imaginations, to restrain them from the simple act of lifting up their eyes. And when they were cured in consequence, they would never think of this as a reward for their looking, but regard it as the fruit of Heaven's gracious appointment. Do in like manner. It will make both against your humility and your peace, that you regard faith in the light of a meritorious qualification; or that you attempt to draw a comfort from the consciousness of faith, which you ought directly to draw from the contemplation of the Saviour. If salvation be given as a reward for faith, then it is not of grace. But we are told in this verse that it is of faith, expressly that it might be by grace. In the one way, you can only be as sure of the promise as you are sure of yourself; and what a frail and fluctuating dependence is this! In the other way, you are as sure of the promise as you are sure of God; and thus your confidence has a rock to repose upon. And in the very act of leaning upon God, man is upheld not only in hope but in holiness. It is in the very position of standing erect upon the foundation of the promises that the promised strength as well as the promised righteousness is fulfilled to him. It is in the very act of looking unto Jesus, that the light of all that grace and truth

which shine from the countenance of the Saviour is let in upon the soul; and is thence reflected back again in the likeness of this worth and virtue from his own person. (*T. Chalmers, D.D.*) **To the end that the promise might be sure to all the seed.**—*The promise made sure—grace and faith*:—I. THE END IN VIEW—that "the promise may be sure to all the seed." Every promise of God is sure in the sense of being trustworthy. But the fulfilment is not necessarily sure to any, for they come short of its stipulations. The certainty here is the opposite of what is deprecated in ver. 4: "the promise being made of none effect," *i.e.*, falling short of its full accomplishment. Let us think of the origin of the promise. 1. Let us behold the Father taking up the question of the inheritance. It is the heirship of the world (ver. 13). Who are ultimately to inherit? That must be settled before anything about it can become the subject of promise at all. And in settling that, there must be sovereign choice. 2. The Son has from everlasting an interest in the promise. The inheritance which it conveys is in the first instance destined to Him (Heb. i. 2). He is the one seed; and others are included in the seed only as being one with Him. Through what a ministry on His part they are to become fellow-heirs with Him He all along knows full well. He is to "bear their griefs and carry their sorrows"; to be "made sin," to be "made a curse" for them. Through such sore "travail of His soul" in their stead He is to obtain the fulfilment of the promise: to "see" in them "His seed"; the seed that being one with Him is to be the heir of the world, to inherit all things in Him. 2. The Holy Spirit is one with the Father and the Son; as in the essence of the Divine nature, so also in this covenant of peace. He is a party to it. The seed who are to be heirs are to be put into His hands, to be made one with the Son in His heirship, and one with one another in the Son. That the promise may be sure, He must put forth His soul-subduing power. Is He to do so otherwise than on the footing of its being "sure to all the seed"? II. THE TWO STEPS BY WHICH ALONE IT IS TO BE REACHED. But why should there be any steps? Why may not the mere fiat of Omnipotence at once secure the end in view? God has but to speak, and "Out of these stones He is able to raise up children unto Abraham." Yes! And if it were "stones" that He had to deal with, the old creation formula—Let it be—would suffice. The voice might go forth, not only figuratively, "Thy seed shall be as the sand," but literally, "Let the sand by thy seed." And if the seed could be as stones, or as sand, ever after, to be managed as stones or sand, the problem of securing that the promise should be sure might be easily solved. But it is not so. For the materials are not stone or sand, but beings who have possessed and abused the faculty of free will. The problem is solved, however, when we take into account the two steps here indicated as securing the result. 1. It is "by grace." The whole economy is alive and instinct with grace. (1) Its origin is very gracious. It has its rise in the favour which the Son ever finds in the Father's right from everlasting. What but this grace moves the Father to "appoint the Son heir of all things" (Heb. i. 2)? And that is at once the source and pattern of all subsequent exercises of the same grace in time. (2) It is by the same grace that, in virtue of His being "appointed heir of all things," the Son is the agent "by whom God made the worlds," and "who upholdeth all things by the word of His power" (Heb. i. 3). It is for the grace He ever has with the Father that, as the Lord of creation and providence, and now the Lord of the economy of redemption, He has "in all the pre-eminence" (Col. i. 16–18). (3) For very specially this grace appears in His having constituted the Saviour of men. When He comes into the world on His errand of redemption He finds grace and favour in the Father's eyes (Matt. iii. 17). When He leaves the world, His work being finished, He finds grace and favour still (Rom. i. 4). It is because the Father graciously accepts Him as the righteous one (Isa. liii. 11), that He "sets Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places" (Eph. i. 20). This grace, love, on the Father's part, how gladly does the Son always own (Prov. viii. 30, 31)! How willingly does He welcome the task that is to cost Him so dear (Psa. xl. 7, 8)! (4) And now it may be seen how the Father's treatment of those who are the Son's seed, is simply an extension of the favour which He bears to the Son Himself. They are embraced or comprehended in the grace which the Son ever finds in the Father's sight. It is on this principle that the Father proceeds in pardoning, acquitting, justifying, glorifying them (Eph. i. 6). 2. It is "of faith." Why? Simply, that it may still be all "by grace." We have seen that it is by grace alone that any are admitted into fellowship with the Son in His gracious work and ministry of substitution. Let us now see what grace there is in the terms, or the manner, of their admission. Freely, unreservedly, unconditionally; if they will; when they

will. Ah! but does not this really destroy all certainty? *If* they will! Does it not cast doubt on everything? When they will! When will they? Will they ever? Of what avail then is all this grace to them? And yet how can the thing be otherwise? How can any enter into union with the Son, so as to have the promise made sure to them in Him, otherwise than by its being freely left to their own free choice? If the grace is to be free, it must be not only freely given, but freely taken. There can be no coercion. There must be cordial and congenial consent. No otherwise can the promise be sure to beings capable of choice. Their free, unforced yes must be got. And if that yes be got, all is safe. Hence the necessity of faith, which is simply that free affirmative response. This may be seen more clearly if we consider—(1) Faith. The whole virtue of faith lies in its being your actual appropriation of the benefit. Its charm consists in dealing with what is presented to it as its object, not through anything, even itself, coming in between, but directly and immediately, without any regard to itself at all. Now the object with which it has to deal is the promise, or rather the Son, to whom, in the first instance, the promise belongs, and is sure. The only use of faith is that it embraces Christ. (2) With its office, the nature of faith corresponds. Our entire moral nature is concerned in it. Every faculty and feeling is taken up with Christ. There is no unoccupied power of the mind within at leisure to take cognisance of the rest. (3) But how shall this full, simple, direct, straightforward faith spring up in any soul? Plainly it is not natural to man. Witness the extreme difficulty of getting men to comprehend it. A Divine teacher is needed to purge the inward sight, and open the eye of the soul. And if, for simply lodging a clear idea of this Divine method of grace in the intellect, the agency of the Divine Spirit Himself is needed, how much more when we are asked to approve of it, to go along with it and become parties to it? Thus "by grace are we saved through faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God." (*R. S. Candlish, D.D.*)

Vers. 17, 18. **As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations.**—*God's promise to Abraham*:—I. ITS GRANDEUR AND IMPORTANCE. 1. A spiritual seed. 2. A world-wide blessing. II. THE POWER BY WHICH IT MUST BE ACCOMPLISHED. 1. Almighty. 2. Life-giving. 3. Creative. III. THE MEANS BY WHICH THAT POWER IS ENJOYED—faith. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) **God, who . . . calleth those things which be not as though they were.**—*The Divine conception of uncreated things*:—Those philosophers of old who held that man pre-existed before his birth into this world had just one element of truth in their doctrine. Man—body, soul, and spirit—pre-existed eternally in the mind and will of God, and as such was an object of Divine contemplation and compassion. Grand architectural fabrics pre-exist long before the ground is cleared, the materials are collected or prepared—yes, long before the plans are drawn. They pre-exist in the mind of the architect and in the will of the constructor. Many things, however, exist in the mind and will of man which, through his inability or caprice, fail to have any formal or substantial being whatever. Consequently it behoves us not to speak too confidently upon the execution and realisation of our conceptions. But with God, who is of infinite power and who changes not, the things in His mind and will are as sure and certain as if they were already ushered into life and activity (*cf.* Heb. xi. 3). (*C. Neil, M.A.*) **Who against hope believed in hope.**—*Abraham's faith*:—I. ITS BASIS the absolute promise of God. II. ITS MEASURE. 1. Strong against hope. 2. Unwavering. 3. Confident. III. ITS ISSUE. 1. God's glory. 2. His own salvation. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Undeterred by difficulties*:—Men differ among themselves. They differ as plainly in their relation to God. The differences appear in their lives. Blorn or Thorfinn will make a longer voyage than Eric, because they are bolder men. But Blorn will push his ship further south than Thorfinn if he has a stronger wind and a better chart. We need not fear our work, nor turn aside from our duty. The hungry multitude need not depart though we have but five loaves, if we are bidden to give them to eat. We might well attempt larger things. Few men have made proof of their ability. Life need not be spent in the valleys. Our way need not be shut in by hills. The promise is distinct, rational, effective. Dare anything which is duty. Believe in yourself because God believes in you, and accept the honour of high service. Leibnitz said that all difficult things are easy, and all easy things are difficult. If the hard thing drives us to God it becomes easy in the act. Farragut repeated Lord Collingwood's saying, that we are not to be afraid of doing too much. The weight of the universe presses on the shoulders of every man to hold him to his task. "The only path of escape known in all the world of God is

performance. You must do your work before you shall be released." How all things hold us up to God, and every thought of greatness puts us under bonds to trust and receive! Westminster Abbey holds no nobler dust than his who faced the darkness and desperation of Africa, and single-handed forced his way through its deadly gloom, and earned a place among England's kings. Is there anything to stir the ambition, to nerve the arm, to empower the life, like the summons of our God, who throws the impossible at our feet and bids us take it up, and about His demands binds the cords of His promises? (*A. McKenzie.*) *Who, against hope, believed in hope*:—Where hope has a great object in view, there will always be fear. If not fear, there will always, however, be that sort of timorous fluctuation which distinguishes hope from assurance. It is thus in worldly affairs. When a great good is expected, but not yet possessed, there will always be an apprehension of losing it. It is thus, too, with every good man who views the Christian dispensation as he ought. When he contemplates the scheme of man's redemption in all its vastness—the wonderful means employed, and the immensity of the views it opens—he recoils at his own insignificance; and thinks it against hope to believe that such a creature as he feels himself can ever be the object of such Divine beneficence. On the other hand, when he considers the love of God to man in his creation, which could have no end but man's happiness—when he considers that the very act of his creation is an assurance of God's future protection—when he reflects on the numerous promises of the gospel, of the truth of which he is clearly convinced by abundant evidence—his diffidence vanishes, and he cannot help, in the language of the text, against hope, believing in hope. (*John Gilpin, M.A.*) *Abraham's faith*:—I. ITS GROUND. The promise of God. 1. The general promise (Gen. xv. 1), that God would take him into His protection and abundantly reward his obedience. The like promise is made to all the faithful (Psa. lxxxiv. 11). 2. The particular promise. When God had told Abraham that He would be his shield, &c., he replied, "Lord, what wilt Thou give me, seeing I go childless"; and again, "Behold, Thou hast given me no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir" (Gen. xv. 2, 3). These words of Abraham imply some weakness of faith, though they also may be a revival of an old promise (Gen. xii. 3). And they say in effect, Lord, how can I take comfort in the promised reward, since I do not seek the fulfilling of Thy promise touching my seed? But now mark the Lord's reply (ver. 4); and then God led him forth (ver. 5)—ocular demonstration leaveth a stronger impression upon the mind—upon this "Abraham believed in the Lord, and He counted it to him for righteousness" (ver. 6). He was a believer before, but now he commenceth a strong believer: "He believed in hope against hope," &c. I. ITS EXCELLENCY. 1. "He believed in hope against hope." Spiritual hope can take place when natural hope faileth. Most men's faith is borne up by outward probabilities; they can trust God no further than they can see Him; but true faith dependeth upon Him when His way is in the dark, as Paul could give assurance when all hope was taken away (Acts xxvii. 20–22). I prove this—(1) From the genius and nature of faith. There must be some difficulty in the thing to be believed or else it is not an object of faith (chap. viii. 24). (2) From the warrant of faith, which is the Word of God. We must believe God upon His bare word, though we know not what time or way He will take, or by what means the thing promised will be accomplished. In things future and invisible we believe against sense; in things incredible we believe against reason (Heb. xi. 1). It must not be, saith sense; it cannot be, saith natural reason; it both can and will be, saith faith. (3) From the object of faith, God all-sufficient. We must gauge neither His goodness nor power by our measure. Not His goodness (Isa. lv. 8, 9; Hos. xi. 9); nor His power (Zech. viii. 6). 2. He considered not the difficulties (ver. 19). Here we learn that we must not oppose natural impediments to the power and truth of God. Note—(1) How we are or not to consider difficulties. (*a*) In some sense it is our duty to consider them, that we may not go about the most serious work hand over head. Christ bids us sit down and count the charges (Luke xiv. 28). The saints are wont to put hard cases to themselves (Psa. iii. 6; xxiii. 4). (*b*) Therefore the ends must be observed. We must consider them to weaken our security, but not to weaken our confidence in the promise. The difficulties of salvation must be sufficiently understood, otherwise we think to do the work of an age in a breath (Luke viii. 24; Josh. xxiv. 19); for it is not so easy a matter as you take it to be. (*c*) Difficulties must be thought on to quicken faith, not to weaken it. If they be pleaded against the promise they weaken faith; if they be pleaded to drive us to the promise they quicken faith. (2) The inconveniences of this sinful considering the difficulties in all the parts of faith. (*a*) As to assent. If

you will not credit it unless the thing be evident in itself, you do not believe Christ but your own reason; and instead of being thankful for the revelation you quarrel with His truth, because it is in some things above your capacity. You should be satisfied with the bare word of God, and captivate your understandings to the obedience of it. (*b*) As to consent and acceptance. There are many things may be objected against entering into covenant with Christ. First, our great unworthiness. This is one reason why the instance of Abraham is proposed as a pattern of faith to the Gentiles. As Abraham considered not his natural incapacity to have children, so they not their unworthiness to be adopted into God's covenant. If you be such a sinner, the more need of a saviour. You would laugh at him that would argue I am too cold to go to the fire, too sick to send for the physician, too poor to take alms, too filthy to go to the water to be washed. Celsus objected against Christianity that it was a sanctuary for men of a licentious life. Origen answered him that it was not a sanctuary to shelter them only, but an hospital to cure them. Secondly, the fickleness of the heart. You are afraid to bind yourselves to God. The truth is this consent implieth a delivery over of yourselves to Christ, and you must consider difficulties so as to fortify your resolution (Matt. xvi. 24; xx. 22). And not to consider is to discourage your consent. (*c*) For affiance. There seemeth to be an impossibility to sense and reason from first to last. If the difficulties of salvation were sufficiently understood, we should see it is the mere grace and power of God that carrieth it on in despite of men and devils (Eph. i. 19). As for instance, the reconciling of a guilty soul to God (Eph. ii. 3); the changing of an obstinate heart (Jer. xvii. 9); and the giving us an holy nature and life (Job xiv. 4); or to quicken us that were dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. ii. 1); to strengthen a feeble and weak creature (2 Cor. iii. 5). 3. "He staggered not at the promise through unbelief." This may refer to three acts or parts of faith: (1) Assent. If we have the word and promise of God we should believe anything as surely as if we had the greatest evidence in the world. Thus some of the disciples doubted of the truth of Christ's resurrection (Matt. xxviii. 17; Luke xxiv. 21). This argueth a weak faith; but faith is strong as it overcomes our speculative doubts, and settles our souls in the truth (Acts ii. 36). (2) Consent. When the consent is weak and wavering faith is weak (Heb. x. 23). But such a confirmed resolution as leaveth no room for wavering argueth a strong faith (Acts xxi. 13). (3) Dependence and trust (James i. 6–8). 4. "He was fully persuaded that what God had promised He was fully able also to perform." A strong, steady, and full persuasion of the power of God argueth a great faith. (1) There is no doubt of His will when we have His promise; but the ability of the promiser is that which is usually questioned. Unbelief stumbleth at His *can* (Psa. lxxviii. 19; Luke i. 34; 2 Kings vii. 2). Nay; and the children of God themselves. Sarah was rebuked when she laughed (Gen. xviii. 12–14). (2) God's power and all-sufficiency is to the saints the great support of faith in their greatest extremities. They are relieved by fixing their eye on God's almightiness; as Abraham here. So Heb. xi. 19; so for perseverance (Jude 24); and for the resurrection (Phil. iii. 21). In matters conditionally promised we must magnify His power, and refer the event to His will (Matt. viii. 2). (3) There are two things to enlarge our thoughts and apprehensions about the power of God (ver. 17). We have to do with a God who can say to the dead, Live. He that can quicken the dead can quicken those that are dead in trespasses and sins. III. ITS FRUIT AND EFFECT—an exact and constant obedience. In Isa. xli. 2 the righteous man is supposed to be Abraham, often designed by that character; and he was called to his foot, to go to and fro at God's command, as the centurion said (Matt. viii. 9). There are two great instances of Abraham's obedience: 1. His self-denial in leaving his country (Heb. xi. 8). Such a total resignation there must be of ourselves to the will of God. 2. Another trial was Heb. xi. 17, 18. Because God would make Abraham an example of faith to all future generations, therefore He puts him to this trial, to see whether he loved his Isaac more than God. (*T. Manton, D.D.*) *Hope built on faith*:—I. OUR SALVATION APPEARS IMPOSSIBLE TO HUMAN EXPECTATION, AND CAN ONLY BE HOPED FOR ON THE GROUND OF FAITH. After the Saviour had laid before His disciples that cherished riches were a hindrance to religion, they exclaimed, "Who then can be saved?" There are many other aspects of godliness which suggest the same doubt, and to which the same gracious answer applies, "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God." The law of self-preservation in human nature would suggest the desirability of being saved, but the same law has no remedy to offer. Man is naturally hopeful, but within his own breast there are no grounds of salvation. God is just; man is guilty. To remove

sin from the book of remembrance above and the book of conscience below, suggests insuperable difficulties to man's reason. The good hope through grace comes of faith. We have the Word of God for our foundation; on that we build our faith, and of faith springs our hope. II. THE EXTENSION OF THE KINGDOM OF THE MESSIAH, AND THE SALVATION OF THE WORLD, IS AN EXPECTATION WHICH RESTS, NOT ON HUMAN PROBABILITIES, BUT ON FAITH IN GOD'S PROMISE. There is no prayer more frequent than—"Thy kingdom come." The whole heart of the Church is bound up in an intense desire to see mankind under its roof. But make a map of the world, and paint Christian countries white, and all the others black. You will see that the labours of eighteen centuries have only touched the fringe of the garment. The human aspect of the matter is discouraging, and we are ready to ask, "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" The day of universal judgment is delayed to allow time for the spread of the gospel. We believe that the earth will be covered with a knowledge of the Lord; that the Saviour will see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied; then the heathen will be His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth His possession. This is the hope of faith. (*Weekly Baptist.*)

Vers. 19–22. **And being not weak in faith, . . . he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief.**—*The sinfulness of staggering*:—I. WHAT IS IT TO STAGGER AT THE PROMISE? The word "staggered" is properly to make use of our own judgment and reason, in discerning of things, of what sort they be (1 Cor. xi. 29). In the sense wherein it is here used (as also Matt. xxi. 21). It holds out a self-consultation and dispute, concerning those contrary things that are proposed to us (so also Acts x. 20). To stagger then at the promise is to take into consideration the promise, and all the difficulties that lie in the way of its accomplishment, and so to dispute it, as not fully to cast it off, nor fully to close with it. *E.g.*, the soul considers the promise of free grace in the blood of Jesus, weighs those considerations which might lead the heart to rest firmly upon it; but considers his own unworthiness, &c., which, as he supposes, staves off the efficacy of the promise. If he add a grain of faith, the scale turns on the side of the promise; the like quantity of unbelief makes it turn upon him; and what to do he knows not: let go the promise he cannot, take fast hold he dares not, but wavers to and fro. Thus the soul comes to be like Paul (Phil. i. 23), or as David (2 Sam. xxiv. 14). He sees, in a steadfast closing with the promise, presumption; on the other hand, destruction; arguments arise on both sides, he knows not how to determine them, and so hanging in suspense, he staggers. Like a man meeting with two paths, that promise both fairly, and knows not which is his proper way, guesses and guesses, and at length sits down until some one comes that can give direction. The soul very frequently in this hesitation refuses to go one step forward till God come mightily and lead out the spirit to the promise, or the devil turn it aside to unbelief. It is as a light in the air: the weight that it hath carries it downwards; and the air, with some breath of wind, bears it up again. Sometimes it seems as though it would fall by its own weight; and sometimes, again, as though it would mount quite out of sight; but poised between both it tosseth up and down, without any great gaining either way. The promise draws the soul upward, and the weight of its unbelief sinks it downward; but neither prevails. Like the two disciples going to Emmaus (Luke xxiv. 14), "They talked together of the things that had happened," and (ver. 22) they gave up. Yet they cannot quite give over all trusting in Christ (vers. 23–25): hereupon they staggered (ver. 17); much appears for them, something against them, they know not what to do. II. NOTWITHSTANDING ANY PRETENCES WHATEVER STAGGERING IS FROM UNBELIEF. The two disciples just mentioned thought they had good cause of all their doubtings (Luke xxiv. 20). But our Saviour tells them that they "are foolish, and slow of heart to believe." Peter venturing upon the waves at the command of Christ (Matt. xiv.), seeing the "wind to grow boisterous," also hath a storm within, and cries out, Oh, save me! The real cause of his fear was merely unbelief (ver. 31). And upon several occasions doth our Saviour lay all the staggering of His followers as to any promised mercy upon this score (Matt. vi. 30, viii. 26; see also Isa. vii. 7, 9; Heb. iv. 2). But these things will be more clear if we consider that when a man doubts his reasonings must have their rise, either from something within himself, or from something in the things concerning which he staggereth. He that doubteth whether his friend be alive or not, his staggering ariseth from the uncertainty of the thing itself; when that is made out, he is resolved, as it was with Jacob in the case of Joseph. But he that doubteth whether the needle in the com-

pass being touched with the loadstone will turn northward, all the uncertainty is in his own mind. If when men stagger at the promises we demonstrate that there is nothing in the promise that should occasion any such staggering, we lay the blame on unbelief. Let us now see whether anything be wanting to the promises. 1. Is there truth in these promises? If there be the least occasion to suspect their truth, or the veracity of the Promiser, then our staggering may arise from thence, and not from our own unbelief. But now the Author of the promises is the God of truth, who has used all possible means to cause us to apprehend the truth of His promises. (1) By often affirming the same thing. There is not anything that He hath promised us but He hath done it again and again; *e.g.*, as if He would say, "I will be merciful to your sins," I pray believe Me, for "I will pardon your iniquities," yea, it shall be so, "I will blot out your transgressions as a cloud." (2) By confirming the truth with an oath (Heb. vi. 13–18). (3) By entering into covenant to accomplish what He has spoken. (4) By giving us a hostage to secure us of His truth, one exceedingly dear to Him, of whose honour He is as careful as of His own. Jesus Christ is the pledge of His fidelity in His promises (Isa. vii. 14). "In Him are all the promises of God yea and amen." Thus also to His saints He gives the further hostage of His Spirit, and the firstfruits of glory. 2. But though there be truth in the promise, yet there may want ability in the promiser. A physician may promise a sick man recovery who, though he could rely upon the physician's truth, yet doubts his ability, knowing that to cure is not absolutely in his power; but when He promises who is able to perform, then all doubting is removed. See then whether it be so in respect of God's promises (Gen. xvii. 1). When difficulties, temptations, and troubles arise, remember God is not only true and faithful, but Almighty (ver. 21; chap. xi. 23; Eph. iii. 20). When men come to close with the promise, to make a life upon it, they are very ready to inquire whether it be possible that the word should be made good to them. He that sees a little boat swimming at sea looks upon it without any solicitousness; but let this man commit his own life to sea in it, what inquiries will he make? So whilst we consider the promises at large, as they lie in the Word, they are all true; but when we go to venture our souls upon a promise, in an ocean of temptations, then every blast we think will overturn it. Now here we are apt to deceive ourselves. We inquire whether it can be so to us, as the Word holds out, when the question is not about the nature of the thing, but about the power of God. Place the doubt aright, and it is this: Is God able to accomplish what He hath spoken? Can He pardon my sins? Now, that there may be no occasion of staggering upon this point, you see God reveals Himself as an all-sufficient God, as one that is able to go through with all His engagements. But you will say, Though God be thus able, yet may there not be defects in the means whereby He worketh? As a man may have a strong arm able to strike his enemies to the ground, but yet if he strike with a feather, or a straw, it will not be done. But—(1) God's instruments do not act according to their own virtue, but according to the influence by Him to them communicated. (2) It is expressly affirmed of the great mediums of the promise, that they also are able. There is—(*a*) The procuring means, Jesus Christ (Heb. v. 27; ii. 18). (*b*) The means of manifestation, the Word of God (Acts. xx. 32). (*c*) The means of operation, the Spirit of grace (1 Cor. xii. 11). 3. But there may be want of sincerity in promises, which, whilst we do but suspect, we cannot choose, but stagger at them. But there can be no room for staggering here; for nothing can be plainer or more certain than that the promises of God signify His purpose, that the believer of them shall be the enjoyer of them. So that upon the making out of any promise, you may safely conclude that upon believing the mercy of this promise is mine. It is true, if a man stand staggering, whether he have any share in the promise, and close not with it by faith, he may come short of it; and yet without the least impeachment of the sincerity of the Promiser; for God hath not signified that men shall enjoy them whether they believe or not. If proclamation be made granting pardon to all such rebels as shall come in by such a season, do men use to stand questioning whether the State bear them any goodwill or not? The gospel proclamation is of pardon to all comers in; it is for thee therefore to roll thyself on this, there is an absolute sincerity in the engagement which thou mayest freely rest upon. 4. But though all be present, truth, power, sincerity; yet if he that makes the promise should forget, this were a ground of staggering. Pharaoh's butler probably spake the truth according to his present intention, and afterwards had doubtless power to have procured the liberty of a prisoner; but "he did not remember Joseph." This forgetting made all other things useless. But neither hath this the least colour of Divine

promises (Isa. xlix. 14). The causes of forgetfulness are—(1) Want of love. But infinite love will have infinite thoughtfulness and remembrance. (2) Multiplicity of business. But although God rules the world, He will not forget (Psa. lxxvii. 9). 5. But where all other things may concur, yet if the promiser may alter his resolution, a man may justly doubt the accomplishment of the promise. Wherefore the Lord carefully rejects all sinful surmises concerning the least change or alteration in Him, or any of His engagements (James i. 18; Mal. iii. 6). In conclusion, then, such staggering must dishonour God, for—(1) It robs Him of the glory of His truth (1 John v. 10). 2. It robs Him of the glory of His fidelity to His promises (1 John i. 9). 3. It robs Him of the glory of His grace. In a word, if a man should choose to set himself in a universal opposition unto God, he can think of no more compendious way than this. This then is the fruit, this the advantage of our staggering; we rob God of glory, and our own souls of mercy. (*J. Owen, D.D.*) *Unstaggering faith*:—It was God's purpose that Abraham should be a surpassingly excellent example of the power of faith. It was therefore necessary that his faith should be exercised in a special manner. To this end God gave him a promise that in his seed should all the nations of the earth be blessed, and yet for many a year he remained without an heir. Doubtless he weighed the natural impossibilities, but he maintained a holy confidence, and left the matter in the hands of the Sovereign Ruler. His faith triumphed in all its conflicts. Had it not been that Sarah and Abraham were both at such an advanced age there would have been no credit to them in believing the promise of God, but the more difficult its fulfilment, the more wonderful was Abraham's faith. By such unquestioning confidence Abraham brought glory to God. It glorifies God greatly for His servants to trust Him; they then become witnesses to His faithfulness, just as His works in creation are witnesses to His power and wisdom. Let us view the text in regard to—1. THE INDIVIDUAL WORKER. 1. You are conscious of your spiritual weakness. You say, "If God intends to bless souls, I cannot see how they can be blessed through me. I feel myself to be the most unworthy instrument in the world." (1) Such a lowly sense of our own unfitness is common at the beginning of Christian labour, and arises from the novel difficulties with which we are surrounded. We have not gone this way heretofore, and being quite new to the work, Satan whispers, "You are a poor creature to pretend to serve God; leave this service to better men." But take comfort; this is part of your preparation; you must be made to feel early in the work that all the glory must be of God. (2) This sense of weakness grows on the Christian worker. To continue in harness year after year is not without its wear and tear; our spirit truly is willing, but the flesh is weak, and faintness in pursuing reveals to us that our own strength is perfect weakness. The more earnest your labours for the Lord, the more clear will be your sense of your own nothingness. (3) There are times when a want of success will help to make us feel most keenly how barren and unfruitful we are until the Lord endows us with His Spirit. Those whom we thought to be converted turn out to be merely the subjects of transient excitement, those who stood long, turn aside, and then we cry out, "Woe is me! How shall I speak any more in the name of the Lord?" Like Moses, we would have the Lord send by whomsoever He would send, but not by us; or like Elias, we hide ourselves for fear, and say "Let me die, I am no better than my fathers." I suppose there is no worker who is quite free from times of deep depression, times when his fears make him say, "Surely I ran without being called." At such moments it only needs another push from Satan to make us like Jonah to go down to Joppa, that we may no longer bear the burden of the Lord. I am not sorry if you are passing through this fiery ordeal, for it is in your weakness God will show His own strength, and when there is an end of you there will be a beginning of Him. 2. It may be also that our sphere of Christian effort is remarkably unpromising. In that Sunday-school class the boys are obstinate, the girls frivolous. You had not reckoned upon this. The more you try to influence their hearts the less you succeed. It is possible you are called to labour where the prejudices, temptations, and habits and ways of thought are all dead against the chance of success. But Christian work never succeeds until the worker rates the difficulties at their proper rate. The fact is, to save a soul is the work of Deity; and unless we have made up our minds to that, we had better retire, for we are not ready for labour. 3. Yet the godly worker has that which sustains him, for he has a promise from God. Abraham had received a promise, and he knew the difficulties and weighed them; but having done so, he put them away as not worth considering. God had said it, and that was enough. The promise of God was as good as its fulfilment; just as in trade

some men's bills are as good as cash. Now if we are to be successful we must get hold of a promise too. You say, "If I could have a special revelation, just as Abraham had, I would doubt no more." Now God gives His promises in many ways. Sometimes He gives them to individuals, at other times to classes of character. Now God has been pleased to give the revelation, in your case, to character. "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." Now if you have gone forth, wept, and carried forth precious seed, the Lord declares that you shall doubtless come again rejoicing. "My word shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." Have you delivered God's word? if so, then God declares it shall not return unto Him void; and these promises are quite as good as though they had been spoken to you by the voice of an angel. A promise however given is equally binding upon a man of honour, and a promise of God, no matter how delivered, is sure of fulfilment; all you have to do is to lay hold upon it. II. THE CHURCH. 1. We have set our hearts upon a revival. But I fear that our temptation is to suppose there is some power in the ministry, or in our organisation, or our zeal. Let us divest ourselves of all that. As to causing a genuine revival by our own efforts, we might as well talk of whirling the stars from their spheres. If God help us we can pray, but without His aid our prayer will be mockery. If God help us we can preach, but apart from Him our preaching is but a weary tale told without power. 2. There is not only difficulty in ourselves, but in the work. We want to see all these people converted. But what can *we* do? The preacher can do nothing, for he has done his best and has failed, and all that any can suggest will fail also. The work is impossible with us, but do we therefore give up the attempt? No, for is it not written, "I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye My face in vain"? Christ must see of His soul's travail, must see of it in this place too. We have God's promise for it; *we* cannot do it, but He can. III. EVERY PLEADING SOUL. If your heart has been set upon any special object in prayer, if you have an express promise for it, you must not be staggered if the object of your desire be farther off now than when you first began to pray. Wait at the mercy-seat in the full persuasion that although God may take His time, and that time may not be your time, yet He must and will redeem His promise when the fulness of time has come. If you have prayed for the salvation of your child, or husband, or friend, and that person has grown worse instead of better, still God must be held to His word; and if you have the faith to challenge His faithfulness and power, assuredly He never did and never will let your prayers fall fruitless to the ground. Remember that to trust God in the light is nothing, but to trust Him in the dark—that is faith. IV. THE SEEKER. You imagined at one time that you could become a Christian at your own will at any moment; and now how to perform that which you would you find not. You desire to break the chains of sin, but they are far easier to bind than to loose. You want to come to Jesus with a broken heart, but your heart refuses to break. You long to trust Jesus, but your unbelief is so mighty that you cannot see His Cross. I am glad to find you in this poverty-stricken state, for I believe that in your case you must know your own powerlessness. Every sinner must learn that he is by nature dead in sins, and that the work of salvation is high above out of his reach. Self-despair throws a man upon his God; he feels that he can do nothing, and he turns to one who can do all things. Now the next thing is to find a promise. "Whosoever calleth upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Have you called upon the name of the Lord? Have you cried to Him, "God be merciful to me a sinner"? If you so call you must be saved. "Whosoever cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." Do you come? If so, you cannot be cast out. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Religious faith rational:—That its object is marvellous is quite true; and it is also true that no mind will form itself to a habit of faith without the influences of Divine grace. But to say that such a faith as that of Abraham, which led him to believe God's word when opposed to his own experience, is a strange principle and irrational, is absurd. I. FOR WE ACT ON TRUST EVERY HOUR OF OUR LIVES. 1. We trust to our memory, and our confidence in it is so strong that no man could persuade us to reject its testimony. 2. We trust our reasoning powers. Who of us would doubt, on seeing strong shadows on the ground, that the sun was shining, though our face happened to be turned the other way? 3. And we trust our memory and our reasoning powers in this way, though they often deceive us; because on the whole they are faithful witnesses, and because in all practical matters we are obliged to decide by not what may be possibly, but what is likely

to be. There is a chance, *e.g.*, that our food to-day may be poisonous, but it looks and tastes the same, and we have good friends round us; so we do not abstain from it, for all this chance. 4. But it may be said that such belief is not what is meant by faith—that to trust our senses and reason is to trust ourselves—and though these do sometimes mislead us, yet we can use them to correct each other; but it is a very different thing to trust another person, which is faith in the Scripture sense of the word. But reliance on the word of another is no irrational or strange principle of conduct in the concerns of this life. For what do we know without trusting others? (1) Are there not towns within fifty or sixty miles of us which we have never seen, but in which we fully believe? What convinces us? The report of others—this faith in testimony which, when religion is concerned, is called irrational. (2) Consider how we are obliged to confide in persons we never saw, or know but slightly; nay, in their handwritings, which, for what we know, may be forged. (3) It is certain that we all must sooner or later die, and men arrange their affairs accordingly. Yet what proof have we of this? because other men die? how does he know that? has he seen them die? he can know nothing of what took place before he was born, nor of what happens in other countries. How little, indeed, he knows about it at all, except that it is a received fact. (4) We constantly believe things against our own judgment; *i.e.*, when we think our informant likely to know more about the matter under consideration than ourselves, which is the precise case in the question of religious faith. And thus from reliance on others we acquire knowledge of all kinds, and proceed to reason, judge, decide, act, form plans for the future. But it is needless to proceed; the world could not go on without trust. The most distressing event that can happen to a state is the spreading of a want of confidence between man and man. Distrust, want of faith, breaks the very bonds of human society. 5. Now, shall we account it only rational for a man to yield to another's judgment as better than his own, and yet think it against reason when one, like Abraham, sets the promise of God above his own short-sighted expectation? II. THE MAIN REASON FOR DISBELIEF. It may be objected, "If God had spoken to us as He did to Abraham, it were madness to disbelieve; but it is not His voice we hear, but man's speaking in His name. How are we to know whether they speak truth or not?" 1. Whatever such may say about their willingness to believe, in a great many cases they murmur at being required to believe, dislike being bound to act without seeing, and prefer to trust themselves to trusting God, even though it could be plainly proved to them that God was speaking to them. Their conduct shows this. Why otherwise do they so frequently scoff at religious men, as if timid and narrow-minded, merely because they fear to sin? Clearly, it is their very faith itself they ridicule. To trust another implicitly is to acknowledge one's self to be his inferior; and this man's proud nature cannot bear to do. It is therefore very much to our purpose to accustom our minds to the fact that almost everything we do is grounded on mere trust in others, and that visible dependence reminds us forcibly of our truer and fuller dependence upon God. 2. Unbelievers condemn themselves out of their own mouth. Our obedience to God is not founded on our belief in the word of such persons as tell us Scripture came from God. We obey God primarily because we feel His presence in our consciences bidding us obey Him. Now, if they trust their senses and their reason, why do they not trust their conscience too? Their conscience is as much a part of themselves as their reason is; and it is placed within them in order to balance the influence of sight and reason; and yet they will not attend to it; for they love to be their own masters, and therefore they will not attend to that secret whisper of their hearts, which tells them they are not their own masters, and that sin is hateful and ruinous. Nothing shows this more plainly than their conduct. Supposing a man says to them, "You know in your heart that you should not do so"; they get angry; or attempt to turn what is said into ridicule; anything will they do, except answer by reasoning. Their boasted argumentation flies like a coward before the stirring of conscience; and their passions are the only champions left for their defence. They in effect say, "We do so, because we like it"; perhaps they even avow this in so many words. And are such the persons whom any Christian can trust? Surely faith in them would be of all conceivable confidences the most irrational. For ourselves, let us but obey God's voice in our hearts, and we shall have no doubts practically formidable about the truth of Scripture. Our doubts will be found to arise after disobedience. And if we but obey God in time faith will become like sight; we shall have no more difficulty in finding what will please God than in moving our

limbs, or in understanding the conversation of our familiar friends. (*J. H. Newman, D.D.*) **But was strong in faith, giving glory to God.**—*Strong faith:*—I. WHAT IT IS. 1. Abraham grew strong in faith; faith grows by exercise. 2. He was made strong by faith; faith is a bracing grace. The world's heroes are strong by faith in themselves, God's by faith in Him (Judges vi. 14; Heb. xi.; David, Daniel, &c.). Weak faith is not rejected, but strong faith is commended. Strong faith triumphs over doubts and fears (Matt. xiv. 30, 31). II. WHAT IT DOES. It glorifies God as unbelief dishonours Him. It gives glory to all His attributes, especially His faithfulness, benevolence, almightiness, for it builds on them alone. Honouring God is therefore honoured by Him. Not to believe Him is to offer Him the greatest insult (1 John v. 10). God's honour and man's interest, both combined. Faith secures both. Abraham giving glory to God waxed strong in faith. As faith glorifies God it becomes stronger and stronger, and is a worthy medium of justification as giving God all the glory. (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) *Strong faith:*—I. STRONG FAITH IS SUPPORTED BY ABUNDANT REASONS. 1. All the reasons which justify our believing in God at all justify our believing in Him most firmly. It can never be right to believe unless the statements are true, and if true they deserve undivided faith. If anything be strong enough for you to trust your eternal destiny to it, your trust ought to be immovable as a granite rock. If it be right to enter into faith's stream at all, every possible argument proves that the deeper you go the better. 2. Reasons for strong faith may be found in the character of God. Our reliance upon man must be cautiously given; but—(1) "The Lord is not a man that He should lie, nor the son of man that He should repent." Should we not have strong faith who believe in a God whose very essence is pure truth? (2) God is omnipotent, and therefore believing should be strong. "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" "With God all things are possible." (3) All things else change, but God knoweth no shadow of a turning. Believe immutably in an immutable God. (4) He is the God of love. What a wanton insult it is to mistrust one who cannot be unkind. 3. When I turn mine eyes to our Lord Jesus it appears incongruous that the Son of God should be received with meagre confidence. Can we doubt His ability to save? Abraham had strong confidence when he saw the type—the burning lamp passing between the pieces of the slain victims. With how much greater confidence should we rest in the antitype. 4. We ought to give God strong faith, because there is no evidence which could justify mistrust. (1) All down the ages those who have trusted in Him have never been confounded. We read in the eleventh of Hebrews the record of what the Lord wrought in those who believed in Him. Now, *per contra*, there standeth nothing. (2) On the bed of death the truth generally comes out, yet who ever heard a solitary believer declare that it is a mistake to confide in the blood of Jesus, or to rest in the faithfulness of God? Somewhere or other this thing would have come out if it had been so. (3) Have you experienced anything which casts suspicion upon the character of God? When you have trusted Him has He failed you? Will you put your finger upon a promise which He has broken? II. STRONG FAITH PRODUCES THE MOST DESIRABLE RESULTS. We can only dwell upon the one mentioned here, "giving glory to God." This is "man's chief end." Strong faith answers that end because—I. It treats him like God. Unbelief is practical atheism; because, denying the truthfulness of God, it takes away what is a part of His essential character. I would not grieve those who have but little faith, but still weak faith limits the Holy One of Israel! It believes Him up to such a point, or under such and such circumstances, whereas strong faith treats God according to His infinite character. 2. It treats Him as a father, and acts towards Him in the childlike spirit, *i.e.*, with unlimited confidence. Can my Father do an unkind thing, be untrue, be false or changeable? Impossible! 3. It strengthens all the other graces, and all these bring glory to God. 4. It gives a striking testimony to the world. The faith which can practise eminent self-denial or achieve great enterprises attracts the eyes of men; they see your strong faith, and they glorify your Father which is in heaven. I have known some faith which would have required a microscope to perceive it, and when we have declared that little faith saves the soul, the worldling has replied, "Well, it is a very small concern at any rate." 5. It enables Him to work in us and through us. As our Saviour could not do many mighty works in a certain place because of their unbelief, so is God hampered with regard to some of us. III. STRONG FAITH WHICH GIVES GLORY TO GOD MAY BE EXERCISED BY PERSONS WHO ARE OTHERWISE EXCEEDINGLY WEAK. 1. What a joy this is to you who are sufferers in body! You cannot do apostolic work and range a continent, but you

may exhibit a placid patience, a sweet resignation, a sacred hopefulness as to the future, a Divine disdain as to the fear of death. 2. So you may have few talents, and yet you may have strong faith. You need not be a genius in order to give glory to God, for the strength of your faith will do it. You can glorify God by holding firmly to the truth of which you understand so little, but which you love so heartily. 3. Some saints are conscious of weakness of every sort, but they must not, therefore, think that they cannot honour God by strong faith, for Abraham was so old that his body was now dead, and yet he believed that he would be the progenitor of the chosen seed. The depth of your weakness is just the height of your possibilities of honouring the Lord. IV. THIS STRONG FAITH VARIES AS TO ITS MANNER OF WORKING, very much according to the person and his circumstances. 1. There is one thing that strong faith does not do, it never talks big and boasts of what it will accomplish. There is a great deal of difference between confidence in yourself and confidence in God. Barking dogs do not often bite, and those men who promise much very seldom perform. Point me to one boastful word that fell from Abraham. David said little to his envious brothers, but he brought home the giant's head. 2. Faith exercises itself as in the case of Abraham, by believing God's word. God had said many things to him, and he believed them all. 3. But Abraham's was not alone receptive faith: his was a faith which obeyed the precept. The test of obedience was the strange command to take his only son and offer him up for a sacrifice, but he went to do it. 4. Abraham's faith awakened in him great expectations. He was looking for an heir, from whom should spring a seed as the stars of heaven for multitude. We shall be full of expectation if we have strong faith: looking for blessings, expecting prayers to be answered, and promises to be fulfilled. V. STRONG FAITH IS ESPECIALLY TO BE EXPECTED IN CERTAIN QUARTERS. 1. In those who know God. "They that know Thy name will put their trust in Thee, for Thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek Thee." 2. Those who have had a long experience of Him. Speak well of the bridge which has carried you over so many times. Let those of us who have been twenty-five years in the ways of God put aside our childish doubts. 3. Those who have lived in fellowship with Him. 4. Those who are getting near to heaven. Do not let it be among the last memories of earth that you doubted your Beloved. 5. Teachers and preachers. We shall never win sinners to faith if we preach what we do not intensely believe, And I do not think we shall have many conversions unless we expect God to bless the word. It is the rule of His kingdom. "According to your faith so be it unto you." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Trusting the Promiser*:—Said Hester Ann Rogers: "By thus trusting the promise and the Promiser, I have conquered, and, glory be to God, through His strength I shall prevail. It is by hanging on Jesus, as an infant on its mother's breast, I retain my peace, and love, and joy." *Unfaltering faith*:—John and Charles Wesley were once conversing about an important project, which they agreed was desirable, but Charles thought they could not do it. John thought they should attempt it. At length Charles said, "When God gives me wings I'll fly." John replied, "When God tells me to fly I'll trust Him for the wings." (*H. K. Burton.*) *Strong faith*:—Amongst us there may be a lack of faith. The unbelieving man is weak, and the believing man is strong. Faith pours vigour into the understanding, the judgment, the affection, and the will. In proportion to a man's faith so is his power. This principle has been illustrated times without number, by the soldier on the battle-field, the sailor on the great deep, the traveller in other lands, and men in every department in life. Without strong faith, Hannibal never could have attempted the bold enterprise of crossing the Alps. Without strong faith, Columbus never could have sailed upon the untried waters, amid the insubordination of his crew. Without strong faith, Cook, Bruce and Livingstone never could have confronted and overcome such gigantic difficulties in unknown countries. Without strong faith in reason and science, Socrates and Galileo never could have been so daring and dauntless, so great and sublime. A mere sneerer—the man who sits in his easy chair, folds his arms, believes in nothing, and laughs at everything—could have done none of these things, and can do nothing for the improvement of the race worthy of a moment's consideration. What steam is to the locomotive, or what life is to the body, faith is to successful action. (*A. McAuslane.*) *Faith glorifying God*:—The leading thought here is the connection of God's glory with our faith. Having that faith, as the gift of God, we glorify Him. And being strong in that faith, we glorify Him all the more. To be glorifying to God, therefore, our faith—I. MUST HAVE A PROMISE OF GOD TO REST ON. Human faith, not

resting on a Divine promise, is either folly or fanaticism. 1. Even in the natural world this is true. We walk by faith; but it is by faith grounded on the promise that nature's laws will operate with the regularity hitherto observed. Strong in that faith you walk safely, and glorify God. But if you disregard that promise, you rush into danger and dishonour God. 2. The promise to Abraham was fitted to try his capacity of believing to the uttermost. The only thing that could lessen the difficulty was that there could be no doubt as to the exact thing promised, or as to the particular person to whom it was promised. Ah! but one says, Give me a promise like that and I will not hesitate for a moment. But consider—(1) May not Abraham's words elsewhere be applicable here?—"If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." Is it clear that if I am not now complying with the gospel call, addressed to all sinners, I would comply with it more readily if it were addressed to me by name? And again, if forgiveness of sin, renewal, &c., are now felt to be intangible, would it obviate the difficulty to have them made up into a material packet which my hand may handle, my eye see, my mouth swallow? Called by name I might refuse as now; that would not make me willing, and if I got the blessings embodied in some sensible sign, it would be the embodiment alone that became mine. The blessings embodied would seem as shadowy as ever. Be sure that the call is personal and pointed enough, and that the promise is to be realised experimentally. Let us together taste and see that God is good. (2) Understand clearly the object of faith of Abraham. Immediately it was a son in his old age. But surely he did not contemplate that barely in itself. He looked at it in its spiritual significancy; in its bearing on the fulfilment of the great original promise, which he had been told was to be fulfilled in his seed. But for that aspect of it, the promise could really have no meaning to him. In a worldly point of view, what need has he of this child, for whose birth the very laws of nature are to be suspended? For his own temporal prosperity, for the preservation of his name and memory in a numerous posterity, provision has been made already. The promise then is not merely that a son is to be born to him, but that in that son he is to see the day of Christ afar off with gladness. Viewed thus, Abraham's faith really differs in no material respect from that which you are called to exercise. He has no promise on which his faith may lean more special and personal than you have; and what his faith has to lay hold of is the same unseen Saviour, and the same spiritual salvation that you have set before you in the gospel. And, simply relying, as you may rely, on the testimony of God concerning Him who is to be his seed in Isaac, he believes, and righteousness is imputed to him. Hence—(3) Abraham's case becomes now really ours. Or, if there is any difference, the advantage is with you. Abraham had presented to him an event future and conditional upon certain necessary antecedents (vers. 19, 20). You have an accomplished fact (ver. 24). Isaac is to be born; and in him is to be found the seed of the woman that is to bruise the serpent's head: that is Abraham's ground of hope. Christ is risen; the seed of woman having actually bruised the serpent's head: that is yours. II. MUST BE SUCH AS WILL BE GLORIFYING TO GOD. My faith must have its root in a real personal dealing between God and me. He and I must meet personally, face to face; as truly as He and Abraham did. We must know one another; trust one another. No other kind of faith than that can be glorifying to Him. What! Shall I be contented that a member of my family should go about to satisfy himself by evidence from hearsay, or from circumstances. Is that a sort of faith which I can feel to be either complimentary or kind? Is it not, on the contrary, a bitter disappointment. For does it not show that I am held to be, not a friend, or father, who may be fondly resorted to, that I may be trusted and consulted; but at the best a suspected stranger, about whom it may be desirable to be informed? III. MUST BE STRONG OR IN THE WAY OF BECOMING STRONG. Now, in considering this we must bear in mind the Lord's own saying—"If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed . . . nothing shall be impossible with you." The woman with an issue of blood was apparently not strong in faith. And yet her faith did a great thing for her, and surely God was greatly glorified through it. And indeed it was strong faith to say, "If I may but touch His garment, I shall be whole," for it was such immediate, personal dealing with the Lord that put all His power and love in operation on her behalf. The strength of Abraham's faith consisted—1. Negatively, in not considering what sense may urge against the promise (vers. 19, 20). If he had considered these things he would have been weak in faith. (1) Certainly they were formidable obstacles that had to be overcome by a miracle of power upon

and a miracle of faith within him. Everything that he could see and know and feel, in nature and in himself, was against his believing. And what had he on the other side for believing? Simply God speaking; God promising. That, however, prevailed. (2) But we must distinguish this "not considering" these difficulties from the mere shutting of the eyes to the fact of their existence. I may be so bent upon the attainment of an object as unconsciously to overlook all intervening obstacles, and fondly persuade myself that what I wish must be possible, simply because I wish it. Or I may be so impatient, foolhardy, as to be wilfully blind to everything but the gratifying of my heart's desire. Not such was the faith of Abraham. He had full in view the obstacles in the way of the promise. And this was the very strength of his faith, that, having them full in view, he disregarded them. (3) Alas! how is faith weakened and made to stagger by your considering what sense says or suggests against it. (*a*) Am I called, as a sinner, to believe in Christ for the forgiveness of my sin and my peace with God? God Himself is telling me, not of a child to be born, but of the Child actually born; and not of His birth merely, but of His wondrous life and death; and of His rising from the dead, &c., God is telling me of this Christ as mine, if I will but have Him to be mine. Alas! I give heed to considerations that seem to make all this impossible. I am not worthy enough, or vile enough. I have not repentance enough, or faith enough. I will not make up my mind absolutely to reject Christ. But I stagger at the promise through unbelief. I stagger into unbelief. Is this giving glory to God? (*b*) As regards a holy life, this evil is sorely felt. Ah! how am I tempted here to consider my own deadness; and so to consider it, as to put up with it, and make allowance for it. How apt am I to dwell on infirmities and hindrances; how ready to acquiesce in what I am, as if it were all I might be. How does all this interfere with my giving glory to God! (*c*) For others my faith is to be exercised. I plead with God for a child, a brother, a friend. I have promises to plead. Ah! can it be that here too I am hindered by my considering the suggestions of sense, and giving heed to difficulties and questions respecting his deadness and mine? (*d*) For the seed of Abraham; for Him who is the seed of Abraham, and for all that is His; His cause and kingdom; the progress of His gospel; the winning of souls to Him; for all that, I am commanded to believe God. Alas! for my weakness in this faith. How do I consider the mountains that are in my way! For all this staggering the remedy is to be found, at least in part, in the negative way of not considering the difficulties which sense may raise. 2. Positively, notice what being strong in faith really is. It is simply being fully persuaded "that what He had promised He was able also to perform" (ver. 21). Nay, but who doubts that? you ask. I at least never dream of calling in question the omnipotence of God. And yet I see not how that will of itself make me, or any man, strong in faith. Very true. But the faith in question is not believing something about God, but believing God. Ah! in that view it is everything, to be fully persuaded that what He has promised He is able also to perform. It is a blessed thing to remember that it is the Almighty who speaks to you, who bids you speak to Him. O ye of little faith, whereof do you doubt? Is anything too hard for Him who asks you to believe Him? Be, then, strong in this faith, giving glory to God. For it is faith in God's power that most glorifies Him; it is distrust of His power which lies at the root of most of the unbelief that is so dishonouring to Him. "If Thou canst do anything," we are apt to say, with the afflicted father. Let us ponder the gracious answer, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." And let us enter into the spirit of the gracious reply, "Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief." Conclusion: Lay to heart the ground of believing strongly. It is not that it gives peace, joy, salvation, but that it gives glory to God. To be weak in faith is not merely to miss or mar a privilege, but to dishonour the God whom you are bound to glorify. To be dwelling on hindrances standing in the way of His free word of promise; to be distrusting His ability to sweep them all away, and make His word of promise good; can anything be more fitted to affront the Almighty, the faithful, true, and loving Jehovah? Is it not literally and truly making him a liar? Beware of so great a sin. You may fancy that there is humility in it. You feel your own unworthiness and unsteadfastness so deeply that you dare not venture to be too confident or to presume. Presume! —the presumption is all the other way! The intolerable presumption is to refuse to take God at His word. Be clothed with humility. And that you may be clothed with humility, be not faithless but believing. Be strong in faith, giving glory to God. (*R. S. Candlish, D.D.*) **And being fully persuaded that what He had**

promised He was able also to perform.—*Full persuasion:*—Having full assurance (Luke i. 1; Rom. xiv. 5; 2 Tim. iv. 5, 17). Metaphor from a ship carried forward with full sail, "Gave out all his canvas." Ventured all on God's word. Believed without hesitation or reserve. Full assurance of faith (Heb. x. 22). Grounded on full assurance of understanding (Col. ii. 2). Conducts to full assurance of hope (Heb. vi. 11). Faith a filling grace. Unbelief empties and keeps empty. (*T. Robinson, D.D.*). *The full persuasion of God's ability:*—God's ability the foundation of faith's stability. Faith honours God by counting Him able (Job xlii. 2; Gen. xviii. 14; Matt. xix. 26; Luke i. 37; 1 Sam. xiv. 6; 2 Chron. xiv. 11). (*Ibid.*) *Faith as a condition of receiving:*—Is it any wonder that, when we stagger at any promise of God through unbelief, we do not receive it? Not that faith merits the answer or in any way earns it, or works it out; but God has made believing a condition of receiving, and the giver has a sovereign right to choose his own terms of gift. (*Samuel Hart.*)

Vers. 23–25. **Now it was not written for his sake alone.**—*The Scriptures used by every generation:*—Do you ever think, as you pass along the chapters of the Bible, that they are now like the king's highways; that more saints than tongue could count have walked along these pages toward heaven; that each verse has been a bosom like a mother's to some child in Christ; that each verse has had in it blessings for multitude of souls; that these passages of hope and joy have made melody for thrice ten million struggling souls; that these Scriptures are a sublime renewal of the miracle of the loaf which increases by using, and which feeds without diminution? These unwasting chapters have supplied armies and multitudes of faint and hungry saints, but there is not a particle gone. There is as much yet for the famishing soul as when first they were set forth. To the end the loaf shall be broken, and shall yield a liberal abundance for every human want; and to the end the undiminished whole shall remain a witness and a miracle of the Divine spiritual bounty. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Lessons of faith from Abraham:*—I. The END of our faith—deliverance from sin. II. The BASIS of our faith—God's promise—the death and resurrection of Christ. III. The ENCOURAGEMENT of our faith—Abraham's example. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Abraham's example:*—As Abraham believed in life from the dead, so also we, because—1. God gives us a pledge of it in the resurrection of Christ. 2. God promises to raise us from a death of sin to a life of righteousness. 3. Faith realises the resurrection power. (*Ibid.*) **It shall be imputed.**—*Imputed righteousness:*—A man is denominated righteous as a wall may be esteemed red or green. Now that comes to pass two manners of ways—either by the colour inherent and belonging to the wall itself, or by the same colour in some diaphanous, transparent body, as glass, which, by the beam of the sun shining on the wall, doth externally affect the same as if it were its own, and covers that true inherent colour which it hath of itself. In like manner, by the strict covenant of the law, we ought to be righteous from a righteousness inherent in and performed by ourselves; but in the new covenant of grace we are righteous by the righteousness of Christ, which shineth upon us, and presenteth us in His colour unto the sight of His Father. Here, in both covenants, the righteousness from whence the denomination groweth is the same, namely, the satisfying of the demands of the whole law; but the manner of our right and property thereunto is much varied. In the one we have right unto it by law, because we have done it ourselves; in the other we have right unto it only by grace and favour, because another man's doing of it is bestowed upon us and accounted ours. (*G. H. Salter.*) *Christ's imputed righteousness:*—We read in our chronicles that Edmund, surnamed Ironside and Canute, the first Danish king, after many encounters and equal fights, at length embraced a present agreement, which was made by parting England betwixt them two, and confirmed by oath and sacrament, putting on each other's apparel and arms, as a ceremony, to express the atonement of their minds, as if they had made transactions of their persons to each other; Canute became Edmund, and Edmund became Canute. Even such a change of apparel is betwixt Christ and His Church —Christ and every true repentant sinner; He taketh upon Him their sins, and putteth upon them His righteousness; He changeth their rags into robes; He arrays them with the righteousness of the saints; that twofold righteousness, imputed and imparted; that of justification, and the other of sanctification; that is an undercoat, this is an upper; that clean and fair, this white and fair; and both from Himself, who is made unto them not only "wisdom, but righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." (*Ibid.*) **Jesus our Lord.**—*Jesus our Lord:*—1. It is the part of

Faith to accept great contrasts, if laid down in the Word, and to make them a part of her daily speech. This name, "Lord," is a great contrast to incarnation and humiliation. In the manger, in poverty, shame, and death, Jesus was still Lord. 2. These strange conditions for "our Lord" to be found in are no difficulties to that faith which is the fruit of the Spirit. For she sees in the death of Jesus a choice reason for His being our Lord (Phil. ii. 7-11). "Wherefore God hath highly exalted Him." She delights in that Lordship as the fruit of resurrection; but there could have been no resurrection without death (Acts ii. 32-36). She hears the voice of Jehovah behind all the opposition endured by Jesus proclaiming Him Lord of all (Psa. ii.; cx.). 3. It never happens that our faith in Jesus for salvation makes us less reverently behold in Him the Lord of all. He is "Jesus" and also "our Lord." "Born a child, and yet a King." "My Beloved," and yet "My Lord and my God." Our simple trust in Him, our familiar love to Him, our bold approaches to Him in prayer, our near and dear communion with Him, and, most of all, our marriage union with Him, still leave him "our Lord." I. HIS TENDER CONDESCENSIONS ENDEAR THE TITLE. "Jesus our Lord" is a very sweet name to a believer's heart. 1. We claim to render it to Him specially as man, "who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (ver. 25). As Jesus of Nazareth He is Lord. 2. We acknowledge Him as Lord the more fully and unreservedly because He loved us and gave Himself for us. 3. In all the privileges accorded to us in Him He is Lord. (1) In our salvation we have "received Christ Jesus the Lord" (Col. ii. 6). (2) In entering the Church we find Him the Head of the body, to whom all are subject (Eph. v. 23). (3) In our life-work He is Lord. "We live unto the Lord" (chap. xiv. 8). We glorify God in His name (Eph. v. 20). (4) In resurrection He is the firstborn from the dead (Col. i. 18). (5) At the Advent His appearing will be the chief glory (Titus ii. 13). (6) In eternal glory He is worshipped for ever (Rev. v. 12, 13). 4. In our dearest fellowship at the table He is "Jesus our Lord." It is the Lord's table, the Lord's supper, the cup of the Lord, the body and blood of our Lord; and our object is to show the Lord's death (1 Cor. xi. 20, 26, 27, 29). II. OUR LOVING HEARTS READ THE TITLE WITH PECULIAR EMPHASIS. 1. We yield it to Him only. Moses is a servant, but Jesus alone is Lord. "One is your Master" (Matt. xxiii. 8, 10). 2. To Him most willingly. Ours is delighted homage. 3. To Him unreservedly. We wish our obedience to be perfect. 4. To Him in all matter of law-making and truth-teaching. He is Master and Lord; His word decides practice and doctrine. 5. To Him in all matters of administration in the Church and in providence. "It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him good" (1 Sam. iii. 18). 6. To Him trustfully, feeling that He will act a Lord's part right well. No king can be so wise, good, great as He (Job i. 21). 7. To Him for ever. He reigns in the Church without successor. Now, as in the first days, we call Him Master and Lord (Heb. vii. 3). III. WE FIND MUCH SWEETNESS IN THE WORD "OUR." 1. It makes us remember our personal interest in our Lord. Each believer uses this title in the singular, and calls Him from his heart, "My Lord." David wrote, "Jehovah said unto my Lord." Elisabeth spoke of "The mother of my Lord." Magdalene said, "They have taken away my Lord." Thomas said, "My Lord and my God." Paul wrote, "The knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord," &c. 2. It brings a host of brethren before our minds, for it is in union with them that we say "our Lord," and so it makes us remember each other (Eph. iii. 14, 15). 3. It fosters unity and creates a holy clanship as we all rally around our "one Lord." Saints of all ages are one in this. 4. His example as Lord fosters practical love. Remember the foot-washing and His words on that occasion (John xiii. 14). 5. Our zeal to make Him Lord forbids all self-exaltation. "Be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ. Neither be ye called masters," &c. (Matt. xxiii. 8, 10). 6. His position as Lord reminds us of the confidence of the Church in doing His work. "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach," &c. (Matt. xxviii. 18, 19). "The Lord working with them" (Mark xvi. 20). 7. Our common joy in Jesus as our Lord becomes an evidence of grace, and thus of union with each other (1 Cor. xii. 3). Conclusion: 1. Let us worship Jesus as our Lord and God. 2. Let us imitate Him, copying our Lord's humility and love. 3. Let us serve Him, obeying His every command. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) **Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.**—*An epitome of the gospel:*—I. CHRIST WAS DELIVERED, &c.—the person—delivered—unto death—for our offences—by the determinate counsel of God. II. CHRIST WAS RAISED, &c.—the fact—the design—because a demonstration of Divine power and grace, and a guarantee to faith. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*). *The great*

substitute:—During the Reign of Terror in France, when many persons every day were being executed by the guillotine, a young man was led to the foot of the scaffold among others to die. His father stood by him, and when the son's name was called the father stepped forward, ascended the scaffold, and died in his place. Here Christ is said to have died for us. Let us look at—I. THE CAUSE of Christ's death. 1. "Offences." Sins. Transgressions. Sin is not a trifle to be forgotten. It is seed that bears terrible fruit. Some one is injured by every sin we commit. Sin harms ourselves and offends God. 2. "Our offences." Christ Himself was without sin, but our sin was laid upon Him (Isa. liii. 6). Our sins are not one, but many. (chap. v. 16). II. THE MANNER of it. 1. "He was delivered," that is, handed over like a criminal to the executioner. "Between two thieves." 2. It was voluntary. 3. Preceded by great sufferings. 4. Painful beyond expression. III. THE VIRTUE of it. It was a sufficient atonement. Christ did not fail in redeeming us. He was "raised again for our justification." IV. THE CLAIMS of it. Such love claims our love and service. (*Preacher's Magazine.*) *Christ's deliverance and resurrection*:—I. CHRIST WAS DELIVERED FOR OUR OFFENCES. 1. Whom was He delivered by? (1) God (Acts ii. 23). (2) Judas. 2. What to? (1) To shame (Isa. liii. 3). (2) To pain (Isa. liii. 4-5). (3) To death (Gal. iii. 13). 3. What for? "Our offences." (1) All men are guilty (Psa. xiv. 3; Gal. iii. 22). (2) This guilt cannot be taken away but by satisfying God's justice (Heb. ix. 22). (3) No creature can satisfy it (Psa. xlix. 7, 8). (4) Hence Christ undertook it (1 Tim. ii. 5). (5) Neither could He do it but by suffering (Heb. ix. 22; Matt. xv. 28; 1 Tim. ii. 6). (6) No suffering would serve the turn but death, and that on the Cross. (7) By His death He hath satisfied for our offences (1 John ii. 2; Rom. iii. 25: Rev. i. 5). (8) Hence our sins came to be pardoned; and so, He being delivered for us, we are delivered from our offences—(*a*) As to their guilt (Matt. i. 21). (*b*) As to their strength (Acts iii. 26). III. HE WAS RAISED AGAIN FOR OUR JUSTIFICATION. 1. How raised again? From death by God (Acts ii. 23, 24; Matt. xxviii. 13-15; Luke xxiv. 4-6). (1) He was a real man. (2) He really died (Matt. xxvii. 50). (3) He really rose again (Luke xxiv. 37-40; John xx. 27). 2. What is justification? A forensic term opposed to accusation (chap. viii. 33). (1) Man hath sinned (chap. iii. 23). (2) This he is accused for by—(*a*) God's justice. (*b*) The law. (*c*) Satan. (*d*) Conscience (chap. ii. 15; 1 John iii. 20). (3) Christ hath borne our punishment (Isa. liii. 6). (4) He hath also performed obedience for us. (5) This His righteousness is imputed to us (2 Cor. v. 21). (6) By this we are cleared from the charge brought against us. (7) This is my justification. 3. In what sense did Christ rise for our justification, or what dependence hath our justification on Christ's resurrection? (1) Christ undertook to satisfy God's justice for us. (2) This He could not do but by suffering death. (3) So long as dead, He had not done this (1 Cor. xv. 14). (4) His rising again argued death conquered, and justice satisfied (Acts ii. 24). 5. Therefore being risen He cleanses us from our sins and so justifies us. Conclusion: 1. Was Christ delivered? Then—(1) Admire the mercy of God in delivering His Son for us. (2) Be mindful of Him. 2. Is Christ risen? Then—(1) We shall rise (1 Cor. xv. 12). (2) Let us mind the things where He is (Col. iii. 1). 3. Did He rise for our justification? Then believe on Him that you may be justified (chap. v. 1). (1) In the merits of His death. (2) The truth of His resurrection. (3) The constancy of His intercession. (*Bp. Beveridge.*) *The resurrection the Saviour's recompense*:—The resurrection of our Lord is but one of that series of acts by which the Son of God is fulfilling the commission which He received from the Father to bring back to Him lost creation. We must never so fix our attention on the details of the work of Christ as to lose sight of its wholeness. It was not the first appearance of the Son of God as man which began that work; it was not His disappearance from mortal sight which completed it. Nor is it any one specific link of Christ's appearance in the flesh on which the salvation of the world exclusively hangs; but on all of them taken together, inserted into, and mutually dependent on each other, as visible parts of that far greater invisible whole. And, accordingly, St. Paul makes mention of the resurrection of Jesus as consequent upon (not in order of time merely, but of relation) the death of Jesus; and this death, again, as consequent upon (in similar order of relation, and of cause and effect) the offences of mankind: "For" means on account of, as the result of, our offences, Christ was delivered by the Father to an expiatory death; and on account of, as the result of, our justification, that expiation having been thereby effected, Christ was raised again to everlasting life. Here, then, we see the resurrection of Jesus, connected not merely in the sequence of time, but in the consequence of cause and effect, with the expiatory

death of Jesus. Wherein does the connection consist? I answer, the resurrection WAS vouchsafed by God to Jesus—I. AS THE REWARD OF THAT JUSTIFYING DEATH. This is a doctrine which St. Paul exhibits more clearly than by the single particle of our text in Phil. ii. 9 (see also Psa. xlv. 7, xci. 14; Isa. liii. 11, 12; Heb. xii. 21). And here we have an instance of God's general principle of conduct towards His people. He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. Them that honour Him He will honour. "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love which ye have showed towards His name." "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." And we must not let the thought lie idle in our minds; we must live upon it by an appropriating faith. Faith in the absolute certainty and constant exercise of God's moral and retributive government, gives life and spirit to our energies, and patient perseverance to our struggles. II. AS THE PUBLIC TESTIMONY FROM GOD OF ITS EFFICACY AND ACCEPTANCE. Jesus had undertaken a mighty work—no less than the taking away the sin of the world; and the assurance of the full sufficiency and complete acceptance of His sacrifice is essential to our faith, and peace, and holiness. As, therefore, God vouchsafed to testify His acceptance of preceding offerings, so, by raising up His Son, did He testify that the justifying act was done and was sufficient, that access to His presence was procured for every penitent, that we may now have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. When Abraham offered sacrifice God vouchsafed to give him visible testimony of its acceptance (Gen. xv. 17, 18). When Moses and the Israelites offered burnt-offerings to the Lord then "they saw the God of Israel—they saw God and did eat and drink." When Elijah had prepared the burnt sacrifice then "the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice," &c. And so, too, after the sacrifice of Jesus was offered, then came there the sign from heaven; then was there the public proclamation—now, by facts, of what had been already told in words—"This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased!" "Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee!" Oh, let the anxious penitent, who feels that on his justification through the merits of Christ must ever hang all his peace and hope, look with thankful adoration to the testimony given thereto. "He was raised again for"—for having wrought out and completed—"our justification"; and that raising again is the public manifesto from the court of heaven that the act is registered and recognised before the throne of God. Does any one urge that his particular justification could not have been accomplished before his repentance and faith? Then observe that our personal faith is not the antecedent to our justification, but simply the recipient of that which has been wrought out for us by Jesus only, on the Cross. It is the benefits of justification to the individual penitent that depends upon his laying hold of that free gift which has been prepared for him. What he needs is simply warrant to return to God; and, therefore, when he is turning, what more is requisite for him to do but to lift the eye of faith, and see that the path is open, that the barriers between him and his God have been long ago removed; that the new and living way has been consecrated through the veil; that is to say, Christ's flesh; and, therefore, that he has only to draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith? Your state of justification, your feelings of acceptance and adoption, depend, indeed, on having in your bosom the scroll of pardon, sealed with Jesus's blood; and your continuance in the enjoyment of that state depends on your frequent looking at it, and your watchful preservation of it: but the act of justification—it has been already achieved; the pardon itself—it has already passed the great seal; the scroll in which it is recorded—it has been already exhibited on the Cross of Jesus; and you cannot write, nor seal, nor countersign it. Look up then upon the record and leap for joy; behold the public testimony of it, and "bless the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who of His abundant mercy hath begotten you again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." III. AS THE PLEDGE THAT ALL WHO REALISE IN THEMSELVES THE EFFICACY OF THAT DEATH SHALL BE SIMILARLY REWARDED WITH PARTICIPATION IN THAT RESURRECTION. Jesus died, not as an individual only, but as the substitute and representative of guilty man; and Jesus was raised again, not as an individual only, but as the head and representative of pardoned men; and consequently as we realise the efficacy of His death, so does the fact which Easter commemorates assure us that we shall realise the glory of His resurrection (chap. vi. 5-10). (*T. Griffith, A.M.*) *Christ raised for our justification*:—Justification (in the full sense of the word) is the holding righteous, not merely the not holding guilty. The man who is justified is not merely not condemned, he is actually accounted to be righteous. And the apostle, in the text, connects the former with the death,

the latter with the resurrection, of Christ. By that, the record of our sins is blotted out from God's book; by this, there is conveyed to us our title to a place in His eternal and glorious kingdom. Why is our justification thus associated with the Resurrection, as our forgiveness is with the Passion? In answer, remember that there are three moments in the act of redemption as manifested in time, and that these are severally embodied in the nativity, the passion, and the resurrection of Christ. Now—1. Man is alienated from God, and the question is how shall he be set at one with God? The method which God devised was the personal union of Deity and humanity in the Word made flesh. And thus the mystery of the Incarnation marks the first step in this Divine process of restitution. 2. But the union of the human race with God in the unity of the Incarnate Son, is merely inchoate and partial, while there remains the barrier of sin. And therefore, "God sending His own Son in the flesh, and for sin" (*i.e.*, as a sin-offering), "condemned sin in the flesh." Christ died for us, and we in Him; and at His death "our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." And thus the Incarnation and the Atonement are each the necessary complement of the other. The Incarnation was necessary that the Atonement might be effected as it was effected: the Atonement was necessary to carry out the work of the Incarnation. 3. But are we at liberty to stop here? Shall we say that the *Consummatum est* of Calvary marked the completion and close of our redemption, as it symbolised that of our Redeemer's atoning sacrifice? Not so. By His act of self-immolation Christ threw down the barriers of sin; by it He continually is and will be throwing them down until all things are put under His feet. And therefore He "was delivered for our offences." But the very act by which those barriers were thrown down impaired the personal union of God and man in Christ. For, although neither the soul nor the body of the Saviour during their temporary separation ceased to be in union with the Divine Word, yet, as Pearson says, "As far . . . as humanity consists in the essential union of the parts of human nature, so far the humanity of Christ upon His death did cease to be, and consequently He ceased to be man." Accordingly, the great sacrifice of the Cross removed the obstacle to carrying out the process of restitution initiated in the Incarnation, at the price of partially reversing the Incarnation itself. The work of redemption had indeed gone a step forward, but it had also gone a step backward. A remedy had been provided for sin, but the remedy had left results which needed a further remedy. 4. And then came the Resurrection, which not only set its seal to the Incarnation and the Atonement, but completed the work of both. (1) Jesus was "declared to be the Son of God with power," and the Incarnation itself began anew when God "raised up Jesus again"; as it is written, "Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee." (2) As the atonement on the Cross, by the condemnation of sin in the flesh, purchased for man the non-imputation of sin, and cleared the way for the imputation to him of righteousness—so, from the Incarnation restored and perfected in our risen Lord, flows forth to His redeemed and believing people, both the imputation and also the reality of positive righteousness. Conclusion: In speaking as I do of the power of His resurrection, I am not merely using the language of technical theology, but that of Holy Scripture itself. We are told that baptized and believing Christians were crucified with Christ, died with Him, were planted together in the likeness of His death, were buried with Him by baptism into death, are dead unto sin—and then, on the other hand, that God brought us to life with Christ, and raised us up with Him, and seated us together with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that we may now reckon ourselves "to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." So again, the same apostle who tells us all this, also says, "that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified"—the word is here used in its negative sense—"by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life." And in like manner St. Peter tells us that "Baptism doth now save us . . . by the resurrection of Jesus Christ," and opens his Epistle with a triumphant burst of thanksgiving (1 Pet. i. 3, 4). (*Bp. Basil Jones.*) *Christ risen our justification:*—I. THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF CHRIST HAVE EACH THEIR OWN EFFICACY AND DISTINCT GIFT. 1. That death paid the ransom for the whole world, but the world lay as yet in darkness and sin. In that awful night, when the firstfruits of our redemption, the pardoned malefactor, was by Christ's side in Paradise, and He brought that blessed tidings to the righteous departed who had so long awaited His

coming, how lay our earth? Apostles dismayed and perplexed; Peter weeping his fall; the blood of the Redeemer resting on the Jews and their children; the chief priests seeking to secure the past by further sin; the sun gone down at noon, withdrawing itself from witnessing man's extremest sin. The mercy of the Redemption had been accomplished, but the ransomed were not as yet set free. They were "yet in their sins." For this blessed day it was reserved to bring life out of death, to "bring out the prisoners from the prison," and "let the oppressed go free," "to bring in everlasting righteousness." His death atoned for us; His resurrection justifies us. 2. What St. Paul declares here, he teaches elsewhere (1 Cor. xv. 17). He says not merely if Christ be not risen no proof hath been given that His atonement hath been accepted, but "your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins"; the world's sin has been atoned for, but the cleansing blood has not reached to you. The Cross, then, did not at once justify us. Before, all in a manner looked on to it (Rev. xiii. 8). Since all looks back to it, all flows from it (Rev. v. 12). Yet such was the will of God, that it should not by itself directly convey the mercies it obtained. What He purchased for us by His death He giveth us through His life. It is our living Lord who imparts to us the fruits of His own death (John x. 17; Rev. i. 18). As truly, then, as the death of Christ was the true remission of our sins, though not yet imparted to us, so truly was His resurrection our true justification imparting to us the efficacy of His death, and justifying us, or making us righteous in the sight of God. II. SCRIPTURE TELLS US HOW THE RESURRECTION IS TO US THE SOURCE OF JUSTIFICATION AND LIFE. 1. It was the especial promise of the resurrection that our Lord would thereby come into a closer relation with His disciples, no longer to be in outward presence with them, but to be in them and be their life (John xiv. 17–23). 2. And with this agrees the language in which the blessings of the gospel are, in such a marked and repeated way, afterwards expressed, that we are in Christ Jesus, and that His Spirit dwelleth in us. But we can be "in Christ" only by His taking us into Him by His Spirit (2 Cor. xiii. 5). Again, as our Lord declared, "I am the Life," so St. Paul says, having been "crucified with Christ," "it is not I which live, but Christ liveth in me," "your life is hid with Christ in God." 3. These are indeed all one gift, variously spoken of according to our various needs, or deaths. It is life, as opposed to our state of death in sin; righteousness, whereas we were unrighteous; sanctification, since we were unholy; redemption, as Satan's captives; wisdom, as become brutish; truth, as in error; but the one gift in all is our Incarnate Lord, who is Himself "made unto us Wisdom, and Righteousness, and Sanctification, and Redemption"; "the Way, the Truth, and the Life." He doth not merely give these gifts as gifts, precious indeed, yet still outward to and without Himself. He Himself is them, and all to us. These are the gifts which, as man, He received, to shed down abundantly on man, through His risen and glorified humanity. 4. So, further, St. Paul speaks of the knowledge of Christ, and of "the power of His resurrection," as the fruit of being "found in Him," and of "the Spirit of Him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwelling in" us, and of "the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe" being "according" or conformable "to the working of the might of His power which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead"; in all cases bringing our life close to the resurrection, and showing how the same Spirit, whereby His body was raised, is communicated to us, and that, because we are in Him, taken unto Him by His indwelling Spirit, and having the Spirit, because "in Him." This, then, is the sum of what Holy Scripture teaches many ways. All salvation, forgiveness, overcoming of death, restoration to life, oneness with God; all treasures of wisdom, mercy, and righteousness, and holiness lay in His atoning blood; but, that they might be applied to us, He in whom they were must come to us and take us unto Himself. What in Himself He is, that to us He becometh, by dwelling in us, that we may dwell in Him. And of these gifts His resurrection was the pledge and beginning. It was the earnest that that same Spirit, through which His holy body was raised, should be diffused through that whole body which He purposed to join to Himself, the Head. It was the commencement of that, of which the day of Pentecost was the fulfilment; and thus our weekly festival is at once that of the rising of our Lord, and His coming to us by the Spirit. On the Cross our Lord gave Himself for us; through the resurrection He giveth Himself to us. On the Cross, He was the Lamb which was slain for the sins of the world: in the resurrection, that body which was slain became life-giving. (*E. B. Pusey, D.D.*) *Christ's resurrection*:—On the Sacro Monte, at Varallo, is a supposed imitation of the sepulchre of the Lord Jesus. It was a singular thing to stoop down and enter it,

of course finding it empty, like the one which it feebly pictured. What a joyful word was that of the angel, "He is not here!" Sweet assurance—millions of the dead are here in the sepulchre, thousands of saints are here in the grave, but He is not here. If He had remained there, then all manhood had been for ever imprisoned in the tomb, but He who died for His Church, and was shut up as her hostage, has risen as her representative, surety, and head, and all His saints have risen in Him, and shall eventually rise like Him. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

CHAPTER V.

VER. 1. **Therefore being justified by faith.**—*Justification:*—We have here—I. A STATE OR CONDITION—"justified." This implies—1. Previous dishonour. A truly righteous character needs no justification. 2. Complete satisfaction. A man who owes a debt can only be justified when that debt is paid; although it need not be paid by himself. 3. Perfect restoration—to all rights, privileges, position, &c. Justification does not mean righteousness. A man is justified although he is defiled in sin. The justification of man by God is His counting man as righteous. II. A MEANS OR METHOD—"faith." Faith is that principle which unites a man with Christ, and so enables him to appropriate all the Saviour's merits and righteousness. Substitution, to be effectual, not only requires its acceptance by the judge, but the acceptance of the Saviour by the sinner as his Substitute. Faith is that acceptance by the sinner. Notice—1. That this act is difficult. It is contrary to human nature—men would rather trust themselves than God. Hence they add rites and ceremonies. 2. It includes acts as well as conviction and trust. "Faith without works is dead," and a dead principle has no existence. III. A RESULT ATTAINED—peace with God. Peace is desirable with man, much more with God. True peace can be obtained in no other way but this. There is a state which is often mistaken for it, such as indifference, a numbed conscience. Gratuitous pardon without justification by atonement would not be able to give peace, but pardon through satisfied justice can. Nothing can satisfy the sense of justice but trust in the justice-satisfying Saviour. (*Homilist.*) *Justification:*—I. ITS NATURE. 1. From the meaning of the word. 2. From the type (Lev. xvi. 21). (1) The two goats were necessary to set forth the perfect work of Christ: the first in atoning for sin, the other in bearing it away. 3. In its foundation (chap. iii. 24, 25; v. 9). (1) The foundation is solid. (2) The grace is perfect. II. ITS CONDITION. "By faith." Consider—1. The root meaning of the word. 2. The naturalness of the thing signified. 3. What is involved in unbelief. III. ITS FRUITS. 1. Peace (ver. 1). (1) Its nature. (2) With whom established. (3) Through whom acquired. 2. Standing (ver. 2). 3. Joy (ver. 2). (1) Its inspiration. "Hope of the glory of God." (2) Its strength. "In tribulations." (3) Its intellectual basis (ver. 4). (4) Its internal evidence (ver. 5). IV. ITS SOURCE. The love of God. 1. The manner in which it was procured (ver. 8). (1) "Commendeth" should be rendered "giveth proof of." 2. The character of those for whom Christ died. (1) "Those without strength" (ver. 6). (2) "Sinners" (ver. 8). (3) Such an exhibition of love unparalleled (ver. 7). 3. The purpose for which God gave His Son (vers. 9, 10). V. PRACTICAL LESSONS. 1. The blessing of which this lesson treats is the greatest need of man. 2. The sacrifice which Christ made to procure this blessing the most wonderful fact in history. 3. The condition on which this blessing may be obtained the most reasonable and easy. 4. The benefits which this blessing confers on the believer in this life are the most precious God can bestow. 5. The glory to which the believer by it lays claim is ineffable and eternal. (*D. C. Hughes, A.M.*) *Justification more than forgiveness:*—A friend with whom you have been long doing business falls into a condition of insolvency, and you find that he is your debtor to a large amount. There is no prospect of his ever being able to pay you back, and you have reason to know that this condition of debt arises not merely from his misfortune, but from his fault. Under these circumstances it would be possible for you to liberate him from his debt by an act of forgiveness. Let us suppose that you adopt this course; the man would no longer be in fear of a debtor's prison, and would no doubt feel himself under a great obligation to you.

But would such a state of things be likely to bring you into closer personal relations with each other? Would it not necessarily produce on the contrary a certain distance and constraint? On the other hand, the forgiven debtor must needs, methinks, feel ashamed to look his generous creditor in the face, must feel ill at ease in his presence, and would shrink from familiar social intercourse with the family of one on whom his conduct has inflicted such serious losses. On the other hand, the forgiving creditor could scarcely be expected to select such a person for his friend, and to treat his past conduct as if it were a thing easily to be forgotten. But to illustrate our position further, let us now present another case. Let us suppose that the creditor is so convinced of the sincerity of the regret which his debtor professes, and has reason to believe that the severe lesson has wrought in him so great a moral change that he feels himself free to make an experiment which most of us would certainly regard as a perilous one; let us suppose that, instead of remitting his debt, he introduces him into partnership with his own son, with whose business he is himself closely concerned. This his new connection with a solvent and flourishing firm places him, we may say, in a position of solvency, removes the stigma of bankruptcy, puts him in the way of making a full return to his benefactor, to whom at the same time it greatly enhances his obligation. Now it is easy to see how this man—not merely forgiven, but in a certain sense justified—will be brought by such an arrangement into the closest relations with his benefactor. Friendly social intercourse will exist without restraint, and he who under the former mode of treatment might have seemed little better than an escaped convict will now be a recognised and respected member of the social circle in which his creditor moves. (*W. H. Aitken, M.A.*) *Justification by faith*:—There is no one who has not asked the question to which these words give the true answer. "How shall man have peace with God?" Wherever man is found, whether savage or civilised, rich or poor, he is found attempting to solve this problem. For everywhere man is found beset with present miseries, and haunted with the dread of some angry power that inflicts them. And, therefore, everywhere man is found endeavouring to appease this displeasure by making peace with his God. Now to this question there are three answers possible; that man might restore himself, or that God alone might restore man, or that God and man together might effect this restoration. The first is the religion of the heathen: he seeks to appease God by his own acts; he will give even his first-born for his transgressions. The second is the religion of the Pharisee: "God, I thank Thee, I am not as other men are." The third is the religion of the publican: "God be merciful to me, a sinner." Which is the true one? I. Scripture everywhere asserts THAT GOD ALONE JUSTIFIES (Micah vi. 7; Psa. xlix. 7; Isa. xlv. 21, 22). Hear the word of the Lord! Here, then, is a simple and an unerring test, by which to try every system of religion. 1. To "justify" means to "pronounce guiltless." It never signifies to make just, but always to declare or pronounce just (Prov. xvii. 15). This justification is indispensable to peace with God, for guilt cannot be at peace with justice. Before God can be at peace with any man, He must first pronounce him to be righteous. 2. Here, then, arise two great questions: first, what righteousness is this? and, secondly, how does it become ours? St. Paul tells us that it is through Christ. But even, for the sake of His dear Son, God cannot say the thing that is not. Unless there be perfect righteousness seen by Him, He cannot say He sees it. How, then, does Christ procure us this perfect righteousness? (2 Cor. v. 21). In it is laid down, that Christ procured our righteousness by being made sin for us. Clearly, then, if we know how He was made sin, we know how we are made righteous. Was He, then, made really and truly sinful? God forbid. He, the Holy One, was, for our sakes, reckoned or accounted sinful. In the same way, therefore, we sinners are, for His sake, reckoned righteous; our sins are reckoned as if they were His; His righteousness is reckoned as if it were ours. To be "justified through Christ," therefore, is to have the righteousness of Christ so imputed to us, that God reckons us, or pronounces us, just. This righteousness is bestowed upon us by faith. Faith is the link that joins together the justice of God and the satisfaction of Christ in the person of the believer, so that God can be just, and the justifier of him that believes. 3. Is there, then, no real righteousness in the believer? does God pronounce him who is unholy, holy; and admit the unclean, in his uncleanness, into His presence? Assuredly not. God never pronounced any man holy whom He did not also make holy. There is a righteousness external and a righteousness internal: both are real—both shall one day be perfect; but that

which is wrought for us is perfect from the first; that which is wrought in us is imperfect, and gradually arrives at perfection: the one at once and for ever justifies; the other progressively sanctifies. 4. But how does this doctrine make God alone the Saviour without any co-operation on the part of man? Is not faith a work of the mind? and is not this, at least in part, the cause of the sinner's justification? We answer, No! for we are not justified because of our faith, but by our faith. Faith is the hand which the sinner stretches forth to receive the "free gift" of God's mercy; but it is not the stretching out of the hand which induces the bestowal of the alms. Nay, more, that very hand is palsied; we have no power of ourselves to put it forth. Faith, itself, is a free gift of God; it is not until He has said, "Reach forth thine hand," that we can, by doing so, receive the alms of His free mercy, which, because of Christ's satisfaction, He is able, and, because of His own infinite love, He is willing, to bestow upon us. 5. This doctrine, then, fully answers the test to which we agreed to submit it: it reveals a salvation, which is God's work, and His alone; prompted by His love, designed by His wisdom, and accomplished by His power. This work of man's salvation has upon it the impress of divinity; it displays that wonderful union of power and wisdom that is found in all God's works, which makes them seem at once so simple and yet so mysterious. View it in its aspect towards man, how simple it seems—"Believe and live!" View it in its aspect as regards God, as His plan devised for the salvation of man, without the compromise of any one of His attributes, it is the great "mystery of godliness." This plan of salvation befits the majesty and the wisdom of God, while it is adapted to the ignorance and the weakness of man. This river of life is unfathomable, in its mysterious depths, by the mightiest of created beings; and yet the little child may kneel by its brink and drink of its sweet waters that flow softly, clear as crystal, from beneath the throne of God. 6. It is an ancient doctrine this; older than Luther, who revived it, or Paul, who defended it, or Abraham, who exemplified it. It was revealed by God, at the gate of Eden, to the first sinner who, by faith, hoped for deliverance yet to be accomplished by the seed of the woman. The first man who believed was justified by faith. The last saint that enters heaven shall enter it praising God, who, justifying him by faith, gives peace to his soul for ever and ever, through Jesus Christ. II. LET US NOW CONTRAST WITH IT MAN'S PLAN OF SALVATION, IN WHICH HE SEEKS TO MINGLE HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS WITH THAT OF GOD. The error of the self-righteous (chap. x. 3) is that he seeks a righteousness of his own, because he will not submit to be saved by the righteousness of God; as man fell by seeking to be his own God, so he remains fallen by seeking to be his own saviour. As he once refused to be entirely ruled by God, so he now refuses to be entirely saved by God. This is a most subtle and dangerous error. 1. The statement of this doctrine we will take from the Church of Rome, because Romanism is a religion of human nature, reduced to a regular system, and because we believe this difference between her and us is generally misunderstood. (1) Let us clearly state how Rome and we are agreed in this matter. We are agreed—(*a*) That man is so utterly fallen that he has no power to help himself. (*b*) That he cannot be saved unless God bestow on him a perfect righteousness. (*c*) That God does bestow this righteousness for Christ's sake. (2) Where, then, do we differ? (*a*) As to the nature of this righteousness. We say that it is a righteousness imputed; she, that it is a righteousness implanted. We say it is a righteousness wrought for us; she, it is righteousness wrought in us. We say, God, for Christ's sake, reckons us as perfectly righteous, and then proceeds to make us holy; she says, God, for Christ's sake, makes us perfectly holy, and then pronounces us, because of this inherent holiness, to be righteous. In other words, we hold that God justifies and also sanctifies; Rome holds that He only sanctifies. (*b*) As to the manner in which this righteousness is applied to us: we say, by faith only; she says, in the sacraments: she holds that this righteousness is infused into every baptised man, so that he is made perfectly righteous, and this state of justification, she holds, further, may be endangered by venial sin, and lost by deadly sin, and that it progresses so that a man may be more or less justified at one time than another. Now observe the subtlety of this error. It might be said this doctrine of Rome answers our test, for it ascribes all the work of salvation to God; it declares that this inherent righteousness is God's free gift, just as you say your imputed righteousness is. Surely there is no claim here made for man's righteousness. Let us see how our Lord disposes of this answer. "Two men went up into the temple to pray, the one a Pharisee the other a publican, and the

Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself—God, I thank Thee, I am not as other men are." Where is self-righteousness here? The Pharisee claims no merit—he declares the righteousness which he presents to God, to be God's work; God has made him to differ; he fasts, and prays, and gives alms, but the power to do these good works he acknowledges to have come from God; and yet it is said that he "trusted in himself that he was righteous." Why? Because the righteousness he presented was a righteousness in him; it was not the righteousness of God, and it availed him nothing to say that it was God's gift at first. It is self-righteous to present to God as a reason for pardon anything in man, whether that be said to be originally God's gift or not; he who comes to Him must come as the publican, "God be merciful to me,"—not a justified or sanctified man, but—"me a sinner!" Add to this, that even if the righteousness be God's gift in the first instance, yet the preserving of it, the increase of it, by faith, and prayer, and penance, are the man's own, upon this system, so that such an one must claim the reward of debt and not of grace. 2. Although we have gone to Rome for a definition of it, this doctrine is to be found among ourselves. How many are there who believe that God, for Christ's sake, will accept them "if they do their best"—Christ's merits making up for their deficiency! How many more are there who think that God, for Christ's sake, will enable them to keep His holy law, and so accept them as righteous! And how many are there who imagine that God, for Christ's sake, accepts their faith as something meritorious, justifying them because they hold the doctrine of justification by faith! In all these, from the open claim of heaven as a reward, to the more subtle claim of merit for having rejected all merit; and of righteousness for having renounced righteousness; in all these there is the same error—the presenting to God of something in us, instead of presenting the perfect righteousness of Christ. (*Abp. Magee.*) *Man saved:*—The words contain a golden chain of highest blessings bestowed by God upon all true Christians. Notice—I. THE DIVINE METHOD OF SALVATION. 1. Faith in Christ removes the condemnation. It means both a general trust in God's revelations and grace, and a special trust in Christ as given by the Father's love to be the Redeemer of His people. Understanding, will, affections, risking their all upon Him. Justification is not perfection. Not justified by the law of innocency, or of Moses, but by the law of Christ—"who died for our sins," and "was raised again for our justification." 2. Faith in Christ brings the believer into close communion with the Father. "By whom also we have access," &c. They are reconciled, and in a state of love and friendship. Since man once sinned, God's justice and man's conscience tell us that we are unfit for God's acceptance or communion immediately, but must have a suitable mediator. Blessed be God for a "daysman" appointed betwixt us and Himself! Without Him I dare not pray, I cannot hope, I fear to die; God would else frown me away to misery. All the hope and pardon that I have, come by this Author and Finisher of our faith. (1) This is joyous intercourse—"Peace with God." (2) It opens up a bright future. "And rejoice in hope of the glory of God." 3. Faith in Christ strengthens the child of God in tribulation. "Not only so, but," &c. The glory revealed unto us is so transcendent, and tribulation so small and short, that an expectant of glory may well rejoice in spite of bodily sufferings. It is tribulation for Christ and righteousness' sake that we are to glory in; tribulation for our sins must be patiently and penitently born. (1) "Knowing that tribulation worketh patience." That which worketh patience should be a matter of joy; for patience can do more good for us than tribulation can harm. Why then do I complain under suffering, and study so little the exercise of patience? (2) "And patience experience, and experience hope." What profitable experiences are to be derived from patient suffering! Of God's providence, of our own dependence upon a higher power, of the fickleness of human friendship, &c. (3) "And hope maketh not ashamed." That is, true hope of what God hath promised shall never be disappointed. They that trust in deceitful creatures are disappointed and ashamed of their hope; but God is true and ever faithful. All this shows the superiority of a free spirit over carnal weapons. II. THE INDWELLING OF THE HOLY GHOST IS THE SOURCE OF ALL EXCELLENCY IN THE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER. 1. By the "love of God shed abroad" is meant—(1) The realisation of Divine life in the soul. (2) The sweet experiences arising from the absence of doubts and fears. (3) It leads God's adopted children to love one another. 2. The Spirit within—(1) Is helpful to overcome temptation. "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him." (2) Mortifies the fleshly lusts that war against the soul. The des-

perately wicked heart is a hotbed of lusts and passions that require to be weeded, else they will choke the germs of the good seed. We cannot serve God and Mammon. 3. Points to a future life, and proves our title to it. There are some so blind as to think that man shall have no hereafter, because brutes have not. But it is enough for us to know that God hath promised it; and let it be our earnest prayer, "Shed more abroad upon my heart, by the Holy Spirit, that love of Thine which will draw up my longing soul to Thee, rejoicing in the hope of the glory of God." (*Richard Baxter.*) *Justification by faith*:—The justification of which Paul speaks is —1. Not that gracious constitution of God by which, for the sake of Christ, He so far delivers men from the guilt of Adam's sin as to place them in a salvable state, and by virtue of which all infants dying in infancy are saved (see ver. 18); for justification is not common to the race, but is experienced by certain individuals. 2. Not the justification of those who lived under inferior dispensations, or who now live in countries where the gospel is not known. On this point there are two extremes. (1) The unauthorised severity of those who hold that all heathens are doomed to damnation. (2) The undistinguishing charity of those who insinuate that the heathen are perfectly safe, and need not be disturbed in their superstitions. Each of these is remote from the truth. 3. Not justification before men by the evidence of works (James ii.), but the justification of penitent sinners before God, which is necessarily previous. 4. Not the justification of persevering believers at the last day. This will be pronounced on the evidence of works springing from faith, and evidencing its genuineness and continuance. Our business is with a present justification, "Being justified." Let us look at:—1. ITS NATURE. We assume—(1) That all men naturally are in a state of guilt and condemnation. Our hereditary depravity is odious to the God of Purity, while our consequent personal iniquity renders us liable to punishment. (2) That the man of whose justification we are about to speak is convinced that this is his state. 2. What, then, is meant by justification in these circumstances? To justify a sinner is to consider him relatively righteous, and to deal with him as such, notwithstanding his past unrighteousness, by clearing and releasing him from various penal evils, especially from God's wrath and the liability to eternal death. Hence justification and forgiveness are substantially the same (Acts xiii. 38, 39; Rom. iv. 5, 8). Note that justification—(1) Does not in the least degree alter the evil nature and desert of sin. It is the holy Lord who justifieth. The penalty is still naturally due, though graciously remitted. Hence the duty of continuing to confess and lament even pardoned sin (Ezek. xvi. 62, 63). (2) Is not, as Romish and some mystic divines contend, the being made righteous by the infusion of a sanctifying influence, which confounds justification with regeneration. (3) Extends to all past sins (Acts xiii. 39). God does not justify us by degrees, but at once. (4) However effectual to our release from past guilt, does not terminate our state of probation. As he who is now justified was once condemned, so he may again come into condemnation by relapsing into sin, as was the case with Adam. (5) If lost, may be recovered (Psa. xxxii. 1-5; *cf.* Rom. iv. 1, 8). II. ITS IMMEDIATE RESULTS. 1. The restoration of amity and intercourse between the pardoned sinner and the pardoning God. "We have peace with God," and consequently access to Him. The ground of God's controversy with us being removed, we become objects of His friendship (James ii. 23). This reconciliation, however, does not mean deliverance from all the evils which sin has entailed, viz., suffering and death, but it entitles us to such supports and such promises of sanctifying influence as will "turn the curse into a blessing." 2. Adoption and the consequent right to eternal life. God condescends to become not only our Friend, but our Father (chap. viii. 17). 3. The habitual indwelling of the Holy Spirit. As sin induced the Spirit's departure, so the pardon of sin is followed by deliverance from it, because it makes way for His return to our souls (Gal. iii. 13, 14, iv. 1; Acts ii. 38). Of this indwelling the immediate effects are—(1) Tranquillity of conscience (chaps. v. 5, viii. 15, 16). (2) Power over sin, a prevailing desire and ability to walk before God in holy obedience (chap. viii. 1, &c.). (3) A joyous hope of heaven (ver. 2, chap. xv. 13; Gal. v. 5). III. ITS METHOD. 1. The originating cause is the free, sovereign, undeserved, and spontaneous love of God towards fallen man (Titus ii. 11, iii. 4, 5; Rom. iii. 24). 2. The meritorious cause is Christ; for what He did in obedience to the precepts of the law, and what He suffered in satisfaction of its penalty, taken together, constitute that mediatorial righteousness, for the sake of which the Father is ever well pleased in Him. In this all who are justified have a saving interest. Not that it is imputed to them in its formal nature or distinct acts; for

against any such imputation there lie insuperable objections from both reason and Scripture. But the collective merit and moral effects of all which the Mediator did and suffered are so reckoned to our account that, for the sake of Christ, we are released from guilt and accepted of God. 3. The instrumental cause is faith. (1) Present faith. We are not justified by—(*a*) To-morrow's faith foreseen, for that would lead to the Antinomian justification from eternity. (*b*) By yesterday's faith recorded or remembered, for that would imply that justification is irreversible. Justification is offered on believing. We are never savingly interested in it until we believe; and it continues in force only so long as we continue to believe. (2) The acts of this faith are:—(*a*) The assent of the understanding to the testimony of God in the gospel, and especially that part of it which concerns the design and efficacy of Christ's sacrifice for sin. (*b*) The consent of the will and affections to this plan of salvation, such an approbation and choice of it as imply the renunciation of every other refuge, and a steady, decided, and thankful acquiescence in God's revealed method of forgiveness. (3) Actual trust in the Saviour and personal apprehension of His merits. IV. INFERENCES. 1. That we are not justified by the merit of our works, inasmuch as no obedience we can render can come up to the requisitions of the Law of Innocence. 2. That repentance is neither the cause nor instrument of justification. Repentance makes no atonement, and therefore cannot supersede the blood of Jesus; nor does it secure any personal or justifying interest in it; this is the object of faith only. 3. That the Spirit's work in regeneration and sanctification is not the previous condition of our justification, or the prerequisite qualification for it. For in that case we should be saved without a Saviour, which is a contradiction. The work of pardon for you must precede the work of purification in you. In the cleansing of the leper, the blood was first to be used, then the oil (Lev. xiv.). And in order to your salvation you must first have "the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus," and then you shall have "the renewing of the Holy Ghost." 4. That our justification is not by the merit of faith itself—a refined theory of justification by works. V. REFLECTIONS. 1. How clear and urgent is the duty of seeking an experimental enjoyment of justifying grace. 2. How sacred are the obligations of the justified. (1) Gratefully acknowledge it. (2) Diligently improve it. (3) Practically evidence your enjoyment of it. (*Jabez Bunting, D.D.*) *Justification by faith*:—I. JUSTIFICATION DEFINED. Justification is the Divine judicial act which applies to the sinner believing in Christ the benefit of the atonement, delivering him from the condemnation of his sin, introducing him into a state of favour, and treating him as a righteous person. Though justifying faith is an operating principle which, through the Holy Spirit's energy, attains to an interior and perfect conformity to the law, or internal righteousness, it is the imputed character of justification which regulates the New Testament use of the word. Inherent righteousness is connected more closely with the perfection of the regenerate and sanctified life. In this more limited sense justification is either the act of God or the state of man. I. GOD THE JUSTIFIER. The act of justifying is that of God as the Judge. Generally it is δικαίωσις, the word which pronounces the sinner absolved from the condemning sentence of the law, and it refers always and only to the sins that are past. Whether regarded as the first act of mercy, or as the permanent will of God's grace towards the believer in Christ, or as the final sentence in the Judgment, it is the Divine declaration which discharges the sinner as such from the condemnation of his sin. "It is God that justifieth"—God in Christ, for all judgment is "committed to the Son," who both now and ever pronounces as Mediator the absolving word, declaring it in this life to the conscience by His Spirit. It is the voice of God, the Judge in the mediatorial court, where the Redeemer is the Advocate, pleading His own propitiatory sacrifice and the promise of the gospel declared to the penitence and faith of the sinner whose cause He pleads. The simplest form in which the doctrine is stated is in chap. viii. 33, 34. Here the apostle has in view the past, present, and future of the believer; the death, resurrection, and intercession of Christ; and the one justifying sense against which there can be no appeal in time or in eternity. God is Θεὸς ὁ δικαιῶν, in one continuous and ever-present act. II. MAN AS JUSTIFIED. The state into which man is introduced is variously described, according to his various relations to God, to the Mediator, and the law. As an individual sinner he is forgiven: his justification is pardon, his punishment is remitted. As a person ungodly, he is regarded as righteous: "righteousness is imputed to him," or his "transgression is not imputed to him." As a believer in Jesus "his faith is counted for righteousness." All these phrases describe, under its

negative and its positive aspect, one and the selfsame blessing of the new covenant as constituting the state of grace into which the believer has entered and in which as a believer he abides. This is attested by passages running through the Gospels, the Acts, and the Epistles; passages which only confirm the promises of the Old Testament. Our Lord's forerunner was fore-announced "to give knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins" (Luke i. 77). Our Saviour's word was, "Man, thy sins are forgiven thee"; but he spoke of the publican as praying, "God be merciful to me a sinner," and as going down to his house "justified"—these words being introduced for the first time, and both being reserved for abundant future service, especially in the writings of St. Paul. He left the commission that "remission of sins should be preached in His name." St. Peter preached that "remission of sins," and afterwards varied the expression, "that your sins may be blotted out" (Acts ii. 38, iii. 19)—counterparts in meaning. But St. Paul takes up the Saviour's words and unites them (Acts xiii. 38, 39), and in this Epistle adds all the other terms and unites the whole in one charter of privileges (chap. iv. 4–8). In this passage all the phrases are united without exception, and they are represented as the act of God and the state of man, the one and various blessing of habitual experience. To sum up: the state of *δικαιοσύνη* is that of conformity to law, which, however, is always regarded as such only through the gracious imputation of God, who declares the believer to be justified negatively from the condemnation of his sin, and positively reckons to him the character, bestowing also the privileges of righteousness. The former or negative blessing is pardon distinctively, the latter or positive blessing is justification proper. (*W. B. Pope, D.D.*) *Justification by faith: an instance of*:—A minister of the gospel was once preaching in a public hospital. There was an aged woman present, who for several weeks had been aroused to attend to the concerns of her soul. When she heard the Word of God from the lips of His servant, she trembled like a criminal in the hands of the executioner. Formerly she had entertained hope of acceptance with God, but she had departed from her comforter, and now she was the prey of a guilty conscience. A short time after this the same minister was preaching in the same place, but during the first prayer his text and the whole arrangement of his discourse went completely from him; he could not recollect a single sentence of either, but Romans v. 1 took possession of his whole soul: "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." He considered this a sufficient intimation of his duty, and descanted freely on justification by faith and a sinner's peace with God through the atonement of Christ. It was the hour of mercy to this poor distracted woman. A ray of Divine consolation now penetrated her soul, and she said to the minister, when taking his leave, "I am a poor vile sinner, but I think, being justified by faith, I begin again to have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. I think Christ has now got the highest place in my heart; and oh! I pray God He would always keep Him there." *Justification by faith: an instance of*:—Some years ago a clergyman was preaching on this text in the East End of London, and at the end of his sermon he invited any who were anxious to come and converse with him in the vestry. He was followed by an intelligent-looking young man, who said, "I am going to leave England in two or three days, and perhaps this is the last opportunity I shall have of talking with a clergyman. My father and I have had a terrible quarrel, and it ended in his turning me out, telling me never to darken his door again. I wandered up to London, but knew not where to look for employment. At last I found a berth as sailor before the mast, and before I go I want to ask you, 'What must I do to be saved?'" The clergyman endeavoured to make the way of salvation as clear as he could to him. They parted, however, without there being any apparent change in the young man's spiritual condition, though he seemed awakened and much in earnest. Time wore on, and the incident had almost passed from the clergyman's mind, when one day a sailor called at his residence. "Do you remember," he said, "some months ago a young man coming to your vestry after the sermon you had preached on the words, 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God?'" "Oh, yes; I remember it perfectly." "Well, he went on board the *London*, and he and I became great friends, because I am a Christian, and I soon found out that he wanted to be a Christian too; so we used often to have long talks over our Bibles, and used to pray together; yet somehow or other I could never get him to see things quite clearly. I suppose he was looking to his feelings more than to Christ. Well, then came the terrible catastrophe, and that young man was told off by the captain, with myself and a few others, to man one of the

boats. The boat was lowered, and soon was crowded; but by some means the poor fellow was left behind in the ship. We hardly knew what to do, for our boat was too full already. Besides, the ship was settling fast, and we were afraid of being dragged down with her. Yet we did not like to pull away. Then I heard him call me by name, as he clung to the rigging; and he shouted across the water, 'Good-bye, mate! If you get ashore safe, inquire for the Rev. H. B——, of Limehouse Docks, London, and tell him that here in the presence of God I can say at last, "Being justified by faith, I have peace with God through my Lord Jesus Christ."' As he said the words, the ship gave her last lurch, and he disappeared in a watery grave." (*W. H. Aitken, M.A.*) *Justification by faith: its effects*:—1. The effect of justification should be peace and holiness. (1) A plan of deliverance which did not include both these would be a mockery. If it did not secure peace it would not meet our wants; if it did not secure holiness it would not meet God's requirements. (2) Accordingly we find that God describes His plan of salvation as effecting both. Christ has "made peace through the blood of His Cross" that He may "present us holy and unblamable and unreproachable in His sight." It is "the very God of peace" who sanctifies us "wholly." 2. The doctrine, therefore, which does not produce these effects is not the true one, and there can be no surer test by which to try the truth of any particular doctrine than this. The religion which really produces both had no man for its teacher, for these are the last things which men would ever think of joining together. All human teachers and lawgivers appeal to fear. All laws are accompanied by penalties. It certainly would never occur to any man to attempt to produce obedience by remitting all penalties; and therefore it is that the natural man always seeks to obtain one of these by the sacrifice of the other. (1) Many try to forget God altogether, or they take refuge in some easy mode of appeasing Him—something said, done, or felt, which quiets conscience; and so they have peace—peace without holiness. (2) But others are not so easily satisfied; their disposition is naturally anxious, or their consciences are scrupulous, and they cannot feel quite comfortable in their sins. Such seek to obtain peace by refraining from sin; but as their only motive is fear, they know of no other way of increasing their obedience than by quickening and strengthening this fear. In such religion takes a gloomy and terrible form. Here is an attempt after holiness, but it is holiness without peace. 3. And thus the mind of the natural man is ever oscillating between these two extremes of sinful peace or painful obedience, but never attaining to the union of these two; never imagining it possible for man to be at once fearless and obedient; and, accordingly, it is a remarkable fact that all false religions have two different aspects, one offering easy terms of salvation to the common crowd, who only desire a religion which shall allow them to sin without fear; the other providing austerities and penances for the few whose intellect or conscience cannot be so easily contented. All these religions, then, are but half religions; they attempt to satisfy man's desire for peace or God's demand for holiness; they never even profess to satisfy both. There is but one religion which does this; it is that which is proclaimed in our text. I. JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH GIVES PEACE. 1. He who believes that God, for Christ's sake, reckons him holy, "not imputing his trespasses unto him," has perfect peace, because he is trusting in a perfect work. The justice that demanded his condemnation now secures his forgiveness; the omnipotence once arrayed against him is now engaged in his defence. Here is the deep, abiding, perfect peace of him whose mind is stayed upon God. 2. On the other hand the doctrine of justification by inherent righteousness does not, and never can, give perfect peace; for it is a righteousness partly human and partly Divine, and therefore partakes of the uncertainty and imperfection of all things human. He who holds it believes, as Dr. Pusey says, that "he was once, in his baptism, placed in a state of justification; in which, having been placed, he has to work out his own salvation with fear and trembling through the indwelling Spirit of God working in him—a state which therefore admits of relapses and recoveries, but which is weakened by every relapse, injured by lesser, and destroyed for the time by grievous sin." Now, if this be the nature of his justification, how can he be sure, at any given moment, that he is justified? All that such a man can say is this, that once in his life he had a perfect righteousness to present to God, and that, if it had pleased God then to take him to Himself he had been blessed, but that whether he has this righteousness still is a very doubtful matter; and yet that night that man's soul may be required of him! What a miserable faith is this on which to bid a dying sinner rest his hopes for eternity! But this is not all the doubt and difficulty which this doctrine gives rise

to, for the means by which justification is bestowed is said to be the sacrament of baptism. If so, perfect and complete justification can be had only once in each man's life; therefore, if he ever entirely lose it by deadly sin, how can it be regained? To meet this, Rome has devised another sacrament by which the sinner may be again made perfectly righteous. But for those who are not Romanists "the Church has no second baptism to give, and therefore cannot pronounce the person who has sinned after baptism altogether free from his past sins. There are but two periods of absolute cleansing—baptism and the day of judgment." Again, "if, after having been washed once for all in Christ's blood we again sin, there is no more such complete absolution in this life, no restoration to the same state of undisturbed security in which God had, by baptism, placed us!" Mark this confession! We will not pause to contrast it with the teaching of him who told baptized men that if they confessed their sins "God was faithful and just to forgive them their sins." We will not delay to inquire whether this way of salvation, which gives no "undisturbed security," can be the same with that which He revealed who said, "Come unto Me, all ye that travail and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest;" or that which he taught, whose converts believing, "rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory." We only ask, how can they who preach such a gospel as this claim to be the messengers of peace? what peace have they to offer? Picture to yourselves a teacher of this "other gospel" proclaiming this way of salvation beside a death-bed. 3. But it is said this uncertainty and anxiety is just what is needed to make men zealous and cautious, and the doctrine may make fewer happy death-beds but it will produce holier lives. We deny this, and, on the contrary, maintain—II. That JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH DOES EFFECT not only peace, but HOLINESS; and that sacramental justification no more produces holiness than it does peace. 1. Holiness is conformity to God's image. The perfect likeness of God, to which we are to be assimilated, is seen in Christ, who "loved righteousness, and hated iniquity." A holy man, therefore, is not one who merely refrains from sin, nor yet one who strives to obey all God's commands; he may do all this, and yet be utterly without holiness. But he is one who has become partaker of that Divine nature which was in Christ, the instinct of which it is to hate what God hates, and to love what He loves. 2. Now what is that power which can produce such conformity to Christ? Love is the only passion which assimilates to its object. Fear obeys, envy rivals, but love imitates. That religion will therefore most tend to holiness which most tends to produce in us love to God. Now we know that the belief which most powerfully moves us to love God must be that which most fully manifests the love of God to us. Which, then, of these two doctrines of justification displays most of the love of God to sinners? This question has received its answer from our Lord Himself (Luke vii. 41). The publican went down to his house with a more loving and grateful heart than the Pharisee. The prodigal had doubtless a deeper love for the father than had the elder brother who had never given him cause of offence. There is more of loving, fervent, grateful joy in the heart of one penitent sinner who believes that "being justified by faith he has peace with God," than there is in the heart of the ninety-and-nine just persons, who, believing that they have kept their baptismal righteousness, deem that they need no repentance. But if he who thus believes cannot but love, he who thus loves cannot but obey; the love of Christ constraineth him, the mercies of God persuade him, to present himself a living sacrifice unto God. 3. But this doctrine further tends to produce holiness because it tends to produce humility. No man is really holy until he is really humble. But who best learns humility—he who presents to God a righteousness in part his own, or he who confesseth that "in him dwelleth no good thing"? 4. This doctrine tends to produce holiness because it alone enables us to realise the promises of God. It is by these that we escape the "corruption that is in the world through lust." Now he who believes that God will assuredly save him for the sake of Jesus Christ claims all the promises at once as his for ever, so that he can say, "I am confident; 'I know in whom I have believed, and that He is able to keep that which I have entrusted to Him against that day.' 'Faithful is He that calleth me, who, also, will do it,'" and "every one that hath this hope purifieth himself even as He is pure." For think what must be the feelings of that man who, truly loving God, and desiring His presence, really believes that he shall spend an eternity with Him. "Where the treasure is, there will the heart be also." On the other hand, we think it is equally clear that justification by inherent righteousness does not tend to holiness, because for love it substitutes fear; for humility, pride; for assurance, uncertainty.

Such a doctrine may make ascetics, hermits, confessors, martyrs even—but never saints. (*Abp. Magee.*) *Faith alone the condition of justification*:—It is faith alone which justifies, and still the faith which justifies is not alone. Ears, feet, and hands are given to us at the same time that our eyes are, yet it is the office of the eye alone to see. In like manner repentance, love, obedience, are the invariable companions of faith; yet it is faith alone for which we claim the power and faculty of justifying. (*J. Calvin.*) *Justifying faith*:—I. WITHOUT WORKS. 1. Faith is a condition of justification opposed to man's own righteousness which is of the law. (1) Faith acknowledges that the legal, proper, primitive sense of the term justify, as the pronouncing him to be righteous who is righteous, is for ever out of the question. (*a*) As to the law: it has been broken, and its condemnation is acknowledged; it demands an obedience that never has been rendered since the fall. (*b*) Then as to man himself, faith renounces all trust in human ability. It utterly abjures the thought of a righteousness springing from self. It acknowledges past sin, present impotence, and the impossibility of any future obedience cancelling the past (Gal. ii. 16). It disclaims all creaturely righteousness as such; the nullity of this is taught by conviction, felt in repentance, and confessed in faith. (2) Hence the specific Evangelical phrase, "Faith is counted for righteousness." This implies the absence of personal righteousness, and the reckoning of a principle, not righteousness, in its stead by a kind of substitution. In its stead: not as rendering good works needless, but displacing them for ever as the ground of acceptance. Therefore faith does not justify as containing the germ of all good works; as "fides formata charitate," or faith informed and vivified by love. Not justifying through any merit in itself, it justifies as the condition on which is suspended the merciful application of the merits of Christ. Faith is not righteousness, as justifying; it is "put to the account" of a man in the mediatorial court as righteousness; not as a good work, but reckoned instead of the good works which it renounces. Lest the faith as itself a work should be regarded as righteousness the apostle varies the expression. He also says again and again inversely that righteousness—not, however, Christ's—is imputed to the believer; not to faith itself, as if God regarded the goodness wrapped up in it (chap. iv. 6, 22, 24). It is the man, in the naked simplicity of his self-renouncing, work-renouncing trust in God on whom the sentence of justification is pronounced. (3) Imputation or reckoning has two meanings; the ascribing to one his own and what is not his own. The latter predominates in the three great theological imputations; that of the sin of Adam to the race, that of the race to Christ, and that of the benefit of Christ's righteousness to the believer, as through the imputation of "one man's disobedience many were made sinners" (ver. 19), and as "the Lamb of God bore the sin of the world," "being made sin for us" by imputation as a sin offering "who knew no sin," so the ungodly who in penitence believes has the efficacy of Christ's obedience reckoned to him. (4) This faith as a negative condition is of the operation of the Holy Ghost. He enables the soul to renounce every other trust. He convinces the mind of guilt and impotence; awakens in the heart the feeling of emptiness and longing desire; and so moves the will to reject every other confidence than Christ. But, though the influence of the Spirit produces it, it is so far only negative—a preparation for good rather than itself good. 2. Faith is the active instrument as well as the passive condition of justification. (1) It is its instrumental cause; the originating being God's love; the meritorious, Christ's atoning obedience; the efficient, the Holy Ghost. (2) Its object is God in Christ. In this as in all, "I and My Father are one." Yet the specific object is not God absolutely, nor Christ in His revelation generally, but Christ as the mediatorial representative of sinners, and God as accepting the atonement for man (Acts xvi. 31; Gal. ii. 16). In two ways this Epistle describes God as the object. Chap. iv. 5 implies what had preceded (chap. iii. 25, 26); and in relation to His resurrection (chap. iv. 24). But the God of our whole redemption in Christ is the object of faith (John iii. 16; Rom. viii. 32, 11). He is the One God of the One Christ. (3) It is never said that we are justified "on account of" faith, but "through" faith. Faith as the act of the soul by which it unites itself with the Lord, makes the virtue of His merit its own. It apprehends Christ and His atonement; ascribing all to Him, it receives all from Him. (4) Faith is not assurance; but assurance is its reflex act. The same Spirit who inspires faith—which is alone (and without assurance) the instrument of salvation—ordinarily and always, sooner or later, enables the believer to say, "He loved me and gave Himself for me" (Gal. ii. 20; Eph. i. 13). (5) Faith, whether receptive or active, is an exercise of the human

heart under the influence of the Holy Spirit through His actual revelation of Christ to the soul, the eyes of which are at the same moment opened. The unveiling of the Saviour and the unveiling of the sight to behold the Lamb of God in one and the same critical moment is the sufficing definition of saving trust. And at the same moment the active energy and passive renunciation of saving faith are brought to the perfection of their unity. II. FAITH AND WORKS. 1. The works of faith declare the life and reality of the faith which justifies. Those works did not declare its genuineness at first when forgiveness was received (chap. iv. 6, 13); but afterwards and to retain that justification its works must absolutely be produced (James ii. 18, 21, 24). In the whole sequel after receiving Christ, a man is justified not by faith only—which in this connection is no faith at all—but by faith living in its works (James ii. 26). Here is the origin of the term living or lively faith; it is remarkable, however, that the invigorating principle is not from the faith to the works, but from the works to the faith. 2. The expression "living faith" suggests the vital relation of this subject to union with Christ. When St. Paul says "that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. v. 21), he means more than the non-imputation of sin. "That we might become"; our forensic justification being included of necessity, our moral conformity to the Divine righteousness cannot be excluded. These closing words are a resumption of the preceding paragraph, which ended with, "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature." "The righteousness of God in Him" is the full realisation of the new method of conforming us to His attribute of righteousness. It is impossible to establish the distinction between "in Christ" for external, and "Christ in us" for internal righteousness; still the distinction may be used for illustration. We are "accepted in the Beloved," "in whom we have redemption through His blood," in order that "Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith" (Eph. i. 6, 7, iii. 17), that His grace "may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." The vital union of faith secures both objects: our being reckoned as righteous because "found in Him," and our being made righteous because He is in us as the Spirit of life and strength unto all obedience (chap. viii. 2, 4). 3. The justification of faith itself in and through its works, forms the Scriptural transition to internal and finished righteousness, which, however, is generally viewed as entire sanctification; improperly, however, if sanctification is regarded as finishing what righteousness leaves incomplete. To him who insists on bringing in the doctrine of sanctification to supplement as an inward work what in justification is only outward, St. James replies, "Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?" (James ii. 22). Here is the finished result of "faith which worketh by love" (Gal. v. 6); that one and indivisible "work of faith" (1 Thess. i. 3), in the assertion of which at the outset of his teaching St. Paul, by anticipation, declared his agreement with St. James. Both show that justifying faith in a consummate religion is "made perfect" in its effects; and both with reference to the law, as again Antinomian renunciation of it (see also chap. viii. 4). If "righteousness is fulfilled in us," that must be by our being "made righteous" while reckoned such. But always, whether at the outset where works are excluded, or in the Christian life when they are required, whether on earth or in heaven, justification will ever be the imputation of righteousness to faith. Works only declare faith to be genuine and living. This alone can secure eternal life to those who, though as holy as their Lord Himself, will be apart from Him and in the record of the past, sinners still (Jude 21). (*W. B. Pope, D.D.*) **We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.**—*Peace with God*:—There is a peace which is not with God. A dull bovine contentment is the stagnancy of life, and not peace with God. Absence of conscience presenting lofty ideals and urging effort; and in place thereof a series of compromises with evil, making things easy all round, is not peace with God; it is the peace of the lowest organism. Peace with God is within the soul, the balmy, vital peace of the summer day, when the forces of Nature are working mightily with the repose of power, moving on without strain or care unto the harvest. Peace with God is:—I. PEACE WITH GOD'S RETRIBUTIVE RIGHTEOUSNESS. 1. God's laws are holy, just, and good. Disobedience ought, therefore, to be followed by punishment. And so the wrath of God, therefore, is revealed from heaven. Plainly is that wrath visible in the miseries of a dishonest and vicious society, in the life and doom of a Jezebel, a Cæsar Borgia, or a Macbeth. But when the disobedience is manifested in a prudently selfish and godless life, the wrath is not so visible. Often such sinners, if they are clever, have little trouble. Most, however, who are not reconciled to God are uneasy and apprehensive. They feel at times as if some doom

were on their track, now and again life feels like a prison, and in death they have no hope. The feeling of the fugitive and of the prisoner is the retributive providence of God, a foreshadowing of the judgment to come. 2. How, then, can transgressors be at peace with this retributive righteousness of God? Only by being justified through our Lord Jesus Christ. Now what is the right position for us to take up to God taking this gracious position to us? Plainly, to repent of the sin and to accept the forgiveness He thus offers. Taking this position, God justifies us—*i.e.*, He acquits us from all penalty, and He declares us to be right with God. God is for us; who then can be against us? We are no longer as a fugitive pursued; we are at the feet of God, accepted as a child returned home; we are in right relations, and no soul can have peace till it is right. II. PEACE WITH GOD'S REVEALED TRUTH; that is, that God is the Heavenly Father, that Jesus is His Christ and Son, who died for sin, and rose again. 1. How many in this day have not peace? Some are in honest doubt concerning it, but do not oppose it. Others, however, go to geology for stones to throw at it, to biology for theories to discredit it, to physical law as a great engine against it, and when fighting it forget their philosophic calm and their scientific modesty. Some raise a prejudice against it by holding up its professors to ridicule or by making merry with some of its facts. Accompanying this army is a motley crowd of camp followers, old sinners and thoughtless youths, the disappointed and the bitter, lacking courage for the fight, and caring not for the victory, but for the spoils—greater freedom for evil. Then, at a safe distance, is a great company of onlookers, not knowing which side to take. These are not to be envied. They who are definitely opposed have, it may be, a certain intellectual peace; they are not troubled with doubt, but their peace is not a peace with God. But they who doubtfully watch the fight are to be sympathised with. To be swung this way by this argument, then that way by that argument, and to feel, pendulum-like, no approach to the hour when the mind shall strike the truth, is a restless, painful state of mind. Being justified, we are delivered from such dispeace. 2. It is faith, and faith only, which can give certainty to our faith of the truth. Being justified, then, by faith, we have no doubt, no strife as to the truth of the truth. As our conscience has had peace with God by our being put right with God, so now our intellect has peace with God's revealed truth by being assured of that truth. III. PEACE WITH GOD'S HOLY COMMANDMENT. In commandment I include both God's purpose and precept for our life. 1. There are works of fiction which have been written by two authors. Of course they must have decided the plot and its details between them, and each must have worked in harmony. But suppose each had had a plot of his own, and had wrought each part according to his own particular plot! In the working or writing of our lives there are two—ourselves and our God. God's purpose is, "Seek first the kingdom of God," &c. But the purpose of many is at war with this. It is, "Seek first the other things, and then, if you can, add God and religion unto them." Absorbed in their own selfish purpose, they forget the purpose of God. Consequently, in their lives there are strife, dispeace. 2. The whole question of keeping God's commandment is simply a question of disposition, as the whole question of justification is simply a question of position with God. Love is good disposition, and love is the fulfilling of the law. Being justified by faith, we receive this disposition. Believing in this position of God toward us, we see His infinite love. Hence there is peace within—peace with the holy commandment; we want to fulfil it, we strive to fulfil it; it is no longer to us a task; it is a delight, and the burden is when we fail through weakness to fulfil it. IV. PEACE WITH GOD'S DISCIPLINARY PROVIDENCE. 1. Even where the purpose of our life is at one with God's and we love His precepts, there fall to us, or at least to most of us, many trials and troubles. The wicked spread themselves as a green bay tree, but the righteous are often as a root out of the dry ground. Then comes the temptation to be not at peace with God's providence; to be angry with God. 2. But our justification is overwhelming proof that God is not against us. If God had forgotten us He would never have sent His Christ for us. But if God love us, it may be said, it cannot be that it is God who sends the trouble to us. No; in many cases it is through the fault of self or others. But God could have prevented them. Yes, but only by interfering with the natural order of things; and rather than He should do that He thinks it best that we should suffer. Then since He so loves us, let us in confidence say, "Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in Thy sight." Then the bitterness of trouble is past, the weight of the burden is gone. Moreover, God's love for us is associated with infinite wisdom, and He will

somehow cause the affliction to work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. As the fire which consumed the poor man's vineyard cracked the earth revealing veins of silver, thus afflicting the vineyard into a silver mine, so shall the fire which withers and consumes so much that we prize give us in place thereof a mine of imperishable and inexhaustible treasure. "All things shall work together for good to them that love God." Conclusion: Note that the apostle bases this peace on our being justified with God. Many of us seek this peace by endeavouring, first of all, to be at peace with God's providence; or, first of all, to be at peace with God's revealed truth, or to be at peace with God's commandment. But, first of all, we must take our right position at the feet of our God. It is monstrous to attempt to invert the Divine order in the lower spheres of Nature. It is more monstrous to attempt to invert the Divine order in these the higher spheres of grace. (*Albert Goodrich, D.D.*) *Peace with God*:—I. WE LIVE IN ONE GREAT WORLD OF TROUBLE, AND THE UNERRING WORD OF INSPIRATION PLAINLY SAYS THAT THE DISTURBING FORCE IS SIN. Yet not everybody chooses to admit that. It will be asserted that traditions of anger in the Supreme Being, coupled with an industrious reiteration of foreboding by a few credulous alarmists, have done most of the mischief. It would soon quiet down, if men and women would just take comfort in what is given them and let presages alone. Across the fair plains of Sicily, with the rising of every new dawn, stretches one deep line of darkness, drawn by the pyramidal form of Mount Etna. It is the unvarying reminder of the ruin that may at any hour fall heavily from the volcano's crater. And yet the inhabitants forbid you to speak of that giant phantom. Thus we live under the immediate shadow of Divine wrath. Men choose to think that there is nothing but incivility in a reminder of the coming day of final judgment. Still, it is better to believe that a few desire to be intelligent. What is it that breaks up the peace in this world? What will bring tranquillity and rest? "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked," &c. (Isa. lvii. 21, 19, 20). If it is in antagonism with God, then a deep-seated source of irritation and uneasiness is lodged in the centre of its being. II. NO QUIET CAN POSSIBLY BE FOUND UNTIL THE SOUL COMES TO BE AT ONE WITH GOD, and adjusts all its purposes to meet His declared will (Isa. xxii. 17, &c.). The question all turns, therefore, upon the possession of justification, *i.e.*, righteousness. 1. It becomes us in the outset to understand that righteousness is a purely individual acquisition. The gospel deals with human beings one by one. 2. What, then, is this "justification by faith"? A sinner is conceived as condemned at the bar of God's justice; the punishment for his sins is death. Now Jesus Christ, as a redeemer and surety, comes and assumes the sinner's exposures and liabilities. In effect, He stands in the sinner's place. This is the picture so often presented by Paul; he appears never to be tired of it (vers. 6–8). Peace comes, therefore, when purity has come beforehand. "First pure, then peaceable." Saved souls are pardoned for Christ's sake. The story is told of Martin Luther, that once the evil one appeared to enter his room with a vast roll of parchment, a catalogue of all his former sins. With a hollow burst of derisive laughter the fiend threw it on the floor, still holding one end in his hand so that it might easily unroll its awful length. There the frightened man was compelled to read, hour after hour, the terrible list of all the wicked deeds he had done in all his life. And his heart failed him as he gazed. Suddenly the devil called him by name, and pointed to some words along the top of the roll. Luther looked up and read aloud, "All sin"; and then he understood that no one of the many acts, or even thoughts, was to be left out. Hell appeared opening at once under his feet. His agony was intense. But Satan kept screaming, "All sin! all sin!" And at last, in order to afflict him the more, exclaimed, "So says God, so says God, all sin, all sin!" Now the man's study of Scripture stood him in excellent stead. For he asked, "Where speaks God that word?" "There, there!" answered the devil, pointing again to the parchment and putting his fiery finger on the two words, "all sin, all sin." The reformer snatched the awful list away from his enemy, and unrolling it one turn more, in the other direction, discovered, as he hoped he would, the remainder of the inscription: "The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin!" So he learned that all his sins had been massed together upon that roll in order to announce that atonement had been made completely to cover them. And with a glad cry of exultant joy he awoke, while the devil disappeared with his parchment of woe. It is when a man knows his sins are all in the burden Jesus bore on the Calvary Cross, that he has no longer any fear about them. "The work of righteousness is peace, and the effect of righteous-

ness is quietness and assurance for ever." III. IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO PUT INTO FORMS OF SPEECH THE SOURCES OF ENJOYMENT WHICH A PARDONED BELIEVER KNOWS when he is once possessed of the peace which passes understanding; the soul like a bride rests in a love it cannot explain, when the sweet day of espousal to Christ has been reached. 1. The Christian cannot be alone, for a happy conscience, like a bird in his heart, keeps singing cheerily to give him company. He has no alarms, no suspicions. Nothing breaks up the calm, bright serenity of his trustful repose in Christ Jesus. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace," &c. 2. Peace brings prosperity. God opens the door of His treasury of promise to the souls He has welcomed into the palace. He loves His Son, and they are His Son's friends. If our feet are upon the Rock of Ages it does not matter at all where the danger threatens. "I have pain," said Richard Baxter, on his dying bed, "I have pain; there is no arguing against sense; but then, I have peace, great peace!" To any true believer, there is no shock in the appearance of that messenger who announces his departure. He seems to himself even now sitting in the antechamber of the palace, waiting; and death is only the black-dressed servant who comes out to say the King is ready to see him in the throne-room. Conclusion: Surely it is worth something, in a world like this, to find one antidote for wakefulness and unrest. This is the peace which the world can neither give nor take away (ver. 10). Each Christian receives a testimony in his soul which settles all his fears for the future. He has put his case out of his own hands. So he waits tranquilly for the judgment, knowing he is prepared for it, and shall stand clear in the end. (*C. S. Robinson, D.D.*) *Peace with God:*—I. WHY MEN HAVE NOT PEACE. 1. One reason is a want of knowledge about ourselves. We do not see that peace is the thing we want. We sigh for it now and again, but we do not pursue it. Gold, pleasure, power, fame, we pursue with all our might; we do not covet peace except when we are weary, and want to sleep and dream. (1) Look at yon solitary man watching the stream flow. He is saying, "I would this restless bosom were like yon tranquil river." But he has not the courage to ask what is at the bottom of this discontent. He lets another sigh escape him, which goes to swell that great wind of unrest which goes moaning about the world, and hurries back to some scene of distraction, where he may get rid, for a time, of that burden of himself which he cannot bear. Men's feeling about peace is often, then, no more than a fleeting sentiment, and where peace is actually enjoyed, men do not take pains to secure it. (2) What a misery is a home without peace! How is it that it does not deeply impress itself, that any sacrifice of personal opinion and feeling is to be made rather than this blessing of peace should be forfeited? (3) And so in the Church. Peace is its bond of union. We cannot worship in truth, we can neither edify nor be edified, with divided hearts. Yet here, again, there has been constant strife between the carnal and the spiritual. And again and again the carnal prevails. Christians do not guard and fence about the sacred enclosure of heaven's peace, and yet they are dismayed when it is broken into and trampled upon! (4) Look again at the case of nations. Is there anything more wicked than needless wars? And how few wars there are which are not needless! See what a weight of pure feeling there is in the scale against war. All the most intelligent and best members of society are against it. And yet war still goes on. Men love to listen to the hymn of the angels, "Peace on earth," and go to raise the yell of demons on the battlefield. 2. The explanation is that which the gospel gives. Tracing the deep inconsistencies of human nature down to their root, it tells us the carnal mind is enmity against God. Here is the secret of our discords. Man has a spiritual part which would lead him to peaceable ways, and he has a passionate part which leads him to hate, and to the destruction of himself and of his brethren. While this strife goes on there cannot be peace. This is the secret of the deep unrest in men's souls. Ever yearning and dreaming of a blissful quiet that is so foreign to their actual condition. This is why the calm of a starlight night softens us; why the sight of a sleeping babe sometimes moves us to tears; or a strain of soft music quells some angry mood; or the face of one we love sleeping placidly in death. These sights, these sounds, speak to us of a state where the unholy war of passion has ceased, of that peace which ought to be ours, and which would be ours, were it not for this terrible foe in our own bosom, in the mind at enmity with God. This is why thousands of persons love to listen to the gospel who are far from living evangelical lives. II. THE WAY OF PEACE POINTED OUT BY THE GOSPEL. Evidently, if we are to come to peace, two things are necessary; first, the spiritual part of our nature must be strengthened, and, second, the carnal or passionate part of our nature must be reduced and

mortified. 1. Now the law, as St. Paul shows, was unequal to this work. The law did much to strengthen and to educate the spiritual feeling of man. It taught as the first principle of all religion—love to God and to man. But when the law came to oppose the carnal nature of man, it was found to be weak. It set up a great frowning barrier against man's unholy passions, and sin acquires greater energy when resisted, like pent-up waters behind a dam. The law, then, failed to bring us to peace with God, because it could not extinguish, though it could restrain, passion: because it could punish sin, but could not make the love of sin to cease. 2. But what the law could not do, God could do by a special act of His grace. He sent His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin. (1) The life of our Lord was throughout an invitation to man to peace and rest in God. His own character was a revelation of the peacefulness of the Divine nature; and His teaching sets before us the gentle and unselfish life, we must live to be in harmony with the life of our Father in heaven. But this is not enough. It is like telling a man in a fever to be cool by thinking of the frosty Caucasus, or a man at sea to be calm by thinking of a quiet harbour. It is mockery to tell a man in the midst of the commotions of his conscience that he can be at peace by looking at Jesus Christ, and following His example. It is like telling him to turn himself into a white marble statue. What the man needs is some influence that can quell the rebellion of his flesh, and allow his spirit free action. (2) And therefore the gospel points to the death of Christ as the means of our reconciliation to God. Our Lord was put to death in an outbreak of Jewish passion which was typical of the sin of man. In the Cross the gospel teaches us to see the last most dreadful proof of what sin is, and whither it tends. And the point before us is that it produces a profound reaction upon the feelings of the sinner. When a man who has long given way to evil passions at last strikes down his friend, his passion dies with its victim. We cannot doubt that sin dies out of the heart of some men when its last fatal fruit has ripened and fallen. And something like this occurs with the man who is led to see in the death of the Lord Jesus the awful witness and fruit of his sin. (3) But is he not an object of God's vengeance? No; the blood of Christ not only cleanses from sin, but it is the last language of God to the sinner, beseeching him to be reconciled to Him. It is the accepted compensation for sin. It does not cry out for vengeance like that of Abel, but it has the pleading tongue of eternal mercy and love. Conclusion: It is for us to believe with all our hearts that this is the relation in which God stands to us and our sin through our Lord Jesus Christ. To have faith in this is the ground of our justification and the beginning of a peaceful and a holy life. (*Prof. E. Johnson, M.A.*) *Peace: a fact and a feeling:*—Wonderful is the power of faith. Hebrews xi. tells us of its marvellous exploits; but one of the most wonderful of its effects is that it brings us justification and consequent peace. It is not the creator of these things, but the channel through which these favours come to us. I. FAITH BRINGS US INTO A STATE OF PEACE. Naturally we have no peace. God is angry with us. "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" And we cannot agree with God, for "the carnal mind is enmity against God," &c. 1. Before there can be peace between us and God we must with all our hearts plead "guilty." To refuse to do so is contempt of court. There is mercy for a sinner, but there is no mercy for the man who will not own himself a sinner. 2. Then we must admit the justice of the Divine sentence. It would yield my heart no comfort to be told that God could wink at sin. Lasting peace must be founded upon everlasting truth. 3. And now comes in the abounding mercy of God, who, in order to our peace, finds a substitute to bear our penalty, and reveals to us this gracious fact. He puts His Son in the sinner's place. Sin having been laid on Christ, He has borne it away. Faith accepts that substitution as a glorious boon of grace, and rests in it. The soul may well have peace when it has realised and received such a justification as this, for—(1) It is a peace consistent with justice. (2) No further demands can be made against us, "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." (3) Our acquittal is certified beyond all question, and the certificate is always producible, viz., the risen Christ, who "died for our sins, and rose again for our justification." II. FAITH GIVES US THE SENSE OF PEACE. 1. The sense of peace follows upon the state of peace. We do not get peace before we are justified, neither is peace a means of justification. God justifies the ungodly. 2. This sense comes "through Jesus Christ." Many children of God lose their peace in a measure, because they deal with God absolutely, but there cannot be any point of contact between absolute Deity and fallen humanity except through Christ, the appointed Mediator. Have you

attempted to approach the Eternal King without His chosen ambassador? How presumptuous is your attempt! The throne of Divine sovereignty is terrible apart from the redeeming blood. 3. Some Christians say, "I have no lasting peace." But peace is the right of every believer. What is there now between him and God? Sin is forgiven; righteousness is imputed. God sees him in His Son, and loves him. Why should he not be at peace? "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God," said Jesus, "believe also in Me." Why have you not peace, then? You have a claim to it, and you ought to enjoy it. What is the reason why you do not possess it? (1) It is your unbelief. In proportion to your faith will your peace with God abide. (2) Or you make a mistake as to what this peace is. (*a*) You say, "I am so dreadfully tempted; the devil never lets me alone." But did you ever read that you were to have peace with the devil? Never; on the contrary, you have the better promise that "the Lord shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." Till then the enmity between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman will continue. (*b*) Another says, "It is not the devil; it is myself that I fear. I feel the flesh revolting and rebelling. When I would do good, evil is present with me. 'Oh wretched man that I am!'" Hearken again. As the Lord hath war with Amalek for ever and ever, so there is war between the spirit and the flesh so long as the two are in the same man. There is no promise of peace with the flesh, but only of peace with God. (*c*) "Ah," says another, "I am surrounded by those that vex me. When I serve the Lord they malign and misrepresent me with scoff and slander." Yes, but did you ever dream of having peace in this world where your Lord was crucified—peace with those that hate you for His sake? Why, did He not say, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you." "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." "And this is the victory which overcometh the world, even our faith." (*d*) "Still," says one, "I find every day that I sin, and I hate myself for sinning." Yes; and the Lord never said that you should have peace with sin. The more hatred of sin the better. If sin never distresses you, then God has never favoured you. 4. To come back then, "we have peace with God." We enjoy peace with God because—(1) We know He loves us. He would not have given His Son to die for us if He had not. Moreover, we feel a fervent love to Him in return. (2) We are not afraid to go to our covenant God for all necessary things, and to seek His help in time of trouble. We have not always such settled peace with our fellow-creatures, for at times we so much lack confidence in them that we could not divulge to them our troubles. Our habitude of prayer proves that we have peace with God; we should not think of praying to Him if we doubted His goodwill. (3) We delight in God. You do not always feel Him equally near, but when He is near it is the joy of your spirit. (4) We acquiesce in all that He does in His rough providences. A hypocrite is like a strange dog that will follow a man as long as he casts him a bone; but a true believer is like a man's own dog that will follow him when he gives him nothing. A true believer says, "Shall I receive good from the hand of the Lord, and shall I not also receive evil?" (5) We look forward with confidence to the time of our departure out of this world and say, "I can die, if Thou, O Lord, be with me." We are not afraid of the day of judgment because we have peace with God, and hence we are not afraid to die. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Peace with God*:—I. PEACE WITH GOD NOT NATURAL TO US. It must be an attainment. 1. To be atheistic, seeming to ourselves to live in a headless universe, is not a condition in which to feel at peace. 2. To regard God as ruling in mere power and will, and as having no administration of righteousness, is to see ourselves under a sway in which it is impossible to confide. 3. To see God as holy and just, and ourselves as sinners against His holiness and justice, is to be filled with hopeless dread and enmity. Here it is that the gospel finds us. II. TO HAVE PEACE WITH GOD WE NEED—1. To believe in His compassion; that while He is almighty and all holy, He is also gracious, and has provided for sinners a way of salvation. 2. To trust in and consent to this way of salvation, taking the Lord Jesus Christ as our Redeemer and our Master. III. THAT THIS IS A TRUE WAY OF PEACE WITH GOD IS ATTESTED BY THE UNIVERSAL EXPERIENCE OF BELIEVERS. 1. There is no pretence of attaining such peace in any other way. Worldliness, philosophy, science, fail to give us peace with God. 2. In Jesus Christ, God, whom you have offended, and from whom you have become estranged, offers the hand of reconciliation. Will you extend the answering hand of faith and be at peace with Him? (*C. W. Camp.*) *Peace by believing*:—A moment's contemplation would suffice to arouse any man to the terror of the position

involved in being at war with God. For a subject to rebel against a powerful monarch is to incur forfeiture of life. But for a creature to be in arms against its Creator, this is an appalling thing indeed; but happy beyond all description the man who can say, "I have peace with God." I. THE PEACE WHICH THE CHRISTIAN ENJOYS. 1. Its basis. (1) There is the widest possible difference between a man being just in his own eyes, and his being justified in the sight of God. Yet, perhaps no fallacy is more common than to mistake the one for the other. Then, as a natural consequence of building on a weak foundation, the structure, however fair to look upon, is insecure. The peace in which multitudes delight is merely peace with their own conscience, and not in any sense peace with God. I know of no greater contrast than there is between that peace which is a mere stagnation of thought, a lull of anxiety, or a blindness to danger, and that soul-satisfying peace which passes all understanding. (*a*) "Are you living in peace with God, my friend?" "Yes," says one, "I have enjoyed peace for years." "How do you get it?" "Well, as I was walking one day in great distress, a feeling of comfort came over me, and it has remained with me ever since." "Yes, but what is the ground of your confidence; what is the doctrinal proof?" "Well, do not press me," says he, "only this I know—I do feel happy, and ever since, I have not had any doubt." That man, if I be not mistaken, is under a delusion. Satan has said to him, "Peace, peace," where there is no peace. The peace of a Christian is not such a lull of stupefaction as that. It has a reason. (*b*) Here is another who says, "Some years ago I never went to a place of worship. I was doing my trade in a very bad way, and now and then I took too much drink; and I thought it was time for me to turn over a new leaf, and I have done so. Now, I am not like the man you brought up just now. I think I may say I have a good ground for saying that I am at peace with God." Now, let this man be reminded that it is written, "By the works of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight." All these moral things are good enough in themselves. They will be very excellent if they be placed at the top; but, if they be used as foundations, a builder might as well use tiles, and slates, and chimney-pots, as use these reformatory actions as a ground of dependence. All this is only peace with yourself. (*c*) Some true Christians will say, "I hope I am at peace with God now, for my faith is in active exercise; my love is fervent; I have delightful seasons in prayer, &c., &c., therefore I feel that I have peace with God." Oh, believer! art thou so foolish as, having begun in the Spirit by faith, to be made perfect in the flesh by your own doing? If thou puttest thy peace here upon thy graces, then there will come another day when all those graces will droop like withered flowers. To look to thy graces for peace is like going to the cistern instead of living by the fountain. (*d*) I fear, too, that there are not a few who are tempted to found their confidence upon their enjoyments. If we do this, let us remember that we may have our times of agonising and fruitless prayer; we may be in the valley of despondency, or in the blacker valley of the shadow of death. (2) The Christian's conviction of his peace with God lies in this—that he is justified by faith. I was a sinner doomed to die; Christ took my place; He died for me. God says that he who believes in Christ shall be saved—I believe in Christ, therefore I am saved. He says, "He that believeth on Him is not condemned." I believe on Him, therefore I am not condemned. Now this is reasoning which no logic can gainsay. There is a rebel—he is pardoned, he is at peace with his king, and a rebel no longer. There is the offending child—his father takes him, accepts him for his elder brother's sake, and he is at peace with his father. This is the basis of the Christian's peace—one on which he may sleep or wake, live or die, and live eternally, without condemnation or separation from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus the Lord. 2. Its channel—"through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1) Though justification by faith is in itself a well of comfort, yet, even from that well we cannot get it, except we use Christ, who digged the well, to be the bucket to draw the water up from its depths. I will suppose that I am in doubt and fear and want to get my peace restored—how shall I seek it? Through Christ, the surety and substitute. Christ tells me that He came to save sinners; I am a sinner, therefore He came to save me. (*a*) He says He can save me. This looks reasonable. He is very God, He is perfect man, He has suffered and offered a complete atonement. (*b*) He tells me He is willing to save me. This also appears reasonable, for why else should He die? (*c*) Then He tells me if I will trust Him, He will save me. I trust Him, and I have not the shadow of a shade of a suspicion of doubt that He will be as good as His word. (2) Some people say we

teach that man is saved by *mere* believing. We do. There is a poor, starving man over there. I give him bread—his life is spared. Why do not these people say this man was saved by mere eating! And here is another person who is dying of thirst, and I give him water and the man is saved by mere drinking. Why do not we drop down dead in our pews? Just stop your breath a little while and see. Surely we all live by mere breathing. All these operations of nature may be sneered at as *merely* this or that; and in like manner to speak disparagingly of "mere believing" is nonsense. And if I would get my peace made more full and perfect, having come to Christ by faith, the more I go to Christ believingly, the deeper will my peace be. If I live near to Christ I shall not know fear. Who should know fear when he is covered with the Eternal wings, and underneath him are the Everlasting arms? As Christ was the first means of giving us peace, so He must still be the golden conduit through which all peace with God must flow to our believing hearts. 3. Its certainty. I like to read these rolling sentences of Paul, without an "if" or a "but" in them—"Therefore, being justified, we have peace with God." How different is this from "I hope," "I trust." Now where this language is genuine it deserves sympathy, but I believe in many cases it is cant. Let those who are the subjects of these doubts be cheered, but let their doubts and fears be rooted out. It is not presumption to believe what God tells you. If He says, "You are justified," do not say, "I hope I am." If I should say to some poor man, "I will pay your rent for you," and he should say, "Well, well, I hope you will," I should not feel best pleased with him. If you should say to your child, "I shall buy you a new suit of clothes to-day," and he should say, "Well, father, I sometimes hope you will, I humbly trust, I hope I may say, though I sometimes doubt and fear, yet I hope I may say I believe you," you would not encourage such a child as that in his uncomely suspicions. Why should we talk thus to our dear Father who is in heaven? 4. Its effect. (1) Joy. Who can be at peace with God and have Him for a Father, and yet be miserable? (2) A calm resignation, nay, a delightful acquiescence in his Father's will. What fear is there to the man that is at peace with God? Life?—God provides for it. Death?—Christ hath destroyed it. The Grave?—Christ hath rolled away the stone and broken the seal. Affliction, tribulation, famine, peril, or the sword? "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that hath loved us." II. WORDS OF COUNSEL TO THOSE WHO HAVE NOT THIS PEACE, OR HAVE LOST IT. 1. There is a man who many years ago was a professor, and who has never been easy in his conscience since he forsook the ways of God. Backslider, do you remember the time when you did feel that Christ could save, and you did trust yourself with Him? Now then, do the same to-night, and the dew of thy youth is restored unto thee. "Oh! but I have forsaken Him." Lay aside thy "buts" and "ifs." He bids thee come. "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." 2. There are those who are not backsliders exactly, but have lost their peace for a little time. Many young Christians are subject to little fits, in which their evidence gets dark and they lose their peace. Now learn from me. I find it very convenient to come every day to Christ as I came at first. "You are no saint," says the devil. Well, if I am not, I am a sinner, and Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. Sink or swim, there I go—other hope I have none. 3. There are those who never had peace. (1) Do not seek peace as the first object; for, if you want peace before you get grace, you want the flower before you get the root, like children who, when they have a piece of garden given them, pluck the flowers out of their father's bed, and put them into their own ground, and then say, "What a nice garden I have got!" But to their dismay, on the morrow all is withered. Better put the roots in and wait till they sprout, and then the flowers will be living ones, not borrowed ones. Do not seek after peace first. Seek after Christ first. Peace will come next. (2) And remember, that if you put your eye on anything but Christ, or anything with Christ, so as to disturb your whole thought and attention from being directed exclusively to Him, then peace will be an impossibility to you. Do not trust your repentance, faith, feelings, knowledge, sense of need, but come because you have nothing to recommend you; because you are vile, to be pardoned; because you are black, to be washed; come, because you are penniless, to be made rich; but look for nothing else save in Christ. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *False peace*:—Your peace, sinner, is that terribly prophetic calm which the traveller occasionally perceives upon the higher Alps. Everything is still. The birds suspend their notes, fly low, and cower down with fear. The hum of bees among the flowers is hushed. A horrible stillness rules the hour, as if death had silenced all things by stretching over them his awful

sceptre. Perceive ye not what is surely at hand? The tempest is preparing, the lightning will soon cast abroad its flames of fire. Earth will rock with thunder-blasts; granite peaks will be dissolved; all nature will tremble beneath the fury of the storm. Yours is that solemn calm to-day, sinner. Rejoice not in it, for the hurricane of wrath is coming, the whirlwind and the tribulation which shall sweep you away and utterly destroy you. (*Ibid.*) *Peace of pardon, not a mere forgetfulness*:—I have spilled the ink over a bill, and so have blotted it till it can hardly be read; but this is quite another thing from having the debt blotted out, for that cannot be till payment is made. So a man may blot his sins from his memory and quiet his mind with false hopes, but the peace which this will bring him is widely different from that which arises from God's forgiveness of sin through the satisfaction which Jesus made in His atonement. Our blotting is one thing; God's blotting out is something far higher. (*Ibid.*) *Peace desired*:—I once knew a young lady very rich in earthly gifts; she had youth, beauty, wealth; but she had not the best gifts, the "peace" that Jesus gives. She was not in the habit of visiting the poor, but one day she went with a friend to see an old woman who had been confined to bed for thirty years, suffering from a painful complaint, and was apparently near death. While the young lady stood pitying by, she was struck by hearing no word of repining or impatience. The aged Christian spoke of happiness and peace, the mercies she had experienced, the joys she was so soon to know. The contrast was great between these two—the one in the flush of youth, health, prosperity! the other so different. But the young lady turned to her friend, and said, "I would gladly change places with that poor creature to have her peace." The saint went to her rest, but the lesson was not lost; the young lady sought for peace in Jesus, and found it. She is now a bright example of a consistent Christian, and treading in that path "which shineth more and more unto the perfect day." (*Teacher's Treasury.*) *Christian peace*:—One who professes to have no settled religious beliefs said to me a few days ago, "The best argument for religion I know is that it brings harmony into the lives of those who are truly religious"; and I believe many would give almost all they have for Christian peace. *Peace may exist in the absence of joy*:—God's hand may be laid very heavily upon us, but faith interprets all as administered in love. Therefore, while joy may be absent, peace may reign supreme in the soul. We should not depreciate Christian joy. To "rejoice with joy unspeakable" is our blessed privilege. But peace is that which our Saviour especially bequeathed as the peculiar inheritance of His children while on earth. *Peace with God*:—God did not begin war against us; we began the war against Him, and it is high time that this farce of the finite struggling against the Infinite were ended. We are tired of the war. We want to back out. But how shall we get a cessation of this contest? By going up into the mount of God and plucking olive branches. What mount? Calvary. Modern travellers say it is only an insignificant hill; but I persist in calling it a mount, because, through the grandeur of its meaning, it overtops the very highest of all earthly elevations. The Alps and the Himalayas are less than ant-hills compared with it. In the very excavation on Calvary where the Cross was once set, afterward the olive was planted, and it is green, and thrifty, and foliaged to-day, and I strip it off, and I wave it before this assemblage, crying, "Peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Oh, if there is any joyful thought enough to overthrow one's equilibrium, that is the thought. It may be a matter of very little importance what President Grant, or Queen Victoria, or King William thinks of any one; but to be brought into close, and intimate, and hearty, and glowing relations with the God of a round universe—that makes a hallelujah seem stupid. If we had continued this fight against God for ten thousand years, we could not have captured so much as a sword, or taken so much as a cavalry stirrup, or wrenched off so much as a chariot wheel of His omnipotence; but God and all heaven's artillery come over on our side at the first swing of the olive branch. Peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, and there is no peace in any other way. (*T. De Witt Talmage.*) *Peace through Christ alone*:—We could relate many heart-moving incidents, but will here only give one which happened to him in the Black Forest. We were driven by a fearful storm to take refuge in a small house, where we found a woman sitting at a table clad in deep mourning, and evidently in great sorrow. Although the Ave Maria was sounding from the neighbouring tower of the village church, she was not praying, but only kept on silently weeping to herself. In answer to our inquiries as to the cause of her sorrow, she told us that she had no rest, and did not know how things stood between her and God. Under the guidance of her priest, she had done all that

could be thought of to obtain ease of mind. She had placed great candles on the altar, had observed all the fasts and joined in all the processions "for the benefit of the Holy Father," and done many other things of the same sort, but all had failed to give her peace of heart. Then came an awful trial in the death of her dear husband, who was killed while employed as a wood-cutter, by the fall of a gigantic fir tree. The Jesuit Father R—— told her that this was the expiation of her sin, and that now she could be at rest. "But I was not, and I am not," sighed the poor deeply-troubled woman. We soon found that she knew nothing of Christ except that He was the son of the Virgin and a great saint, whom one ought to invoke alternately with the other intercessors. With what delight this poor soul now absorbed the good news of the Saviour of sinners, and how quickly she understood Him whom she had long loved without knowing it, they alone can form a conception who know what it is to have been blind, to have cried for the light, and to have had their eyes opened. (*Pastor Funcke.*) *Immediate results of justification*:—1. Here we come to a main turning point in the development of the apostle's teaching. One chapter whose title might be, "An exposition and defence of justification by faith in Christ without the deeds of the Law," is closed. Another is about to open whose title might be, "The results of justification in the experience of the believer." To unfold these results; to show that, so far from the new teaching encouraging men in sin, it affords the only security for practical holiness; to trace the growth of a believer's spiritual life from the moment of his justification till it ends in the glorious liberty of the children of God;—this continues to be his theme down to the end of the eighth chapter. 2. In the opening paragraph of this section St. Paul makes it plain that God's gospel way of justifying a sinner on his believing affords the most ample ground to hope for the ultimate complete salvation of every believer. How that hope is to be realised the apostle does not as yet say. Into the connection between a justified state and a holy life, he does not as yet enter. Taking his stand simply on the bare fact of justification, he states that he who accepts it cannot help expecting triumphantly the fullest possible deliverance one day into the glory of God. 3. Hope is the keyword of this section, therefore; exultant hope of future glory. I. OUR HOPE REPOSES ON THIS NEW RELATION, ESTABLISHED BETWIXT US AND GOD, THAT WE ARE AT PEACE WITH HIM (vers. 1, 2). 1. This "peace with" or "with respect to" God is probably neither our changed feelings toward God in Christ, nor our peace of conscience when we are sure of pardon, nor that deep peace of the spirit which is Christ's bequest and which passes all understanding; but the relationship out of which all this springs. Friendly affections grow out of pacific relations. 2. The change from an armed to a peaceful attitude we owe in the first instance to the atoning work of the Son. Not that God could hate His sinful creature. But He does hate sin—the one thing which He hath *not* made. And our sin, so long as it was unexpiated, forced Him into an attitude of reluctant antagonism. Antagonism is not hatred, nor even dislike; it may co-exist with the most tender affection. After Absalom had assassinated his half-brother, the sorrowing king and father refused to receive the murderer at court, although all the while his heart longed to go forth to his favourite. So were we to God as that misguided fratricide was to David. Apart from the atonement He could not speak to us words of friendship; while we, on our part, were "enemies in our minds through wicked works"—disliking God and resenting His claims. 3. But see what a mighty revolution Christ's death wrought! The obstacle which before had legally barred a sinful man's admission into friendship, was taken out of the way. So soon as we are penitent believers, we have an access into this favour of our Father (ver. 1); and standing in that grace, it is now possible for us to hope that we shall see and share the glory of our God (ver. 2). II. OUR HOPE IS NOT IMPAIRED BUT CONFIRMED BY OUR PRESENT TRIBULATION. It is far off, that glory of God which we hope for. And the present is a life of trouble. Does not this then put our boastful hope in a coming glory to shame? No, life's trouble confirms and increases our hope; because it works in us a steadfast endurance in the exercise of our faith—a holding on and holding out to the end. The Christian who thus perseveres under trouble is an approved or accredited believer. Having stood that test of trial, his faith is found genuine; and as the tested Christian finds his faith to prove itself thus genuine, must not his hope wax only so much the more confident? As the hope to be one day glorified with the glory of God is a theme for triumph, so the believer learns to transfer his exultant triumph even to those afflictions which in the long run minister to his future glory, and that strangest of all strange paradoxes on Christian

lips comes true (ver. 3). III. THIS TRIUMPHANT HOPE IN WHICH GOD IS YET TO DO FOR US, FINDS A STILL MORE SURE FOUNDATION OF FACT IN WHAT GOD HAS ALREADY DONE TO PROVE THE GREATNESS OF HIS LOVE. This is the argument which fills the remainder of the section (vers. 5–11). It is introduced in the words of ver. 5. This love of God for us which His Spirit pours out like a rich fruitful tide within the believer's heart, is that quite unparalleled love evinced in Christ's death for us while we were yet sinners (vers. 6–8). And the force of the argument is, "If when we were hostile, God reconciled us by His Son's death, how much now when we are His friends, will He save us by His Son's life?" Paul regards all that still remains to be done for a believer in order to fit him for final glory as an inferior test of Divine kindness, costing less, and therefore less improbable, than what God already did in the sacrifice of Christ's life. He argues from the greater thing to the less. It is a much higher effort of generosity to reconcile an enemy than to save a friend. Love was put then to its hardest task. It did not fail in that thing which was greatest; why should it fail in a less thing? The conquering, uplifted Christ, regnant in celestial bliss, with matchless resources at command, His omnipotent breath penetrating His Church—He will not withdraw His hand from the easy completion of a task of which the first part has been already performed in tears and blood. Conclusion: Only seize the religious meaning of the death of Jesus Christ, and everything puts on a new face. It did so to St. Paul. This world was become a new world to him since Christ had died. Before that decease was accomplished at Jerusalem, the human race lay sunk in hopeless guilt, jailered by the inexpiable vengeance of heaven, with the blackness of death shrouding its hereafter. But now, what a change! 1. God is changed. Whereas there lay on our hearts only the intolerable sense of infinite disapproval and displeasure, now we have peace with Him. He is just, and yet He justifies us through His Son's expiation. 2. This life is changed. Its troubles are still upon us, but before they seemed to be only presages of a vengeance to come. Now we are God's friends, and afflictions can be nothing worse than experiments upon our confidence in Him; a well-meant discipline vindicating the sincerity of our attachment to Him, whom, though He slay us, we still can trust. When we have withstood such a test, we can even turn round and rejoice in it. 3. The future is changed. The leaden pall is lifted which overhung man's existence. With God on his side, a man learns to have boundless anticipations. Who will say that anything is too much to hope for a creature for whom God was willing to die? (*J. Oswald Dykes, D.D.*)

Ver. 2. **By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand.**—*Access to God*:—There are many locks in my house and all with different keys, but I have one master-key which opens all. So the Lord has many treasuries and secrets all shut up from carnal minds with locks which they cannot open; but he who walks in fellowship with Jesus possesses the master-key which will admit him to all the blessings of the covenant—yea, to the very heart of God. Through the Well-beloved we have access to God, to heaven, to every secret of the Lord. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The state of grace*:—In this chapter St. Paul describes the riches of Divine grace—how free, full, and comprehensive is the gift of God. Now the grace of God is not merely nominal, it is operative and communicative. Sometimes God may show His almighty power, as when He creates a system of worlds; sometimes His wisdom, as when He furnishes and adorns a planet; sometimes His goodness in the abundant favours which he confers upon His creatures. But He displays His grace to the ruined family of mankind. Here the kindness of God has full play. "This grace wherein we stand" denotes a state in which we remain to dwell amidst its privileges. It is not a casual or evanescent feeling, but a settled condition wrought for us and in us by the abounding mercy of the Lord. This is a state of—I. PEACE AND FAVOUR WITH GOD (ver. 1). When God justifies the ungodly, and withdraws the sentence of condemnation, the fear of wrath is removed, and heartfelt peace necessarily succeeds to gloomy apprehension. Peace is the first blessing promised by Christ to the returning sinner, and it is a great one. A soul at peace with the universe, above, around, and before it, is in an enviable state of existence! II. DIVINE INFLUENCE. "Grace" is often used to express the work of the Holy Spirit. When you first believed and entered the kingdom of grace, the Holy Ghost, with royal finger, touched your soul, and raised it from the death of sin to a life of righteousness. He continues His work of grace in the believer. He loves to form the soul anew, to beautify and adorn it with the image of the heavenly. III. COMMUNION WITH GOD (Eph. ii. 18). It is no mean privilege for a needy

creature to have free and ready access to the Giver of all good; to have the liberty of ransacking the storehouse of grace. There is a temple of prayer in the land of grace. We know not if there be another such in the universe. There is none in the regions of sin. "God heareth not [wilful] sinners." True, there is a porch of mercy to which the penitent may flee, and where the sighing of a broken heart will be heard by God; and this porch communicates with the temple of salvation through the door which is Christ Jesus. But until you reach the gate of repentance, you may stretch out your hands to heaven in vain. In the new Jerusalem, John "saw no temple." Heaven is a place of praise, not of prayer. So we are permitted to pray upon earth. This is an amazing privilege which is too little appreciated, and can never be fully estimated. IV. JOYOUS ANTICIPATION. "We rejoice in hope of the glory of God." This full assurance of hope is the privilege of the experienced Christian in whom grace has produced its ripe fruits. Hope is the daughter of faith. Faith is the victory over the world, hope over death. It is the Christian warrior's privilege. When his spiritual hope is matured, it is a faculty of no little potency. The believer now feels the powers of the world to come—a Divine life which is ever aspiring towards its native heaven. (*R. M. Macbriar, M.A.*) *Further fruits of justification*:—Peace is only the first link of a golden chain which binds us to the throne of God. It is the first gem out of heaven's cabinet, the first fruit of the tree of life, the first taste of the water of life. Peace comes to the forgiven sinner like a radiant angel from the skies; but she brings along with her a happy troop of young sisters, every one of whom is his constant companion from the wicket-gate to the crystal battlements. Note—I. THE BELIEVER'S PERMANENT STATE OF GRACE. 1. The privilege of being specially loved of God. This love is that of a father to his children (John i. 12; Gal. iv. 4, 5; James i. 18; Jer. xxxi. 3). The end at which God aims in His treatment of His children is to bring them to glory (Heb. ii. 10). But first they have to be fitted for it (Col. i. 12). And therefore it is God's present business to purify them and make them perfect in holiness and love. Whom He justifies, them He also sanctifies. Into this grace we are introduced by faith. And it is by faith we stand in it. 2. The constant privilege of prayer. Those who are justified have at all times freedom of access to the throne of grace. They are encouraged to come to it boldly (Heb. iv. 16; Phil. iv. 6); if rebuked at all, it is because they do not pray enough, or because they do not expect sufficiently large returns (John iv. 24). Prayer opens the armoury of God; it is the key which unlocks the promises and makes them ours. It makes the weak worm, Jacob, omnipotent. By it we link our little skiff to the great ark of Jehovah's purposes and promises, and thus are we borne triumphantly across life's billowy sea to the heavenly Ararat of rest. It is by Christ that we have such access into this grace wherein we stand (Eph. ii. 18, iii. 12). 3. The privilege of being God's instruments in fulfilling His great purposes in the world. We are the Church of the living God, endowed with a queenly authority and power. The Church is the Lamb's bride. It is the heritage, the house, and the city of God. It is the pillar of the truth. It is the open mirror of Jehovah's most glorious attributes (Eph. iii. 10). And yet it is into this grace that we obtain access through our Lord Jesus Christ, when we are justified by faith. II. THE BELIEVER'S JOYFUL HOPE CONCERNING THE FUTURE. 1. Its object. (1) Glory is a word which primarily denotes clearness and brightness. Hence, we speak of the glory of the sun, moon, and stars, while "one star differeth from another star in glory." Here we read of the "Glory of God." On earth this glory is dimmed and obscured; in hell it is never beheld; while heaven is a realm of perfect light, and in this God dwells (1 Tim. vi. 15, 16). For such glory to be revealed to us now, like Saul of Tarsus, we should afterwards be unable to see, unless, indeed, we were instantly destroyed by the brightness of His appearing. Now let us regard the Christian's hope of glory under this aspect. There are creeping things which can only live in darkness; others, a little superior, thrive best in twilight; and others which can live in misty, northern climes, while they would speedily perish under a bright, southern sky. Man, the chief and head of terrene existences, can bask with delight in the most brilliant earthly sunshine. But angels, higher still, can live amid the unscreened splendours of the heavenly world. Now the prospect which we, as Christians, have is of one day joining their bright hosts, feeling at home in that most intense radiance. But how great a change must pass over us before we are fitted for that sphere! We must possess spiritual bodies (see Col. iii. 4; 1 John iii. 2; Phil. iii. 21). (2) But God's glory must be viewed in a moral aspect, as that of wisdom, holiness, rectitude, and truth, mingled with mercy and love. There is a glory in God's character which, the more we discern, the

more we must admire it; in His law, which is the exact counterpart and transcript of His character; in His government of all intelligent creatures, and brightest of all in Christ. This glory we hope to see and to share. Here we see it in part, and know it in part. But hereafter, we shall see it in its fullest splendour. Our moral faculties will be purified, quickened, and enlarged, while our acquaintance with the ways and works of God will be corrected and expanded. We shall be holy, even as He is holy, and do His will as angels do it now (Psa. xvii. 15). (3) There is also a circumstantial glory—not the glory which belongs intrinsically to God, but the extraneous glory which He bestows upon His people. We cannot but prepare for some determinate place as the scene of our immortal life (John xiv. 2, 3; 1 Cor. ii. 9). We cannot doubt, however, that heaven will be a domain of perfect happiness and beauty worthy of its Maker; it will contain everything which can minister to the enjoyment of holy and immortal creatures (Rev. vii. 16, 17). 2. Its nature. To hope for it is—(1) To believe in its existence and certain attainment; and this we do, because it is expressly promised by Him who cannot lie. (2) To desire it, and long for it (2 Cor. v. 4). 3. This hope, accordingly, becomes a source of pleasure and joy to us. (*T. G. Horton.*) **And rejoice in hope of the glory of God.**—*The glory of God* is an eternal mystery which the heart of man cannot yet conceive, but of which Holy Scripture gives here and there short glimpses. Like the righteousness, the truth and the life of God (Eph. iv. 18), it has its hidden source in the Father, it is manifested in the Son, it is reflected in man (John xvii. 22). Of this glory man was from the first designed to partake (1 Cor. xi. 7), but by sin all men "come short" or suffer loss of it (chap. iii. 23); its restoration is wrought by the Spirit revealing and imparting the glory of Christ (2 Cor. iii. 18). In presenting this glory as an object of the believer's hope, the apostle points to its future perfection in the glorification of our whole nature, body, soul, and spirit. The glory in which man will be thus transfigured will be the glory of God, even as the sunshine resting upon earth is still the light of heaven; it will be an everlasting glory, just because man will dwell for ever in the light of God's countenance. (*Archdn. Gifford.*) *Hope of glory:*—I. WHAT CONSTITUTES THAT GLORY IN THE HOPE OF WHICH THE APOSTLE REJOICED? The word "glory" applied to God sometimes denotes that splendour with which He often clothed Himself when He made His appearance to the ancient saints; sometimes that sublime display of God's natural attributes, which He has made in the creation; sometimes a particular attribute of the Deity. It is in general used, however, to denote any signal or triumphant display of the Divine attributes as made towards men. In its primary and highest sense it is the full, cloudless, and combined display of the perfections of the Godhead, as in the text. 1. The display of this glory is reserved for the future world. But it is not to be imagined that any change is to pass upon the essential divinity of the Godhead. Jehovah is the perfection of beauty, yesterday, to-day, and for ever; only interposing mediums will be removed, and the capacity of the creature elevated. This is accomplished for the soul at death; for the body at the resurrection. Think not, therefore, that God is to reveal His glory by descending to us. The revelation will be made by elevating us to Himself. If we are to behold this glory with a seraph's ecstasy, we shall gaze upon it with a seraph's eye. 2. It is to consist in the displays which God will make of Himself. The company of saints and angels may indeed increase immensely the bliss of heaven. But what are they without God? The glory in which they will shine is but a reflection from that embodied effulgence which emanates from the perfections of the Eternal Three. It is chiefly to be disclosed through the Church, and Jesus Christ is its Head and Redeemer. He has received this appointment; and, from the Father, glory has been given Him, which, in answer to His own prayer, His saints shall behold. But in what way will He execute it? The manifold wisdom of God is to be exhibited through the Church, unto principalities and powers in the heavenly places. The absolute riches of His glory He has determined to display through the vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory. Where in the universe besides could He have found materials for erecting a monument so splendid, durable, and great, to His matchless love and mercy, as in these poor guilty beings which He thus redeems and exalts. Having gathered His saints into their everlasting rest, and secured a complete triumph over the last enemy, the Redeemer will now sit down in the midst of the throne, encircled with a bow of glory, in sight like unto an emerald. Then the sound of innumerable voices will break upon the ear of heaven, "Worthy is the Lamb to receive glory." II. WHAT IS THE HOPE OF GLORY, AND HOW DOES IT

BECOME A FOUNDATION OF JOY TO THE BELIEVER? It is the hope of a sinner founded in the atonement of it, and it gives to the believer a prospective possession of the glory that is to be revealed. 1. There is, however, a hope that fastens upon the same blessed inheritance which yet is not the Christian's. Of this kind the world is full. How are they to be distinguished from each other? (1) Look at their origin. The rock of ages, Jesus Christ, is here placed as a broad and deep substratum on which the hope of glory is built. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid," and safely build upon it this animating hope. It is the immediate result of justification by faith. The impenitent sinner's hope, on the contrary, is built upon the sand. (2) But these hopes differ not less in their legitimate effects upon the heart. That of the Christian is, in its very nature, purifying (1 John iii. 3). It is a hope, too, through which the love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost. In this way it transforms the soul into the very image of its Maker, and thus prepares it for the inheritance of the saints in light. The hope of the sinner, however, is not only incompatible with the undisturbed repose of every sin, but it is the very aliment on which these plants of death are nourished. (3) As to the different results of these hopes, I need only say the one is like the giving up of the ghost when God takes away the soul—while the other, on the same event, will be like the breaking of a summer's morning. The one terminates in endless day, the other in eternal night; the one in heaven, the other in hell. 2. The hope renders the possession prospective. But what is intended by possession? The glory of God's kingdom is to be ours in a sense vastly higher than anything we are said to possess in the present life. In the terrestrial sense nothing becomes completely ours till every foreign claim is extinguished. In the heavenly, everything becomes ours by extinguishing our own. In the present world our right to possession is founded in the sacrifice we have made or the equivalent we have rendered. In the other, the blood of the Cross will seal it to us entire, with no sacrifice of our own, no equivalent given. Here we struggle for possession that we may not be dependent. There we shall surrender all, that our dependence may be complete. Conclusion: 1. The saints have ample occasion to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Are you at present the subjects of affliction? I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in you. 2. God forbid that in the animating prospect which the heavenly inheritance presents, any of you should be disposed at present to glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. (*J. W. Adams, D.D.*) *Hope of the glory of God a source of joy to His people*:—I. THE GLORY OF GOD. Glory signifies something splendid, dazzling, overwhelming. The term is misapplied to things mean and unworthy, but is always most rightly applied to anything pertaining to God. "The meanest labour of His hands" is more deserving of the term than the greatest works of men. "Even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these." The glory of God means—1. God Himself. Moses prayed, "I beseech thee, show me Thy glory," that is, "Reveal Thyself more fully to me." It would have been well if God's answer had repressed all similar curiosity. No man can see Him personally and live. We could not sustain the vision, even were we physically capable of it. But when we have laid aside all that is mortal, and "put on immortality," "we shall see Him as He is." 2. The glory of God which is beheld in His works. "The heavens declare the glory of God." And what splendours do these heavens exhibit! The most capacious mind may well quail in its effort to comprehend the glory of the infinite Creator, which they both reveal and conceal. We require to be a God to comprehend all of God which His works contain. And if the works of God be so glorious, what must Himself be? 3. The glory which appears in God's ways and dealings with us in providence. We may take three views of this and call it a natural providence, a judicial providence, and a gracious providence. By the first, He provides for all creatures, according to their capacities and necessities; by the second, He holds us accountable to Himself, and takes cognisance of our hearts and lives; and by the third, He is reconciling us to Himself, in Jesus Christ, and dispensing mercy and grace to all who ask them at His hands. And how gloriously does He act in all these respects! 4. The perfect purity and bliss which await the godly in heaven. (1) Their state is glorious. What was the glory of Eden, of Sinai, of Zion, of Tabor, compared with this! No sin, disease, pain, death. (2) Their society is glorious. If it was "good" to be present when Moses, Elijah, and Christ conversed, what must the intimacies of heaven afford? (3) Their employments are glorious. Think of being for ever engaged in contemplating, loving,

adoring, and serving God! of ever receiving and performing reciprocations of love! (4) Their prospects are glorious. The infinite and various excellences of God will be ever affording new discoveries; the river of their bliss will increase as it rolls; that the sun of their heaven will still brighten as He shines; and that their state of glory will ever admit of "a far more exceeding and an eternal weight of glory." II. THE JOY WHICH THE HOPE OF THE GLORY OF GOD AFFORDS. 1. They are to possess it. It is theirs, as Canaan was the inheritance of the descendants of the patriarchs. It is given to them by a covenant never to be broken. It is the chief part of the "eternal redemption" procured for them by the Redeemer. It is that to which they receive a title in their justification, to which they are "begotten again" by the Holy Spirit, for which they are sanctified, preserved, and fitted in this life. 2. Of this ultimate possession they have now a hope—"a good hope through grace." And their "hope maketh not ashamed," and is "an anchor of their souls, sure and steadfast, entering into the things within the veil." We see the powerful influence of this hope. With what firmness and composure does many a good man endure calamity and meet death! Such a person may be likened to a mariner, who, while prosecuting his long and dangerous voyage, has the eye of his mind fixed on the desired haven: or he is like an heir of some vast estate, looking forward, during his minority, to the period when he shall receive his property. 3. This hope begets joy in the bosom of its possessors. (1) The foundation of it is a cause of joy. It does not rest upon merits, sacraments, &c., but upon the foundation which God has laid in Zion, and "other foundation can no man lay." Everything besides is as "shifting sand, fleeting air, or a bursting bubble." (2) Its attendant principles occasion joy. It is one of a class of graces which are the "fruits of the Spirit." (3) Its effects minister joy. It is not an uninfluential grace, but is ever active, and all its influence is for holiness. A genuine hope and allowed sin cannot co-exist in the same person. (4) Its certainty yields joy; other hopes may and do fail. We have seen the candidate for wealth, power, fame, pleasure, flushed with hope, only to become the victim of disappointment and mortification! (5) Its object gives joy—the glory of God in heaven. In other things, the ultimate enjoyment may not equal our present hope of it; but here realisation will infinitely sustain our largest and most sanguine hope. We shall find that notwithstanding all that is written in the Scriptures of this glory, all the glimpses and tastes we may have of it now, the half has not been known. Conclusion: 1. How little we know at present of the glory of God! Who can find Him out to perfection? And a cloud rests upon His works. His providence, too, is all beyond our comprehension. The difficulties do not diminish if we think of Divine revelation; in which we have certain facts stated, but the circumstances of many of these facts are not explained. And then how dense is the veil which conceals the world of spirits from our view! And in all these things the mere philosopher has little advantage over the clown. But the Christian has the advantage of faith; "what he knows not now he shall know hereafter." 2. Is our hope for eternity the hope of the gospel and the real Christian? Self-deception and vain pretensions are common in the world and in the Church. We can hardly meet with a person who does not hope to go to heaven when he dies. But, in thousands of instances, how vain is the hope! "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." Here is a sure test by which to ascertain the genuineness of our hope. 3. The subject is well fitted to relieve the present obscurity, and to mitigate the present sorrows of the people of God. We shall not always remain under a cloud and in trouble. A day of revelation is approaching when we shall "shine as the sun in the kingdom of our Father," and when we shall no more "hang our harps upon the willows," but retain them, ever strung and attuned to the songs of immortality. (*James Davies.*) *The hope of heaven:*—Shall we sink or falter by the way, when we know that we are journeying to a land of everlasting rest, and shall soon reach our eternal home? Shall the dark valley of death affright us, when we see beyond it the fields of immortality smiling in the verdure of eternal spring? Destined as we are for heaven, shall we grieve or murmur that the earth is not found to be a suitable resting-place for immortal beings, and that God checks every tendency to rest here, by sharp afflictions and severe disappointment? God forbid! heaven, seen even in the distance, should allure us onwards, and its glorious light should cast a cheering ray over the darkest passages of life. Nay, not only should the hope of heaven prevent us from complaining of the afflictions of life, but the thought that these afflictions are even now preparing us for that blessed state, that they are ordained as necessary and useful means of discipline to promote our progress

towards it; that they are the furnace by which the dross is to be purged away, and the pure ore fitted for the Master's use in the upper sanctuary, should reconcile us to resigned submission, should make us grateful, that such discipline being needful, it has not been withheld, and to pray earnestly that it may be so blessed for our use as that we shall, in due time, be presented faultless and blameless before the presence of God's glory, with exceeding joy. (*James Buchanan.*) *The future vision of God*:—This vision of God will constitute the blessedness or the misery of the future world, and since only like can know like, as Trench has said, "Every advance in a holy life is a polishing of the mirror that it may reflect distinctly the Divine image; a purging of the eye that it may see more clearly the Divine glory; an enlarging of the vessel that it may receive more amply of the Divine fulness." *The glory of the Creator*:—Baron Von Canitz, a German nobleman, who lived in the latter half of the seventeenth century, was distinguished both for talent and intense religiousness of spirit. When the dawn broke into his sick chamber on the last morning of life he desired to be removed to the window, and once more behold the rising sun. After a time he broke forth in the following language, "Oh, if the appearance of this earthly and created thing is so beautiful and so quickening, how much more shall I be enraptured at the sight of the unspeakable glory of the Creator Himself!"

Ver. 3. **And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also.**—*The Christian process*:—I. Tribulation gives rise to PATIENCE, coming from a verb which signifies "to keep good under" (a burden, blows, &c.), and might be rendered "endurance." II. Endurance, in its turn, worketh EXPERIENCE—the state of a force or virtue which has stood trials. This force, issuing victorious from the conflict, is undoubtedly the faith of the Christian, the worth of which he has now proved by experience. It is a weapon of which henceforth he knows the value. The word frequently denotes the proved Christian, the man who has shown what he is (*cf.* chap. xiv. 18), and the opposite (1 Cor. x. 27). III. When, finally, the believer has thus experienced the Divine force with which faith fills him in the midst of suffering, he feels his HOPE rise. Nothing which can happen to him in the future any longer affrights him. The prospect of glory opens up to him nearer and more brilliant. How many Christians have declared that they never knew the gladness of faith or lively hope till they gained it by tribulation! With this word the apostle has returned to the end of ver. 2; and as there are deceitful hopes, he adds that this, "the hope of glory," runs no risk of being falsified by the event. (*Prof. Godet.*) *The Christian process*:—The text may be treated—I. ANALOGICALLY. 1. Sore was the tribulation which came upon the disciples as they thought upon Christ's death and burial. But after a little patience and experience, their hope revived; for their Lord arose. After that hope had been begotten in them, the Holy Spirit's Divine influence was shed abroad upon them. They were not ashamed of their hope, but fearlessly proclaimed Jesus, their hope of glory. 2. History repeats itself. The history of our Lord is the foreshadowing of the experience of all His people. First comes our tribulation, our cross-bearing. Out of our patience and experience there arises in due season a blessed hope: we are quickened by our Lord's resurrection life, and come forth from our sorrow. Then we enjoy our Pentecost: "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost." Consequent upon that visitation our hope becomes clear and assured, and we are led to make a full outspoken testimony. II. EXPERIMENTALLY. Here is a little map of the inner life. This passage can only be fully understood by those who have had it written in capital letters on their own hearts. 1. "Tribulation worketh patience." Naturally it worketh impatience, and impatience misses the fruit of experience, and sours into hopelessness. When the heart is renewed by the Holy Spirit, but not till then, tribulation worketh patience. Angels cannot exhibit patience, since they are not capable of suffering. Job did not learn it in prosperity, but when he sat among the ashes and his heart was heavy. Patience is a pearl which is only found in the deep seas of affliction; and only grace can find it, bring it to the surface, and adorn the neck of faith therewith. 2. This patience worketh in us experience: *i.e.*, the more we endure, the more we test the faithfulness of God, the more we prove His love, and the more we perceive His wisdom. He that hath never endured may believe in the sustaining power of grace, but he has never had experience of it. You must put to sea to know the skill of the Divine Pilot, and be buffeted with tempest before you can know His power over winds and waves. What better wealth can a man have than to be rich in experience? 3. Experience works hope. How wonderfully does

Divine alchemy fetch fine gold out of baser metal. The Lord in His grace spreads a couch for His own on the threshing-floor of tribulation, and there we take our rest. He sets to music the roar of the water-floods of trouble. Out of the foam of the sea of sorrow He causeth to arise the bright spirit of hope that maketh not ashamed. III. DOCTRINALLY. The text is none other than the house of God and the gate of heaven. "The love of God (*the Father*) is shed abroad in our hearts by *the Holy Ghost* which is given unto us. For when we were yet without strength . . . *Christ* died for the ungodly." Behold the blessed Three in One! It needs the Trinity to make a Christian, to cheer a Christian, to complete a Christian, to create in a Christian the hope of glory. We have Divine love bestowed by the Father, made manifest in the death of the Son, and shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The Christian's grounds for glorying in tribulation*:—To see a man rejoicing, notwithstanding his sufferings, in the good of his portion, were nothing remarkable; but his glorying even in the very evil itself, one would be disposed, in the ignorance of any other cause, to ascribe to mental derangement. Now, what is the light in which the gospel teaches us to regard the evils of life? When the apostle says, "We glory in tribulations," are we to understand that the evils of life, in place of being regarded as indications of God's displeasure, are really to be looked upon by all men as tokens of His love and favour? Not so, we conceive, by any means. Affliction, even when viewed in the light of the gospel by the unrepentant, though it may be looked upon by them as the doing of a God who still waits to be gracious, cannot, while their relation to God is unchanged, be regarded as so divested of its penal character that they can at all glory in it. The best fruits it can as yet yield to them is that sorrow which worketh repentance, and it is only when it operates thus that it operates aright. There is, then, manifestly just one class of men who on reasonable grounds can glory in their tribulations, and that is those who have already turned to God and found reconciliation—to them alone it is given to extract anything like the oil of gladness out of the bitter herbs of temporal suffering; and so it is that we here find glorying in tribulations ranked by the apostle among the privileges of the justified. And it is worthy of being remarked, too, that it is not the first in the enumeration—that first peace of conscience, and joyful hope of sharing the promised glory, must have resulted from justification before a man can bring himself to regard his tribulations as a ground of rejoicing. We would now call attention to the grounds of his so glorying, as here stated by him. 1. "Tribulation worketh patience." That patience, which is a Christian grace, is not mere mental composure in the midst of outward troubles, and fixedness of purpose when excited passion threatens to bear the spirit away from its firmest resolves, but it is all this from right religious views and principles. It is because the mind of a Christian is stayed upon God that it is kept calm and steady in the day of trouble. He has such confidence in the character of God, and has taken such a hold upon His promises, and understands, moreover, so well the design of His fatherly correction, that when affliction does come, instead of loosening his hold of God, it tends, on the contrary, to lead him to cleave to Him still more closely. It being granted, then, that tribulation worketh patience, what ground, it may be asked, has a man for rejoicing in tribulation because it so operates? The Christian is taught to regard the improvement of character—the having his mind and will brought into perfect conformity to the mind and will of God—as that above all things else to be desired by him. Any advance he can make in this way he looks upon as the greatest gain, not only on account of its present advantage, but especially because of its eternal recompense. Show him, then, that he has gained in character, that he has brought his will more nearly to coincide with the will of God, and he will be satisfied that he has cause to rejoice in the acquisition, whatever may have been the sacrifice or suffering through which it was obtained. Now, how are such acquisitions made? First, we answer, by endeavouring, in the strength of Divine grace sought and relied on, to do the will of God, as made known in His holy commandments; and secondly, by endeavouring, through the same Divine aid, patiently to submit to God's will as made known in His providential dispensations. 2. But the patient enduring of tribulation not only tends to the improvement of a character, but it also serves to test the character and so to manifest its genuineness. And this is the meaning of the apostle when he says that patience worketh experience. When a man is put into the furnace of affliction and comes out unscathed, then he has the best evidence to conclude that they are genuine. 3. The value to the believer of this judgment of self-approval will fully appear when we consider that it worketh hope, even a hope that maketh not

ashamed. The connection between a believer's judgment of self-approval and his hope of glory is very evident. The fact of his being a believer implies that he has faith in the unseen realities of the future world. He may believe this, however, without having any assured hope of being himself a partaker of the inheritance. He knows that it is promised to men of a certain character only; so it is clearly only when he has been enabled to pronounce judgment on himself favourably and decidedly that his hope of future glory will be brightened up into full assurance. He need not mourn though this earth be made darkness around him, who has the hope of heaven's glory to cheer him; and if it be in the dark night of sorrow that the light of heavenly hope is made to shine most brightly, he need not be impatient for the coming of the dawn. The apostle, to give confirmation to his argument and to show that the process by which this gladdening hope is extracted out of the believer's tribulations, is not one that is carried on independently of the aid of Divine grace, adds, "Because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given to us." The Divine Spirit, by infusing love towards God into the believer's heart, gives him assured grounds to regard himself a child of God; and being assured of this, and knowing that on this point there is no delusion or self-deception, then he knows for certain that his hopes can never be disappointed—that be they ever so bright they shall be far more than realised. (*A. Stewart.*) *Glorying in tribulation*:—Let us—I. EXPOUND THE TEXT. 1. "We glory in tribulations," *i.e.* (see Heb. x. 33), refers specifically to persecutions. We know how Paul himself was exposed to these. It was no easy thing to be a Christian in those early times. Our English word means to thresh corn with flails. Methinks that if the same flails were used now upon the threshing floors of Christian profession, we should very speedily know how much chaff, and how little wheat, is now heaped up there. But we need not limit the term to tribulations of that class. Afflictions may overtake us in many other forms. We may lose our health, our wealth, our friends, our domestic comfort and peace. Yet in these tribulations, as Christians, we "glory," for we believe them to be sent or permitted of God to promote our good (Heb. xii. 5–15). 2. "Tribulation worketh patience." It does so, of course, only when received in submissiveness and faith. On the ungodly it generally produces the contrary effect. (1) The simplest idea of patience is that of passive continuance, as when we read of patiently waiting for the object of hope. (2) A higher degree of self-control, or a power to govern our tempers in provocation (Eccles. vii. 8, 9). (3) Another notion is that of fortitude, or strong resistance against a pressure of adversity (James i. 3). (4) But its crowning excellence is that it can do more than resist; it can overbear opposition and go on its way rejoicing. It is the same thing as perseverance (Heb. xii. 1). Now as tribulation works patience, we may well glory in it, for it is a good thing to be patient. By patience we are kept from ignoble sloth, children are converted into noble heroes, we are roused to new life and energy, and grow up from puny infancy to the full stature of the perfect man in Christ. The forest trees grow stronger the more they are beat upon by the tempest; your stalwart rowers pull harder just as they feel the current bearing more steadily against them; and the exposed warrior gets most inured to the battle and the breeze. 3. "And patience, experience." The radical idea is that of testing or trying metal, to ascertain its purity. Patience gives us proof of—(1) Our own sincerity and genuineness. You may imagine yourself converted, and be the subject of joyful feeling; but is all this real? The answer is got by the experiment of tribulation (Mark iv. 16, 17). (2) The limited power of our adversaries. The young Christian, like the young voyager, is soon frightened by the tempest, but the experienced saint, like the veteran sailor, has discovered that the waves are not so mighty as they seem, and that the winds only hurry the vessel faster on its course. (3) Jehovah's faithfulness (Psa. xviii. 16–18, 29; Hab. iii. 17–19; 2 Cor. xii. 5–9). 4. "And experience, hope." Hope was mentioned before as the result of faith; here it is the fruit of experience. Each is the same in its nature and object; but it is reached by two distinct processes. First, our hope is based simply and nakedly on the declaration and promise of God (ver. 1; Psa. cxix. 49, 50). But the hope of the text, while it rests upon the same word, also rests upon our experience of what the Lord has done for our souls. This has the double effect of satisfying us that we are the subjects of grace, and therefore those to whom the promise belongs; and also of convincing us, from what we have actually received, that God "is faithful who hath promised, who also will do it." 5. This assured hope suffers us not to be ashamed, even in the midst of suffering and reproach. II. APPLY THE TEXT. It supplies—1. A test of faithfulness. How

do you deal with troubles? Do you meet them with fretfulness and impatience, or in a spirit of stoical pride or stolid indifference? If not, do you, as God's children, bear them patiently and triumph in them? From experience, does hope spring? and does that hope make you bold in confessing Christ? Is the love of God shed abroad in your breast? 2. A lesson of wisdom. If our hearts are set on worldly things, then plainly we can have no delight in tribulations. Let us, then, study the nature and the worth of moral excellence and religious attainments. It were surely better for us to get the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, than to compass every object of earthly ambition. 3. A lesson of patience and trust. You know, as a child of God, that affliction is given you from above, that it is all ordered in wisdom, and superintended by infinite love. Therefore, be patient and hope unto the end. God will remove the crucible as soon as the liquid metal reflects His glorious image from its unsullied surface. Affliction is to God's children what the shepherd's dog is to the flock, which barks at the outsiders and drives the wanderers home again. Or it is the lapidary's grindstone, whereby the most costly gems are rounded and polished. 4. Some solemn thoughts for the unconverted. (1) Do you persecute the righteous? What you do against them will redound to their greater reward. It must, however, injure you. (2) What effect has trouble upon you? You cannot avoid it, any more than can the godly. (3) Whether in sickness or health, you have not the love of God in your heart. One wonders how you can live without it. And certainly you will find it hard to die without it. (*T. G. Horton.*) *Glorying in tribulation*:—It is joy, when between the millstones crushed like an olive, to yield nothing but the oil of thankfulness; when bruised beneath the flail of tribulation, still to lose nothing but the chaff, and to yield to God the precious grain of entire submissiveness. Why, this is a little heaven upon earth. To glory in tribulations also, this is a high degree of up-climbing towards the likeness of our Lord. Perhaps the usual communions which we have with our Beloved, though exceeding precious, will never equal those which we enjoy when we have to break through thorns and briars to be at Him; when we follow Him into the wilderness then we feel the love of our espousals to be doubly sweet. It is a joyous thing when in the midst of mournful circumstances, we yet feel that we cannot mourn, because the Bridegroom is with us. Blessed is the man who in the most terrible storm is driven in not from his God, but even rides upon the crest of the lofty billows nearer towards heaven. Such happiness is the Christian's lot. I do not say that every Christian possesses it, but I am sure that every Christian ought to do so. There is a highway to heaven, and all in it are safe; but in the middle of that road there is a special way, an inner path, and all who walk therein are happy as well as safe. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Tribulation a ground of glorying*:—"Not only so." The apostle has been speaking of the priceless advantages that flow from justification, peace, access into grace, rejoicing in hope of the glory of God. Surely there is sufficient here "to pay" a man for becoming a Christian. But, "not only so." This "not only so" is the Christian's peculiar privilege. Make the most copious enumeration you will, and there will be a "not only so." "O the depth of the riches!" Note—I. THE STRANGE FACT OF OUR TEXT. 1. Though a modest man, Paul was greatly given to "glorying." And in his grounds we can generally justify him. We are not surprised that he should boast of himself. And there is leave for any man to do so who has good reason, provided it be done in the spirit of the apostle. We are not surprised that he should boast of the churches. Above all we are not surprised at his boast in the Cross, that grand symbol of the world's redemption. But that he should "glory in tribulations also" must seem somewhat strange to the generality of men who regard them as distressing. You could understand him if he were speaking of the halls of mirth, of the pomp of palaces. He might reasonably glory in such things. 2. But the explanation is to be found in no defective mental or moral organisation. These are not the words of a madman speaking at random; nor of some hare-brained youth who goes through life saying "I don't care"; nor of a stoic whose false philosophy teaches him to despise alike the good and the ills of life. No, never was a nature more sensitive than Paul's. He does not mean that he gloried in the midst of his tribulations, notwithstanding his tribulations, treating them as matters of no account and even of contempt. They were the very ground of his glorying. Nor was his glorying mistaken. Our tribulations are but the instruments of the Lord of the harvest for purifying our souls. The uses of our griefs are Divine, and this must not only reconcile us to them, but enable us to glory in them. You see the strength of the apostle's argument. He has got God. Therefore he has got all and can glory in all. To connect

a thing with God, whatever guise it wear, is at once to make it an angel. II. THE EXPLANATION OF THIS STRANGE FACT. He justifies his assertion by setting forth the gradations by which tribulation works the highest good. 1. Tribulation worketh patience, or "endurance." The more a Christian suffers in a Christian spirit, the greater capacity does he discover for endurance. So that his very afflictions become their own anodyne. 2. "Patience worketh experience." The word signifies—(1) Proof; patient endurance of suffering proves a man's spiritual mettle. The furnace must declare whether a man's religion is gilt or gold. A parrot might be taught to say "Thy will be done." How will the man behave when every earthly comfort is withdrawn? (2) Approbation. God sends tribulation first that it may test, and then, that He may say to us, "Well done!" 3. "Experience, or approval, worketh hope." These tribulations drive us to the anticipation of another world. While sunny skies are over our head we think only of the present, but an overcast heaven sends our thoughts into the future. And hope maketh not ashamed. We sometimes see men with rueful countenances coming away from the door of a quondam friend. "Ah! I did hope that man was my friend," is the exclamation. "But he has put my hope to shame." Men never come away like that from God's door. There is nothing like experience to fortify faith. 4. "Because God's love is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost." God's love, as the active principle in the heart, is the angel presence that banishes all impatience, all fear. The God I love sends my tribulations. Therefore will I glory even in tribulations. Only love can interpret the mysteries of God. I will close with a picture (Rev. vii. 9–14). Thus tribulation is the gateway of heaven. (*J. Halsey.*) *Tribulation and after:*—The apostle sets before us a ladder like to that which Jacob saw, the foot whereof resteth upon the earth, but the top ascendeth to heaven. Tribulation is the foot, but we mount as we see that it worketh patience; and we climb again, for patience worketh experience; and we ascend yet once again, for experience sustaineth hope; and hope that maketh not ashamed climbs up to the very heart of God, and the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us. I might compare these verses to those songs of degrees which were sung by the people as they went up to the temple: as they halted at each stage of the pilgrimage, they sang a fresh psalm, and so David said, "They go from strength to strength; every one of them in Zion appeareth before God." The pilgrim setteth out from the dull and desolate vale of tribulation, he journeys on to patience and lifts up his psalm under the shadow of the rock; he removes his tent and journeys on to experience—beneath its wells and palm trees he refreshes himself; soon he marches on again from experience to hope, and never stayeth till the love of God is shed abroad in his heart, and he has reached the New Jerusalem, where he worships the ever blessed God and drinks full draughts of His eternal love. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Tribulations beautifying:*—It is rough work that polishes. Look at the pebbles on the shore. Far inland where some arm of the sea thrusts itself deep into the bosom of the land, and expanding into a salt loch, lies girdled by the mountains, sheltered from the storms that agitate the deep, the pebbles on the beach are rough, not beautiful; angular, not rounded. It is where long white lines of breakers roar, and the rattling shingle is rolled about the strand, that its pebbles are rounded and polished. As in nature, as in the arts, so in grace; it is the rough treatment that gives souls as well as stones their lustre. The more the diamond is cut the brighter it sparkles; and in what seems hard dealing, their Lord has no end in view but to perfect His people's graces. He afflicts not willingly; He sends tribulation to work patience, so that patience may work experience and experience hope. (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) *Tribulations: how to meet them:*—We should brave trouble as the New England boy braves winter. The school is a mile away over the snowy hill, yet he lingers not by the fire; but with his books slung over his shoulder, and his cap tied closely under his chin, he sets out to face the storm. And when he reaches the topmost ridge, where the powdered snow lies in drifts, and the north wind comes keen and biting, does he shrink and cower down beneath the fences, or run into the nearest house to warm himself? No: he buttons up his coat, and rejoices to defy the blast, and tosses the snow-wreaths with his foot; and so erect and fearless, with strong heart and ruddy cheek, he goes on to his place at school. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Tribulations: sources of joy:*—Our afflictions are like weights, and have a tendency to bow us to the dust, but there is a way of arranging weights by means of wheels and pulleys, so that they will even lift us up. Grace, by its matchless art, has often turned the heaviest of our trials into occasions for heavenly joy. "We glory in tribulations also." We

gather honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The genealogy of Christian hope*:—1. It is no uncommon thing amongst us, for a man, sprung from the lowest grade of society, to rise, by the mere force of industry and intelligence, to a level with the high-born and the noble; but he would show himself unworthy of his success and elevation, were he ashamed of his mean parentage. On the other hand, it has a very graceful look when he shows no wish to hide, but rather a desire to display, the meanness of his parentage; when, *e.g.*, amidst the gorgeous decorations of his mansion he places conspicuously the picture of some cottage, or some weather-beaten rustic, and says to his admiring guests in a tone of honest satisfaction—"In that cottage was I born," or, "That was my father." 2. And we are assuming the fact that what is brilliant is only the more brilliant when traced to its lowly origin, when we think that our text is of more than common interest. For what so glorious as Christian hope? And our text traces it back through its immediate ancestry, and stops—where? At what is lofty, radiant, attractive? Nay, at tribulation. Nor is he ashamed of that ancestry; for he "glories in tribulation." We shall find it profitable and interesting to trace the struggles of hope; for they are like the struggles of a family raising itself by successive steps, till it has exchanged a mean for a dignified position. Let us examine—I. How THE ONE IS DEPENDENT ON THE OTHER. Remember that St. Paul speaks only of those who bear tribulation as Christians, who receive it as appointed them by God. With them—1. "Tribulation worketh patience!" There is nothing else which can work it. Whilst things are all going smoothly it is difficult for him to ascertain whether we have patience or not. We can only know ourselves as to any particular quality, as God shall put that quality to proof. Courage must be tested by danger, virtue by temptation, constancy by solicitation. And further, the trial is adapted to develop and strengthen it. Courage grows by exposure to danger, virtue is confirmed by every victory over temptation, and constancy acquires steadfastness as it resists a solicitation. And all this is particularly true in regard of patience. It is beautiful to observe how persons who, by nature, were fretful, have been disciplined into patience through affliction. It is not necessary that an individual should be patient as a man, in order to be patient as a Christian; on the contrary, grace works its choicest specimens out of the most unpromising material. But patience is wrought out, not by tribulation in itself, but by tribulation bringing the Christian to reflection and to prayer. Therefore does the Christian "glory in tribulation," even if he had to stop here. He knows that patience is required as one of the chief fruits of the Spirit, a main evidence of meetness for the heavenly inheritance; shall he be ashamed of the adversity whence he hath acquired so choice a grace? 2. Patience worketh experience. The putting something to the proof; in this case the ascertaining the precise worth, verity and power of the consolations and promises of God. "Tribulation worketh patience," in that suffering brings the Christian into an attitude of submission; but when he has been schooled into resignation, he is not left without heavenly visitations. God "allures him into the wilderness," but only that He may "speak comfortably to him, giving him the valley of Achor for a door of hope." Promises, whose beauty can be but faintly apprehended so long as there is no pressing need of their accomplishment, come home to the heart in an hour of trouble patiently endured, as if they were made on purpose for such emergencies. Here, then, is already a noble elevation. From tribulation we have passed through patience and experience; the man has become his own evidence to the truth of Scripture, to the Divinity of Christianity, to the sufficiency of the gospel. No longer obliged to solicit external testimony, he has "tasted and seen that the Lord is gracious." "Experience" is a vast advance upon "patience"; and we may look to find in the next generation all the honour and brightness of Christian nobility. Such, indeed, is the case, for "experience worketh hope." How naturally does the one spring from the other! He in whom patience has wrought experience is one who, having put promises to the proof, has found them made good, and thereby proved to be of God. Surely now he who has tried the chart, and found it correct so far as he has had the power of trying it, has the best ground for relying on that chart with regard to ports which he has never yet entered. Accordingly you will find the righteous dwelling on their experience, and deriving from it their confidence. "Thou hast been my help"—there is the experience; "in the shadow of Thy wings will I rejoice"—there is the hope. It is the same with St. Paul. "I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion." Then what immediately follows? "The Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto His heavenly kingdom." The one assertion is that of experience—the next is

that of hope. Experience is a book in which there should be daily entries, and to which there should be daily reference. If we do not register our mercies, or if we never recount them, they are not likely to throw light upon coming events. He must be grateful for the past, who would be hopeful for the future. Answers to prayer, what encouragements to prayer! Promises fulfilled, what arguments for expecting their fulfilment! Mercies bestowed, what grounds for confidence that mercies will not be withheld! And thus it is that hope, the splendid, the beautiful grace—hope, with the stately step and the soaring wing—hope, whose special province it is to people the future with a brightness which compensates for all that may be gloomy in the present—hope, which makes the smile of health play around the couch of sickness—lights up the prison with the flash of liberty, pours abundance into the lap of poverty, and crowds the very grave with the burning processions of immortality—hope traces itself back to tribulation, like the coronet of the noble, whose ancestry may be found among the poor and the despised. II. THE APOSTLE'S ENCOMIUM ON HOPE. 1. Is not hope commonly spoken of as most delusive? Does not poetry love to liken it to some bright meteor, which beguiles the traveller, leading him into danger, and then leaving him in darkness? Gather the character of hope from men of the world, and she is but an enchantress, whose spells are so soothing, and whispers so soft, that having cheated us a hundred times, we are nevertheless willing to be cheated again. 2. But Christian "hope maketh not ashamed." It paints no vision which shall not be more than realised; it points to no inheritance which shall not be reached. How should it make ashamed, when it altogether rests itself upon Christ, who is "not ashamed to call us brethren?" This is the secret of its difference from every other hope; Christ is the source and the centre of our hope—Christ, in whom all the promises of God are yea, and in Him amen; and if Christ can deceive us, then, but not otherwise, may hope make ashamed. Therefore is it that the apostle elsewhere speaks of hope, in one place as an anchor, in another a helmet. He gives it attributes which fit it for the storms or the battle. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *A common evil and an uncommon result*:—I. A COMMON EVIL. "Tribulation." Men's tribulations are various. 1. Bodily. 2. Mental. 3. Social. II. AN UNCOMMON RESULT. In the case of most tribulation worketh irritation, hostility, conflicting passions. But in the case of the Christly man it worketh patience, which does not mean—1. Insensibility. Some are praised for their patience who should be denounced for their stoicism. 2. Weakness. Some are praised for their patience who lack the capacity of strong feeling. Patience implies exquisite sensibility, and the highest power: the power of reflection and of self-control. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*)

Ver. 4. **And patience experience.**—*Patience working experience*:—The benefit of trials is lost when we either "despise the chastening of the Lord," or "faint when we are rebuked of Him." It is only when they are borne with Christian "patience" that "experience" is their happy fruit. The word signifies properly "proof": and there are various things proved to us by our trials, endured with patience. I. THE LOVE, CARE, FAITHFULNESS, AND POWER OF OUR FATHER. He has assured us that "whom He loves He chastens." He has encouraged us to "cast all our care upon Him," by the declaration, and, in the gift of His Son, the convincing evidence, that "He careth for us." He has promised "never to leave, never to forsake us." He has reproved the fears of His people by reminding them that the "everlasting God, Jehovah, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not neither is weary," and assuring them that "He giveth power to the weak." When "patient in tribulation," we learn, by sweet "experience," that God is indeed to His people all that He declares Himself to be. II. OUR OWN WEAKNESS AND EMPTINESS, AND THE ALL-SUFFICIENCY OF JESUS. We feel the repugnance of our nature to suffering; the difficulty of bowing to the Divine will, our proneness to doubt and to rebel. But when we are enabled to bear our trials with patience, they teach us, by "experience," which imparts present delight, and encouragement for the future, that "His grace is sufficient for us"; "that we can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth us." III. THE VANITY OF ALL EARTHLY THINGS, WHEN SOUGHT AFTER, AND DEPENDED UPON, AS A PORTION. Sanctified trouble dissolves the delusive charm of prosperity. When the cup of worldly enjoyment is at our lips, the bitter that is infused prevents its deadly influence. The heart is brought back to the relish, which it was losing, of higher joys. And at the same time we feel the gladdening influence, and the inestimable preciousness of the truths of God, and of the good hope which the faith of them inspires. Thus the case of the prophet's little book is

reversed. The trial itself is bitter to the taste; but the experience resulting from it is sweet. IV. THE DIVINE EXCELLENCE AND SUFFICIENCY OF THE WORD OF GOD. How precious has this volume of inspiration ever been felt by the children of God in their seasons of trial! How rich the treasures of its "exceeding great and precious promises," when our worldly resources have "made themselves wings and flown away"—how sweet the celestial music of its devotion, when our "harp has been turned to mourning, and our organ to the voice of them that weep!"—how delightful the "still small voice" of a Saviour's love, amidst all the harassing turmoils of a turbulent world! The believer now learns to clasp this Divine treasure to his heart, and to say, "The law of Thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver!" V. THE REALITY OF OUR FAITH IN JESUS, AND OF OUR CONSEQUENT INTEREST IN HIS SALVATION. We judge from the fruit of the soundness of the root and stem. The man whose professed faith allows him to fret and murmur under his trials has good cause to suspect that the gospel has come to him "in word only." But when the faith of the truth inspires tranquil resignation, and "patience has her perfect work," we have "the witness in ourselves" of our connection with Him who said, "The cup which My Father hath given Me shall I not drink it?" By "adding to our faith—patience," we "make our calling and election sure." VI. THE VALUE AND CERTAINTY OF THE GOSPEL HOPE. Whatever bears testimony to the truth of those doctrines which the Christian believes serves to establish the hope of which these doctrines are the foundation. His experience, therefore, confirms his faith; and the confirmation of his faith gives additional confidence to his hope. It settles and animates its exercise. He "abounds in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost." (*R. Wardlaw, D.D.*) *Experience confirms men in the right*:—A man propounds the wonderful discovery that honey is not sweet. "But I had some for breakfast, and I found it very sweet," say you, and your reply is conclusive. He tells you that salt is poisonous; but you point to your own health, and declare that you have eaten salt these twenty years. He says that to eat bread is a mistake—a vulgar error, an antiquated absurdity; but at each meal you make his protest the subject for a merry laugh. If you are daily and habitually experienced in the truth of God's Word, I am not afraid of your being shaken in mind in reference to it. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Experience expensive*:—Experience is an excellent schoolmaster; but he does charge such dreadful fees. (*T. Carlyle.*) *A dead experience*:—In my Bible at home I have in the Old Testament a folded sheet of paper, in which are tastefully arranged some flowers and leaves. I was looking at it this morning, and it was very beautiful. Every colour was fading; but I saw, by the help of imagination, what they had been. If, however, I had no other summer than that it would be poor indeed; but I have roses and daisies, and honeysuckles and asters, and various other flowers, all of which are fresh every year, and some of which are fresh almost every month of the year; and I am not obliged to make this herbarium leaf of dried flowers my only summer. But I have known Christians that had but three or four old leaves in their Bible which they would go and pull out and show you every time they alluded to their religious history. They would say, "I was converted so-and-so," when they would exhibit these dry memorials, and then they would put them up again very carefully, and leave them; and the next time they talked with you they would show you these old experiences again—the same dry flowers and leaves—no more and no less. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Experience and faith*:—Faith, in its reproductive power and progress of growth, may be compared to the great Oriental banyan-tree. It springs up in God, rooted in God's Word; and soon there are the great waving branches of experience. Then from these very branches the runners go down again into God's Word; and thence spring up again new products of faith, and new trees of experience, till one and the same tree becomes in itself a grove, with pillared shades and echoing walks between. So experience first grows out of faith; and then greater faith grows out of experience, the Word of God being all the while the region of its roots; and, again, a still vaster, richer experience grows out of that faith, till every branch becomes not only a product, but a parent stock set in the same word, and all expanding into a various magnificent and enlarging forest. (*G. B. Cheever, D.D.*) *Experience, knowledge by*:—Practical sciences are not to be learned but in the way of action. It is experience that must give knowledge in the Christian profession, as well as in all others; and the knowledge drawn from experience is quite of another kind from that which flows from speculation or discourse. It is not the opinion, but the path, of the just, that the wisest of men tells us shines more and more unto a perfect day. The obedient, and the men of practice, are those sons of light that shall outgrow

all their doubts and ignorances, tha shall ride upon these clouds, and triumph over their present imperfections, til persuasion pass into knowledge, and knowledge advance into assurance, and all come at length to be completed in the beatific vision, and a full fruition of those joys which God has in reserve for them whom by His grace He shall prepare for glory. (*R. South, D.D.*) *Experience, power of:*—Said a poor pious widow to a scoffing sceptic, when he asked, "How do you know your Bible is true? What proof have you of its truth?"—"Sir, my own experience—the experience of my heart." "Oh," said he, contemptuously, "your experience is nothing to me." "That may be, sir; but it is everything to me." *Experience, various:*—You are too apt to feel that your religious experience must be the same as others have; but where will you find analogies for this? Certainly not in nature. God's works do not come from His hand like coin from the mint. It seems as if it were a necessity that each one should be, in some sort, distinct from every other. No two leaves on the same tree are precisely alike; no two buds on one bush have the same unfolding, nor do they seek to have. What if God should command the flowers to appear before Him, and the sunflower should come bending low with shame because it was not a violet; and the violet should come striving to lift itself up to be like a sunflower; and the lily should seek to gain the bloom of the rose; and the rose, the whiteness of the lily: and so each one, disdaining itself, should seek to grow into the likeness of the other? God would say, "Stop, foolish flowers! I gave you your own forms and hues and odours; and I wish you to bring what you have received. O sunflower! come as a sunflower; and you, sweet violet, come as a violet; and let the rose bring the rose's bloom; and the lily the lily's whiteness." Perceiving their folly, and ceasing to long for what they had not, violet and rose, lily and geranium, mignonette and anemone, and all the floral train, would come, each in its own loveliness, to send up its fragrance as incense, and all wreathe themselves in a garland of beauty about the throne of God. Now, God speaks to you as to the flowers, and says, "Come with the form and nature that I gave you. If you are made a violet, come as a violet; if you are a rose, come as a rose; it you are a shrub, do not desire to be a tree; let everything abide in the nature which I gave it, and grow to the full excellence that is contained in that nature." (*H. W. Beecher.*) **And experience hope.**—*The well-grounded hope:*—"Experience worketh hope." Take that principle in its largest sense, apply it to the interests of this life and this world, and who is there that does not know that the apostle's statement would be utterly wrong? The inexperienced man is all buoyant anticipation; he sees no difficulties in the way; he looks for brilliant success in life. How different with the man who has had some experience of the realities of life, how modest are his hopes of earthly happiness and success! But it was not of earthly experience that the apostle spake, nor of earthly hope. As regards our blessed Saviour, His grace and preciousness and love: as regards the solid peace and happiness to be found when we find a part in His great salvation: as regards the sanctifying and comforting influences of the Holy Spirit: as regards the power and prevalence of earnest prayer: as regards the rest and refreshment the weary soul may find in a Lord's day duly sanctified: as regards the consolation which religion can impart amid earthly disappointments; as regards the peace that Christ can give in death: as regards such things as these, "experience worketh hope"; the more you know of Jesus, His promises and His grace, the more you will expect from Him; and instead of experience leading us to say, as it does lead us to say of most earthly things, "I have tried it, it cannot make me happy, I shall trust it no more," experience of God leads us rather to say, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him against that day"; "I love the Lord, because He hath heard my voice and my supplication; because He hath inclined His ear unto me, therefore will I call upon Him as long as I live"; "The Lord hath been mindful of us: He will bless us still!" And now, concerning St. Paul's declaration that "experience worketh hope," let me suggest to you two thoughts which are implied in the apostle's principle, and which are the great reasons why the apostle's principle is true. I. First, then, IN THE GREAT CONCERN OF RELIGION YOU ARE SURE, IF YOU SEEK IN THE RIGHT WAY, TO GET WHAT YOU SEEK. Now here at once we find a point in regard to which there is a total contrariety between worldly and spiritual things. Who is there that needs to be told that one great cause of human disappointment in worldly things lies in this, that however anxious you may be to get something on which you have set your heart, and however diligent you may be in using all the means which you think

tend towards your getting it, you may yet entirely fail of getting it? But when we pray for spiritual blessings, for repentance towards God and faith in Christ and a sanctifying Spirit, we may pray with the absolute certainty that our prayer will be granted, because we pray with the absolute certainty that we are asking that which it will be for our good to get, and for God's glory to give. II. Another fact on which the principle in the text founds is, that in the matter of spiritual blessings YOU ARE SURE, WHEN YOU GET WHAT YOU SEEK, TO FIND IT EQUAL YOUR EXPECTATIONS. There never was the human being who said, I was earnestly desirous to gain the favour of God, to gain the good part in Christ, and now I have gained them, I find they are no such great matter after all, the prize is hardly worth the cost. God is indeed my Father, Christ is indeed my Saviour, the Holy Spirit dwells within my breast, and I know that heaven is my home; but these things leave me still unsatisfied and unhappy. No; experience never brought any human being to such a mind as that. That is the strain in which experience has taught men to speak of earthly ends after they were won. But the man never breathed who would say the like of the blessings of grace. (*A. K. H. Boyd, D.D.*) *The hope of faith and the hope of experience*:—The hope of the fourth verse is distinct from, and posterior to the hope of the second, and is derived from another source. The first hope is hope in believing; a hope which hangs direct on the testimony of God. The second hope is the fruit of experience, and is gathered, not from the word that is without, but from the feeling of what passes within. I make a twofold promise to an acquaintance—the lesser part of which should be fulfilled to-morrow, and the latter on this day twelvemonth. If he believe me, then will there be a hope of the fulfilment of both, and, for a whole day at least, he may rejoice in this hope. To-morrow comes, and if to-morrow's promise is not fulfilled, the hope which emanated from faith is overthrown, and the man is ashamed of his rash and rejoicing expectations! But if instead of a failure there is a punctual fulfilment without shame or without suspicion, he will now look to the coming round of the year with more confident expectation than ever. It is quite true that there is a hope in believing, but it is just as true that experience worketh hope. Now in the gospel there are promises, the accomplishment of one of which is far off and the other of which is near. By faith we may rejoice in hope of the coming glory, and it will be the confirmation of our hope if we find in ourselves a present holiness. He who hath promised to translate us into a new heaven hereafter has also promised to confer on us a new heart here. Directly appended to our belief in God's testimony may we hope for both these fulfilments; but should the earlier fulfilment not take place, this ought to convince us that we are not the subjects of the latter fulfilment. A true faith would ensure to us both, but as the one has not cast up at its proper time neither will the other cast up at its time—and, having no part nor lot in the present grace, we can have as little in the future inheritance. (*T. Chalmers, D.D.*)

Ver. 5. **And hope maketh not ashamed.**—*Christian hope*:—There is no word more beautiful than "hope." It is alight with the radiance of futurity; in it murmurs a prophetic music of good times coming. Its influence upon mankind it is impossible to over-estimate. As it has waxed or waned, society has risen or declined. The sinfulness of the first pair threatened life with a collapse; but in the first promise the day-star of humanity arose. A watery deluge rolled around the world; and in the solitary ark, among the dearest objects which survived was the hope of the race. At the time of Jesus, upon the universal heart was settling the sickness of hope deferred. The virtues of force, courage, endurance, had failed. The intellectual hope of the world likewise had suffered; philosophy had sunken into sophistry. Religious hope, too, was dead; buried in the superstition and atheism of the times. It was now that Christ appeared the dawn of the world—material, intellectual, and spiritual. Among the many obligations the Divine Man imposed upon mankind was the redemption of the hope of the race. I. THE NATURE OF CHRISTIAN HOPE. 1. Hope is sometimes confounded with desire; but the yearning of the soul after unrealised good may not only not be hope, but the keenest form of despair. It is also confused with belief; but as the perceptive faculty, faith may reveal to us evils that will befall us. Taken separately these conceptions are inadequate and untrue; in combination they yield the wished result. Hope is made up of desire and faith—it is the confident expectation of coming good. 2. This world is the special scene of hope. Because of the perennial freshness of the great source of all things, every life has about it a vigour of unlimited hope. To the young the disappointments of the past go for nothing. As if no anticipations

had perished, every heart comes into life like the recurring spring crowned with flowers of hope. Until the summit of life is reached, earthly hope guides man onward; but the time must come when the summit of earthly welfare is reached and life becomes a subdued decline—when, from the guardianship of Hope, man is handed over to the weird sister Memory. 3. But to the Christian there is a higher hope, which knows no decay, which can sustain the spirit in an unending course of dignity. Christianity renews the youth of men. II. ITS GROUND. The best earthly expectations are based upon innumerable contingencies which any moment may give way. The Christian hope is built upon a rock—the being and providence of a gracious God. There are some to whom the throne of the universe is vacant and man an orphan. Others have filled the supreme seat with a formless shadow of fate—without knowledge, without love. In distinction from all such theories the ground of the Christian hope is, first, the infinite perfections of God's character. In the grand unity which pervades the whole material universe, which guides even those matters disturbed by the perverse will of man towards a purpose of good, we gather that the Divine nature is a unity. Then, again, from the works of nature we gather suggestions of a power that is omnipotent, a wisdom that is boundless, a goodness that is infinite. Here, then, we seem to touch the very granite of mortal confidence—a personal, loving Godhead. Give us this, and the only fatal sin among men is despair. According to his faith shall it be done unto man. To illuminate and supplement the manifestation already given, the Almighty spoke the truths contained in the Bible. Beyond all, in the person of Christ, the very heart of the Father was unfolded to men. And is there no warrant for hope here? "He that withheld not His own Son but freely gave Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things!" III. ITS CHARACTERISTICS. 1. Solidity. It is "a good hope." This fact arises from the nature of its foundation and from the character of its securities. Here, however, we prefer to notice some of the testimonies of experience, In support of Christianity we can show an array of witnesses unapproached in the defence of any other system. Surely, to follow the religious footsteps of Bacon, Milton, and Newton is no slight comfort. Not only in the vigour of their life have great men attested to the truth of Christianity, but likewise in the hour of their dissolution. "The best of all," said the dying father of Methodism: "The Lord is with us." "Hast thou hope?" said the attendants upon the death-bed of John Knox. He answered not, but merely pointed his finger upward. 2. It is a purifying hope. (1) This is so from the nature of the objects which excite it. The soul is tinged by the phenomena amid which it moves. He who anticipates the impure becomes impure; he who aspires after the trivial only becomes frivolous. Before the Christian, on the contrary, are placed objects of standard worth. In this world he is called to holiness; in the world to come he is promised heaven. (2) It is purifying in itself. Give a man hope, and though steeped to the lips in evil, he will, under the Divine grace, clarify himself. Give a man hope, and you place his foot on the first stair of heaven. This is the reason of the success of the gospel over every other religious system. 3. It is a living or lively hope. There is such a thing as a dead hope. Some have made shipwreck of faith and have cast away their confidence. Then there are some who have a kind of galvanised hope—while operated upon by outward excitement it seems to move, but the moment this is taken away it collapses. The Divine principle which animates the Christian heart beats a pulse of undying ardour. When the soul enters heaven it only begins a career of endless progress. Throughout that course hope will be the unfailing guide of man. IV. ITS PROPER OBJECTS. These comprehend all that is good, *i.e.*, all that is in accordance with the will of God. It only requires a moment's reflection to see the necessity of such a condition. The mind of man is necessarily defective, and confounds shows with realities. As a child perplexed in an intricate path gladly resigns himself to the guidance of his father, so the Christian exclaims, in the presence of Divine love, "Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel." Another reason for making hope contingent upon the Divine will is found in God's infinite goodness. Assured of this, man realises his highest blessedness. Carry with you the thought of Divine rectitude, and you cannot anticipate too much from infinite compassion. The fact of God's willingness to bless man being manifested in all the mercies received, should add zest to their enjoyment. "No good thing is withheld from them that walk uprightly." But, in regard to religious benefits, the certainties of hope are still greater. They have regard—1. To man individually, and begin with human life. "Of such is the kingdom of heaven," "Their angels do always behold the

face of My Father which is in heaven," are passages which hang like a luminous cloud over the heads of little children. In them is opened a boundless field of hope in regard to incipient life. All who depart before the years of responsibility are safe in the protection of Christ. In the case of those who survive it is made possible to train them up in the way they should go. Still, so early does man become sinful that the prophet said, "We go astray from the womb, speaking lies." Just as the prodigal left the house of his father, men go astray from the Divine rectitude, and then there is only a single voice which speaks of hope, that is the voice of the gospel. The promises of God suggest that there is no room for despondency on the part of the vilest, but every reason for hope. 2. To Christian attainments. The real life of man is that of progress. The objects which are held up to us in the Christian course are calculated to stir the pulse, to call forth the continued aspiration of the soul. Above all, there is a standard of Christian character placed before us we can never transcend—namely, that of Jesus Christ. "We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." Well was it added, "He that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself." 3. To heaven. The life above will be of—(1) An intenser character. (2) Permanent blessedness. (3) Improved circumstances. There the religious life instead of being hindered will be helped by the surroundings. (4) Better society. (*Stephen Clarke.*) *The glorious hope:*—Consider—I. THE CONFIDENCE OF OUR HOPE. We are not ashamed—1. Of our hope. Some persons have no hope, or only one of which they might justly be ashamed. "I shall die like a dog," says one. "When I am dead there's an end of me." The agnostic knows nothing, and therefore I suppose he hopes nothing. The Romanist's best hope is that he may undergo the purging fires of purgatory. There is no great excellence in these hopes. But we are not ashamed of our hope who believe that those who are absent from the body are present with the Lord. 2. Of the object of our hope. We do not hope for gross carnal delights as making up our heaven, or we might very well be ashamed of it. Whatever imagery we may use, we intend thereby pure, holy, spiritual, and refined happiness. Our hope is that we shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of the Father; that we shall be like our perfect Lord, and where He is that we may behold His glory. 3. Of the ground of our hope. The solemn promises of God confirmed in the person and work of Christ. Inasmuch as Jesus died and rose, we that are one with Him are sure that we shall rise and live with Him. 4. Of our personal appropriation of this hope. Our expectation is not based upon any proud claim of personal deservings, but upon the promise of a faithful God. He hath said, "He that believeth in Him hath everlasting life." We do believe in Him, and therefore we know that we have eternal life. Our hope is not based on mere feeling, but on the fact that God hath promised everlasting life to them that believe in His Son Jesus. 5. As to the absolute certainty that our hope will be realised. We do not expect to be deserted, for "He hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." "Who shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord?" II. THE REASON OF THIS CONFIDENCE. 1. Our hope has for one of its main supports the love of God. I trust not to my love of God, but to God's love for me. We are sure that He will fulfil our hope because He is too loving to fail us. If it were not for the Father's love, there would have been no covenant of grace, no atoning sacrifice, no Holy Spirit to renew us, and all that is good in us would soon pass away. 2. This love has been shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost—like a rain-cloud, black with exceeding blessing, which pours forth a shower of silver drops innumerable, fertilising every place whereon it falls, making the drooping herbs to lift up their heads and rejoice in the heaven-sent revival. After a while, from that spot where fell the rain, there rises a gentle steam, which ascends to heaven and forms fresh clouds. Thus is the love of God poured upon our heart, and shed abroad in our nature till our spirit drinks it in, and its new life is made to put forth its flowers of joy and fruits of holiness, and by and by grateful praise ascends like the incense which in the temple smoked upon Jehovah's altar. Love is shed abroad in us, and it works upon our heart to love in return. (1) The Holy Ghost imparts an intense appreciation and sense of that love. We have heard of it, believed in it, and meditated upon it, and at last we are overpowered by its greatness! (2) Then there comes an appropriation of it. We cry, "He loved me, and gave Himself for me." (3) Then follows, as a matter of course, that return of love which the human heart must feel—we love Him because He first loved us. 3. But notice the special sweetness which struck our apostle as being so amazingly noteworthy. (1) That God should give His Son for the ungodly. He loved us when we hated Him.

Marvellous fact! (2) That Christ died for us. That Christ should love us in heaven was a great thing; that He should then come down to earth was a greater; but that He should die, this is the climax of love's sacrifice, the summit of the Alp of love. (3) That the Lord must ever love us now that we are reconciled. (4) That "we have now received the atonement." The hope of glory burns in the golden lamp of a heart reconciled to God by Jesus Christ. Grace is glory in the bud. Agreement with God is the seed-corn of perfect holiness and perfect happiness. 4. Note the Divine Person by whom this has been done. Only by the Holy Ghost could this have been done. We can shed that love abroad by preaching, but we cannot shed it abroad in the heart. If the Holy Ghost dwells in you, He is the guarantee of everlasting joy. Where grace is given by His Divine indwelling, glory must follow it. III. THE RESULT OF THIS CONFIDENT HOPE. 1. Inward joy. 2. Holy boldness in the avowal of our hope. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The hope that maketh not ashamed:*—I. Its glorious OBJECT. II. Its signal TRIUMPHS. III. Its unfailing SUPPORT. (*J Lyth, D.D.*) *Hopes that make and the hope that maketh not ashamed:*—I. HOPES THAT MAKE ASHAMED. 1. By the insufficiency of the object—that of the worldling. 2. By the weakness of the foundation—that of the Pharisee. 3. By the falsity of the warrant—that of the antinomian. II. THE HOPE THAT MAKETH NOT ASHAMED. 1. Its nature. (1) Holy. (2) Solid. (3) Certain. 2. Its value. It can never disappoint and thus put to shame. (*Ibid.*) *Believers not ashamed*, for they have—1. A good Master. 2. A good cause. 3. A good hope. (*M. Henry.*) **Because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts.**—*The love of God shed abroad in the heart:*—I. THE LOVE OF GOD IS HIS LOVE TO US. The fact that we are the objects of a love which embraces all the creatures of God would not be ground of hope. But this love is—1. Special. It stands opposed to wrath, and includes reconciliation and Divine favour, and secures to us all the benefits of redemption. 2. Infinitely great. It led to the gift of God's Son. 3. Gratuitous. It is not founded on our character, but was exercised towards us when sinners. 4. Immutable. If founded on anything in us it would continue no longer than our attractiveness continued: but flowing from the mysterious fulness of the Divine nature it cannot change. II. THIS LOVE IS SHED ABROAD IN OUR HEARTS: *i.e.*, we have a full conviction and assurance that we are its objects. There might be a conviction that God is love, and that His love toward some men is infinitely great, and that it is gratuitous and unchangeable, and yet we might remain in the blackness of despair. It is only when we are assured that we are its objects that we have a hope which sustains and renders blessed. III. WE KNOW THAT WE ARE THE OBJECTS OF THIS LOVE. 1. Not simply because God loves all men. 2. Nor because we see in ourselves effects of regeneration and the evidences of holiness; for—(1) This love was prior to regeneration. (2) Holiness is the fruit of the assurance of it. 3. But by the Holy Ghost. How we cannot tell, and it is unreasonable to ask. We might as well ask how He produces faith, peace, joy, or any other grace. It is enough to say negatively that it is not—(1) By exciting our love to God, whence we infer His love to us: the order is the reverse. Nor—(2) By simply opening our eyes to see what a wonderful display of love is made in redemption: for that we might see and yet suppose ourselves excluded. IV. THE PROOF THAT WE ARE NOT DELUDED IN THIS MATTER IS TO BE FOUND IN THE EFFECTS OF THIS CONVICTION. 1. The effects of such a conviction when unfounded are seen in the Jews, Papists, and Antinomians, and are—(1) Pride. (2) Malignity. (3) Immorality. 2. When produced by the Holy Ghost the effects are—(1) Humility. Nothing so bows down the soul as a sense of undeserved love. (2) The tenderest concern for those who are not thus favoured, and an earnest desire that they may share our blessedness. (3) Love to God. Love begets love: and our love to God is mingled with admiration, wonder, gratitude, and zeal for His glory. (4) Obedience. (*C. Hodge, D.D.*) *The love of God shed abroad in the heart:*—I. THE LOVE OF GOD. If you would have this love shed abroad in your hearts you must consider carefully—1. Who it is that loves you, namely, the most high God. To be loved is a sublime thought, but to be loved of Him is a right royal thing. A courtier will often think it quite enough if he hath the favour of his prince. It means riches, pleasure, honour. And what means the love of the King of kings to you? All that you ever can need. 2. What He is who so loves you. Very much of the value of affection depends upon whom it comes from. It would be a very small thing to have the complacency of some of our fellow creatures whose praise might almost be considered censure. To have the love of the good, the excellent, this is truest wealth; and so to enjoy the love of God is an utterly priceless thing! 3. The remarkable characteristics of that love,

(1) It is heaven-born; it sprang from no source but itself, and is not caused by any excellence in the creature. (2) It is self-sustaining. It borrows nothing from without. It lives, and shall live as long as God lives. (3) Utterly unbounded and altogether unequalled. You cannot say of God's love it has gone thereto, but it shall go no further. There is no love that can any more be compared with God's than the faint gleam of a candle with the blaze of the sun at noonday. He loves His people so much that He gives them all that He hath. (4) It is unvarying and unsleeping. He never loves us less, He cannot love us more. The multiplicity of the saints doth not diminish the infinite love which each one enjoys. Never for a single moment does He forget His Church. (5) It is undying and unfailing. II. THE LOVE OF GOD IS SHED ABROAD. Here is an alabaster box of very precious ointment, it holds within the costly frankincense of the love of God; but we know nothing of it, it is closed up, a mystery, a secret. The Holy Spirit opens the box, and now the fragrance fills the chamber; every spiritual taste perceives it, heaven and earth are perfumed with it. 1. No one can shed abroad the love of God in the heart but the Holy Ghost. It is He that first puts it there. 2. Do you inquire in what way is the love of God shed abroad? (1) The Holy Spirit enables the man to be assured that he is an object of the Divine love in the first place. The man comes to the Cross as a guilty sinner, looks up to the Cross, trusts in the living Saviour, and then cries, "I am saved, for I have God's promise to that effect. Now, since I am saved, I must have been the object of the Lord's love." (2) Next thing, the Spirit makes the man understand what kind of love this is, not all at once, but by degrees, until he apprehends Jehovah's love in its length and breadth and height. (3) But then comes the essence of the matter—the Holy Spirit enables the soul to meditate upon this love, casts out the cares of the world, and then the man, while he meditates, finds a fire begins to burn within his soul. Meditating yet more, he is lifted up from the things of earth. Meditating still, he is astonished, and then, filled with strong emotion, he cries, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." Then while gratitude is still within his soul a Divine resignation to all the Master's will keeps rule within him. Then follows a rapturous leaping over this devout calm, a joy unutterable, next akin to heaven, fills the heart. III. THIS LOVE BECOMES THE CONFIRMATION OF OUR HOPE. Hope rests itself mainly upon that which is not seen; the promise of God whom eye hath not beheld. Still it is exceedingly sweet to us if we receive some evidence and token of Divine love which we can positively enjoy even now. And there are some of us who do not want Butler's "Analogy" or Paley's "Evidences" to back our faith; we have our own analogy and our own evidences within, for the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, and we have tasted and seen that the Lord is gracious. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The love of God shed abroad in the heart*:—It does not descend upon us as dew in drops, but as a stream which spreads itself abroad through the whole soul, filling it with a consciousness of His presence and favour. (*Philippi.*) *The love of God shed abroad by the Holy Ghost*:—Frequently at the great Roman games the emperors, in order to gratify the citizens of Rome, would cause sweet perfumes to be rained down upon them through the awning which covered the amphitheatre. Behold the vases, the huge vessels of perfume! Yes; but there is nought here to delight you so long as the jars are sealed; but let the vases be opened and the vessels be poured out, and let the drops of perfumed rain begin to descend, and every one is refreshed and gratified thereby. Such is the love of God. There is a richness and a fulness in it, but it is not perceived till the Spirit of God pours it out like the rain of fragrance over the heads and hearts of all the living children of God. See, then, the need of having the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The love of God in the heart*:—This love—I. IS NOT NATURALLY REVEALED TO MAN. It beams on all, like the sun which shines whether the clouds hide his heat or not. So God's love always exists, although the clouds of sin may dim and obscure its rays. It existed in Paradise, in the fall, when man is most depraved and dark. It exists amid all the sin of the earth, in the wretched corners where crime and vice exist. It exists amid all the negligence with which God is treated. II. IS NOT APPRECIATED OR RESPONDED TO. If it were, the lives of men would be far different to what they are. The reason is that clouds of sin and its effects intervene to prevent its influence. For the most part men keep in the shade when they might live in the warmth and brightness of the sunshine. III. MUST BE FELT AND RESPONDED TO. It is impossible to be a child of God without. For to realise the love of God is the only foundation on which we can build any substantial hope for the future. Nothing but love could consider guilty, fallen creatures, or have con-

trived a method of salvation. Nothing but love can guide us safely through life and through death. IV. CAN BE REALISED AND APPRECIATED. 1. The method—"shed abroad." God does nothing with a niggardly hand. The love of God is not sent in a puny dribble; it comes like the waters of an incoming tide, mighty, resistless. His love fills the soul and surrounds it and permeates our nature. 2. The place—"in our hearts." The heart is the spring of life, and metaphorically is the centre of spiritual life. It is the heart that is said to feel love. And so it is represented that the heart receives the love of God. Our hearts receive all the blood from the body, and then, after purifying it, sends it back to all parts of the body. So we are to receive the love of God in the heart to be distributed over all our life and actions. 3. The means—"by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." The great King always uses means. The Holy Spirit is the appointed channel through which all the graces are sent from heaven to earth. (1) The value of the Holy Spirit is, it is always a present means. It is not "should" be given, but "is" given. (2) The certainty of the blessing. Like the Holy Spirit, it is always present. (3) The value of the gift—the love of God. What will not love accomplish? What will it not attain? The love of God is infinite. And if we appreciate it, if we share it, if we enjoy it, then is our lot the most blessed. (*U. R. Thomas.*) *Personal piety*:—I. ITS SOURCE AND SEAT. 1. Its source: "the love of God." False religions spring from fear, but true religion springs from love. God's love, as revealed in the gift of His Son, begets love in us, and just as the sun is the author of life in the natural world, so God is the Author of all life and light in the human soul. 2. Its seat: "in our hearts." All life and growth must begin within, or they will prove to be nothing but fruitless fungus. Morality in the life may be the outcome of self-respect, or early culture, or fear of shame and sorrow. Personal piety has to do not only with the conduct, but the character; and the character is decided by the condition of the heart in the sight of God. Out of the heart are the issues of life, and if the love of God be there holiness will be stamped upon thought, word, and deed. The love of God diffuses itself in the heart like light, life, warmth, fragrance, and spreads through every avenue of the soul till the possessor of it becomes a temple of the Holy Ghost. II. ITS OPERATION AND OUTCOME. Hope is the natural and inevitable outcome of love. We expect to derive joy and blessedness from the persons upon whom our affections become fixed, and who take possession of our hearts, and we are "not ashamed" of those we love, but are ready at any time to acknowledge them and identify ourselves with them. Courageous and confiding hope—1. Sanctifies. If we love God, and hope one day to see Him and be with Him, we shall seek to please Him and become like Him. 2. Sustains. While we look at the things which are unseen and eternal, the sorrows and sufferings of the present seem very light and small. 3. Stimulates. Hope, springing from love in the heart, will quicken all the faculties of the mind and fire all the passions of the soul. Love will constrain to consecration, and hope stimulate to action. III. ITS GENERATOR AND GUARDIAN. Whatever the means we use, or the channels through which Divine blessings come to us, they all proceed from the Holy Ghost which is given unto us; the rise, progress, and perfection of personal piety must be attributed to that source. Let us, then, be careful that we grieve not, quench not the Holy Spirit, nor dishonour God by trusting too much to outward forms and worldly noise and show. If we lose the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, if the love of God expire in our hearts, there will only remain within us the white ashes of a former fire, and "Ichabod" will be written upon our desolated and darkened brows. (*F. W. Brown.*) **By the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.**—*The gift of the Holy Ghost* is—I. THE PLEDGE OF what is to come (chap. viii. 23; 2 Cor. i. 22, v. 5; Eph. i. 14). II. THE WITNESS OF OUR SONSHIP (chap. viii. 16; Gal. iv. 6). III. THE AUTHOR OF ALL GRACIOUS FRUITS AND EXPERIENCES (Gal. v. 22, 23). IV. THE REVEALER OF ALL DIVINE TRUTH (John xvi. 13, 14; 1 Cor. ii. 10-12; 1 John ii. 20, 27). THE SEAL AND BOND OF OUR UNION WITH CHRIST AND GOD (Eph. iv. 20; Rom. viii. 9-11). (*T. Robinson, D.D.*)

Vers. 6-12. **For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.**—*Without strength*:—Utter condemnation and loss lies in that little word "not." "Ungodly," or not godly, is to be strengthless, condemned, and lost. I. BY NATURE ALL MEN ARE UNGODLY. Ungodliness takes a great many forms. 1. In some it is lawlessness. It is seen in the breach of every Divine commandment. (1) Idolatry is the sin of hundreds of thousands during every hour of time. (2) Swearing and impiety load every gale. (3) Sabbath-breaking is, wherever there

is a Sabbath to break. (4) Parents are disobeyed and neglected. (5) Murder: does it not come to our very doors, and shock the city with its terrors? (6) Adultery: is not that one of the sins which is fed by our wealth and the artificial state of society? and is it not preying on the very vitals of the nation's life? (7) Dishonesty: Diogenes would still need his lantern in some places of the city and the world if he would find an honest man. (8) False witness, slander: what society is free from these? What man or woman is safe from them? (9) Covetousness: no man has anything which is not apt to be desired unlawfully by another. All these commandments are broken because men are ungodly. If men were godly they would see the excellency and the beauty of them. They do see this when they become godly. 2. But ungodliness may exist in strength where there is little or no outward violation of the commandments. A man may keep them all in the letter, and not one of them in the spirit; he may still have the "carnal mind which is enmity against God." Suppose a child of yours were to forget your name, or to show indifference about you when named, or coldness and dislike, although veiled under the form of politeness, could any one persuade you that all that was consistent with loving you? And is not God forgotten? Disliked? Treated like a stranger, like an enemy? Ungodliness—that is the great sin. II. THE AFFECTING CONCOMITANT OF THIS STATE OF THINGS. 1. Ungodliness brings of necessity many evils in its train, condemnation, banishment from God, the wild passions and the miseries of life, gloomy, dismal prospects; but perhaps the most affecting thing of all is moral paralysis, "without strength." 2. The meaning is this—that there is in ungodly human nature no recuperative power, no blessed gracious recoil in itself, back again to goodness. We may look up, but we cannot rise. A tree may be bent almost to breaking, but in a day it is erect again. There are some trees which do more than recover! The prevalent winds in Mexico which split the plantain's leaves and warp the mango tree, give the cocoanut tree a permanent inclination towards the winds. This result arises from the rebound of the stems after being bent by the wind. Did you ever hear of any man having such a spring in his own nature, that the more he was pressed down by evil the higher he would rise in goodness? Is not the process rather "waxing worse and worse"—going away backwards? "Not liking," and liking less and less, "to retain God in their knowledge." 3. Without strength—(1) Of reason, to find the lost God. (2) Of wisdom, to discover the right plan of life. (3) Of conscience, to see and testify for true morality. (4) Of will, to do the duty that is apparent. (5) Of affection, which has all been squandered and lost, to love God even when He reveals Himself! 4. This is a very sad condition. If you saw a man who, by his self-will and over-confidence, had brought on himself some terrible disaster, you would yet pity him, and help him out of his difficulty. And do you think that God will not pity a whole world of immortal creatures made in His own image? True, He condemns. But He also sorrows over our fall, and yearns for our salvation. III. SEASONABLE INTERPOSITION. "In due time." As "for everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under the heaven," so there was a ripe and full time for the manifestation of God in the flesh. 1. This manifestation was not made too soon. Suppose it had been made very soon after the fall, men might have said, "We got more help than we needed—we were not fully proved—we had no chance to try our powers." If Christ had come sooner—(1) The Jewish priests might have said, "We are sent away from the altar too soon; perhaps the blood of bulls and of goats might take away sin in the end." (2) The heathen philosophers might have said, "We are superseded too soon. The world by wisdom might know God, if time were given." (3) The great conquerors, Nimrod, Cyrus, Alexander, &c., might have said, as representing kings and all civil governments, and the whole doctrine of force in this world, "The sceptre is wrested from us too soon; a few more battles and the world would have been one empire of far-stretching righteousness and peace." But no such protest was raised. They were all silent, priest, and sage, and conqueror. 2. The Divine interposition did not come too late. (1) Not after the world had grown so old in sin that it had lost in its wanderings the very faculty of hearing the recalling voice. (2) Not when even the salt of the earth, the chosen people, had lost their savour, worn out their own beliefs, and lost, as they might have done, the knowledge of God. (3) Not when all the continents and islands of the earth were full, and no fresh tracts remained to be claimed and peopled by races baptized into a nobler faith. Not too soon, and not too late, but when the world was weary of waiting, like a sufferer worn out with a long sickness, in this "due," "full" time, the Saviour came.

IV. HE CAME TO DIE. 1. The fountain and spring of our salvation is the death of Christ—(1) One might have said when the angels sang, "Unto you is born this day a Saviour,"—that will be humiliation enough—will have virtue enough to save us. No; incarnation is the foundation fact, but something more must be built on it. (2) Is life enough? Working, sleeping, passing up and down Nazareth for thirty years? No; this is not redemption. It brings us nearer to it, year by year. But life like this for ever would not have saved us. (3) Is teaching enough? No; that had great power, but was like God's law: it made sin more exceeding sinful, but did not take it away. (4) Would translations to heaven, then, have been enough? No; nothing will do but this. 2. "Christ died for us," as our Ransom and Substitute, not merely for our benefit and advantage. All the explanations of this truth, with which we are familiar, have force in them, although they all come short of the great and blessed meaning. He died—(1) To satisfy justice. Not only would it be impossible for God to save in any violation of that attribute, but men themselves could not (for their own moral nature would not allow it) accept a salvation that did not consist with the integrity and clearness of that attribute. (2) To honour the Divine law, which is the visible strength and protection of the universe, the wall of heaven and earth. (3) To procure for us a righteous forgiveness, a peace—calm, and deep, and pure—like the very peace of God. (4) To cancel guilt, to cleanse us by His sacrificial blood. (5) To express Divine grace and boundless favour. 3. And this great act is brought before us here, and everywhere, as the most wonderful proof that could be given of the love of God. In the whole course of human history there has been nothing like it (ver. 7). Who ever heard of any one dying for a worthless man? But this is what God does. "He commendeth," makes very conspicuous and great, His love to us, in sending Christ to die for us, "while we were yet sinners." Take away the love; make the death only a great historical fact, necessary to the accomplishment of God's purpose in the development of this world; make it a contrivance in moral government, and although it will still be an impressive fact, you have shorn it of its glory. It is no longer the loadstone that draws all hearts. The death without the love might still be the wonder of angels, and the political admiration of the universe, but would be no longer the joy and rest of humble souls. "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." How? By the subtle, mysterious power of all-conquering love. Do you see it? Are you drawn by it? I long to lead you to the "large and wealthy place," to which you have right and title. (*A. Raleigh, D.D.*) *Man's impotency to help himself out of his misery*:—I. THE CONDITION WHEREIN WE ARE BY NATURE "without strength." This will appear if you consider man's condition—1. With respect to the law (Gal. iii. 10). Consider—(1) The duty it exacts; universal, perpetual, perfect obedience. If man fails in one point, he is gone (Ezek. xviii. 4, xx. 11). Now if God should call us to an account for the most inoffensive day that ever we passed over, what would become of us? (Psa. cxxx. 3). So that we are "without strength" to conform to the law's requirements (chap. viii. 3). (2) The penalty it inflicts: "Cursed is every one." (*a*) In all he hath (Deut. xxviii. 15-18). (*b*) In all he doeth (Prov. xxi. 27). (*c*) For evermore (Matt. xxv. 41). We are "without strength," because we cannot satisfy the justice of God for one sin. (3) Its operation. Consider how all this works. (*a*) Sometimes it terrifies (Heb. ii. 15; Acts xxiv. 25). (*b*) Sometimes it stupefies the conscience so that men grow senseless of their misery (Eph. iv. 19). (*c*) Sometimes it irritates inbred corruption (Rom. vii. 9). As a dam makes a stream the more violent or as a bullock at the first yoking becometh the more unruly. (*d*) Sometimes it breeds a sottish despair (Jer. xviii. 12). It is the worst kind of despair, when a man is given up to his "own heart's lust" (Psa. lxxxi. 12), and runs headlong in the way of destruction, without hope of returning. Thus as to the law man is helpless. 2. With respect to terms of grace offered in the gospel. This will appear—(1) By those emphatic terms by which the case and cure of man are set forth. (*a*) His case. He is born in sin (Psa. li. 5), and things natural are not easily altered. He is greedy of sin (Job xv. 16). Thirst is the most implacable appetite. His heart is a heart of stone (Ezek. xxxvi. 26), and deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked (Jer. xvii. 9), and the New Testament is no more favourable than the Old. There you will find man represented as a "child of wrath by nature" (Eph. ii. 3), a "servant of sin" (Rom. vi. 17), "alienated from God" (Eph. iv. 18). An enemy to God (Rom. viii. 7), "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. ii. 1-5). Certainly man contributeth little to his own conversion: he cannot "hunger and thirst" after Christ that "drinks in iniquity like water." If the Scripture had

only said that man had accustomed himself to sin, and was not "born in sin"; that man was somewhat prone to iniquity, and not "greedy" of it, and did often think evil, and not "continually"; that man was somewhat obstinate, and not a "stone," an "adamant"; if the Scripture had only said that man was indifferent to God, and not a professed "enemy"; if a captive of sin, and not a "servant"; if only weak, and not "dead"; if only a neuter, and not a "rebel";—then there might be something in man, and the work of conversion not so difficult. But the Scripture saith the quite contrary. (*b*) The cure. To remedy so great an evil requires an almighty power, and the all-sufficiency of grace; see, therefore, how conversion is described in Scripture. By enlightening the mind (Eph. i. 18). By opening the heart (Acts xvi. 14). God knocks many times by the outward means, and as one that would open a door—He tries key after key, but till He putteth His fingers upon the handles of the lock (Cant. v. 4, 5), the door is not opened to Him. If these words are not emphatic enough, you will find conversion expressed by regeneration (John iii. 3), resurrection (Eph. ii. 5), creation (Eph. ii. 10; 2 Cor. iv. 6, v. 17; Psa. li. 10), victory (1 John iv. 4), the beating and binding of the "strong man" by one that is "stronger than he" (Luke xi. 21, 22). (2) By those assertions whereby all power is denied to man to convert himself to God, or to do anything that is spiritually good. As when it is said he cannot know (1 Cor. ii. 14), believe (John vi. 44), obey (Rom. viii. 7). Nay, to instance in single acts: he cannot think a good thought of himself (2 Cor. iii. 5), speak a good word (Matt. xii. 34), do anything (John xv. 5). Surely, then, man is "without strength," to turn himself to God. But here are objections—(*a*) How can it stand with the mercy, justice, and wisdom of God to require of man what he cannot pay? Answer first—God doth not lose His right, though man hath lost his power; their impotency doth not dissolve their obligation; a drunken servant is a servant, and it is against all reason that the master should lose his right to command by the servant's default. A prodigal debtor, that hath nothing to pay, yet is liable to be sued for the debt without any injustice. And shall not God challenge the debt of obedience from a debtor that is both proud and prodigal? Answer second—Our natural impotency is voluntary. We must not consider man only as impotent to good, but as delighting in evil: he will not come to God (John v. 40). Our impotency lies in our obstinacy, and so man is left without excuse. We refuse the grace that is offered to us, and by continuing in sin increase our bondage, our inveterate customs turning to another nature. (*b*) If man be so altogether without strength, why do ye press him to the use of means? Answer—Though man cannot change himself, yet he is to use the means. First, that we may practically see our own weakness. Men think the work of grace is easy, till they put themselves upon a trial: the lameness of the arm is found in exercise. Whosoever sets himself in good earnest to get any grace, will be forced to cry for it before he hath done. When a man goes to lift up a piece of timber heavy above his strength, he is forced to call in help. Second, the use of the means we owe to God as well as the change of the heart. God, that hath required faith and conversion, hath required prayer, hearing, reading, meditating; and we are bound to obey, though we know not what good will come of it (Heb. xi. 8; Luke v. 5). Our great rule is, we are to do what He commandeth, and let God do what He will. Third, to lessen our guilt. For when men do not use the means, they have no excuse (Acts xiii. 46; Matt. xxv. 26). Fourth, it may be God will meet with us. It is the ordinary practice of His free grace so to do; and it is good to make trial upon a common hope (Acts viii. 22). II. SOME REASONS WHY GOD PERMITS THIS WEAKNESS. 1. To exalt His grace. (1) Its freeness; for God hath shut up all under the curse, that there may be no way of escape but by His mercy (Rom. xi. 32; Gal. iii. 22). (2) Its power (Eph. i. 19). When we consider it, we may wonder at it that ever such a change should be wrought in us that are so carnal, so obstinate (1 Pet. ii. 9). It is indeed marvellous that ever we should get out of the prison of sin; more miraculous than Peter's getting out of prison. 2. To humble the creature thoroughly by a sense of his own guilt, unworthiness, and nothingness (Rom. iii. 19). Conclusion: The subject is of use—1. To the unconverted—to be sensible of their condition, and mourn over it to God. Acknowledge the debt; confess your impotency; beg pardon and grace; and, in a humble sense of your misery, endeavour earnestly to come out of it. By such doctrines as these men are either "cut at heart" (Acts vii. 54) or "pricked at heart" (Acts ii. 37). 2. To press the converted to thankfulness. We were once in such a pitiful case. 3. Let us compassionate others that are in this estate, and endeavour to rescue them. (*T. Manton, D.D.*) *A weak world*

made strong:—I. THE MORAL PROSTRATION OF HUMANITY. "When we were yet without," not muscular or mental, but moral "strength." 1. To effect the deliverance of self. The souls of all were "carnal, sold under sin." Man, the world over, felt this profoundly for ages. His cry was—"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me?" &c. Philosophers, priests, poets, tried to deliver the soul, but failed. 2. To render acceptable service to the Creator. "Wherewithal shall we come before the Lord, and how shall we bow before the Most High God?" 3. To face the future with calmness. Deep in the hearts of all men was the belief in a future life, but that future rose before them in aspects so terrible that they recoiled from it. No weakness so distressing as this; moral powerlessness is not only a curse, but a crime. Yet all unregenerate men are the subjects of this lamentable prostration. II. THE REINVIGORATING POWER OF CHRIST'S DEATH. "In due time Christ died for the ungodly." Christ's death enables man—1. To deliver himself. It generates within him a new spiritual life, by which he throws off its enthralments as the winged chrysalis its crust. Christ's death is the life of souls. 2. To render acceptable service to God. It presents to him—(1) The right motive. (2) The right method. 3. To calmly face the future. Christ's death reveals a bright future, and furnishes the means for attaining it. Christ's death is the moral power of the world. It inspires men with love—love is power; with faith—faith is power; with hope—hope is power; with courage—courage is power. III. THE SEASONABLE PERIOD OF THE REDEEMER'S MISSION. "In due time," *i.e.*—1. When the world was prepared to appreciate it. Mankind had tried every means they could invent to deliver themselves from the power of sin, to attain the approval of their Maker, and to win a bright future, but had failed. Four thousand years of earnest philosophisings and sacerdotal labour, legislative enactments, and moral teachings, had signally failed. "The world by wisdom knew not God." The intellect of Judæa, Greece, Rome, all failed. The world was prostrate in hopelessness. 2. The time appointed by Heaven. The time had been designated by the prophets (Gen. xlix. 10; Dan. ix. 27; John xvii. 1). 3. The time most favourable for the universal diffusion of the fact. (1) There was a general expectation of a Great Deliverer. (2) The world was at peace, and mainly under the control of one government—Rome. (3) The Greek language was all but universally spoken. (4) Communications were opened up between all the villages, towns, and cities of the world. "In due time Christ died." (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *For whom did Christ die?*—The human race is here described as a sick man in an advanced stage of disease; no power remains in his system to throw off his mortal malady, nor does he desire to do so. Your condition is not only your calamity, but your fault. Other diseases men grieve about, but you love this evil which is destroying you. While man is in this condition Jesus interposes for his salvation. I. THE FACT. "Christ died for the ungodly." 1. Christ means "Anointed One," and indicates that He was commissioned by supreme authority. Jesus was both set apart to this work and qualified for it by the anointing of the Holy Ghost. He is no unauthorised, no amateur deliverer, but one with full credentials from the Father. 2. Christ died. He did a great deal besides dying, but the crowning act of His career of love, and that which rendered all the rest available, was His death. This death was—(1) Real, as proved by the piercing of His side, and His burial. (2) Acute. "My God, My God, why," &c. (3) Penal; inflicted upon Him by Divine justice; and rightly so, for on Him lay our iniquities, and therefore on Him must lie the suffering. (4) Terrible. Condemned to a felon's gibbet, He was crucified amid a mob of jesters. 3. Christ died, not for the righteous, but for the ungodly, or the godless, who, having cast off God, cast off with Him all love for that which is right. He did not please Himself with some rosy dream of a superior race yet to come, when civilisation would banish crime, and wisdom would conduct man back to God. Full well He knew that, left to itself, the world would grow worse and worse. This view was not only the true one, but the kindly one; because had Christ died for the better sort, then each troubled spirit would have inferred "He died not for me." Had the merit of His death been the perquisite of honesty, where would have been the dying thief? If of chastity, where the woman that loved much? If of courageous fidelity, how would it have fared with the apostles, who all forsook Him and fled? Then, again, in this condition lay the need of our race that Christ should die. To what end could Christ have died for the good? "The just for the unjust" I can understand; but the "just dying for the just" were a double injustice. II. PLAIN INFERENCES FROM THIS FACT. 1. That you are in great danger. Jesus would not interpose His life if there were not

solemn need and imminent peril. The Cross is the danger signal to you, it warns you that if God spared not His only Son, He will not spare you. 2. That out of this danger only Christ can deliver the ungodly, and He only through His death. If a less price than that of the life of the Son of God could have redeemed men, He would have been spared. If, then, "God spared not His Son, but freely delivered Him up for us all," there must have been a dread necessity for it. 3. That Jesus died out of pure pity, because the character of those for whom He died could not have attracted Him. "God commendeth His love towards us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." 4. That the ungodly have no excuse if they do not come to Him, and believe in Him unto salvation. Had it been otherwise they might have pleaded, "We are not fit to come." But you are ungodly, and Christ died for the ungodly, why not for you? 5. That the converted find no ground of boasting; for they were ungodly, and, as such, Christ died for them. 6. That saved ones must not think lightly of sin. If God had forgiven sinners without an atonement they might have done so, but now that pardon comes through the bitter griefs of their Redeemer they cannot but see it to be an exceeding great evil. 7. This fact is the grandest argument to make the ungodly love Christ when they are saved. III. THE PROCLAMATION OF THIS FACT. 1. In this the whole Church ought to take its share. Shout it, or whisper it; print it in capitals, or write it in a large hand. Speak it solemnly; it is not a thing for jest. Speak it joyfully; it is not a theme for sorrow. Speak it firmly; it is an indisputable fact. Speak it earnestly; for if there be any truth which ought to arouse all a man's soul it is this. Speak it where the ungodly live, and that is at your own house. Speak it also in the haunts of debauchery. Tell it in the gaol; and sit down at the dying bed and read in a tender whisper—"Christ died for the ungodly." 2. And you that are not saved, take care that you receive this message. Believe it. Fling yourself right on to this as a man commits himself to his life-belt amid the surging billows. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The sad plight and the sure relief*:—I. THE CONDITION OF THOSE FOR WHOM CHRIST DIED. 1. They were "without strength." (1) Legally. Before God's bar man had a weak case. (*a*) We could not deny the charge that we had broken the law. (*b*) We could not set up an *alibi*. (*c*) We could not make apologies, for we have sinned wilfully, repeatedly, without any necessity, with divers aggravations, deliberately and presumptuously, when we knew the penalty. So weak was our case that no advocate who understood it would have ventured to plead it, except that one glorious Advocate who pleaded it at the cost of His own life. (2) Morally. We are so weak by nature that we are swayed by every influence which assails us. At one time man is driven by fashion; at another he is afraid of his fellow-men. Then the evil spirit comes upon him, or if the devil should let him alone, his own heart suffices. The pomp of this world, the lust of the eye, the pride of life—any of these things will drive men about at random. Nothing seems to be too wicked, too insane, for mankind. Man is morally weak—a poor, crazy child. He has lost that strong hand of a well-trained perfect reason which God gave him at the first. (3) Spiritually. When man disobeyed he died spiritually. The blessed Spirit left him. Man is dead in sin. He cannot rise to God any more than the dead in the grave can come out of their sepulchres of themselves and live. 2. They were "ungodly," *i.e.*, men without God. God is not—(1) In their thoughts. (2) In their hearts. If they do remember Him, they do not love Him. (3) In their fears. (4) In their hopes. Christ came to save the very vilest of the vile. II. WHEN CHRIST INTERPOSED TO SAVE US. In "due time," *i.e.*, at a proper period. There was no accident about it. Sin among mankind in general had reached a climax. 1. There never was a more debauched age. It is impossible to read chap. i. without feeling sick at the depravity it records. Their own satirists said that there was no new vice that could be invented. Even Socrates and Solon practised vices which I dare not mention in any modest assembly. But it was when man had got to his worst that Christ was lifted up to be a standard of virtue—to be a brazen serpent for the cure of the multitudes who everywhere were dying of the serpent's bites. 2. Christ came at a time when the wisdom of man had got to a great height. Philosophers were seeking to dazzle men with their teaching, but the bulk of their teaching was foolishness, couched in paradoxical terms to make it look like wisdom. "The world by wisdom knew not God." 3. But, surely, man had a religion! He had; but the less we say about it the better. Holy rites were acts of flagrant sin. The temples were abominable, and the priests were abominable beyond description. And where the best part of man, his very religion, had become so foul, what could we expect of his ordinary

life? But was there not a true religion in the world somewhere? Yes, but among the Jews tradition had made void the law of God, and ritualism had taken the place of spiritual worship. The Pharisee thanked God that he was not as other men were, when he had got in his pocket the deeds of a widow's estate of which he had robbed her. The Sadducee was an infidel. The best men of the period in Christ's days said, "Away with such a fellow from the earth!" Now, it was when men had got to this pitch that Christ came to die for them. If He had launched His thunderbolts at them, or swept the whole race away, none could have blamed Him. But, instead of that, the pure and Holy One came down to earth Himself to die, that these wretches—yea, that we ourselves—might live through Him. III. WHAT DID HE DO FOR US? 1. He made the fullest degree of sacrifice that was possible. He made the heavens, and yet He lay in Bethlehem's manger. He hung the stars in their places, and laid the beams of the universe, and yet became a carpenter's son; and then when He grew up He consented to be the servant of servants. When at last He gave His life, "It is finished," said He; self-sacrifice had reached its climax; but He could not have saved us if He had stopped short of that. 2. In the fact that Christ's self-sacrifice went so far I see evidence of the extreme degree of our need. Would He, who is "God over all, blessed for ever," have come from the height of heaven and have humbled Himself even to the death, to save us, if it had not been a most terrible ruin to which we were subject? 3. This death of Christ was the surest way of our deliverance. The just dies for the unjust; the offended Judge Himself suffers for the offence against His own law. IV. WHAT THEN? 1. Then sin cannot shut any man out from the grace of God if he believes. The man says, "I am without strength." Christ died for us when we were without strength. The man says, "I am ungodly." Christ died for the ungodly. 2. Then Jesus will never cast away a believer for his after sins, for if when we were without strength He died for us, if, when we were ungodly, He interposed on our behalf, will He leave us now that He has made us godly (ver. 10)? 3. Then every blessing any child of God can want he can have. He that spared not His own Son when we were without strength and ungodly, cannot deny us inferior blessings now that we are His own dear children. 4. Then how grateful we ought to be! (*Ibid.*) *Glorying in God*:—I. GOD'S LOVE TO US. Note—1. The condition in which it found us. We were—(1) Without strength. Let this be viewed as—(*a*) Moral impotence; and is it not true that we were unable to do that which is good? When we wished to do it, we could not will it. We felt ourselves captives of the devil, sold and bound under sin. (*b*) Helplessness in the time of danger; and is it not true that we were without strength to defend ourselves against the condemnation of the law, and the righteous anger of Jehovah? (2) Ungodly, that is, destitute of true righteousness. We were not only weak, but unwilling to do good. (3) Sinners; transgressors of God's law in act and deed. Being corrupt trees, we brought forth evil fruit. (4) Enemies to God. We did not love Him, or care for Him. Nay, we insulted Him, fought against Him, silently or violently, and so lived as to counteract and oppose all His purposes, so far as we had the power. 2. What that love has done for us. When we were in this state of helplessness and rebellion against God, He gave His Son to die for us. By that death believers are justified and reconciled to God. 3. The comparison of this love with the behaviour of men to each other (vers. 7, 8). The righteous man is a man of correct and irreproachable behaviour; but the good man is a man of generosity and kindness, who wins the hearts of his friends, and for whom friends have been willing to die. But for a merely just man, you would scarcely find any willing to lay down his life; while certainly for the base and mean of mankind, or for his personal enemies, no man has been found willing to die. "But God commendeth His love toward us in that, while we were wickedly His enemies, He gave His Son to die for us." 4. That this love was manifested in due time (Mark i. 15; Gal. iv. 4; and Eph. i. 10). This time seems to have been determined by the stage arrived at in history when man's utter helplessness was fully demonstrated. Many centuries were allowed for the world to exhaust every device, to accomplish its own moral renovation. War and peace had been tried, together with every possible form of civil government. Philosophy and science, civilisation and religion, literature and art, had been carried sufficiently far to prove how utterly powerless they all were to accomplish the end designed. It was impossible for any one to say, If He had waited a little longer, we should have found out some other plan, and been able to do without Him. How this enhances our conception of God's love! He patiently tarried to see what mankind could achieve for themselves; and He beheld them at length

entirely helpless, hopeless of self-restoration, and callously indifferent to the interposition of Heaven. Then it was that God sent His Son to die for the ungodly. II. OUR HOPE IN GOD. Look at—1. The salvation of which we are so sure. It is a salvation from wrath; and it is a salvation to heaven (ver. 9). 2. The grounds of this confidence. The apostle argues from the greater difficulty to the less. For—(1) We were reconciled when enemies; how much more, being now the friends of God, shall we enjoy the full blessings of His grace? (2) We were saved from guilt by His death; how much more shall we be sanctified and prepared for heaven by Him living for us. III. OUR GLORYING IN GOD. If such be our apprehension of God's love to us, and such the confidence of our hope and trust in Him for the future, it is not hard to see how we must "joy," or rather make our boast in Him through Jesus Christ, by whom this blessedness of reconciliation with God has been secured. Think of—1. The greatness of our heavenly Friend. In nature how noble! In attributes how august! 2. His goodness. Many rejoice in the friendship of the great and powerful, while they cannot boast of the goodness and integrity of their patrons. But here it is permitted us to glory in the perfect rectitude and moral loveliness of Him in whose name we make our boast. 3. His riches. We might have a kind and good friend, whose ability to help us might fall far short of his disposition. But it is not so with God. 4. His love. The great ones of the earth bestow their friendship on inferiors in a cold and meagre manner. But God gives us and shows us all His heart. 5. His purposes concerning us. It is impossible to exaggerate the value of the good things which He hath prepared for them that love Him. Conclusion: 1. How happy should believers be, rejoicing, as they are privileged to do, "with a joy unspeakable and full of glory." 2. How humble, when they remember their unworthiness, and their inability to render back any sufficient return to God. 3. How holy and diligent in their endeavour to walk worthily of so high a calling, and so great a Friend. 4. How thankful, when they consider what they owe unto God. 5. How ready to praise Him for all His goodness toward them. 6. How willing to trust Him with all the issues of their salvation in the time to come. *The certainty of the believer's final redemption:*—The apostle establishes this point by means of two reasons—I. THE GREAT LOVE WHICH GOD HAS ALREADY BESTOWED ON MAN. This is seen in—1. The unworthiness of the object. (1) "Without strength." In this expression the apostle is probably accommodating himself to the natural disposition of the Romans. Rome was a mighty empire, and its motto was "power." Their highest notion of goodness, as the word "virtue" indicates, was strength. Hence Paul represents the gospel as "the power of God." Nothing was so detestable in their eyes as weakness. And what a helpless man was in the estimation of the Roman, that—universal man—was in the sight of God. There was nothing to evoke the Divine complacency, but everything to repel. (2) "Ungodly." There was not only the destitution of what was holy, but also the absence of desire for any good. (3) "Sinners." When God is banished from the thought, as suggested by the word "ungodly," His place is usurped by unworthy rivals. The higher principles of the soul are made subordinate to the lower. Disorder prevails; and to God, who in the beginning commanded the chaotic earth to wear its present aspect of beauty, nothing could be more repelling than the huge disorder reigning in the human soul bent on fulfilling the desires of the flesh. (4) "Enemies." Here the apostle reaches the climax of his reasoning. All the unworthiness of man must be attributed to his enmity against God. In this man is a sad exception to everything else which God has made. In nature, God's will and power are coextensive. But man disobeys and resists his Maker. The very power which was given him to hate sin is so perverted that it is used against God Himself. 2. The greatness of Christ's sacrifice. With reverence we would say, that to redeem man was not easy even to God. It required an infinite sacrifice to remove the curse connected with sin. And for this purpose "God spared not His own Son." Now, if God bestowed such an incomparable love upon man when he was "without strength," "ungodly," sinful, and inimical towards Him, surely He will not withhold any blessing from man when he is reconciled to Him, and adopted to His family again. II. WHAT CHRIST'S LIFE IN HEAVEN IS DOING, CONTRASTED WITH WHAT HIS DEATH HAS DONE. 1. However important we may regard the death of our Lord, we must not consider His life in heaven of secondary moment. Apart from this life His death would not avail us. But the apostle asserts that the death of Christ effected our reconciliation to God. And shall we doubt the power of His life? Nay; the good work which He hath begun on our behalf will be fully consummated. 2. Besides, the nature of Christ's

work in heaven is a pledge for the final safety of the believer. "He liveth to make intercession for us." His intercession is the completion of His sacrifice, and perpetuates the efficacy of His atonement. (*H. Hughes.*) *Christ's vicarious death*:—One of the most hopeless cases ever brought into the Moyamensing Prison in Philadelphia, U.S., was a negress, who was convicted of a crime of violence. She was a huge, fierce animal, who had been born and had lived in the slums of Alaska Street. She was a drunkard and dissolute from childhood. The chaplain, after she had been under his charge for six months, shook his head hopelessly and passed by her cell without a word. One day the matron, taking a bunch of scarlet flowers from her hat, threw them to "Deb" carelessly, with a pleasant word or two. The woman started in astonishment, and then thanked her earnestly. The next day the matron saw the flowers, each leaf straightened and smoothed, pinned up on the wall of the cell. Deb, in a gentle voice, called attention to them, praised their beauty, and tried, in her clumsy way, to show the pleasure they had given her. "That woman," said the matron to the chaplain, "has the rarest of all good qualities. She is *grateful*. There is one square inch of good ground in which to plant your seed." The matron herself planted the seed. Every day she showed some little kindness to the poor, untamed creature, who was gradually softened and subdued simply by affection for this, her first friend, whom she followed like a faithful dog. By and by, the matron took her as a helper in the ward, a favour given only to the convicts whose conduct deserved reward. The matron's hold upon the woman grew stronger each day. At last she told her the story of the Saviour's love and sacrifice. Deb listened with wide, eager eyes. "He died for me—me!" she said. The matron gave up her position, but when Deb was discharged she took her into her house as a servant, trained, taught her, cared for her body and soul, always planting her seeds in that "one inch of good ground." Deb is now a humble Christian. "He died for me," was the thought which lightened her darkened soul. (*American Youth's Companion.*)

Vers. 7, 8. **For scarcely for a righteous man will one die . . . but God commendeth His love.**—*Human and Divine love contrasted*:—I. THE LOVE OF MAN TO HIS FELLOW-CREATURES (ver. 7). You may find in history generosity and gratitude manifested by the greatest of all sacrifices—that of life. But such instances are rare. We read of dangers encountered, sufferings endured, for the purpose of rescuing others from destruction; but seldom of devotion to death, in order to deliver a fellow-mortal from the heaviest calamity, or to procure for him the most precious privilege. When such an instance has occurred it has been uniformly a tribute paid to distinguished excellence, or an acknowledgment of obligations too strong and sacred to be fulfilled by a less noble or costly recompense. 1. Suppose an individual distinguished for honour and integrity, who had exerted himself on all occasions to maintain the rights, and redress the wrongs of others, whose righteous deportment, fidelity, and defence of truth had rendered him the object of profound and universal veneration; suppose that such a person, by the decree of despotism, were doomed to expiate an imaginary crime on an ignominious scaffold, would you step forward to save his life by the sacrifice of your own? No; nor can we imagine any one doing it. 2. But, supposing that to righteousness we add benevolence—all that is melting in tenderness, winning in compassion, god-like in beneficence, would there be any among those to whom such characters are dearest, or any, even of those who had shared his kindness, that would agree to be his substitute? Yes; you may conceive such cases to occur. Still, however, the apostle speaks correctly; it is only "some" who would thus die for a good man—that, even for this act of chivalry "daring" would be required—and that after all, the fact must be qualified with a "peradventure." To the statement of the apostle we may add that of our Lord, that "greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." This is the utmost limit to which human affection can go. And this may be still more readily admitted, if we consider friendship as comprehending those relationships which, binding husband and wife, parent and child, brother and sister, by a thousand endearments, instinctively prompt to efforts and endurances, from whose ample range even the terrors of death are not excluded. 3. But supposing a person iniquitous and hostile, condemned to die for his iniquity and rebellion, and under his sentence, cherished as bitter an enmity against his benefactor as he had ever done before, would that benefactor consent to suffer his judicial fate, in order to send him back again to the life and liberty he had so justly forfeited? Ah! no; that is a height of love

which humanity has never reached, and of which humanity is utterly incapable. And were it ever to occur, we should be compelled to rank it amongst the greatest miracles. II. THE LOVE OF GOD TO MAN is illustrated by two circumstances. 1. "Christ died for us." The apostle could not speak of God dying for us, for death cannot possibly be predicted of Him who "alone hath immortality." We must remember, therefore, who Christ was, as well as what He did. But in viewing His death as a manifestation of Divine love, we must recollect the connection which God had with it. The scheme, of which it formed the leading feature and the essential principle, was altogether of His appointment (John iii. 16). And while God was thus so gracious, it becomes us to think of the relation in which Christ stood to Him. Christ was not the creature, nor the mere servant of God, but "His only begotten and well beloved Son, the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person." Yet God did "not spare Him." 2. But the principal evidence of God's love is that Christ died for us, "while we were yet sinners." Had man been such as that the eye of God could have looked on him with complacency, or having fallen, had the feelings of penitence pervaded his heart, and made him willing to return, we should not have been amazed at God's condescending love. But the marvel lies in this, that there was no good whatever to attract the regards of a holy being, and to invite a willing interposition of His benevolence. On the contrary, there was worthlessness and guilt to such a degree as to provoke a just indignation, to warrant an utter exclusion from happiness and hope. We were "yet sinners" when Christ died for us. There are resources in the eternal mind which are equally beyond our reach and our comprehension. There is a power, a magnitude, and a richness in the love of God towards those upon whom it is set which, to the experience of the creature, presents a theme of wondering gratitude and praise. Man loves his fellows; but he never did, and never can love them like God. Had He only loved us as man loves, there would have been no salvation, no heaven, no glad tidings to cheer our hearts. But behold! God is love itself. Guilt, which forbids and represses man's love, awakens, and kindles, and secures God's. Death for the guilty is too wide a gulf for man's love to pass over. God's love to the guilty is infinitely "stronger than death." God forgives, where man would condemn and punish. God saves, where man would destroy. "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways." "Herein is love," &c. (*A. Thomson, D.D.*) *Christ and the martyrs*:—It was a principle in the breast of every Roman that he owed his life to his country. This being the spirit of the people, gave birth to many illustrious and heroic actions. The spirit of patriotism glowed among the people for many ages of the republic; one hero sprung from the ashes of another, and great men arose from age to age who devoted themselves to death for the public good. These being the most celebrated actions in the history of mankind, the apostle here compares them with the death of Jesus Christ. I. Those who devoted themselves to death for their friends or their country, submitted to a fate which THEY MUST ONE DAY HAVE SUFFERED; but Jesus Christ, who is the true God, and POSSESSETH ETERNAL LIFE, submitted to death for our redemption. II. Those among the sons of men who devoted themselves to death for the good of others, MADE THE SACRIFICE FOR THEIR FRIENDS, for those by whom they were beloved; BUT JESUS DIED FOR HIS ENEMIES. III. He who dies a martyr for the public good, DEPARTS WITH HONOUR; BUT JESUS MADE HIS DEPARTURE WITH IGNOMINY AND SHAME. (*J. Logan.*) *The love of God the motive to man's salvation*:—I. THE SUPREME DIGNITY OF HIM WHO UNDERTOOK THE WORK OF OUR SALVATION. II. THE STATE OF HUMILIATION TO WHICH HE CONSENTED TO BE DEGRADED IN ORDER TO ACCOMPLISH OUR REDEMPTION. III. THE RELATION BORNE TO HIM BY THOSE FOR WHOM THIS AMAZING TESTIMONY OF LOVINGKINDNESS WAS ENTERPRISED AND PERFECTED. Inasmuch as we are by nature sinners, we are also by nature enemies of God. If it be the act of an enemy to slight, resist, and renounce the authority of our lawful sovereign; if it be the act of an enemy to range ourselves under the banners of a potentate in open hostility to our own; we who are "by nature the children of disobedience," in subjection to "the powers of darkness," "alienated from the life of God," and the ministers and slaves of sin, are by an obvious inference the natural enemies of God. And standing in this relation to God, as rebels, it evidently appears how inefficacious anything in us could have been towards meriting our redemption and influencing Him to redeem us. There was in us, indeed, that which well deserved the wrath of God, and might well have left us exposed to the severity of His displeasure. Conclusion: 1. The contemplation of this surprising love of God towards us ought to warm and

expand our hearts and fill them with the most earnest love towards Him in return, and with the most zealous determination to obey Him. 2. The contemplation of the love of God, as having already interposed to save us by the sending of His Son, should fill us with a devout confidence in Him; persuaded that He who has conferred upon us of His free grace the greatest of all blessings will not withhold from us others which He may know to be for our good. 3. A third inference to be drawn from a contemplation of the love of God exemplified in the work of our salvation, is a further "confidence" that He will not leave it imperfect; but that if we love Him and keep His commandments, "He which hath begun a good work in us will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." 4. The contemplation of the love of God employed for our redemption, and the persuasion that our salvation is "the *gift* of God," connected with the belief that "we all had sinned and come short of His glory," &c. 5. But, then, whilst we renounce all hopes of salvation as merited by our works, we must be cautious not to disregard them as if they were not necessary to our salvation. (*Bp. Mant.*) *Unparalleled love*:—The grand doctrine of the Bible is that God loves apostate man. Nowhere else do we learn this. Nature teaches that God loves His creatures, but the volume of nature was written before the Fall, and it says nothing as to His affection towards man as a sinner. In every conceivable form the Bible impresses us with the fact that God loves man though a sinner. Note—I. THAT MAN HAS, CONSTITUTIONALLY, A KIND AFFECTION FOR HIS SPECIES. The apostle is speaking here of men generally, and he says that in some cases the generous instincts of human nature would prompt to the utmost self-sacrifice. That man has this social kindness I maintain in the face of all the oppression and cruelty that make up a large portion of history. Notwithstanding the Pharaohs, Herods, Neros, Napoleons, there is a spring of kindness in human nature. 1. The tendency of sin is to destroy this element. Had sin not entered into the world, this element would have united all races in the bonds of a loving brotherhood. 2. The tendency of Christianity is to develop this element. Christianity recognises it, appeals to it, strengthens it. Blessed be God, bad as the world is, there is a fountain of love in its heart. II. THAT SOME CHARACTERS HAVE A GREATER POWER TO EXCITE THIS AFFECTION THAN OTHERS. 1. The righteous man is not likely to excite it. "Scarcely." Who is a righteous man? He is one who conforms rigorously to the outward forms of morality: he pays all that is demanded of him, and he will be paid to the utmost fraction of his due. He is what the cold mercantile world would call a "respectable" man. He has no generous impulses, no heart, and therefore cannot awaken love in others. The just man is not a very popular character. 2. The "good" man has power to excite it—the kind man—the man of warm sympathies, who can weep with those who weep. Such a man evokes the sympathies of others. He has often done so. Job opening, by his kindness, the heart of his age; Pythias enduring the punishment for Damon; and Jonathan and David, are cases in point. III. THAT THE SACRIFICE OF LIFE IS THE HIGHEST EXPRESSION OF AFFECTION. There is nothing man values so much as life. Friends, property, health, reputation, all are held cheap in comparison with life. To give life, therefore, is to give that which he feels to be of all the dearest things most dear. A man may express his affection by language, toil, gifts, but such expressions are weak compared with the sacrifice of life, which demonstrates powerfully both the intensity and the sincerity of that affection. IV. THAT CHRIST'S DEATH IS THE MIGHTIEST DEMONSTRATION OF AFFECTION. This will appear if you consider—1. The characters for whom He died—"sinners." 2. The circumstances under which He died. Not amid the gratitude of those He loved, but amid their imprecations. 3. The freedom with which He died. He was not compelled. 4. The preciousness of the life He sacrificed. Conclusion: Learn —1. The moral grandeur of Christianity. There is no such manifestation of love in the universe. 2. The moral power of Christianity. The motive it employs to break the heart of the world is this wonderful love. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Self-sacrificing love for friends*:—Damon was sentenced to die on a certain day, and sought permission of Dionysius of Syracuse to visit his family in the interim. It was granted on condition of securing a hostage for himself. Pythias heard of it, and volunteered to stand in his friend's place. The king visited him in prison, and conversed with him about the motive of his conduct; affirming his disbelief in the influence of friendship. Pythias expressed his wish to die that his friend's honour might be vindicated. He prayed the gods to delay the return of Damon till after his own execution in his stead. The fatal day arived. Dionysius sat on a moving throne drawn by six white horses. Pythias mounted the scaffold, and calmly

addressed the spectators: "My prayer is heard; the gods are propitious, for the winds have been contrary till yesterday. Damon could not come; he could not conquer impossibilities; he will be here to-morrow, and the blood which is shed to-day shall have ransomed the life of my friend. Oh! could I erase from your bosoms every mean suspicion of the honour of Damon, I should go to my death as I would to my bridal. My friend will be found noble, his truth unimpeachable; he will speedily prove it; he is now on his way, accusing himself, the adverse elements, and the gods; but I haste to prevent his speed. Executioner, do your office." As he closed, a voice in the distance cried, "Stop the execution!" which was repeated by the whole assembly. A man rode up at full speed, mounted the scaffold, and embraced Pythias, crying, "You are safe, my beloved friend! I now have nothing but death to suffer, and am delivered from reproaches for having endangered a life so much dearer than my own." Damon replied, "Fatal haste, cruel impatience! What envious powers have wrought impossibilities in your favour? But I will not be wholly disappointed. Since I cannot die to save, I will not survive you." The king heard, and was moved to tears. Ascending the scaffold, he cried, "Live, live, ye incomparable pair! Ye have borne unquestionable testimony to the existence of virtue; and that virtue equally evinces the existence of a God to reward it. Live happy, live renowned, and oh! form me by your precepts, as ye have invited me by your example, to be worthy of the participation of so sacred a friendship." *Self-sacrificing love for a father:*—While Octavius was at Samos, after the battle of Actium, which made him master of the universe, he held a council to examine the prisoners who had been engaged in Antony's party. Among the rest there was brought before him an old man, Metellus, oppressed with years and infirmities, disfigured with a long beard, a neglected head of hair, and tattered clothes. The son of this Metellus was one of the judges; but it was with great difficulty he knew his father in the deplorable condition in which he saw him. At last, however, having recollected his features, instead of being ashamed to own him, he ran to embrace him. Then turning towards the tribunal, he said, "Cæsar, my father has been your enemy, and I your officer; he deserved to be punished, and I to be rewarded. One favour I desire of you; it is, either to save him on my account, or order me to be put to death with him." All the judges were touched with compassion at this affecting scene; Octavius himself relented, and granted to old Metellus his life and liberty. *Divine love:*—There are three gradations in which the love of God is here exhibited—I. THE LOVE OF INFINITE COMPASSION. Contemplate—1. The aspect under which man appeared to the most holy God. Paul tells us that men were—(1) Sinners. (2) Ungodly, *i.e.*, living without God. (3) Enemies. (4) Objects of the Divine wrath. 2. The aspect under which the blessed God ought to be viewed by sinful man. Shall any hard thought of God be allowed a dwelling-place in your hearts? Will you call in question His clemency? Is it possible for you to imagine that He takes delight in the death of a sinner? "Herein is love," &c. II. THE LOVE DISPLAYED IN THE EXERCISE OF THAT MERCY WHICH SECURES FROM THE DANGER OF FUTURE CONDEMNATION (ver. 9). Consider—1. The extent of privilege actually attained by every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. He is justified by the blood of Christ—that is, God, in the capacity of a righteous lawgiver and judge, pronounces him righteous. 2. The security from final condemnation arising out of the state already attained. "Much more . . . we shall be saved from wrath through Him." III. THE LOVE DISPLAYED IN COMPLACENCY TOWARD THOSE WHO ARE IN A STATE OF RECONCILIATION (ver. 10). The life of Christ in heaven secures to the believer all needful resources during his progress towards the enjoyment of consummated salvation if you consider—1. That His presence in heaven secures His continual and prevailing intercession on behalf of His people. 2. The perpetual communications of His grace as secured to us by His life in glory. "All things are delivered unto Him by the Father"—that is, for the use of His people. "It hath pleased the Father that in Him shall all fulness dwell"; therefore it pleased the Father that from His fulness should every needy disciple receive an abundant supply; so that of His fulness we, who have believed, do receive even grace for grace. 3. The interposition promised and pledged for the coming hour of our greatest emergency. The death and the life of Christ gives to the believer indeed no security against death, but full security in death and after death. (*H. F. Burder, D.D.*) *Divine love for sinners:*—We infer—I. That God HAS LOVE. He is not sheer intellect: He has a heart, and that heart is not malign but benevolent. He has love, not merely as an attribute, but in essence. Love is not a mere element in His nature; it is His nature. The moral code by which He governs the universe is but

love speaking in the imperative mood. His wrath is but love uprooting and consuming whatever obstructs the happiness of His creation. II. That God has love FOR SINNERS. Then—1. This is not a love that is revealed in nature. It is exclusively the doctrine of the Bible. 2. This is not the love of moral esteem. The Holy One cannot love the corrupt character; it is the love of compassion—compassion deep, tender, boundless. III. That God's love for sinners is DEMONSTRATED IN THE DEATH OF CHRIST. This demonstration is—1. The mightiest. The strength of love is proved by the sacrifice it makes. "God gave His only begotten Son." 2. The most indispensable. The only way to consume enmity is to carry conviction that he whom I have hated loves me. This conviction will turn my enmity into love. God knows the human soul, knows how to break its corrupt heart; hence He has given the demonstration of His love in the death of Christ. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *God's unparalleled love*:—1. Sacrifice is the true test of love. 2. Life is the greatest sacrifice man can make. 3. Such a sacrifice is possible, but exceedingly rare. 4. Supposes strong inducements. 5. But Christ died for His enemies. 6. He thus commends the love of God—because He is God—and is the gift of God. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The love of God commended*:—I. By its OBJECTS—without strength—ungodly—sinners—enemies. II. By its DISPLAY—Christ died—for us. III. By its PURPOSE—our justification—reconciliation with God—final salvation. IV. By its EFFECT—joy in God. (*Ibid.*) *Self-sacrificing love*:—That young sailor who, when the last place in the lifeboat was offered him, drew back, saying, "Save my mate here, for he has a wife and children," and went down himself with the sinking ship; that brave soldier who, in the moment of deadly peril, threw himself in front of his old master's son and fell dead with a smile upon his lips, the fatal bullet in his heart; that poor outcast woman, out in the wild winter night, who wrapped her baby in her own scanty dress and shawl, and patiently lay down in the snow to die, saving her child's life at the cost of her own; the pilot dying at his post on the burning steamer; the Russian servant casting himself among the wolves to save his master; the poor child dying in a New York garret with the pathetic words, "I'm glad I am going to die, because now my brothers and sisters will have enough to eat"—these, and hundreds of true hearts like these, proclaim with the clearness of a voice from heaven, "'The hand that made us is Divine'; and in our Father's heart are higher heights of love, deeper depths of pity and self-sacrifice." (*Ellen Wonnacott.*) *Disinterested friendship*:—Edwin, one of the best and greatest of the Anglo-Saxon kings, flourished in the beginning of the seventh century. He was in imminent danger of perishing by the hand of an assassin, who had gained access to him under the guise of an ambassador. In the midst of his address the villain pulled out a dagger and aimed a violent blow at the king. But Edwin was preserved from danger by the generous and heroic conduct of Tilla, one of his courtiers, who intercepted the blow with his own body, and fell down dead on the spot. Thus did he cheerfully resign his own life to preserve that of his sovereign, whom he loved. But this instance of disinterested friendship loses all its charms, and sinks into insignificance when contrasted with the love wherewith Christ hath loved us. For "God commendeth His love to us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." *Nature does not reveal God's love*:—Nature does not reveal God's love. We find His power there, undeviating cause and effect, irresistible force, iron law. But no love. The ocean, grand as it is, and beautiful even, will crush the egg-shell you call your ship; the lightning kills; the torrent engulfs; the beautiful twilight air chills you; the lovely flower conceals poison under its gorgeous petals; a weak spot in a girder of iron precipitates a hundred people to an awful death; the sun strikes with deadly sickness; and who can stand before God's cold? Careless or ignorant of her laws, man is a leaf underfoot, or a bubble on the wave. You may search ocean, air, and desert; you may traverse the whole universe of matter, and know all the secrets of science, and you can find no Christ. There is no hint of mercy, or love, or pardon, in the whole realm of nature. God's might and majesty are there; but the "love of God was manifested in this, that He sent His Son into the world that we might live through Him." *The love of God's unspeakable gift*:—A crew of explorers penetrate far within the Arctic circles in search of other expeditions that had gone before them—gone and never returned. Failing to find the missing men, and yet unwilling to abandon hope, they leave supplies of food, carefully covered with stones, on some prominent headlands, with the necessary intimations graven for safety on plates of brass. If the original adventurers survive, and, on their homeward journey, faint yet pursuing, fall in with these treasures, at once hidden and revealed, the food,

when found, will seem to those famished men the smaller blessing. The proof which the food supplies that their country cares for them is sweeter than the food. So the proof that God cares for us is placed beyond a doubt; the "unspeakable gift" of His Son to be our Saviour should melt any dark suspicion to the contrary from our hearts. (*W. Arnot.*) *The love of God commended*:—The manifestations of God's love are many and various. If I look forth upon our glorious world I cannot but feel that God displays His love in the dwelling-place which He hath given to the children of men. If I contemplate the succession of seasons, and observe how the sunbeam and the shower unite in the production of sustenance, I recognise love in the workings of God's providence. Thus also, if I think upon man, the creature of mighty capacity, but of mightier destiny, I am necessarily conscious that infinite love presided originally over his formation. And, if I yet further remember that man, whose creation had thus been dictated by love, returned despite for benevolence, I might marvel, if I did not know that love rose superior to outrage, and, in place of forsaking the alien, suggested redemption. Note:—I. How CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS WERE AGGRAVATED BY THE SINFULNESS OF THOSE AMONGST WHOM HE SUFFERED. 1. He possessed infinite perceptions of the nature of sin. He saw it without any of the varnish which it draws from human passion or sophistry; and He discerned that the least acting of impurity struck so vehemently against the bosses of the Almighty's attributes, that it rebounded in vengeance, which must eternally crush the transgressor. 2. Now to this capacity of estimating sin, add—(1) The love which He bore to the Father. It would have accorded well with the longings of His heart, that He should succeed in bringing back the earth into obedience, so that the Almighty might draw His full revenue of honour. But when, from the contradiction of sinners against Himself, it became palpable that generations would yet do despite to His heavenly Father, this must inexpressibly have lacerated His soul. (2) But vast also was His love to mankind; and here again His apprehensions of sin come into the account. It would be idle to enlarge on the greatness of that benevolence which had prompted the Mediator to undertake our rescue. The simple exhibition of Christ appearing as the surety of mankind remains ever the overwhelming and immeasurable prodigy. Yet when He beheld the beings, for every one of whom He was content to endure ignominy and death, pursuing obstinately the courses of unrighteousness, throwing from them the proffered boon of deliverance, it must have entered like a poisoned arrow into His pure and affectionate heart, and lacerating and cauterising wherever it touched, have made an inlet for sorrow where there never could be found admission for sin. 3. If an artist study to set forth the Christ's sufferings, he has recourse to the outward paraphernalia of woe. Yet there is more in the simple expression that Christ died for us "whilst we were yet sinners," than in all that the crayon ever produced, when the genius of a Raphael guided its strokes. We look in at the soul of the Redeemer—we are admitted as spectators of the solemn and tremendous workings of His spirit. 4. We attempt not to examine too nicely into the awful matter of the Mediator's sufferings, suffice it that there is not one amongst us who was not a direct contributor to that weight of sorrow which seemed for a time to confound Him and to crush Him. II. How COMPLETELY THESE SUFFERINGS WERE IRRESPECTIVE OF ALL CLAIM ON THE PART OF THOSE FOR WHOM THEY WERE ENDURED. In the commencement of His dealings with our race, God had proceeded according to the strictest benevolence. He had appointed that Adam should stand as a federal head or representative of all men; had Adam obeyed, all men would have obeyed in him—just as when Adam disobeyed, all men disobeyed in him. We were not, in the strictest sense, parties to this transaction, but I hold that if we had had the power of electing we should have elected Adam, and that there would have been a wisdom in such procedure, which is vainly looked for in any other. And if this appointment cannot be arraigned, then it must be idle to speak of any claims which the fallen have upon the Creator; and whatsoever is done on their behalf must be in the largest sense gratuitous. If the arrangement were one into which the love which prompted the creation of man gathered and condensed its fulness, and its tenderness, then we lay it down that the compassions of the Most High towards our race might have closed themselves up, and, nevertheless, the inscription, "God is love" would have been graven upon our archives, and the lying tongue of blasphemy alone would have dared to throw doubt on its accuracy. But the love of God was a love which could not be content with having just done enough—it was a love which must commend itself—which must triumph over everything which could quench love. We were sinners, but, nevertheless, God loved us in our degradation,

in our ruin. We were unworthy the least mercy, we had no claim to it—the minutest benefit, we had no right to it—but God commended His love towards us. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *The love of God commended:*—Several considerations tend to enhance the greatness of the love of God towards us—I. THE DIGNITY OF THE SAVIOUR. He was no other than the eternal Son of God, coequal with the Father, infinitely endeared to Him by an ineffable union, and a full participation in all the attributes of the Divine nature. Hence when the death of Christ is mentioned great stress is laid on the dignity of His character, as that which gives worth and efficacy to His sufferings (Heb. i. 3; 1 Pet. i. 19; 1 John i. 7). II. THE DIVINE AGENCY EMPLOYED IN CHRIST'S DEATH. God did not spare His own Son, but freely delivered Him up as a victim in our stead, and called upon justice to make Him a sacrifice for us. Nor was the Divine agency employed merely in this part of our Saviour's sufferings; it was also engaged in their actual infliction. Men crucified His body, but it was the Lord who "made His soul an offering for sin"; or it pleased "the Lord to bruise Him, and put Him to grief"; and herein is expressed the most astonishing wrath, and the most astonishing love. III. THE CHARACTER OF THOSE FOR WHOM CHRIST DIED. While as yet no change was wrought in us, no good performed by us; while inveterate enemies to God, then it was that Christ died for us. It was also "while we were yet without strength," either to do the will of God, or to deliver ourselves out of the hands of infinite justice. The patriot dies for his country; but Christ died for His enemies. IV. THE VOLUNTARY NATURE OF CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS. His death was fore-ordained, and He had received a commandment of the Father that He should lay down His life for the sheep; yet He had power to lay down His life, and power to take it up again, and no one could take it from Him. V. IF WE COMPARE THIS MANIFESTATION WITH EVERY OTHER WE SHALL HERE FIND ITS HIGHEST COMMENDATION. The blessings of Providence are incessant and innumerable; but of all His gifts, none is to be compared with the gift of Christ. This is the unspeakable gift. VI. THE CONSTANT EFFICACY OF THE DEATH OF CHRIST AFFORDS ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE OF THE MAGNITUDE OF THE GIFT, AND OF THE LOVE OF GOD IN ITS BESTOWMENT. His righteousness for ever avails for our justification; His sacrifice retains its cleansing virtue for our sanctification; and in the discharge of all His mediatorial offices He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Hence He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him, and to do for us exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think. The gift of Christ includes every other gift; for He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things. Improvement: 1. This subject affords encouragement to serious inquirers. The gospel is the religion of sinners, the only one that can afford relief to the troubled conscience. 2. The gospel, notwithstanding, affords no ground of hope or encouragement to those who continue to live in sin. Though Christ died for sinners, it was that they might repent, believe, and be saved. 3. To all true believers, the gospel becomes a source of abundant joy. (*B. Beddome, M.A.*) *The love of God commended:*—God's manifestations of Himself invariably carry with them the commendation of some distinguishing perfection. He is manifested —1. In the universe, and "the heavens declare the glory" of His wisdom and power. 2. In conscience, which commends His righteousness. 3. In the Bible, which commends His truth. 4. In history, which commends His sovereignty. 5. In Christ, who by His life and death, but especially in the latter, commends His love. It is the glory of Christianity to give voice to this commendation. Other religions profess to reveal God in this or that aspect of His character, but none as "love." Note—I. THE TIME WHEN this commendation was made (ver. 6). "In due time." The time was most appropriate. No other period would have done so well. This will be seen if we consider that then—1. The world most needed it. Read chap. i., and what contemporary writers said about the sinfulness, misery, and hopelessness of mankind. 2. The world had exhausted all its resources in the vain hope of working out its own salvation. Philosophers had taught, priests had sacrificed, governors had ruled with a view to this; but the world's wisdom, religion, and policy had all failed. 3. The world was now as it had never been before prepared for the wide diffusion of this commendation. The dispersion of the Jews who carried their Messianic hopes with them; the conquests of Alexander which disseminated a language in which this commendation might be couched; the universal supremacy of Roman power and civilisation, which provided ample means for the widespread commendation of the gospel, combined to prepare "a way for the Lord." II. THE PERSONS TO WHOM IT WAS MADE. "Sinners." That God

should commend His love to angels, to unfallen Adam, or to conspicuous saints, would be but natural, and that that love in a general way should be displayed in nature is not to be wondered at, for the fountain of love must overflow; but that God should commend His love to sinners as such is wonderful indeed. The wonder heightens as we follow the apostle's analysis. Men were—1. Without strength. Once they were strong, but lured by the devil they fell from the breezy heights of righteousness, and were maimed and paralysed by the fall. None could have complained if God had left them in that condition, but pitying their inability to rise He "laid help on One who was mighty," who was able to restore them to moral soundness and a righteous status. 2. Ungodly. Men had severed their connection with the source of righteousness and bliss, and so were plunged in sin and misery. God did not withdraw from man, but man from God. No blame could have attached to God had He made the separation eternal. But He commends His love in the gift of the Mediator, God-man, who could lay His hand on both and bring both together again. 3. Sinners. Men who had missed the mark. "Man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him for ever." Man's blessedness is to aim at this, and in reaching it to find his true rest. But men failed to even aim at this. Their aspirations were after inferior objects, and they missed even them. So the earth is strewn with moral wrecks. God commendeth His love in that He gave His Son to save these wrecks, and to enable man to aspire after and to reach the true end of life. 4. Enemies. In one sense men were moral failures to be pitied; in another moral antagonists to God and goodness, hence the objects of God's wrath. But instead of commending His anger He commends His love through Christ, who saves from wrath and reconciles to God. III. THE MANNER OF this commendation. 1. "Christ died." God commended His love, indeed, in Christ's incarnation, life, teaching, deeds, example. For God to visit, abide in, and do good to the inhabitants of His revolted province, was a singular display of affection. Reason asks, why not come with legions of angels to destroy? But all this regard would have fallen short of what was needed; so love was displayed in an unstinted manner. "God spared not His own Son." Spared Him nothing that was necessary to save a lost world; *i.e.*, God gave all He could to commend His love. The riches of the Divine mercy were practically exhausted on the Cross (chap. viii. 32). 2. "For us." (1) In our room and stead. He bore our sins with their curse and punishment on the tree. (2) For our benefit. To remove our condemnation were much; but Christ's death for us involves much more—justification, sonship, holiness, heaven. (*J. W. Burn.*) *God's love commended:*—I. To our CONSIDERATION. II. To our ADMIRATION. III. To our ESTEEM. IV. To our GRATITUDE. V. To our IMITATION. (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) *The love of God commended:*—Some years ago a young English lady, moving in the highest circles of fashion in Paris, happened one day to be slightly indisposed and lying upon her bed, when her sisters came into the room in a state of great merriment, and said to her, "There is a mad fellow come over here from England—a revival preacher. They say it is the greatest joke in the world; he goes ranting away in English, and one of the French pasteurs does his best to interpret what he says into French. All the world is going, and we are going too," and off they went. They had no sooner gone than this girl, as she lay in her bed, felt an indescribable desire to hear him too. She rang the bell for her maid, and said, "I want to hear this revival preacher; dress me and order a carriage." Her servant expostulated with her: "You really should not think of it, ma'am; I am sure you are not fit to go." But she would not be put off. So she went, and was shown to a seat in front of the platform, and there sat directly in front of the preacher. By the time the hymn was sung and the prayer over I suppose she began to feel somewhat solemnised. Then came the sermon, and the preacher stepped right to the front of the platform, and looked her full in the face with a keen, searching glance, and said, "Poor sinner, God loves you!" "I do not know what other words he may have spoken," she afterwards said. "I dare say he said a great deal, for he preached a long time; but all I know is that I sat there before him with my head buried in my hands, sobbing, sobbing as if my heart would break. My whole life passed in review before me. I thought how I had lost it and wasted it, and all my life had turned my back upon God, to live for sin, and worldliness, and folly. I had spurned His entreaty and rejected His call; and yet, O my God, is it true, is it true, that all the while Thou hast been loving me? These words kept re-echoing over and over again through my mind, Poor sinner, God loves thee! I do not know how I found my way home. The next thing I remember is that I was lying prostrate upon my face before God, the tears still streaming from my eyes, as I lifted up my

heart to God, and said, 'It is true, it is true. Thou hast been loving me all the time, and now Thy love hath triumphed. O mighty Love, Thou hast won my poor heart! Great God, from this moment forward I am Thine.'" (*W. Hay Aitken, M.A.*) *Love's commendation*:—God's commendation of His love is not in words, but in deeds. "God commendeth His love not in an eloquent oration," but by an act. If thou wouldst commend thyself to thy fellows, go and *do*—not go and *say*; and if before God thou wouldst show that thy faith and love are real, remember, it is no fawning words, uttered either in prayer or praise, but it is the pious deed, the holy act, which is the justification of thy faith. Paul gives us a double commendation of God's love. I. CHRIST DIED FOR US. Note—1. That it was Christ who died. 2. That Christ died for us. It was much love when Christ stripped Himself of the glories of His Godhead to become an infant in the manger of Bethlehem; when He lived a holy and a suffering life for us; when He gave us a perfect example by His spotless life; but the commendation of love lieth here—that Christ died for us. All that death could mean Christ endured. Consider the circumstances which attended His death. It was no common death; it was a death of ignominy; it was a death of unutterable pain; it was a long protracted death. II. CHRIST DIED FOR US WHILE WE WERE YET SINNERS. 1. Consider what sort of sinners many of us have been, and then we shall see the marvellous grace of Christ. Consider—(1) How many of us have been continual sinners. Have not sinned once, but ten thousand times. (2) That our sins were aggravated. When you sin you do not sin so cheap as others: when you sin against the convictions of your consciences, against the warnings of your friends, against the enlightenment of the times, and against the solemn monitions of your pastors, you sin more grossly than others do. The Hottentot sinneth not as the Briton doth. (3) That we were sinners against the very Person who died for us. If a man should be injured in the street, if a punishment should be demanded of the person who attacked him, it would be passing strange if the injured man should for love's sake bear the penalty, that the other might go free; but 'twas even so with Christ. (4) That we were sinners who for a long time heard this good news, and yet despised it. 2. Inasmuch as Christ died for sinners, it is a special commendation of His love for—(1) God did not consider man's merit when Christ died; in fact, no merit could have deserved the death of Jesus. Though we had been holy as Adam, we could never have deserved a sacrifice like that of Jesus. But inasmuch as it says, "He died for sinners," we are thereby taught that God considered our sin, and not our righteousness. (2) God had no interest to serve by sending His Son to die. If God had pleased, He might have crushed this nest of rebels, and have made another world all holy. (3) Christ died for us unasked. If He had died for me as an awakened heir of heaven, then I could have prayed for Him to die; but Christ died for me when I had no power nor will to pray. Where did ye ever hear that man was first in mercy? Nay, rather, it is the other way: "Return unto Me, backsliding children, and I will have mercy upon you." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Love commended*:—I. HOW SHALL MAN BE CONVINCED OF GOD'S LOVE TOWARDS HIM? 1. He is indisposed to believe in it, and is disposed to doubt it. Many do not think of God's love at all; and others cannot bring themselves to believe that it is a personal affection. But all are exposed to the fatal influence of that arch-deceiver who poisons our mind by suggesting that God's commands are grievous, and His government unjust. 2. Then we have to consider the nature of our condition down here. God has been pleased to put us into a world where we do not see Him; we are not in a position to enter into direct communication with Him. 3. Perhaps it will suggest itself that God has only to reveal Himself to us, leaving us no longer in any degree of uncertainty about His relations with us. But in order to make such a revelation of Himself, God would first of all have to contravene the fundamental principles of His government. From that time forth we should be walking by sight, no longer by faith, and thus our probation would be ended. 4. But it may be replied that we see that God loves us in that He supplies our outward wants, and those pleasures which make life tolerable. This at first sounds plausible, but—(1) These effects appear to come to us in the ordinary course of nature, and it is only natural to conclude that, if there be a God at all, His laws will be wise, and such as to render the condition of those creatures whom He has called into existence not wholly intolerable. If God were to create beings without a supply for their natural wants, it would be such an exhibition of folly as would cast a reflection upon His own character and glory. (2) On the other hand, there are circumstances of sorrow which sometimes produce an opposite impression. 5. Perhaps it may be asked, Is it necessary that man should be convinced of God's love? If

God really loves him, is not that enough? By no means. The love of God, if it be real love, should have a certain practical effect. Many a man may prate about the value of love, and yet be a total stranger to anything like the real affection. It is necessary that God's love should be made so manifest to me as to produce in me a similar moral attitude towards Him. True love always yearns for reciprocity. II. IN THE FULNESS OF TIME GOD GIVES AN ANSWER TO THIS QUESTION; and it is such an answer as no imagination or genius of man could ever have suggested. It might have been emblazoned upon the starry skies so that all might read it, "God is love!" These wondrous words might have been uttered by prophet or philosopher, wherever they went, they might have beeu the watchword of humanity, the battle-cry of man in his conflict with all the powers of evil, and yet I apprehend that so strong is the latent suspicion sown in the heart of man by the great enemy, that we should still have remained indisposed to yield it full credence. God is not content to commit this truth to mere testimouy; it is true St. John wrote these words, but he would never have written them if Christ had not first of all written them in His own life, and sealed the record by His wondrous death. The truth that God is love was only known to Him, can only be known to us, because Christ has demonstrated it in His own person upon the Cross. 1. Here is God's own confutation of that ancieut doubt of the Divine character and purpose, sowed by the father of lies iu the human heart. It is no longer possible that God can be careless of our well-being or indifferent to our happiness, when to secure these He gave His own Son to die. 2. By this we are able to form some conception of the extent and intensity of God's love. So far as it can be measured, the Cross of Christ is the measure of the love of God. (1) What sacrifice is there that you would not willingly make for the benefit of your fellow-man rather than such a sacrifice as we have here? If the inhabitants of this town were to be saved by some act of heroic self-sacrifice on your part, what is there—you that are a mother—that you would not propose to give up before your own dearly-loved child? Yet such a sacrifice did God willingly make for us, and by such a sacrifice does He commend His love to us. (2) But even this is not all. Why should God require a satisfaction before He lets His goodness take its course? It may well be replied, How much easier would it have been for God to act as His critics would have desired Him! How vast a sacrifice might He have escaped, what sorrow and suffering might the Son of His love have been spared, if He had contented Himself with the exercise of His prerogative of mercy! Was it a sign of greater or of less love that He adopted a more costly means of bringing the desired result about? There is a distinction between love and mercy. Mercy may be exercised without love. The Queen may extend mercy to a condemned felon, but would you say that this proved her love for the felon? You give a copper to a beggar and thereby show mercy, but this is no sign that you love him, perhaps the reverse. But if you put yourself to much trouble in order to make your mercy a real benefit, you are showing yourself to be animated by true feelings of philanthropy. Would the mere exercise of mercy, that costs God nothing, have impressed my mind with such a sense of Divine love as does the Cross of Calvary? Here I see that love has provided not merely for my pardon—mercy might have done that; but for my regeneration—for a change so complete and radical as to constitute me a new creature. (3) But even this is not all. What if it should be found that in one sense all this amazing self-sacrifice was not absolutely necessary? Might not an Almighty God have guarded against any such necessity, by modifying the conditions of human existence, and placing man, as angels would seem to be placed, beyond the reach of temptation? Probably; but by so doing He would have rendered it impossible for man to rise to that special destiny of glory which is to be his. Was man to lose his true glory, or was the Son of God to die? (4) But we shall not feel the full force of these considerations until we turn from the race to the individual. He loved me, and gave Himself for me. It is quite true that God's love is as wide as the world, for "God so loved the world"; but it is equally true that it is as narrow as the individual. What art thou that He should love thee so? How hast thou dealt with Him? (*W. Hay Aitken, M.A.*) *The Cross, the witness of love:*—1. A right knowledge of the true God lies at the root of true religion (John xvii. 3). On the other hand, either belief in a false God, or a false view of the true God, is the source of all superstition. Of this we have an illustration in chap i. 21-23. Men needed a new revelation to recall them from the worship of the works of their own hands. The tendency to invent a god, where the knowledge of the true God is blotted out, reappears under a modified form amongst those who have the light of Divine

revelation. Human hopes and fears have led the intellect into two opposite extremes concerning the moral character of God. In the one case, God is regarded as a Being whose only attribute is benevolence: in the other, God is invested with the character of implacability. By the first, the sanctity of God is obscured; by the second, He is viewed as "an almighty Tyrant," whom it must be our only endeavour to propitiate. 2. The Cross was a manifestation to meet false views of God as to His sanctity and love. Whilst on the one hand it was the measure of sin marking God's hatred of evil; on the other it was the witness of love. It harmonised Divine mercy and justice—attributes which seemed before to pursue opposite roads. Let us regard the Cross as witnessing to—I. THE LOVE OF GOD. Our happiness depends on knowing and realising this Love. There are three ways of contemplating God. 1. You may regard Him only as a Being, and occupy your thoughts with the conditions of the Divine life—its infinity, immensity, immutability, and eternity. 2. You may dwell on His absolute perfections without respect to creatures—His power, wisdom, sanctity, perfection, form an august object of contemplation, but do not inflame the affections. To know God only as the great "I Am" will prevent me from falling down to an idol; but the revelation of the bush must be followed by that of Sinai, and that of Calvary must complete both. 3. Concerning God, the great anxiety is to know His relative perfections. The great necessity in a fallen world is that His love may shine in upon it, and that the creatures who feared His holiness may be convinced of His benignity. Love begets love. II. THE PRE-EXISTENT LOVE OF GOD. It is necessary to notice this, because language is sometimes used which would seem to imply that the Cross was creative of Divine love. But the conditions and perfections of the Divine life are not varying moods such as creatures are capable of feeling, but fixtures (Mal. iii. 6). For God to view the human race with wrath until Calvary, with love after Calvary—would be for God to change. For God to love once is for God to love always (Jer. xxxi. 3). Ancientness clothes love with a peculiar tenderness. Early friendships and associations cling to us in after life, and have something in them which new ties cannot supply. Love is heightened by the thought that it was poured upon us when we were unconscious, and entirely dependent upon its unrequited lavishness. Oh, wondrous love of the Parent of my soul, "the God of my life," bending over the thought of my being! (Psa. cxxxix. 16). The Cross then witnessed to this pre-existent love. It revealed it anew when the blight upon creation and the heavy penalties of sin had darkened human life. God's thoughts had been "thoughts of peace and not of evil" all along, but they needed to be shown in acts. Angels needed no such witness. Creation sufficed when the first estate was preserved. But with the world as we know it—who is there who has not at some time felt the need of a foundation for his tottering faith. When the tempter suggests the thought, "whence this suffering? is thy God a God of love?" there is but one vision that can sustain the soul—it is the Cross of Christ, for that Cross dispels all doubt as to the goodness of God. III. THE FATHER'S LOVE. All are accustomed to see in the Cross the love of our blessed Lord, yet many fail to discover the Father's love. The secrecy of the person of the Father, unbegotten and unsent, may tend to produce forgetfulness of the first spring of redeeming love; and cause us to stop short at the love of Jesus. A defect in recognising love is a little evil compared with the sin of substituting anger in its stead. A certain system of theology has this latter error at its base: it portrays the Father as Wrath, the Son as Mercy; and the Son as striving to appease the anger of the enraged and implacable Parent. Hence "the love of the Father" becomes impossible. The question is—how is the First Person of the Blessed Trinity described in reference to man's salvation? How is He portrayed by our Lord?" Does not His description of Him correspond with His name—a name ever associated with tender love? (Luke vi. 36; Matt. v. 44). In the parables how does the love of the Father Himself shine forth in the patience of the householder with the wicked husbandmen; in the repeated invitations of the king who made a marriage for his son; in the yearnings of the father over the returning prodigal; in the mission to the most unworthy, that they may share in the blessings of the gospel! Then note how He is spoken of by the apostles (2 Cor. i. 3; Col. i. 12; 1 Pet. i. 3; Rom. xv. 5; Eph. i. 17; 1 John iii. 1; Titus iii. 4). If we trace redemption to its source, it is the love of the Father which is reached through the Cross. Of Him it is written, that He "so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son" to save it. IV. THE GREATNESS OF DIVINE LOVE. Love is estimated by sacrifice, and heightened by the unworthiness of those for whom the outlay is made. Conclusion: We have regarded the Cross as the witness of the

love of God; let us see now what should be the effect of this love on the beholder. This love of God, when realised, has a transforming power on the soul. Love begets love. Love drew God down from heaven to the manger, to the Cross; but it also draws man up to God (Hosea xi. 4). (*W. H. Hutchings, M.A.*) *The Cross a revelation*:—There have been many momentous events in history which have revolutionised society, and opened new paths of effort. But the death of Christ holds a unique position, and has an importance more vital to the well-being of the world than all these events put together. Its value and power lie in the appeal it makes to the higher thoughts of men, in the conception of life it sets before men, in the vision it gives men of loftier hopes, purer sources of satisfaction, grander objects of ambition. For the Cross is a revelation of the things that are highest and best for mankind. It reveals—I. THE PLACE WE HAVE IN THE HEART OF GOD. There are times when we feel the want of a perfect love. The heart yearns for something more than things—aches for another heart that can beat in unison with itself. Yes; and that other heart must not be limited in its affection. We all prize human love, but we spoil our enjoyment of it by exacting more than it can give us. This is the immortal spirit within crying out for God. There are influences abroad which seem to baffle this deep yearning. The discoveries of science have brought to view the overwhelming vastness of the material creation; and in presence of it all we are apt to be overpowered by a feeling of our insignificance. Our little lives seem but as motes dancing in the sunbeam. On what ground can we hope that the infinite Ruler of all will have towards us any special interest or affection? The grand corrective to this is the sacrifice of Christ. For that sacrifice makes us feel that we are not so insignificant as we thought; there is an Infinite One who cares for us, and in the Cross is the measure of His care. There is one heart beating for us with tireless love, and that is the heart of God. II. THE IMPORTANCE GOD ATTACHES TO OUR RESCUE FROM SIN. It has always been difficult to get people's minds rightly aroused to the danger and evil of sin. Not a few settle themselves down to the impression that evil tendencies are inevitable, and must be submitted to in the best way possible, without being allowed too much to disquiet the mind. The shallowness of such ideas is seen in the light which the sacrifice of Christ flashes upon them. It is impossible for any one to see the Great Sufferer without being touched with a sense of the infinite peril of all things evil. The Cross was the Divine testimony against the balefulness of sin. But more, it displayed the solemn fact that God was willing to make great sacrifice to win men from sin. It is imposible now to doubt the Divine purpose to free the soul from the thraldom of evil. III. THE EXPLANATION OF MANY OF THE THINGS THAT BAFFLE US IN THE PROVIDENCES OF LIFE. When the infirmities of our character bring us into trouble, when our selfishness defeats itself, when our ambitious successes leave us unsatisfied or load us with heavier cares, it is God seeking to wean us from the pride that constitutes the bane of life. He is striving to effect this grand work of deliverance now. For the Cross makes it clear that God wants an immediate deliverance. He knows—what we only find out by bitter experience—that every wrong thing limits our capacity for present enjoyment, lowers and spoils the quality of our enjoyment, and breeds more evil. He therefore seeks to win men from sin at once, that the corruption of evil may not have time or opportunity to weave itself into their nature, and so poison and degrade them ere they enter into eternity. Some people imagine that they shall undergo a magical transformation the moment they pass into eternity. If any one is to begin eternity as a spiritual prince, he must have the princely elements of character in him ere he closes his life on earth. And if any one closes his life on earth as a spiritual beggar, then as a spiritual beggar must he start on his eternal career. Now that is a consideration of tremendous solemnity; and when we ponder it we can surely see the force of that appeal which God makes to us in the Cross, to wake up with instant decision to battle against evil, that our character may be rescued while there is time yet to get it purged and sanctified and trained in the elements of goodness by those hallowing influences which the Divine Spirit brings to bear upon us. IV. THE VASTNESS OF THE BENEFIT WHICH GOD HAS IN STORE FOR US. We may take what God has actually done as the standard of the love He will always show towards us. When you get the key-note you know the strain that must follow. So in the sacrifice of Christ we have the exact pitch of all God's dealings with us. We can be certain that no act of God's towards us shall ever fall below the note struck in the sacrifice of Calvary. Everything will harmonise with that. Thus the sublimest note emanates from the Cross. We see there the scale on which God means to bless us. V. THE HEIGHT OF SPIRITUAL

NOBLENESS TO WHICH GOD SEEKS TO RAISE OUR CHARACTER—that spirit of self-sacrifice which the death of Christ exhibits so completely. This, alas! is just the offence of the Cross; but if we stumble at it, our life can never be crowned with the imperishable glory. The crowning joys of life are the outcome of deeds of unselfishness. Your heart throbbed in unison with the heart of Christ then. And it is in that spirit of unselfishness that God is seeking to train us all. It is the greatest blessing He can confer upon us. (*G. McHardy, M.A.*) *The best thing*:—I. THE BEST THING COMMENDED. Not God's wisdom, power, holiness, or wealth, but His love, unsolicited, unmerited, free, unparalleled, towards us, the most undeserving of His creatures. II. The best thing commended BY THE BEST JUDGE. "God." "God only knows the love of God." A man may know the love of man, an angel may know the love of an angel, but only the Infinite can gauge the Infinite. III. The best thing commended by the best Judge IN THE BEST POSSIBLE WAY. "In that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." While we were at the worst He did the best for us. IV. The best thing commended by the best Judge in the best possible way FOR THE BEST PURPOSE. That we might be "justified by His blood"; "saved from WRATH"; "reconciled to God by the death of His Son," and "saved by His life"; yea, "joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ"; in a word, have everlasting life. (*D. Brotchie.*) **Christ died for us.**—*The death of Christ*:—I. ITS CHARACTER. 1. Real. 2. Violent. 3. Cruel. 4. The same death that was due to us. II. ITS DESIGN. It was—1. The punishment of our sin. 2. The price of our redemption. 3. A sacrifice for sin. III. ITS EFFECTS. 1. Our sins by it are expiated and atoned for. 2. The wrath of God is averted from us. 3. We are freed from all guilt. IV. APPLICATION. For Christ's great love to us in dying for us, we should love Him—1. Ardently. 2. Transcendently. 3. Effectually. (*D. Clarkson, B.D.*) *The death of Christ* is—I. THE PLEDGE OF GOD'S LOVE TO US—He died for us—while yet enemies. II. THE PLEDGE OF SALVATION—it justifies and reconciles us to God. Much more shall we be saved from final wrath and share in the blessedness of life. III. THE PLEDGE OF UNSPEAKABLE HAPPINESS IN GOD. Joy in God is the only true happiness—is secured in the reconciliation effected by the atonement. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The death of Christ, substitutionary*:—The original meaning is over or above (Lat. *super*). As if a bird, hovering over her young, warded off a blow from them and bare it herself; if by this act she rescued them from destruction at the sacrifice of her own life, we see how the thought of dying over them is merged in the greater, of dying instead of them. Thus a shield suggests the thought of being over that which it protects, and of receiving the blow instead of that which it defends. The sacrificial relation of Christ to His people involves the full notion of deliverance and satisfaction by substitution (2 Cor. v. 15). (*Webster and Wilkinson.*)

Ver. 10. **For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.**—*Enemies of God*:—I. IN WHAT RESPECT unregenerate men are such. In—1. Their esteem of Him. 2. The natural relish of their souls. 3. Their will. 4. Their affections. 5. Their practice. II. TO HOW GREAT A DEGREE. 1. They have no love. 2. Their every faculty is subject to this enmity. 3. It is insuperable to any finite power. 4. They are greater enemies to God than to any other being. III. THE REASONS FOR THIS. 1. God is opposed to their idolatries. 2. They are threatened with damnation because of them. (*Jonathan Edwards, A.M.*) *God's hatred of sin*:—It is no figure but a deep essential truth that God hates sin; and since sin is necessarily personal, the sinner as such, *i.e.*, so far as he wilfully identifies himself with his sin, is hated of God, His enemy (chap. xi. 28). But God loves everything that He has made. He cannot love man as a sinner, but He loves him as man, even when he is a sinner. In like manner the Jews are described as being, at the same time, enemies in one relation and beloved in another (chap. xi. 28). Human love here offers a true analogy: the more a father loves his son, the more he hates in him the drunkard, the liar, or the traitor. Thus God, loving as His creatures those whom He hates as self-made sinners, devises means whereby they may be brought back to Him. (*Archdeacon Gifford.*) *Reconciliation with God*:—I. THE BELIEVER'S RECONCILIATION. 1. The previous character of the partakers of this benefit; they "were enemies to God." But it is no easy thing to induce men to acknowledge this. They may indeed acknowledge that they have some imperfections and infirmities; but they cannot be persuaded that they are "enemies to God." 2. This inestimable boon itself. There are but few who do not know the value of

reconciliation. Who has not tasted the bitterness of estrangement? Who has not enjoyed the deliciousness of renewed friendship? How delicious is national peace, domestic peace, ecclesiastical peace. But the blessing of reconciliation must be judged of by the Being whom we have offended and provoked. Who knoweth the power of His anger? And oh, to know that we are one with God again! Why, then, trials have no curse, death no sting, and all things work together for good. 3. The reconciliation is perfect and perpetual. A breach may be so far made up as to exclude hostility. Absalom was allowed to live three years in Jerusalem without seeing the king's face. There may be an admission of civilities and even general intercourse, where there may be no admission of cordialness. But how is it here? (chap. viii. 35–39). 4. The medium of it. "The death of His Son." We escape, but He suffered. There are some who deny the vicariousness of the sufferings of Christ. But upon their principles it seems hard to account for His sufferings at all. According to these, He died not for others' sins, and we know He could not for His own; so upon this ground He suffered in every respect as innocent; and if this were true, we may well ask, Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. Why is He thus making Him to be sin for us who knew no sin? Why, if our tears, or repentance, or alms could have made reconciliation with God, He never would have been pleased to bruise His only begotten Son; and if in His sacrifice God did nothing needlessly or in vain, then there must have been a propriety, a necessity in the great transaction. So the apostle affirms, "It became Him to make the Captain of our salvation perfect through sufferings." Thus your reconciliation is made in a way that is as honourable to God as it is safe to us. The just God appears a Saviour. Now, this blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than the blood of Abel, having spoken to the justice of God, and satisfied it, speaks to the conscience of the sinner, and gives it quiet and peace. Thus have we boldness to enter into the holiest of all by the blood of Christ. II. THE BELIEVER'S SALVATION. 1. We are "saved by His life." But are we not saved when reconciled? No. The one regards God, the other regards ourselves. But did not He exclaim when He expired, "It is finished"? Yes; but what was finished? The work of redemption, or the procuring of the thing; not the work of salvation, or the applying of the thing. The case is this. We were guilty, and by the death of God's Son expiation was made for our offences. He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, and thus removed every hindrance on God's side to our return to Him. Yet we are not actually saved till we receive Christ, and are found in Him. Indeed, as to the commencement of the work, and the certainty of the issue, Christians are said to be saved already. "By grace are ye saved through faith." But as to the actual consummation, they are not saved till death is swallowed up in victory. This work of salvation is a gradual work carried on through the whole of the Christian's life on earth. We go from strength to strength, and in the Divine image we are "renewed day by day." 2. How this salvation is achieved. By His life; His mediatorial life; that life in which He is now living in our nature in heaven. This is what He referred to when He said, "Because I live ye shall live also." Had He not risen, our hopes would have perished in the same grave. "But we are begotten again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." Everything that concerns our salvation is now to be viewed in connection with His life. He is now making intercession for us. He is a living Saviour, and as such He received the whole dispensation of the Spirit for men (Eph. iv. 8, &c.; Acts ii. 33). It is as a living Saviour, "it hath pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell, and out of His fulness have all we received grace for grace." 3. From hence you should learn to dwell more upon the present life of Christ. Christians love to hear of Christ's death. But it would be in vain to view Him as the crucified One, unless we could view Him as the glorified One. Here is the ground of our highest triumph (chap. viii. 34). III. THEIR CONFIRMATION: derived from an inference drawn from one to the other. "For if . . . much more." Observe the conclusiveness of the inference. What can be more natural than for us to argue from the past to the future; from what has been done to what may be; to feel the remembrance of one favour encouraging our hope of another, especially when we argue from the greater to the less; as chap. viii. 32 does? It was wonderful that God should have provided an ark for the saving of Noah and his house; but it was not wonderful, after He had provided it, that He should not suffer him to sink and go to the bottom. It is wonderful that God should have given us exceeding great and precious promises; but it is not wonderful, after He had given

them, that He should fulfil the same. It is wonderful, Christians, that He should have begun a good work in you; but having begun it, it is not wonderful that He should perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. (*W. Jay.*) *Reconciliation with God an earnest of complete salvation:*—I. MORE IMMEDIATELY IN REFERENCE TO GOD. Reconciliation is the restoring to a state of friendship parties who had been at variance with each other. The parties presented by the apostle in the passage before us being God and man—God being necessarily the justly-offended party, it belonged to guilty, rebellious man to reconcile himself to God. But wherewithal could man thus come before God? What man, however, could never have solved, God hath both unravelled and removed. "He was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself; not imputing to men their trespasses." He so far reconciled Himself to man, when He devised the plan whereby He could continue the just God, whilst the justifier of the ungodly who believe on Jesus. And He so far reconciled Himself to man, when He gave and continues with man, the ministry of reconciliation. Now the reasoning of the apostle, as bearing on this view of the case, is shortly this—hath God out of absolutely spontaneous loving-kindness thought compassionately on man in his low and lost estate—hath He exerted His infinite wisdom in devising a scheme whereby "in the riches of His grace through Christ, He hath even abounded towards man in all wisdom and prudence"—hath the character of the Divine holiness been signally vindicated, and the claims of infinite justice and unimpeachable truth satisfied—hath the almighty power of God been put forth in raising up Christ from the dead—hath the Divine machinery, the pattern of things in the heavens, not only been constructed and perfected, but ready at the bidding of the great Artificer to begin the work of mercy and of love—when lo! the hand of the Divine Artificer, ready to touch the life-giving apparatus is suspended—producing the silence of ungratified desire in heaven, of disappointment on earth, of joy in hell. And, would such a part be worthy of the great God to act? Would it be consistent with the all-perfect character of Jehovah? Could the wisdom which devised and consummated the scheme, rest satisfied till its excellence was developed in its glorious effects? II. THE CONTRAST IMPLIED BETWEEN THE EFFICACY AND POWER OF THE LIFE AND THE DEATH OF CHRIST. "Much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life." Now, although the death of Christ is not here specifically mentioned, yet it is directly referred to, and a contrast stated, though tacitly, between His death and His life. How was it that God was reconciled to man, and man to God? It was by the death of His Son. Now, if such effects are ascribed to, and naturally flow from the death of Christ, much more may we look for, and naturally expect consequences, even if possible surpassing these, springing from His life. It is not so much His mediatorial life, as affording opportunities for the fruits of His death to appear, and hereby manifesting its incalculable efficacy; as by the transference, as it were, of what gave worth and efficacy in the death, to the activity and energy in the life. And what was it which rendered the death or sacrifice of Christ infinitely meritorious? It was not that He was a man, or even a perfect man, but that He was the God-man. Oh, what encouragement, and what a firm ground of confidence does the apostle's reasoning in this view of the case afford to the genuine believer in the name of Christ! Transfer the infinite worth of character, as giving value and efficacy to the death of Christ—transfuse all this into His mediatorial life, and what vitality and power concentrate not only here; but how are all these pledged as a guarantee that the foundation which was laid in the death will be reared into a glorious edifice by the life of Christ. If His death effected so much, much more rather will His life more than perfect all. III. THE THIRD STEP IN THE PROCESS OF THE APOSTLE'S REASONING REFERS MORE IMMEDIATELY TO MAN, and carries with it into the bosom of the genuine believer the most irresistible evidence of its truth and power. Having become the subject of this reconciliation, he is conscious to himself that a thorough change hath passed upon his state and character as in the sight of God. Lately he was dead whilst he lived; but now "hath he been quickened to newness of life," and "is alive unto God, through Jesus Christ." Originally his inner man was a spiritual chaos, without form and void; but now he is created anew in Christ Jesus. "A new heart has been given him, and a new spirit put within him." Lately his mind, being carnal, was enmity against God, but this enmity is now transfused into friendship. Once he loved sin, and derived his chief enjoyment from the ways of it; but now he is a lover of God, and God's law is his delight. Now, observe how forcibly to the experienced Christian the conclusion is which the apostle draws in the text—"much more being reconciled,

we shall be saved by Christ's life." What hath been already wrought in the heart of the believer is an earnest and a pledge of what God will continue to do, and delight in doing. Hath He changed rebellion into loyalty, He will never fail to reward with the smiles of His approval the acts of loyalty cheerfully and submissively rendered. Hath He changed enmity into affection, He will never cease to draw forth renewed and more ardent expressions of this heaven-born love. In short, if our heavenly Father came graciously near when we were repulsive, He will never leave us now that He hath rendered us attractive. (*D. Logan.*) *Reconciled and saved*:—1. Among the ten thousand plants that clothe the naked world, none are found where the execution falls short of the design. Nor among the countless tribes of animals does God, in any case, appear to have begun a work and stopped in the middle. He never made an unfinished flower or insect; and it were strange if He should make an unfinished saint. 2. "Wherefore hast Thou made all men in vain?" "I saw the prosperity of the wicked. . . . Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency. For all day long have I been plagued." These plaints prove that Providence is not so easily read as nature. But that is because Providence is not, like creation, a finished work. Take a man to a house when the architect is in the middle of his plan, what is perfect order to the architect, to the other will be confusion; and so stands man amid that vast scheme of Providence which God began six thousand years ago, and may not finish for as many thousand years to come. Raised to the throne of Egypt, Joseph saw why God had permitted him to be sold into slavery and cast into prison. And raised to heaven, the saint, now that God's works of Providence stand before him in all their completeness, shall take his harp, and sing, "Just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of Saints." 3. Now, God's work in grace forms no exception to His works in nature and in Providence. A man designs a great literary work, and he dies; or throwing it aside for something else, he leaves the world but a fragment of it. The studio of the painter has unfinished pictures; our streets have unfinished houses; and man has many a plan lodged in his busy brain that he never or but partly executes. But where God begins a good work He carries it on to the day of the Lord Jesus. Consider—I. OUR STATE BY NATURE—we are the enemies of God. 1. Some things we are to believe on the simple authority of God's Word. There are others, again, in which, "as face answereth to face in water," so the state of our hearts answereth to the statements of God's Word; and such is the case with Paul's saying, "The carnal mind is enmity against God." For was there ever a saved man who did not feel when he was converted that he was conquered? This enmity does not lie in bad habits, education, or other such circumstances. It is not like a cold which any one may take, but a consumption which is constitutional and hereditary; and what are all these sins and crimes which the apostle describes as works of the flesh (Gal. v. 19); but, like the flushed cheek, languid eye, and bounding pulse of fever, the symptoms of an enmity that lies lurking in every heart? The temptations that call out the enmity no more create it than the showers and sunshine create the deadly hemlock which has its seed in the soil. 2. Nor is this all. Consumption, fell and deadly as it is, usually attacks but one organ. The constitution may be otherwise sound. The best things, indeed, have their defects—there are spots in the sun; there is more or less of alloy in all gold; and weeds deform the fairest gardens. But whenever circumstances occur to call it out, this enmity affects the whole man; so that he is as much under its influence as every sail, yard, mast, and timber of a ship are under the government of her helm. True, that does not always appear; but no more does the fire that sleeps in the cold flint, until there be a collision with steel. The carnal mind not only has, but is, enmity against God. Enmity is of its very nature, as it is of the nature of grass to be green, or sugar to be sweet, or vinegar to be sour. If it were not so, man would not need to be born again to get a new heart; like a watch that had but started a jewel, or lost the tooth of a wheel, it were enough to be repaired without being renewed. 3. What a proof of this we have in the treatment of Christ by man. Fancy a drowning man putting forth his dying strength to wound the hand stretched out to save him! I would hold any man my enemy that would kill my son; and if men by nature were not God's enemies, why did they kill His Son? why do they still reject Him? II. THE RECONCILIATION. The time has come when Jacob must face an angry brother. He had taken cruel advantage of Esau's necessities and ungodliness, to possess himself of the birthright and the blessing. He had to settle the account with his brother now; and the prospect, as well it might, filled him with alarm. Busy,

guilty, fancy conjures up a dreadful retribution. What shall he do? Fight? It is vain to think of that. Flee? Encumbered with wives and little ones, it is vain to think of fleeing. One refuge is still open to him! He betakes himself to prayer; wrestling with God till the break of day. I have seen the sun set on a troubled sea where the billows burst in white foam on rocky headlands, and roared in thunders on the beach; and to-morrow the same sun set on the same sea, smooth as a glassy mirror. A change as great, and in as short a time, has passed on the soul of Jacob. Yesternight was spent in an agony of prayer; and this night he lays his head in sweet peace on its pillow. The long estranged brothers have embraced and buried in one grave Esau's wrongs and Jacob's crimes—being enemies, they were reconciled. Blessed change to Jacob; and yet but a faint image of our reconciliation to God! What is that? what does it imply? what blessings does it bring? We shall never know fully till we get to heaven; "for eye hath not seen," &c. But this, meanwhile, we know, reconciliation is sin pardoned; death discrowned; peace of conscience; a sense of Divine love; a sight of coming glory. III. THE MEANS OF RECONCILIATION. A man lying under sentence of death has sent off a petition for mercy, and waits the answer in anxious suspense. One day his ear catches rapid steps approach his door—they stop there. The chain is dropped; the bolts are drawn; a messenger enters with his fate; the sovereign pities the criminal, but cannot pardon the crime. His hopes dashed to the ground, he gives himself up for lost. And now the messenger draws near, and tells him that if the king's son would change places with him and die in his room, that would satisfy justice, and set him free. Drowning men will catch at straws; not he at that. The king give up his son! If there is no hope but that, there is no hope at all! Now fancy, if you can, his astonishment, sinking to incredulity, and then rising into a paroxysm of joy, when the messenger says, I am the king's son; it is my own wish, and my father's will that I should die for you; take you the pardon, and give me the fetters. In me shall the crime be punished; in you shall the criminal be saved. Such love never was shown by man; only by God. Did David, when he considered the heavens the work of God's fingers, exclaim, What is man that Thou art mindful of him? How much more may God's people break out into expressions of adoring wonder, when they stand beneath the Cross. IV. RECONCILED BY THE DEATH OF CHRIST, HIS PEOPLE ARE SAVED BY HIS LIFE. Suppose that our Lord, having satisfied Divine justice, had left in the grave a body which He needs no more, and returned to the bosom of His Father, still the Son of God, but no longer also the Son of Man, His death had been in vain. There was the medicine, but where was the physician to administer it? When we die our work is done. Not so with Christ. He had a great work to do after His death—a work foreshadowed on the day of atonement in the temple. The high priest, having sacrificed a lamb, carries its blood into the holy of holies; offering it before the mercy-seat. By and by, returning with the blood, he takes a bunch of hyssop, and sprinkles it in red showers on the people. Now are they ceremonially clean before the Lord; and so David, with his eyes no doubt on better blood, prays, Sprinkle me with hyssop and I shall be clean; wash me and I shall be whiter than the snow. Even so, Jesus rises from yonder grave and ascends to yonder throne, that He may apply to His people the benefits of His redemption. He lives to provide for our wants and to advocate our cause; so that our life is as much dependent on His as that of the branches on the tree, or the body's various members on the life of their heart and head. Because He liveth we live also. We attach little value to what costs us little. Of all men they are the most careful of their money who have earned it by the hardest labour; they guard their liberties most jealously who have bought them at the greatest price. The great price at which Christ purchased His people is the great security for their safety. (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) *Double assurance*:—How anxious the apostle was in all his letters to convince believers in Christ that their position was absolutely secure. The text suggests the following train of thought. I. THE SAD STATE INTO WHICH SIN HAS DEGRADED MAN. "We were enemies." Not simply godless and careless, but rebels against God. Hence the heinousness of sin. The carnal mind is enmity against the holiest and best of Beings, and implies alienation, guilt, condemnation, and if persisted in—death. II. THE HAPPY CONDITION INTO WHICH GRACE ELEVATES MAN. "Reconciled to God." 1. The exhibition of Divine love, in the sacrifice of Calvary, draws men to God, because there is proclaimed how deep, sincere, and pitiful He is, against whom sinners have revolted; how ready He is to forgive and save. 2. To be reconciled to God is not only to be pardoned, but to be admitted into fellow-

ship with Him; to be in harmony with His will and purposes; to acquiesce in the dispensations of Providence. 3. What honour in such a state of oneness with the Almighty. Reconciled to Him we—(1) Walk with Him. (2) Talk to Him and He to us. (3) Work with and for Him. (4) Become like Him. (5) Become prepared to be for ever with Him. III. THE DIVINE MEANS BY WHICH THAT GREAT CHANGE IS EFFECTED. "By the death of His Son." The voices of nature call us to grateful acknowledgment of the great and good Creator; but the loudest and sweetest tones come from Calvary. By the death of God's dear Son, we see—1. The exceeding sinfulness of sin. 2. The ineffable love of God. Not that He loved His friends, but His foes. 3. The substitutionary character of the Redeemer's offering. IV. THE IMMOVABLE BASIS UPON WHICH WE MAY REST OUR HOPE OF COMPLETE SALVATION. "Much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life." The death of Christ was not merely to save us from the consequences of sin, but from the love and practice of it. The love of Christ was seen in His life as well as in His death; and we are saved from sin by—1. His exemplary earthly life. We may attain to the highest life by imitating Him, and in proportion as we become like Him do we please God. 2. His exalted heavenly life. He lives to see the purposes of redemption fulfilled, to dispense the gifts His atoning death procured. No wonder the apostle staked all on the resurrection of Christ. If we cannot look up to a risen and reigning Redeemer, then our preaching and faith are vain, we are yet in our sins. (*F. W. Brown.*) *A double contrast, and an argument drawn therefrom*:—I. Contrasted conditions IN THE HISTORY OF THOSE WHO WERE NOW CHRISTIANS. 1. "We were enemies." Some had answered to the description given in chap. i., others had doubtless been more virtuous heathen, or, like Paul, blameless as touching the righteousness of the Jewish law; but the description "enemies," is applied to all (Rom. viii. 7). "We were reconciled to God." Reconciliation may be mutual, or only one party may need to be influenced by its power. The latter is the case here; we are the only parties needing to be reconciled (see 2 Cor. v. 18). This is effected by Christ's death, as the manifestation of the love of God. II. Contrasted conditions IN THE HISTORY OF CHRIST. 1. His death. Death is a time of captivity, therefore of weakness. Christ's death was surrounded by circumstances of sorrow and shame. 2. His life. The life which followed His death, when He led captivity captive, when SORROW was exchanged for the "joy set before Him," and the Cross for the throne. III. THE ARGUMENT drawn from this double contrast. If God's Son by death could reconcile His enemies, how much more by His life will He complete and perfect their salvation, now that they are His friends. If in weakness He could accomplish the greater, how much more in strength can He insure the less. If by imprisonment in the tomb He could give us the liberty of the sons of God, how much more can and will He now sustain us in that freedom. (*W. Harris.*) *Converting mercy a pledge of preserving grace*:—I. THE POSITION HERE ASSUMED. Note—1. The change which Christians have undergone. This change has been effected. Let us separately advert to these two particulars. (1) They were enemies to God. This, indeed, is naturally the state of all men. "Being by nature born in sin, they are children of wrath." It is not, however, by imputation only, but also by wicked works. They dislike His holiness, His law, His service. To dislike God, who is goodness; to hate His service, which is happiness; to have lost His favour, which is better than life; to be exposed to His wrath, which is a consuming fire; who can conceive the real wretchedness of such a state! (2) Such was once the state of those who are now real Christians. But it is their state no longer. (*a*) They are now "reconciled to God." His wrath is turned away from them. They are brought into a state of peace and friendship with God. (*b*) Their nature has undergone a most wonderful alteration. They are become new creatures in principle and practice. They now love God and find pleasure in His ways. From enemies they have been made friends; from rebels, children; from vessels of wrath, monuments of grace and mercy. 2. The astonishing way in which this change has been effected. (1) By what means? "By the death of His Son." It is plain that the whole benefit of this reconciliation rests with man. God cannot be profited by it; but it was God who brought it about. In His infinite mercy He projected so great a blessing to mankind. In His infinite wisdom He devised a plan for effecting it. And when, according to this plan, it was expedient that His only-begotten Son should suffer for sinners, He "spared Him not, but delivered Him up for us all." He delivered Him up as a sacrifice to justice. (2) Under what circumstances? "When they were enemies." Previously to any disposition on their part, to any sorrow felt, any contrition expressed, any desire of forgiveness manifested, any

petition for mercy offered, God planned their return to Him, and provided the way. II. THE INFERENCE DRAWN FROM IT. "Much more being reconciled, they shall be saved by His life." True Christians in their reconciliation with God have, indeed, undergone a great and a glorious change. But the work is not yet complete. The great obstacle is removed. Their sins are pardoned and their souls are renewed. But they are as yet renewed only in part. The carnal mind, though weakened, is not utterly subdued. Their great adversary constantly harasses them; while the world assails them with all its formidable weapons. Now the natural tendency of all these united obstacles is to oppose their progress; nay, to drive them back, and to leave them at last to perish in sin and wrath. Effectual provision is made for their security. He who died to reconcile them by His blood, now liveth to preserve them by His power. Observe, then, the whole force of the inference in the text. Hath God done so much for His people, and will He do no more? Certainly not. On the contrary, if He has done the greater work for them, much more will He do the less. If He pitied them when enemies, much more will He love them when friends. (*E. Cooper.*) *The Christian encouraged to expect final salvation:*—Mankind, in all ages, have been prone to extremes. If we reject the doctrine of infallible perseverance, which has no foundation in Scripture, and has a tendency to lull asleep in carnal security, there is danger lest we conceive that the continuance and final salvation of God's people is a matter of uncertainty. The consequence is, that some, who might otherwise go on comfortably in the ways of God, are enervated and cast down, while their dejection and sorrow is very discouraging to others. To offer a preventative I have chosen this passage, from which I would observe—I. OF WHOM THE APOSTLE HERE SPEAKS. The context shows he does not speak of mankind in general—or of mere nominal Christians—but of those who have obtained peace with God through Christ. II. THE STATE SUCH WERE IN WHEN THE GRACE OF GOD FOUND THEM. 1. They were "without strength" (ver. 6), and without ability to recover themselves; ignorant, and without ability to enlighten themselves; guilty, depraved, and wretched, and without strength to expiate their guilt, change their depraved nature, or remove their miseries. 2. But did they not deserve that God should help and save them? No; for they were "ungodly" (ver. 6), devoid of the knowledge, fear, love, favour, image, and enjoyment of God (chap. iii. 10, 11). 3. They not only had no merit, but they had demerit, for they were "sinners" (ver. 8). 4. Nay, they were "enemies" (ver. 10), to God's nature and attributes, to His will, word, and ways, manifested by the carnal mind, their disobedience to, or rebellion against His laws, their fretfulness and murmuring against His dispensations. III. WHAT GOD HAS ALREADY DONE FOR THEM. He has given His Son (see vers. 6–8). And consider—1. His dignity (John i. 1; Col. i. 13–17; Heb. i. 2), and His dearness to His Father, whom the Father gave to die. 2. The unworthiness of the persons for whom He suffered; how this demonstrates God's love, as they were enemies, &c. He has justified them by Christ's death, reconciled them to Himself, and united their hearts in love to Him. And this He has done on the most easy condition, viz., repentance and faith. IV. THE GROUND HEREBY LAID FOR HOPING THAT HE WILL DO ALL THAT REMAINS TO BE DONE. "We shall be saved by His life"—that is, sanctified and glorified. The solidity of our hope in this respect will appear from three particulars. 1. From what He has done already. The incarnation, life, sufferings, death, resurrection, &c., of God's Son, have afforded much greater displays of Divine wisdom, power, and love, than any other that can possibly be made. To save the lost, to reconcile the enemy, to heal the sick, to raise the dead, were greater and more difficult than to guard the found, to preserve the friendly, to keep in health the restored, to sustain the life of the quickened and revived, and to save to the uttermost. 2. From the situation of the person from whom this remaining good is to be done. If not less weak, unworthy, and guilty than they were before, yet they are better disposed, and less opposed to the work to be done in them and for them. Therefore there is less obstruction in the way. 3. From the nature of the means employed to do it. If, when enemies, we were reconciled by the death of God's Son, much easier is it that when made His friends we should be preserved and saved to the uttermost by His life. For life is more powerful than death; especially life after death; life for evermore. (*Joseph Benson.*) *Conflict prolonged unnecessarily:*—The battle of New Orleans was fought after the treaty of peace had been signed at Ghent, the news of which arrived soon after. And this is what conflict with God means—warfare continued when there is no longer any occasion for it. (*W. Baxendale.*) *Salvation by Christ's life:*—1. The resurrection and life of Jesus are the sure

pledge of the resurrection and life of all His people. 2. Christ, in His present life at God's right hand, is invested with "power to give eternal life to as many as the Father hath given Him." 3. Jesus is employed in interceding for His people: and the evidence of God's full satisfaction in the finished work of His Son, afforded by His rising to life from the grave, gives us the most assured confidence that He never pleads in vain, that the Father heareth Him always. 4. All the arrangements of providence are in His hands. He not only exercises a general superintendence of the affairs of the world for the advancement and final triumph of His spiritual kingdom; there is a minuter care—a care which extends to each particular individual of His subjects in his passage through life. 5. By the power which is committed to Him in His meditorial life, He will perfect the salvation of His people, by raising them at last from the grave. He is "Lord of the dead." Their spirits are with Him. Their bodies, though for a time left under the power of the last enemy, are still His. He will "redeem them from death, He will ransom them from the power of the grave." He ransomed them by price on earth: He will redeem them by power in heaven. (*R. Wardlaw, D.D.*) *The salvation of believers carried on by the life of Christ in heaven:*—I. THE LIFE OF CHRIST. 1. Its present sphere—(1) In the glory which He had with the Father before the world was. (2) At the Father's right hand of power. 2. Its present occupation. (1) He ever liveth to make intercession. (2) All power in heaven and earth which has been given Him He employs. (*a*) To serve His friends. (*b*) To extend His dominion. II. HOW WE ARE SAVED BY THIS LIFE. He—1. Perpetuates the justification, and liberty of access to God, procured by Him for us, when we first believed on Him. 2. Frustrates the attempts of our adversaries to injure us. 3. Replenishes us with grace for the furtherance of our sanctification in the use of the appointed means. 4. Revives us with Divine support and consolation in seasons of extremity. (*J. Leifchild, D.D.*) *The genuine Christian:*—I. IS THE SUBJECT OF A GREAT MORAL CHANGE IN HIS RELATION TO GOD. All were once "enemies to God." The language presents to us two facts—1. The most terrible condition in which it is possible to conceive a moral creature. "Enemies to God." The fact that men are not conscious of this is no proof that it does not exist. Emotion often settles down into a principle of action too regular to become a matter of consciousness. The father's love, which in its first stage was a warm emotion, in the course of years becomes a principle of action, that rules the life and explains the conduct; and thought concentrated on the object, can at any time bring up this emotion. 1. There are facts which indicate a man's state of mind towards another. If, *e.g.*, I find a man—(1) Habitually acting contrary to my well-known wishes. (2) Habitually ignoring and shunning those who are my avowed friends. (3) Associating with my determined opponents, he proves himself my enemy in each case. In such ways as these, sinful men demonstrate their enmity to God, whatever they may say. 2. But what a state is this to be in! (1) How ungrounded! "They hated Me without a cause." (2) How guilty! hating the infinitely Righteous and the infinitely Good. (3) How mad! a worm raising its head against the thunders of the universe. "Hast thou an arm like God?" &c. 2. A suggestion which serves to correct a theological error—that God was an enemy whose love had to be purchased, whereas it is quite the other way. II. HAS BEEN THUS CHANGED BY MEANS OF THE DEATH OF CHRIST. We were "reconciled to God by the death of His Son." How is enmity to be destroyed? There is only one way in which from the constitution of mind it is possible—by love. This God does by the death of Christ, which is—1. The grandest effect of God's love. The universe is an effect of His love, but this is the grandest. 2. The mightiest demonstration of God's love. It is impossible for the human mind to conceive of anything more convincing. All arguments and facts bearing on this subject seem to concentrate in this. This is the great focal and ultimate exhaustive argument. 3. The special organ of God's love. The Cross is the great instrument of His Spirit, in convincing, converting, justifying, and sanctifying sinners. It is that by "which the world is crucified unto us," &c. III. THAT HE HAS BEEN THUS CHANGED BY CHRIST'S DEATH IS AN INVINCIBLE ARGUMENT THAT HIS SALVATION WILL BE COMPLETED. "Much more." The following thoughts may develop the force of Paul's *a fortiori* reasoning. 1. The most difficult part of the work has already been accomplished. Any power may destroy an enemy, but it requires the highest power to destroy enmity. The reconciler or peacemaker is the divinest character in the universe. This work has been done; what remains to be done is the development of this new affection. 2. This most difficult part of the work has been accomplished—(1) When you were

in the most repulsive condition. Enemies repel us from acts of kindness. "Vengeance for enemies," says corrupt human nature. "Scarcely for a righteous man will one," &c. (2) By a dying Saviour; the remaining and easier part of the work, now we are in a more pleasing position, is accomplished by a living Saviour. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*)

VER. 11. **And not only so, but we joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom we have received the atonement.**—*Joy in God*:—I. JOY IN GOD IS THE CLIMAX OF CHRISTIAN PRIVILEGE. 1. In the whole passage from ver. 1 we have an account of the new feelings that are introduced by faith into the heart of a believer. (1) Peace with God, of whom we could never think formerly, if we thought of Him aright, but with disquietude. (2) Exultation in the hope of glory. (3) Exultation, even in tribulations, the process which manifests a work of grace here, and so serves to confirm all our expectations of a harvest of glory and blessedness hereafter. 2. And indeed how can it be otherwise, the apostle reasons. He hath already given us His Son, will He not with Him freely give us all things? And now that He has done so much in circumstances so unlikely, will He not carry on the work of deliverance to its final accomplishment when circumstances have changed? It is thus that the believer persuades himself into a still more settled assurance of the love of God to him than before; and whereas (ver. 2) he only rejoiced in the hope, he now rejoices in possession. 3. To feel as if you were in the company of God—to have delight in this feeling and find that the minutes spent in communion are far the sweetest intervals of your earthly pilgrimage—to have a sense of God all the day long, and that sense of Him in every way so delicious as to make the creature seem vain and tasteless in the comparison is certainly not a common attainment; yet no true saint can be altogether a stranger to it. "Rejoice evermore," says the apostle, "the Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice," says the patriarch. It is easy to walk in the rounds of a mechanical observation. It is easy to compel the head to obedience against the grain of the heart. It is very easy to bear towards God the homage of respect, or fearfulness, or solemn emotion. To serve Him as a master to whom you are bound in the way of obligation is more the tendency of nature than to serve Him as a friend to whom you are bound by the heart. But is not the latter the far more enviable habit?—to have the spirit of adoption and cry out Abba, Father, rather than to drivel before Him among the restraints and the reluctances of a slave?—to do His will, not as if by the force of a compulsory law, or as if under the stipulation to discharge the articles of a bond, or as if pursued by an unrelenting taskmaster? This is the way in which God's will is apt to be done on earth; but it is not the way in heaven—where the doing of His pleasure is not a drudgery for which they get their meat and drink, but where their meat and drink is to do the will of God, where the presence of God ever enlivens them, and their own pleasure is just His pleasure reflected back again. To carry onward the soul to this were to work upon it a greater transformation than to recall it from profligacy to mere external reformation. II. MANY ARE STRANGERS TO THIS JOY. 1. There are those who care little about the matters of the soul and eternity, who live as if the visible theatre which surrounds them were their all; all they mind is earthly things, and of joy in God they have no comprehension. Give them a warm habitation, stock it well with this world's comforts, and surround them with a thriving circle of companionship, and they would have no objection to be done with God and eternity for ever. When the preacher speaks of the woefulness of their spiritual condition, their response is, "We pay our debts; we can lift an unabashed visage in society; we compassionate the necessitous," &c., &c. We do not deny this, but we charge you with joying in the creature, and not at all in the Creator; and, to verify your woefulness, you have only to read the future history of this world. That scene, on which you have fastened your affections so closely that you cannot tear them away from it, will soon be torn away from you. It is then that God will step in. And had your joy been in Him, then heaven would have been your fit habitation. But as the tree falleth so it lies; and you rise from the grave with the taste, the character, the feelings which you had when you breathed your last; and so all that is in your heart, carrying upon it a recoil from Him, will meet with nothing but that which must give dread and disturbance to your carnal affections; and these affections will wander in vain for the objects which solaced them upon earth. It is thus that he who soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption. 2. There are others who make the interest of their soul a topic of great care and thought; who have recourse to active

measures in the prosecution of this great interest, and are all alive to the great object of being right with God. It is indeed a most natural forth-setting of the whole man on such an occasion, to proceed on the principle of "work and win," just as an ordinary workman does. It is not his work or his master that gives him pleasure, but only the receipt of his wages. There is many a seeker after life eternal, toiling with all his might, who has no joy in God—satisfied if he can escape hell and reach heaven; but who does not reflect that it is altogether essential to this blessedness to have such a taste for the Divine character as to be glad in the contemplation of it—to have such a liking for the Divine life as that the life itself shall be reward enough for him. Without this, all he can do is but the bodily exercise that profiteth little; and that, instead of heightening his affection for God, may only exasperate the impatience, and aggravate the weariness and distaste that he feels in His service. III. HOW IS THIS PRIVILEGE TO BE OBTAINED. There is a high ground of spiritual affection and of joy in God, to which you would like to be elevated. But you see nothing between you and that lofty region, saving a range of precipice that you cannot scale, and against which you vainly wreak all the native energies that belong to you. Let one door, hitherto unobserved, be pointed out, open to all who knock at it, and through which an easy and before unseen ascent conducts you to the light and purity and enjoyment of those upper regions after which you aspire; and what other practical effect should all the obstacles and impossibilities you have before encountered have upon you, than just to guide your footsteps to the alone way of access that is at all practicable? This is just the open door of Christ's mediatorship. 1. It has been objected to the gospel—(1) That it exacts an unnatural and unattainable elevation of character; and this is a most likely objection to proceed from him who looks at this economy with half an eye. (2) The very same people may also, on looking at another side of this dispensation, be heard to object to the freeness of the gospel. 2. Now these two parts are those which give support and stability to each other. It is just by faith that you enter upon peace and hope and love and joy; through Jesus Christ, not by working for the atonement, but simply by receiving the atonement, that you are translated into this desirable habit of the soul. (*T. Chalmers, D.D.*) *Joy in God through Christ*:—There is a remarkable peculiarity in Paul's disposition. Thwarted in his movements, yet he is not despondent. Exposed to persecution, yet he is not embittered in his feelings. He ever rejoices in the hope of the glory of God; and not only so, but joy and triumph pervade the very heart of his trials. Singular, and aside from revelation, inexplicable circumstance, that a man so sorely tried, should have derived his only joy from an invisible, incomprehensible source! Not so does human nature joy in God. Yet it is strange that man should not seek his chief happiness in the Author of his being. If it were not now essentially deranged, the world of mankind would be advancing in its cycles of holy happiness around the throne of unsullied blessedness with the harmony and celerity with which the planets move on in their majestic orbits around the source of material light. Until man, then, shall be led to seek his happiness in God, not only must he be in pursuit of shadows, but be defeating the true and ultimate purpose of his being. But how shall he be brought to joy in God? I need not ask whether it would have been possible, had we been left to the dim light of nature, to look up to God as the source of joy. The great spirit of natural religion comes not within the definite purview of a finite mind. He is too retired and silent to influence our habitual emotions. Let us think of God as the omnipotent Creator, the beneficent Father of the universe. Man may not fail to be wrapt in admiration as he casts his eye over the beauty and brightness of creation; but when the thunders utter their voices, and the cloud surcharged with the element of death approaches nearer and yet nearer, shall not fear and trembling take hold on him? The wiser heathen thought that God was good; but "how can man be just with God?" was their natural inquiry. What is the Divine goodness but that all-pervading feeling of God's mighty heart, which leads Him to promote the highest happiness of His moral universe by at once rewarding the righteous and punishing the wicked? It is in vain to say that your conviction of God's goodness fortifies your heart against all prognostications of evil. If you feel that you have sinned, you must know that you enjoy no harmonious alliance with your Maker and Judge. Have you no fear of Him when you think that He may be strict to mark iniquity? Can you commit yourself with conscious and joyous safety to His supreme disposal. I contend that it is impossible to joy in God, unless He be revealed to man's distinct and intimate knowledge; unless we have been made to feel that He takes a deep

and deathless interest in our welfare; has no pleasure in our death; yea, that He may glorify His own name, and illustrate the stability of His throne, in our salvation. Now, where can be gathered any satisfactory knowledge of God, except from the Word of God Himself? As the sun reveals to us the beauties and sublimities of God's works, so does Jesus Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, unveil the glories of the eternal throne. Through Him all the attributes of Deity shine forth with vindicated and resplendent lustre, yet sweetly attempered to human vision. God, the great, the unsearchable One, is brought down to us in such an attitude that we cannot fail to comprehend. God, the infinite Spirit, is brought near to our hearts. Let us appeal to the true Christian, and I ask him whether it be not solely through Christ that he is enabled to joy in God as the Ruler of the universe, and to rejoice in the contemplation of His perfections? Whether a sense of God's favour in Christ be not more to him than the riches and honours and pleasures of the world? "The joy of the Lord is their strength." Or let us summon in testimony the newborn soul. You were transfixed with the arrows of remorse and dread. You wandered about vainly seeking peace for your soul. God shined into your mind to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of Himself in the face of Jesus Christ"; and then it was that the tear was wiped away and that your heart leaped for joy. Or, we might transport you to the bed of death. See there the dying Christian! Why does he not flinch from the king of terrors? Oh, it is the remembrance that God is in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself; it is the deathless conviction of his soul that God, even his own God in Christ, will never leave, and never forsake him. (*R. W. Dickenson, D.D.*) *Joy in a reconciled God*:—"And not only so." It is the second time in which these words occur, and a similar expression is used (ver. 2). The apostle had been mentioning great privileges, and had gone to yet greater; from silver to gold, and from gold to the priceless crystal; and when he had reached conceivably the highest point, he adds, "And not only so." There is always in Christian privilege a yet beyond. The ancient mariners spoke of Ultima Thule, the end of the universe; but more venturous prows forced their way to a new world, so we concluded in the early days of Christian experience that we never could enjoy greater privileges, but we have pushed far beyond, and at the end of all there will be written, "And not only so." The text seems to me to describe the progress of a soul towards God. I. THE FIRST STEP is rather implied than expressed. THERE WAS A TIME WHEN WE HAD NOT RECEIVED THE RECONCILIATION, AND WERE MADE SENSIBLE THAT WE NEEDED IT. 1. We were led to see that from necessity of His nature God must be angry with us. A being who has no anger against evil has no love towards goodness. This is a painful discovery, but a very simple one. One would think that every man ought to see this, but no man does see it till the Spirit of God convinces him of sin, and even then the natural heart endeavours to shut its eyes to it. 2. Another degree of this same step is a consciousness that we are at enmity with God. "Why," says one, "I pay respect to God, and go to a place of worship, and therefore I am not at enmity with Him." Yet listen; I am certain that if I could assure you that there was no God, and consequently no need of repentance, and no fear of punishment, and consequently no need of pardon, it would be a relief to many. 3. A further portion of this step is the perception that, in order to perfect reconciliation with God, there must be something done Godward, by which the insult and injury done to His law shall be recompensed; and, next, a thorough change in us before we can walk with God in perfect communion. In order to reconciliation it is not enough that one party should be forgiving, the other must yield too. 5. The last degree of this step is the desire to be reconciled to God. This is the dawn of grace, and a blessed dawn it is. II. THE NEXT STEP is RECEIVING THE RECONCILIATION. Observe how we are reconciled. 1. It is not by working out a reconciliation; although this is the first instinct of a man who finds himself at enmity with God. The heart suggests a multitude of expedients—ceremonialism, amendment, future carefulness, &c., &c. But the text does not say that we have made any atonement. We do not make it, or buy it, or complete it, we receive it. It is a free gift. We receive it perfect. 2. The process of receiving reconciliation. (1) The man being already on the first step, knowing that he wants reconciliation, believes the truth about the gospel. Now, the gospel is that reconciliation, which is made for every soul that believes in Jesus. God is not reconciled to anybody who will not believe in Christ, but He is reconciled to every soul that does. (2) The next step is to become a believer, because reconciled. (3) Then peace flows into the soul as the result of the reconciliation. (4) Then the heart drops her former enmity to God. III. THE THIRD STEP IS JOY IN GOD. 1. No man ever

rejoices in God except he who receives the atonement. Suppose a man should say, "I do not want an atonement; I am a good man, and always have been; I have not broken the law." Well, he will rejoice in himself, but if we have nothing of our own, and have simply to receive salvation as a matter of the free grace, then we joy in God. 2. The moment a man is reconciled to God his view of God alters entirely. A neighbour has done you a displeasure, perhaps he is a very excellent man, but you read everything he does in the evil light of suspicion. If, however, by a discovery of his kindness you escape from prejudice, his whole conduct wears another aspect. So the soul when reconciled to God from that moment reads Him aright. 3. He delights in God. (1) In His very existence and person. That there is a God is to the Christian supreme bliss. The infidel may say there is no God, but if that were true I should have lost my father, my friend, my all. The Christian feels that his hope of prevailing over injustice and wrong lies in the fact that there is a reigning God who will set all things right at last. And since we believe there is to be a fuller revelation of Himself in heaven, is not that our main reason for longing to be there? As loyal subjects rejoice that they have a king, as affectionate children rejoice that they have a father, as a loving spouse rejoiceth that she hath a husband; so do we, but infinitely beyond all this, rejoice that we have a God. (2) In His character. All the attributes of God are themes of joy: His power; His mercy; His immutability; His faithfulness to His promises, &c., &c. (3) In His sovereignty. Before our reconciliation we cavil at the Divine will, and set up our own. But, the moment we are reconciled we consent that Jehovah should do as He wills. What better rule could be than the absolute empire of love? What can be better as a government for mankind than the absolute authority of one so good, so true, so holy, and so just? (4) Under all His dispensations. Of course we joy in God under comfortable dispensations. Query, whether we do not then very much divide our joy between the comforts and the God; but in dark times, when the comforts all go, we can joy in God if reconciled. 4. Joy in God is—(1) The happiest of all joys. (2) The most elevating. Those who joy in wealth grow avaricious; in their friends, too often lose nobility of spirit; but he who boasts in God grows like God. (3) Solid; there are good reasons for it. (4) Abiding. If I rejoice in the sun, it sets; if in the earth, it shall be burnt up; if in myself, I shall die; but to triumph in One who never fails or changes, this is lasting joy. Conclusion: The only sad reflection is, that there are so many who know nothing about joy in God. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

The joy of salvation:—There are various kinds of joy—1. Maternal: such as was expressed by Eve at the birth of Cain, or Hannah at the birth of Samuel. 2. The mariner's: when, after a long and dreary absence, he again beholds his native land. 3. The warrior's: such as David experienced when the women went out to greet their youthful champion with their songs. 4. That of the emancipated: such as that of the slaves on that memorable morning when their liberty was proclaimed. 5. The nation's: at the coronation of a king. These are instances of legitimate joy; but what are these when compared with the "joy of salvation"? I. IN THE NATURE OF SALVATION ARE CONTAINED ALL THE ELEMENTS OF THE HIGHEST JOY. Suppose yourself to be a prisoner driven away to an inhospitable clime—as the Poles were—there to toil in gloomy mines; and suppose yourself suddenly restored to liberty and home. Suppose you were sick, nigh unto death, and a skilful hand should restore you. Or suppose yourself condemned to die as a criminal, and the royal clemency should send you a full and free pardon, when you had mounted the scaffold and were expecting death. Salvation is all this, and more (Isa. lxi. 3.) II. MANY MISTAKES HAVE BEEN MADE ON THIS SUBJECT. The joy we contend for arises out of a sense of pardon, peace, reconciliation with God. (Psa. xxxii. 2; Isa. lii. 7, 9; Rom. viii. 1, 3.) This reconciliation is complete (chap. viii. 33, 39), honourable and abiding; we therefore assert every Christian has reason for being joyful. To prevent mistake—note—1. That we do not assert this joy to be perfect. Some imagine there can be no joy if it be not of the highest kind, without alloy or interruption. Persons entertaining such extravagant notions are sure to be disappointed. We are imperfect creatures in an enemy's country, and surrounded by temptations. Is it always mid-day? Is there no dawn, and no evening? Is it always midsummer? Is there no spring, and no autumn? And why, then, expect joy in perfection, or not at all? 2. We must not, therefore, be surprised if the Christian is sometimes depressed. 3. There is often more joy experienced than we are inclined to believe, and than others give us credit for. Suppose you were to be deprived of your Christian privileges, then you would value your present enjoyments. We only

know the real value of our mercies when we have lost them. III. LET US VIEW THIS AS A MATTER OF FACT. 1. Christians might, and ought to be happy, for there is every provision and reason for it (James i. 5; Luke xi. 13). Perhaps some Christian will reply, "I am not as happy as I expected, or as I was wont to be." Very possibly. But perhaps—1. You have grieved, quenched, and so expelled the Holy Spirit. Business may have been encroaching more than is legitimate. (2) You have given way to a petulant and angry spirit. (3) You have been regarding religion as a privilege, and not as a duty. Idle Christians never can, and never ought to be happy. If, then, the Christian is not joyful in God, it is his own fault. There is guilt as well as folly in such a state of mind. 2. Now let us look at those who have illustrated the joy of salvation. See it exemplified—(1) In the conduct of Christians during the time of trial (Hab. iii. 17; Acts xx. 24; 2 Cor. vii. 4). Think of the apostles and martyrs. (2) In the peace which pervades the various holy communities of Christians (Isa. xxvi. 1, 4). (3) In the peace which has always been the result of real religious revivals. (4) But the fullest examples of it yet remain to be seen. This is clear from the prophecies. The golden age of the Church and the world is yet future. IV. Let us now inquire WHETHER SALVATION WILL WARRANT SUCH FEELINGS OF DELIGHT. 1. What is the object in which the Christian rejoices? Certainly not himself, his attainments, or his merits (Gal. vi. 12). But—(1) In God the Father. (2) The Son. (3) The Holy Ghost. (4) In the prospect of eternal glory. 2. Do not these objects then justify us in cultivating the highest joy? At present, however, the Christian's joy is only in the bud, "it doth not yet appear what it shall be." 3. If you submit to this salvation, you will fill all heaven with joy; for "there is joy in heaven among the angels of God," &c. 4. Compare the Christian's with the worldling's joy (Prov. xiv. 13; Eccles. ii. 2, vii. 3, 6). (*C. Dukes, M.A.*) *Christian joy*:—1. The desire of happiness is the most powerful and influential principle of human nature. It is common to man in every circumstance of life—the prince in his palace, and the peasant in his cottage, &c. It is that which governs our feelings, forms our plans, and directs our pursuits. 2. This desire is lawful and beneficial; it corresponds with the design of man's creation, and is in harmony with the will of his Creator. The glory of God is connected with the happiness of His creatures. To promote these, the commands and promises were given, and the plan of redemption executed. 3. Why, then, is there so much misery in the world? The cause is the influence of sin in the heart and on the conduct. Sin is the greatest enemy to the welfare of man. Consider:—I. THE SOURCE FROM WHICH THE JOY OF THE CHRISTIAN IS DERIVED. It does not proceed from himself, or the objects around him—it is not the false joy produced by self-complacency, or by the possessions and amusements of the world. The believer rejoices in God—in Him who is perfectly blessed in Himself, and who is the only source of real happiness to His creatures. The Christian's joy arises from—1. Reconciliation with God (Isa. lxi. 10). He views God, not as an enemy, but as a friend. 2. Communion with God. Reconciliation will promote confidence, and this will lead to intercourse. The Christian "dwells in the secret place of the Most High," holds delightful fellowship with the Father of spirits, and gets nearer heaven in devout meditation, ardent desire, and warm affections. 3. A participation in the blessedness of God. The Lord is his portion: all the perfections of Jehovah are engaged for his welfare, and all the promises of His Word are designed for his comfort and encouragement. He enjoys God in everything; in the bounties of Providence, as well as in the ordinances of religion. He has many blessings now in possession—peace of mind, &c., but he has the fulness of joy reserved for him, of which he has now the foretaste. II. THE MEDIUM THROUGH WHICH THIS JOY IS COMMUNICATED. Christ is the medium of—1. Reconciliation with God. This arises from that satisfaction which He made to Divine Justice by His voluntary death on the Cross. Those "who were enemies, are reconciled to God by the death of His Son." 2. Communion with God. "No man cometh to the Father but by Him." 3. All spiritual blessings. In Him there is treasured up a fulness of grace, to pardon, to sanctify, to comfort, to direct, to support under all the trials and duties of life, and to prepare for eternal glory; and of His fulness all true believers have "received grace for grace." III. THE PROPERTIES BY WHICH THE CHRISTIAN'S JOY IS DISTINGUISHED. "The joy of the hypocrite is but for a moment"; "the pleasures of sin are but for a season"; "the triumphing of the wicked is short." This joy is distinguished from these, as it is—1. Spiritual in its nature. It is not that which depends on external circumstances. It is deeply rooted in the heart, the proper

seat of happiness. It is there that the desire of happiness dwells; and till the heart is filled the desire will not be gratified. 2. Holy in its influence. Carnal mirth has a tendency to dissipate the mind and to corrupt the heart; for its source is polluted. But Christian joy purifies the mind, by bringing it into close contact with all that is worthy of its noblest powers. 3. Permanent. The fountain from which it flows is inexhaustible; and as the Christian pilgrim advances in his journey heavenward he arrives nearer its source. Conclusion: 1. Learn the value of true religion. It is friendly to the best interests of man. 2. Let those who are destitute of this joy seek it by immediate application to the Saviour of sinners. 3. Let the Christian seek an increase of spiritual joy. *True happiness:*—I. WHENCE IT PROCEEDS—from God. II. WHAT IS ITS NATURE—we joy in God as—1. The God of all grace. 2. Our covenant God and Father. 3. Our everlasting portion. III. HOW IT IS DERIVED—through Christ, &c. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The atonement:*—I. WHAT IS MEANT BY THE ATONEMENT. At-one-ment, *i.e.*, reconciliation. This—1. Supposes that there must have been some disagreement; not so now. Mark the aggravating circumstances with which man's rebellion is characterised. It is—(1) Most unnatural rebellion; it is the rebellion of children against the parent of their existence. (2) Most ungrateful; it is the rebellion of children that have been nourished and have been brought up. (3) Most hopeless. Rebel man could not reconcile himself; he could furnish no consideration sufficiently valuable; his fellow-man could not help him; an angel's arm could not rescue him from impending ruin. 2. Divine in its appointment. (1) To the Divine Father it belonged to say what should be done on this awful emergency. It was His sovereign will and pleasure that Jehovah Jesus should assume our nature, and that in our nature He should live, and die, and that His death should be a proper atonement for the sins of our guilty race. "It became Him, for whom are all things," &c. Did it so? Why, there are many so-called Christians who will not hesitate to affirm that it became the Divine Being to do no such thing. But "let God be true, though every man be a liar." Jehovah alone was competent to say what it became Him to do. And He who alone was competent to say what ought to be done, and what became Him to do, had alone the right. What! had man at the bar the right? Would this be allowed in any well-regulated government? 3. Complete in its nature. (1) Those typical atonements, which shadowed forth this great sacrifice, were imperfect—(*a*) In their nature, because in the mere blood of an animal there was no real intrinsic worth. (*b*) In their very design. They were only intended to be shadows of better things to come. (*c*) In the fact of their repetition; because if one had been complete why then repeat the sacrifice? (2) But we are told that Christ was offered "once for all," and once offered, it was complete; eternal redemption was procured. The sufferings of our Saviour were intense; but yet without the dignity of Christ as a Divine person, they could have been of no avail. That is the point that stamped His sufferings with infinite value. Hereby justice receives its demands; the holiness of God is preserved untarnished; the wisdom of God is testified in devising such an expedient; the inviolable truth of God is preserved; the Divine penalty of the law is inflicted; sin becomes remissible; the greatest hatred to sin is expressed, while the greatest compassion to the sinner is manifested. 4. Unchanging in its efficacy. There are some remedies that are efficacious for a time only; but this sovereign remedy has not lost its power through the revolution of years. II. WHAT IS IT TO RECEIVE THE ATONEMENT? 1. It must be received by an act of the mind, on conviction that it is the truth. 2. But it may be admitted by the understanding, where it is not cordially and experimentally received. And no man will ever experimentally receive the atonement till he has received another great truth antecedent to this—the universal depravity and guilt of man. These two things are connected together. If I am not a sinner, or if sin be a very trivial thing, where is the necessity of atonement? But if I am a sinner, and if the demerit of sin be beyond all that I can conceive, why, then, there must be an atonement, or I am undone. 3. It must be practically received. That man does not truly and really glory in the Cross of Christ who is not, by the Cross of Christ, crucified to the world, and the world crucified unto Him. III. WHERE THE ATONEMENT IS THUS RECEIVED, GREAT WILL BE THE JOY. 1. We have joy. Before you received the atonement you had sorrow. At last you were directed to the atonement, and you ventured on it; you received the reconciliation, sorrow fled away, and joy sprung up in your heart. 2. We "joy in God." We do not merely joy in justification, nor in this reconciliation, nor in introduction to the throne, nor in the prospect of glory that awaits us yonder, nor

tribulation, and (vers. 1-4) although there may be grounds of joy. No; if any man joy or glory let him "glory in the Lord." (1) "We joy in God Himself." He that has received the atonement "dwells in God, and God in him." And where he dwells he joys. "He joys in God," in all He has—in His wisdom to guide and direct, in His power to guide and defend, in His grace to renew and save. (2) But how can we thus joy in God? "Through our Lord Jesus Christ." Fallen man, even from the first moment of his apostacy to this hour, has never approached his Creator with success, but through the intervention of blood. "I am the way," &c. 3. How rational is this joy. Not like the joy of the wicked, for which no reason can be given. 4. How pure. Those who dwell here dwell in a sacred and holy atmosphere; there is nothing to defile. Not like the polluting joys of sin. 5. How lasting. Not like the short-lived joys of the wicked, which are "like the crackling of thorns under a pot." Conclusion: Learn—1. How vital to evangelical, saving religion, is this great doctrine of the atonement. 2. That this life-giving religion is a joy-producing religion. Religion is the life of all our delights, and the soul of all our joys. 3. That this life-giving, joy-producing religion may be ours even now. "We have now received the atonement." 4. That we who have realised this religion will not wish to monopolise it ourselves. Monopoly in religion is the worst monopoly of all. (*R. Newton, D.D.*) *The atonement a subjective fact:*—The word "atonement" means reconciliation, and this is the old English meaning—at-one-ment. Thus Shakespeare, "He seeks to make atonement between the Duke of Glo'ster and our brothers." Learn that the atonement is—I. A CONSCIOUS POSSESSION OF THE SOUL. "We have now received." He does not speak of it as a fact accomplished years ago, nor as a speculative doctrine, but as something of which he and his readers were at that moment conscious. It is one thing for man to have an atonement in his theology, discuss it with ability and defend it with enthusiasm, and another thing for him to have it as a blessed experience. As a mere doctrine—1. It often makes a man an arrogant bigot; but as a feeling always an humble saint. 2. It may light men to hell, and may there aggravate their misery. As a feeling it will conduct them to heaven, and encircle them with the light of immortality. II. A conscious possession of the soul IMPARTED BY CHRIST. "By whom." Christ is the Great, the only, Reconciler of the soul to God. "God is in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." How? In the only way in which reconciliation could be affected. By affording the strongest possible demonstration of Divine love. "God so loved the world," &c. Legislation, philosophy, ethics, religion, civilisation, poetry—none, nor all of these, can bring this at-one-ment into the soul. This is the exclusive work of Christ. III. A conscious possession of the soul, INSPIRING IT WITH JOY IN THE ETERNAL. "We joy in God." The joy springs from the assurance that the Almighty is once more our friend. This joy may include—1. Thanksgiving, which inspires the songs of immortality; the reconciled soul traces its atonement to the free, tender, boundless love of God through Jesus Christ. 2. Security. If God is our friend, His love is unchangeable, His power almighty, His resources illimitable. And what a sense of security must His friendship inspire! 3. Adoration. Had we a friend that bestowed upon us the highest favours, inspiring our gratitude, and whose promises and capacities assured us of our security, if he were imperfect in moral character, we could not heartily rejoice in his friendship. Moral admiration is the highest element of joy: and this requires moral excellence in the object. God has this in an infinite degree. Thus, if He is our friend, we may well rejoice in Him, with the most ecstatic rapture and triumphant delight. Conclusion: Learn—1. The paramount necessity of human nature—atonement with God. 2. To appreciate the intervention of Christ, by whom alone it can be affected. No system of belief, no code of morality can accomplish it. To the gospel men must look. 3. The test of genuine religion—joy "in God." The world has joy in creatures and in worthless things—the joy of the truly good is joy in God Himself. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Christ's vicarious suffering:*—A physician testifies: I have been chargeable with forgetfulness of God, and with disobedience to His commands; so that I am numbered among those whom He has threatened with punishment. How, then, can I escape? Such is the constitution of my mind; such has been my education as a man of honour; such is my regard to the inviolability of my own word, and such my contempt for whatever has the semblance of falsehood; that, were God to allow His threatening to remain unfulfilled, in consequence of forgiving me, "simply, immediately, and unconditionally," I could not esteem or pay homage to His character, even though constrained to acknowledge Him as the governor of the

world. But, said he, I have read of atonement on the principle of vicarious suffering. It was exhibited, under the Mosaic dispensation, in the erection of the brazen serpent, in the sacrifice of the paschal lamb, and in the ceremony of the scape-goat. This principle is, in fact, a law of Providence, which is traceable throughout society, in every age, and in every state of advancement. It forms the link of connection between the Old Testament and the New; and now that, in seriousness, I am led to ask, How can a sinner be washed from his guilt? reason, feeling, and observation, unite with the authority of Scripture in disposing me to rest on the expiatory efficiency of Christ's vicarious suffering. To me has been given faith in Jesus Christ: and, I now perceive, that pardon conferred, in consideration of what my Saviour has endured, sheds a lustre both over the milder and more awful attributes of the Divine character. My soul is satisfied; my heart is enlarged; my eye is fixed in admiration of the glory of God, as it appears "in the face of Jesus Christ." (*Wilson's Dissertation on the Reasonableness of Christianity.*)

Vers. 12-21. **By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men.**—*The entrance of sin into the world*:—Sin entered as a foe into a city, a wolf into a fold, a plague into a house; as an enemy to destroy, a thief to rob, a poison to infect. (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) *Introduction of sin into the world*:—The word "entered" indicates the introduction of a principle till then external to the world, and the word "by" throws back the responsibility of the event on him who, as it were, pierced the dyke through which the irruption took place. Paul evidently holds, with Scripture, the previous existence of evil in a superhuman sphere. Assuredly no subsequent transgression is comparable to this. It created, here below, a state of things which subsequent sins only served to confirm. If the question is asked, how a being created good could perpetrate such an act, we answer that a decision like this does not necessarily suppose evil in its author. There is in moral life not only a conflict between good and evil, but also between good and good, lower good and higher good. The act of eating the fruit of the tree on which the prohibition rested, was not illegitimate in itself. It became guilty only through the prohibition. Man, therefore, found himself placed—and such was the necessary condition of the moral development through which he had to pass—between the inclination to eat—an inclination innocent in itself, but intended to be sacrificed—and the positively good Divine order. At the instigation of an already existent power of revolt, man drew from the depths of his liberty a decision whereby he adhered to the inclination rather than to the Divine Will, and thus created in his whole race, still identified with his person, the permanent proclivity to prefer inclination to obligation. (*Prof. Godet, D.D.*) *Sin and death*:—I. THE ORIGIN AND DIFFUSION OF SIN. 1. As to the origin of sin. "By one man sin entered into the world." (1) Sin is "the transgression of the law," and the "one man" by whom it entered into the world was Adam. He was created after the image of the Almighty, and placed in Eden, where we behold a test of obedience, "the tree of knowledge of good and evil," with regard to which, "the Lord God commanded the man, saying, . . . thou shalt not eat of it." Here, then, was the law, showing the right of God to command, the obligation of man to obey, and the responsibility and the final account which man must render to the Almighty for his conduct. Satan, animated by malignant hatred to God and holiness, became the tempter, that he might introduce sin. Our first parents yielded, an event which changed the path of nature, and whose mighty consequences will be felt throughout eternity. (2) The transgression of our first parents was of vast and heinous amount. There are some who have been inclined to treat it with levity, and have sometimes inquired, "What mighty offence could there be in the eating of an apple?" In answer, note the sins connected with this transgression. There was—(*a*) Unbelief, because they denied the right to command and the penalty that existed. (*b*) Ambition, because they aspired to be as gods, distinguishing between good and evil. (*c*) Sensuality, because they wished to gratify mere animal appetite. (*d*) Ingratitude, because they turned against that God who had spread around them every enjoyment. 2. As to its diffusion, "all have sinned." (1) As it is impossible that an evil tree should bring forth good fruit, so it was impossible, when the nature of our first parent had become corrupted, that one of his descendants could enter into the world except as being a partaker of corruption also. Each, then, enters the world possessing what we term original sin. (2) This important doctrine is indicated in Gen. v. 3, where Adam is said to have

begotten a son "in his own likeness, after his own image," apparently in contrast to the fact that he was formed "after the likeness of God." The same doctrine is affirmed in the inquiries of Job and Bildad, "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one." "How can he be clean that is born of a woman?" There is the confession of David, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity." There is the statement of Christ, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." There is the asseveration of the apostle, "The old man is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts." (3) Now, that original sin always produces actual transgression. Hence it is that the children of the first man exemplify in themselves unbelief, ambition, sensuality, and ingratitude. Whatever modification may have been formed by education, example, or interest, this one fact remains, that man everywhere is a sinner. The charges of Scripture are without exception or limit: "All flesh has corrupted his way upon the earth." "There is none that doeth good, no not one." "The heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." II. THE ORIGIN AND DIFFUSION OF DEATH. 1. The origin of death "by sin." Man was formed with a susceptibility of being affected by the prospect of reward, and by the fear of punishment. Obedience was connected with the one, and disobedience with the other; and thus the most powerful of motives was put in action to aspire to good, and to avoid evil. Now, death was a penalty presented as the result of transgression (Gen. ii. 16, 17, iii. 17, 19). "The wages of sin is death." Corporeal death was included, but much more, viz., spiritual and eternal death; *i.e.*, the debasement of human nature consequent upon its alienation from God, the withdrawment of the Divine friendship, the terrors of the conscience at the prospect beyond the grave, the consummation of all this by the entrance of the soul into a state of retribution for ever. 2. The diffusion of death. "Death passed upon all men." In Adam all die; all men are sinners, and therefore against all men the penalty is still standing. (1) Corporeal death is a penalty which is exacted from all the sons and daughters of Adam. (2) The ages at which the allotment is suffered vary. There is the child at the mother's breast, the youth in the springtide of gaiety and buoyant spirits, the man in the maturity of wisdom and of power, the aged bending under the decrepitude of years. (3) The method in which the allotment is suffered varies. The convulsions of nature; war; famine; accident; disease, slow and sudden. And yet, amid the variety of modes, seasons, the path is the same. All these things are but so many avenues leading down to the one narrow house, which has been appointed for all living. 3. Spiritual death constitutes the state of every man by nature. Every man in consequence of that state of spiritual death, is also in peril of proceeding to receive the recompense of it in the agonies of death eternal. III. THOSE REFLECTIONS BY WHICH OUR VIEWS OF THE COMBINED ORIGIN AND THE DIFFUSION OF SIN AND DEATH MAY BE DULY SANCTIFIED. 1. It becomes us to perceive and to lament over the exceeding sinfulness of sin. 2. We are called upon also to admire the riches of that Divine mercy which has provided a remedy against an evil which is so dreadful. (*J. Parsons.*) *Death by sin, and sin by man*:—I. THE GREAT CURSE OF THE WORLD. 1. In its physical application. All the pains that our body has to endure are but the efforts of death to master it; and those pains are rendered worse because they awaken the fear of death. It is because accidents and disease are so often fatal that they are so greatly dreaded, and their pains so bitterly endured. 2. In its social results. Friendships shattered, homes broken up, hearts bleeding, does not the mere mention of these daily facts remind us what a curse death is. The graves of good men, and of beloved ones bear witness to more terrible things about death than can be expressed. 3. Spiritual death, all that is the opposite of purity, peace, love, joy, *i.e.*, of eternal life is meant in Scripture by death. This death, which is insensibility, corruption, helplessness, ruin, is wide-spread. Every soul is either a temple or a tomb, a sanctuary or a sepulchre. Let the life of God be wanting, and the soul is dead. Over such death good men lament, angels may wail, and the Spirit of God grieves. II. THE ORIGINAL CAUSE OF DEATH. "Sin." Death is not here naturally. It invaded the world and is here because sin is here. Some find a difficulty in admitting that physical death is the result of sin; our bodies must die, they say, altogether apart from it. In answer may we not ask—1. May not our physical nature be so injured by sin, that we cannot tell from our present knowledge what it might primarily have been? May not sin have introduced some mortal element that makes death now a necessity, or have expelled some immortal element that would have made death impossible? 2. Can we not see that the God who translated Enoch and Elijah could have so translated all the human race, supposing it were

necessary that they should go? or—3. Can we not see that but for sin death might have been without pain or fear? Even now to the Christian death resembles sleep. To the sinless the analogy might have been still more true. But explain it how we may, the teaching of the Scripture is that death is the penalty of sin. Shall not we count sin, then, our deadliest enemy, and contend with it as such? III. THE VAST INFLUENCE OF MAN. "By one man." It was the hand of man that opened the world's gates to sin and to death. What the force of no foe from without could accomplish, happened through the compliance of a traitor within. But the text says that "by one man sin entered," &c. Oh, the stupendous power, the momentous responsibility of that one man! Had that "one man" resisted temptation all might have been otherwise. We should have inherited stronger natures, nobler habits, and holy tendencies. But the "one man" who stood in the very forefront of the battle used the will he had (and without which will he could not have had any virtue), and chose to sin. And to-day our ancestors' sins, even back to the sin of the first sinner, have exercised their share of influence in making us what we are. Our yielding to temptation is none the less guilty than Adam's. For if our nature is weaker and our tendencies more debased, we have in the sufferings and deaths of generations a warning such as he could not have known. So without charging home on our "first father" more than his due proportion of guilt, we summon him here as an unanswerable witness to the vast influence of individual men. Our sins should ever be discouraged, our virtues excited by the remembrance that "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin." Conclusion: Let us thank God for the gospel that so gloriously meets at every point the sad suggestions of our text. 1. Is death in the world? Its conqueror, He who has taken its sting and crushed its power, is the ever living, ever present Christ. 2. Is sin in the world, working its fearful ravages as the precursor of death? The Saviour from sin is even more intimately one with this same human race. As "one man" sinned, "one man" has redeemed the world. And where sin abounded, grace doth much more abound. (*U. R. Thomas.*) *On the fallen state of man*:—I. THE SINFULNESS OF OUR FALLEN STATE.—1. What it is, or wherein the sinfulness of our fallen state doth consist. 2. Not only particular expressions and passages, but the whole of Divine revelation, concerning Christ's coming into the world to save His people from their sins, proceeds upon a supposition of this truth, that sin has entered into the world, and that all have sinned. 3. Sin has in it an unlikeness, or contrariety and opposition, to the very nature of God. Sin is a transgression of the Divine law, and betrays want of loyalty to our supreme Lord—rebellion, and a contempt or denial of His authority and right of sovereignty over us. Sin is also dishonouring to God, and robs Him of that glory, honour, and service we owe to Him. Sin likewise carries in it the baseness of ingratitude to God, our kind Benefactor. Further, sin brings confusion into our frame, turning our affections from God to the creatures, and exalting the passions and appetites to reign over reason, and counteract the dictates of conscience. Again, sin brings deformity, pollution and defilement on our souls; effacing that likeness to God, and conformity to His law, which is their beauty and glory; stamping them with the likeness of the prince of darkness, and making them vile and filthy. II. THE MISERY OF OUR FALLEN STATE. "Death by sin, and so death passed upon all men." 1. Let us consider what this misery is, or what is implied in that death which entered into the world by sin. They are exposed to manifold miseries in this life—to internal miseries in the soul—the distress that flows from vile affections and disorderly appetites. Further, the death which is here said to have entered into the world by sin, no doubt includes natural death, or the separation of soul and body. The second, or eternal death, is by far the worst and most dreadful part of the misery to which we are exposed by sin. 2. Sad experience, in all ages and in all nations, witnesseth that troubles of various kinds are incident to the children of men while they live and that death is the common lot of all mankind. Death or misery is the punishment which sin deserves; its just reward. Death or misery is the fruit of sin connected with it and allotted to it by the law of God; God having expressly threatened to Adam, "In the day thou eatest, thou shalt surely die." The honour of the Divine veracity requires that sin be punished. The connection established betwixt sin and punishment is not a mere arbitrary constitution, but founded upon the infinite purity, rectitude, and goodness of God. The same thing may be argued from the Divine justice and righteousness. Of this He has given a most awful and striking display in the sufferings and death which Christ, as our substitute, endured when He His own self bare our sins in

His own body on the tree. Nay, this the very goodness of God, and the end of His government, as the kind and merciful Ruler of the world, require. When the Lord caused His goodness to pass before Moses, He proclaimed, as one part of it, "That He will by no means clear the guilty"; intimating that even His punishing the guilty is an act of His goodness and love. 3. The greatness of that misery to which we are, by sin, become liable. (*T. Fernie, M.A.*) *The introduction and consequences of sin*:—1. The question of the origin of evil has exercised and perplexed the understandings of men in every age. The theories of most of the ancient philosophers on this point involved far greater difficulties than that which they were introduced to account for. And how could it be otherwise? for the principles of the subject lie beyond the range of the human faculties. 2. Even the Christian revelation does not profess to give a full explanation; for it does not countenance the presumptuous attempts of men to be "wise above what is written." It is a religion of faith; and God expects that all His rational creatures should be willing to receive with humility, and thankfulness, the measure of knowledge with respect to Himself and His ways which He is pleased to communicate. It is also a religion of practice. It was never intended to furnish materials for mere intellectual exercise. 3. In conformity, then, with these leading characteristics of our religion, the gospel revelation, although it does not profess to give a full explanation of the origin of evil, does yet give us some information which calls for the exercise of humble faith and is intended to promote the purposes of practical godliness. The substance of the information is given in the text. I. "BY ONE MAN SIN ENTERED INTO THE WORLD." From this we learn that God was not the author of sin, it formed no part of our constitution as it came from the hand of its Creator. But although man was able to stand, he was also liable to fall; and he did fall through the temptation of the devil. The introduction, then, of sin into the world was the joint work of Satan and of man. II. IN WHAT WAY DID THIS FIRST SIN OF OUR FIRST PARENT BEAR UPON THE CHARACTER AND CONDITION OF HIS POSTERITY? 1. Does the text mean merely that the first man was the first that sinned, and that all his descendants have also sinned in like manner, following his bad example? There is a great deal more in the matter than this. (1) The Scriptures, and especially the whole subsequent part of the chapter, represent all Adam's posterity as implicated both in the guilt and in the punishment of his first transgression. The trial of Adam, under the covenant of works, was substantially the trial of the human race. Adam was a fair specimen of human nature, and his conduct was a fair test of what human nature could do, and would do, when placed in certain circumstances, and subjected to certain influences. (2) But Adam was not only a fair specimen of human nature, he was also the federal head and representative of all his posterity. In consequence of this, all men sinned in him, and fell with him, and are justly subjected to all the penal consequences of Adam's first sin. 2. Adam lost communion with God. It was no longer consistent with the holiness of the Divine character to hold fellowship with a being who had rebelled against His authority. Adam, accordingly, was expelled from Eden, where he was wont to hold personal intercourse with the Father of his spirit. So all his posterity are born where they cannot in the ordinary course of things expect to be visited with any intimations of a Father's care and love. 3. From this all the other consequences of Adam's sin upon his posterity are derived. These are all comprehended under the word "death." The sanction attached to the covenant of works was, that "in the day he broke it he should surely die." (1) That the word "death" here means more than the separation of the soul and the body is evident, for the denunciation was not literally fulfilled. At the same time, we are expressly informed that temporal death was a consequence of Adam's transgression. We are too much in the habit of looking upon death just as the natural consequence of our bodily constitution, and of the physical influences to which we are subjected. But had man not fallen, he had never died, nor been subjected to those influences which now are the proximate causes of death; but he would have flourished for ever in undecaying health. (2) Death, then, involves something more than dissolution. Men are naturally "dead in trespasses and sins"; kept in a state of distance and alienation from God, the truth of which fact rests upon grounds independent of the truth that man's moral nature is derived from Adam. This might be proved in many cases by an appeal to a man's consciousness, and by an impartial examination of the state of the world, and the moral aspect of human society. This condition is not only one of sinfulness, but one of misery. The true happiness of a rational and immortal creature can consist only in the favour of God. Everything else, although it may afford pleasure for a time, is in reality only a vain

show of happiness, and can afford no permanent enjoyment. (3) But there is a more alarming sense still in which the word "death" is used. The apostle tells us that "the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord," where, from the contrast between the two parts of the statement, it follows necessarily that the death which is the wages of sin must be eternal death, that is, the endurance of everlasting misery in hell. 4. The reason of man has often alleged that it is inconsistent with justice to involve men in the penal consequences of an offence which they did not commit. To which the full and adequate answer is—"Nay, but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?" At the same time, before any one can show that he is treated unjustly, the objector must show that, if he had been placed in Adam's circumstances, he would not have fallen as Adam did, but would have held fast his integrity. And this is a position which few individuals will be presumptuous enough to maintain. Besides, our actual transgressions are independent of the particular manner in which they originated. It is our duty to state plainly and openly all the doctrines revealed to us in Scripture; and if wicked men will pervert the doctrines of Scripture their blood be upon their own head. 5. But, remember that God did not abandon all intercourse with the human race when He drove Adam from paradise. Immediately after the fall, He held out an intimation of a Deliverer, and by a series of wonderful dispensations He made preparations for the manifestation of Him who was to destroy the works of the devil. Accordingly, in the fulness of time, God sent into the world His only-begotten Son for the purpose of delivering men. On the ground of what Jesus Christ did and suffered, every man is warranted to come to Christ that he may receive salvation. The offers of the gospel are addressed to you, and if you do not accept of them, you remain, of course, in your sins; but the guilt is entirely your own, you have rejected the counsel of God against yourselves and judged yourselves unworthy of eternal life. (*W. Cunningham, D.D.*) *Original sin*:—This doctrine may be regarded as it respects the disposition to sin, and as it respects the guilt of it. These two particulars are distinct. The corruption of human nature means its tendency to sin. The guilt of them who wear that nature means their evil desert on account of sin. I. THE FACT OF THE SINFUL DISPOSITION—1. Can only be gathered from man's sinful doings or desires. We do not need to dig into a spring to ascertain the quality of its water, but to examine the quality of the stream which flows from it. We have no access to the hearts of the inferior animals, and yet we can pronounce from their doings on their disposition. We speak of original ferocity in the tiger. This means that, as the fountain on the hill-side is formed and filled up before it sends forth the rills which proceed from it, so a ferocious quality of nature exists in the tiger before it vents itself forth in deeds of ferocity; and it is a quality not due to education, provocation, climate, accident, or to anything posterior to the formation of the animal itself; it is seen, both from the universality and unconquerable strength of this attribute, that it belongs essentially to the creature. There is no difficulty in understanding here the difference between original and actual. Could the cruelties of a tiger be denominated sins, then all the cruelties inflicted by it during the course of its whole life—then would these be its actual sins. These might vary in number and in circumstances with different individuals, yet each would have the same cruel disposition. It is thus that we verify the doctrine of original sin by experience. Should it be found true of every man, that he is actually a sinner, then he sins, not because of the mere perversity of his education, the peculiar excitements to evil that have crossed his path, the noxious atmosphere he breathes, or the vitiating example that is on every side of him; but purely in virtue of his being a man. And to talk of the original sin of our species, thereby intending to signify the existence of a prior and universal disposition to sin, is just as warrantable as to affirm the most certain laws, or the soundest classifications in natural history. 2. There is not enough, it may be thought, of evidence for this fact, in those glaring enormities which give to history so broad an aspect of wicked violence. For the actors in the great drama are few, and though satisfied that many would just feel and do alike in the same circumstances—there is yet room for affirming that, in the unseen privacies of social and domestic life, some are to be found who pass a guileless and a perfect life in this world. Now it is quite impossible to meet this affirmation by passing all the individuals of our race before you, and pointing out the actual iniquity of the heart or life, which proves them corrupt members of a corrupt family. You cannot make all men manifest to each man; but you may make each man manifest to himself. You may appeal to his conscience, and in defect of evidence in his outward history

you may accompany him to that place where the emanating fountain of sin is situated. You may enter along with him into the recesses of his heart, and there detect the preference to its own will, the slight hold that the authority of God has over it. We dispute not the power of many amiable principles in the heart of man, but which work without the recognition of God. It is this ungodliness which can be fastened on every child of Adam. From such a fountain innumerable are the streams of disobedience which will issue; and though many of them may not be so deeply tinged, yet still in the fountain itself there is independence of God. Put out our planet by the side of another, where all felt the same delight in God that angels feel, and are you to say of such a difference that it has no cause? Must there not be a something in the original make and a constitution of the two families to account for such a diversity? 3. We are quite aware that this principle is but faintly recognised by many expounders of human virtue. And therefore it is that we hold it indeed a most valid testimony in behalf of our doctrine, when they are rendered heartless by disappointment; and take revenge upon their disciples by pouring forth the bitterest misanthropy against them. Even on their own ground, original sin might find enough of argument to make it respectable. 4. The existence of man's corruption, then, is proved from experience; how it entered into the world is altogether a matter of testimony. "By one man," says our text, "sin entered into the world." He came out pure and righteous from the hand of God; but Adam, after he had yielded to temptation, was a changed man, and that change was permanent, and while God made man after His own image, the very first person who was born into the world, came to it in the image of his parent. This is the simple statement, and we are not able to give the explanation. The first tree of a particular species may be conceived to have come from the Creator's hand with the most exquisite flavour. A pestilential gust may have passed over it, and so changed its nature, that all its fruit afterwards should be sour. After this change it may be conceived to have dropt its seeds, and all the future trees rise in the transformed likeness of the tree from which they sprung. If this were credibly attested, we are not prepared to resist it; and as little are we entitled to set ourselves in opposition to the Bible statement that a moral blight came over the character of our great progenitor; and that a race proceeded from him with that very taint of degeneracy that he had taken on. 5. Another fact announced in this passage is the connection between the corruption of our nature and its mortality. This brings out in another way the distinction between actual and original sin. All have not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, *i.e.*, by a positive deed of disobedience; infants *e.g.* The death that they undergo is not the fruit of any actual iniquity, but of that moral virus which has descended from the common fountain. And what is this but the original and constitutional aptitude that there is to sinning, a disposition that only yet exists in embryo, but which will come out into deed so soon as powers and opportunities are expanded. The infant tiger has not yet performed one act of ferocity, but we are sure that all the rudiments of ferocity exist in its native constitution. The tender sapling of the crab-tree has not yet yielded one sour apple, but we know that there is an organic necessity for its producing this kind of fruit. And whether or not we should put to the account of this the boisterous outcry of an infant, the constant exactions it makes, and its spurning impatience of all resistance and control, so as to be the little tyrant to whose brief but most effective authority the entire circle of relationship must bend, still the disease is radically there. Original sin, then, as it respects the inborn depravity of our race, is at one with the actual experience of mankind. II. We should further proceed to show in how far original sin, AS IT RESPECTS THE IMPUTATION OF GUILT TO ALL WHO ARE UNDER IT, IS AT ONE WITH THE MORAL SENSE OF MANKIND. Experience takes cognisance of whether such a thing is, and so is applicable to the question whether a depraved tendency to moral evil is or is not in the human constitution. The moral sense of man takes cognisance of whether such a thing ought to be, and whether man ought to be dealt with as a criminal on account of a tendency which came unbidden by him into the world. 1. To determine the question we should inquire how much man requires to have within his view, ere his moral sense be able to pronounce conclusively. One may see a dagger projected from a curtain, grasped by a human hand, directed against the bosom of an unconscious sleeper; and, seeing no more, he would infer that the individual was an assassin. Had he seen all he might have seen that he was in fact an overpowered victim, an unwilling instrument of the deed. The moral sense would then instantly reverse the former decision and transfer the charge to those who were behind. 2. Now, the mind of man, in order to be made up as to the

moral character of any act, needs to know only what the intention was that originated the act. An act against the will indicates no demerit on the part of him who performed it. But an act with the will gives us the full impression of demerit. How the disposition got there is not the question which the moral sense of man, when he is unvitiated by a taste for speculation, takes any concern in. Give us two individuals—one of whom is revengeful and profligate, and the other kind and godly, and our moral sense leads us to regard the one as blameable and the other as praiseworthy. And in so doing it does not look so far back as to the originating cause of the distinction. 3. What stumbles the speculative inquirer is this, he thinks that a man born with a sinful disposition is born with the necessity of sinning, which exempts him from all imputation of guiltiness. But he confounds two things which are distinct, viz., the necessity that is against the will with the necessity that is with the will. The man who struggled against the external force that compelled him to thrust a dagger into the bosom of his friend, was operated upon by a necessity that was against his will; and you exempt him from all charge of criminality. But the man who does the same thing at the spontaneous bidding of his own heart, this you irresistibly condemn. The only necessity which excuses a man for doing evil, is a necessity that forces him by an external violence to do it, against the bent of his will struggling most honestly and determinedly to resist it. But if the necessity be that his will is bent upon the doing of it, then such a necessity just aggravates the man's guiltiness. 4. It is enough, then, that a disposition to moral evil exists; and however it originated, it calls forth, by the law of our moral nature, a sentiment of blame or reprobation. If it be asked how this can be, we reply that we do not know. It is not the only fact of which we can offer no other explanation than that simply such is the case. We can no more account for our physical than for our moral sensations. When we eat the fruit of the orange-tree we feel the bitterness; but we do not know how this sensation upon our palate stands connected with a constitutional property in the tree, which has descended to it through a long line of ancestry. And when we look to the bitter fruit of transgression, and feel upon our moral sense a nauseating revolt, we do not know how this impression stands connected with a tendency which has been derived through many centuries. But certain it is that the origin of our depravity has nothing to do with the sense and feeling of its loathesomeness wherewith we regard it. 5. There is an effectual way of bringing this to the test. Let a neighbour inflict moral wrong or injury; will not the feeling of resentment rise immediately? Will you stop to inquire whence he derived the malice, or selfishness, under which you suffer? Is it not simply enough that he wilfully tramples upon your rights? If it be under some necessity which operates against his disposition, this may soften your resentment. But if it be under that kind of necessity which arises from the strength of his disposition to do you harm, this will only stimulate your resentment. And thinkest thou, O man, who judgest another for his returns of unworthiness to you, that thou wilt escape the judgment of God? 6. These remarks may prepare the way for all that man by his moral sense can understand in the imputation of Adam's sin. We confess that no man is responsible for the doings of another whom he never saw, and who departed this life many centuries before him. But if the doings of a distant ancestor have in point of fact corrupted his moral nature, and if this corruption has been transmitted to his descendants, then we can see how these become responsible, not for what their forefathers did, but for what they themselves do under the corrupt disposition that they have received from their forefather. According to this explanation, every man still reapeth not what another soweth, but what he soweth himself. Every man eateth the fruit of his own doings. III. IN ATTEMPTING TO VINDICATE THE DEALINGS OF GOD with the species, let us begin with the portion now within hearing. What have you to complain of? You say that, without your consent, a corrupt nature has been given you, and that so sin is unavoidable, and yet there is a law which denounces upon this sin the torments of eternity. Well, is this an honest complaint? Do you really feel your corrupt nature, and are you accordingly most desirous to be rid of it? Well, God is at this moment holding out to you in offer the very relief which you now tell us that your heart is set upon. Does not God wipe His hands of the foul charge that His sinful creatures would prefer against Him, when He says, "Turn unto Me and I will pour out My Spirit upon you"? Who does not see that every possible objection which can be raised against the Creator is most fully and fairly disarmed by what He offers to man in the gospel? And if man will persist in charging upon God a depravity that He both asks and enables us to give up, did not we firmly retain it by the wilful grasp

of our own inclinations, is it not plain that on the day of reckoning it will be clear that the complaints of man, because of his corruption, have been those of a hypocrite, who secretly loved the very thing he so openly complained of. We may conceive a man murmuring at being upon a territory over which there is spread a foul atmosphere charged with all the elements of discomfort and disease, and at length to be wrapped in some devouring flame which would burn up every creature within its vortex. But let God point his way to another country, where freshness was in every breeze, and the whole air shed health and fertility and joy over the land that it encompassed—let Him offer all the facilities of conveyance so as to make it turn simply upon the man's will, whether he should continue in the accursed region or be transported to another. And will not the worthless choice to abide rather than to move, acquit God of the severity wherewith He has been charged, and unmask the hypocrisy of all the reproaches which man has uttered against Him? What is true of the original corruption is also true of the original guilt. Do you complain of that debt under the weight and oppression of which you came into the world? What ground, we ask, is there for complaining, when the offer is fairly put within your reach, of a most free and ample discharge, and that not merely for the guilt of original, but also for the whole guilt of your proper and personal sinfulness. (*T. Chalmers, D.D.*) *Original sin, a scientific fact*:—Now he who would deny original sin must contradict all experience in the transmission of qualities. The very hound transmits his peculiarities, learnt by education, and the Spanish horse his paces, taught by art, to his offspring, as a part of their nature. If it were not so in man, there could be no history of man as a species; no tracing out the tendencies of a race or nation; nothing but the unconnected repetitions of isolated individuals, and their lives. It is plain that the first man must have exerted on his race an influence quite peculiar; that his acts must have biassed their acts. And this bias or tendency is what we call original sin. (*F. W. Robertson.*) *Original sin*:—Probably no one will seriously deny the fact which is asserted throughout the Bible that "all are under sin," that "in many things we offend all." The universality of sin, apart from all theories as to its origin, or the cause of its universality, is a fact of experience as incontestable as any universal statement about the human race can be. This is different from the doctrine of original sin; it is an assertion that, as a matter of fact, all human beings whom we know, all of whom any record exists have, so far as we can judge, shown in one point or another a weakness and corruption of nature, a faultiness—to use the lowest term—which in most cases rises to occasional wickedness, in some to the most extreme and continuous depravity. But it has been pointed out by a great theologian of our own time, that when such a fact as this can be affirmed of every representative of a race composed of such various sorts, under such various conditions of time and place, as the human race, the fact points to a *law*. No fact can be universal unless some *law*, some general cause, lies behind it. We may not always know what it is, but we believe that it is there though we have not yet discovered it. It is simply impossible for us to think that the universal phenomenon of sin is due to chance; that men, differently constituted and differently placed as they are, should all have fallen into sin by accident. There must be, then, some law corresponding to the fact and explaining it. Such a law is that which we assert in asserting the doctrine of original sin. For this doctrine does not simply declare that all men sin—that would be merely a re-statement of the universal fact, a summary, not a law; but it asserts that this is the result of inheritance depending upon the physical relation of one generation to another, and that each human being brings with him into the world a tendency to sin, which is due to no act or wish of his own, but is the working out of far-off causes among the dim origins of the human race. That is the law which, according to the Bible and the Church, lies behind and explains the universal fact of sin. There might be another explanation, another law. It might be maintained that every soul was freshly created by God, that it came into the world unaffected by the previous conditions of the race, untainted by any stain of will or deed of its human ancestry, and that by the direct act of its Creator every such soul has been made to fall into sin; so that the phenomenon of universal sinfulness is simply a repetition in millions and millions of cases of an act of God's controlling power by which men are allowed—nay, impelled—to become evil. This is a conceivable theory; but the conscience of every Christian must revolt from such a travesty of God's love and human free-will. Whatever the mystery of sin may be—and I am not, of course, attempting (the Church has never attempted) to explain its origin, its first appearance in God's universe—we must at least bring it

into harmony with what we know of God's will and of His methods in other parts of His action. And it is surely more consistent with our knowledge of the universe to say that sin is due to one great cause acting uniformly throughout the human race than to ascribe it to so many repeated separate acts of God's will. We dare not believe that God directly wills that any soul should sin, but we can see that indirectly, and in consequence of one of the great general laws of His action, He may allow men to reap the fruit of human sin even if the harvest should be their own continuance in sin. That, apart from the question of redemption, is the Christian doctrine of original sin. It depends upon a general law, the law of the intimate relation of human beings one to another—the solidarity, as it is called, of the human race. Indeed, but for this relation, it is difficult to see how Christianity could be an intelligible system at all. If we do not share in the sinfulness of our forefathers, neither do we share in the redemption won for us by Christ, the spiritual Head of our race. For "as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." If men are simply separate atoms, unrelated to each other save by the similarity of outward form and nature, how can they be Christ's brethren? If they do not constitute a body, how is Christ the Head? (*Hon. and Rev. A. T. Lyttelton.*) *Original sin: why God did not arrest its consequences*:—Was it compatible with Divine perfection to let this succession of generations, stained with original vice, come into the world? God certainly might have annihilated the perverted race in its head, and replaced it by a new one; but this would have been to confess Himself vanquished by the adversary. He might, on the contrary, accept it such as sin had made it, and leave it to develop in the natural way, holding it in His power to recover it; and this would be to gain a victory on the field of battle where He seemed to have been conquered. Conscience says to which of these two courses God must give the preference, and Scripture teaches us which He has preferred. (*Prof. Godet.*) *Original sin*:—Sin is born in a child as surely as fire is in the flint—it only waits to be brought out and manifested. (*W. F. Hook, D.D.*) *Original sin* acted as an extinguisher; and therefore the soul is born in darkness and cannot see until enlightened by the Holy Spirit. (*A. Toplady, M.A.*) *Original sin*:—Our father Adam had a great estate enough at first, but he soon lost it. He violated the trust on which he held his property, and he was cast out of the inheritance, and turned adrift into the world to earn his bread as a day labourer by tilling the ground whence he was taken. His eldest son was a vagabond; the first-born of our race was a convict upon ticket-of-leave. If any suppose that we have inherited some good thing by natural descent, they go very contrary to what David tells us, when he declares, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." Our first parents were utter bankrupts. They left us nothing but a heritage of old debts, and a propensity to accumulate yet more personal obligations. Well may we be poor who come into this world "heirs of wrath," with a decayed estate and tainted blood. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Original sin, a root*:—A pious minister, having preached on the doctrine of original sin, was afterwards waited on by some persons, who stated their objections to what he had advanced. After hearing them, he said, "I hope you do not deny actual sin too?" "No," they replied. The good man expressed his satisfaction at their acknowledgment; but, to show the folly of their opinions in denying a doctrine so plainly taught in Scripture, he asked them, "Did you ever see a tree growing without a root?" (*J. G. Wilson.*) *The misery of man's sinful state*:—Note—I. THAT ALL MANKIND ARE MADE MISERABLE. This needs no proof. Sad experience in all ages confirms the truth of this assertion. II. THAT THIS MISERY CAME UPON MEN BY THE FALL. Man came not out of God's hand with the tear in his eye, or sorrow in his heart, or a burden on his back. Death never could enter the gates of the world till sin set them wide (Gen. iii.). And then one sin let in the flood, and many sins followed and increased it. The first pilot dashed the ship on a rock, and then all that were in it were cast into a sea of misery. III. WHAT THAT MISERY IS. Note—1. Man's loss by the fall. He has lost communion with God. (1) A saving interest in God as his God. Man could then call God his own God, his Friend, his Portion, being in covenant with Him. (2) Sweet and comfortable society and fellowship with God (Gen. iii. 8). Thus man lost God (Eph. ii. 12), the greatest and the fountain of all other losses. Had the sun been for ever darkened, it had been no such loss as this. Man is a mere nothing without God; a nothing in nature without His common presence, and a nothing in happiness without His gracious presence (Psa. xxx. 5; lxiii. 3). 2. What man is brought under by the fall. (1) God's wrath (Eph. ii. 3). (2) His curse (Gal. iii. 10). 3.

What man is liable to in consequence. (1) In this world. (*a*) To all the miseries of this life. First, outward miseries, as, God's curse upon the creature for our sake (Gen. iii. 17); calamities, such as sword, famine, and pestilence; miseries on men's bodies, sickness, pains, &c.; on our estates, as losses, wrongs, and oppressions; on our names, by reproach, disgrace, &c.; on our employments; on our relations. Secondly, inward spiritual miseries, as "blindness of mind" (Eph. iv. 13; 1 Cor. iv. 4), "a reprobate sense" (chap. i. 28), "strong delusions" (2 Thess. ii. 11), "hardness of heart" (chap. ii. 5), "vile affections" (chap. i. 26), fear, sorrow, and horror of conscience (Isa. xxxiii. 14). (*b*) At the end of this life, man is liable to death (chap. vi. 23). (2) In the world to come. (*a*) The punishment of loss—of all the good things of this life; of all the good things which they are enjoyed here; the favourable presence and enjoyment of God and Christ (Matt. xxv. 41); of all the glory and blessedness above. (*b*) The punishment of sense. Conclusion: 1. See here the great evil of sin. 2. Woeful is the case of all who are in a state of nature. (*T. Boston, D.D.*) *Man's fall*:—Let us consider—I. THAT SIN WHICH BY ONE MAN ENTERED INTO THE WORLD. 1. What this sin was, and how it came to be committed. The sin itself, as to the outward act, was the eating of the tree of knowledge contrary to the command of God. The manner of doing it may be collected from Gen. iii. compared with other Scriptures. 2. Its heinousness. (1) It contained many sins. (*a*) Direct disobedience and rebellion against God. (*b*) Unbelief. (*c*) Inordinate indulgence to the sensual appetite. (*d*) Pride and covetousness. (*e*) An envious discontent with God. (*f*) Sacrilege; for God was robbed. (*g*) Idolatry; because the trust due to God only was transferred to the devil, and because they made a tree a god to themselves, and expected from it greater benefits than their Maker would bestow. (*h*) Ingratitude. (*i*) Injustice and cruelty against all their posterity. (2) It had special aggravations. (*a*) It was committed in a direct manner against God, and struck at all His perfections at once. His Majesty was treated by it with irreverence, His truth was arraigned, as though He had spoken what was equivocal or false. His Omnipotence was impeached, by the hope of escaping an evil certainly threatened; His goodness was contemned by ingratitude. Finally, His omnipresence, wisdom, justice, and holiness all shared in the affront. (*b*) It was perfectly voluntary, being done against the clearest light. (*c*) The broken command was an easy one, for it required nothing to be done, but only somewhat to be foreborne. (*d*) The sin was committed in paradise, a delightful spot, honoured with the special presence of God and friendly communion with Him. (*e*) This sin was the first in our world, which gave birth to the innumerable sins and calamities. II. THE CONCERN WHICH ALL MEN HAVE IN THE FIRST SIN. 1. All men suffer and die through it (vers. 14–17). 2. It belongs in the guilt of it to all men. "All have sinned." How? Why, in Adam, their common father and head. (See also vers. 18, 19.) III. THE DREADFUL CONSEQUENCES OF THE FIRST SIN TO ALL THE POSTERITY OF ADAM. 1. Natural death, with a long train of miseries in life preceding it. 2. The punishments of another world. 3. One which commences in every man on the first union of soul and body—the want of habitual rectitude, or of effectual principles to incline and enable him to do what is pleasing to God, together with the inherency of an evil habit and bias prompting and disposing him to sinful actions. Conclusion: 1. Let us learn from the first sin growing into such an enormous size, though conversant about a matter in itself inconsiderable, never to account the doing of anything which God forbids a slight trespass, and never to venture on it under such a pretence (1 Cor. v. 6; James iii. 5). 2. Let us be deeply humbled before God, for original sin without us, even that of our first parents, which, though not done by us is yet upon us by a just imputation, and for original sin within us. 3. Let us see that we abuse not this doctrine by charging all our sins so to the score of original corruption, as by the presence of a necessity, either to take an unbounded liberty in sinning or to extenuate the guilt of what we do knowingly with free and full consent of will. On the contrary, it is incumbent on us to watch, strive, and pray the more carefully and earnestly against sin as it easily besets us. 4. Let us take occasion from the view of our fall in the first Adam, with its sad consequences, to admire and thankfully use the way of our recovery in the second, which is in exact opposition to the former, only with superior efficacy and advantage. (*Hubbard-Puritan.*) *Human depravity*:—It is—1. TOTAL IN ITS INFLUENCES OVER THE MIND. Even—1. The understanding. 2. The conscience. 3. The will. 4. The affections. II. UNIVERSAL IN ITS PREVALENCE AMONG MANKIND. It exists in all—1. Ages. 2. Countries. 3. Communities. 4. Families. 5. Individuals. III. INHERENT IN OUR NATURE IN CONSEQUENCE OF THE FALL. 1. The origin of sin is in

the creature, not in the Creator. 2. Accordingly, man was created pure and holy. 3. But almost the first thing recorded of him is his fall. 4. The results of the fall—its degradation and misery of man—pass from one generation to another. (*T. Raffles, D.D.*) *The need of healing*:—1. "The traits of greatness and of misery in man are so clear," says Pascal, "that it is absolutely necessary that the true religion should teach us that there is in him some great principle of greatness, and at the same time some great principle of misery." 2. In Gen. iii. we see the beginning of all that dreary, mean, disfiguring misery that rudely clashes with the honour of humanity, as the heir of a great house entering upon his envied heritage is saddened for life as he is told the secret of some shameful cloud upon the name he boasts, some taint of dishonour or wretchedness that is in his veins—so we learn the great blot on our scutcheon: how it is that we can be so noble and so base—it is because "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin." I. LET US TRY TO SEE HOW NATURALLY FAITH MAY LINK THE RECORD OF THE FALL WITH THE FACTS OF OUR PRESENT STATE. 1. There is a clear and familiar analogy between our childhood and the childhood of our race. We look back, and in both cases the utmost effort of our thought fails long before it draws near to the first dawn of life and consciousness; in both cases there is much that we must take on trust, here relying upon the words of earthly parents, there upon the Word of God. And we then come to find, in both cases, that life itself is a verification of that which we have thus received by faith. (1) For as we try to recall the first years of our own lives, the lines which we can retrace through our school-days grow faint and uncertain as they enter the furthest past, till in the far distance of childhood only a few points of quivering light appear, like the scattered lamps of a straggling suburb, and then the tracks of consciousness are utterly lost in impenetrable haze. It is from others that we learn the story of those earliest days. It is faith in others, the evidence of things not seen, which links our present and our past. But then, as we go on living by this faith, accepting the manifold conditions of the state assigned to us, the witness of experience day by day confirms our trust. (2) Now, is it not even exactly thus with the dim childhood of mankind? We travel back along the centuries towards the beginning of our race; presently the guidance of history falters and then stops; then tradition fails us long before we get to the boyhood of humanity; at last even science is irresolute, and only offers us hypothesis. Natural reason tells us as little of the childhood of humanity as memory can tell us of our own. But then, from behind the veil, there comes the voice of the Father of Spirits, whose eyes did see our substance yet being imperfect, and He alone tells us how man first became a living soul, and what were the conditions of his dawning thought; from Him we learn how our new life was lifted up by the inward strength of His own holiness, by the unchecked fulness of His grace; He teaches us what was the trial of those early years, and what choice first called our freedom into exercise. And then He shows us the beginning of our sin and all its devastating work. All that wondrous vision of man's infancy He offers to our faith. But here again Faith is not left to stand alone. By experience we find ourselves to be just what that strange revelation would lead us to expect: confused, uncertain of our proper place, bewildered between our ideal and our caricature, contented neither with virtue nor with vice; we have forces striving in us which are and are not ourselves, we have desires from which we recoil, and aversions for which we long, so that sometimes it almost seems as though man might have called himself fallen, even if God had never told him how he fell. II. Yes, it is true indeed that, as Pascal says, "THE MYSTERY OF THE FALL AND OF THE TRANSMISSION OF ORIGINAL SIN IS A MYSTERY AT ONCE MOST REMOTE FROM OUR KNOWLEDGE, AND MOST ESSENTIAL TO ALL KNOWLEDGE OF OURSELVES." "It is, indeed, itself incomprehensible, but without it we are incomprehensible." 1. The facts of life force our thoughts to the recognition of the fall, just as the attractions and repulsions of the heavenly bodies guide the astronomer to believe in the existence of an undiscovered star. And so it has come to pass that the doctrine of the fall has been at once the most scornfully-rejected and the most generally acknowledged truth in all the Christian faith. Surely it is both true and strange that a belief which seems at first so hard to realise, which is often thrust away with a confident impatience, can yet appeal to a vast army of witnesses, often unconscious, sometimes incredulous, of that which they have attested. 2. Plato compares the soul in its present plight to the form of the god Glaucus, immortal and miserable, crippled and battered by the waves, disfigured by the clinging growth of shells and seaweed, so that the fishermen as they catch sight of him can hardly recognise his

ancient nature. However it may be misnamed, however the moral sense may be crushed down to die under fatalism and despair, still there is the witness to a corruption, a perversion of humanity, wide as the world and deep as life. The witness of all our experience, of all current language, all common expectations, about the ways of man; the witness of daily life, of our journals with their columns full of ceaseless news about the fruits of sin; the witness, interpreting all else, of our own hearts, all converge upon the truth of a world-wide disfigurement of human life, a pervading taint through all our history, a sense of something wrong in the ethical basis of our nature, thrust into every movement of the will. 3. And then, it may be, our minds will stagger and our hearts begin to sink at the dreary vision of that vast desolating gloom: "there is none good, then, no, not one." There be many that say, "Who will show us any good?" The lies of the cynic and the pessimist claim kindred with our thoughts. "Yes," they say, "all this is true, and we had better simply acquiesce in it. What have we to do with those vague ideals which have made so many restless and miserable? When will men frankly recognise their proper level, and live there, and renounce those fruitless, wasteful hopes." III. Oh, then, if that worst of all infidelity, the disbelief in goodness, the despair of holiness, begins to creep about your souls, then turn and gaze, where through the rent cloud the pure white light of God Himself has broken through. One break there is in that uniform tenor of our history, even the surpassing miracle of a sinless life. IV. WE CAN AFFORD TO REALISE AND FACE THE SIN OF THE WORLD, THE SINFULNESS OF OUR OWN HEARTS; we can bear to know the worst because we know the best, because the darkness is past, and the true Light now shineth, BECAUSE WE CAN TURN FROM THE GLOOM OF SINFUL HISTORY TO THE PERFECT GLORY OF THE HOLINESS OF CHRIST. "In Him is no sin," "the Life was manifested, and we have seen it, and shew unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us." "The Word was God," "and the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father." (*F. Paget, D.D.*) *What is chance?*— 1. All death is a solemn and fearful thing. When it comes to an old person one cannot help feeling it often a release; but when death comes suddenly to people in the prime of life we cannot help asking, "What is this death? this horrible thing which takes husbands from their wives, and children from their parents, and those who love from those who love them? What right has it here, under the bright sun, among the pleasant fields, destroying God's handiwork, just as it is growing to its prime of beauty and usefulness?" And there, by the bedside of the young at least, we do feel that death must be the enemy of a loving, life-giving God, as much as it is hated by poor mortal man. And then we feel there must be something between man and God. What right has death in the world if man has not sinned? And then we cannot help saying further, "This cruel death! it may come to me, young and healthy as I am. It may come to-morrow, this minute, by a hundred diseases or accidents which I cannot foresee or escape, and carry me off to-morrow. And where would it take me to?" 2. But perhaps you young people are saying to yourselves, "You are trying to frighten us, but you shall not. We know very well that it is not a common thing for a young person to die, and therefore the chances are that we shall not die young, and it will be time enough to think of death when death draws near." Well, what do you mean by chance? What are these wonderful "chances" which are to keep you alive for forty or fifty years more? Did you ever hear a chance? Did any one ever see a great angel called Chance flying about keeping people from dying? What is chance, which you fancy so much stronger than God? 3. Perhaps you will say, "All we meant was that God's will was against our dying." Then why put the thought of God away by foolish words about chance? For it is God only who keeps you alive, and He who makes you live can also let you not live. 4. Then again, it is not as you fancy, that when God leaves you alone you live, and when He visits you you die—but the very opposite. Our bodies carry in them from the very cradle the seeds of death. We live because God does not leave us alone, but keeps down those seeds of disease and death by His Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life. 5. God's Spirit of Life is fighting against death in our bodies from the moment we are born. And, as Moses says, when He withdraws His Spirit then we are turned again to our dust. So that our living a long time or a short time does not depend on chance, or on our own health or constitution, but entirely on how long God may choose to keep down the death which is ready to kill us at any moment, and certain to kill us sooner or later. 6. And therefore I ask you, "For what does God keep you

alive?" Will a man keep plants in his garden which bear neither fruit nor flowers; or stock on his farm which will only eat and never make profit; or a servant in his house who will not work? Much more, will a man keep a servant who will not only be idle himself, but quarrel with his fellow-servants, and teach them to disobey their master? And yet God keeps thousands in His garden, and in His house, for years and years, while they are doing no good to Him, and doing harm to those around them. 7. Then why does not God rid Himself of them at once and let them die, instead of cumbering the ground? I know but one reason. If they were only God's plants, or His stock, or His servants, He might do so. But they are His children, redeemed by the blood of Christ. God preserves you from death because He loves you. Oh, do not make that truth an excuse for forgetting and disobeying your heavenly Father! Why does any good father help and protect his children? Not as beasts take care of their young, and then as soon as they are grown up cast them off and forget them; but because he wishes them to grow up like himself, to be a comfort, help, and pride to him. And God takes care of you and keeps you from death for the very same reason. God desires that you should grow up like Himself. 8. But if you turn God's grace in keeping you alive into an excuse for sinning—if, when God keeps you alive that you may lead good lives, you take advantage of His fatherly love to lead bad lives, and basely presume on His patience, what must you expect? God loves you, and you make that an excuse for not loving Him; God does everything for you, and you make that an excuse for doing nothing for God; God gives you health and strength, and you make that an excuse for using your health and strength just in the way He has forbidden. What can be more ungrateful? What can be more foolish? Oh, if one of our children behaved to us a hundredth part as shamefully as most of us behave to God, what should we think of them? Oh, beware! God is patient; but "if a man will not turn, He will whet His sword." And then, woe to the careless and ungrateful sinner. God will take from him his health, or his blind peace, and by affliction, shame, and disappointment, teach him that his youth, health, money, and all that he has, are his Father's gifts, and that his Father will take them away from him till he cries, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before Thee. Father, take me back, for I have sinned, and am not worthy to be called Thy child." (*C. Kingsley, M.A.*) *A historical parallel*:—The apostle's argument turns entirely upon a parallel between the effects of Adam's sin and those of Christ's righteousness. I. HE IS ACCORDINGLY OBLIGED TO GLANCE BACK UPON THE RESULTS WHICH FOLLOWED UPON THE FIRST MAN'S TRANSGRESSION OF LAW. 1. The point to be proved is this: Sin and death spread to all mankind "through one man." The proof is this: All men betwixt Adam and Moses died. Why? Not, argues St. Paul, for any transgression of their own, but for Adam's. At first one may object, sin was in the world. Why should they not have died for their own sin? (1) But remember that Paul has already taught us to discriminate betwixt sin committed *against*, and sin committed *without* law. Without a law sin may be present as a defect of nature or fault of will, but sin as a violation of statute can enter only where the statute is known. "Where no law is there can be no transgression" (chap. iv. 15). This he now supplements by "sin is not imputed where there is no law" (ver. 13), axioms which carry with them all the stronger assurance of truth, that they not only echo, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," but are in accord with all that our Lord taught us concerning Him who is perfect love. (2) Turning next to the bearing of these legal maxims upon the position of men betwixt Adam and Moses, one cannot fail to see that it applies to them roundly, yet with qualifications. That they sinned "without law," and therefore "not after the fashion of Adam's transgression" (ver. 14), is true in the main, but only partially true of some of them. St. Paul himself implies as much by, "even over them that had not sinned" as Adam did. For although the ages before Moses, like the vast heathen world ever since, possessed no statute recognised to have come from heaven which denounced death as the penalty of transgression, such as Adam or the Jews had, and therefore could not break the statute with their eyes open in the same degree; yet they still retained (chap. i.) the relics of natural conscience, testifying to the eternal rules of right and wrong, and testifying quite clearly enough to render some of them at least inexcusable. But in many of them conscience was undeveloped, false judgments; in all, it was defective, prescribing only certain rules of duty, and very feebly declaring, if at all, the penalty for disobedience. Besides, this inadequacy of the moral sense, being a portion of that subjection of human nature to the consequences of transgression

for which we are seeking to account, needs itself to be accounted for. 2. After all fair deductions have been allowed for, let the question be put broadly: Were the sins committed without revealed law such that, had there been no antecedent transgression, they would have been in the bulk of cases punishable with eternal death? I think St. Paul's reasoning compels us to reply that they were not. Suppose it conceivable for a new-created moral agent to be left in that condition of imperfect knowledge of the Divine will, and to sin, his fall would not entail such a penalty as actually followed the transgression of Adam. Here, then, were men dying for thousands of years under a penalty which was originally attached to the express violation of a known law, but not attached to such sins as they themselves could commit. Before Adam there had been placed a clear command with precise warnings. Deliberately breaking it, he died. But his posterity could not so sin. Before them no such positive law had been set. To them no such consequences had been foretold. They made no such deliberate choice. Yet on all of them alike falls that same penalty. There is the fact. Is there any other explanation of it except St. Paul's, viz., that they died because Adam sinned; because the sentence passed on the first man for his transgression included his posterity in its sweep, be their personal offences what they might; and from this point of view it does supply an explanation for what must otherwise appear inexplicable. Moreover, if it be once admitted, it materially alters the complexion of all the subsequent sins of mankind. Those later sins of the "men without law" might not be such "transgressions" as of themselves to entail "death." Yet it is impossible to cut them off from their guilty origin in the "one transgression" which went before. If the race be one, and its whole sin be the fruit of one culpable and deliberate act of original rebellion, then it is clear that the total mass of moral evil must continue to be stained throughout with the dark hue of its origin. 3. It need hardly be added that in the case of adults under Christianity, sin has to a great extent recovered the type of Adam's first transgression. The law has long since been republished with plain-spoken promises and penalties. Most of us have chosen evil with the clearest knowledge. Still, even we can be proved to underlie the penalty, not of our own, but of Adam's sin. For time was when we, too, had "no law." As children we knew nothing of sin or duty, of the Lawgiver or the penalty. Yet we were subject then to death. 4. All this, however, is not preliminary merely, but parenthetic. Now that the sweeping lapse of a race into death through the single act of a representative man has been proved, he is prepared at the close of ver. 14 to resume his interrupted sentence begun in ver. 12. He does not resume it, and the reason is very notable. He has caught sight of differences betwixt the two cases which make the parallel in some points a contrast. The cases are similar, but not equal. Is there any shortcoming? On the contrary, there is a glorious excess. The apostle, therefore, forbears to conclude his parallel, but abruptly exclaims—II. "BUT NOT AS THE TRESPASS, SO ALSO IS THE FREE GIFT!" (ver. 15). 1. One point of superiority is developed in ver. 15, "If by the trespass of the one," &c. Here are two similar procedures on the part of God, by which a vast multitude of human beings is involved in each case in the fate of one man. The one application of the principle turns out to be a terrific disaster which overwhelms countless millions of unhappy beings in the judgment and ruin that overtake their transgressing representative. The other is a blessed provision of Divine kindness brought in to remedy the sad efforts of the former through the action of a better and abler Representative. This argument bears upon us in two ways. 1. Do we feel the fact of universal condemnation for a single man's sin to be baffling? Then learn the best use to be made of this hard fact. If anything can relieve the difficulty it must be when grace pledges itself to save on the same principle. It is at least something to discover that it is a principle of the Divine administration and not an isolated occurrence. There comes out (to say no more) a certain noble consistency in God's treatment of us. When the very principle which, on its first application, in Adam worked disaster, turns its hand, so to say, in the gospel, to work a remedy for its own ruin, is there not a certain poetical justice, or dramatic completeness, in the twofold scheme? May not the one be intended to be read in the light of the other? Is it not conceivable that both applications of the one rule to the Two Heads of Humanity may be requisite to make up that plan of Omniscience, of which each were but a broken part? At all events one thing is plain. The more keenly any one feels the hardship of being involved without his will in the condemnation of another, with so much the more joyous eagerness ought he to embrace the parallel way of escape which has been

brought nigh by the obedience of Another. 2. Are you one who stumbles, not at the fall in Adam, but at the doctrine of a free pardon in Christ apart from merits of your own? Have you never considered to whom you are indebted for your sin and condemnation? Surely, if you must take death at another man's hand, you may as well take life too! Is it not idle to quarrel with the way in which God would set us right, since it is in this very way that we have got wrong. 3. Another point of superiority arises: one of fact no less than of logic. "Not as through one that sinned, so is the gift," &c. (ver. 16, R.V.). In order to men's condemnation there needed but the one trespass of Adam. In order to our being declared righteous, there need "many trespasses" to be wiped out in blood. The Restorer's work might perhaps have followed close on the fall by an instant purging of the "first transgression," and an instant replacing of the lapsed race in recovered purity again. There would in that event have been no room for the superiority St. Paul seems here to have in his eye. But it pleased the Most High to suffer sin to make its way through the world till it had grown to be a burden intolerable to the earth. Then at length came the "free gift" of an atonement which covered all. It is the same with individual experience. Is it not after a man has for years abused his freedom to choose the wrong, adding to the inherited fault under which he is condemned a crowd of illegal acts, that the "free gift which justifies" is usually revealed to the soul? Then when it comes to a mature and experienced offender, grown penitent at last, how widely must it abound! 4. Another point of superiority remains: "If by the trespass of the One," &c. (ver. 17, R.V.). The results to be expected from redemption are grander than the results of the fall were disastrous. This sounds fabulous, for the disaster entailed on mankind by the fall of "the One" might well appear too fearful ever to be overtopped by any subsequent advantage; that disaster Paul does not attempt to soften. "Death reigned"; it not only "entered" and "passed through unto all" (ver. 12), it is man's king. A triple crown it wears: over body, soul, and spirit. Over against this last extremity of ill, what can Jesus bring us of excelling good? Why, merely to undo that curse calls for the abolishing of death. To discrown our tyrant—no more; and set them free who are all their lifetime subject to his bondage; is not this as much as man's highest hope dare look for? But superabounding grace conceives a higher triumph. The Deliverer turns a rescue into a conquest. The curse is reversed till it becomes a blessing. Having brought back life, Christ raises life to glory. Death is discrowned, but only to set a crown upon the head of the redeemed. Not "death reigns" any more, but we "reign in life." (*J. Oswald Dykes, D.D.*) *The great parallels*:—I. THE UNIVERSAL DIFFUSION OF DEATH BY THE DEED OF ONE MAN (vers. 12–14). II. THE SUPERIORITY OF THE FACTORS ACTING IN CHRIST'S WORK OVER THE CORRESPONDING FACTOR IN THE WORK OF ADAM (vers. 15–17). III. THE CERTAINTY OF EQUALITY IN RESPECT OF EXTENSION AND EFFECT BETWEEN THE SECOND WORK AND THE FIRST (vers. 18–19). IV. THE INDICATION OF THE TRUE PART PLAYED BY THE LAW BETWEEN THESE TWO UNIVERSALS OF DEATH AND RIGHTEOUSNESS (vers. 20–21). *Adam and Christ*:—I. ADAM. Through Him we are all—1. Subject to suffering, sorrow, and death. 2. Debarred from entrance into Paradise. 3. Kept from eternal happiness. II. CHRIST. By Him—1. Our sins are atoned for. 2. We are entirely freed from guilt. 3. Eternal life is granted to us. 4. Immortal happiness is our portion. (*J. H. Tarson.*) *Adam and Christ*:—I. THE PARALLEL. 1. Both stand in a federal relation to mankind. 2. In both cases the effect of individual action is transferred. 3. The effect in both cases is coextensive. II. THE CONTRAST. 1. The effects in the one case are—sin, condemnation, death; in the other—grace, justification, life. 2. In the one they follow by just consequence, in the other by grace. 3. In the one are suffered involuntarily; in the other are enjoyed by faith. 4. In the one they proceed from one sin; in the other cover many offences. 5. In the one they terminate in death; in the other in everlasting life. III. THE CONCLUSION. 1. If sin has destroyed all, grace can save all. 2. If sin has abounded, grace doth much more abound. 3. If sin has reigned unto death, grace reigns unto eternal life. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Adam and Christ*:—Where frost and snow have abounded in winter, there spring, sunshine, and gladness will abound still more. Where, at Passion-tide, Herod's cunning, Pilate's cowardice, the Pharisees' envy, Judas's treachery, and the blind "Crucify, Crucify!" of the mob have risen high, there, on Easter-morn, the hallelujah of angels and the Church around the triumphant Saviour will rise still higher. Here are contrasted—I. THE ONE TRANSGRESSION AND THE ONE OBEDIENCE. 1. What, I hear it objected, is it not arbitrary and unjust that the fall of the first man should

involve all succeeding generations, and scatter them, as children of misery, upon fields of thorn, as children of death upon churchyards? But, is it not simple matter of fact that some fate—explain it as we may—does, again and again, strew us, as children of misery and death, upon the earth? 2. And if further it be objected that, as Abraham was once nerved for endurance by the vision of his posterity, so Adam must needs have been deterred if the thought of the ruin hanging over the sons of men had been granted him in time. But was such prevision wanting? In the blessing, "Replenish the earth, and subdue it," Adam sees himself set at the head of an entire economy; his lot is to be the lot of his heirs and posterity. By the image of God born with him, by his covenant-fellowship with God, by the paternal warnings of the hostile powers against which the Garden of Eden was to be fenced and guarded, by the highest aim of eternal life, were not the fullest means of security imparted to the first man? 3. And when the fall took place, think you that God should have annihilated the human race? Annihilation is no redemption, and to yield the game to Satan is no victory. Then only is evil overcome by good when Divine love makes itself a sacrifice. Who will doubt, when over against the one Adam stands the one Christ, who with, "It is written," wields a victorious sword, and becomes the dispenser of every heavenly blessing. II. THE DOMINION OF ONE DEATH AND THE DOMINION OF ONE LIFE. 1. You are familiar with the doubt of the unity of the race, which appeals to the various shapes of the skull, different complexions, divers tongues, &c. But Paul believes in the unity of the race, and knows one family of Adam, when, in Athens, he speaks of one blood, of which the nations are made; and when he says, "Is God the God of the Jews only?—is He not the God of the Gentiles also?" 2. And what sombre witnesses to this unity Paul summons! First sin itself, which shows itself far as humanity extends. But at the same time he points to death, which is the lot of all men, not merely of those struggling with poverty, but of those nursed in luxury; not merely of those feeble through age, but of children with their morning and May-tide freshness; not merely of those branded with vice, but to the truly good, comes the stern creditor who demands of all the payment of the debt of life! 3. Nothing is more unnatural than for God's image, instead of declining gently, and then being quietly transplanted; instead of entering into glory by a transfiguration, to fall a prey to violent dissolution, and be devoured by corruption. In outer death an inner death is imaged; the sting of death is sin, the wages of sin is death. Sin is absence from the source of all life—from God—and is therefore deadly in nature. The one separation is punished by the other; separation between the soul and God by separation between soul and body; yea, by a separation which rends in twain the soul itself. But if a house be divided against itself, how can it stand? III. THE CONDEMNATION ON ALL, AND THE ABOUNDING GRACE FOR ALL. "What is man, that Thou art mindful of him?" Nothing more wretched than man in his sin, in his death—a lost son, a dethroned king. "What is man, that Thou visitest him?" Nothing higher in dignity than man; far above angels; since the Son of God assumes human nature, and by His incarnation, passion, resurrection, outpouring of His Spirit, makes fallen humanity partaker of the Divine nature. Four dispensations of God with mankind are here to be described. The original one in Paradise; the second in the fall, where, without intermission, death is preaching repentance, and to every life-history affixes the black seal bearing the inscription, "And he died"; the third dispensation under the law, which came between the fall and the rising again, that sin might abound, that is, become more and more perceptible; the fourth in the fulness of time. Now that you have been driven from the first, you will not deny. Are you living in the second, in utter indifference, a man utterly without conscience, not even alarmed by a command of God? Or are you living under the law, pursued by sin, not merely as sin but also as a punishment? Or do you know, in addition to the weakness and guilt of the first Adam, the power, the riches, and the grace of the second? Have you, under the Cross, come under the shelter of the strong arm, mightier than a Samson who, in his death, embracing the pillars of the idol-temple, buried four thousand of the worshippers? Have you felt the arm which, stretched out in Golgotha, overturned the idol-temple of sin and the gloomy prison-house of death? And as David once cut off the giant's head with the giant's sword, have you learnt under the Cross that death is conquered by death; death as the wages of sin by death as a sacrificial offering? (*R. Koegel, D.D.*) *The analogy between the manner of man's condemnation in Adam and justification in Christ*:—I. THE FACT ON WHICH THE ANALOGY PROCEEDS. 1. Stated (ver. 12). 2. Proved (vers. 13, 14). II. THE POINTS IN WHICH IT DOES NOT HOLD. 1. The free gift transcends the offence, it reaches not only

as far, but in those who receive it effects much more good than the offence did evil (ver. 15); for the free gift neutralises the effect not only of one offence but of many (ver. 16); not only destroys death but brings abundance of life (ver. 17). III. THE POINTS IN WHICH IT DOES HOLD. 1. One offence (marg.) occasioned the condemnation of all; one righteousness (marg.) provides for the justification of all (ver. 18). 2. In one man many sinned, in one shall many be made righteous (ver. 19). IV. THE SUMMING UP OF THE WHOLE. 1. Grace abounds over sin (ver. 20). 2. Death is swallowed up of life. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The principle on which justification proceeds: that of mediation*:—Mediation is the principle on which human society is based and constituted. Ever since the creation of the first pair, all have been born and preserved by it. The dominion conferred on the man in Eden (Gen. i. 28) was not to be achieved singly, but in society. Even here our blessings come through mediation. Yet not our blessings only. The fact that men have it in their power to do us good involves also that of doing us mischief. This constitution of society is precisely that which made it possible for the first man to involve himself and all his posterity in sin and ruin, and for the "Second Man" to provide salvation and glory (ver. 18). I. BOTH ADAM AND CHRIST WERE DIVINELY APPOINTED AND RESPONSIBLE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE WHOLE HUMAN RACE. 1. Adam was its natural head; but he was much more. All men are affected by the conduct of Adam, in a wider sense than that in which children are affected by the conduct of their parents. All children born into the world to the end of time will be affected by the one offence of Adam just in the same sense and to the same extent as his own children were affected by it. And this is not simply because he was the natural head. Noah was also the natural head of all the men who have existed since the deluge; but it is never intimated that he, by his one recorded sin, entailed a curse upon all his posterity. But it is plainly affirmed that Adam, by his one offence, has done so. For he was also the federal head of the race. God dealt with the entire race in and through him. To him were entrusted the interests of all his descendants. Had he proved faithful these would have been born into the world holy and happy, and would each have commenced his probation on terms as favourable as Adam's. But he failed us, and thus induced our ruin. 2. Now Adam is a type of Christ in that he was a Divinely constituted representative of the race. Adam was created in the "image" of God. But Christ, the beloved Son, "is the image of the invisible God." The race, therefore, in its very creation, sustained special relationship to Him. And it was fitting that He, whose image in man had been marred by the fall of the first man, should Himself become man in order to its restoration. For we are predestinated to be conformed to His "image." Adam, as our first head and representative, failed in his fidelity, and thereby betrayed and ruined our interests; Christ, our Second, has gloriously succeeded. II. THE LIKENESS BETWEEN ADAM AND CHRIST IS ONE OF ESSENTIAL OPPOSITION, because that Adam has affected us for evil, Christ for good. 1. The judgment to condemnation on account of Adam's sin involved the penalty of moral death for all his posterity. Not that any positive evil principle was infused into our nature, but rather that the Holy Spirit, in fellowship with whom all spiritual life is sustained, was then penally withdrawn, and that being so men became "dead in trespasses and sins." "In Adam all died." 2. The judgment to condemnation on account of Adam's sin was a judgment to bodily death (Gen. iii. 17–19). And this in all probability resulted from the penal withdrawment of the Spirit of life. Naturally liable to death man must have been; *i.e.*, regarded as a creature whose animal life is an organic successional growth, sustained by material food. So long as he remained innocent he had the pledge and sacrament provided against this liability in "the tree of life." But as soon as he had sinned, he was subjected to the vanity which was the lot of the lower creatures, denied access to the tree of life, and surrendered to the dissolution which had already been the natural termination of the existence of the inferior orders. But "as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Cor. xv. 22; John v. 28, 29). And though the restoration of immortal life to the bodies of His people is deferred, the quickening Spirit is a pledge and earnest that He who raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken their mortal bodies (chap. viii. 11). 3. The judgment to death, on account of sin, was a judgment to everlasting death. As "grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord," even so (unobstructed) sin reigns in death, by offending Adam, unto everlasting death. In the very nature of things it cannot be otherwise. For to doom a man to death at all is to doom him to endless death. No one ever thinks of a criminal being sentenced to death for so many years. The dead have

no power to recover life. And this is as true of spiritual as of physical death. The fact is that sin reigns in death, and by death is its dread dominion sustained. III. THE GRACE OF REDEMPTION, WHICH IS BY JESUS CHRIST, NOT ONLY MEETS, AND AVAILS TO COUNTERACT, THE CURSE ENTAILED FROM ADAM AT EVERY POINT, BUT ABOUNDS FAR BEYOND EVEN THAT. 1. Adam entailed upon us the curse of one offence only. He doubtless committed other sins; but they have involved us in no disadvantages. If, therefore, Christ had made provision for nothing beyond the cancelling of the judgment on account of that, the parallel between the first and Second Man would have been at that point complete. But He has done much more (ver. 16). And not only so, but being justified, there is provision made to secure our continued acceptance. Nor does even a lapse cut off the offender from hope: but, because God has just ground on which to "multiply to pardon," a fallen David and a backsliding Peter may be restored. Therefore the word of exhortation (Gal. vi. 1), and the word of compassionate love (1 John ii. 1, 2). Thus richly does the grace of Christ superabound over the curse from Adam. 2. The apostle's position clearly implies that the number of the saved through Christ will far exceed that of the finally lost through Adam. It is not intended to intimate, however, that any are really lost on account of Adam's sin alone. The apostle clearly assumes that there are none such (vers. 15, 18). And have we not an assurance here that all infants, incapables, &c., shall through Christ inherit everlasting life? But those who resist grace and refuse salvation thereby make the sin of Adam their own, and in that sin they shall perish. But—3. The apostle further intimates that those who avail themselves of the redemption which is by Jesus Christ shall be elevated to a far higher state of glory and blessedness than could have been inherited by unfallen man (vers. 17, 20, 21). Conclusion: 1. This review of the Divine administration calls for ardent and adoring gratitude. 2. We must learn to regard sin with ever-increasing hatred. 3. Let all avail themselves with glad alacrity of the gift of grace through Christ. (*W. Tyson.*)

Vers. 13, 14. **For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed where there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses.**—*The sin of those who died before the law:*—1. Sin supposes law. 2. But sin was in the world before the law. 3. Hence there is a law in the conscience to which all men are amenable. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The reign of death* is—I. PERPETUATED BY SIN. II. UNIVERSAL. Because all have sinned either against—1. Positive commands, as Adam. 2. Or the moral law written in the heart. 3. Or in the Word of God. III. ABSOLUTE. He strikes where and when he pleases—the young and old, &c. IV. IRRESISTIBLE. All must bow to his sceptre. V. WOULD BE ETERNAL, but for the interposition of Christ. (*Ibid.*) *In Adam all die:*—1. Some say that there can be no criminality where there is not wilful transgression of the law: and therefore God could not impute guilt from birth to every child of Adam. To this we answer, that there is no other way of explaining the certain facts. All men suffer the penalty of sin and death. Now, why? Our explanation is that they are primarily held guilty before God. To deny this is to involve the question in yet greater darkness. It is to charge God with inflicting suffering upon our whole race without a reasonable cause. 2. Paul argues in the text that death had reigned from Adam to Moses, and therefore could not have resulted merely from the violation of the Mosaic law. It took effect on myriads who had no law to guide them but the dictates of conscience or of tradition, and on children who died in unintelligent infancy. But death is the practical imputation of sin: and such imputation implies the existence of a broken law. What law, then, can it be, but God's command to Adam? And what breach of it, but his transgression? And therefore, it was because they were regarded as having been implicated in Adam's sin, that they were surrendered to the tyranny of death. Yet their criminality was very different from his. Theirs was indirect and accredited, while his was direct and real. Theirs was unconscious and involuntary, his deliberate and intentional. Theirs was through the crime of another, his through his own. His was the root, and in its damage the branches equally suffered. He was the fountain, and in its defilement all the stream of human existence was polluted. 3. Nor does this contravene our natural sense of justice. We ascribe blameworthiness to wrong states and tendencies of disposition, without staying to inquire how these were originated. A commoner may be elevated to the peerage, and thus confer titles and dignity on all future generations. Or a nobleman, convicted of treason, may involve his posterity in poverty and ignominy. 4. Now, this procedure on the part of God may strike you at first as unjust. And so it would be, if

it stood alone. But—I. WE MUST CONSIDER IT IN CONNECTION WITH GOD'S GREAT SCHEME OF REDEMPTION. Paul invariably links the two together. Here he shows that Adam's headship is a type of Christ's: and if in one all men have been made sinners, so in the other all have, at least conditionally, been restored to righteousness. Similarly in 1 Cor. xv. he affirms that "as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." II. OUR RUIN BY THE FALL DOES NOT ENTAIL ON US THE DOOM OF FINAL PERDITION. The life to come is always set forth as the retributive consequence of the present. And no principle is more clear or more frequently stated than that each man must give an account of himself before God, and receive the reward of his own doings. We are here treated as sinners for Adam's sake: but hereafter, if so treated, it will be for our own sake. The necessary loss which we have sustained by the fault of another is limited and temporal; it will be our own fault if we make it absolute and eternal. This arrangement, then, has simply altered the conditions of our probationary life. There are two distinct courses which such probation may take. 1. Men might be created holy, and be left to obey or disobey. In the former case their righteousness would be sealed to them for ever; but in the latter they must forfeit it for ever. In this way the probation of angels was accomplished: and that of Adam and Eve. 2. The other mode is that of souls originally depraved, but furnished with adequate means of self-recovery through grace. And this is the method adopted in regard to all the posterity of Adam and Eve; and it is with reference to it that they are all born under the imputation of the first great transgression. III. COMPARE THESE TWO ALTERNATIVES, THAT YOU MAY SEE HOW MUCH MORE DESIRABLE THAT ONE IS, IN WHICH WE FIND OURSELVES CONCERNED. We see what our probation now is, and how easy it is for us, through God's grace in Christ, to escape perdition, to triumph over our native depravity, and to lay hold on eternal life. But suppose the opposite method had been adopted, do you think that your eternal safety would have been more likely or certain than it is now? Is it not probable that the great majority of mankind would act as Adam and Eve did? IV. THE IMMENSE PREPONDERANCE OF GOOD WHICH ACCRUES TO THE SAVED, THROUGH THE ECONOMY OF GRACE IN CHRIST. There is a mighty superiority in the Saviour's headship above that of Adam. The ultimate benefits of our salvation will infinitely exceed the little temporary sufferings of our loss and ruin through the fall. Conclusion: 1. Let us tremble at the thought of sin, when we survey its terrible results in the ravages of death. 2. Be convinced of sin, and stirred up to seek salvation from it. 3. Let us confidently accept and embrace the salvation of the gospel. 4. Here is an argument for submission and patience under the ills of life. Our subjection to affliction and sorrow is not meant to be our permanent and everlasting state. (*T. G. Horton.*) *The educating power of mortality*:—Dr. Bushnell, in his "Moral Uses of Dark Things," shows how man can never be at his best without the influences of alarm and threatening, for these enable him to appreciate critical situations, and develop in him the grand qualities of caution and prudence. Surely God knew what was needed to bring the royal elements of our nature to full account when He put death into the world, hiding a mercy under a curse. It is a schoolmaster we should be thankful for, since without it we should lack expression for most that is finest and tenderest in ourselves. We cannot afford to miss the educating power of mortality and its sorrows—the suggestions of the burial scene and the last farewell, the lessons of sick-room duty, the privilege of dying-bed consolation and grace. We need the discipline of suffering and decay, the culture of fear and danger, the wakenings of latent virtue in fatal emergency and accident. Something must reveal to us the fittest ways of pity and kindness, the dearest facilities of affection, the noblest means of philanthropy, the purest offices of patience, the holiest opportunities of sympathy, the sweetest uses of hope, and the highest service of piety. And in a world where death is we have them all. **Who is the figure of Him that was to come.**—*The figure of Him that was to come*:—If we see great streams of people journeying from every direction towards one common destination, we infer that this spot must be the centre of some unusual attraction. It is a pretty sight to stand some summer Sabbath morning upon a rising ground, and see the lanes dotted with pilgrims wending their way towards the church of God. Suppose a wayfarer encounters groups of travellers, and the nearer he draws to the adjacent town, finds the crowds increasing, and the interest heightening on every face. He asks the object of this unusual excitement, and learns that the foundation-stone of a great temple is to be laid by a great man; that there is to be a procession and a gala-day of banners, music, and rejoicing. So does a survey of the landscape of past history disclose the lives of many men tending

towards one point; and, standing as we do upon our gospel vantage-ground, we can see a long procession of lives tending in their acts and history to one point; we can hear the music of many a deed celebrating beforehand one greater deed than all. There was a divinity shaping the ends of many of the lives of the Old Testament worthies, to the purpose that they might be typical of that life which is our life, and by which our stifled souls might breathe again with their destined immortality. A mark had been impressed upon the lives of men in earlier times, and a map had been sketched upon the page of history, whose lines converged towards the one great central fact, that Jesus Christ should come into the world. If we look amongst the men whose lives were eminently typical of the Redeemer, we shall not find one in whose case it will be a more easy task to trace the parallel than that of Adam. But just in proportion as the similarity is striking, so will the points of difference be prominent. I. POINTS OF CORRESPONDENCE. 1. Both were formed by and came directly from God. Here, of course, we speak of Jesus in His humanity. In the method of his birth the first man differed from all the rest of his posterity, and the only parallel we find to it is in the miraculous conception of the Child of Bethlehem. Of course, even in this, the points of difference are greater than those of likeness. But it was the breath of the Lord which breathed into Adam's nostrils the breath of life; it was the Spirit of the Lord which overshadowed the Virgin. 2. Both were formed in the same glorious likeness, designed as the mirrors to reflect the life and image of the Author of all life. And as in Adam, ere he fell, the unblushing cheek, where shame had been "ashamed to sit," formed the mirror which reflected the likeness of the Father, so was that same likeness printed on the form and feature of the spiritual life of Jesus Christ, so that He could claim His heavenly pedigree, and declare, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." 3. The fatherhood of both over a numerous race. (1) The tawny slave who hoes the rice-field in the burning sun; the dark-eyed denizens of China and of India; the fiery Afghan; the tall Circassian; the dwarfish Hottentot; the fur-clad dweller amidst northern ice; and the naked panter in the tropic heat; the homeless Jew and clannish Gentile; the readers of the Koran, of the Shasters, of the Bible; the worshipper of the sun, of Juggernaut, and of Jesus; each creature who bears the form and likeness of a man, dates his paternity to Adam. (2) The seed of the Second Adam shall be also numerous. All souls are His, purchased by Him, that they may be born again through Him. And though the work of regeneration by no means keeps pace with the increase of the race, He shall yet "see His seed," and that seed shall outnumber sand or stars for multitude, and be gathered out of all lands. And they shall bear the family feature clear in life and lineament. As by nature they once "bore the image of the earthly," so by the redundant grace of this new birth shall they bear impressed upon them the "image of the heavenly." 4. The lordship and dominion with which each was invested. (1) Man was made only "a little lower than the angels," and has been "crowned with glory and honour." He holds dominion over the very work of God's own hand; he wounds the earth that it may give him food. All things are put beneath his feet; the beasts range plain and mountain-side, but they cannot range so widely as the thought of man; the birds soar high, but they cannot cleave their way to such fair altitudes as man's ambition may attain; the fishes dive down into the ocean gorge, but they cannot pierce to such a deep profound as that intelligence which marks mankind and sets the human over the brute creation. (2) And if a man is thus large in lordship and dominion, how much more the Son of Man, who came to reassert the creature's claim after it had been flung away, by sharing His own dominion with that creature. The dominion of Jesus is illimitable. While man is made a little lower, He is made "so much better than the angels, as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they." For when the power of Omnipotence showed forth its mightiest sinew, it was when it "wrought in Christ, and raised Him from the dead," &c. (Eph. i. 20–23). 5. The conjugal union ordained by God respecting them. Paradise was inadequate to appease the need of the first man, and bring him to rest, till woman was created. And so the Maker hushed him into a deep sleep, and from his side He took the comrade meet for him, and made his happiness complete. Now this is one of the most striking types of Christ's union with His Church. He is the Bridegroom, and that Church is "the bride, the Lamb's wife." Adam and Eve were not more intimately and emphatically one flesh than Christ and the Christian are one spirit. "This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the Church." II. POINTS OF CONTRAST. 1. "The first Adam was of the earth, earthy; the Second Adam was the Lord from heaven." 2. The first Adam possessed the Divine image,

and effaced it; the Second Adam put on the human image, that He might restore in us the Divine. The serpent hissed its evil breath, and filmed the brightness which God had spread over His creature's brow; and, just as the foul vapour on a looking-glass blurs the reflections on its disc, so did the image stamped by the Creator there become distorted and disturbed. But Christ rubbed off the taint of the tempter's breath, and wrote the name of God upon the creature in His own blood. 3. The spirit of apostate Adam was proud, unbelieving, discontented, and rebellious; that of the Second Adam was humble, submissive, obedient, and faithful. 4. The first Adam was the medium of death, while the Second brought salvation and life. 5. By the first Adam paradise was lost; by the Second that paradise is regained. (*A. Mursell.*) *Adam a type of Christ*:—I. As THE FEDERAL HEAD OF MANKIND. II. As THE SOURCE OF LIFE—natural—redeemed. III. As THE CAUSE OF UNIVERSAL BUT WIDELY OPPOSITE EXPERIENCES—sin, death—life, righteousness. IV. As THE PROTOTYPE OF HUMAN NATURE—earthly—heavenly. V. As THE RULER OF THE WORLD—natural—Divine. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Adam a type of Christ*:—This is the earliest and deepest of all the types; God the Spirit grasps the first fact of man's history, and therewith prints the lesson of man's redemption. Note—I. THE AGREEMENT between the type and the Antitype. 1. Adam and Christ were the true sources or heads of their respective families. (1) There are two conceivable methods of constituting humanity; one, to make each man independent of all; the other, to make the first man the head and source of humanity. This latter method our Maker has adopted, and it is useless to question whether the other would have been better. When the bird is shut up in a cage, it is better that it should not dash itself against the bars. It was in an attempt to be as God that our first parents fell. If we would escape their fate, we should abandon speculations and address ourselves to facts. In point of fact we all come into the world with darkened minds and wayward hearts, which the Scriptures explain by the fall. Some complain of the difficulties they find there on this subject; but the difficulty lies, not in the Scriptures, but in the fact. Creatures manifestly the head of creation, under the government of an omnipotent and beneficent Being, lie in sin and suffering, and have done so from age to age, without intermission or mitigation. This is the difficulty; all Bible difficulties are small when compared with this. (2) The first man stood as head and representative of the race. His fall brought all down. At the head he stands, and at first the line of march is narrow: on the apex one; and behind him two or three walk abreast: broader and broader grows the stream, until, in our day, the file of march is a million of millions deep. On the other side stands He that was to come. Alone He stands at the head; already a multitude, which no man can number, tread the pilgrim's path; and now we look forward to that time when the stream of the Second Adam's children shall be co-extensive and coincident with that of the first. 2. These two representatives stood side by side from the first, and redemption began to flow from Christ as soon as sin was brought in by Adam. The promise sprang at the gate of Eden, an echo of the curse. Christ began to act as the Head of the redeemed the moment that the first man became the head of a fallen race. Under the earlier economies many felt the drawing of the unseen Christ, and in the days of His personal ministry, although He manifested Himself only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, He had compassion on the surrounding heathen, and hastened forward to the day of their redemption. 3. On both sides it is by birth that the members are united to their head and his destiny. We have been born to this inheritance of sin and suffering; we cannot shake it off. But be of good cheer, prisoner of hope: if by a corresponding new birth you are one with the Second Adam, you have no cause to weep. You cannot, indeed, escape from being a man; but if you are a new creature in Christ Jesus, the second birthright is as irrevocable as the first. It is a fixed principle of natural science that species do not change. But that which is impossible with man is possible with God. He has undertaken in the gospel to make a new creature. II. THE DIFFERENCE. The chief point lies in this, that whereas Adam's seed derive from their head sin and death, Christ's seed derive from their Head righteousness and life. One of the strangest facts in history is that multitudes are proud of their first birth, and do not give themselves any concern about a second. Under this, however, there are many specific points of difference. 1. While Adam's seed possess the moral nature of their head complete, Christ's possess His moral nature only in part. When we derive a sinful nature from the first man, we have previously no better nature, that may mingle with it and mitigate its evil. In me, that is in my flesh—in all that I derive from man my father—there dwelleth no good thing. But on the other hand, the

regeneration is the getting of a new nature, indeed, through union in spirit with Christ; but it is gotten by one who previously possessed an evil nature, and that evil nature is cast down from the throne, but not cast forth from the territory. The two contend against each other; and there is not peace, but a sword (see Rom. vii.). The union with Christ in the regeneration is likened to the grafting of a fruit-tree. The tree at the first, which springs from seed, is wholly evil. When it is grafted it is made good; but not so completely as it was originally made evil. In some way, however, the remnants of the old will be filtered out; and nothing shall enter heaven that would defile its golden streets or be a jar in its new song. 2. The two bands are not equally numerous. Adam's company includes absolutely the whole of the human race; Christ's company is contained within it, and is therefore necessarily smaller. Adam's company consists of all the born, and Christ's of all the born-again. God's creatures of the old and new creation seem to envelop each other, after the manner of a sphere within a sphere, the most precious being embedded in the heart. Humanity, comparatively small in bulk, is surrounded by the mightier mass of beasts that perish. In the heart of humanity lie the regenerate—the true, vital seed of the kingdom; and the crust that surrounds them will crumble and be cast away. When the earth and all that it contained have passed away, Christ and Christians will remain, inheritors together and alone of the eternal life. 3. Although we inherit this corruption from the first man, we personally have no relation to him; we received it from the last that stood before us in the line. But from Christ our life flows as its fountain, and each generation of believing men continue to draw their spiritual life and justifying righteousness immediately from Him. The new creature does not propagate its kind. If the first Adam were annihilated, man would still be born in sin; but if Christ were no more Christ, there could be no more for any man a new, a holy life. The difference is somewhat like that between a tree propagating its kind by seed and one sustaining its branches. When once the seed is ripened and cast, the progenitor tree may be burned. But even when the branch has been put forth by the tree, the branch is ever directly dependent on the tree. If the tree should die, all the branches would die too. Adam might say, I was the tree, and ye grew from the seed which I shed; but Christ says, "I am the vine, ye are the branches." And as Christians hold directly of Christ, Christ holds individually by Christians. The Head endures pain when the members are injured. How safe is that life which is hid with Christ in God! 4. The gain by the second Adam is greater than the loss by the first (ver. 15). He pays our debt, and makes us rich besides. He sets free the slave, and makes him a son. "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." (*W. Arnot, D.D.*)

Ver. 15. **But not as the offence, so also is the free gift.**—*The offence and the free gift*:—1. The offence originated with man, the free gift in the grace of God. 2. The offence operated necessarily by a just law, the gift is free through Jesus Christ. 3. The offence results in death, the free gift abounds unto everlasting life. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The offence and the free gift*:—If from the offence of one—so insignificant in its way—there could go forth an action which spread over the whole multitude of mankind, will not the conclusion hold *a fortiori* that from the grace of God, and the gift through this grace of one man, acting on the opposite side, so powerful and rich as they are, there must result an action, the extension of which shall not be less than that of the offence, and shall, consequently, reach the whole of that multitude? If a very weak spring could inundate a whole meadow, would it not be safe to conclude that a much more abundant spring, if spread over the same space of ground, would not fail to submerge it entirely? (*Prof. Godet.*) *The first and second Adam compared* in reference—I. To THE UNIVERSALITY OF THEIR INFLUENCE. The first Adam destroyed all, the second has obtained grace for all—with this difference, that in the former case the ruin came inevitably, but the reception of the grace is suspended upon man's free choice. II. To THE INTENSITY OF THEIR INFLUENCE. The first Adam has by one sin given occasion to all sin; the second has by one act of grace expiated all sin—with this difference, that Adam's sin in itself was not greater than any other sin, but the grace of Christ outweighs the aggregate guilt of all sin. III. To THE FINAL RESULTS OF THEIR INFLUENCE. The first Adam has subjected mankind to the bondage of death, the second confers upon all, who will receive it, dominion in life—with this difference, that the fulness of grace in Christ not only meets the curse in Adam, but far surpasses the grace originally conferred upon man. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Life in Christ contrasted with death in Adam*:—Note—I. THE INTRINSIC NATURE OF THE THINGS HERE CONTRASTED;

and we shall see that if the one arrangement could be adopted by God, much more likely is it that the other would be also, as being more strictly congenial with all that we know of His glorious character. God might permit us to sin and suffer in Adam, with reference to some future good to come out of it: He might permit it in harmony with His wisdom, holiness, and love; but still He could have no delight in it for its own sake. Yet we find that He has seen it right to permit these things to transpire: how much more, then, may we believe in the arrangement of grace, by which salvation is brought to our ruined race! But how do we know the feelings of the Most High in reference to this matter? What reason have we for supposing that it pleases Him more to give us life in Christ than to see us die in Adam? We take our views from His own word (Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7; Psa. lxxxvi. 5, 15, cxlv. 8, 9; Ezek. xviii. 23, 31, 32, xxxiii. 11; John iii. 16, iv. 16). Say not, then, complainingly that God has permitted you to die in Adam, but rather believe that He delights to give you life in Christ. II. THAT GRACE RELATES TO A LARGER NUMBER OF TRANSGRESSIONS THAN DID THE FIRST CONDEMNATION (ver. 16). The gift by one is quite unlike the sin by one, inasmuch as in the sin there was but one offence committed, and instantly judgment upon it; whereas, in the matter of the gift by grace, there is forgiveness ensured for many offences. Hitherto, we have been regarding the sin of mankind as one, and in that one sin all men became guilty before God. Let us, then, look at the nature and the number of our offences, all of which need to and can be forgiven through the atoning work of Christ. There are the sins of our ungodly life; there are also our sins since we entered on a godly career. We are daily guilty of omissions of duty, or grievous shortcomings in the mode of fulfilling our obligations. But beyond all this, there are positive faults and evils in the best of us. Yet—blessed be God!—these sins, however numerous, may be all pardoned through the blood of Christ; for the free gift is of many offences unto justification. III. THAT GRACE IS ESSENTIALLY A STRONGER PRINCIPLE THAN SIN (ver. 17). Life is more mighty than death. The range of death is limited; it can only ravage that which already exists. But life is a creative power to whose possible achievements we can assign no limits. Death is a negative principle, life a positive one. Death is a condition of the creature, life has its source and fulness in the infinite Creator. Under the domination of death we are made its groaning and unwilling victims; but under the reign of life we are caught up to the throne, and share with gladness in the monarch's might and joy. (*T. G. Horton.*) *The grace of God*—I. TRANSCENDS SIN. 1. In its origin. Sin proceeds from the offence of one man and destroys many; grace proceeds from God through one man, Jesus Christ, and therefore not only reaches many, but abounds. 2. In its operation. One offence brought condemnation, but grace not only counteracts the effects of that one offence but of many others. 3. In its results. One offence brought death, but grace wherever received not only gives back life, but gives it more abundantly. II. IS COEXTENSIVE WITH SIN. 1. It cannot reach further because it presupposes sin. 2. It does reach as far, because the free gift unto justification of life is unto all men, because the many made sinners might also be made righteous. 3. If grace anywhere fails it is not through any limitation of its action, but through the wilful impenitency of man. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Honey from a lion*:—This text affords many openings for controversy. It can be made to bristle with difficulties. It would be easy to set up a thorn-hedge and keep the sheep out of the pasture, or to so pelt each other with the stones as to leave the fruit untasted. I feel more inclined to chime in with that ancient father against whom a clamorous disputant shouted, "Hear me! Hear me!" "No," said the father, "I will not hear you, nor shall you hear me, but we will both be quiet and hear what Christ has to say." Note—I. THE APPOINTED WAY OF OUR SALVATION IS BY THE FREE GIFT OF GOD. Salvation is bestowed—1. Without regard to any merit, supposed or real. Grace is not a fit gift for the righteous, but for the undeserving. It is according to the nature of God to pity the miserable and forgive the guilty, "for He is good, and His mercy endureth for ever." 2. Irrespective of any merit which God foresees will be in man. Foresight of the existence of grace cannot be the cause of grace. God Himself does not foresee that there will be any good thing in any man, except what He foresees that He will put there. 3. Without reference to conditions which imply any desert. But I hear one murmur, "God will not give grace to men who do not repent and believe." I answer, "God gives men grace to repent and believe, and no man does so till first grace is given him." Repentance and faith may be conditions of receiving, but they are not conditions of purchasing, for salvation is without money and without price. 4. Over the head of sin and in the teeth of rebellion. "God commendeth His love toward

us, in that, while we were yet sinners," &c. Many of us have been saved by grace of the most abounding and extraordinary sort. 5. Through the one man Jesus Christ. People talk about a "one man ministry." I was lost by a one man ministry when father Adam fell in Eden, but I was saved by a one man ministry when Jesus bore my sin in His own body on the tree. II. IT IS CERTAIN THAT GREAT EVILS HAVE COME TO US BY THE FALL. 1. We have lost the Garden of Eden and all its delights, privileges, and immunities, its communion with God, and its freedom from death. 2. We have been born to a heritage of sorrow. 3. We came into the world with a bias towards evil. 4. We are made liable to death, and are sure to bow our heads beneath the fatal stroke. 5. While we live we know that the sweat of our brow must pay the price of our bread. 6. Our children must be born with pangs and travail. III. FROM THE FALL WE INFER THE MORE ABUNDANT CERTAINTY THAT SALVATION BY GRACE THROUGH CHRIST JESUS SHALL COME TO BELIEVERS. For—1. This appears to be more delightful to the heart of God. I can understand that God, having so arranged it that the human race should be regarded as one, should allow the consequences of sin to fall upon succeeding generations of men; but yet I know that He takes no pleasure in the death of any, and finds no delight in afflicting mankind. If God has so arranged it that in the Second Adam men rise and live, it seems to me most gloriously consistent with His gracious nature and infinite love that all who believe in Jesus should be saved through Him. 2. It seems more inevitable that men should be saved by the death of Christ than that men should be lost by the sin of Adam. It might seem possible that, after Adam had sinned, God might have said, "Notwithstanding this covenant of works, I will not lay this burden upon the children of Adam"; but it is not possible that after the eternal Son of God has become man, and has bowed His head to death, God should say, "Yet after all I will not save men for Christ's sake." 3. Look at the difference as to the causes of the two effects. Look at the occasion of our ruin—"the offence of one"—a finite being, who therefore cannot be compared in power with the grace of the infinite God; the sin of a moment, and therefore cannot be compared for force and energy with the everlasting purpose of Divine love. The grace of God is like His nature, omnipotent and unlimited. God is not only gracious to this degree or to that, but He is gracious beyond measure; we read of "the exceeding riches of His grace." He is "the God of all grace." 4. The difference of the channels by which the evil and the good were severally communicated to us. In each case it was "by one," but what a difference in the persons! (1) Let us not think too little of the head of the human family. Yet what is the first Adam as compared with the Second? He is but of the earth, earthy, but the Second Man is the Lord from heaven. Surely, then, if Adam with that puny hand of his could pull down the house of our humanity, that greater Man, who is also the Son of God, can fully restore us. (2) Adam commits one fault and spoils us, but Christ's achievements are many as the stars of heaven. (3) Adam did but eat of the forbidden fruit, but Christ died. Is there any comparison between the one act of rebellion in the garden and the matchless deed of superlative obedience upon the Cross of Calvary which crowned a life of service? 5. From the text you may derive a great deal of comfort. (1) A babe is born into the world amid great anxiety because of its mother's pains; but while these prove how the consequences of the fall are with us ("in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children"), they also assure us that the Second Adam can abundantly bring us bliss through a second birth. (2) Inasmuch as we have seen the thorn and the thistle because of one Adam, we may expect to see a blessing on the earth because of the Second Adam. Therefore with unbounded confidence do I believe the promise: "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the briar shall come up the myrtle-tree," &c. (3) Did not the Lord say, "In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread"? Ought not your labour to be an argument by which your faith shall prove that in Christ Jesus there remaineth a rest for the people of God. (4) Did the first Adam through his disobedience lift the latch for death? It is surely so. Therefore I believe with the greater assurance that the Second Adam can give life to these dry bones, can awake all these sleepers, and raise them in newness of life. IV. IF FROM THE FALL OF ADAM SUCH GREAT RESULTS FLOW, GREATER RESULTS MUST FLOW FROM THE GRACE OF GOD AND THE GIFT BY GRACE, WHICH IS BY ONE MAN, JESUS CHRIST. Suppose that Adam had never sinned, and we were unfallen beings, yet our standing would have remained in jeopardy. We have now lost everything in Adam, and so the uncertain tenure has come to an end; but we that have believed have obtained an inheritance which we hold by a title which Satan himself cannot dispute: "All things are yours,

and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." By the great transgression of Adam we lost our life in him; but in Christ we live again with a higher and nobler life. The Lord Jesus has also brought us into a nearer relationship to God than we could have possessed by any other means. We were God's creatures, but now we are His sons. We have lost paradise, but we shall possess that of which the earthly garden was but a lowly type: we might have eaten of the luscious fruits of Eden, but now we eat of the bread which came down from heaven; we might have heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, but now, like Enoch, we may walk with God after a nobler and closer fashion. We are now capable of a joy which unfallen spirits could not have known—the bliss of pardoned sin. The bonds which bind redeemed ones to their God are the strongest which exist. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The love of God* is a love which gives another love; it is the grace of a Father giving the love of a Brother. (*Prof. Godet.*) *The advantages accruing to the race from the fall*:—How common and bitter is the outcry against our first parent for the mischief he entailed on his posterity; and it were well if the complaint ended there, but it glances from Adam to his Creator. "Did not God foresee that he would abuse his liberty, and know all the baneful consequences of the act? Why, then, did He permit it?" Because He knew that "not as the offence, so is the free gift"; that the evil resulting from the former was not as the good resulting from the latter, not worthy to be compared with it. If Adam had not fallen—I. CHRIST HAD NOT DIED, AND THE WORLD HAD MISSED THE MOST AMAZING DISPLAY OF GOD'S LOVE. So—1. There could have been no such thing as faith in God thus loving the world; nor faith in Christ as "loving us, and giving Himself for us"; nor faith in the Spirit as renewing the image of God in our hearts. 2. The same blank could have been left in our love. We might have loved God as our Creator and Preserver, but we could not have loved Him under the nearest and dearest relation. We might have loved the Son of God as being "the brightness of His Father's glory," but not as having borne our sins. We could not have loved the Spirit as revealing to us the Father and the Son, as opening our eyes and turning us from darkness to light, &c. 3. Nor could we have loved our neighbour to the same extent: "If God *so* loved us we ought to love one another." II. WE HAD MISSED THE INNUMERABLE BENEFITS WHICH FLOW THROUGH OUR SUFFERINGS. Had there been no suffering, a considerable part of religion, and in some respects the most excellent part, could have had no place. 1. Upon this foundation our passive graces are built; yea, the noblest of them—the love which endureth all things. Here is the ground for resignation, for confidence in God, for patience, meekness, gentleness, longsuffering, &c. 2. These afford opportunities for doing good which could not otherwise have existed. III. HEAVEN WOULD HAVE BEEN LESS GLORIOUS. 1. We should have missed the fruit of those graces which could not have flourished but for our struggle with sin here. Superior nobleness on earth means superior happiness in heaven. 2. We should have missed the reward which will accrue to innumerable good works which could not otherwise have been wrought, such as relief of distress, &c. 3. We should have missed the "exceeding and eternal weight of glory" which is to be the recompense of our light affliction. IV. OUR SALVATION WOULD HAVE BEEN LESS SECURE. Unless in Adam all had died, every man must have personally answered for himself, and, as a consequence, if he had once sinned there would have been no possibility of his rising again. Now who would wish to hazard eternity on one stake? But under the economy of redemption if we fall we may rise again. Conclusion: See, then, how little reason there is to repine at the fall of our first parents, since herefrom we may derive such unspeakable advantages. If God had decreed that millions should suffer in hell because Adam sinned it would have been a different matter; but on the contrary, He has decreed that every man may be a gainer by it, and no man can be a loser but through his own choice. (*J. Wesley, M.A.*)

Ver. 16. **And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift.**—*The Adamic and Christian dispensations*:—I. THE ADAMIC. 1. One offence brought condemnation. 2. Upon all mankind. 3. By a just and inevitable law. II. THE CHRISTIAN. 1. Grace is free. 2. Brings justification. 3. For all. 4. From many offences. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The one and the many*:—With the one sinner is contrasted the multitude of the justified. What a difference between the power of the spark which sets fire to the forest by lighting a withered branch, and the power of the instrument which extinguishes the conflagration at the moment when every tree is on fire, and makes them all live again. (*Prof. Godet.*) *Christ and the many*:—He gave His

life a ransom for many (Matt. xx. 28); His blood was shed for many (Matt. xxvi. 28; Mark xiv. 24); He bare the sins of many (Isa. liii. 11, 12); by His knowledge He justifies many (Isa. liii. 11); He brings many sins to glory (Heb. ii. 10). The many are a multitude which no man can number (Rev. vii. 9). (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) *Salvation a free gift*:—One excuse which awakened sinners are accustomed to allege in their own defence is, that they wish to love God with all their heart, but cannot. They do, indeed, wish to be saved, but they are not willing to be saved in God's way; that is, they are not willing to accept salvation as a free gift. They would do anything to buy it, but will not take it without money and without price. Suppose that you were very sick, and were told by the physician that there was but one medicine in the world which could save your life, and this was exceedingly precious; that you were also told that there was but one person in the world who had any of this in his possession; and that, although he was willing to give it to those who asked, he would on no account sell any. Suppose this person to be one whom you had treated with great neglect and contempt, injured in every possible way. How exceedingly unwilling would you be to send to him for the medicine as a gift: you would rather purchase it at the expense of your whole fortune. You would defer sending as long as possible; and when you found you were daily growing worse, and nothing else could save you, you would be obliged, however reluctantly, to send and ask for some. Just so unwilling are sinners to apply to God for salvation, as a free gift; and they will not do it until they find themselves perishing, and that there is no other hope for them. (*E. Payson.*) *Sin the occasion of glorifying God*:—I do believe that sin in itself has the same aspect as affliction—that it makes room for the mercy of God. I hardly dare say what Augustine, when speaking of the fall and of the sin of Adam, and looking to all the display of grace that followed it, said. He said, "*beata culpa*"—"happy fault," as if he thought that by means of sin the grace of God is so magnified and displayed he might call it a "happy fault." I will not go so far. I scarcely do more than repeat what that great master in Israel once said; but I do say this, that I cannot imagine an occasion for glorifying God equal to the fact that man has sinned. God so loved the world as to give Christ to die for sinners, and how could this have been if there had been no sin? The Cross is a constellation of glory that is brighter than creation itself. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Ver. 17. **For if by one man's offence death reigned by one.**—*The reign of death and the reign in life*:—I. THE REIGN OF DEATH. 1. Established by one man's sin. 2. Universal. 3. Irresistible. II. THE REIGN IN LIFE. 1. Effected through grace. 2. Glorious. 3. Eternal. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The reign of death and the reign in life*:—When the empty vessel of the human heart has once become filled with the fulness of grace and righteousness, the sinner is raised to the place of a "king in life"—an antithesis to "death reigned." But the apostle has too lively a conviction of spiritual realities to say here "life shall reign." Death reigns: it is a tyrant. But life does not reign; it makes kings. Instead of a sombre state of things which bears sway as a reign of death, it is here the individuals themselves who, having personally appropriated righteousness, reign personally in the luminous domain of life. Compare on this reign what Paul said (chap. iv. 13), of the inheritance of this world; then the glorying (chap. v. 11); finally, chap. viii. 17. "In life" does not denote a period—*i.e.*, eternal life, but the mode or nature of the reign of believers. A new, holy, inexhaustible and victorious vitality will pervade those "receivers of righteousness," and make them so many kings. If the collective condemnation could make each of them a subject of death, the conclusion therefrom should be that their individual justification will make each of them a king in life. (*Prof. Godet.*) *The reign of death and the reign in life*:—I. THE EVIL INTRODUCED INTO THE WORLD BY ADAM. The reign of death. There was a time when Death was a stranger in the world. It was sin which brought him here. But the consequences did not end here. Sin gave to death a fearful dominion over the whole globe on which man dwelt. Hence he is represented as a monarch. Men love him not and are daily resisting his power, but he laughs to scorn their efforts, and the contest ends in their lying down in the dust. The wide world is his only kingdom. Into heaven he never entered, and in hell he cannot destroy. The soul, too, is brought under his dominion. There is not one of us who is not by nature "dead in trespasses and sins." II. THE BLESSING INTRODUCED BY CHRIST. A reign in life. 1. Life is here opposed to death, and expresses a state of spiritual existence. But they who have received this precious benefit

not only live, they "reign in life." This implies—(1) Power. They have overcome their enemies, as well as escaped from them; not merely freed themselves from their tyranny, but attained a dominion over them. (*a*) They were once the subjects of Satan, they now "bruise him underneath their feet." (*b*) The world once held them in thraldom, but the world also is overcome. (*c*) Once, too, they were governed by lawless passions, but now they reign as lords over their own soul. They "mortify the deeds of the body," they "crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts." Not that their victory is complete. Their throne is secure, but it is surrounded by rebels who incessantly disturb its peace. Satan still assails, the world still tempts, sin still rages. (2) Dignity. And what so truly great and noble as to be masters of ourselves? What so base as to be the slaves of sin? (3) Heaven. There the Christian will indeed live and reign. He will have attained a complete triumph over all his enemies. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me on My throne," &c. He who once suffered with Christ, shall be "glorified together with Him." What a glorious change is this, that the feeble mortals who were once the trembling victims of death, should thus "reign in life." 2. And to whom are they indebted for this wondrous change? To themselves? The dead cannot raise themselves to life. To the father who ruined them? He made them the children of wretchedness, and then he went away and left them to their misery. To legions of angels? All their mighty hosts could not reanimate one lifeless body, much less quicken and glorify a ruined soul. One Being only was able to accomplish this glorious change, but He was the very Being who seemed the least likely to accomplish it, for it was His righteous vengeance which had sent death into the world, and His voice which proclaimed Him its king. By Him, however, was death dethroned; by Him to the utter exclusion of all others, to the utter rejection of all our claims to any part of the honour of the work. III. WHO ARE THE PERSONS FOR WHOM THIS GREAT BLESSING IS DESIGNED? All the human race? Clearly not. The ungodly lives of thousands around us would at once disprove such an assertion. All men indeed, in consequence of the interference of Christ, are under a dispensation of mercy; a free and full salvation is offered them, and they are invited to accept it. But men will not accept it. Those who have received this salvation are the men for whom the kingdom is prepared. They are described as—1. "Receiving abundance of grace." (1) "Grace" is that free favour which God has manifested towards His sinful children, providing a sacrifice for their iniquities, sending them the glad tidings of salvation, and making them actually partakers of its blessings. (2) "Abundance of grace" signifies not only a sufficiency, but grace enough and to spare. And look at what part we may of the mystery of redemption, we discover at once the propriety of the term. The wisdom which planned and the power which executed this stupendous scheme, and the love which called this power and this wisdom into exercise, are all infinite. The glory of the salvation treasured up for sinners in Christ, the freedom with which it is communicated, the characters of those on whom it is bestowed, all bear witness to the boundless extent of the Divine mercy. 2. "The gift of righteousness." (1) This may possibly mean that renewal of the heart unto holiness, which the redeemed sinner receives from the free bounty of his Saviour. But the apostle seems rather to refer here to the same righteousness of which he speaks in the following verse, the obedience or righteousness of Christ. It is this which enables the Lord to pour out the abundance of His grace on His apostate children. He imputes to them the merits of His dear Son, and then He pardons, accepts, and rewards them, without weakening His authority or tarnishing His glory. (2) The apostle calls it a gift, because it is by an act of mercy that it is transferred to us; he speaks of it as an abundant gift, because it completely satisfies the demands of God's unalterable law. Its merit is infinite. It is a robe so pure, that he who wears it, stands before God without spot or blemish; so splendid, that it covers all his shame; so freely offered, that all the naked may array themselves in it, and all rejoice in it as the garment of salvation. IV. THE CERTAINTY OF THEIR RECEIVING IT. The apostle may mean—1. That the efficacy of the righteousness of Christ to procure life is greater than that of the offence of Adam to cause death; that the salvation of the Christian's soul is even more certain than the death of his body, secured to him by more numerous and solemn declarations, and involving in it the honour of more of the Divine perfections. Justice and faithfulness demand his body for corruption, but mercy unites with faithfulness and justice in raising his soul to the kingdom of life. 2. That the righteousness of Christ is more than sufficient to repair the destructive conse-

quences of Adam's transgression. It does not place the believer in the state in which he would have been had Adam never fallen; it does more; it places him in a more secure and far more exalted state. In other words, we may gain more by Christ than we lost by Adam. The one made an honourable temple a mournful heap of ruins; the other can not only raise up the temple again out of its ruins, but can make the latter house far more glorious than the former. When man was first created God looked on him and pronounced him good; but when His beloved Son redeems him, He calls him His inheritance and portion; he comes and dwells in Him, and loves Him more than all the creatures of His hand. (*C. Bradley, M.A.*) *Believers receive in Christ more than they lost in Adam*:—I. BETTER RIGHTEOUSNESS. II. FIRMER STANDING. III. HIGHER GLORY. (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) **Abundance of grace.**—Overflowing kindness and blessing. All fulness of grace in Christ (Col. i. 19; Eph. iii. 8). Justifying grace, sanctifying grace, glorifying grace (Rom. viii. 29, 30). Grace for grace (John i. 16), or grace upon grace (Phil. ii. 27). He gives more grace (James iv. 6); and makes all grace to abound (2 Cor. ix. 8). He gives His sheep not only life, but life more abundantly (John x. 10). Ezekiel's river realised (Ezek. xlvii. 1-5; *cf.* Eph. iii. 19). (*Ibid.*) *Individual influence*:—No warlike host delivered the children of Israel from the bondage of Egypt, but one man—Moses. No senate of statesmen raised Israel to a pitch of greatness that proclaimed to the world the glory and safety of a theocratic nation, but one man—David. No school of divines gave to England the Bible in the mother tongue, but one man—Wycliffe. No learned society discovered America, but one man—Columbus. No association of science revealed the clue to interpret the laws of the heavenly bodies, but one man—Galileo. No parliament saved English liberties, but one man—Pym. No assembly of theologians wrote the book which, next to the Bible, has had the most potent influence on the English language and on English hearts, but one man—Bunyan. No confederate nations rescued Scotland from her political and ecclesiastical enemies, but one man—Knox. And the same might be said of almost every great step since in the progress of the race. Doubtless these men found their coadjutors; but all through the ages God has put immense honour upon individuals. (*J. Guest.*)

Ver. 18. **Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation.**—*Condemnation*:—I. ITS CAUSE. Sin. II. ITS MISERIES. 1. Physical. 2. Spiritual. 3. Eternal. III. ITS CURE. 1. Justification. 2. Freely offered. 3. Through the righteousness of Christ. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The contrast between a state of condemnation and grace*:—I. IN THEIR ORIGIN. 1. The one originates in sin. 2. The other in the righteousness of Christ. II. IN THEIR EVIDENCES. 1. The one is distinguished by disobedience. 2. The other by the obedience of faith. III. IN THEIR RELATION TO THE LAW. 1. The law exposes sin, and increases condemnation. 2. Grace removes both yet magnifies the law. IV. IN THEIR RESULTS. 1. Condemnation brings death temporal, eternal. 2. Grace confers a new life on earth and a glorious and blissful life in the world to come. (*Ibid.*) *The mediatorial system*:—1. One of the chief glories of Christianity is this—it is the religion of facts. These facts are few, extraordinary, and eternal and universal in their aspects. 2. In the context we have two classes of facts. (1) Dark melancholy facts. (*a*) Sin is in the world; it has quenched its lights, destroyed its liberties, embittered its enjoyments. History, observation and our own consciousness convince us of this. (*b*) Death is in the world. It has reigned from Adam to this day. Individuals, families, nations, the world are dying. Every sepulchre, funeral, illness, pulse, reminds us that the dust is to be our home. (*c*) Both sin and death have entered the world by the same man, Adam. The origin of evil is a deep mystery, but its introduction to our world is a historical fact clearly stated in the Bible. God made Adam the father, the priest of the world, but Adam ruined it and himself. Adam was the original sinner, and we his children sin and die. (2) Bright and animating facts. (*a*) Grace is in the world. "Grace hath abounded." God was under no obligation to show or continue grace to this world. He might withdraw it; that would leave man a demon in character, who would soon kindle around himself the fires of an universal hell. Grace alone keeps the world from becoming the victim of its own transgression. (*b*) There is a higher, nobler life than this. "Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life." Eternal life means freedom from sin, which is the destroyer of the innocence, happiness and utility of man; freedom from the penalties of violated law; and freedom from annihilation. It means an existence without sin, misery, or end. (*c*) This

grace and eternal life flow to man through the same channel, "Christ Jesus the Lord." 3. The apostle states these great truths—(1) To convince Jews and Gentiles that both were equally indebted to Christ for salvation. The Gentile had the law written on his conscience, and the Jew had the law outwardly written, and both transgressed, so that both needed a Saviour. (2) To set forth the nature and number of benefits derived through the mediation of Christ. I. THE EXISTENCE OF THE HUMAN RACE RESTS ON THE MEDIATION OF JESUS. 1. "The Lord commanded the man, saying, . . . of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." A phrase which must have meant either absolute annihilation or the dissolution of soul and body, and the consequent punishment of both in hell. But Adam did sin. Was his existence quenched? Was he driven to hell? No. Was he spared on the ground of rectitude? No; for if justice could have spared him for one hour, it could have spared him for ever. But he was spared; and as he could not have been spared on the ground of justice, he must have been spared on the ground of grace, and if on the ground of grace, then it was through the mediation of Christ, for grace reigns only through Him. 2. A new system was introduced, and Adam's forfeited being was spared, and his species was to be multiplied because the Second Adam had been appointed to be the Great Head and Saviour of the human kind. But if our very existence is an effect of the great mediatorial scheme, all the means, comforts, and hopes of our existence are also effects of the same scheme. In Him all things consist. 3. Under the government of the Son of Man the human race has already grown into extraordinary numerical greatness, and is to continue to augment in strength, moral and physical excellence, grandeur and happiness, for perhaps millions of years to come. It is natural to think so, if we consider the honour which God has already bestowed on our nature, by raising it to union with Himself; that four thousand years were occupied in preparations for the advent; the extensive provisions that have been made for the future accommodation of our race in another world; that the agency of the Church is in its infancy; that the sciences and arts, matter and mind, have hardly yet presented their first oblations to Christianity. 4. Christ is to be honoured here more than He has yet been. It was on earth He was born, died, first published His salvation, qualified Himself for His mediatorial crown. Here, also, He is to be acknowledged as the Lord of all. The mediation of Christ is the basis of human existence, and the means of restoration to light, purity and glory. II. THE MEDIATORY AGENCY OF JESUS CHRIST PROCURES IMMORTALITY FOR MAN. 1. Man's existence is not limited to this narrow, dark sphere. Our immortality and the knowledge of it are the gifts of Christ. His existence in the invisible world is the greatest proof we have of its reality. His resurrection and ascension are the most convincing arguments for a future world. He lives. We shall live. 2. It is true that an endless existence will be a curse to the wicked; but let not the author of immortality be blamed for that. Remember—(1) Existence is a blessing; history and consciousness prove that. (2) Nothing can render existence a curse but sin. It is not in the power of any creature. The Creator Himself will not render a perfectly holy being unhappy. (3) Christ is now able and willing to take away sin from us. Yes, He is willing, and if you are so too, your existence is safe for ever. III. THE MEDIATION OF CHRIST HAS FURNISHED US WITH A SYSTEM OF MEANS TO PREPARE US FOR A HAPPY IMMORTALITY. "Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." Here is the essence of the gospel. This is—1. A system of grace. The doctrine of human merit is at once unphilosophical and unscriptural. Man's salvation is all of grace. Its origination, discovery, application, and perfection in heaven is grace. Let us trust and triumph in gospel-grace. 2. A system of righteousness also. It justifies man before God, and justifies God in doing so before His own intelligent universe. Here, then, is a scheme that is just to all. It injures none; it benefits the universe. Conclusion: From the whole we may infer—1. That Christianity is infinitely superior to natural religion. It reveals more, and its revelations are warm, loving, transforming. 2. Christ is the most extraordinary and interesting Being in the universe. How vast His sphere! How benevolent His agency! How Divine His character! In all things He has the pre-eminence. 3. Let us rejoice in Christianity while parting with friends in death. Christ lives, they live. We shall also live. (*Caleb Morris.*) *The two representatives of the race*:—The words "judgment came" and "the free gift came," are not part of the original, but are introduced to complete the sense. In the margin you read, "by one offence," instead of, "by one man's offence," and also "by one righteousness" (righteous act) instead

of "by the righteousness of one." Dean Alford translates the verse—"As through one trespass the issue was unto all men to condemnation; even so through one righteous act, the issue was unto all men to justification of life." Note, then—I. THE LOSS TO ALL MEN THROUGH ADAM. 1. There is no principle more widely conceded than that of representation. Our national, municipal, and social arrangements, are all more or less representative. We honour the son of a good man, not merely for his own excellence, but also for the sake of his father. We suspect the son of a bad man, even although we know no evil of him personally. No one imagines that there is any injustice in this. Those who suffer by it are pitied, but their misfortune is recognised to be the natural consequence of their connection with those whom they represent. On the other hand we never grudge to others any advantage which they may gain by it. 2. Now this principle is everywhere recognised in the Bible. We read that the "Lord our God is a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children," &c. We see the descendants of Canaan punished for their progenitors' offence; the Edomites excluded from their birthright because their father Esau had despised it; how the wives and children of Achan and those of Dathan and Abiram were destroyed because of the sin of their relatives. We find Jesus Himself declaring that vengeance was about to descend upon the children of those who slew the prophets. And when we read the story of the siege of Jerusalem, that awful record seems to demand no less an explanation than that "all the righteous blood shed upon the earth" was exacted at the hands of that generation. "His blood be upon us and upon our children"; and in the story of the Jews through eighteen centuries, who can fail to perceive the cleaving of the curse? 3. The loss which has come to all men through the trespass of Adam is an instance of this great law of representation. Adam was the head of our race. He could neither stand nor fall alone. That which we see upon a small scale when the fortunes of a family depend upon the conduct of some member, or when the history of a nation is determined by some one statesman's decision—that took place upon the vastest scale when Adam was placed upon his probation in Eden. What was the tragic issue we all know. The head of the family gambled away his fair inheritance, bequeathing only to us the bitter entail of his corruption and death. The forbidden fruit turned out to be a deadly poison, and the pale infection has spread through all the race. Adam had been created in the likeness of God. But when Adam begat a child (Gen. v. 3), it was in the image of a depraved and fallen man. The perversity which appears in early childhood, the proneness to error even of the wisest and most virtuous, the callous indifference to the will of Heaven which characterises the majority, the common selfishness and the black list of daily crimes are witnesses of the curse that broods over the nations. Moreover, there is in the conscience of every one of us the knowledge that we have our own sad share in the inheritance of the fall. 4. There is something painful in this view of life. To be born under the condemnation of God, who can bear to think of it? As Paul points out in this very chapter, death, the wages of sin, comes even upon those "who have not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression"; *i.e.*, the sentence comes upon those who have not personally incurred it. Torturing pains and untimely death are allotted to our little babes, and to those who, by reason of disease or imperfection of brain, are at no period of their lives responsible. God forbid that because of this we should challenge the Divine justice. If I suffer wrong to-day because of the crime or folly of some ancestor, the wrong be upon the head of the offender, not upon the law! Yet if this were the whole truth we might, indeed, be perplexed and broken-hearted. But, thank God, there is a counterbalancing fact, viz.—II. THE GAIN TO ALL MEN THROUGH JESUS CHRIST. By His righteous act there is an issue unto all men towards acquittal resulting in life. We have in this new fact a new operation of the representative principle. It pleased God to make His Divine Son a Second Great Head of the human race, that "as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Cor. xi. 3). As our Representative He paid the penalty of our sins. "He bare our sins in His own body on the tree." As our Representative He fulfilled all righteousness, "that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." From the first Adam a poison passed into the lives of all men. From the Second an antidote passed into the lives of all men. The statements have respect not to a portion of the race, not to an elect few, but to all men. 1. We owe to Christ the very fact of our existence. The warning to Adam respecting the forbidden fruit was, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Had the sentence been speedily executed, then, in the deepest of all senses, we should all have died in Adam, for we should never have

been born. What was it that arrested the course of the law? Not justice, surely; but grace (John i. 17). It was because of the obedience of Christ, foreseen and mercifully taken into account, that Adam was spared, and that our birth into this world became possible. 2. All men owe much more than this. When we come to inspect human nature, we find there that which cannot be accounted for by our descent from the fallen Adam. Those who have had to deal with abandoned women declare that beneath all their degradation they have discovered something left of womanhood and modesty. Those who have moved freely among the vilest men of the land, have found in the deepest heart of the blackest reprobates something of good. In every man, side by side with a corruption whose issue is unto condemnation, there exists, also, a pure influence, whose issue, could it but prevail, is unto justification of life. Whence comes this influence? Is it a part of our heritage from the first Adam? We cannot believe it. Can a clean thing come out of an unclean? Do men gather grapes on thorns, or figs on thistles? Whatever of generosity, of purity, is found in any human heart; whatever gracious disposition, or kindly motive, or noble inspiration; whatever is sweet and child-like in the young; whatever is modest, and gentle, and winsome in woman; whatever is brave, and loyal, and faithful in man is some portion of that heritage of good which has come to us from Christ, the federal Head and redeeming Representative of our race. Conclusion: We are here to-day, losers and gainers by this principle of representation. The first Adam and the second are in every one of us. We have inherited from both. We have inherited a sinful and corrupt nature. We have inherited also a better nature. We stand now upon our own personal probation. We are summoned now to make our choice between the "natural man" that is in us, and the "Spiritual Man" that is in us. The issue is for eternity, and "why will ye die?" Choose not that forbidden fruit, whose bitter end is death, or at the last the just God must needs ratify your choice, and you will perish in the second death. Choose rather to live. Let that life which was bestowed for Christ's sake be used in Christ's service, (*W. J. Woods, B.A.*) *Our loss through Adam and our gain through Christ*:—1. Some points of importance are lost in the authorised rendering. "The offence of one" is, in the original, "one offence," or "one trespass," as in Matt. vi. 14. The word properly expresses a fall by the side of the path of duty. "The righteousness of one" is, in the same way, in the original, "one act of righteousness." The whole redeeming work of Christ is here, then, summed up into a single act of righteousness. The next verse explains the expression by introducing the equivalent word obedience, and if further explanation were needed, St. Paul himself gives it in Phil. ii. 8. "Obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the Cross"; not a death by itself as a single isolated deed, but as a crown of life—the self-sacrifice begun in incarnation, continued through the earthly life, and consummated on Calvary. Through this one act of righteousness the free gift through the grace of Jesus (ver. 15), "bringeth all men unto the justification of life," *i.e.*, bringing with it the absolution which has life in it, the free forgiveness which gives that unity with God which is the eternal life of the soul. This is the first change of rendering. 2. The next is perhaps yet more important. The fourfold omission in ver 19 (A.V.) of the definite article is a very serious loss. St. Paul did not write Greek at random. In ver. 16 he omits the article, for there his purpose was to contrast the singleness of the sin which brought condemnation to the multitudes with the sins which elicited and evoked compassion; but in vers. 15, 17 and 19 the particular one man who brought sin and death is designedly set in contrast with the particular one man who brought in grace and life. The other pair of omissions in this verse is equally serious. Many were made sinners, many were made righteous, is a culpable gloss upon St. Paul's language. St. Paul was not afraid to say judgment came upon all men; the free gift came upon all to justification of life; nor that the many were made sinners and the many were made righteous; the all in the one verse and the many in the other are equivalent terms. St. Paul's object was to show the universality of redemption. Christ, by His one sacrifice made a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. Although they will not come, He yet speaks in that universal "whosoever will." The gracious work of Christ in redeeming is co-extensive with the disastrous work of Adam in ruining—"As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." As through the disobedience of one man, the many—the universe of humanity—were made or placed on the footing of sinners, even so through the obedience of the One shall the many be constituted as righteous. (*Dean Vaughan.*)

Ver. 19. **For, by the obedience of one many were made sinners, and by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.**—*One man's disobedience and its consequence*:—I. MAN WAS MADE IN THE IMAGE OF GOD, which consisted partly—1. In his power over all terrestrial creatures (Gen. i. 26; Psa. viii. 5, 6). Hence he gave names (Gen. ii. 19. 20). 2. In the perfection of his nature, endued with—(1) Reason. (2) Will. (3) Knowledge (Col. iii. 9, 10). (4) True holiness (Eph. iv. 24). II. MAN FELL FROM THIS HIGH ESTATE THROUGH DISOBEDIENCE (Gen. ii. 16. 17, iii. 1, &c.). 1. How this was done. (1) Through Satan's temptation, which was managed with great cunning. (*a*) He enters the serpent, the subtlest creature. (*b*) Sets upon the woman, the weaker vessel (1 Pet. iii. 7). (*c*) Propounds a doubtful question (Gen. iii. 1). (*d*) Denies the truth of God's threatenings (ver. 4). (*e*) Gives a contrary promise and uses the name of God to confirm it (ver. 5). (2) Through the woman's fault. (*a*) In entering into a dispute with the devil. (*b*) In doubting the truth of God's command. (*c*) In eating the fruit. (3) Through the man's fault. In taking the fruit at her hands. 2. What was involved. (1) He broke the first command, by infidelity, ingratitude, contempt of God, and ambition to be like God (Gen. iii. 5). (2) Hearkened to the devil's word before God's. (3) Pleased his wife rather than God. (4) Murdered his whole posterity (John viii. 44). (5) Minded the lusts of the flesh more than the law of God. (6) Stole God's fruit. (7) Coveted God's attributes. III. THROUGH THIS DISOBEDIENCE ALL HIS POSTERITY WERE MADE SINNERS. 1. By imputation. (1) In that all sinned in him (vers. 12, 16–18; Heb. vii. 9, 10). (2) In that all died in him (chap. vi. 23; 1 Cor. xv. 22). (3) All were then in his loins; so that he was the common father of all mankind; therefore called Adam, *i.e.*, man in general (Gen. v. 1). 2. By inhesion. All, through Adam's sin—(1) Are born in sin (Psa. li. 5; Job xiv. 4; Eph. ii. 3; John iii. 3). Hence only is it that children die. (2) Do actually commit sin, which shows all mankind to be polluted with it and inclined to it (Eccles. vii. 20; Prov. xx. 9; 1 Kings viii. 46; Gal. iii. 22; 1 John i. 8–10). 3. The whole man is defiled with sin and continually subject to it. (1) The understanding (1 Cor. i. 19, 20, ii. 14). (2) The mind and conscience (Titus i. 15). It is stupid (1 Tim. iv. 2), or else troubled. (3) The memory (2 Pet. i. 21). (4) The thoughts and the imagination (Gen. vi. 5), which appears in their vanity and disorder. (5) The will and affections (John i. 13; Col. iii. 2). (6) The body (1 Thess. v. 23). It is not now serviceable to the soul, but a clog to it; yet it tempts it to sin. 4. Hence our original sin is the corrupt fountain from which all our actual sins flow (James i. 14). Some relics of it remain in the best saints (Gal. v. 17). Conclusion: 1. This should make us humble (Job. xv. 14–16). 2. Hence we should earnestly desire to be made new creatures; and go to Christ, the Second Adam, that we may be made righteous by Him, as we are sinners by the first. (*Bp. Beveridge.*) *One man's obedience and its consequences*:—I. WHO IS THIS ONE SPOKEN OF? Note—1. All mankind being contained in, and so fallen with Adam, God raised up another Adam, by whom they might rise (1 Cor. xv. 45). Who being promised, as soon as the first fell (Gen. iii. 15) is called the Second Man (1 Cor. xv. 47). 2. This was no less a Person than the Son of God made Man (John i. 14; 1 Tim. iii. 16). For He took the nature of man into His Divine Person (Heb. ii. 16). 3. Hence the whole nature of man was so fully and really contained in Him as in the first Adam (1 Cor. xv. 22). 4. This, the Second Man, had an advantage over the first, that whereas the other was but a man made in the likeness of God, this was God made in the likeness of man (Phil. ii. 6, 7). II. WHAT WAS THE OBEDIENCE OF THIS ONE? 1. He did no sin, was not guilty in the least (Isa. liii. 9; 1 Pet. ii. 22; 1 John iii. 5; John viii. 46). 2. He did whatsoever the law required, and so remained perfectly righteous in all things (Matt. iii. 15; Heb. vii. 26–28; John xv. 10, iv. 34). 3. He was obedient, even to death itself (Phil. ii. 8); so He underwent that death which the first Adam had deserved for all mankind. III. IN WHAT SENSE ARE MANY MADE RIGHTEOUS BY ONE? In the same sense as they are sinners by one. 1. By having Christ's righteousness as we had Adam's sin imputed to us. (1) No man can be pronounced righteous by God, unless he be really so (Prov. xvii. 15; Isa. v. 23). (2) But no man is really righteous in himself (Eccles. vii. 20). (3) Hence it is impossible we should be accepted as righteous before God, unless we have some other righteousness imputed to us (chap. iv. 6, 11). (4) Hence Christ was pleased to be obedient even unto death for us; that so by His obedience imputed to us we might be accepted as righteous. For—(*a*) Our righteousness is plainly asserted to be only in Christ (2 Cor. v. 21). He was made sin for us. Our sins were laid on Him (Isa. liii. 6); so His righteousness on us (Phil. iii. 8, 9; Eph.

i. 6). (*b*) He is expressly called "Our righteousness" (Jer. xxiii. 6, xxxiii. 16; 1 Cor. i. 30). (*c*) He is called our Surety (Heb. vii. 22), who, being bound for us, paid in our stead what the law required of us. (*d*) Christ's whole obedience was only upon our account, and for our sakes (Gal. iv. 4, 5); so that by His obedience the law is perfectly fulfilled in us (chap. viii. 3, 4). 2. We are made righteous by Christ as sinners by Adam, inherently. He—(1) Mortifies our sins (1 John iii. 8; Acts iii. 26; 1 John i. 7–9). (2) Gives repentance (Acts v. 31). (3) Sanctifies our whole nature (1 Cor. i. 30, vi. 11; Eph. v. 25–27). (4) Enables us to do good works (John xv. 4, 5; Titus ii. 14; Phil. iv. 11–13). Conclusion: 1. Thank God for Christ. 2. Put your whole trust in Him only, for grace as well as pardon. 3. Let it be your great care to be in the number of those who are made righteous in Christ, in believing in Him. 4. Live as becometh righteous persons. (*Ibid.*) *Man's first sin*:—Is there a human being to be found who, after reflection, and speaking honestly, would affirm of himself, "I have never sinned"? We are aware of the existence of great ignorance concerning the extent of sin, and the evil of sin; and we know men are exceedingly reluctant to confess even those sins of which they are conscious; but we do not think there is a man who, after serious reflection, is entirely unconscious of guilt. Furthermore, is there a man who would say of a fellow human being, however dearly loved and highly prized, "I do not believe that person has ever sinned"? Verily, our consciousness and our observation confirm the Bible doctrine, "There is none that doeth good; no, not one!" I. THE FACT AND THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF MAN'S FIRST SIN. 1. The first sin was Adam's failure under trial as the representative of the human race. Say that this test was simple; then how adapted to inexperience, and how fitted to show whether, in filial dependence, man would serve God or not. Do you refuse to judge of the quarter whence the wind blows by the course of the thistle-down, or by the path of the smoke; and would you wait for information until you could see the vane of some lofty tower? Do you not measure the heat of a summer's day by the moistened brow, and judge of the cold of winter by the smarting skin, far more frequently than by the scale of the thermometer? 2. Man was specially tempted to the first sin. 3. Temptation was necessary in man's probation. Could probation be conducted apart from this trying process? Is not the coin tested in the balance? Is not silver proved in the fining-pot? Is not gold tried in the furnace? Are not the elements of a chemical compound made manifest by analysis? Is not the strength of metal or timber relied upon after proof? As in our law courts, no prisoner is recognised as guilty until his crime has been proved; so, in God's moral government, no procedure is based on character until the character is made manifest by the light of conduct. 4. The first sin of man was (tested by any standard) a great transgression. Actions must be judged by the principle involved in them. In eating the forbidden fruit did not Adam transgress a law? In transgressing this law did not Adam reject the Divine authority and cast off his allegiance to God? In thus sinning did not Adam resist the power of the strongest motives on the side of obedience?—motives arising from his obligations to the kindness of God; motives connected with the full and flowing fountains of pleasure and of advantage by which he was encompassed; and from the fact that he was being proved, and that upon his conduct were suspended tremendous results? Moreover the image of God was within him—revelations of God surrounded him; and under the power of these multiplied motives and influences his attention was fixed on one defined, intelligible, and distinct requirement. It was not an easy thing for Adam to sin against God. (1) Observe that human nature, at its best state, is not to be trusted; and that it universally fails where the failure is of most consequence. (2) See the tremendous responsibility which our influence over each other involves. (3) Learn the utility of experience in the trial of temptation. (4) Look, by the aid of the facts we are considering, into the philosophy of sinning. II. THE RESULTS OF MAN'S FIRST SIN. Trace them in the transgressors themselves. We know not what interval existed between the evil act and a sense of its iniquity. Delusion may have continued through some time. At length, however, an inward monitor gave notice of the fault; disapprobation and self-condemnation, with their keen smart, succeeded; and Adam tasted the bitterness of sin. 1. Learn hence the enormous evil of any one sin; and profit in this department of knowledge by the experience of others. 2. Know also the certainty of punishment where pardon is not vouchsafed. 3. Mark the limit of Divine interference with human conduct. (*S. Martin.*) *Man's disobedience and Christ's obedience*:—I. MAN'S DISOBEDIENCE. 1. Its consequences. 2. Perpetration. 3. Extent. II. CHRIST'S OBEDIENCE. 1. Its nature. 2. Operation. 3. Result.

(*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The condition of man a sinner and man made righteous contrasted:*—1. Unbelief and faith. 2. Enmity and love. 3. Banishment from God and acceptance with God. 4. Disobedience and righteousness. 5. Misery and bliss. 6. Curse and blessing. 7. Death and life. 8. Paradise lost and paradise regained. (*D. M'Nicoll.*) *Of our fall in Adam:*—Consider—1. Who that one man was. Adam (ver. 14). 2. What his disobedience was. His first sin, the eating of the forbidden fruit, which opened the door to death (ver. 12). 3. Whom it concerned; "many"; the "all" (ver. 14). The alteration is not without reason, for there is an exception here of Christ. It reached many men, but not all simply; he, and he only, was excepted. 4. How it touched them; they were "made sinners" by it. There are two ways how men might be made sinners by the disobedience of Adam, viz., either by imputation or imitation. The last is not meant. (1) Because some of those many who are made sinners are not capable of imitation or actual sin, viz., infants. (2) Because we are made righteous, not by the imitation, but imputation of Christ's righteousness; but as we are made righteous by the one, so we are made sinners by the other. I. WHAT SIN OF ADAM'S IT WAS THAT THEY WHO SINNED AND FELL WITH HIM, SINNED AND FELL IN. His first sin, the eating of the forbidden fruit. This was the sin that broke the covenant of works. Other sins of Adam are not imputed to them, more than those of any other private persons. So then, Adam quickly betaking himself to the covenant of grace, and placing himself under another head as a private man, ceased to be the head in the covenant of works. Adam had all his children in one ship to carry them to Immanuel's land; by his negligence he dashed the ship on a rock, and broke it all in pieces; and so he and his lay foundering in a sea of guilt. Jesus Christ lets out the second covenant as a rope to draw them to the shore. Adam for himself lays hold on it, while others hold by the broken boards of the ship, till they be by the power of grace enabled to quit them too, as he was. II. WHO WERE THEY THAT SINNED AND FELL IN ADAM. All mankind, descending from him by ordinary generation. So—1. Christ is excepted. Adam's sin was not imputed to the man Christ. He was separated from sinners (Heb. vii. 26), and was not infected with the plague whereof He was to be the cleanser. And so Christ comes not in under Adam as head, but, as in the text, is opposed to Adam as another head. Christ was indeed a Son of Adam (Luke iii.). And it was necessary He should be so, that He might be our near kinsman, and that the same nature that sinned might suffer. But He came not of him by ordinary generation—He was born of a virgin. And upon this account He came not in under Adam in the covenant of works; for Christ was not born by virtue of that blessing of marriage given before the fall (Gen. i. 28), but by virtue of a covenant-promise made after the fall (Gen. iii. 15). So that Adam could represent none in that covenant, but such as were to spring from him by virtue of that blessing. 2. All mankind besides sinned and fell with Adam in that first transgression. His sin of eating the forbidden fruit is imputed to them. Consider—(1) The Scripture plainly testifies that all sinned in him (ver. 12). Hence it is plain that death has not come into the world but in pursuit of sin; all die, for all have sinned. (2) All fell with him into misery by that sin. Now, a just God will not involve the innocent with the guilty in the same punishment. (*a*) All fell under condemnation (vers. 16, 18). (*b*) All fell under the loss of God's image, and the corruption of nature with him (Psa. li. 5). (*c*) All the punishments inflicted on Adam and Eve, for that sin, as specified in Gen. iii., are common to mankind, their posterity; and therefore the sin must be so too. III. HOW THE FIRST SIN OF ADAM COMES TO BE IMPUTED TO US. The great reason of this is, because we are all included in Adam's covenant. The covenant was made with him, not only for himself, but for all his posterity. 1. Consider here—(1) It was the covenant of works, the condition whereof was perfect obedience. (2) It was made with Adam for himself. That was the way he himself was to attain perfect happiness; his own stock was in that ship. (3) It was made not only for himself, but for all his posterity descending from him by ordinary generation. So that he was not here as a private, but as a public person, the moral head and representative of all mankind. Hence the Scripture holds forth Adam and Christ, as if there had never been any but these two men in the world (1 Cor. xv. 47). And this he does, because they were two public persons, each of them having under them persons represented by them (vers. 14, 18). 2. But some may be ready to say, we made not choice of Adam for that purpose. Answer—(1) God made the choice, who was as meet to make it for us as we for ourselves. And "who art thou that repliest against God?" (2) Adam was our natural head, the common father of us all (Acts xvii. 26), and who

was so meet to be trusted with the concerns of all mankind as he? 3. But to clear further the reasonableness of this imputation, consider—(1) Adam's sin is imputed to us, because it is ours. For God doth not reckon a thing ours, which is not so (chap. ii. 2). If a person that has the plague infect others, and they die, they die, by their own plague, and not by that of another. (2) It was free for God either to have annihilated all mankind, or to have given them no promise of eternal life. Was it not, then, an act of grace in God to make such a rich covenant as this? and would not men have consented to this representation gladly in this case? (3) Adam being made after the image of God (Gen. i. 26) was as capable to stand as any afterwards could be for themselves; and this was a trial that would soon have been over, while the other would have been continually a-doing, had men been created independent of him. (4) He had natural affection the strongest to engage him. He was our father, and all we the children that were in his loins, to whom we had as good ground to trust as to any other creature. (5) His own stock was in the ship; his all lay at stake as well as ours. Forgetting our interest, he behoved to disregard his own, for he had no separate interest from ours. No man quarrels, that when a master sets his land in tack to a man and his heirs upon conditions, if the first possessor break the bargain, the heirs be denuded of it. (6) All that quarrel with this dispensation must renounce their part in Christ; for we are made righteous by Him, as sinners are made guilty by Adam. If we fall in with the one, why not with the other? We chose Christ for our head in the second covenant no more than we did Adam in the first covenant. IV. INFERENCES. 1. See the dreadful nature of sin! one sin could destroy a world. 2. Let this be a lesson to parents to do nothing that may bring ruin on their children. Many times children are destroyed by their parents through their bad example and government. 3. This doctrine affords a lesson of humility to all. The rich have no cause to boast of their wealth, for they have as sad a heritage as the poor and needy. 4. View and wonder at the redemption purchased for sinners by Christ. 5. Quit your hold of the first Adam and his covenant, and come to and unite with Christ by faith, and lay hold on His covenant (1 Cor. xv. 22). (*T. Boston, D.D.*) *The fall and the atonement:*—These are the two main facts involved in the text. Round these there has gathered a vast cloud of theological formulas which render it difficult to discern them in their simplicity and integrity. I have a few suggestions to make, which are simple and hang well together. 1. We can hardly begin to reflect on the fall without asking, "Why did God permit it? why make man so that he not only could, but almost must, fall away from his original righteousness?" The very moment we begin to reflect on the fall we are confronted by the origin of evil. Why did God permit it to invade and stain His universe? 2. So, again, with that other fact, "How could the obedience, or sacrifice, of the one just Man avail for the salvation of the whole sinful race? How is it so to tell on those who have fallen from righteousness as to recover them to the love and service of righteousness? To tell us that these problems are insoluble is to contradict the inspired apostle. To warn us against intermeddling with them is to pour contempt on the labours of eighteen centuries. And, worse still, it is to bid us suppress an inbred and unconquerable tendency, viz., that when we believe certain facts we cannot but try to frame some reasonable conception of them, in which each shall hold its due place and form part of an intelligible and harmonious whole. I. THE FALL. 1. We start from a point familiar and approved. (1) If God were to surround Himself, not with mere automata that would mechanically obey the impulses of His will, but with creatures capable of love and obedience, He must give them wills of their own and leave them free. A mechanical or compelled goodness is not a goodness at all. If the angels are incapable of sin they are also incapable of righteousness. If they are not free to choose between good and evil, but are kept by the power and will of God, then their goodness is God's goodness, and not their own. If the stars keep their courses only by an involuntary and unconscious obedience to natural laws, there is nothing noble, because there is nothing free, in their obedience. But if, as some of our poets have dreamed, each "heavenly body" is but the vesture of some great spirit, then the very stars become moral, because voluntary, agents, who render a willing and constant obedience to the laws imposed upon them. 2. Now, what the choice of God would be we may infer from our own preference. Just as we prefer to have even a dog about us to all the mechanical toys ever invented: or just as we love to have children about us whose love we can win, who are capable of a true because voluntary goodness, so we may reasonably believe God would choose to surround Himself with many orders of creatures, each capable of loving

Him of its own will, and of rendering Him a free and glad obedience. 3. But this very capacity involves an alternative. Those who can freely lift their wills into accord with the will of God, can also deflect their wills from His. And was it not well-nigh inevitable that, in the infinite possibilities of existence, some of them should strike out a path for themselves, and take that rather than keep the path marked out for them by God? How else were they to prove to themselves that their wills were their own, and free? 4. This free will, if a great is also a most perilous endowment; for there is a certain charm in asserting it. It is not mere depravity which prompts a child to do that which he knows he ought not to do. The temptation, although he may be unconscious of it, is the charm of assuring himself and showing others that he is free, that he is not a mere link in the chain of necessity, not a mere pipe in the fingers of others to sound what stop they please. Who has not felt this fascination, and done that which he knew would yield him neither pleasure nor profit, simply in order that he might feel and assert his freedom? And who that has felt this charm can doubt that when myriads of creatures had been called into being gifted with free will, some of them would be sure to prove their freedom by trying whether or not their wills were their own? 5. Our argument leads us straight into that great mystery—the origin of evil. Evil is in the world, in the universe, by no Divine fiat or decree. It is not of God's making, but of our own. And from this gift of a will free to select its own path and take its own course have sprung all the miseries of evil. What God intended for our good, as our special honour and distinction, we have turned to our own harm. But before any man complains that so perilous a gift has been conferred upon him, and that he is called to rule and control it, let him remember the alternative—incapability of conscious and voluntary choice of righteousness and love. If any man would prefer to sink so low as that, it certainly is hard to see what God made him a man for. But does any such man exist? II. ITS CONSEQUENCES. When men, in the exercise of their free will, have fallen into sin, they begin to make excuse. They say, "It is human to err. Sin is common to all; how, then, can I hope to escape it?" This is one of the saddest consequences. 2. Men condemn even while they excuse themselves. All the while they feel that sin has alienated them from the life of God; that He is displeased with them; that they are debased; and that God must be propitiated. And thus men are made both reckless and hopeless. On the one hand, sin seems so human, so inevitable, that it can hardly be very wrong; and, on the other hand, it is so alien to God that He can hardly be expected to pardon it. III. FROM THESE CONSEQUENCES WE GET SOME OF OUR BEST AND SIMPLEST CONCEPTIONS OF REDEMPTION. 1. What is the answer of the Divine grace to the feeling of doubt and despair? It is this. While we are yet sinners, God, in the person of His Son, comes down and dwells among us. He virtually says to us, "See, much as I hate the sins which have degraded and enslaved you, fellowship with Me is not impossible. I am in your midst to bless you by turning every one of you away from your sins. So far from being separated from you, I have become one with you, that you may become one with Me, partaking your nature that you may partake Mine." 2. Men say, "It is human to sin; so long as we are men we can hardly hope to avoid it." "Nay," replies Christ; "for, see, I, too, am a man; and which of you convicteth Me of sin? So far from sin being an essential part of manhood, or a necessary adjunct of it, you feel that I am a higher style of man, precisely because I never at any time transgressed My Father's commandments, because I make it My will to do His will." This, then, is a chief way in which the redemption of Christ comes to tell on men, in which they are atoned to the God against whom they have sinned. Our wills are ours, then; but they are ours that we may make them His. And not till we do make them His shall we be recovered from the fall, and know the power of His redemption. (*S. Cox, D.D.*) *The Lord our righteousness*:—I. THE OBEDIENCE OF CHRIST. 1. Personally and privately, in regard to His own moral character. He fulfilled all righteousness. He alone, of all the human race, has maintained from first to last a perfectly spotless character before the tribunal of God. 2. Officially, Christ's obedience was equally perfect. He came into the world to fulfil a public mission, as the Lord's servant, and at the close it was not necessary for Him to bewail shortcomings or to avow Himself an unprofitable servant (John xvii. 4). Nor was His an easy task. He needed more meekness than Moses, more wisdom than Solomon, more watchfulness than Isaiah, and more courage than Daniel. Yet never in all His public course did He betray an unworthy spirit or act unwisely. No doing or saying of His requires to be covered with the cloak of charity. 3. As

a sacrificial victim for sin, we find Christ equally obedient. He received this commandment from the Father, that He should lay down His life for His sheep. This He was to do by surrendering Himself into the hands of wicked men. He might have refused and have consumed His enemies. He might have come down even from the Cross, and declined to shed His heart's best blood for such a thankless race; but no, He submitted to it all without a murmur. His own language was, "The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" (*cf.* Isa. liii. 4–6, 10; Phil. ii. 8; Heb. ii. 10). II. THE WAY IN WHICH WE ARE MADE RIGHTEOUS BY THIS OBEDIENCE. 1. By the eternal purpose of God Himself. He gave His Son to achieve such mighty results for us, and He accepts us in the Beloved, and imputes to us a righteousness, which is purely of grace, and through faith in Christ. "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." 2. The ground of this imputation, undoubtedly, is the perfect obedience of Christ, our Head; and the principle of it is, that, because of our union with Christ, what belongs to Him comes to be regarded as belonging to us. He takes our sins, that we may take His righteousness. 3. Yet, in looking at Christ's obedience as the ground of our righteousness, we must view it as a whole. We cannot say that one part of the blessing we derive from Christ is to be ascribed to His sinless life, and another to His vicarious suffering. We take a whole Christ as a whole Saviour. 4. Yet in this gift of righteousness we find these three blessings. (1) Pardon. This we have in Christ's obedience unto death. That death owes its merits to His preceding spotless life. (2) Holiness. This relates to the present, as pardon to the past, and we owe it to Christ's holy life, setting us an example; to His mediatorial labours, teaching us the law; and to His sacrificial death, constraining our love, and procuring for us the Spirit, by whose indwelling we are quickened, renewed, changed into the Divine likeness, and enabled to walk as becometh saints. (3) Heaven. This relates to the future. Even if we were pardoned, and made holy, we could by no means earn for ourselves a title to glory. It is God's free gift: bestowed upon us only for the sake of the perfect obedience of Christ, who hath purchased this inheritance, and secured it for us. It is He who both washes us from our sins and makes us kings and priests unto God and His Father for ever. Conclusion: 1. Behold, then, the Scripture doctrine of substitution, which ascribes our salvation, not to our own obedience, but to the obedience of Christ. This is—(1) A conceivable arrangement: it is in harmony with equity and justice, provided only that the substituted victim of suffering be a voluntary one, and that he be not a permanent loser by what he endures. (2) An arrangement, analogous to much that we see in nature and providence, and especially to the hereditary law of association, which obtains among all mankind. (3) Necessity. For without it no member of our fallen race could ever have risen to holiness and happiness at all. (4) An accomplished reality, for Christ hath actually suffered for our sins, once for all, and put them away by the sacrifice of Himself (Heb. ix. 26–28). 2. A few practical inferences. (1) Christian believer, see your dependence on Jesus, and rejoice in it. Cultivate a simple and confiding faith in Him, and believe that if your salvation be the reward of His obedience, there is no limit to what God is able and willing to do for you. (2) Penitent inquirer, behold the way of righteousness, and walk in it. Come, as a sinner, to the throne of grace; and ceasing from your own works, enter by faith into spiritual rest. (3) Ye unconverted, we point you to the Cross. There see what sin has done. Reflect, repent, return unto the Lord, for He will have mercy upon you, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. (*T. G. Horton.*) *The mechanism of heredity*:—Why should children, born with tainted constitutions and damaged prospects, suffer blamelessly for their father's iniquity? Precisely as, on the contrary, children benefit gratuitously through the goodness of their parent. For the marvellous mechanism of heredity does not merely transmit evil. It is also, and indeed preponderantly, the machinery by which the physical, mental, and spiritual acquisitions of bygone generations—the accumulated and stored wealth of the ages—are conveyed to the future and preserved for posterity. There is an inheritance of strength and intellect, grace and goodness, as well as of disease and vice and evil. Nay, this last is but a misuse and perversion of God's beneficent and stupendous contrivance of heredity. To escape the entail of ill, you must snap the mechanism of transmission, and so forfeit the entail of blessing. It is as if you should propose that each generation's acquisition of property, tools, inventions, arts, and appliances should be destroyed, and the next generation compelled to begin afresh on the bare, barren soil. Progress were impossible, civilisation but the rolling of a

Sisyphus' stone, the human race no longer an organic unity, without continuity, without history, without moral solidarity. Take from my life and actions this awful prerogative of the transmission of good and evil, and you rob it of all dignity and depth of perspective; you degrade it to the narrowest dimensions of self-centred insignificance; you divest my actions of all far-reaching influence and unselfish consequence; you isolate my being from all impersonal interests and ennobling sympathies. Cut asunder the fine meshes of heredity, and you dissolve the ties of affection that bind the generations together, and reduce humanity to a chaos of trivial atoms, without roots in the past, without part in futurity, devoid of large possibilities of achievement, and therefore destitute of strong moral motive. Heredity ordained by Heaven for blessing, through sin becomes a vehicle of evil. (*Prof. Elmslie, D.D.*)

Vers. 20, 21. **The law entered that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.**—*The offence abounding through the law*:—The wise physician often gives medicine to bring the disease from within to the surface, and make it abound, so to speak, with the view of driving away the disorder, and so enabling health to reign in the system of his patient. The skilful surgeon, by diet and hot-water fomentations, develops the abscess in order that he may be able to effectually remove it. In like manner God in His infinite love and wisdom allowed the law to enter "that the offence might abound," with the ultimate purpose "that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." *Law developing sin*:—1. The apostle begins the present argument in ver. 12, breaking off for the time; and instead of completing the comparison, turning aside to show the universal and lamentable effects of sin. St. Paul was sufficiently acquainted with the continent of Divine truth to be able to wander without losing sight of the cardinal points. To put a man unacquainted with a country half a mile from the main road would make his safe return somewhat doubtful. Many are in this state in respect of gospel truths. But Paul could venture to take a by-road to reach a by-purpose, and then return safely to the place whence he started. 2. At the close of ver. 14 he comes again in contact with his main purpose, that the reader might not lose sight of it, and to show that he knew exactly his whereabouts—"who is the figure of Him that was to come." But instead of going on to prove their resemblance, he again digresses to show first their unlikeness. 3. In ver. 18 he again returns to his chief purpose, namely, to show that the first Adam and the second were in one respect similar. The "offence" stands alone. There was but "one" offence from Adam to Moses, for there was no law to be transgressed, *i.e.*, no covenant. God made a covenant with Adam as the representative of mankind; but that covenant was broken. Man, therefore, had no covenant to break in the period indicated. God gave His law to the sea, to the birds, &c., without saying a word to them: they were too small for Him to enter into covenant with them. But man was created on so large a scale that God could not legislate for him without covenanting with him. The "offence," in the apostle's sense here, was not possible to man in the absence of a covenant. Mankind from Adam to Moses were daily adding to the mass of their corruption, but the offence continued to remain "one" and the same all through. However, in the time of Moses we find mankind again brought under a covenant—"the law entered that the offence might abound." I. THE GIVING OF THE LAW OCCASIONED THE DEVELOPMENT OF SIN. 1. Sin always revives in the presence of law (chap. vii. 9). The pure and fiery light of the commandment awakes it, excites it, and draws out its energies. (1) Sin in Israel had been sleeping during the Egyptian bondage and deliverance; and the trials encountered during the journey to Sinai only made sin dream fitfully and say an occasional angry word between wakefulness and sleep, just enough to show that it only wanted opportunity to rouse itself. But when the nation arrived at Sinai they received the most marvellous exhibition of the Divine glory. It might have been thought that sin had received such a deep wound that it would never again be able to raise its head. But no; "they made a calf in those days." Wonderful! But it was only the necessary consequence of the giving of the law. (2) Sin is still the same. Man is not conscious of his enmity to God when the commandment does not shine upon his conscience. His enmity is like the match in his waistcoat pocket. There is fire in it, but it is asleep. It only needs to be brought into contact with something harder than itself to become a flame. So the young man's guilty heart is full of the fire of enmity, but it is asleep. When he comes to rub against God's law,

sin "takes occasion by the commandment" to develop itself. 2. The entrance of the law occasioned the development of sin, because man cannot be developed without developing his sin. This principle manifests itself everywhere. When tares have been sown mixed with wheat, all the influences which promote the increase of the wheat promote the growth of the tares. Look at the young babe. Well, if the little one is to be developed, his sin must be developed with him. As true as he will be a three-feet man, he will be a three-feet sinner at the same time. The internal enemies of many a country would not be nearly as formidable were it not for the educational advantages they have enjoyed. The danger and the horribleness of their deeds increase in the same proportion as their knowledge. In the face of that, were it not better to keep all knowledge from them? No! that is not the method of the Divine government. The voices of nature, providence, and inspiration teach the contrary. Humanity must be developed, though that be impossible without developing its sin. And inasmuch as the law entered to develop man, it of necessity therefore occasioned the development of his sin likewise. II. THE LAW ENTERED FOR THE PURPOSE OF DEVELOPING SIN. It entered in order—1. To develop sin in its heinousness and frightfulness, so that the evil of its nature as it strikes against God and militates against man might be made patent to all. There is deceitfulness in sin. It wears a garment so attractive that no creature is free from the danger of being bewitched by it. It deceived even the angels. It captivated our first parents. Sin was having fair weather before the law entered. The earth was sitting quietly under its heavy and torpid authority. But at last there dawned the day of its visitation. In the presence of God's holy law the splendour of its raiment begins to fade; its horrible look makes many refuse it their loyalty any longer. The entrance of sin supposes the entrance of all the dispensation of the Old Testament, which terminated in the advent and death of Christ. And there, on the Cross, was finished the work of stripping sin of all its robes. Thenceforth it stood in all the nakedness of its shame before an astonished universe. 2. To develop its strength, and accomplish its destruction. God is not afraid of sin. By the time of the Incarnation sin had been completely developed. Corrupt religion could not before, and can never again, produce such a court as that of the high priest in Jerusalem. There is no hope that paganism will ever again produce such a faithful representative of itself as Pontius Pilate. Hell will never again see the day when it can steel and whet a tool so dangerous as Iscariot. All the hosts of sin are on the field in the memorable struggle with the Prince of Life, so that the foe can never complain that all his forces were not on the spot (Col. ii. 14, 15). Sin still continues the war, but it only shoots like a coward; shoots and runs at the same time. Let us therefore take heart; let us arm ourselves with all the armour of God that we may pursue and help to drive it out of the world. There is a complete victory over sin to every one that believeth in Christ. (*Evan Phillips.*)

Law and grace:—I. THE DESIGN OF THE LAW. 1. Not to occasion sin. 2. But to develop—(1) Its extent. (2) Its guilt. (3) Its misery. II. THE RELATION OF THE LAW TO GRACE. 1. It prepares the way for its manifestation. 2. It sets forth its transcendent excellency. 2. It disposes the sinner to receive it by making him conscious of his need. III. THE SUPERABOUNDING OF GRACE. 1. It surpasses the extent of human guilt. 2. Relieves its misery. 3. Secures more happiness to man and more glory to God. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*)

Law and grace:—There is no point upon which men make greater mistakes than upon the relation between the law and the gospel. Some men put the law instead of the gospel; others put the gospel instead of the law; some modify both, and preach neither; and others entirely abrogate the law, by bringing in the gospel. Many think that the law is the gospel, and who teach that men by good works may be saved. On the other hand, many teach that the gospel is a law, by obedience to which men are meritoriously saved. A certain class maintain that the law and the gospel are mixed, and that partly by the law, and partly by grace, men are saved. Consider the text —I. AS CONCERNING THE WORLD. 1. The object of God in sending the law was "that the offence might abound." There was sin in the world long before; and where that law has never been heard, there is sin,—because, though men cannot sin against the law which they have never seen, yet they can all rebel against the light of nature, against the dictates of conscience, and against that traditional remembrance of right and wrong (chap. i. 20). The law makes offences "abound," because—(1) It tells us that many things are sins which we should never have thought to be so if it had not been for the additional light. What man by the light of conscience would keep holy the Sabbath day? Moreover, if in the term "law"

we comprehend the ceremonial ritual, we can plainly see that many things, in appearance quite indifferent, were by it constituted sins—the eating of animals that do not chew the cud and divide the hoof, the wearing of linsey-woolsey, and all seem to have no sin in them, but the law made them into sins, and so made the offence to abound. (2) Law has a tendency to make men rebel. Human nature rises against restraint. I had not known lust except the law had said, "Thou shalt not covet." So evil are we, that we conceive at once the desire to commit an act, simply because it is forbidden (chap. vii. 7, 8, 11). The law is not faulty, but sin uses it as an occasion of offence, and rebels when it ought to obey. Augustine says, "The law is not in fault, but our evil and wicked nature; even as a heap of lime is still and quiet, until water be poured thereon, but then it begins to smoke and burn, not from the fault of the water, but from the nature and kind of the lime which will not endure it." (3) The law increases the sinfulness of sin, by removing all excuse of ignorance. Until men know the law, their crimes have at least a palliation of partial ignorance, but when the code is spread before them, their offences become greater, since they are committed against light and knowledge. The more light the greater guilt—the law affords that light, and so causes us to become double offenders. But does it not seem very harsh that God should give us a law which will not justify, but indirectly cause our condemnation to be greater? But there is a gracious purpose even here. Natural men dream that by a strict performance of duty they shall obtain favour; but the law never came to save men. It came on purpose to make the evidence complete that salvation by works is impossible, and thus to drive the elect of God to rely wholly on the finished salvation of the gospel. 2. The superabundance of grace. (1) Grace excels sin in the numbers it brings beneath its sway. It is written that in all things Jesus shall have the pre-eminence: and why is this to be left out? Can we think that Satan will have more followers than Jesus? Oh, no; for while it is written that the redeemed are a multitude that no man can number; it is not recorded that the lost are beyond numeration. Think for a moment of the army of infant souls who are now in heaven. (2) Grace doth "much more abound," because a time shall come when the world shall be all full of grace; whereas there has never been a period when it was wholly given up to sin. (3) Hath the world lost its possessions by sin it has gained far more by grace? True, we have been expelled from Eden, but we have through Jesus a fairer habitation. Did we lose natural life and subject ourselves to painful death by sin? Has not grace revealed an immortality for the sake of which we are too glad to die? Jesus has clothed us with a Divine righteousness, far exceeding the robes of created innocence. II. As CONCERNING THE HUMAN HEART. 1. The law causes the offence to abound—(1) By discovering sin to the soul. When once the Holy Ghost applies the law to the conscience, secret sins are dragged to light, little sins are magnified to their true size, and things apparently harmless become exceedingly sinful. John Bunyan says that "the Interpreter took Christian by the hand and led him into a very large parlour that was full of dust, because never swept; in which after he had reviewed it a little while, the Interpreter called for a man to sweep. Now, when he began to sweep, the dust began so abundantly to fly about, that Christian had almost therewith been choked. Then said the Interpreter to a damsel that stood by, 'Bring hither water, and sprinkle the room'; the which when she had done, it was swept and cleansed with pleasure. Then said Christian, 'What means this?' The Interpreter answered, 'This parlour is the heart of man. The dust is his original sin and inward corruptions. He that began to sweep at first, is the law; but she that brought the water, and did sprinkle it, is the gospel. Now whereas thou sawest, that as soon as the first began to sweep, the dust did so fly about, that the room could not by him be cleansed, but that thou wast almost choked therewith; this is to show thee that the law, instead of cleansing the heart (by its working) from sin, doth revive (chap. vii. 9), put strength into (1 Cor. xv. 56) and increase it in the soul (ver. 20), even as it doth discover and forbid it, for it doth not give power to subdue. Again, as thou sawest the damsel sprinkle the room with water, upon which it was cleansed with pleasure; this is to show thee that when the gospel comes in the sweet and precious influences thereof to the heart, so is sin vanquished, and the soul made clean, through the faith of it, and consequently fit for the King of glory to inhabit.'" (2) By showing us how very black we are. Some of us know that we are sinners. It is very easy to say it, but it does not appear exceedingly sinful till the law comes. How many do we find who are saying, "There may be a little amiss at the top, but I am very good-hearted at bottom." If you saw some fruit on the top of a basket that was

not quite good, would you buy the basket because they told you, "Aye, but they are good at the bottom"? No; you would say, "They are sure to be the best at the top, and if they are bad there, they are sure to be rotten below." (3) By discovering to us the depravity of our nature. We are all prepared to charge the serpent with our guilt, or to insinuate that we go astray, from the force of ill example—but the Holy Spirit dissipates these dreams by bringing the law into the heart. Then the fountains of the great deep are broken up, the chambers of imagery are opened, the innate evil of the very essence of fallen man is discovered. (4) By bringing home the sentence of condemnation. It mounts the judgment seat, puts on the black cap, and pronounces the sentence of death. (5) By discovering the powerlessness occasioned by sin. It not only condemns but it actually kills. He who once thought that he could repent and believe at pleasure, finds in himself no power to do either the one or the other. 2. Grace excels sin—(1) In its measure and efficacy. Though your sins are many, mercy hath many pardons. (2) Sin shows us its parent, and tells us our heart is the father of it, but grace surpasseth sin there, and shows the Author of grace—the King of kings. (3) Just as sin makes us sick, and downcast, and sad, so does grace make us far more joyful and free. Sin unfits us for heaven. Grace makes us fit companions for seraphs and the just made perfect. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The triumphs of sin and of grace*:—I. THE TRIUMPHS OF SIN. 1. As they regard the material world. Sin has altered its character—defaced its beauty—tarnished its splendour. Disorder has been introduced, and various evils have been realised. 2. As they regard the moral nature of man. If the evil were merely external, it would be comparatively immaterial, but it is internal. The whole man is infected with the leprosy of sin. His members are not consecrated to God, but to iniquity. His understanding is enveloped in dense darkness. His reason is proud, and unyielding to God. His affections are perverted, cold, and sensual. His will is stubborn and intractable. All his powers, passions, capacities, and emotions, have been affected by sin. 3. As they regard death and the grave. What fearful desolations they effect! They dim the lustre of the eye, extinguish the light of genius, tarnish the bloom of beauty, wither the arm of vigour, and reduce the frame of man to dust. 4. As they regard the remote and awful consequences of iniquity. The loss of the soul, banishment from God, the utter withdrawal of His favour, the agony of conscience, the society of devils and wicked spirits, and the consciousness that this degradation, ruin, and misery, will endure unmitigated for ever. II. THE SUPERIOR AND MORE SPLENDID TRIUMPHS OF DIVINE GRACE. 1. In the full and spontaneous forgiveness which it bestows. It removes the oppressive burden of sin—it speaks peace to the conscience; and whatever might have been his offences, it assures the justified individual that his sins have been all forgiven. 2. In the character of those operations which it secures. It not merely justifies the person, but renovates the nature, implants new principles, induces new feelings, inspires love to prayer, and communicates that strength and consolation which we require while residents in this world. 3. In the inheritance which it assigns. Rest from labour, tranquillity after agitation and alarm, freedom from temptation, advancement to ineffable dignity—the possession of a glorious and an enduring kingdom, and the promise of an unfading and immortal crown. 4. In the complete and glorious resurrection of the body for which it provides. 5. In the eventual number of the redeemed. They shall embrace every age, country, condition, class. A number, which no man can enumerate, shall be rescued from sin, delivered from the grave, and advanced to the bliss and glory of heaven. Conclusion: This subject should—1. Tend to correct many errors with regard to the doctrine of election: the fact of the fall, the extent of Divine mercy, the number of the saved. 2. Induce us to institute an inquiry whether we have ever realised the power of that grace which so gloriously triumphs. 3. Inspire us as regards the future, and induce us to make greater exertions to secure and extend the triumphs of Divine mercy. (*J. Leifchild, D.D.*) *Sin abounding, and grace superabounding*:—These glowing words fitly crown the parallel the apostle traces. From its triumphal climax he surveys the expanded triumphs of grace and sin in a reign, or conquered dominion, on which the common sun never sets, and which the Sun of Righteousness ever floods with glory; an empire which, like the mystic ladder, first establishes its footing on earth, and finally loses itself in the glories of heaven. We will range our exposition under the following heads: I. HISTORICAL. 1. The curtain is uplifted, and the background scenery represents visions of paradisial beauty. And now for the characters; for "all the world's a stage." First enters primeval man, fresh from his Maker's

hand; and then woman, his ministering angel. Slinking stealthily from behind, next enters the serpent. The lights pale, and visions grow dark and dim, as the next actor, Sin, enters like a disastrous eclipse; and it entered not alone—it entered trailing its grim shadow after it, "Death entered by sin." The plot thickens. "Moreover, the law entered," that men might know their duty, and in the light of that their guilt, and in the light of both their doom, and in the light of all seek the remedy. As the result—Sin is seen to abound: it enters and re-enters, rolling its thunderous clouds across the stage; for in the fierce light of the law its magnitude and intensity are clearly seen, and sin takes occasion from that very law to riot and multiply itself the more. But by this time another actor has entered on the stage; the seed of the woman appears, with the ransom flowing from his side, the serpent squirming under his heel. 2. In the second long act, covering the Old Testament period, the shadows seem to deepen, and the confusion to become more confounded. 3. In the third brief, but grand act, the Deliverer steps on the stage, takes the room of the sinner, and sublimely dies, rises, ascends to glory, and sends forth His twelve champions for the spiritual conquest of the world. 4. During the next, or fourth act, the mingling elements of light and darkness, good and evil, life and death, have been in fierce, hot strife; life and light evermore rising triumphant over sin and death. 5. In the fifth, and last, grand act, Satan shall fall from his usurped dominion, and the "kingdoms of this world shall have become the kingdoms of our God," &c. II. DOCTRINAL. The text is the culminating point of a passage which, like all that precedes, has for its objects the vindication and illustration of justification by faith. If this Divine method of salvation can be shown to have primeval precedent in the Edenic Dispensation, and to root and ramify its fundamental principles in the Divine administration of our world and in the moral and social constitution of man, no stronger argument for the great doctrine could well be adduced. This is just what our apostle does. He traces a parallel between the First Adam and the Second. Both being representative, each is shown to stand out in his unity as "the one," in relation to "the many." The two Adams present strong points of parallelism. By one we fell, and by one we rise. The points of contrast are these: Adam's sin brought temporal death; but Christ brings eternal life. Again, Adam had nothing directly to do with our actual sins, but Christ's atonement, besides neutralising the effects of Adam's sin, neutralises also the effects of our innumerable actual transgressions, in the cases of all who believe. Finally, those who do believe, not only rise to the position they would have had under a sinless Adam, but to one immeasurably higher, even to a very royalty of bliss. III. EXPOSITIONAL. Taking the causes as they occur, consider:—1. "Moreover the law entered,"—a term triply compound—means to enter in by, or alongside of, or immediately upon; and thus conveys the idea that if "sin entered," if "death entered" here comes another entrance upon the back of these—that of immutable Moral Law. Adam, from the moment he sinned, ceased to be our representative; and at that same moment, therefore, the paradisial dispensation ceased. But not so Eternal Law. It therefore stepped prominently into view, after the special paradisial arrangements had passed away. And it was highly desirable that it should, that men might see their own portrait, and read their own ruin, and be thereby led, as by a schoolmaster, to seek for the remedy. Being now a broken law, it had to be arrayed in its terrors, as well as expanded in its intrinsic loveliness, Hence its successive promulgations, which culminated at Sinai, and ran on through the Mosaic Economy in parallel lines of wrath and love, till He came who has reconciled all these contrarieties, and "put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." 2. The result of this exhibition was that the "offence did abound." In the pure mirror of the law sin was first seen to abound; and then, by kicking against the law's restraints, sin rebelliously took occasion more and more to abound. With what fearful rapidity it did, may be read in the awful fact that human crime sprung to its climactic stage in the first generation. The first human birth in our world was that of a murderer, the second that of his victim. What then? Was the law to blame for that? Far be it! The law must be proclaimed; and in numberless instances it did put an arrest on sin, and guided primeval men into its "ways of pleasantness, and its paths of peace." But those who would not be guided, wrested it to their ruin. Our apostle meets that objection in chap. vii. 12, 13. 3. Mark the sin-neutralising energy of Divine grace:—"Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." (1) It is an undoubted fact, for Paul here declares it without qualification, limitation, or reserve. (2) It is a continuous fact; for it belongs to the present as truly and fully as ever it did to the past. (3) It is an evangelical

fact; for it implies that the only cure for sin is grace. It is not the fear of hell that will make a bad man good. (4) It is a world-wide fact. Confront me with a sinner. In agony he asks, Is there any mercy for me? I tell you yes, for does not Paul say, where sin abounds, grace superabounds? 4. Sin is said to "reign," and that unto death. It not only "abounds," it tyrannises. Was there ever despot like sin? Was there ever taskmaster like Satan, plying his drudges with a whip of scorpions, and ever saying to them, as Pharaoh did to the Hebrews, "get you to your burdens"? Was there ever bondage like that of the drunkard, like that of the sensualist? And "sin reigns unto death,"—or as in a previous verse, "death reigns." The "fear of death," we read, "keeps many all their life long subject to bondage." Well is he described as "the king of terrors," the most universal and relentless of all devastating conquerors. One stronger than he has grappled with him; "and the last enemy, death, shall be destroyed." 5. In direct antagonism to sin's usurped dominion, grace reigns; and "unto eternal life." The antithesis is perfect. We may not say that grace tyrannises, for its reign is essential liberty; but it dominates and is destined to final triumph. Love shall be the conqueror, as sure as God is love. 6. Observe on what principle grace reigns: not through mere arbitrary choice, as if God could act in caprice; not through mere absolute sovereignty, as if God were personified despotism; not through mere blind indulgence, as if God were too facile to be firm, too fond to be inflexibly wise and good; but through righteousness; or on some wise, safe, and righteous ground on which mercy might flow freely, but not licentiously and destructively. And how is this secured? 7. "By Jesus Christ our Lord," by His merits and world-embracing propitiation, on the ground of which "God can be just, while the justifier of the ungodly who believe in Jesus." IV. PRACTICAL. Too many, alas, who need no proof that "sin abounds," still urge, But has God any superabounding grace for me? Let Jesus reply: "Look unto Me and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth." He "gave Himself a ransom for all"; then He is a ransom for thee. A "propitiation for the sins of the whole world," He has expiated thine. "But I have sinned grievously." What! too greviously for "the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, which cleanseth from all sin"? You never did a worse sin than to vent an insinuation like that. Do you still want more witness? Pray what sort do you desiderate? A voice from heaven? Here are voices without number. Turn to Rev. xxii. 17. Or is it earthly testimony you want? Think of the once scoffing and profligate Rochester, of the once God-defiant adventurer, John Newton, of the once profanely boisterous Bunyan. Or is it the testimony of the redeemed in heaven you want to hear? Open the Apocalypse at random, and thereby turn aside the heavenly veil, and your eyes will see them casting their crowns at the Deliverer's feet, and your ear will catch the refrain—"Unto Him that loveth us!" "Worthy the Lamb!" &c. (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) *Abounding sin; overabounding grace*:—1. "The law entered that the offence might abound." The sin was already there. Deep in the constitution of humanity the poison was already working, and God would have it developed in full manifestation. The driving of evil out to the surface, where all can see it in the broad daylight, is, as in some deadly forms of fever, the first step towards the cure. But Paul had not ventured to entertain the thought unless he had known, as no man, save perhaps Luther, has ever known, the superabounding, the overmastering power of grace. 2. The problem of problems is, how can a righteous and loving God endure and perpetuate a world like this while a breath would abolish its sin and misery for ever. But it lives on. The life of a human spirit is an awful endowment. By no act of ours it comes to us. And the influences which mould it are but partially under our control. There is a man who was educated to be a jail-bird from his infancy. He never had his eye upon the form of a nobler life. You cannot say that there are no seeds of great thoughts and virtues in him. He would be torn limb from limb before he would betray his comrade. But his chance in life has been a poor one. His whole life is a battle with society. Society masters him, chains him, and will infallibly crush him at last. And yet that man must drag on his burden; and passionately as he may long to die, it is God's will that he shall bear the burden of that life through eternity. He may mend his life; God's mercy puts that within his reach; but if he will not mend it, he shall bear it for ever. 3. How many myriads are there who, were the choice offered to them, would answer, "Let me die and have done with it for ever." Annihilation has been the supreme hope of many a creed. And why? Because "Sin reigneth unto death" everywhere. Life is good: the world is fair. The storms, deserts, and earthquakes, would have no terror

for man if there were not wilder storms and barer deserts within. But self haunts him as a spectre. "The things that I would, those I do not; the things that I would not, those I do"; and the doing these things is death. Here, then, are men by millions, living by no will of their own, fighting a losing battle through life; or refusing to fight it, and giving it up in despair, grovelling with the beasts, cursing with the fiends, filling the world with woe. Doubtless there are lights as well as shadows in the picture. But looking at the broad world, the shadow masters the sunlight. Take one day's honest service with a city missionary, and judge for yourselves. There is the "struggle for life" everywhere; but Death, if want, disease, and misery are his lictors, everywhere wins. Death is the broad term which covers the whole work of sin. Death is but the culmination of a process. The sinner carries his torment with him—a life poisoned at the springs, a life which God will not suffer him to lay down. 4. And Paul has the daring sentence, "The law, sent of God, entered that the offence might abound." Many, startled, try to soften the words. "God hath sent the law to correct, but its result was the increase of sin," is the sense to which they would modify it. But the words will not bear it, and the argument refuses to adopt it. God sent the law that the offence might abound. Not sin—that is, the sinful thought and purpose—but the offence, the act and manifestation of sin. The poison there, it should not lurk there; it should be pressed into full development. "The Mosaic law," say cautious commentators, "with all its minute regulations, difficult and impossible to fulfil, which made men despair of legal obedience, and prepared them to receive the righteousness which is by faith." I think the larger view the true one. All law, in a sin-loving, God-hating world, has for its first fruit the insurrection of human passion and self-will. Every declaration of the character and the will of God to sinners seems at first but to madden the spirit and blacken the tone of their transgression. "Sin by the commandment becomes exceeding sinful." It is true of all dispensations, even the highest. When men saw the Father in the Son they hated Him; and the hatred of the generation to which the revelation was made, broke out in the most damning crime in the history of the universe. The revelation reproved, and by reproving maddened the sinner. Only when the grace with which the revelation was charged penetrated the hard crust of their natures could men begin to understand the counsel developed in our text. Every manifestation of light at first seems but to reveal darkness. Every manifestation of God at first seems but to deepen and darken sin. The great revelation developed the great transgression, and through that, "grace has reigned, through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord." Let us consider as follows:—I. GRACE. Grace is love in a certain relation—the love of a Redeemer working to its ends. It represents the whole sum of the forces by which the love that would redeem aims at the accomplishment of its hope. Its incarnation is Christ. Christ is the *gift* of grace. Grace is the manifestation and action of that fatherly love which could not rest in its native glory and blessedness, while one prodigal was wandering, while one tear was wept, one groan uttered in the universe, which its suffering and sacrifice might spare. "Ye know the grace of the Lord Jesus," but the measure of it One only knows. That grace is the reigning conqueror of sin. That triumphs where law fails. II. THE RELATION BETWEEN GRACE AND SIN. 1. Sin is the condition of its manifestation. No sin, no grace. Through a lost world Christ is to win His most glorious Crown. Grace and sin are the twin antagonists; opposed as light and darkness. If one reigns the other is destroyed; and God suffers sin to be born because He knows that grace can conquer it. 2. There is a glory which no fiat of Omnipotence even can create, which grace, by the conquest of sin, can win and wear through eternity. No sin, no grace, and, in the highest sense, no glory. The joy of the prodigal come home, the joy of the father in his return; these are the glorious joys of earth, of heaven. III. THE RELATION BETWEEN GRACE AND RIGHTEOUSNESS. Grace must reign through righteousness, if it reign at all. Imputed righteousness, some cry; inherent righteousness, others. Neither the one nor the other, I venture to think. The apostle has a broader meaning, which covers both. Inherent righteousness is a vain show, if it be not rooted in the perfect righteousness; while imputed righteousness is a mere fiction, if no image of itself be generated in the soul. The broad principle here may be thus expressed:—1. The righteous soul alone is blessed. To some, grace may suggest a kindly remission of penalty. That were feasible enough if a man's worse torment and curse were not himself. The problem to be solved is within; there the fountain of bitter waters has to be healed. And it is there that grace reigns through righteousness,

An inward harmony, healing, quickening is its promise; it presents to him a righteousness which is a man's righteousness, and yet is God's; a righteousness not awfully, hopelessly above him; a righteousness which, while his sad worn heart drinks in, the love which streams from Calvary enters and enshrines itself in his heart. 2. The righteousness which is by grace has a glory and blessedness all its own. Grace reigns through righteousness; it is a joyous, glorious reign. The work of grace is to shrine righteousness in man's heart of hearts; to teach him not to obey it only, not to honour it only, but to love it. Loving Christ, it is God's own righteousness which man loves and holds. Through love, he has a joy in all righteous thoughts and righteous deeds, which is part of his joy in Christ his Saviour. IV. THE COMPLETE AND FINAL END OF GOD. "Unto eternal life." Death is simply isolation. The cutting the body off from free communion with its world. And what is life? The opposite of isolation. It is the faculty of communion with all things. The soul's death is the paralysis of its faculty to all that a soul was made to commune with, till it becomes without truth, righteousness, and holiness, without God and without hope, because without life. The soul's quickening is the rekindling of the energy of its powers, the re-occupation of the glorious range of its faculty to commune with, to possess, and to enjoy all that God has made a soul to live for, all whereby a soul may live eternally. The work of grace is as the baptism of a new life for man. Conclusion: "Lord, are there few that be saved?" The Lord gives no answer but the text. This we know, that the end which God foresees shall repair all the waste, and repay all the sorrow with which sin has filled the world. How wide, how vast, how glorious this work of overabounding grace, which of us may dare to guess? "But strive thou to enter in at the straight gate." The end for which the Redeemer is waiting, the issue for which heaven is hoping, depend in their measure upon you. You can frustrate, you can forward the great consummation. (*J. Baldwin Brown, B.A.*) *Abounding sin and superabounding grace*:—I. "SIN ABOUNDS." This appears—1. From its extensive prevalence. It is not a local evil, like many natural evils; but it is an universal mischief. This the apostle has shown in chaps. i. and ii. However men may differ in their customs, wherever you go, sin reigns. 2. From the immense number of sins that are constantly committed. If we include, as we ought, our sins of omission, and our sins of thought, who can enumerate his errors (Gen. vi. 5). From the first dawn of reason, through infancy, childhood, youth, and riper years, even to the end of human life, we are offending against God (Psa. xl. 12). 3. From the eagerness with which men sin. How are our iniquities cultivated by art! they become, as it were, a trade. Men sin "as with a cart-rope," "with both hands earnestly," and what plans are formed for the execution of it! 4. In some seasons and places iniquity unusually abounds; and persons arrive at a certain pitch of wickedness, beyond which God will not suffer them to go. Thus it was with Sodom and Gomorrah, &c. 5. Consider all the aboundings of sin in the aggravations of it. Thus, no doubt, Judas, with the knowledge he possessed, was far more criminal than Pilate. Religious education tends greatly to aggravate the sins of those who continue in them; and when sins are committed against the special goodness and mercy of God, they are also greatly aggravated. 6. Sin will appear to abound, if you advert to the calamitous effects which it has produced. God would not suffer His creatures to endure so much misery if He were not greatly displeased with their sins. The earth is cursed for man's sake. 7. The prudence of man in framing human laws is another proof of the same truth. Why are bonds and oaths necessary in our affairs? Why must we have locks, and bolts, and bars, to our habitations? Why must we have judges and magistrates, prisons and gibbets? The reason is, that sin so much abounds. 8. Recollect also the numerous and painful diseases which invade the human frame. II. GRACE SUPERABOUNDS. Grace signifies "the free favour of God" towards sinful and undeserving creatures; and it stands opposed in Scripture to the merit or wages of works performed (Eph. ii. 8, 9; Rom. vi. 23). Grace abounds—1. In the whole business of salvation, from first to last. It originated in the heart of God, who pitied us in our low estate; and devised a plan of salvation; to us perfectly easy, to Himself highly honourable. It was God who, unasked, presented to the world that "unspeakable gift." Grace is admirably displayed in the glorious person and the perfect work of the Son of God. "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, &c." 2. In the gospel of Christ, which, on that account, is itself called "The grace of God" (Titus ii. 11, 12). 3. In the free and full justification of the sinner who believes (1 Tim. i. 14). But it is not only said that "grace abounds," but that it "much

more abounds." We derive more from Christ than we lost in Adam. Conclusion: 1. Let us diligently study the doctrine of grace. 2. Let us be concerned, above all things, to be partakers of this grace. 3. What a source is here of consolation, even for the chief of sinners. 4. What abundant cause is here for praise—ardent, constant praise! 5. This subject furnishes us with a mighty incentive to holiness. (*G. Burder.*) *Good triumphing over evil:*—In the widest sense sin always implies: law; opportunity of knowing law; capacity to obey or transgress law; and an actual deviation from law. The last is the idea to be attached to it here. "Grace" means the religion of Christ in the heart as the life of heavenly love; and the system of Christ in the world as a system of Divine mercy. I attach the latter idea to it here. I. In this chapter there are several things stated about SIN AND GRACE. 1. That they are actually in our world. Sin is a dark fact everywhere seen—a force turning men in the wrong direction. Grace is here too, as a corrective and restoring force. Human actions here result from two opposite principles. You cannot trace all history to sin, nor can you trace all to grace. In both you find a solution of all its phenomena. It is a fact that sin is in this world—sin is not in heaven. It is a fact that grace is in this world—grace is not in hell. 2. That they come into our world through the agency of man. Sin came by Adam; grace by the "second Adam." There was a time when sin was not. All was holy. There was a time when there was no grace—the world needed none. 3. That they exercise an immense influence upon the race. (1) The sin of Adam made "many sinners," the grace of Christ made "many righteous." (2) The sin of Adam brought condemnation upon the race; the grace of Christ has brought justification to many. (3) The sin of Adam leads to death; the grace of Christ to "eternal life." (4) The influence of grace far transcends that of sin. II. WHERE SIN ABOUNDED, GRACE DID AND WILL MUCH MORE ABOUND. 1. In relation to the individual. Take the case of one of the most corrupt sons of Adam, a Manasseh, or a Saul; and if grace take possession of his mind, you may say grace will "much more abound" there. (1) The influence of grace there will be of a higher kind. (*a*) Life-giving. Anything can destroy. (*b*) Justifying. One sin condemns. (2) The influence of grace there will be of a mightier kind. Sin can never attain a mastery over every part of human nature. It can never carry with it the conscience. The conscience will be ever against it. But grace carries with it conscience. Take Paul as an illustration. 2. In relation to the aggregate race. It must be confessed that up to the present moment sin has had the sway. But consider—that it is highly probable that the generations of those that have appeared on earth, will be far out-numbered by those that are yet to come. The following things suggest this. (1) The gradual method of God's procedure—creation, civilisation, redemption, are all gradual. (2) The state of past generations. (3) The representations of Scripture. (4) The omnipotency that is on the side of grace. 3. Throughout the universe of God. (1) It will spread new and brighter views of God's character through the universe. (2) Enhance the moral force that binds to holiness in the universe. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Grace abounding:*—During the Indian mutiny, a number of British soldiers with their wives and children were besieged in Lucknow by thirty thousand rebels under Nana Sahib. The food and ammunition were nearly exhausted. General Havelock was their only hope, but he had to march through fifty miles of the enemy's country in order to reach them. Death stared upon them on every hand. Jessie Brown, the wife of a Scotch corporal, lay on the ground weak and famishing; but suddenly she sprang up, and cried, "Hark! there is the Scotch battle-cry; thank God!" No one heard that cry but Jessie Brown, and many of the garrison thought she was suffering from brain fever. In a short time, she again cried, "Hear it now, then; the Campbells are coming!" They listened, and at last the shrill music of the bagpipes fell on their ears. The whole garrison fell on their faces before God, and never before was there such a thanksgiving service in Lucknow. Ere long, the plumes of the Scotchmen were seen playing in the breeze, Havelock and Outram reached the city gates, their gallant heroes marched in to rescue their countrymen, and in less than ten minutes Lucknow was a-ring with Hallelujahs. But, friends, what was the relief of Lucknow compared with the relief of humanity? Nothing, and less than nothing. We were rescued, not from Lucknow, but from the city of condemnation. We were rescued, not by Havelock, but by the only-begotten Son of God. We were rescued, not from the fangs of Nana Sahib and his monsters, but from the fangs of Satan and his black phalanx. We were rescued, not from physical bondage, but from the most terrible soul bondage. The ancient prophets, like the Scotchwoman in Lucknow, testified

that they could hear the approaching footsteps of a Deliverer, but the world was slow to believe them. "These poor prophets have fevered brains—they are deceived by hallucinations," said the silly world. But when every star of hope was about to die—Hark! the sound of music was heard from afar. Whence did the sound proceed? It was the music of angel-choristers over the fair fields of Ephratah. And one night, the great Deliverer reached our world, He broke the iron band of the besiegers, He opened the massive gates, and He re-opened the way from the city of condemnation to the city of eternal glory. Let us fall on our faces, like the garrison of Lucknow before us, to thank God for His wondrous grace. "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." (*J. Ossian Davies.*) *The reign of grace*:—The righteous Lord sits upon that throne, but His face has no frown upon it—His voice has no terror in it. On whatever part of that throne you cast your eye, you see it inscribed with grace in all its variety of application to your circumstances. There is grace to blot out your trespasses, though they be "red like crimson." There is grace to purify your hearts, though they be full of all uncleanness. There is grace to subdue your enemies, though they "come upon you as a flood." There is grace to console you amidst all your sorrows, though they be great, and multiplied, and protracted. There is grace to guide you through life, to cheer you at death, and to carry you to heaven; and as surely as God sits upon that throne of grace, so surely will He listen to the prayers that you proffer at His footstool, and uphold the character which He Himself has enstamped upon it, by freely tendering and imparting to you whatsoever you ask in sincerity and faith. (*A. Thomson, D.D.*) **That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign.**—Observe—I. HOW THE APOSTLE COLLECTS IN ONE PICTURE THE SUBJECTS OF HIS ARGUMENT. 1. Sin. 2. Death. 3. Grace. 4. Righteousness. 5. Life. II. How HE GROUPS THEM. 1. Grace exalted in the midst. 2. Sin and death hath conquered foes on the left. 3. Righteousness and life, the trophies of victory, on the right. III. How the name of ADAM is forgotten and buried, but the name of JESUS shall flourish for ever. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The reign of sin and of grace*:—I. THE REIGN OF SIN. 1. Its origin. 2. Extent. 3. Terror. 4. Consummation in death. II. THE REIGN OF GRACE. 1. Its nature. 2. Means. 3. Consummation in eternal life. (*Ibid.*) *The reign of sin and of grace*:—I. SIN'S REIGN is—1. An usurpation—God is the only rightful ruler. 2. Rebellion—opposition to God and His authority. 3. Unnatural—contrary to men's better judgment and sense of right. 4. Despotic—compelling men even unwillingly to obey it. 5. Tyrannical and oppressive—the source of present suffering. 6. Cruel and destructive—ends in eternal death. 7. Deceitful and seductive—promises ease and gratification. 8. Resistless—all human attempts to terminate it in vain. 9. Powerfully supported—justice and a broken law its strength (1 Cor. xv. 56). II. THE REIGN OF GRACE. 1. Grace exercises a power corresponding with that of sin. (1) Mighty. (2) Extensive. (3) Supported by law. 2. It not merely acts, but reigns. (1) In the world: therefore, men are salvable. (2) In each believer, therefore, a believer is actually saved. (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) *Reigning grace*:—Consider—I. GRACE IN ITS REIGNING ACTS. 1. Come with me to the valley of vision. See, strewn there, the dried bones of the house of Israel. O death! we come this day to see thee cast from thy throne. But who shall do it? Come forth, ye ministers of Christ, and see what ye can do. Here are souls spiritually dead. Behold, Chrysostom speaks, and now Whitfield, Esaias, Jeremy, Ezekiel, Daniel. Alas! eloquence, and wisdom, and zeal, cannot wake the soul of the spiritually dead. But hearken, the voice Divine exclaims, "Grace, arise and quicken these dead souls," and behold, grace stands before you in the form of incarnate God, and I hear Him say, "Thus saith the Lord, ye dry bones live." It is done, and in the place of a charnel-house now stands a great host full of life, and who shall soon be clothed with glory. "Grace reigns unto eternal life." 2. Behold another scene. The man is alive; but no sooner is he quickened than he feels the terrible bondage of sin. He has been a drunkard, a swearer, and all else that is vile; but now he feels that this mode of life will surely end in eternal death, and he therefore longs to escape. But see how he is bound with chains, and held in bondage by seven devils. Ye who understand how to reform mankind, come and ply your arts upon him and see what ye can do. But grace speaks the word, and says, "Get thee hence, Satan, let the man be free"; and free he is, no more to be a slave. Now he hates the things which once he loved. His nature is changed. Grace reigns unto eternal life. 3. Come with me to another scene. There in the prison-house of conviction sits a miserable wretch. Ask him why, and his answer is, "I have sinned; within me there is an accusing

conscience, the foretaste of the wrath to come." Come, ye sons of mirth, and see what ye can do for this poor prisoner. Come, ye that are masters of the art of consolation, see what ye can do. In vain even the minister himself, knowing the blessings of the gospel, sets before the man the riches of Christ's love. But now grace comes bearing in his hand the Cross, crying, "Look hither," and when the prisoner lifts his eyes he sees a Saviour bleeding on the tree, and in a moment a smile takes the place of his sorrow. "Rise," saith grace, "thou art free; shake thyself from the dust." Oh! grace Divine, thou art indeed triumphant, where despair itself had triumphed. 4. And now the sinner, set free both from the chains of his old lusts and of his old despairings, journeys to the palace of justice, and there, enthroned on light, he beholds a glorious King. He trembles; when lo, reigning grace who sits smiling upon a throne of love, stretcheth out its sceptre and says, "Live, live." At that sound the sinner revives; he looks up, and ere he has fully seen the wondrous vision, he hears another voice—"Thy sins which are many are all forgiven thee." And now the sinner, bowing low before the throne of mercy, begins to kiss its feet with rapture, and mercy cries, "Go and rejoice, for thou art my son who was lost, but art found; who was dead, but is alive again." 5. The man has now become a forgiven one—a saint; but grace has not ceased to reign, nor has he ceased to need its reign. 'Tis after sin is forgiven that the battle begins. There has never such a fight been seen on earth as that man must wage who hopes to enter into the kingdom of heaven. Young Christian, dost thou tremble? Remember Elijah and his servant. "More are they that are for us than all they that be against us." The soldier of Christ shall stand, for underneath him are the everlasting arms; he shall tread upon his enemies and shall destroy them. 6. The man, being kept in temptation, has a work to do for his Lord, and there is no case where grace reigns more powerfully than in the use which God makes of such infirm creatures as His servants are. Do you see Peter afraid of a little maid? Wait awhile. Some six or seven weeks have passed, and there is a great crowd in the streets. Who is to preach to them? Grace—to thine honour let it be told—thou didst not select John who stood at the foot of the Cross, nor Zelotes—no, Peter who denied his Master, must come forth to own Him afresh. Perhaps his heart whispers to him, "Simon, son of Jonas, what doest thou here?" The cock crows, Simon; what doest thou here? But that day, three thousand baptisms tell how grace can reign in the feeblest instrumentality. 7. Come to another spot, and see how grace can reign where you little think it would ever live at all. The sea is agitated with a great storm, and Jonah has just been thrown into the sea. A fish has swallowed him; and yet he lives. Grace is there preserving his life; she speaks to Leviathan—he comes up upon the dry land, and vomits forth the prophet. Have you ever been in a strait and a trouble so difficult that you imagined there was no deliverance? If you ever have, I turn you to your own history as an illustration of how grace can reign in redeeming you out of the most terrible trials. I shall need to give you but one other picture, grace reigning in the hour of death, and triumphing in the moment of our entrance into heaven. When you come to die, grace shall bear you up in the midst of Jordan, and you shall say, "I feel the bottom, and it is good." When the cold waters shall chill your blood, grace shall warm your heart. When the light of earth is being shut out from you for ever, grace shall lift the curtains of heaven, and give you visions of eternity; and when at last the spirit leaps from time into eternal space, then grace shall be with you to conduct you to your Father's house. II. GRACE SITTING ON ITS THRONE. 1. The throne is placed on the eternal hills of God's immutable purpose and decree. The throne itself, standing upon those lofty hills, has for its pedestal Divine fidelity. The thrones of monarchs rock and reel, but this is settled and abideth for ever. The throne of many a dynasty has been cemented by blood, and so is this, but with the precious blood of the Son of God. Nay, as if this did not suffice, this throne is settled by the eternal oath. God swears by Himself because He can swear by no greater, that by two immutable things wherein it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation who have fled for refuge to Christ. 2. And now look upward. The steps are the Divine openings of Providence as He gradually develops His mighty scheme. And see on either side two lions ready to guard and protect it. That very justice which once seemed to stand in the way of grace is one of the lions which guard the throne; and that very holiness which seemed once to put a barrier between thy soul and bliss, now stands there as a mighty one to guard the throne of sovereign grace. 3. Now look upward. I see upon that throne a Lamb that has been slain. The eyes of grace are the suns of the spiritual universe; the

hands of grace scatter lavish bounties throughout all the Church of the firstborn. 4. See above the throne, and above Him that sits thereon, the crown. Was ever such a crown? Nay, 'tis not one, 'tis many; there are many crowns and many jewels in each of the many crowns. And whence came these crowns of grace? They have been won in fields of fight, and been given by grateful hearts. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Life instead of death:*—Sometimes the condition of a Church and community is like that of famine-stricken Leyden, when it was besieged by Philip's popish army. Within the beleaguered town death reigned. Its brave defenders were starving by thousands. Succour was waiting for them in the Dutch fleet, which could not reach the city. But the heroic Hollanders sluiced the dykes and let in the sea, and as the rescuing fleet swept in, they flung the loaves of bread to the overjoyed crowds which thronged the canals of Leyden. Then pouring into the great Protestant cathedral, they made its arches ring with thanksgiving unto God, their Deliverer. Brethren, let us sluice the dykes of pride, and selfishness, and unbelief. The waters of salvation will flow in. Where death reigned life shall enter. (*T. L. Cuyler, D.D.*) **Jesus Christ our Lord.**—I. JESUS. Hoshea is, in Hebrew, a "Saviour." To this word the Jews added the first syllable of the name Jehovah, making the whole Jehoshua, or Joshua, or, in its Greek form, Jesus; and by this addition the name came to mean a Saviour appointed, given, sent by God. 1. Now what does Jesus save us from? (1) From hell. Now "hell" is chiefly the condition of those who have come to hate God. It is not merely a place—though, no doubt, all bad people meet together at last in one particular locality; but it is more especially a condition of heart and mind. "But," you say, "who is it that hates God?" Let us consider. Christ is the representative and exact likeness of God. Now, when He was on earth, He went about doing good. But for all that did men, as a rule, like Him? No! and in hating Christ, they hated God. It is possible then to come into that most terrible condition of hating God. But the Lord Jesus Christ saves us from such a fate, for He wins our hearts for God, and makes us love what God loves, and hate what God hates. (2) From sin. Picture to yourselves a boy who has broken one of his father's commands, and is expecting to be severely punished. Suppose the boy to say, "All that I care about is to escape the punishment. I don't mind grieving my father nor setting a bad example." You would not have a very high opinion of such a boy. A good son would be grieved at having done wrong, and would desire to be kept from doing wrong again. And so it is with the Christian. He is chiefly anxious about being kept from sinning. (3) From death. Though death triumphs for a time, Jesus at last wrests the prey from his grasp, by raising the dead out of their graves. 2. Consider what it cost Jesus to become the Saviour. I have heard of a soldier who saw that an arrow was being aimed at the heart of his friend, and that his friend could be saved only if he threw himself in the way. Well, he did throw himself in the way; he shielded his friend—but it was at the cost of his own life. It was necessary that Jesus, in order to become the Saviour of His people, should interpose Himself between them and their danger; should receive the shaft in His own breast; and die that they might live. 3. Jesus is "able to save to the uttermost." You may have all the will to help your neighbour, and yet not have the power. A man once caught another who was falling over a precipice, and held him; but he was not strong enough to hold him long, so at last he was obliged to let go, and the other was dashed to pieces on the rocks below. He had the will; he had not the power. But Christ has both. He is "mighty to save"; and you may be sure that He can save you, if only you will let Him. II. CHRIST. "Jesus" refers to the person, "Christ" to the office. Christ is the Greek word for "Messiah," and means anointed. In the old days prophets, priests, and kings were anointed for the purpose of showing that they were set apart for a particular office, and that God would give them fitness for it. 1. Now, Jesus is our Prophet. A prophet is one who not merely foretells future things, but one who forth-tells, *i.e.*, explains to man what God and the will of God are. Jesus does this partly by His word, partly by Himself. Jesus is a perfect likeness of His Father. Have you ever stamped a seal upon hot wax? You know how the seal and the impression exactly correspond. So Jesus and God exactly correspond. 2. Priest. In Jewish times the High Priest stood in the place of the whole people. Now these priests were the types or shadows of the great High Priest who was coming; and when Jesus had accomplished His work and entered into heaven, there ever to make intercession for us, their office was done away with—they were no longer wanted. So now there is no one to stand between us and God, but Christ Himself. Nor do we want any one

else. He is sufficient. 3. King, not only of His people, but also of the whole world. And Jesus obtained His kingdon by His obedience unto death, even the death of the Cross. He had to carry the Cross before He received the crown. Time is given to people to obey, but if they persist in refusing to accept His authority, a terrible punishment is in store for them (Psa. ii.). III. OUR LORD. The world says, "We will not have this man to reign over us": but Christians say, "We are glad and thankful to obey His rule." Now, why do Christians say this? Because—1. He is what He is. Men are proud to serve a great monarch; the more so if he is a good man. But what must it be to serve the King of kings and Lord of lords? and not only to serve Him, but to be admitted to His friendship? 2. He has done so much for them, and they love Him. Some years ago a poor black woman was put up for auction at a slave-market. She was very much afraid of being given over into the hands of some cruel master, when a good man who was passing by, and who hated slavery with all his heart, happened to hear her sad story, and purchased her himself. But as soon as he had purchased her he set her free. The woman had not expected this, and she was transported with joy, but she could not be persuaded to leave her benefactor. For she said, "He redeemed me! he redeemed me!" And after she had served him faithfully for many years, still, when she was spoken to about her loving service, she could only give as the explanation of it, "He redeemed me! he redeemed me!" Because Christ redeemed us with His blood, we are delighted to be allowed to enter His service, and work for Him. "We love Him, because He first loved us." 3. The service of Christ is true happiness. I never yet found a truly happy man who was not a real Christian. Gay, jovial, laughing, joking people, who were not Christians, I have met with in abundance; but I have lived long enough to know that an uneasy and restless heart may lie under a bright face. (*G. Calthrop, M.A.*)

CHAPTER VI.

VERS. 1–5. **What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?**—*Grace and sin*:—1. This question was prompted by a sentence, the very cadence of which seemed to be still alive in the apostle's memory (chap. v. 20). It is well to trace the continuity of Scripture—to read the letter of an inspired writer as you would read any other, as an entire composition, through which there possibly runs the drift of one prevailing conception. 2. The tenure upon which eternal life is given, and upon which it is held under the economy of the gospel, Paul makes abundantly manifest by such phrases as "grace," and "free grace," and "justification of faith and not of works," and the "gift of righteousness" on the one hand, and the "receiving of the atonement" on the other. And yet the apostle, warm from the delivery of these intimations, and within a single breath of having uttered that where there was abundance of guilt there was a superabundance of grace in store for it—when met by the question of What then? shall we do more of this sin, that we may draw more of this grace? on his simple authority as a messenger from God he enters his solemn caveat against the continuance of sin. Lavish as the gospel is of its forgiveness for the past, it has no toleration either for the purposes or for the practices of sin in the future. Couple these two verses, and learn from the simple change of tense two of the most important lessons of Christianity. With the first of these verses we feel ourselves warranted to offer the fullest indemnity to the worst and most worthless. Your sin has abounded; but the grace of God has much more abounded. No sin is beyond the reach of the atonement—no guilt of so deep a dye that the blood of a crucified Saviour cannot wash away. But the sinner should also look forward, and forget not that the same gospel which sheds an oblivion over all the sinfulness of the past, enters upon a war of extermination against future sinfulness. 3. The term "dead," in the phrase "dead unto sin," may be understood forensically. We are dead in law. The doom of death was upon us on account of sin. Conceive that just as under a civil government a criminal is often put to death for the vindication of its authority and for the removal of a nuisance from society, so, under the jurisprudence of Heaven, an utter extinction of being was laid upon the sinner. Imagine that the sentence is executed—that by an act of extermination the transgressor is expunged from

God's animated creation. There could be no misunderstanding of the phrase if you were to say that he was dead unto or dead for sin. But suppose God to have devised a way of reanimating the creature who had undergone this infliction, the phrase might still adhere to him, though now alive from the dead. And in these circumstances, is it for us to continue in sin—we who for sin were consigned to annihilation, and have only by the kindness of a Saviour been rescued from it? Now the argument retains its entireness, though the Mediator should interfere with His equivalent ere the penalty of death has been inflicted. We were as good as dead, for the sentence had gone forth, when Christ stepped between, and, suffering it to light upon Himself, carried it away. Does not the God who loved righteousness and hated iniquity six thousand years ago, bear the same love to righteousness and the same hatred to iniquity still? And well may not the sinner say—Shall I again attempt the incompatible alliance of an approving in God and a persevering sinner; or again try the Spirit of that Being who, the whole process of my condemnation and my rescue, has given such proof of most sensitive and unspotted holiness? Through Jesus Christ, we come again unto the heavenly Jerusalem; and it is as fresh as ever in the verdure of a perpetual holiness. How shall we who were found unfit for residence in this place because of sin, continue in sin after our readmittance therein? 4. But while we have thus insisted on the forensic interpretation of the phrase, yet let us not forbear to urge the personal sense of it, as implying such a deadness of affection to sin, such an extinction of the old sensibility to its allurements and its pleasures, as that it has ceased from its wonted power of ascendency over the heart and character of him who was formerly its slave. So the apostle (vers. 5, 6) goes on to show that we are planted together in the likeness of His death. He is now that immortal Vine, who stands for ever secure and beyond the reach of any devouring blight from the now appeased enemy; and we who by faith are united with Him as so many branches, share in this blessed exemption along with Him. And as we thus share in His death, so also shall we share in His resurrection. By what He hath done in our stead, He hath not only been highly exalted in His own person; but He hath made us partakers of His exaltation, to the rewards of which we shall be promoted as if we had rendered the obedience ourselves. This tallies with another part of the Bible, where it is said that Christ gave Himself up for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity and purify us unto Himself a peculiar people zealous of good works. 5. Now how comes it that because we are partakers in the crucifixion of Christ, so that the law has no further severity to discharge upon us, that this should have any effect in destroying the body of sin, or in emancipating us from the service of sin? How is it that the fact of our being acquitted leads to the fact of our being sanctified? There can be no doubt that the Spirit of God both originates and carries forward the whole of this process. He gives the faith which makes Christ's death as available for our deliverance from guilt; and He causes the faith to germinate all those moral and spiritual influences which bring about the personal transformation that we are inquiring of. But these He does, in a way that is agreeable to the principles of our rational nature; and one way is through the expulsive power of a new affection to dispossess an old one from the heart. You cannot destroy your love of sin by a simple act of extermination. You cannot thus bid away from your bosom one of its dearest and oldest favourites. Our moral nature abhors the vacuum that would thus be formed. But let a man by faith look upon himself as crucified with Christ, and the world is disarmed of its power of sinful temptation. He no longer minds earthly things, just because better things are now within his reach, and "our conversation is in heaven—whence we also look for the Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ." And this is in perfect analogy with familiar exhibitions of our nature in ordinary affairs. Let us just conceive a man embarked, with earnest ambition, on some retail business, whose mind is wholly taken up with the petty fluctuations that are taking place in prices and profits and customers; but who nevertheless is regaled by the annual examination of particulars at the end of it, with the view of some snug addition to his old accumulations. You must see how impossible it were to detach his affections from the objects and the interests of this his favourite course by a simple demonstration of their vanity. But suppose that either some splendid property or some sublime walk of high and hopeful adventure were placed within his attainment, and the visions of a far more glorious affluence were to pour a light into his mind, which greatly overpassed and so eclipsed all the fairness of those homelier prospects that he was wont to indulge in—is it not clear that the old affection which he could never

get rid of by simple annihilation, will come to be annihilated, and that simply by giving place to the new one. (*T. Chalmers, D.D.*) *Free grace and sin*:—1. The foregoing chapters are a proof and defence of the first fundamental truth of the gospel—that the only way in which we can be pardoned is through our trusting exclusively, not to what we have ourselves done, but to Christ and His atonement. Nay; we have the principle that the more sin has abounded, so much the more superabundant and triumphant is the free favour of God. 2. To many this has always appeared to be very perilous teaching. It seems to offer no security for practical virtue—if, indeed, it does not actually put a premium upon sin. What else is that but to say that we may sin the more in order to make God's forgiving mercy the more illustrious? Of course, if anything approaching to this were a fair deduction from the doctrine of justification, then such a doctrine would be grossly immoral. But the same objection was taken in St. Paul's day against St. Paul's teaching; and he met it by a vigorous repudiation. Indeed his answer to it formed the second main section of his theological system, since in that answer he developed the whole theory of Christian holiness. And the charge of immoral tendency, which glanced harmlessly off St. Paul and the Church of his time, may very well prove equally harmless against the evangelical Churches of modern date. Remember, the free acquittal of a penitent believer is not the end of the gospel, but only the means. Now, if free justification turn out on trial not to save a man from his sin, but to encourage him in it; then it turns out to be a cheat, like all other gospels or recipes for working deliverance which men have ever concocted or experimented with before Christ and after Him! The question, therefore, is a vital one. It just means this: Is the gospel a success or a failure? 3. St. Paul's instant reply is a blunt and staggering one. It amounts to this: such an abuse of free grace is unthinkable and out of the question. Christians are people who, in the mere fact of becoming Christians, passed through an experience which put a virtual end to their sinful life. Such a difficulty is purely intellectual, arising in the minds of men who try to comprehend the gospel from the outside without having first experienced it. But, then, when once this intellectual difficulty has been started by a non-Christian objector, the Christian craves to find an intellectual answer. That my Christian faith is inconsistent with persisting in sin, I feel. How it comes to be thus inconsistent with it, I want also to see. 4. It is under this view that St. Paul proceeds. "Are you ignorant of what every Christian is supposed to know—how as many of us as were baptised into Christ, were baptised into His death?" Well, then, it follows that "we were buried along with Him by means of that baptism of ours into His death, for the express purpose, not that we should remain dead any more than He did, but that, just as He was raised from the dead, so we also should walk in a new life." In the case of converts in the primitive Church, conversion was always publicly attested, and its inward character symbolised, by the initiatory rite of baptism. For them nothing could seem more natural than to look back upon their baptismal act whenever any question arose as to what their conversion really meant. Its most general meaning was this, that it put baptised believers into the closest possible relationship with Christ, their Second Adam, of whose "body" they were thenceforward to be "members," whose fortunes they were thenceforward to share. But if baptism seal our incorporation into the Representative Man from heaven; who does not know that the special act of Jesus with which of all others we are brought most prominently into participation, is nothing else than His death and burial? That central thing about Christ on which my faith has to fasten itself is His expiatory death upon the Cross for sin. Am I to be justified through Him at all? Then it is "through faith in His blood" (chap. iii. 25). Have I, an enemy, been "reconciled to God" by His Son at all? I was reconciled "by the death of His Son" (chap. v. 10). To that death upon the Cross of expiation which was attested by His three days' burial the gospel directs the sinner's eye, and on that builds his trust for pardon and peace with God. And the great rite which certified the world and me that I am Christ's, was before all else a baptism into the death of Him who died for me! 5. All this St. Paul treats as a Christian commonplace. Its bearing on our continuing in sin is obvious. Conversion through faith in Christ's propitiation is seen to be essentially a moral change, a dying to sin. The nerve of the old separate, selfish, sinful life of each man was cut when the man merged himself in his new Representative, and gave up his personal sins to be judged, condemned, and expiated in his Atoner's Cross. Now, how can a man who has gone through an experience like that continue in sin? For him the old

bad past is a thing dead and buried. Old things are passed away, everything has become new. Such a man can no more go back to be what he was before, feel as he felt, or act as he used to act, than Jesus Christ could rise out of His grave to be once more the Victim for unexpiated guilt and the Sin-bearer for a guilty race. 6. The Christian dies to his old sin that he may begin to live to holiness and God. This is the express design God had when He put our sins to death in His dear Son's Cross. Faith in Christ makes us morally incorporate with Him in spirit, as well as legally embraced under Him as our Representative. Christ is our Head in that He represents us before the law, so that in His death all who are His died to sin. Christ is no less our Head to quicken us as His members, and in His living again we all live anew. The will and the power to walk in new moral life are therefore guaranteed to us by our faith. Christian faith is very far from a superficial, or inoperative, or merely intellectual act, such as a man can do without his moral character being seriously affected by it. It is connected with the deep roots of our moral and religious nature. It changes the main current of our ethical life. Those who have been baptised into Christ and say they trust in His death as the ground of their peace with God, are bound to satisfy themselves that their faith is of a sort to kill sin, and to maintain the life of righteousness. (*J. Oswald Dykes, D.D.*) *The purity of the gospel dispensation*:—That the gospel dispensation, instead of relaxing the principles of moral obligation, strengthens and renders the sin committed under its light the most inexcusable, may be illustrated—I. FROM THE NATURE AND PERFECTIONS OF GOD. He is a being of absolute purity. Being thus perfect in Himself, He must love every resemblance of His own perfection in any of His intelligent creatures; and the more nearly they resemble Him, the more must they be the objects of His favour. II. FROM THE CHARACTER AND OFFICES OF THE REDEEMER. The Redeemer is the beloved Son of God, one with the Father; and, therefore, the arguments drawn from the perfections of God, to illustrate the purity of the gospel dispensation, are equally conclusive with respect to the Redeemer. In His several offices, no less than in His personal character, Christ invariably promoted the cause of righteousness. For this He sustained the office of a prophet; for this He became our great High Priest, to restore that intercourse which sin had interrupted. For this end, too, He became our King, and gave us a system of laws suited to that state of reconciliation. Now, such being His character, such the offices which He sustained as our Redeemer, and such the end for which He did sustain them, it follows, by necessary consequence, that the dispensation of the gospel, so far from relaxing the obligations of moral duty, tends powerfully to confirm them. III. FROM THAT PERFECT RULE OF MORAL CONDUCT WHICH THE GOSPEL PRESCRIBES. It is at once the most simple, the most pure and perfect that ever was delivered to the world; as superior to the much-famed systems of philosophers as its Divine author was superior to them. It lays the foundation of moral duty in the heart, the true spring of action; and by one simple principle of which every heart is susceptible, even the principle of love, it provides for the most perfect moral conduct, and for the proper discharge of the duties of life. IV. FROM A CONSIDERATION OF THE BRIGHT EXAMPLES WHICH ARE SET BEFORE US IN THE GOSPEL. V. FROM THE POWERFUL AID WHICH THE GOSPEL PROMISES TO ENABLE US TO OBSERVE ITS PRECEPTS, AND IMITATE THE BRIGHT EXAMPLES WHICH IT SETS BEFORE US. The gracious Author of this Divine influence is the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of God, the third person in the ever blessed Trinity. VI. FROM THE ULTIMATE END AND DESIGN OF THE WHOLE SCHEME. The great end of the gospel scheme undoubtedly is to bring us to a state of perfect felicity in the glorious kingdom of our God; to the full enjoyment of that immortality which our Saviour hath revealed. With the attainment of this glorious end, holiness, or moral purity, and inseparably connected, both in the nature of things and by the positive laws of God's moral government. 1. In the nature of things, the unholy or immoral must be excluded from heavenly happiness. They are incapable of it. There is no conformity between the dispositions which they have cultivated and the joys of the celestial regions. 2. It is not only in the nature of things, but by the positive law of God's moral government, that the unrighteous are excluded from heaven and happiness. (*G. Goldie.*) *Perversions of evangelical truth*:—1. What shall we say then? Say to what? To the great affirmation that man is justified freely by God's grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Shall it be this: Let us persist in sin that grace may multiply? How sharply Paul turns upon the immoral suggestion! It is a corruption not to be endured. 2. But why did the apostle submit a conclusion like that to his readers? He knew that his doctrine

did not contain it, but he knew that a corrupt human heart and a perverted understanding could put it in. That the conclusion, or its equivalent, has been asserted, and that often, where if submitted as a proposition it would be rejected with loathing, it is not without a subtle influence, is matter of observation. I. THERE ARE THOSE WHO THINK THAT IT IS POSSIBLE TO CONTINUE IN SIN AND BE SAVED. 1. How often one is forced to notice that men may combine a love of evangelical doctrine with love of money and a shrewdness that makes men who are not evangelical shrug their shoulders. We have known men, great wrestlers in prayer, whose lives, and the whisperings of whose doings, have made us ashamed. Moral confusion is at the bottom of these inconsistencies. Our evangelical doctrines are not to blame. The fault and the failure is in those who profess them while only half-perceiving them, and ignore their moral issues. 2. Paul shows us that grace comprises not only a gracious act of pardon done by God in the believer's interest, but also an active principle of sanctification in the believer's soul. The abounding of grace is only manifested in the breaking of sin's power and the destruction of sin's principle. Grace is the enemy of sin, not its covering. He who is saved by grace is not a leper clad in white raiment, but a leper healed. Grace is not beauty thrown over the deformity of some foul sickness; it is health. It is life counter-working death, and no man can continue in sin and yet be saved by grace. 3. But still, Is not grace a gift? Certainly. But God gives life. Yet life is not something external to the creature to whom it is given. It is not like a string of beads round the neck or a ring on the finger. The gift of life to a dead stick after that manner would leave it a dead stick still. Hear a parable. Early one summer morning I came upon an orchard. The trees were beautiful, and fruit was abundant. I wandered on until I came upon a tree having neither bloom nor fruit. I said, "You poor, lost tree, what can you be doing here? I marvel you are not removed." Upon which this tree replied, tartly, "You are in a great mistake. I am neither poor nor lost." "Well," I said, "you have neither leaves nor fruit, and, I should judge, no sap." "What has that to do with it?" it broke out. "You seem not to know that a great saviour of trees has been down here, and I have believed his gospel, and am saved by grace. I have accepted salvation as a free gift, and, though I have neither leaves nor fruit, I am saved all the same." I looked at it with pity and said, "You are a poor deluded tree; you are not saved at all. You are dead and good-for-nothing, despite all your talk about grace and redemption. Life, that is salvation. When I see you laden with fruit, I shall say, 'Ah! that poor tree is saved at last; it has received the gospel and is saved by grace.'" As I turned away, I heard it saying, "You are not sound; you do not understand the gospel." And I thought, so it is, as with trees so with men. II. ANOTHER FORM OF THIS ANTINOMIANISM OF THE HEART CONNECTS ITSELF IMMEDIATELY WITH THE DEATH OF CHRIST. Men talk and act frequently as if in Christ's shed blood there was a shelter from the consequence of their sins, even though they remain in their sins. They harbour covetousness, envy, hate, and pride; they stain their hands with dishonesty, and then, with their stained hands uplifted in the face of God, aver that they believe in the death of Christ for their sins, and are saved. This is not the gospel Paul preached. He asks, "How shall we who died to sin live any longer therein?" He who has by faith appropriated the expiatory death of Jesus, in and by that act died to sin. In the apostle's day, baptism was the open signification of the death. It was as the burial of one who had died. It would be a new thing to see a dead man going on as if nothing had happened. So the saved man does not persevere in sin; how should he? He has died to it. Sin has no further claim. Who can claim anything of the dead? He is not sinless. Sin, alas! is not dead, but he is dead to it. He has not got beyond its trouble, but he has got beyond its bondage. Faith in Christ's death as our means of pardon, includes also His life as the principle of our sanctification. As one delightfully said, "The Cross condemns me to be holy." (*W. Hubbard.*) *Distorted doctrines:*—A man's nose is a prominent feature in his face, but it is possible to make it so large that eyes and mouth and everything are thrown into insignificance, and the drawing is a caricature and not a portrait. So certain important doctrines of the gospel can be so proclaimed in excess as to throw the rest of the truth into the shade, and the preaching is no longer the gospel, but a caricature, and a caricature of which some people seem mightily fond. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Inconsistency:*—I. THE CONDUCT OF MANY PROFESSED CHRISTIANS INDICATES—1. That they have some knowledge of grace. 2. That they do not heartily receive it

because of sin. 3. That they rather use it as a shelter for sin. II. SUCH CONDUCT IS ABOMINABLE, because it—1. Tempts God. 2. Is irrational. 3. Courts certain destruction. 4. Is impossible where grace is really active. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The abuse of Divine mercy*:—A certain member of that parliament wherein a statute for the relief of the poor was passed was an ardent promoter of that Act. He asked his steward when he returned to the country, what the people said of that statute. The steward answered, that he heard a labouring man say, that whereas formerly he worked six days in the week, now he would work but four; which abuse of that good provision so affected the pious statesman that he could not refrain from weeping. Lord, Thou hast made many provisions in Thy Word for my support and comfort, and hast promised in my necessities Thy supply and protection; but let not my presumption of help from Thee cause my neglect of any of those means for my spiritual and temporal preservation which Thou hast enjoined. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) **God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?**—*Death to sin*:—Abounding sin is the occasion of abounding grace, but abounding grace is for the destruction of abounding sin. It is absurd to suppose that a medicine should aggravate the disease it cures. I. BELIEVERS ARE DEAD TO SIN. 1. In their condition before God. 2. In their character in consequence of it. 3. Forensically; in the eye of the law. 4. Experimentally; in point of fact. 5. In their affection for it. 6. In its power over them. Or, to put it another way, believers have died to sin legally in justification; personally in sanctification; professedly in baptism; and will die completely to it in glorification. II. THIS IS ACCOMPLISHED—1. By participation in Christ's death who died for it. 2. By communication of the power of Christ in killing it. 3. By profession made in baptism of renouncing it. Death to sin is the necessary consequence of union with Christ, who delivers from its depraving, condemning, and reigning power. (*T. Robinson.*) *Converted men dislike sin*:—An Arminian arguing with a Calvinist remarked, "If I believed your doctrine, and was sure that I was a converted man, I would take my fill of sin." "How much sin," replied the godly Calvinist, "do you think it would take to fill a true Christian to his own satisfaction?" Here he hit the nail on the head. "How can we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?" A truly converted man hates sin with all his heart, and even if he could sin without suffering for it, it would be misery enough to him to sin at all. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Breaking with sin*:—The Christian's breaking with sin is undoubtedly gradual in its realisation, but absolute and conclusive in its principle. As, in order to break really with an old friend whose evil influence is felt, half measures are insufficient, and the only efficacious means is a frank explanation followed by a complete rupture which remains like a barrier raised beforehand before every new solicitation; so to break with sin there is needed a decisive and radical act, a Divine deed taking possession of the soul and interposing henceforth between the will of the believer and sin (Gal. vi. 14). This Divine deed necessarily works through the action of faith in Christ's sacrifice. (*Prof. Godet.*) *The two lives* (text and ver. 11):—I. THE CONTRASTED LIVES: "Life in sin," and "being alive unto God." The contrast is such that the unspiritual can perceive it, though unable to understand it. The ungodly may say, "We neither know nor care whether a man is justified or not, but we do know whether he keeps the law of conscience, whether he acts up to his professed principles, whether he does that which, apart from his profession, we know to be right. But how is it that the world is able to form these judgments? Was the civilised world qualified to do this in the days of Cicero or of Pericles? Was there to be found then, or is there to be found now, where Christianity is not, anything approximating the same jealousy of conscience, &c., which those who now boast that they are men of the world often exhibit? Surely not. If worldly men are competent judges of Christian principle, it is because the atmosphere breathed by true Christians has stimulated its life and awakened its conscience. The world is indebted to the Christianity it is ready to revile for its power to call Christians to its bar. Note: 1. What is meant by "living in sin." The term has been almost appropriated to describe certain forms of bold and unblushing transgression of moral law. If a man is a known drunkard, adulterer, or rogue, he is said to "live in sin"; and no one excuses or palliates his conduct. But the corruption of human nature goes down deeper, and the ravages of sin are far more extensive than this. That man is "living in sin"—(1) Who can sin without remorse. If a man sins and his only thought is, "How shall I escape the indignant scorn of the world?" he

is taking pleasure in ungodliness, he is only happy in the absence of God. (2) Who does what he knows to be wrong, but palliates it by pleading the force of circumstances, the nature of society, or the custom of the world. (3) Who habitually neglects to do that which God and his conscience have often called upon him to accomplish. "To him who knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin." It is not enough that a man should avoid the practice of evil; he must not be lacking in generosity, good temper, self-restraint, religious emotion, zeal and work for God and man. (4) Who finds pleasure in the commission of sin, hankers after forbidden sweets, and would like to go where he could escape detection. To sum up, "All ungodliness is sin." To be without God, to act irrespectively of His authority, to find pleasure in what is opposed to His will, is to live in sin and bring the consequences of such a life down upon the soul. 2. What is meant by being "alive unto God." By being "alive to" anything is meant a vivid conception of its reality, a joy in its presence, a devotion to its interests. Thus one man is alive to business, another to his reputation, another to truth. One man is alive to beauty in nature or art, he is therefore quick to discern its presence, keen to criticise its counterfeits, filled with joy when surrounded with its exponents. Another man is alive to literature or science, his ear is sensitive to every message from the great world of letters and invention, and the world exists, so far as he is concerned, to sustain and furnish material for his favourite pursuit. One man is alive to the well-being of his own country, and another to the wider interests of man. With the help of these illustrations we may assume that a man is alive unto God—(1) When he fully recognises the signs of the presence of God. Habitual transgression or neglect of the laws of God is incompatible with the condition of a man who sees God everywhere. That man is "alive to God" to whom God is not a theory by which he can conveniently account for the universe, or a name for certain human conceptions of nature and its workings, or an invention of priestcraft to terrify the soul, or a philosophic concept the presence or absence of which has little to do with life or happiness, but the great and only reality, the prime and principal element of all his thoughts. No one fully recognises the presence of God unless he has advanced beyond the teaching of nature, and received from Holy Scripture, from the inward operations of the Spirit in his own heart, more than philosophical speculations can give him. If alive unto God, every revelation of His infinite essence suggests to our quickened spirit the presence of our Father and our Friend. (2) When the sense of the Divine Presence awakens all the energies and engages all the faculties of his nature. If duly conscious of the Divine Presence, we shall render the appropriate homage of our entire being. Then every place is a temple, every act is a sacrifice, every sin the pollution of a sacred place, the defilement of a holy day. It is morally impossible for one who is alive unto God to imagine that he is doing too much to express his sense of reverence, gratitude, or obligation. In one word, self is subdued to Him, and human will is lost in God's. (3) When he finds his highest desires gratified. If we are alive unto God, we shall find that we are following the bent of our true nature. He that drinketh of the water given him by Christ, shall never thirst after those draughts of carnal pleasure to be found in the broken cisterns of human invention, and it shall be in him a well of water springing up to everlasting life. II. The two lives have been described and contrasted, life in sin and life unto God. IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO CONCEIVE OF TWO MODES OF LIFE MORE OBVIOUSLY OPPOSED TO ONE ANOTHER. They cannot co-exist in the same spirit. 1. If sin is delighted in, God is dreaded. There is no tendency in human nature by means of which sin can be remedied or undone. The punishment of sin is death, *i.e.*, moral alienation of heart from God, sinful habit and tendency. Consequently every sin carries in itself its own perpetuation and the germ of further transgression. 2. A life unto God supposes a spirit to whom the nearness, the perfections, the work of the Lord are unutterable delights; to whom the whole universe is a transparent medium, through and behind which is seen the face of the Eternal God. III. HOW SHALL THOSE THAT ARE LIVING IN SIN EVER LEARN TO BE ALIVE UNTO GOD? 1. The charge had been brought that that gospel looked leniently on sin, and the apostle boldly takes it up, admits its seeming plausibility, anticipates its possible force, and answers it by showing what was involved in that faith which justifies the soul. The life unto God can never supervene in a soul which has been living in sin, "except," says he, "through a death unto sin." Justification implies the removal of its penalty, its non-imputation, the exhaustion of its sting, the annihilation of its wages. Our

new and holy life is not the ground of our justification, nor, strictly speaking, the consequence of our pardon and acceptance with God; but it is in one sense the pardon itself, the way in which the Holy Ghost slays that enmity within us which was the great curse of sin. "How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?" 2. As far as his illustration is concerned, the apostle states a truism when he says that one who is dead to sin cannot live any longer therein. A man who is dead to sin may be carried away from his standing-ground by some terrible and novel blast of temptation; but it is a contradiction in terms to assert that he can "live in sin." 3. What, then, is meant by "death to sin"? (1) Not a desperate fear of the consequences of sin. This fails to repress gross vice and crime. There are no cowards so great as those who often make violent assault on the life and property of others. They choose darkness that they may avoid detection; they are armed to the teeth when they go against feebleness and womankind. Multitudes tremble at the preaching of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, but sin as if they never trembled. Fear may have kept you back from the commission of sin, and warned you to paths of honour and usefulness, and yet never have slain the desire after what is hateful to God. (2) Not respect to the opinion of the world. The good opinion of our fellow-citizens is a powerful motive to virtue; but if it is our only one, there is nothing eternal in our virtue. Then if our circumstances were changed, we should change also. Let us be put back to times when a lower honour prevailed in business or in society, we should be forced back to the undeveloped morality of the past, and "live in" the practice of what we now see to be "sin." (3) Not mere self-respect. There are those who are careless about the world's respect as long as they can secure their own. This reverence for conscience, and independence of the judgment of others, is closely akin to the highest virtue, but yet as an ultimate principle it is not sufficient. The proud independence of mankind may speedily run up into an audacious independence of God. Self-respect may rapidly blossom into self-idolatry. (4) "Death to sin" is not secured by orthodox creed, ceremonial exactness, or even religious zeal. These are all occasionally confounded with it, but they may be all compatible with a "life of sin." Church history is full of proofs that neither articles, nor sacraments, nor profession, nor even great sacrifices for religion, avail to slay the sin of the heart or render the soul alive to God. (5) By this process of exclusion we have brought the meaning of the phrase "death to sin" to a much more limited group of experiences. The apostle identifies it with union to Christ, that which he sometimes calls "faith in His blood," "baptism into Christ," or "living by faith on the Son of God," because "Christ liveth in us." Paul knew he was appealing to a safe and sure tribunal when he went right to the consciousness of his converts. "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." It is certain that the apostle would not have these Romans reckon thus unless it were true. Observe, it is not merely that they are to reckon that Christ died for their sins, but they are also to reckon that they too are dead unto sin through Jesus Christ. 4. The way, then, in which this change is effected is by union with Christ—(1) In His Passion. "By the Cross the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world"; "I am crucified with Christ"; "If we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him." We are "buried with Him by baptism into His death." The thought often recurs that our faith in Him nails our own hands to the cursed tree and films our eye on worldly glory. If we have taken up this thought into our entire spiritual nature, that "Christ died for our sins," then we are dead. As we become alive to what the death of Christ really is and means, how it prepares the only way by which a new life could enter our race, and a new spirit be given to transgressors, by which God could justify the ungodly, and still be just; it is not difficult to understand that faith in Christ, that union to Christ, involves dying with Christ to sin. A true and deep faith in Christ, a recognition by mind and heart of His work, is such an intuition of law, such a sense of God, such a revelation of the evil of sin, such a burning of the heart against the world, the flesh, and the devil, that the apostle was justified in saying that Christians might reckon themselves dead unto sin. (2) In His life and resurrection. The new life of the soul is a resurrection-life, charged with all the associations and aspirations which would be possessed by one who had passed, through dying, from death to life. The life unto God flows out of the life of God in the soul. (*H. R. Reynolds, D.D.*) *Christ's legislative glory to be preached:*—The following curious incident once happened to a clergyman. One day, after

preaching, a gentleman followed him into the vestry, and, putting a £10 note into his hand, thanked him most energetically for the great comfort he had derived from his sermon. The clergyman was very much surprised at this, but still more so when shortly afterwards the same thing again took place; and he determined to sift the affair to the bottom, and find out who this man was that was so comforted by his discourse. He discovered that he was a person at that very time living in the most abominable wickedness and in the very depths of sin. "Certainly," said he to himself, "there must be something essentially wrong in my preaching when it can afford comfort to such a profligate as this!" He accordingly examined into the matter closely, and he discovered that, whilst he had been preaching Christ's sovereignty, he had quite forgotten his legislative glories. He immediately altered the style of his sermons, and he soon lost his munificent friend. I am told that, by preaching Christ's legislative glory, I also have driven some from my chapel. Pray for me, my brethren, that I may still preach doctrine, and that Longacre may become too hot for error in principle or sin in practice; pray for me that with a giant's arm I may lash both. (*Howels, of Longacre.*) *The atonement gives no encouragement to sin*:—There is no influence more mischievous on the morals of a people than to interpret the atonement in such a way as to make it independent of good works, if to the atonement you give any other than purely legal connection. If it includes state of nature and character in its connections, then must it stand for ever associated with human endeavour and conditioned upon it. Else the sacrifice of Jesus becomes a harbour for thieves—a port into which sinners can at any moment steer with all their sins on board, the moment that the winds of conscience begin to blow a little too hard and threaten wreck to their peace. And this is what I call a plain accommodation of sinners, and hence a premium on sin. For sin is sweet to the natural man, sweet to his pride, his cruelty, his senses; and who would not sin and have the sweetness of it, if when he found it troublesome he could, by the saying of a prayer, or the utterance of a charmed word, be in an instant delivered from it for ever? And yet I believe that in just this supposition multitudes in Christendom are living. Salvation is something to be visited upon them, independent of their conduct; nay, in spite of their conduct. Jesus is a cabalistic word which, no matter how they live, if they but whisper it with their dying gasp into the ear of death, he is bound to pass them up into heaven and not down into hell, where their deeds would consign them and which their characters fit. They cheat, they lie, they slander, they hate, they persecute, but then is not there mercy for all? Will not faith save a man; and have not they faith? And are they not told that God will do anything in answer to prayer; and did you ever see men pray as fast as these fellows can when they are sick? This is what I call making Christ a harbour for thieves and Christianity a premium on sin. This is what I call the most horrible perversion of the gospel plan of salvation conceivable! (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Death to sin, a difficulty*:—There is nothing so hard to die as sin. An atom may kill a giant, a word may break the peace of a nation, a spark burn up a city; but it requires earnest and protracted struggles to destroy sin in the soul. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*)

Vers. 3, 4. **Know ye not that as many as were baptised into Jesus Christ were baptised into His death?**—*Christian baptism*:—I. WHAT IT IS—1. A sign of grace. 2. A mystery of faith. 3. A seal of the covenant. II. WHAT IT REQUIRES. The death of the old man. III. WHAT IT IS INTENDED TO SECURE—spiritual and eternal life. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Christian baptism*:—I. ITS SIGNIFICANCE AND NATURE.—1. It was no novelty. Pious lustrations had been practised for ages among the Hindoos, Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans. The Jews also, in addition to the legal ablutions, baptised proselytes. John practised the same ceremony. And when Christ adopted this ordinance, it must have been with the same general significance, viz., initiation into a new mode of life. The past was to be renounced and forgotten, and a new, higher and holier career entered upon. Hence baptism was regarded among the philosophers and Rabbis as a new birth: not that it produced any real change of heart, but was a solemn and public separation from a former course of life, and a new start on a more hallowed career. Now, this is exactly the idea of baptism in the New Testament. It is like a Rubicon crossed: or a river which divides two continents occupied by hostile nations. 2. Such being the general idea of baptism, what is its specific meaning in the Christian system? Christian baptism generally is baptism into Christ. Just as one may be baptised into Hindooism, Judaism, or

Mahometanism, so may a man be baptised into Christianity, or Christ. But Paul describes it as baptism into "Christ's death"; and here we shall see how essentially it differs from baptism into any other form of religion. To be baptised into Moses or Mahomet would not signify to be baptised into his death, but only the acknowledgment of their authority. Baptism into Christ's death is expressed four times, and by as many different phrases, in this passage. (1) "Baptised into His death." We think of the death of Christ as the central and most momentous event of His mediatorial mission. He was put to death by wicked men, the representatives of the world in its depraved condition; but He also died in the sinner's stead, and for sin, that He might condemn and cancel it, and deliver His people from its curse. By it, therefore, we express our acquiescence in that death, both as a protest against the wickedness of the world, and as an atoning sacrifice for human sin. If so, we are expected to be dead to the world which slew Him; and to the sins for which He died. (2) "Buried with Him by baptism." The interment of Christ gave conclusive evidence of the reality of His death. The world had done with Him, and He with it. To denote therefore the absoluteness of our death in Christ, we are said to be buried with Him—as a man who is completely done with this life is said to be "dead and buried." (3) "Planted together in the likeness of His death." The idea is that of growing together into one, as a new branch grafted into an old stock. Our death is entirely owing to the death of Christ; yet it is only in the likeness of His death that we die. There are points of difference as well as of resemblance. He died *for* sin, we die *to* sin; He died vicariously, we for ourselves. His death was to cover the guilt of sin; ours is to escape from its pollution and power; His death was physical, ours spiritual. (4) "Our old man is crucified," "that the body of sin might be destroyed." By the old man we understand our unrenewed moral disposition (Eph. iv. 22, 23); by "body of sin," the fact that our lower animal nature is the great occasion and instrument of sin. Jesus died a death of slow, lingering torment and ignominy. And our death to sin is one of corresponding painfulness, difficulty, and seeming dishonour. So Paul, in the Galatians, twice declares that he is "crucified with Christ" (Gal. ii. 20; vi. 14). Indeed the whole idea of this passage is repeated in several others (see Col. ii. 11–13; 1 Pet. iii. 18–iv. 6). How the world scoffs at a man who gives up his sins! II. THE SUBSEQUENT STATE OF THE BAPTISED AS DEAD TO SIN. Now we are said to be dead to anything when we have ceased to be under its influence, and have become indifferent to it. Thus many a passion of human love or hate dies away, and the heart is perfectly unmoved by the presence of its once exciting object. Or a man utterly alters his studies and pursuits, and becomes callous to speculations or adventures which once had fired him with uncontrollable ambition. In like manner a converted man is dead to his former life of sin. He is a new creature in Christ Jesus. Old things have passed away, and all things have become new (2 Cor. v. 17). 1. He is indifferent to its pleasures (Gal. v. 19–26). 2. He has renounced its principles and practices. 3. These things he has been enabled to do. "Dead to sin," he is emancipated from its bondage. He is raised up from the death of sin, as Christ from the grave, by the glorious power of the Father, and so, filled with the Spirit, he is able to walk in newness of life. *Christian baptism:*—I. THE MORAL SIGNIFICANCE OF OUR BAPTISM INTO CHRIST—our baptism into His death. 1. The forms of expression are elliptical. For just as Christ gave commandment to "baptise into the name of the Father," &c., the meaning was that they were to be baptised into the faith and for the service of the Triune God; so here, to be baptised into Christ and His death is to be baptised into the faith of Christ crucified. 2. Regarded from its human side baptism is an act by which a man makes open profession of faith in Christ as his Saviour and Lord; an act in which he makes full renunciation of self and sin, and unites himself to the Church (1 Cor. xii. 12, &c.). It does not, however, constitute its subject a really living member; it is but a material act which cannot possibly of itself have any moral effect. Thus, though Simon had been baptised, he had neither part nor lot in the Christian salvation. But the faith of which baptism is the profession does bring its possessor into living fellowship with Christ. 3. This faith is in Christ's death, and really brings its possessor into union with Christ. Hence by our baptism into Christ's death, we were buried with Him. It is very commonly supposed that there is here a reference to immersion: but the apostle does not say that we were buried in baptism, but that we were "buried together with Christ by means of the baptism into His death." That is to say, if we have that faith of which baptism is the open profession, then are we brought into such legal and effective union with Christ as

that we are treated by God as though we had been crucified when Christ was crucified, and buried when He was buried. 4. But there is yet a further moral significance in this act of faith, viz., a confession that the believer himself, because of his sins, deserves to die; that but for the death of his Divine Substitute he must himself have died; that he hates and renounces those sins which thus imperilled his own soul and caused such agony to his Redeemer; and that he thankfully and with all his heart avails himself of this provision of salvation from sin. It is not consistent with our profession of faith that we should continue in sin. For "how shall we that died to sin, live any longer therein?" II. Its PURPOSE—that like as Christ was raised, so we, being quickened together with Him, should walk in newness of life. 1. Though Jesus died, He does not continue dead. He died unto sin once. By that one death He satisfied the demand of the law, and having satisfied that demand, He could legally claim a complete justification from sin (ver. 7). But, being so justified, death had no further dominion over Him. He was therefore raised on account of our justification by the glory of the Father, *i.e.*, by His power, working out His will and purpose, according to the demands of His glory. 2. For the glory of the Father demanded the resurrection of His Son on two accounts. (1) To clear Him from false accusations. The Jews condemned Him as a blasphemer, because that He had called God His own Father, making Himself equal with God. No doubt the Jews were right, if the claim had not been true. But it was true. And to prove its truth, and vindicate His Son, the glory of the Father raised Him from the dead. (2) To attest the sufficiency of His atoning death. Not according to man's arrangement, but "by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God," Jesus was "delivered" to death to expiate sin. It was declared that His death should effectually accomplish this purpose. But, in proof thereof, it was needful that He should rise again. For how could we have trusted in Him for salvation, and how could it have been consistent with the glory of the Father, if the sinless One had continued under the power of death after the demands of justice had been fully satisfied? Therefore the glory of the Father could not suffer that Holy One to see corruption. 3. But we are baptised into Christ's death, and by that baptism buried with Him, in order that we also might participate His restored and glorious life. For, as in our Representative, so also in us these things of necessity go together, namely—(1) Death to sin and burial in death; (2) Justification from sin in consequence of that death; and—(3) Restoration to holy and prevailing life. If in Christ we have not been made alive to God, then it is quite certain that we have not been justified in Christ. 4. Thus it comes to pass that, both by profession and by privilege, Christian men are bound to renounce a life of sin, and to live a life of holiness. That we may do this effectually, we have but to attend to two things; namely—(1) To be indeed what we profess ourselves to be, believers in the saving work and power of Jesus; and—(2) To do, with resolute courage, what we are bidden to do, even to yield ourselves to the service of God as those who are alive from the dead. Doing these things, we shall no longer continue in sin, but shall reign in life by One, Jesus Christ. (*W. Tyson.*) **Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death.**—*Baptism—a burial*:—1. Paul does not say that all unbelievers and hypocrites, &c., who are baptized, are baptized into our Lord's death. He intends such as come to it with their hearts in a right state. 2. Nor does he intend to say that those who were rightly baptized have all of them entered into the fulness of its spiritual meaning; for he asks, "Know ye not?" Some perhaps saw in it only a washing, but had never discerned the burial. I question if any of us yet know the fulness of the meaning of either of Christ's ordinances. Baptism sets forth the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, and our participation therein. Its teaching is twofold. Consider—I. OUR REPRESENTATIVE UNION WITH CHRIST AS A TRUTH TO BE BELIEVED. Baptism as a burial with Christ signifies—1. Acceptance of the death and burial of Christ as being for us. We are not baptized into His example, or His life, but into His death. We hereby confess that all our salvation lies in that which we accept as having been incurred on our account. 2. An acknowledgment of our own death in Christ. My burial with Christ means not only that He died for me, but that I died in Him, so that my death with Him needs a burial with Him. Suppose that a man has actually died for a certain crime, and now, by some wonderful work of God, he has been made to live again. Will he commit that crime again? But you reply, "We never did die so." But that which Christ did for you comes to, and the Lord looks upon it as, the same thing. You have died in Christ's death, and now by grace you are brought up again into newness of life. Can you, after that, turn back to the accursed thing

which God hates? 3. Burial with a view to rising. If you are one with Christ at all, you must be one with Him all through. Since I am one with Christ I am what Christ is: as He is a living Christ, I am a living spirit. So far the doctrine: is it not a precious one? Shall the members of a generous, gracious Head be covetous and grasping? Shall the members of a glorious, pure, and perfect Head be defiled with the lusts of the flesh and the follies of a vain life? If believers are indeed so identified with Christ that they are His fulness, should they not be holiness itself? II. OUR REALISED UNION WITH CHRIST as a matter of experience. There is—1. Death—(1) To the dominion of sin. If sin commands us we will not obey, for we are dead to its authority. Sin cannot reign over us, though it may assail us and work us harm. (2) To the desire of any such power. The law in the members would fain urge to sin, but the life of the heart constrains to holiness. (3) To the pursuits and aims of the sinning life. We are in the world, and have to live as other men do, carrying on our ordinary business; but all this is subordinate, and held in as with bit and bridle. (4) To the guidance of sin. Our text must have had a very forcible meaning in Paul's time. An average Roman of that period was a man accustomed to the amphitheatre. Taught in such a school, he was cruel to the last degree, and ferocious in the indulgence of his passions. A depraved man was not regarded as being at all degraded; not only nobles and emperors, but the public teachers were impure. When those who were regarded as moral were corrupt, you may imagine what the immortal were. See here a Roman converted by the grace of God! What a change is in him! His neighbours say, "You were not at the amphitheatre this morning." "No," he says, "I am totally dead to it. If you were to force me to be there, I must shut my eyes, for I could not look on murder committed in sport!" The Christian did not resort to places of licentiousness; he was dead to such filthiness. The fashions of the age were such that Christians could not consent to them, and so they became dead to society. 2. Burial. This is—(1) The seal of death, the certificate of decease. There have been instances of persons being buried alive, and I am afraid that the thing happens with sad frequency in baptism, but it is unnatural, and by no means the rule. But if I can say in very truth, "I was buried with Christ thirty years ago," I must surely be dead. (2) The displaying of death. When a funeral takes place, everybody knows of death. That is what baptism ought to be. The believer's death to sin is at first a secret, but by an open confession he bids all men know that he is dead with Christ. (3) The separateness of death. The dead man no longer remains in the house. A corpse is not welcome company. Such is the believer: he is poor company for worldlings, and they shun him as a damper upon their revelry. (4) The settledness of death; for when a man is dead and buried you never expect to see him come home again. They tell me that spirits walk the earth; I have my doubts on the subject. In spiritual things, however, I am afraid that some are not so buried with Christ but that they walk a great deal among the tombs. The man in Christ cannot walk as a ghost, because he is alive somewhere else; he has received a new being, and therefore he cannot mutter and peep among the dead hypocrites around him. 3. Resurrection. (1) This is a special work. All the dead are not raised, but our Lord Himself is "the firstfruits of them that slept." He is the Firstbegotten from among the dead. As to our soul and spirit, the resurrection has begun upon us, and will be complete as to our body at the appointed day. (2) By Divine power. Christ is brought again "from the dead by the glory of the Father." Why did it not say, "by the power of the Father"? Ah, glory is a grander word; for all the attributes of God are displayed here. There was the Lord's faithfulness; for He had declared that His Holy One should not see corruption. His love. I am sure it was a delight to the heart of God to bring back life to the body of His dear Son. And so, when you and I are raised out of our death in sin, it is not merely God's power, or God's wisdom that is seen, it is "the glory of the Father." If the tiniest spark of spiritual life has to be created by "the glory of the Father," what will be the glory of that life when it comes into its full perfection, and we shall be like Christ, and see Him as He is! (3) This resurrection life is—(*a*) Entirely new. We are to "walk in newness of life." (*b*) Active. The Lord does not allow us to sit down contented with the mere fact that we live, nor allow us to spend our time in examining whether we are alive or no; but He gives us His battle to fight, His house to build, His farm to till, His children to nurse, and His sheep to feed. (*c*) Unending. "Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more." (*d*) Not under the law or under sin. Christ came under the law when He was here, and He had our sin laid on Him, and therefore died; but after He rose again there was no sin laid

on Him. In His resurrection both the sinner and the Surety are free. What had Christ to do after His rising? To bear any more sin? No, but just to live unto God. That is where you and I are. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Buried alive* (Psa. xxxi. 12; Rom. viii. 6, and text):—The subject would perhaps suggest a terrible physical calamity, such as the closing of a coalpit upon toiling miners; or of an interment ere life was extinct. But there are other senses in which men are buried alive. I. In an UNFORTUNATE sense. Men are often buried alive—1. For the want of opportunities of mental development. How frequently we hear men say in certain spheres and conditions that they are buried alive! There is an amount of mental life in all men. But the development of that life requires certain external conditions and favourable opportunities. Sometimes, indeed, but rarely, we find men, through the force of genius, breaking through the most unfavourable circumstances; but the millions remain in the mental grave of thoughtlessness and ignorance. Englishmen have at last realised the magnitude of this calamity; the loss which it involves to commerce, literature, and moral influence. 2. Through the infirmities of age. Some, thirty or forty years ago, played prominent parts in the drama of public life; but where are they to-day? We are constantly reading of the death of an old Waterloo hero, or Trafalgar veteran, or distinguished statesman, or great scholar, who have not been heard of for years. This is a sad entombment, one that awaits us all if we live long enough. 3. Through the envy of their contemporaries. This was perhaps what David meant. Malice always wishes to murder, and to bury. Many a noble man in Church and State, who is too truthful to temporise, too independent to cringe, is kept in the background by envy. No invitation shall be given to him to take a prominent part in the movements of his party, no mention shall be made of his doings in the organs of their clique. II. In a CRIMINAL sense (Rom. viii. 6). In the case of all unrenewed men, the soul, the conscience with all its Divine instincts and sympathies, is buried in the flesh, in the sense in which a slave is buried who has no liberty of action. Hence Paul speaks of it as "carnally sold under sin." A man may be a merchant, artist, author; but the inspiration of his business, the glow of his genius, the tinge and form of his thoughts, will be flesh rather than spirit. Nay, he may be a religionist, and that of the most orthodox stamp: but his creed and devotions will "be after the law of a carnal commandment," and his Christ "known only after the flesh." III. In a VIRTUOUS sense. "We are buried with Him by baptism unto death." Not the baptism of water, but of that holy fire that burns up all corrupt carnalties. What is buried here? Not the mental faculties, for these are quickened into action; not the conscience—no, this is brought out of its grave and put upon the throne. But the old man with its corruptions and lusts. Whilst this carnal "I" is buried, the moral "I" is quickened and raised. "Nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Now, this is a virtuous burying alive. It means being dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto righteousness. As you must bury the seed in the earth before you can have the living plant, so you must bury the carnal nature before you have spiritual life. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Dead and buried with Christ*:—In the fourth century, when the Christian faith was preached in its power in Egypt, a young brother sought out the great Macarius. "Father," said he, "what is the meaning of being dead and buried with Christ?" "My son," answered Macarius, "you remember our dear brother who died, and was buried a short time since? Go now to his grave, and tell him all the unkind things you ever heard of him, and that we are glad he is dead, and thankful to be rid of him, for he was such a worry to us, and caused so much discomfort in the Church. Go, my son, and say that, and hear what he will answer." The young man was surprised, and doubted whether he really understood; but Macarius only said, "Do as I bid you, my son, and come and tell me what our departed brother says." The young man did as he was commanded, and returned. "Well, and what did our brother say?" asked Macarius. "Say, father!" he exclaimed; "how could he say anything? He is dead." "Go now again, my son, and repeat every kind and flattering thing you have ever heard of him; tell him how much we miss him; how great a saint he was; what noble work he did; how the whole Church depended upon him; and come again and tell me what he says." The young man began to see the lesson Macarius would teach him. He went again to the grave, and addressed many flattering things to the dead man, and then returned to Macarius. "He answers nothing, father; he is dead and buried." "You know now, my son," said the old father, "what it is to be dead with Christ. Praise and blame equally are nothing to him who is really dead and buried with Christ." That like

as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.—*Christ's resurrection and ours for the glory of God*:—It glorifies His omnipotence. For if creation required omnipotence, so does the new creation. It glorifies His wisdom; for what wisdom is required to "bring a clean thing out of an unclean"! To reconcile sinful man to a holy God. It glorifies His justice; for how could God have forgiven us, except at the expense of His justice, had He not received atonement in the person of Jesus; and how could He have given us any comfort in that atonement, if He had not raised Jesus from the dead, and thus show us that the price of our redemption was fully paid, and we were set free? It glorifies His truth; for God had said that it should be so, and we had to wait for the fulfilment of His promise, and in the fulness of time Jesus came, died, and rose again. (*Bp. Montagu Villiers.*) *Resurrection-life*:—1. The chapter connects the historical resurrection of Christ with the spiritual resurrection of the heart by the golden link of "baptism." 2. We have to consider what is the "newness of life" in which we are to "walk," or "walk about," the metaphor referring to our ordinary "walk" in the beaten track of every-day life; for this is "the newness of life" which God loves—not the striking out of some novel path, but the old path trodden every day with "new" affections and "new" attainments. And may we not all say that there has been now quite enough of old, dull, religious duties, enough of worldly-mindedness, enough of things which have done nothing else but disappoint us, enough of things that die? And could there be a better season than this Easter for starting afresh upon the journey of life? Look at this life as "new"—I. IN THE METHOD OF ITS FORMATION. 1. There is a natural life which we all obtain from our father and mother. It carries an entail from Adam—a stream of corruption and a carnal-mindedness. But Jesus took manhood, and did His mediatorial work, that He might become, like another Adam, the root of another pedigree. Our entrance into the lineage takes place by an act of spiritual union to Christ. 2. Now see the processes of that "life." When Christ died on the Cross our nature died in Him. And now Christ, being the Head, rising, draws up the body. First, in this present life, our souls begin to be drawn up to ascending desires, to nearer communion, to loftier enjoyments, to a more heavenly-mindedness. Afterwards, at the resurrection, by the same process, our bodies will be raised up. II. IN ITS OWN CONSTITUTION. God's way of making a "new" thing is not man's way. God uses up the "old" materials; but, by His using and moulding them, makes them "new." Thus, "the new heavens and the new earth" will only make another heaven and earth formed out of the old materials. Or, take that expression, "a new heart." God does not annihilate a man's original temperament—remove his old habits, and tempers, and feelings, and make another man with him; but He restrains, sanctifies, and elevates the man's primary character. The characteristic of his unconverted state is the characteristic of his converted condition; but "new" feelings have given "new" directions to old things; and "new" principles have given another development; and "new" grace has given "new" power: and so, though he is the "new man," he is "the old man" still! III. THE "NEW" ELEMENT THROWN IN TO MAKE A "NEW MAN." Love. Of this command we read that it is "old" and "new." St. John in a breath calls it both. "Old," in the letter; "new," in the spirit. "Old," as an universal obligation; "new," in the standard. "Old," in the fact; "new," in the motive. "As I have loved you, that ye also love one another." (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *Christ's resurrection and our newness of life*:—I. THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD WAS ATTENDED WITH GLORY. It was glorious—1. In itself the most marvellous occurrence in history. 2. In contrast with Christ's humiliation. 3. In its effects. He was raised—(1) "For our justification." (2) To secure our own resurrection. (3) That through His life of intercession He might save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him. 4. As to its cause, for it was a display of the glory or power of the Father. But it was more than a miracle of power, for all the attributes of God united their glory in it, love, wisdom, justice, and mercy. The veil which concealed the sacred presence was rent from top to bottom; and the glory of the Lord was seen in the resurrection of Christ from the dead. 5. Because of its sequel in reference to our Lord. Once hath He suffered, but it is once for all. His victory is final. And now, therefore, to the child of God death furnishes a couch of rest, and is no longer a dark and noisome prison cell. The body is sown in corruption, but it is raised in incorruption and immortality. II. THE PARALLEL IN OUR EXPERIENCE IS ALSO FULL OF GLORY. Partakers of His death, we are also partakers of His resurrection. This body of ours will have its share in it in due

time. The spirit has its resurrection even now; but we are "waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." 1. It is a blessed thing that we should be made alive in Christ. 2. This quickening is a needful part of sanctification. Sanctification, in its operation upon our character, consists of three things. First, Jesus strikes at the heart of evil. His death makes us die to sin. After this we are buried with Christ, and of this burial baptism is the type and token. To complete our actual sanctification we receive heavenly quickening, "for he that believeth in Him hath everlasting life." 3. Being thus quickened you are partakers of a new life. You are not like Lazarus, who had the same life restored to him. True, you have that same life about you. But your true life has come to you by your being born again from above. In this there is a striking display of the glory of God. It is one of the highest displays of Divine power. 4. Thus we have a pre-eminent security for future perfection. If He raised us up when we were dead in sin, will He not keep us alive now that we live unto Him? This life springeth up unto eternal life. You shall surely behold His face whose life is already within your breast. III. THE LIFE IS EMPHATICALLY NEW. I expect to read, "even so we also should be raised by the glory of the Father"; but it is not so. It is in Paul's mind that we are raised together with Christ; but his thought has gone further, even to the activity which comes of life; and we read, "that we also should walk in newness of life." As much as to say, "I need not tell you that you have been quickened as Christ was; but since you have been made alive, you must show it by your walk and conduct." But he reminds us that this life has much newness about it. This new life is—1. A life which we never before possessed—an exotic, a plant of another clime. It is not written, "You hath He fostered, who had the germs of dormant life"; but, "You hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." You had no life, you had nothing out of which life could come. Eternal life is the gift of God. 2. New in its principles. The old life at its very best only said, "I must do right that I may win a reward." Now you are moved by gratitude, now you serve not as a servant, but as a child. It is your joy to obey out of love, and not from slavish fear. 3. Swayed by new motives. You live now to please God; aforetime you lived to please yourself, or to please your neighbours. 4. One which has new objects. You aim higher; yea, at the highest of all; for you live for God's glory. 5. One of new emotions. Your fears, hopes, sorrows, and your joys are new. 6. One of new hopes; we have a hope of immortality; a hope so glorious, that it causes us to purify ourselves in preparation for its realisation. 7. One of new possessions. God has made us "rich in faith." Instead of groaning that life is not worth having, we bless God for our being, because of our well-being in Christ. We have peace like a river, and a secret joy which no man taketh from us. We drink of a well which none can dry up; we have bread to eat that the world knows not of. 8. One by which we are brought into a new world. I often compare myself to a chick, which aforetime was imprisoned in the shell. In that condition I neither knew myself, nor aught that was about me, but was in a chaos, as one unborn. When the shell was broken, like a young bird I was weak and full of wonderment at the life into which I had come. That young life felt its wings and tried them a little. It moved with trembling footsteps, essaying a new walk. It saw things it never dreamed of. IV. THE WALK WHICH COMES OUT OF THIS LIFE IS NEW. 1. The new life that God gives us is exceedingly active. I have never read that we are to lie down and sleep in the newness of life. I greatly question whether you have new life if you do not walk. 2. This activity of life induces progress. If we are really quickened we shall march on, going from strength to strength. 3. This walk is to be in newness of life. I see a Christian man coming back from a place of question-amusement. Did he go there in newness of life? The old man used to go in that direction. When a man has made a bargain which will not bear the light; is that done in newness of life? When an employer grinds down the workman; is that done in newness of life? Put off the old man. If Christ has quickened you, walk in newness of life. 4. This life should be one of joyful vivacity. A healthy Christian is one of the liveliest creatures on earth. Newness of life means a soul aglow with love to God, and therefore earnest, zealous, happy. Come, my soul, if Christ has raised thee from the dead, do not live after the fashion of the dark grave which thou hast quitted. Live a God-like life; let the divine in thee sit on the throne, and tread the animal beneath its feet. "It is easier said than done," cries one. That depends upon the life within. Life is full of power. I have seen an iron bar bent by the growth of a tree. Have you never heard of great paving-stones being lifted by fungi, which had pushed up beneath them? If you choose to con-

tract your souls by a sort of spiritual tight-lacing, or if you choose to bend yourselves down in a sorrow which never looks up, you may hinder your life and its walk; but give your life full scope, and what a walk you may have! Conclusion: I have seen boys bathing in a river in the morning. One of them has just dipped his toes in the water, and he cries out, as he shivers, "Oh, it's so cold!" Another has gone in up to his ankles, and he also declares that it is fearfully chilly. But see! another runs to the bank, and takes a header. He rises all in a glow. You Christian people are paddling about in the shallows of religion, and just dipping your toes into it. Oh, that you would plunge into the river of life! How it would brace you! What tone it would give you! In for it. Be a Christian, out and out. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Newness of life*:—When the gospel was first preached, its novelty must have impressed both Jew and Gentile. Not only was the Christian doctrine something fresh in the history of human thought; the Christian morality was something new in the sphere of the individual and social existence of mankind. The novelty may not strike us as it struck the men of the first century, but still Christianity summons all men to "newness of life." The new life—I. COMMENCES WITH A NEW BIRTH. Every human life has a beginning, so with the spiritual life; there is what is called regeneration, in which the birth of the body is followed by that of the soul. II. IS QUICKENED BY A NEW POWER. Mysterious even to the present men of science is the secret of vitality. We can only account for the new and spiritual life of Christianity by accepting the doctrine that the Holy Spirit takes possession of the nature, vivifying it with a celestial vitality and energy. III. IS INSPIRED BY A NEW PRINCIPLE. What is it which distinguishes the life of the Christian from that of the worldly, unspiritual man? It is the prevalence and power of Divine love in his nature. IV. IS PERFECTED IN AN EVER NEW IMMORTALITY. The life of the body perishes; but the life of the Christian is renewed day by day; age and infirmity have no power over it; even death fails to destroy it; in fact, its fairest blossom and its richest fruit appear only beneath celestial influences, and when the Omnipotent "makes all things new." (*Family Churchman.*) *Newness of life*:—1. We are called upon this Easter morning to contemplate the master miracle of Divine love as set against and triumphing over the masterpiece of Satan's malignity. As death must be regarded as the supreme development of evil, so resurrection must be regarded as the highest triumph of good. Now not only does God triumph over death, but He actually employs the enemy to produce this greater benefit. 2. The question of Nicodemus is a natural one. He might well conclude, "I must of necessity carry my old self along with me to the grave." Not so, "Ye must be born again." But what form of birth is there for the man grown old in habits of sin? The great discovery was not made until from the womb of death there arose the new-born man, "the first-begotten of the dead," "the firstborn of many brethren!" and from that time forward it became possible for the sinner to be severed from the incubus of the past, and to rise into newness of life in virtue of his union with Christ. 3. Now, observe the difference between God's way of dealing with fallen man, and ours. Nicodemus objects, "How can a man be born when he is old," &c. A moment's reflection will show us that the change in itself is exceedingly desirable. But all that we can suggest is to patch up the old creature; but a thing seldom looks well after it is mended, and it becomes less and less serviceable the more frequently it is mended; and the fact of its being patched indicates that it is nearly worn out, and will soon be laid aside. But a man with a new garment makes a fresh start. Now God does not mend—He recreates, and He presses death into the service, and through that we rise to newness of life, in which we are able to stand free from sin. 4. As we go into the country at this springtime, and gaze on the opening leaves and flowers, the newness of everything powerfully impresses us. God might have restored nature by a process of repair; but no! until the withered dead leaf is swept away into the tomb of corruption the new leaf does not unfold itself; but as soon as the old is dead and buried there arises a newness of life. How like the work of God! The most skilful artist who endeavours to imitate nature cannot reproduce nature's freshness. So there are many imitations of religion, but they are all devoid of that virgin freshness which is only produced by the touch of the Life-giver. 5. As the Lord teaches us this lesson in nature, so He enforces it by the striking symbolism of one of the sacraments. Baptism is not a mere washing; it is a burial and a resurrection. Not that the mere outward observance of the ordinance can ever produce this; there must be faith in the operation of God. When I have this whether it takes place at the moment of baptism, or after, or before, makes no difference. The point is this, that when my

faith lays hold on the operation of God, manifested in the resurrection of Christ, and which is symbolised in baptism, then that ordinance in itself is a pledge that the reality of the blessing which the ordinance typifies is actually mine. 6. With these thoughts in our minds, I want you to observe that Paul says that we are buried and raised up again with a definite object, viz., the walk in newness of life. You cannot walk in a place if you do not reach that place; and I cannot walk in newness of life without having first of all been introduced into a condition of newness of life. As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, even so walk in Him. And now what are the distinguishing characteristics of this newness of life? I. THE NEWNESS OF RELATIONSHIP TO GOD. In the old life we felt there was something wrong between God and us; we desired that that something should be set right, and we hoped gradually to win His approval by a life of consistency. Some of us laboured very hard, and yet the end was disappointment. How was all this to be changed, and every barrier to confidence and love swept away? Not by patching ourselves up. We saw ourselves, represented by Christ, as enduring the penalty of the law; and were content to reckon ourselves as crucified with Christ; but "he that is dead is justified from sin," and so we found that there was now no further condemnation for us who are in Christ Jesus. From the grave we rose into newness of life, and our first experience was the discovery that God was a reconciled Father. II. NEWNESS OF POWER. Faith introduced me into this blessed condition; faith is to be the law of my experience in it. There is a power now working within me; the power of God, whose mighty Spirit has taken possession of me, and is working out His purposes within me. Electricians tell us that our nervous system is so constituted that under the force of electricity we can perform prodigies of strength and endurance which would be impossible under ordinary circumstances. We will suppose this book to contain a weight of several pounds. I hold it out at arm's length. Presently the sense of fatigue comes insupportable, and my arm must fall to my side; but turn on a current of electricity to the outstretched arm, and I am able to sustain the weight indefinitely, without any such sense of fatigue. Where does my part in the matter lie?—not in struggling to force my arm to do what it is too weak to do, but in yielding my member to the power which can enable it to accomplish what is otherwise impossible. I have to see to it that no non-conductor breaks the invisible stream of power; and that is just what I have to see to in my spiritual experience. Am I in full connection with Divine Omnipotence? "I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me." Now do you not see the difference between going about the work of life flurried with anxiety and weighted with care, now straining every nerve in an agony of effort, and now, weary and discouraged, sinking into lethargy, and the quiet, happy confidence of him who is walking in newness of life, assured that, whatever may arise, the new life within him is equal to any and every emergency. III. NEWNESS OF CHARACTER. I meet with a great many who do not seem to expect this. How many of us are there who have so very much of the old self about us that even our fellow-Christians cannot help being distressed and pained at it? "Are we walking in newness of life?" Are the old features passing away?—have they passed away? You who were naturally uncontrolled, are your natural passions well in hand?—not in your hand—in Christ's hand? You who were ready to say a bitter word without thinking how much pain it might give, who rather plumed yourself on being blunt even to rudeness, is the beauty of the Lord our God beginning to rest upon you? You, whose gifts of conversation were apt to degenerate into idle gossip, have you learned to keep the little member in its place? Are you doing all to the glory of God? What manner of man are we? We are children of the resurrection. When we get down to the exchange, to the workshop, do we forget that? The glorious beauty of the Lord our God is for us; His freshness, purity, the very bloom of newness of life, is ours. Shake yourself loose of every encumbrance, turn your back on every defilement, give yourself over like clay to the hand of the Potter, that He may stamp upon you the fulness of His own resurrection glory, that we, beholding as in a mirror the glories of the Lord, may be changed from glory unto glory as by the Spirit of God. (*W. Hay Aitken, M.A.*) *Newness of life:*—I. ITS CONNECTION WITH CHRIST'S RESURRECTION. "Like as"—1. Material things may be compared to material and spiritual to spiritual; but is not this comparison of a moral revelation to a physical transaction arbitrary and fanciful? The answer is that the source and motive power of the two are the same. The manner and proportion of the Divine action at the tomb of Christ, when they are addressed to sense, enable us to trace and measure them in the mystery of the soul's life when they are addressed

to spirit. 2. Something of the same kind may be observed in the case of the human mind. A mind capable of writing a great poem or history, and of governing at the same time a great country, is not to be met with every day. But when we do find the two things combined it is reasonable to compare the book with the policy of the king or statesman, on the ground that both are products of a single mind; and it is further reasonable to expect certain qualities common to the two forms of work. This is Paul's position; Christ's resurrection and the soul's regeneration are works of one powerful, wise, and loving will. 3. Nature can no more give us newness of life than a corpse can raise itself. Prudence, advancing years, the tone of society, family influences, may remodel our habits, but Divine grace alone can raise us from the death of sin to the life of righteousness. Reflect on that terrible reality—spiritual death. The body is in the full flush of its powers, the mind is engaged with a thousand truths, but neither boisterous spirits nor intellectual fire can galvanise the spirit into life. The spiritual senses do not act—the eyes, ears, mouth, of the soul are closed. Its hands and feet are bandaged with the graveclothes of selfish habit. It cannot rise, and must lie on in its darkness, and the putrefaction of its spiritual tomb. And a great stone has been rolled to the door—the dead weight of corrupt and irreligious opinion which bars out the light and air of heaven and makes the prison-house secure. How is such an encumbrance to be thrown off? Even if angels should roll away the stone, how can life be restored, unless He who is its Lord and Giver shall flash into this dead spirit His own quickening power? II. THE CHARACTERISTICS COMMON TO BOTH. 1. Reality. (1) Christ really died. The piercing of His side proves this; and being truly dead He really rose. (*a*) Some say only in the heart of His disciples. But supposing such a process of imagination to have taken place in the case of two or three, is it reasonable to suppose that it could have occurred simultaneously to many. (*b*) Nor was it a phantom that rose. Had that been the case it would surely have been found out, by the women, by Peter, by the eleven to whom He said, "A spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see Me have," and by Thomas. Undoubtedly His risen body had added qualities of subtlety and glory; but these did not destroy its reality. "It had been sown in dishonour; it was raised in glory," &c. (2) So the soul's newness of life must be, before everything, real. (*a*) What avails it to be risen in imagination and in the good opinion of others, if having a name that we live while yet we are dead? Is it well for a dead soul to be periodically galvanised by unmerited flattery into awkward mimicries of the language and action of Christian life? (*b*) What is the value of the mere ghost of a moral renewal; of prayers without heart, actions without religious principle, religious language in advance of conviction and feeling? Ah, the phantoms of a renewed life stalk through the world and the Church—picturesque in the distance, and like wax-work figures hard to distinguish from the living. There is the phantom life—(i) Of imagination when a lively fancy has thrown around religion the charm of an intense interest without touching religious principle. (ii) Of strong physical feeling where occasional bursts of religious passion are mistaken for discipline and surrender of the will. (iii) Of sheer good nature, when however much is done, it is done without inward reference to God and His law. (iv) Of good taste, where it is simply taken for granted that certain religious properties belong to a particular social position—phantoms each and all; for they melt into thin air under the harder stress of service or sorrow. They may not safely challenge the "Handle Me" of the risen Jesus. So then the first lesson is genuineness. Feel more deeply than you talk—act as you feel in your best moments. 2. Durability. (1) Jesus did not rise that, like Lazarus, He might die again. "I am alive for evermore." "Death hath no more dominion over Him." His triumphant life could not be exchanged again for a life of sin and suffering. (2) So should it be with the Christian. His, too, should be a resurrection once for all. I say *should be*, for God's grace does not put force upon us. The Christian must reckon himself to be dead indeed unto sin, &c. And if this seems hard to flesh and blood the Christian will remember that he has forces at his command equal to cope with them. If the risen Christ be in us the body is dead because of sin, &c. Once risen with Christ we need die no more. God will certainly be true, and we have but to cling to Him and keep a tight hand upon ourselves. Nothing from without can avail to destroy our life if it be not seconded from within. Louis XIV. went year by year through his Lenten and Easter duties and then fell back into debauchery—a hideous libel on the teaching of Christ's resurrection. And yet what if we with slighter temptations repeat his experiences? 3. Secrecy. (1) Much of Christ's risen life was hidden from the eyes of men. His visible presence after His resurrection was the exception rather than

the rule; and by this the disciples were gradually trained for their future. It was a gentle passage from the days of Christ's ministry to the days of that invisible presence which was to last to the end of time. But who can doubt what the risen Christ was doing? He needed not strength as we need it, but communion with the Father was His one glory and joy. (2) Who can fail to see here a lesson and a law for Christian life? Much and the more important side of it must be hidden. No doubt our business, families, &c., have their claims; but where there is a will there is a way, and time must be made for prayer, self-questioning, &c. Alas for souls who shrink from solitude and secret communion with God. Does not the forest tree, while flinging its trunk and branches high towards the heavens, strike its roots for safety and nourishment ever deeper into the soil beneath? (*Canon Liddon.*) *The several degrees of personal religion:*—Progress in the new life, commenced at the time of the second birth, is more desirable than success in business, or growth from infancy to manhood. It is in this text urged as a duty, and proposed as a favour, in consideration of the resurrection of our Redeemer from the dead. I. I EXPLAIN THE WORDS OF MY TEXT. The Apostle Paul, who experienced in his own progressive attainments the influence of Christ's resurrection, holds it up to the view of the believing Romans as the reason and the means of their walking forward "in newness of life." "Walking" indicates not only vital action, but also progress from one place to another. That "walking in newness of life" which is urged in the text, in consideration of the resurrection of our Lord, must of course signify both the exercise of the Christian life in all its parts and relations and our progressive improvement in piety. II. I describe, from the Scriptures, THE SEVERAL DISTINCT DEGREES OF PERSONAL ATTAINMENT IN TRUE RELIGION. 1. The state of mind which exists in the earliest stage of true religion is characterised by anxiety to escape from evil and enjoy salvation. The anxiety of the young believer must be distinguished from that of unconverted minds. This is easy in theory, but difficult in practice. When we act, it is with imperfect instruments; with faculties corrupted by sin and disordered by our passions. It is the Spirit, however, that helps our infirmities. The Christian is anxious to be delivered from sin; the unrenewed man cares only for its consequences. The anxiety of the believer if from the Holy Spirit, is exercised with a spiritual discernment of the covenant of grace, and is influenced by an ardent desire to enjoy righteousness, and holiness, and happiness in Christ; the anxiety of the unconverted is a blind, unholy passion, pungent indeed, but indefinite, and equivocal in respect to all these objects. 2. The state of mind enjoyed by the Christian in the second grade of spiritual attainments is characterised by admiration of Jesus Christ and the salvation which He administers. Great power, magnanimity, and condescension are in their own nature admirable: infinite perfection is an object of the admiration of all intelligent creatures; and, in a certain sense, the Divine excellency is admired by the unregenerate. Christians, too, from the very commencement of their new life, and throughout every stage of their progress, feel an admiration for God in Christ: nor does it cease in heaven; but in this stage, after having ascertained their own interest in the grace of God, it becomes the most prominent part of their character. They admire the dignity of the mediatory Person, God manifested in the flesh: the attributes and, especially, the love of God in Him; the wisdom of the plan devised for our redemption through a covenant ordered in all things and sure; and His fitness in everything to our condition, in whom it pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell. They admire the tenderness of His compassion, the fortitude displayed in His sufferings, the gracious Spirit which rests upon Him, and which He liberally communicates, grace for grace, from His own fulness to our wants. They admire the place on high, where He is enthroned in light, and into which they have now themselves a sure hope of admission. 3. The third period of Christian progress is characterised by a thirst for religious knowledge. In every art or science, the period most favourable to the ardent pursuit of knowledge is immediately after the habits and the language peculiar to it, and at first strange, have become familiar and easy; after a high admiration of the objects of study is felt by the learner; and before the actual business of life demands his chief attention. There is a similar period in the religious life of man. The knowledge of Divine things, always desirable and useful, is pursued with peculiar ardour so soon as we have attained to that patient admiration of its glorious objects which accompanies the full assurance of hope. Then the speculative powers of the mind, enlightened by the Holy Ghost, search for knowledge, and procure it on account of its own intrinsic worth. 4. The fourth period of Christian progress is characterised by public spirit

in promoting the interests of the Church. A benevolent disposition towards mankind, and a special regard for the godly, are coeval with the Christian life; and wheresoever these exist, there will also be some exertions for promoting the good of the house of the Lord; but it requires great progress in the new life before any one is characterised by self-denial in the Church's service similar to that of Moses, who chose affliction with the people of God; by an enlightened ardour in the work of righteousness, like Elijah the prophet; and by such disinterestedness as was practised by Paul the apostle. This is not a blind devotion to the interests of a party, but a spirit of magnanimity and liberality, fostered and directed by the Word of God. 5. The fifth degree of progress in personal piety is characterised by heavenly-mindedness. 6. The highest rank in personal godliness on earth is attained by those who willingly suffer for Christ's sake. Voluntary martyrdom for any cause is an evidence of personal resolution and sincerity—the highest which man can give of his attachment to the cause he has espoused. And it is easy to show that the disciple who willingly carries the cross, for which he is misrepresented and maligned by his contemporaries, rises far superior in heroism to the patriot soldier who, encouraged by the honours of a military life, and cheered by the voice of applause loudly raised by his country, exposes himself to danger and to death. Reason, as well as Divine revelation, of course, justifies the Christian in sacrificing cheerfully the honours and comforts of this life, and even life itself, when they come in competition with the honour which cometh from God and with the never-ending enjoyments of the heavenly life. The duty and the reward of such a sacrifice are sufficiently obvious: "Whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it"; but the disposition of mind to perform the duty in view of the high reward is a rare attainment in grace. The Lord Himself will, however, bestow it according to His good pleasure, in those extraordinary times of trial which call for it, upon them whom the King delighteth to honour. (*A. McLeod, D.D.*) *Freshness of being*:—1. In everything which is really of God there is a singular freshness; it is always like that "tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month"; there is a continual novelty. And yet some people speak of the sameness of a religious life. 2. Through a new spirit, endowed with a new heart, by a new and living way, in obedience to a new commandment, with mercies new to us every morning, carrying a new name, we travel to a new heaven and a new earth, where we shall sing a new song for ever and ever. Well might Christ say, "Behold I make all things new." 3. If there be a time when we ought specially to study "newness," surely it is now in this springtime, when the resurrection of Christ is telling us of risen beings coming forth to new affections, and higher enterprises. Therefore let us study "newness." 4. For who has not a great deal which he would get rid of? Old levels of thought, old appetites, clingings, selfishnesses, prejudices, sins! And may we not be thankful that we have to do with a religion which is always giving grace through new opportunities, for new actions, whose very essence is a daily renovation, and whose key-note all along is resurrection? I. WHAT IS "NEWNESS"? 1. It is better than creation. Beautiful as must have been the Holy Child, as He lay a babe at Bethlehem, the same form, risen from the tomb, was lovelier. The heavens and the earth of innocence were fair. But "the new heavens and the new earth" which are to be, shall exceed the glories of Eden. 2. The good that comes out of evil is better than the good which has never been soiled. The old goes to make the new. The old passions, the old bias, the old elements of the natural man, go to make the strength, the elevation of the new creation, the same, yet not the same. II. LET US TRACE WHERE THE "NEWNESS" LIES. 1. There is set a "new" motive, "God loves me. How can I show Him that I do indeed love Him who has been so exceedingly kind to me?" 2. Bars and fetters have been falling off from that man's soul, and he feels a "new" principle. He is emancipated from a long, dark bondage. And he goes forth into the old world, its scenes are just the same, but a "new" sunshine lies upon everything, it is the medium of his "new-born" peace, it is a smile of God. And oh! how changed that world looks to him. 3. And so his standard is always rising. He leaves the past attainments behind, as nothing to the heights which are opening before him. He has ever a new ambition, therefore he enterprises new works for God. And all the while, Christ reveals Himself to him with ever-increasing clearness. Some new view of some old truth, some yet untasted sense of his own pardon, is always breaking upon his wondering mind. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *Christianity the renewal of the race*:—1. Christianity has become to us such an every-day and old thing, so different from the amazing, inspiring miracle which once

it was, that we fail to realise how Divine a revolution it was intended to effect. Yet Christ and His apostles tried to impress upon us that the gospel was not a slightly improved Judaism, not a mere scheme to produce the average morality of men, but a vast reversal of the past, a fresh beginning for the future. "May we know what this new teaching is?" cried the votaries of obsolete philosophies on Mars Hill. The writer to the Hebrews describes Christ as a new and living way to God. St. Paul describes conversion as putting off the old man, with his affections and lusts, and putting on the new man, and says: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold they are come new." And St. Peter speaks of "a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." And St. John in the Apocalypse talks of "a new name" and "a new song," and a "new Jerusalem descending out of heaven from God," and He that sitteth on the throne said: "Behold, I make all things new." Life from the dead—newness of life—that was the conception which the apostles and evangelists had formed of Christianity. 2. It was not that any ostensible change had taken place in the world around them. Men married, and gave in marriage, and sinned, and suffered, and lied, as before. Heathenism hardly deigned to cast one single glance upon Christianity, or, if so, simply scorned it as an insane enthusiasm or hated it as an execrable superstition. And that despised handful of artisans and fishermen was right, and the world, with all its powers, and splendours, was wrong. Not with the diadem, and the purple, the wisdom of Greece, the venerable institutions of Jerusalem, were the truth, and the force, and the glory of the future. With them was the ebbing, with these was the flowing tide. The peopled walls of the amphitheatre broke into yells of sanguinary exultation when the tiger sprang upon some aged martyr; but the hope and the meaning of all human life were with him, and not with them. 3. "Yes," the cynic will coldly answer, "the world goes mad at times, and this was one of the world's strange delusions; but we have changed all that." Now we have come to the time when every little nobody can pose in the attitude of immense superiority to the ignorant superstition of Christians. First comes the materialist, who thinks himself great because he cannot believe in anything which he cannot grasp with both hands. "Why should I accept," he asks, "anything which I cannot verify?" But he forgets to ask whether for the truths which he rejects there can be any verifying faculty but that spiritual faculty of which he denies the very existence. When we are assured by the materialist that man is but an animal, that he is a chance product of evolution; that what he takes for his thoughts are only a chemical change of the molecules in the grey substance of his brain—at everything of this kind Christians can only smile, not in anger, but in deep sorrow. If a man resolutely closes his eyes we cannot greatly respect his asservation that there is no sun in heaven; if a man declares that there is no God, are we astonished if he has purposely atrophied within himself the faculty by which alone we are able to believe that God is? Christianity has less than nothing to dread from this dry and dusty system which supremely fails to account for the human consciousness and the moral nature, and which offers to men's unquenchable spiritual yearnings nothing but a chaos of brute forces blindly evolving order out of mazy dream. But next we have the pessimist telling us, with a bitter sneer, that, after all, our Christianity has hopelessly failed. It is one of the notes of condemnation of these moral systems that they all, unlike Christianity, despair of man. Pessimism tells us by the voice of Schopenhauer that the human race always tends from bad to worse, and that there is no prospect for it but ever-deepening confusion and wretchedness. It asserts with Von Hartmann that existence is unspeakably wretched, and society will ever grow worse; and with Carlyle, "More dreary, barren, base, and ugly seem to me all the aspects of this poor, diminishing, quack world, doomed to a death which one can only wish to be speedy." 4. To all such slanders and caricatures of humanity Faith gives her unwavering answer. To the materialist she opposes her unalterable conviction that the worlds were made by the Word of God, and that He is the Governor among the nations. To the pessimist she answers that though the road trodden by the long procession of humanity seems often to be rough and devious, and often even to sweep down into the valley of the shadow of death, it is yet a road which does not plunge into the abyss, but is ever leading us nearer to our God. 5. But Faith can appeal not only to intuition, but to reason, to experience, and to history. Admitting that change does not always or necessarily imply advance, she can yet show that even amid the most vehement moral earthquakes of history mankind has still ever found in Christianity the secret of rejuvenescence and of victory. Humanity may some-

times advance over ruins, but humanity advances still. The Church tamed the barbarians and silenced the scoffers; upon the disencumbered *débris* of past superstition she rebuilt the fairer and firmer fabric of her reformed faith; and now whatever ruins may ensue, we feel secure that God will once again, as ever heretofore, lay the stones of His Church with fair colours, and her foundations with sapphires, and that her walls should be salvation and her gates brass. 6. But after so many splendid victories, when it has undoubtedly blessed the world, how is it that men allow themselves so easily to speak slightingly and scornfully of Christianity as they do? I answer, it is our fault. A man must be ignorant indeed if he does not know how Christianity changed the life and character of the whole civilised pagan world. What need have I to tell you how it rescued the gladiator, how it emancipated the slave, how it elevated womanhood, how it flung over childhood the ægis of its protection, how it converted the wild, fierce tribes from the icy steppes and broad rivers of the North, how it built from the shattered fragments of the Roman empire a new created world, how it saved learning, how it baptized and recreated art, how it inspired music, how it placed the poor and the sick under the angel wings of mercy, and entrusted to the two great archangels of reason and conscience the guidance of the young? And is not Christianity exactly what it ever was? Is her force spent? Where is the Lord God of Elijah? Is His hand shortened that it cannot save, or His ears heavy that they cannot hear? God is where and what He was. It is not the "I am that I am" who has changed, but it is we who are dead, faithless, hollow and false. The new life of the gospel is as full of fire as it ever was; but because we have never truly felt and tested it we work no miracles, we cast out no devils, we subdue no kingdoms. God never does for man the work which He has assigned to man himself to do. It is of no use for us to say, "Well, God will mend all." We must help Him. A handful of peasants, beaten, imprisoned, treated as the offscouring of all things, faced pagan Rome in the plenitude of her despotism, made whole armies drop their weapons before their defenceless feet. If they, with so little, did so much, how is it that we, with so much, do so little? Of what use is it for us to cry, "Awake, O arm of the Lord?" It is we who must awake. If Christianity does not prosper, it is only because the vast majority of us are Christians in name alone. We no longer feel that newness of life; we multiply organisations, but we enkindle no enthusiasm: we posture, and pray, and boast, and babble, and rail at one another, and Christ stands far away; we give a guinea to a missionary society, and think that we have discharged all our responsibilities to the heathen world. Thus our Christianity is smitten with vulgarity; it is commonplace, tamed out of its heroic faith and its splendid passion. If in one single congregation the fire of God burst forth again in every heart as in some of those congregations of the early Christians—yea, if there were but one man here and there capable of a God-like and absolute self-sacrifice—how would such a man flash the vivid thrill of nobleness into ten thousand hearts; how would life move again among the dry bones of the valley of vision! To very few in the long generations is it given to achieve a mighty work like this; but to every one of us it is given to help it forward and to carry it on. Every one of us can at least catch some faint and feeble and twinkling spark from that unemptiable fountain of eternal light. (*Archdn. Farrar.*) *The new life in the nation and the family*:—1. The prophets were interested not only in their own nation, but in the world around them. Christianity always suffers when it is dwarfed into individualism, or when it is made simply selfishness expanded to infinity. If Christianity was meant to be a new life in the world, it surely ought to exercise a profound influence upon every nation. But can we honestly say that in any lofty sense even those kingdoms which call themselves Christian have become the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ? 2. The earliest of the prophets is Amos, and he begins his book by looking at the seven neighbouring nations, each of which he is compelled to condemn, and then turning to his own. The voice of prophecy has long dwindled down into smooth generalities; but suppose one true prophet were living, and were to turn his gaze upon the nations of Europe, would he be content to indulge in the song of "Peace on earth"? Strange peace, when there are in Europe upwards of thirteen millions of men under arms. Look at the relations of European nations. The Kaffir, the Hindu, the Australian, &c., have not the footsteps of our race among them been dyed in blood? Two crimes fling their lurid light over every land. There is the crime of the man-stealer, which makes whole regions of Africa red with human blood; and the yet more ruinous crime of selling to the natives a filthy poison christened gin or rum. We, the Pharisees of the world, in the name of

Free Trade, are inoculating the world with a virus of a deadly pestilence. It is greed which prevents Germany and England and America from combining at once as righteous and noble nations ought to do, to prevent this decimation of the Dark Continent. 3. If Amos were alive in these days would he not cry, "Thus saith the Lord, For three transgressions of Russia, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof, because her Church is torpid, and her upper classes unbelieving. For three transgressions of Germany, and for four, will I not turn away the punishment thereof, because she has the spirit of militarism, and is grasping and insolent. For three transgressions of France, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof, because, unwarned by the collapse and catastrophe of twenty years ago, she still suffers her sons to flood Europe with filthy literature, and has erased from her statute-book the name of God"? Might not such a prophet also proceed to mention the names of Spain, Italy, and Turkey, and after looking around at these nations, what would he say of England? "Thus saith the Lord, For three transgressions of England, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof." Are not men estimated for what they have far more than for what they are? Are there not spurious goods and lying advertisements? Are there no sweaters' dens? Is not Christ sold for filthy lucre? Are not thousands ruined by gambling? Are there not in London alone a number equal to the whole population of Norwich of lost, degraded beings? Are there not streets as full as Sodom of youths who have poisoned their own blood and the blood of generations yet to come? Is it no crime that in spite of the warning of fifty years, drink should still continue to be the potent curse which has folded this nation round and round in its serpent coils? 4. Dare we say otherwise than that Christian nations are not walking in newness of life? Let none of you say, "It does not concern me." It does concern you; and every one of us is guilty and responsible so far as we have suffered Christ in our lives to become nothing but a name, and Christianity in our examples to be dwarfed and dwindled into a sectarian squabble or a paltry form. Look at America sixty years ago. One boy—William Lloyd Garrison—confronts enraged statesmanship, and alone, with the dagger of the assassin flashing every day across his path, proclaimed to the slave States of America the duty of emancipation, and lived to carry the great plan which as a boy he had devised. Look at England fifty years ago—filled with sullen discontent, with starving poor; children in factories were made a holocaust to Mammon; women bent double; half-naked men dragging waggons of coal, like beasts of burden, in wet, black collieries; the streets were alive with ignorance and vices. Then arose Anthony Astley Shaftesbury. We cannot all be great heroes, but we may be humble soldiers in that great army when the Son of God goes forth to war. 5. For is there not one of us who does not belong to some family? And always the corner-stone of the commonwealth is the hearthstone. The chief hope for any country, the chief element for England's safety, now lies in the purity of her homes. If you can do nothing more, every one of you may perform in your home the high duty of patriotism. If the Spartans were invincible, if the Romans carried into the world their majestic institutions, it was because Spartan and Roman mothers would tolerate no effeminate sons, no lackadaisical daughters. Let us each try so to illustrate the workings of the new life that by thus kindling throughout the length and breadth of England myriads of twinkling points of light there may be one broad glow of Christianity throughout the world. (*Ibid.*) *The new life in the individual*:—1. As the family is the unit of the nation, so the individual is the unit of the family. We get at the inmost meaning of what the gospel was intended to achieve when we ask, "What should the new life effect for each separate soul?" 2. Look out into the world around you and see, as Ezekiel saw, the torn and wandering flock, sheep without a shepherd, scattered on the dark hills in the dark and cloudy day. Many simply shrug their shoulders at the sight in despair. They say all this curse is irretrievable. Some have nothing but scorn and contempt. Not so Christ. There is nothing irretrievable with God. 3. And how did the Lord of Mercy work? It was not in accordance with the laws of the Divine will to convert the whole world, as it were, by one lightning flash. Such compulsory conversion is no conversion. Christ's word was, as ours ought to be, largely with the individual. He came to a land full of misery. He saw the blind, the halt, the leper, &c., and He cured the incurable who came to and believed on Him. But far Diviner was the miracle which He wrought upon the souls of all who received Him. The official religionism and ritual and priestliness had wholly failed to touch this mass of sin and misery. But He turned the wretched to his Father in heaven, and shed on the

souls of the humble and the penitent the pure eternal ray of His transcendent love. Then each soul, however lost and fallen, revealed the beauty which was in it; and as when one uplifts a torch in a cavern full of gems, and they awaken into million-fold lustre, so at the touch of Christ's heavenly sympathy each soul flashed back its inward gleam of peculiar light. 4. Herein lies the secret of our regeneration, and of the regeneration of the world. The publicans were hated, and naturally hated, as the greedy jackals of a distasteful oppression. Yet even of these wretches Christ did not despair. One loving word to Zaccheus, and lo! one half of his goods he gives to the poor; one loving word to Matthew, and lo! he springs up an evangelist and an apostle. And so it was with yet more miserable outcasts. The woman that was a sinner, lost to purity, to innocence, to womanhood—yet He suffered her to wash His feet with her tears and to wipe them with the hairs of her head. The dying malefactor, even he repented and heard the gracious words, "This day shalt thou be with Me in paradise." And, as though to show us that these were not accidental cases, He, the Friend of publicans and sinners, embraced the degradation of all sinners alike in His pearl of parables—the parable of the prodigal son. It was the revelation of God as a loving Father; it was not any weak and beggarly observances, it was not any threats of a bodily hell which made multitudes holy in a world of paganism, where heretofore the very ideal of holiness had been unknown. And herein lies the essential and the irrevocable evidence of Christianity—the changed lives of multitudes of Christian men. 5. But here we come back to the momentous question—Christ has saved a multitude whom no man can number, but are we saved? The work of salvation is, and it must be personal; it must be not only Christ for us, but Christ in us. Alas, multitudes know nothing of personal salvation—because they love their sins better than their Saviour, or out of carelessness, defiance, or despair, and some because of the religiosity which they mistake for religion have been ossified into mere function and routine, and their souls are rotting asleep amid formula and rites; but the vast majority, I think, chiefly because they have not faith to believe that they can be healed and Christ can heal them. You know, many of you, that you are living in a state of sin—sloth, or dishonesty, or hatred, or falsehood, or impurity, or habitual discontent. You do not love your sin; it may be that you loathe it, and yet you have become a slave to it. You are like the leper, who thinks his leprosy is altogether incurable. I bid you shake off this despair; I bid you hope. Fly into the stronghold. You are the slaves of sin; but Christ came to ransom you from sin. You think that you can never be born again when you are old. So did Nicodemus; yet he became a servant of Christ. Christ is mighty to save. 6. He saves in many ways. Sometimes gently and gradually He wins the soul with cords of love; sometimes He rends from the destroyer; sometimes He breaks the hard soul with the blows of affliction; sometimes He makes it soft with the gracious rain of sorrow; but so long as there is one sign of hope He will not break the bruised reed nor quench the smouldering wick. (*Ibid.*) *The new life in religion*:—1. Can we say Christianity still is a new life? Does it achieve one thousandth part of what it was intended to achieve; and if not, what is the reason? Why has the Church been smitten with the curse of a spiritual sterility? It is one of the sophisms of infidel argument to charge upon Christianity the crimes and faults of men who have acted in flagrant contradiction to its spirit. The representatives of the Church have in many an age condoned vice, leagued with tyranny. But to charge these crimes on Christianity is absurd and false; they are to be charged on anti-Christ. Satan is ten-fold Satan when he dons the cowl or the mitre, and would pass himself off as an angel of light. And a religion may retain the name and the semblance of a religion long after it is dead; and when a religion has lost its life how deep the death! "If the light that is within us is darkness, how great is that darkness!" Christianity was meant to be the salt of the earth, but "if the salt has lost its savour wherewith shall it be salted?" "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire"; but when men have ceased to believe that there is so much as a Holy Ghost, how shall spiritual miracles be wrought? 2. Now, the one peril of all religions is to lose their life, to lose their fire. We talk of false religions, but no religion worthy of the name can be wholly false. The value of religions may sometimes be more easily tested by their results than by their doctrines, by their fire than by their abstract truths. Confucianism, for instance, is now arid and empty enough, and yet Confucius once taught great truths. Buddhism is the religion of masses of the human race, and is rife with error; and yet Buddhism is still kept alive by its great demand for self-conquest and self-sacrifice. Mahommedanism, notwith-

standing all its deadly degeneracies, saved Arabia from idolatry, and its demand for abstinence has been to many nations an inestimable boon. Each of these religions has sunk into inanition, because their priests have suffered their votaries to make a mere fetish of their formulæ, and to violate their essential life. Judaism stood incomparably above other religions in its Divine origin, but it proved to be no exemption from this law of decay. Is it possible that Christianity could undergo a fate so terrible, and become no better than a phantom? Yes. Many a time has nominal Christendom been tamed out of its splendid passion, and sunk into Pharisaism, and lost its renovating power. 3. Now, when any faith has sunk into this condition, when it has got to rely mainly upon worthless symbols and pompous claims, it is for the time dead. It needs resurrection and a new Pentecost. And the Christian Church has had many such. The work of Benedict, Wycliffe, Huss, Savonarola, and Francis of Assisi, was but a successful rekindling of dead or dying claims. So, too, it was when Luther disinterred the true gospel from the heaped *débris* of priestly falsehoods. So, too, was it when George Fox made men believe once more in the living power of the Spirit of God with every human soul. So, too, was it when Wesley and Whitefield awoke the full-fed and torpid Church of England. And so it would be now if among the many echoes God would send us one voice—but one man with his soul so electric with the fire of God that he would make us feel that God is face to face with every one of us. 4. The real question to ask about any form of religious belief is, "Does it kindle the fire of love?" Does it make the life stronger, sweeter, more noble? Does it run through society like a cleansing flame? There is no error more fatal than the notion that correct belief or church membership are of any value whatever in comparison with righteousness of life. Just as a living dog is better than a dead lion, so a good heretic or a righteous schismatic may be immeasurably dearer to God and nearer to heaven than is, or can be, a bad Christian. 5. How necessary is it, then, that our religion, which is so Divinely great and true, should not degenerate in our hands into a pompous system or an outward formalism. And yet is there no danger of this? What is the state of things in Christian England, and what is predominantly occupying its attention? You know that of all the fifteen hundred millions now alive only one in three is even yet a nominal Christian; that in Europe at this moment thirty-six millions of men are in arms. You know the vice, the squalor, the misery of these great cities; you know how in this awful city there are tens of thousands of the unemployed, of paupers, of criminals, of drunkards, of prostitutes; and that there are at least two millions and a half who scarcely ever enter any house of God. And when you have gazed long enough on this weltering sea of shame and misery, you turn to the professors of religion and find two hundred and seventy rival sects, and the Church of the nation rent asunder by questions as to who can fail to ask, "Is this the outcome of nineteen centuries of Christianity?" Is it about such questions that the new life is concerned? Is Nero fiddling during the burning of Rome a sadder spectacle? 6. Oh, if Christianity is ever fully to be what it was meant to be, if it is to be something more than a clamour of contending sects and contending parties; if it is to be a new life and a new walk, then it must inspire once more such a sense of eternity, such a sense of the near, immediate presence of God, such a belief in the infinite love of Christ and the power of His resurrection, such a consciousness of the Spirit, as shall restore it once more to its olden glory, and make it adequate to fulfil the vast promise of its Lord, "He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also," &c. (*Ibid.*) *The present pledge of life to come*:—1. The argument of the text is that the hope of a new life, like Christ's, beyond the grave ought to find its justification in a new life here; that on either side of the grave the life of the spirit is the same. 2. It is commonly supposed that the fact of immortality can only be established by some external evidence such as the resurrection of Christ; but the text refers us to the ultimate proof both of that and of the resurrection of all in whom a life like Christ's dwells. And here the eye-witnesses of Christ's resurrection have no advantage over us, and the unlearned man is on a level with the critic. 3. The peculiarity of man is the blending in him of two kinds of life. There is, first, that the lower animals possess; but in this there is for man no more than the lowest animals. It seeks nothing, sees nothing, and says there is nothing beyond. One who has not first come to the truth of immortality in a higher line of thought can never discover it by any process of physiological explanation. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." From things that are merely temporal we can never attain to certainty of things eternal. The life of flesh and blood has here all its satisfactions, its goal and end. It is as perishable as the

things on which it feeds. 4. But on the stock of this animal life is manifest a bud prophetic of an unfolding which is independent of the material world. What the apostle calls "newness of life" is not merely new, but radically distinct from all other life, and unfolds itself in an opposite way. Search its annals, and you will find them luminous with the names of those who, for the sake of living in a world of higher satisfaction, refused to live in a world of inferior content. From the Good Shepherd giving His life for the sheep to the martyr of Erromanga perishing in his mission to cannibals, we see a moral life developing in a way diametrically opposite to the animal life, declaring itself independent of the material things that are sought by a life which is for this world alone. 5. Will this life, then, survive? The answer must come from the life itself. Life is a conclusive witness to the nature of life, as Jesus said, "Though I bear record of Myself, yet My record is true, for I know whence I came, and whither I go." We accept the witness which the animal life bears to its perishable nature, when we see it shrink instinctively from death as its destruction. We must equally accept the witness of the moral life to its imperishable nature, when we see it instinctively welcome death as its deliverer. What is it, then, that we see in the multitude who in the spirit of Christ have turned their backs on a transitory world in preference for that which they seek as eternal? Evidently a mighty, vital force overmastering the imperious dictates of a lower life. Now is this a delusion, a dream? Look at this newness of life, walking down the ages with the torch of truth and the gifts of love; look at the transcendent inspirations by which it transforms brutish into Christly natures! See now what would follow on the hypothesis of its termination at death, viz., that the self-preserving instinct of the lower life of selfish appetite is trustworthy, but that the self-preserving instinct of the moral life catches at a shadow; that the highest and holiest aspirations of Jesus, and of all who, like Jesus, have sought a higher world through the sacrifice of a lower, have only been a deceitful lure to an utter loss. 6. Our own personal certitude of immortality depends on the development which we give to this newness of life in ourselves. Long ago was this pointed out in Cicero's remark that the presage of a future life takes the deepest root in the most exalted souls. To one, therefore, who seeks to be convinced of his immortality, I would say not "Hear or read this," but "Be this." He who lacks a working belief of his immortality cannot borrow it, but must cultivate it by creating the moral soil in which it grows. The actual resurrection of Christ is something, but that newness of life which is the earnest of the inheritance is better. But let the old life get uppermost, with its selfish desires and gratifications, and the inward witness which the new life bears to an eternal hope will grow faint and mute (chap. viii. 13). (*J. M. Whiton, Ph.D.*) *Newness of life*:—"I understand," said this chief to a congregation which he was called to address at Plymouth, in the year 1837, "that many of you are disappointed because I have not brought my Indian dress with me. Perhaps if I had it on you would be afraid of me. Do you wish to know how I dressed when I was a pagan Indian? I will tell you. My face was covered with red paint, I stuck feathers in my hair, I wore a blanket and leggings, I had silver ornaments on my breast, a rifle on my shoulder, a tomahawk and scalping-knife in my belt. That was my dress then. Now, do you wish to know why I wear it no longer? You will find the cause in 2 Cor. v. 7, 'Therefore, if any man,' &c. When I became a Christian, feathers and paint were done away; I gave my silver ornaments to the mission cause; scalping-knife done away, tomahawk done away—that my tomahawk now," said he, holding up at the same time a copy of the Ten Commandments, in his native language. "Blanket done away. Behold!" he exclaimed, in a manner in which simplicity and dignity of character were combined, "Behold! all things are become new."

Vers. 5–7. **For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death.**—*Planted together with Christ*:—The idea is not of two or three plants all put into the same ground, though that would to a certain extent express blessedness—to be near Him is blessed, to have walked the same earth is blessed, to have a similar nature is blessed; but the meaning here is far deeper. The idea is of one plant with various branches (John xv. 1). The root is Christ; we, the branches, are grafted in by believing. The plant out of the dry ground had no form nor comeliness; He came down and emptied Himself of His glory, and went down into death that we might be planted in the same ground and in the same grave. You see the same thing in your gardens; the plant put down into the ground, no appearance of life, no buds, no fruit there: yet if it were not put into the ground there would never be buds or fruit. So,

"except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit." Here we have the planting of the Tree of Life, which, springing up in the Resurrection, "bears twelve manner of fruits, and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations." We are planted in union with Him, in the likeness of His death; but when the spring comes, and the light, and dews of God operate upon the plant, we know what the consequences are; it puts forth buds, and leaves, and fruit. And what a beautiful thing it is! The branches of the tree whose root was planted in winter, are the very branches which contain its fragrance and beauty in the summer-time. It was winter-time with Jesus when He was put down into the ground; but springtime and summer are coming, when the Tree of Life shall put forth its fruit, and we shall be in the likeness of His resurrection; even God Himself shall delight to rest under that shade, and eat His pleasant fruit. (*M. Rainsford, B.A.*) *Planted first*:—A short time ago a gentleman was preaching in the open air; his subject was growth in grace. At the close of the meeting a man approached him and said, "Our minister has been preaching some excellent sermons on that subject, and I have been trying to grow in grace this long time, but I find I never can succeed." The preacher, pointing to a tree, said, "Do you see that tree?" "Yes," was the wondering reply. "Well, it had to be planted before it could grow. In like manner you must be rooted and grounded in Christ before you can begin to grow." The man understood his meaning, and went away to find Christ; and soon he was rooted in Christ, and brought forth fruit to His praise. *Improving the root of virtue*:—I will mention a very striking illustration of the difference between men's striving to improve one or another individual good quality, and the improving the common root of all of them, and thereby improving them all at once. The former is the way in which a human artificer works—a statuary, for instance, sometimes making a finger, sometimes a leg, and so on—while the latter, the workmanship of the Divine Artificer, is like the growth of a plant or a tree, in which all the various parts are swelling out and increasing, or, as we term it, *growing* at the same time. (*William Wilberforce.*) *The likeness of Christ's resurrection*:—1. The resurrection of our Lord Jesus is apt to be considered mainly as a proof of the truth of the Christian faith, or in the light of the guidance, the support, the comfort it affords in our thoughts about the dead. But the apostle would have us consider it as the mould, the type, the model of our life and character. "The likeness of His resurrection." How can we be anything like so preter-natural an event? 2. Now, one answer may be, that at the general resurrection the bodies of Christians will rise just as Christ rose. This is undoubtedly true, but Paul is not here thinking of that. He is thinking of the soul and character, and he says that this resurrection is to be modelled on that of our Lord. The true Christian here is crucified with Christ; is buried with Christ; and rises with Christ. Call this mysticism if you will; it bears two certificates on its front—the certificate of apostolic authority and of Christian experience. St. Paul will have it that a Christian must die, be crucified with Christ. That mass of undisciplined desires and passions which is the governing body in the life of man in a state of nature, and which the apostle calls "the body of sin," must not do what it would—its hands must be nailed to a cross; it must not go whither it would—its feet must be nailed to a cross; it must linger on that cross to which the Divine Will would fain attach it until it dies; and then it must be buried out of sight so as to have no further contact with the world in which it lived and worked its evil will in the days gone by. 3. Now, this death to sin must not be a fainting fit or a swoon. Jesus really died upon the Cross, and St. Paul insisted on a real death to sin in the convert to Christianity. The points of likeness between a true Christian's life and the life of our risen Lord relate—I. To THE PAST. 1. Each has experienced a resurrection, and if the likeness be a true one, in each case the resurrection is real. When our Lord rose He took leave of death for good and all. "Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more," &c. And a Christian life which is planted in the likeness of Christ's resurrection, will resemble it in its freedom from relapses into the realm of death. Sin is the tomb of the soul, and if we have risen, let us be sure that we do not return into it. "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God." 2. Not that St. Paul would have us believe that a baptized or a converted man cannot sin if he would. He knows nothing of any theory of indefectible grace. There is no absolute impossibility in the relapse of a regenerate Christian into spiritual death, but there should be the highest moral probability against anything of the kind. The strength which has

been given the Christian warrants him in reckoning himself "dead indeed unto sin," although he still may be "overtaken in a fault." 3. Now, what is the case with a large number of Christians nowadays? So far are some of us from dying no more, that we might almost seem to sink down into the tomb at regular intervals. 4. One predisposing cause of this is the empire of habit. Habit is a chain which attaches us with subtle power to the past, whether that past be good or evil. It is linked on to the action of the understanding, the affections, and the will. It was meant by our Creator to be a support of the life of grace; but when the soul has been enchained by sin habit is enlisted in the service of sin, and promotes a return to the grave of sin, even after the soul's resurrection to the life of grace. 5. And do we not too often invite the reappearance of old habits by haunting the tombs from which we have risen, by playing with the apparatus of death, by visits to old haunts, by reading old books, by encouraging old imaginations that are fatally linked to the debasement of the past? "How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?" Surely we cannot dally with the ancient enemy, we cannot risk the reassertion of that power of habit of which we had broken the chains, we cannot forget that at our moral resurrection the whole power of habit was to be transferred to the account of the life of grace. II. TO THE PRESENT. 1. The greater part of our Lord's resurrection life was hidden from the eyes of men. (1) During the forty days retirement was the rule, and His appearances to His disciples were so many suspensions of that rule. Now, a Christian life which is planted in the likeness of Christ's resurrection will be to a great extent withdrawn from the eyes of men. A Christian must, indeed, "let his light so shine before men," &c.; but the life of private prayer, of self-discipline, of motive faith, hope, and love, must in a true Christian's career altogether preponderate over his external activities, and if it does it will thereby promote those activities. The forest tree ere it rears its branches to the skies strikes its roots far and deep into the soil beneath; and an active Christian life which is not rooted in devotion to an unseen Master will speedily degenerate into the existence of a philanthropic machine, looking for its reward to imposing statistics, to florid newspaper reports, to the applause of public meetings, and generally to the praise of men. (2) Publicity is the order of our day, and the press, the railway, the telegraph all conspire to oblige men to live before the eyes of their fellows; everybody is observed, discussed, interviewed. No doubt this publicity has its good side. It may supply motives against wrong-doing, where none of a higher order are recognised; but who can doubt that it tends to impair that disinterestedness which is the very bloom of the higher Christian life; that it tends to make the world's standard of excellence the standard also of the servants of Christ; that it impairs that note of likeness to Christ in His resurrection, a life hidden with Christ in God? (3) It was the sense of this truth which was the strength of monasticism. Like other human efforts to give practical expression to a religious truth, monasticism made its full share of mistakes; but the truth remains for ever, that the life lived wholly before the eyes of men, and probably with a view to the approval of men, cannot be in the likeness of Christ's resurrection. 2. Another note of our Lord's risen life was that when He did appear to His apostles He had a lesson to teach, a warning or a blessing to convey, as the reason for each separate act of contact with those around Him. Consider the account of His interviews; each does a separate work which had to be done, and does it with a point and a thoroughness which we cannot mistake. And here must we not admit that we modern Christians are unlike Him? Our life too often resembles those story books whose aim is to excite continuous amusement in the reader, and yet not to have any discoverable moral whatever attached to them. We shrink from speaking the word in season; we shrink from giving a reason for the hope that is within us. Can we wholly escape responsibility for the consequences of our silence, for the moral downward career, for the darkened or dying faith of those with whom we may have been brought into contact? "You may have forgotten an interview which we had," so said a stranger to an older friend, "twenty years ago. At the time I did not thank you for what you said; I was angry with you; but I must tell you now that under God I owe you my soul." III. TO THE FUTURE. Our Lord's risen life was passed in anticipation of the event which was close to it—forgetting the sepulchre which was behind, and reaching forward to the ascension which was before. And so it should be with us. Here we have no continuing city; we seek one to come; we look not for the things that are seen and temporal, but for the things that are not seen and eternal. Earthly greatness, as a rule, ends with the grave; the greatness of Jesus

on earth begins with it. Why should it not be so in the life of the spirit? We should have done with the tomb of sin for good and all. When this new life is planted in the soul old things indeed have passed away; behold all things have become new! (*Canon Liddon.*) *Assimilation through faith*:—1. The text is an effort to convey by a curious and vigorous figure the close spiritual assimilation which faith produces between the Christian and Christ. What St. Paul says literally is, that believers have "grown together into one" with Christ, so as to become of like nature with Him in the matter of His death. 2. But how can any inward change, passing in the mind of a man to-day, be said to bear a likeness to what happened when Christ bare our sin? Easily enough. Consider the moral significance of Christ's death for sin. Was it not, to begin with, the first full recognition ever made on this earth of the guilt of sin, and of the integrity of the law? The Son, being of one mind with the Father, owned that sin was hateful, and the Divine law holy, and its sentence just. Now, whenever I with my whole heart accept of that death as reconciling me to God by satisfying His law on my behalf, do I not enter into sympathy with God's point of view, just as His own Son did? Can we call such an experience anything but spiritual incorporation into the likeness of Christ's death? The man who has got such a view of his own sin does in a very real sense die in his heart to sin. Seek to know the fellowship of Christ's sufferings; become conformed to His death; then the old evil self must die within the bosom, killed by the Cross that killed our Saviour. 3. If faith in the Cross of Christ prove thus effectual to cut the nerve of a sinful life, surely we shall also "grow together with Him in the likeness of His resurrection." The very object for which Christ and our old sinful self died, is that the believer, once set free from sin, should be point by point conformed to the likeness of the risen Jesus. It may appear to some as though this thing which we call faith were too feeble or uncertain for a work so great. What! may one say, shall a man reverse his tastes, break his habits, and change his life into the likeness of One so unlike him as Jesus Christ, merely because he puts faith in Christ to save him? What is there in this "faith" to work so astounding a revolution? 4. The answer to that, in part at least, is this: that we have really no deeper or more powerful agent for working any such change than just this same faith. It combines the strongest motives and most sustaining elements in character; such as confidence, loyalty, affection, reverence, authority, and moral attractiveness. You constantly find that large bodies of men, parties in the State, armies in the field, schools of opinion, whole nations even at critical moments, are swayed simply by the transcendent influence of one outstanding trusted leader. Still more absorbing is the influence which an individual may acquire over one other soul that entirely believes in him. Take a single element in "faith"—the mere persuasion of one man that another is able and willing to aid him in his enterprises. Let it be a fixed idea with a poor individual that some influential friend will back him up in his business, and that in such backing lies his best chance of success. What is there he will not do rather than forfeit assistance from that quarter on which all his hopes are built? Add to such a selfish expectation of help the far deeper bond of personal reverence or of proud admiring love. Let the relation become like that of some tried and faithful lieutenant to a gallant leader, or like that of a maiden to the lover whom she both believes in and doats upon. Can bounds be set to the power of faith like theirs? Let the object of such devotion be really noble and wise, who shall say how far baseness and selfishness may be burnt out of the heart that cleaves to the idol it has chosen for itself? Let that idol be itself erring or misguided, who will wonder if the soul that worships it be dragged down the same devious and unhappy path to share the same fall? If to all this you could add in a rare instance some overwhelming obligation of a strictly moral kind, like a bond of gratitude deep as life for a benefit never to be forgotten, or a claim of supreme authority no less sacred than a father's, more subduing than a king's—who does not see that in such a faith as that you would have the mightiest of all forces within human experience? 5. This is our faith in Christ—this, but beyond analogy greater and more masterful, because human parallels are infinitely too weak to express it. The Christian trusts in Jesus, but not as a man trusts in his fellow's support, for our Saviour is the mighty God. The Christian is tied to Jesus with a heart devotion based on reverence and warming into love; but not as women cling to their lovers, or partisans to their hero-chieftain, for our Saviour commands a reverence which is worship, and wins an affection which is supreme. The Christian owes to Jesus obedience for the service He has rendered, and for the

right He possesses to command; but not under such limitations as always environ human authorities, even the highest, since our Saviour is Lord of the conscience as well as of the heart, and His moral mastery is absolute, as His judgment shall be final. Does it seem, then, any longer a thing futile or unreasonable to say, that through such faith as that a man may come to grow together into one with the Divine Object of his devotion, until the man's life is penetrated with Christ's spirit and conformed in everything to His matchless likeness? 6. Still, the tie which links a believer to His Saviour offers points of contrast quite as striking. Men do get assimilated no doubt to the objects of their earthly devotion. Still no union wrought by any such faith on earth can adequately represent the unique life-junction which, through a special act of God's Holy Spirit, makes these twain one—the living Head of God's new family and each lowly, trusting sinner who cleaves to Jesus as his spiritual life. For one thing, the union of a believing soul to Jesus has its roots in a certain mysterious oneness which God's gracious will has established between the heirs of salvation and their new representative and Second Adam, the Lord from heaven. For another thing, this relationship involves not a portion only of the man's experience, not some transient, or secular, or subordinate interest, but the believer's very self—his true and deepest being. It is the old man which is crucified with Christ, that moral personality which has hitherto been the very centre and source of all my words and actions. The believer's very self hangs thenceforward on Christ's self. His spiritual being is new made, for it is informed by another Spirit as its inspiring and ruling influence, even by the Holy Spirit whom Jesus gives. Such a change as this is effected, indeed, by faith. But such faith comes of the operation of God. When the old man dies and the new man lives in a human being there is an evident re-birth; and for that we must postulate an immediate operation of the Divine Giver of life. (*J. Oswald Dykes, D.D.*) **Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him.**—*The old man:*—Why is original sin called the "old man"? Because—I. IT IS DERIVED FROM THE ELDEST OR FIRST ADAM. II. IT IS FIRST IN EVERY ONE (1 Cor. xv. 46). III. IT IS TO BE DONE AWAY (Heb. viii. 13; 2 Cor. v. 17). IV. OF ITS CUNNING AND CRAFT. As old men, by reason of their abundant experience, are more wise and subtle than others; this "old man" is cunning to deceive. Oh, what excuses does it bring for sin, what pretences! It hath much of Adam; but it hath somewhat of the wise and old serpent too, for it was begot betwixt them both. Conclusion: Observe that when the apostle calls original sin "our old man," he distinguishes it from ourselves. It is ours, too, nearly cleaving to us; but it is not ourselves. Whence we must learn to put a difference betwixt the corruption of nature, and nature itself. Man's nature is from God; but the corruption of man's nature is from himself. (*P. Vinke, B.D.*) *The crucifixion of the old man:*—I. THE OLD MAN. 1. Old as Adam, in nature, habit, spirit. 2. His features. 3. His vigour. II. HIS CRUCIFIXION. 1. Effected with Christ. 2. The process. (1) Painful. (2) Protracted. (3) Voluntary. III. THE NECESSITY OF IT. 1. That the body of sin may be destroyed. 2. That we may be emancipated from its service. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The old man crucified:*—1. Every new man is two men; he is what he was and not what he was: the old nature and the new exist in each regenerate individual. That old nature the apostle calls a man, because it is a complete manhood after the image of fallen Adam. He calls it the "old man," because it is as old as Eden's first transgression. 2. Every Christian has a new nature which was implanted in him through the Spirit's working. That new nature utterly hates and loathes evil; so that finding itself brought into contact with the old nature, it cries, "O wretched man that I am," &c. 3. Hence a warfare is set up within the believer's bosom; the new life struggles against the old death, as the house of David against the house of Saul, or as Israel against the Canaanites. Neither nature can make peace with the other. Either the earthy water must quench the heavenly fire, or the Divine fire, like that which Elijah saw, must lick up all the water in the trenches of the heart. It is war to the knife, exterminating war. I. THE OLD MAN IS TO DIE IN THE LIKENESS OF CHRIST'S DEATH BY CRUCIFIXION. Our Lord died—1. A true and real death. The Roman officer would not have given up the body if he had not made sure that He was dead, and made assurance doubly sure by piercing our Lord's side. There was no make-believe; it was no phantom which bled, and the death was no syncope or swoon. Even thus it must be with our old propensities; they must not be mewed up by temporary austerities, or laid in a trance by fleeting reveries, or ostentatiously buried alive by religious resolves and professions; they must actually die. Sometimes persons who are really alive appear as dead, because

death reigns over a part of their bodies; their hands are powerless, their eyes closed, every member palsied; yet they are not dead. So have I known some that have given up a part of their sins. But no man shall enter heaven while one propensity to sin lies in him, for heaven admits nothing that pollutes. "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." Sin must be slain. 2. A voluntary death. Christ said, "I lay down My life for the sheep . . . no man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself." Jesus need not have died. Such must be the death of sin within us. Some men part with their sins with the intention of coming back again to them if they can; like Lot's wife they set out to leave Sodom, but their eyes show where their hearts would be. They fight sin as stage-players; it is mimic conflict, they do not hate sin in reality. Ah! but we must have our whole hearts burning with an intensity of desire to get rid of our sins; and such we shall feel if there be a work of grace in our soul. The execution of sin, then, must be undertaken with a willing mind. 3. A violent death. By wicked men Christ was taken, and by violent hands put to death. Sin struggles awfully in the best of men, especially besetting and constitutional sins. One man is proud, and what prayers and tears it costs him to bring the neck of old pride to the block! Another man is grasping, and how he has to lament because his gold will corrode within his soul! Some are of a murmuring spirit, and to conquer a spirit of contention is no easy task. Yet, cost us what it may, these sins must die. Violent may be the death and stern the struggle, but we must nail that right hand, ay, and drive home the nail. 4. A painful death. The suffering of crucifixion was extreme. So the death of sin is painful in all, and in some terribly so. Read Bunyan's "Grace Abounding," and see how year after year that wonderful mind of his had red-hot harrows dragged across all its fields. Some are brought unto salvation much more easily, but even they find that the death of sin is painful. 5. An ignominious death. It was the death which the Roman law accorded only to felons, serfs, and Jews. So our sins must be put to death with every circumstance of self-humiliation. I am shocked with some people who glibly rehearse their past lives up to the time of their supposed conversion, and talk of their sins which they hope have been forgiven them, with a sort of smack of the lips, as if there was something fine in having been so atrocious an offender. If you ever do tell anybody about your wrong-doing, let it be with shame and confusion of face. Never let the devil pat you on the back and say, "You did me a good turn in those days." "The old man is crucified with him." Who boasts of being related to a crucified felon? 6. A lingering death. A man crucified often lived for days, and even for a week. Our old man will linger on his cross. Each one of our sins has a horrible vitality about it. Expect to have to fight with sin, till you sheathe your sword and put on your crown. 7. A visible death. If there is no visible difference between you and the world, depend upon it there is no invisible difference. If a man's outward life is not right, I shall not feel bound to believe that his inward life is acceptable to God. "Ah, sir," said one in Rowland Hill's time, "he is not exactly what I should like, but he has a good heart at bottom." The shrewd old preacher replied, "When you go to market and buy fruit, and there are none but rotten apples on the top of the basket, you say to the market woman, 'These are a very bad lot.'" II. THIS CRUCIFIXION IS WITH CHRIST. There is no death for sin except in the death of Christ. Your killing of your sin is not in your power. If you go to the commandments of God, or to the fear and dread of hell, you will find such motives as they suggest to be as powerless in you for real action as they have proved themselves to be on the general world. You must get to Christ, nearer to Christ, and you will overcome sin. Conclusion: 1. Fight with your sins. Hack them in pieces, as Samuel did Agag, let not one of them escape. Revenge the death of Christ upon your sins, but keep to Christ's Cross for power to do it. 2. If you will not have death unto sin, you shall have sin unto death. There is no alternative, if you do not die to sin you shall die for sin; and if you do not slay sin, sin will slay you. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

The old man crucified:—I. WHAT DOES THE APOSTLE MEAN BY OUR OLD MAN? Simply our natural self, with all its principles and motives, its outgoings, actions, corruptions, and belongings; not as God made it, but as sin, and Satan, and self have marred it. The old Adam never changes; no medicine can heal the disease, no ointment can mollify the corruption; it can only be got rid of by death. In Psa. xiv. 1–3 we have God's view of our sad case. In chap. iii. the apostle quotes this passage to prove the universal depravity of human nature, and the necessity for the gospel which it was his privilege to proclaim. II. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE "CRUCIFIED WITH HIM"? 1. This expression implies that we have suffered in Christ

—(1) A penal death (Gal. iii. 13). I have been crucified with Christ and suffered the penalty which the law demands and the sin of the old Adam deserves. This corrupt self was executed under the sentence of law on the Cross. (2) A lingering, painful death. The knowledge that I have been crucified with Christ will be a constraining motive for mortifying my members which are on the earth, and make me try to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts (Gal. v. 24). (3) A voluntary death. Christ was crucified as a voluntary agent, and the Christian voluntarily identifies his lot with the crucified One (Gal. vi. 14). 2. See, then, the importance of the statement "crucified with Christ." It is—(1) An act of sovereign grace, for God gives us union with Christ when He was crucified for sin. (2) The realisation of this union. Christ lives in the man who has union with Christ, and the man who has union with Christ lives in Christ, and here lies the power for the practical crucifixion of the affections and lusts. (3) It is the knowledge of this union which constrains us to go out with Him beyond the camp, bearing the cross, despising the shame. III. THE OBJECT OF THIS CRUCIFIXION. "The body of sin" is another form of expression for the "old man." It is not the human nature defiled by sin, nor the human body burdened by sin, that is to be destroyed (Phil. iii. 21), but it is the sin that defiled and possessed it. Because sin has so poisoned the whole body, it is called the body of sin. The word "destroyed" is the strongest possible. It is the same as that used in 1 Cor. xv. 26, and translated "bring to nought" (1 Cor. i. 28), "put down" (1 Cor. xv. 24), abolished (2 Tim. i. 10), "made of none effect" (Gal. iii. 17), "done away" (2 Cor. iii. 14). IV. ITS EFFECT—"that henceforth we should not serve sin," or "be slaves to sin." How can we be slaves to a thing that is extinct? to a power that is abolished? to a principle that is set at nought, made nothing of, put down? See, then, what inconsistent and infatuated creatures we are when we minister in anywise to sin. (*M. Rainsford, B.A.*) *The twofold function of personal Christianity*:—I. ITS CRUCIFYING FUNCTION. It crucifies —1. Not any of his nature's faculties or sensibilities. It energises, refines, and develops these. 2. Not any of the ties of his moral obligations. On the contrary, it gives a stronger revelation of duty, and mightier motives to obey. Christianity crucifies the corrupt character, called "the old man," not because it is the original character of humanity, which was holy, but because it is the first character of individual men. This crucifixion is—(1) A painful process. Crucifixion was the most excruciating death that the cruelty of the most malignant spirit could devise. To destroy old habits, gratifications, &c., is a painful work. It is as the cutting off a limb, the plucking out of an eye, &c. (2) A protracted process. No wound was inflicted upon the most vital part, that the agony might be perpetuated. The agonised life gradually, drop by drop, ebbed away. There is nothing so hard to die as sin. An atom may kill a giant, a word may break the peace of a nation, a spark burn up a city; but it requires earnest and protracted struggles to destroy sin in the soul. No man grows virtuous in a day. (3) A voluntary process. Christ's crucifixion was voluntary. It is so with the crucifixion of "the old man." No one could do it for us. No one can do it either without our consent or against it. If "the old man" is to be crucified, we must nail him to the cross. II. ITS RESURRECTION FUNCTION. "We shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection." The spiritual life of a Christian is—1. A revived life. It was not a new life that Jesus had when He came forth from His grave:—it was the old revived. The spiritual life of a Christian is that life of supreme love to God which Adam had, which belongs to our nature, but which sin has destroyed, and buried under evil passions and corrupt habits. 2. A Divinely produced life. "None but God can raise the dead," &c. 3. An interminable life. "I am He that liveth," said Christ, "and was dead, and am alive for evermore." Once the true spiritual life of the soul is raised from its grave, it will die no more. It is an "everlasting life." 4. A glorious life. How glorious was the resurrection body of Christ (Rev. i. 13–18). "We shall be like Him," &c. The subject teaches us—1. The value of evangelical religion: which is to destroy in man the bad, and the bad only, and to revive the good. 2. The test of evangelical religion, which is dying unto sin, and living unto holiness. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) **That the body of sin might be destroyed.**—*The body of sin weakened*:—The whole body of sin, indeed, is weakened in every believer, and a deadly wound given by the grace of God to his corrupt nature; yet, as a dying tree may bear some fruit, though not so much, nor that so full and ripe, as before; and as a dying man may move his limbs, though not so strongly as when he was in health, so original corruption in a saint will be stirring, though but feebly; and thou hast no cause to be discouraged because it stirs, but to be

comforted that it can but stir. *The body of sin*:—Sin, in Scripture, is called "a body," because made up of several members; or as the body of an army, consisting of many troops and regiments. It is one thing to beat a troop, or put a wing of an army to flight, and another thing to rout and break the whole army. Something hath been done by moral principles, like the former; they have got some petty victory, and had the chase of some gross and external sins; but then they were fearfully beaten by some other of sin's troops. As the sea, which loses as much in one part of the land as it gains in another; so what they got in a seeming victory over one sin, they lost again by being in bondage to another, and that a worse, because more spiritual. But faith is uniform, and routs the whole body of sin, so that not one single lust stands in its unbroken strength (ver. 14). (*W. Gurnall.*) *The body of sin*:—Original corruption is a body of sin. 1. In that a body though it seems never so beautiful and fair, yet it is in itself but made of base matter, so sin, though it may seem specious and alluring, yet it is but an abomination. 2. As a body, being material, is visible; so original sin discovers itself to every one that without prejudice will look to find it. It is discernible in its effects daily. 3. As the body hath divers members, so sin. 4. As a body is beloved and provided for, so is sin (Rom. xiii. 12). Who would willingly part with the least member of his body? But if something of this body must be parted with, it is but hair and nails. And thus, till that day in which God puts forth His almighty power to make us willing, we are loath to leave any sin. 5. Sin, as a body, hath strength in it, and tyranny is exercised by it. 6. It is called here especially "a body" by the apostle, to answer to the metaphor of "crucifying." Only bodies can be crucified, and this sin is "crucified with Christ." (*P. Vinke, B.D.*) *Destruction of the body of sin*:—Five persons were studying what were the best means to mortify sin. One said, to meditate on death; the second, to meditate on judgment; the third, to meditate on the torments of hell; the fourth, to meditate on the joys of heaven; the fifth, to meditate on the blood and sufferings of Christ: and certainly the last is the choicest and strongest motive of all. If ever we would cast off our despairing thoughts, we must dwell much upon and apply this precious blood to our own souls. (*S. Brooks.*) *Destruction of the body of sin*:—Destroyed, not merely subdued, but annihilated—stripped of its dominion, deprived of its life, annulled as to authority and energy, and finally as to existence. Our sinful nature not to be improved but destroyed. Its place to be taken by a holy and Divine nature. As the old man dies the new man lives. Either grace must destroy sin or sin the soul. Four things observed in the destruction of the body of sin. I. THE MERITORIOUS CAUSE. The crucifixion of Christ. II. THE EFFICIENT CAUSE. The Holy Spirit (Rom. viii. 13). III. THE INSTRUMENTAL CAUSE. The gospel of God's grace (1 Pet. i. 22). IV. THE MODE. The infusion of new principles and affections (Gal. v. 16; 2 Cor. v. 14). (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) **That henceforth we should not serve sin.**—*The Christian should not serve sin*:—I. IT HAS COST HIM ENOUGH ALREADY. Sin never yields—1. Real pleasure. 2. Solid satisfaction. II. IT IS CONTRARY TO THE DESIGNS OF ETERNAL LOVE. III. ITS PUNISHMENT IS VERY GREAT. It—1. Destroys peace of mind. 2. Obscures fellowship with Jesus. 3. Hinders prayer. 4. Brings darkness over the soul. IV. IT CRUCIFIES THE LORD AFRESH AND PUTS HIM TO AN OPEN SHAME. Can you bear that thought? (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Slaves to sin*:—When the morning sun is bright, and the summer breezes are gently blowing from the shore, the little river-boat is enticed from the harbour to start on her trip of pleasure on the clear, calm sea. All Nature seems to enlist in her service. The fair wind fills her sails, the favourable tide rolls onward in her course, the parted sea makes way for her to glide swiftly and merrily on her happy voyage; but having thus been her servants, and carried her whither she would, these soon become her masters, and carry her whither she would not. The breeze that swelled her sails has become a storm, and rends them; the waves that quietly rippled for her pleasure now rise in fury, and dash over her for her destruction; and the vessel, which rode in the morning as a queen upon the waters, sinks before night comes on, the slave of those very winds and waves which had beguiled her to use them as her servants. So it is with sin. (*Canon Morse.*) **For he that is dead is freed from sin.**—*Freed from sin*:—To arrive at the meaning of these words, we must consider that law regards all punishment in the light of satisfaction. By a crime, the law has been aggrieved; and by the punishment, the law is satisfied. When, therefore, the guilty person has undergone sentence, the law has no further claim upon that man. I. CHRIST DIED AND UNDERWENT THE EXTREME PUNISHMENT OF THE LAW. 1. He was the One, only, sinless being

that ever walked the earth. But He "was made sin." The sins of the world gathered upon that spotless One, and He was treated as if He was one concentrated essence of sin. 2. When He died, it was death indeed. No other death was like that. (1) Is death the rending of the fine tissue by which spirit and body are mysteriously one? His was the most sensitive and delicate frame that ever was seen—and the soul of Jesus broke through its tabernacle—the body went its way to the sepulchre—the soul winged its flight to Paradise—and Jesus died. (2) Is death the parting from those whose love makes life? The tender farewell to Mary, and the beloved disciple, showed the dying of the heart of Jesus. (3) Is death separation from God? Then there was a passage in that dark valley which Jesus walked without a ray of His Father's presence. 3. But the death passed, and it could never be repeated. It was not compatible with the justice of God that Jesus should die again. II. SEE HOW THIS BEARS UPON OURSELVES. 1. It is God's plan always to deal with man as seen in some federal head. The whole of our race fell in the first Adam, and became involved in his condemnation. Is it arbitrary? See the balance. Christ came to be a federal Head. As the natural members of our body gather up into the natural head, so spiritual believers gather up into Christ. 2. Observe the consequence of this representative system. As soon as ever you are really united to the Lord Jesus Christ, you have died in your covenant Head. There was a sentence of death against you which must be executed—but in Christ you have undergone it. What is the result? You can never be required to pay the forfeit which has been paid, or to die the death which has been died—it is done in Christ, and you are dead—and "he that is dead is freed from sin." And as impossible as it would be that God should take His risen Son, and nail Him to that Cross again, so impossible is it that God should ever demand satisfaction at your hand for any of those sins, which being once laid on Christ, have already received satisfaction in the death of your Redeemer. 3. This was the only conceivable way in which it was possible that any man should be "freed from sin." God's government of this world is a moral government, and it is essential to moral government that every sin should have its retribution. Therefore, God laid it down at the first, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." But He vindicated His truth, and upheld the law, when, gathering the sins of all, and laying them upon one great Substitute, He crucified all in One, saw all dead that He might acknowledge all alive—and simply carried out the one grand principle, "He that is dead is freed from sin." 4. Look at the condition of a man who is "freed from sin." Had sin never entered into our world—or, having entered, had it been simply forgiven by a word—we should have been, I suppose, just as Adam was. We should have lived in a beautiful garden, where we should have eaten sweet fruit, and done gentle labour, and at times we should have enjoyed the presence of God, and had some measure of communion with Him. Conclusion: It is a certain fact that no other process, except the grace of Christ—no fear of punishment, no hope of reward, no self-respect, no consideration for human affection, have ever proved sufficient in this world to make men really good. But let a man be once brought under a real feeling that through the grace of Christ he is free from condemnation—let him begin to look at that Saviour as his own Friend, and live, day by day, in converse with that love, and contemplation of that example, and we know what is the consequence. We know how the mind of Christ enters into that man's spirit, and how the pattern of Christ becomes reflected upon his conduct. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *Dead with Christ*:—What is it to be dead? We all know what it is to turn away from the grave side, in which we have laid to its last rest the cold body of a friend. All is done and over now. Something has been in the world which will never be again. A story, a presence with its good and evil, with its joys and sorrows is wiped out. Everything is ended. The great silence closes over it, as the waters close over a sunken ship, and leaves no sign. It is all dead and over! We have said the last word; we have taken the last look. Now, let it go! Come away! Leave it to lie hidden! For you must go your way without it. That is death, and we are dead if we are in Christ. We have buried our old manhood. That old natural self of ours—the man in us that is born and lives its little day and dies—the self, as is by human laws, as a creature of this earth—that is with us no longer. It has had its day. It has done its business. We have wrapped it in its white shroud. We have carried it out to its burial; down in the dark grave we have laid it; it is buried, with Christ's burial. All that old past, so onerous, so tangled, so hurdened, so sick—it is all gone and over, as completely as a life that is dead. Never, never can it be again. The blood of Christ's death lies between us and it; and it cannot touch us,

Its sorrows, its sins, are remote and alien, as the voice of a torrent that we have crossed in the night, whose dull and smothered roar comes to our ears only in faint gusts of wind. The old is dead and buried. (*H. S. Holland.*) *Freedom from sin*:—The original means justified or acquitted from sin—absolution from its guilt and merited penalty. Law has received its rightful claim in the Person of the Surety. Freed from sin's penalty, we are also freed from its power. We are dead *to* sin, because in Christ we have died *for* sin. Consequently we are also freed from its practice (Job iii. 19; Rom. vii. 24; 1 John iii. 6–9). (*T. Robinson, D.D.*)

Vers. 8–11. **Now if we be dead with Christ . . . we shall also live with Him.**—*Death and life with Christ*:—To be dead with Christ is to hate and turn from sin; and to live with Him is to have our hearts and minds turned towards God and heaven. To be dead with sin is to feel a disgust at it. We know what is meant by disgust. Take the case of a sick man, when food of a certain kind is presented to him; consider how certain scents, or tastes, affect certain persons, and you will be at no loss to determine what is meant by disgust at, or deadness to, sin. On the other hand, consider how pleasant a meal is to the hungry, or some enlivening odour to the faint; how refreshing the air is to the languid, or the brook to the weary and thirsty; and you will understand what is implied in being alive with Christ. Our animal powers cannot exist in all atmospheres; certain airs are poisonous, others life-giving. So is it with spirits and souls: an unrenewed spirit could not live in heaven, he would die; an angel could not live in hell. The natural man cannot live in heavenly company, and the angelic soul would pine and waste away in the company of sinners, unless God's presence were continued to it. To be dead to sin is to be so minded that the atmosphere of sin oppresses, distresses, and stifles us—that it is painful and unnatural to us to remain in it. To be alive with Christ is to be so minded that the atmosphere of heaven refreshes, enlivens, stimulates, invigorates us. To be alive is not merely to bear the thought of religion, to assent to its truth, to wish to be religious; but to be drawn towards it, to love it, to delight in it, to obey it. (*J. H. Newman, D.D.*) *Death and life with Christ*:—"Skin for skin," said Satan, "all that a man hath will he give for his life." He was wrong, however, as the event proved. There is one thing a man will not give for his life if he has got it; and that is, the favour of God. And yet let us do justice to the maxim, for there is great truth in it: What is life? "In Thy favour is life"; so that if a man holds this favour at all costs—if he will be content to part with anything and everything in the universe before he will part with God's favour, it is but carrying out Satan's maxim thoroughly. My text develops to us the great secret of life. I. "IF WE BE DEAD WITH CHRIST." It does not say, if we are dead in Christ; but dead with Christ. It is not a case of conformity, but of identity; not of imitation, but of participation. But the question is, In what sense did Christ die, or to what purpose? "He died unto sin." Now, when you say that we die unto sin, and that Christ died unto sin, do you mean the same thing? In the common way of expression, when a man says that a Christian dies unto sin, he means that he dies unto its influence. Now, sin never had any influence over Christ, and therefore how could He die unto sin in that sense? What did Christ die unto? 1. He died under the condemnation of sin. "The Lord laid upon Him the iniquity of us all." He died "under the law," met its demands, bore its penalty; then what followed? The condemnation was completely averted. But if that is true you must adopt that interpretation exclusively in regard to ourselves, *i.e.*, we die unto the condemnation of sin. "Therefore there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ." That is a blessed truth; and does not the whole history of Christian experience depend upon the recognition of it? All the experience of sorrow and suffering, of bondage and of a servile spirit, result from not entering into that truth. You cannot have a stronger term than the word death. 2. Prior to Christ's dying to sin He died under the condemnation of sin. The law did its full work upon Him; He was never emancipated from its condemnation until He thoroughly realised it. The believer experimentally passes through something of that kind before he dies with Christ to the condemnation of sin. Who ever comes to Christ to escape condemnation, but the man over whom that condemnation is pressing? Here is the great distinction between real and nominal conversion. One man has gone through a process of self-condemnation, and the other has not. The one man apprehends the value of salvation; the other does not. The one man has learnt the curse of sin; the other has not. Death is the necessary consequence of sin. If I sin, it must somehow or other pass on me.

I must die, or I must be connected with One who has died. In some way or other God's righteous sentence must be executed. II. "WE SHALL ALSO LIVE WITH HIM." As sure as life followed in Christ's case, so surely will it follow in our case. The life spoken of in the text is the resurrection life; it is the life that follows death. Mark, concerning that life, that it is—1. An endless life. He died unto sin once. Death hath no more dominion over Him: He dieth no more. Then there is no more death to you. We have done with death if we are believers. "If a man believe on Me, he hath eternal life, and he shall never die." "He is passed from death unto life." You may say, "There go the mourners in the street, and the man of God is in the hearse." No, he is not. Death was a laying aside of the body of sin and death, that life might be emancipated. Life is locked up here. To open the door, and let the man free, is that death? 2. A life unto God. But did not Christ "live unto God before He died"? Certainly; but He lived under the law, and died under it. It was a kind of bondage that He was under. Hence He says, "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" From the moment of His death, what followed? Complete emancipation; the law was no longer over Him; the curse was no longer on Him. Now, till we die with Christ, we are under the law, cursed by the law; the spirit of bondage is in our hearts. Our consciences must be "purged from dead works to serve the living God." It is only when a man is emancipated, and knows it, that he leads a life of liberty; it is then he feels, "Condemnation is gone; God is my Father; we are reconciled"; and then he runs in the way of God's commandments. 3. A life in heaven. At His ascension Christ went to heaven; and there He is at the right hand of God. And so we are risen with Christ; we are seated with Christ in heavenly places; our conversation is in heaven. The way is laid open—that new and living way through the body of Christ. So that we do not wait for the final glory to know something of the blessedness of heavenly experience. 4. The life of an acknowledged Son of God with power. It is true that during Christ's ministry a voice from heaven said before the disciples, "This is My beloved Son"; but there was no declaration of that with power. Christ walked about as "a Man of sorrows." At the resurrection there was indeed a proclamation of the Son with power. And how is it in our case? "To as many as receive Him" to them does He "give power to become the sons of God." The power of Christ becomes theirs. "We can do all things by the power of Christ, which dwelleth in us." "When I am weak then am I strong." "My strength is perfect in weakness." 5. A life which involved the full reception of the Holy Ghost. Christ never had that to dispose of till "He ascended up on high." Now, from the moment we are dead with Christ we receive, and are temples of, the Holy Ghost. 6. A life of glorious anticipation. His experience is not perfect; He is still waiting. Christ has not got His Church; and do we wait for our body? When we die, as it is called, we are separated from the body, and we wait to be united to it. Is not that like the intermediate state of Christ, who is waiting above for His body? (*Capel Molineux, B.A.*) *Death and life in Christ*:—The apostles never travelled far from the simple facts of Christ's life, death, resurrection, ascension, exaltation, and second advent. What a rebuke this should be to those who are ever straining after novelties. Our business is the old labour of apostolic tongues, to declare that Jesus, who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. I. THE FACTS REHEARED TO CONSTITUTE THE GLORIOUS GOSPEL WHICH WE PREACH. 1. That Jesus died. He who was Divine, and therefore immortal, bowed His head to death. This is the second note in the gospel scale. The first note is incarnation. Christ died as—(1) A sacrifice. (2) A substitute. (3) Mediator between God and man. There was a great gulf fixed, so that if we would pass to God we could not, neither could He pass to us. There was no way of filling up this gulf, unless there should be found one who, like the old Roman, Curtius, would leap into it. Jesus comes. Into the grave Christ plunged, the gulf is bridged, and God can have communion with man! 2. But Jesus rises. Can ye imprison immortality in the tomb! Death is overcome, and thus, having delivered Himself, He is able also to deliver others. Sin, too, was manifestly forgiven. Christ was in prison as a hostage; now that He is suffered to go free, it is a declaration on God's behalf that He has nothing against us; our substitute is discharged; we are discharged. "He rose again for our justification." Nay more, inasmuch as He rises from the dead, He gives us a pledge that hell is conquered. 3. Jesus is now living. He does not, after forty days, return to the grave: He departs from earth from the top of Olivet, and now at His Father's right hand He sits, the Lord of Providence, expecting the hour when

His enemies shall be made His footstool; and the all-prevalent Intercessor. 4. Jesus lives for ever. (1) "Death hath no more dominion over Him." Disease may visit the world and fill the graves, but no disease or plague can touch the immortal Saviour. (2) It would be a strange doctrine if any man should dream that the Son of God would again offer His life a sacrifice. (3) Since He lives for ever, then no foes can overcome Him, and His people's eternal life is sure. II. THE GLORIOUS WORK WHICH EVERY BELIEVER FEELS WITHIN HIM. The apostle only mentions death, resurrection, life, and life eternal to show our share in them. 1. As Christ was, so we also are dead. We are dead to sin because—(1) Sin can no more condemn us. I cannot claim a debt of a dead debtor, and although I be a debtor to the law, yet since I am dead, the law cannot claim anything of me, nor can sin inflict any punishment upon me. He that is dead is freed from sin; we are free from all its jurisdiction. (2) We defy its power. Sin had been sitting on a high throne in our heart, but faith pulled the tyrant down, and though it still survives to vex us, yet its reigning power is destroyed. 2. If we be thus dead with Christ, let us see that we live with Him. It is a poor thing to be dead to the world unless we are alive unto God. Death is a negative, and a negative in the world is of no great use by itself. Just as Jesus had a new life after death, so have we a new life after death. But we must prove it, as Jesus did, by infallible signs. 3. Christ lives for ever, and so do we. Sin made us die once in Adam, but we are not to be slain by it again. 4. Like Jesus, we live unto God. (1) The forty days which Christ spent on earth He lived unto God, comforting His saints, manifesting His person, giving forth gospel precepts. For the few days we have to live here on earth we must live to comfort the saints, to set forth Christ, and to preach the gospel to every creature. (2) And now that Christ has ascended He lives unto God to manifest the Divine character. Christ is the permanent revelation of an invisible God. Christian, God is to be seen in you; you are to show forth the Divine longsuffering, tenderness, kindness, patience. (3) Christ lives unto God, for He completes the Divine purpose by pleading for His people, by carrying on His people's work above. You are to live for the same. (4) Jesus lives unto God, delighting Himself in God. Live in the same way, Christian. III. THE FACTS ARE PLEDGES OF THE GLORY WHICH IS TO BE REVEALED IN US. Christ died. We shall die. Christ rose, and so shall we. I do not think we get enough joy out of our resurrection. Resurrection will be our marriage-day. Body and soul have been separated, and they shall meet again no more to be divorced. Anticipate that happy day. No sin, no sorrow, no care, no decay, no approaching dissolution! He lives for ever in God: so shall you and I! (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Dead and alive with Christ*:—I. DEAD WITH CHRIST. Crucified with Him—1. Judicially, as to sin's penalty. 2. Spiritually, as to sin itself. II. LIFE WITH CHRIST. 1. Judicially, absolved from sin by God's own sentence. 2. Spiritually, through His own nature communicated to us. 3. Experimentally, in the enjoyment of God with Him for ever. (*T. Robinson.*) *Dead indeed, but living*:—I. THE BASIS OF THE APOSTLE'S SENTIMENT. 1. Is laid in the past. (1) The death of Christ. Christ died for our sins. Millions of deaths have passed unobserved as leaves fall from the trees in autumn. A few deaths have arrested attention and been a source of great benefit to the countries to which the dying belonged. Never a death like that of Jesus Christ—never one that has attracted such attention, never one from which such benefits have flowed. (2) Christ died unto sin once, and when He thus died He had no more to do with sin, either as tempting Him, or as requiring to be atoned for. He had borne the sins: He bore them no longer when He had atoned for them. He had been surrounded by sin; but now He had passed away from that sphere in which He had been brought into contact with it, and henceforth and for evermore all was to be holy. 2. There is also a basis of prophecy. Respecting Christ and His people. Paul saw a grand future for Christ and the Church. Paul's earliest inspiration was as a prophetic author. The glowing hope which the apostle cherished was of Christ's coming again, and of the resurrection and the glorification of His people at the last day! The wonderful prophecy is sketched in chap. viii. 18-24. II. THE BEARING OF THE PAST AND THE FUTURE UPON THE PRESENT. History is not good for much if it be not connected with the present, and those who indulge in speculations as to prophecy without connecting them with the present, are not doing much that will be of avail for themselves or others. When we look at history and prophecy in the Bible we have not two islands separated from one another, but two continents joined by an isthmus—the present. We stand, then, at the meeting point of the

past and future; and the past and future have both to do with us, and our whole spiritual life is based upon the history of the past and the prophecies of the future. 1. Paul fixes upon the historical fact that Christ died for our sins, and he will not let that for an instant go. But without turning Christ's death into a myth, he gives it a spiritual meaning, and teaches that between us and Christ there comes an identification and sympathy, through which we feel like Him and act like Him and become one with Him, imitating His example and becoming conformed to His image. 2. With regard to Christ's resurrection, Paul spiritualises it and indicates its relation to our Christian holiness: "That we also should walk in newness of life." Without turning Christ's resurrection into a myth, he makes it a moral power working in us, so that we rise from the death of sin to the life of righteousness. 3. As it regards future and present, Paul says, "We shall live together with Him." Without losing sight of Christ's glorious reign, and of our resurrection through His power at the last day, the connection shows that he had in his mind the thought of a risen life, now enjoyed by the believer, of which the words just cited are the irresistible proofs. Thus he thinks of Christ's resurrection as repeated in the believer's life, and the believer's resurrection as antedated and as rehearsed in his present holy life. 4. Note the wonderful effect upon our morality and our religion of these ideas. (1) Common morality, as it is recognised in the world, is just resistance to temptation to vice. But according to Paul, Christian morality consists in dying to sin. The idea is that of becoming insensible to sin, even as Christ was. (2) Christian piety is living with Christ, rising to such a level of life that we become one with Christ, and there is a spirit of devotion, of patience, of activity, like that of Christ. (3) So with regard to religion altogether. Religion now is in the estimation of some people rather degrading than otherwise. It is just the opposite. It is a rising in the spiritual universe: it is a getting nearer to heaven, through getting nearer to Christ—getting into fellowship with Christ. Conclusion: As we think of all this—1. The first conviction that is produced in our minds is that of tremendous deficiency. 2. But we have at hand an immeasurable power of improvement in the truths and promises of the gospel, and in the promise of the Holy Spirit. Our aims as Christians should be very high, very noble. We shall never realise those ends and objects in our own strength, but God will help us. (*John Stoughton, D.D.*) *The new life*:—I. OWES ITS EXISTENCE TO THE INDWELLING OF THE HOLY GHOST. No doctrine of the New Testament can be clearer than this (John i. 12; James i. 18; Pet. i. 23; John iii. 6). These developments of our religious history are not natural, but supernatural. No kind of education, no original endowment of genius, no acquired treasures of wisdom and knowledge, can adequately account for the phenomena in question. To receive that life at all is to obtain it from God. The Spirit, once received, must remain in the heart. What the soul is to the body, to give it vitality, so must the Holy Ghost be to the soul, to give it eternal life. II. IS MAINTAINED BY FAITH IN CHRIST AND COMMUNION WITH HIM (ver. 11). III. IS A DEVOTION OF THE WHOLE BEING TO CHRIST (1 Cor. vi. 20). Here we see an entire change in the aims and purposes of a man's life: such a change as must influence and control all his activity and behaviour. Men, naturally, "seek their own," or else they devote themselves to some fellow-creature, or to the good of their country, or the service of their sovereign: but the peculiarity of the Christian's life is that it is consecrated to Christ. This means—1. That he seeks in every possible way to promote the glory of the Saviour, by acknowledging His name, by declaring His goodness, by enforcing His claims. 2. That he is always anxious to further the great work of Christ, which is to save sinners, and to set up the kingdom of God. 3. That he is careful at all times to consult the will of Christ and to do it. This devotedness will follow Christ through good and ill report. IV. ASSIMILATES THE CHARACTER TO THAT OF CHRIST. We would be in the world as He was in the world. It is the height of our ambition to be like Jesus (2 Cor. iii. 18). V. DERIVES ITS HAPPINESS FROM THE LOVE OF CHRIST. Happiness is the very life of life; and the soul of happiness is love. And what love can satisfy the heart of the believer except the love of Christ? To love Jesus, and to be loved by Him, are the two perennial sources of the believer's joy; the two poles of his moral life. It is his consolation in every trial, his compensation in every loss, and his everlasting reward. (*T. G. Horton.*) *Living with Christ*:—Believers live with Christ. I. JUDICIALLY—absolved from death by God's own sentence (2 Cor. v. 15). II. SPIRITUALLY—through His own nature communicated to us (Gal. ii. 20). III. EXPERIMENTALLY—in the enjoyment of God with Him for ever (Psa. xxi. 6). (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) **Knowing that Christ being raised from**

the dead dieth no more.—*Of the resurrection:*—The two principal words of the passage are "knowing" (ver. 9), and "counting" (ver. 11). Knowing and calling ourselves to account for our knowledge: two points needing ever to be conjoined. Oft we hear, but small reckoning we make of it. What Christ did at Easter we know; but to what then we are to do we give no great regard. Now this Scripture teaches us that Christian knowledge is not a knowledge without all manner of account, but that we are accountants for it, especially in the matter of Christ's resurrection. I. OUR KNOWING. 1. The means of it. Not by actual vision, as in the case of the apostles, but by their testimony which is—(1) Ample—for all the apostles were witnesses, and if they are not enough five hundred saw Christ risen (1 Cor. xv. 6). (2) Trustworthy. For the witnesses—(*a*) Were not credulous, but otherwise (Mark xvi. 11; Luke xxiv. 11, 13, 41; Matt. xxviii. 17; John xx. 25). That is ever best known that is most doubted of; and as Augustine says, "All this doubting was by them made, that we might be out of doubt, and know that Christ is risen." (*b*) Lost their living and their life by their testimony. 2. The particulars. (1) That Christ is risen. Death is a fall; it came with the fall of Adam, and was a fall from which, but for one thing, there had been no rising. But by Christ's rising it falls out to be a fall, from which we may get up again. For if one be risen another may be; and if Christ rose in our nature then is our nature risen; and if our nature then our persons may be (ver. 4). Bernard well observes, "that Christ is risen only but not wholly," till we be risen too. This then we know, first, that death is a fall, not like that of Pharaoh into the sea, who never came up more, but like that of Jonas (Matt. xxv. 41); not like that of the angels into the bottomless pit, there to stay for ever, but like that of men into their beds; not as a log or stone to the ground, which, where it falleth there it lieth still; but as of a wheat corn which is quickened and springeth up again. (2) That Christ now dieth not as the widow's son, ruler's daughter, and Lazarus did. And if we only rise as they did, this mortality of ours will be to us as the prisoner's chain from which he escapes only to be pulled back again; but if we rise as Christ rose, then our resurrection will be no return to the same life, but a passing over to a new. (3) That from henceforth "death hath no more dominion over Him." Three times in chap v. Paul saith, "death reigned," as if it were some mighty monarch having great dominions. And so it is; for how many dangers, diseases, miseries, there be of this mortal life in which we live under death's jurisdiction and arrest; and if we escape them we are still under the fear of them which is death's dominion too (Job xviii. 14). And when we are out of this life unless we are in Christ we are not out of his dominion. But he hath no dominion over Christ; Christ hath dominion over him (Heb. ii. 14; 1 Cor. xv. 55). 3. The reasons. The Romans loved to see the grounds of what they received and not the bare articles. Indeed it might trouble them why Christ should need to rise since they saw no reason why He should die. The truth is we cannot speak of His rising well without mention of what He rose from. The two are never separated by the apostle, and their union serves many good purposes. It shows His human nature and weakness in dying, and His Divine nature and power in rising; His two offices—His priesthood and sacrifice in His death, and His kingdom in the glory of His resurrection; His two main benefits—the death of death in His death, and the reviving of life in His resurrection; the two moulds wherein our lives are to be cast. Of them both, then, briefly—(1) The cause of His dying. "Sin." To sin He died; and yet not simply to sin, but with reference to us, *i.e.*, He would save us, and because else He could not save us. By justice sin must have death—our death, for the sin was ours. This His love to us could not endure; therefore that we might not die to sin He died. But why "once"? Because that was enough "to take away" (John i. 29), "to abolish" (Acts iii. 19), "to draw dry" (Heb. ix. 28), utterly to exhaust all the sins, of all the sinners, of all the world. The excellency of His Person that performed it, the excellency of the obedience He performed, and the excellency of the humility and charity wherewith He performed it, were of such value as made His once dying "a plenteous redemption" (See Eph. ii. 7, iii. 20; 1 Tim. i. 14). (2) The cause of His living—God who had by His death received full satisfaction, reached Him, as it were, His hand and raised Him to life; and not only raised Him, but for that cause exalted Him (Phil. ii. 8, 9), to live with Him in glory for ever. For as when He lived to man He lived to much misery, so now He liveth to God He liveth in all felicity (Psa. xxxvi. 9). II. OUR ACCOUNT. 1. Of our comings in. An account there is growing to us by Christ's rising of much benefit. The hope of gaining a better life is our comfort against the fear of losing this (1 Pet. i. 3); and

through this we comfort ourselves in bereavement (1 Thess. iv. 18; John xi. 23), and in regard to the issue of our work (1 Cor. xv. 58). 2. Of our goings out. (1) The sum or charge of which account is set down in these words that we be like Christ; that what He hath wrought for us He wrought in us. (*a*) Like Him in His dying: for He died not only to offer a sacrifice for us but to leave an example to us. Like Him, too, in His rising: for He arose not only that we might be begotten to a lively hope, but also that we might be planted in the likeness of His resurrection. (*b*) Like Him in His living to God. (2) The discharge and means of it. "In Jesus Christ our Lord" (ver. 11). Out of Christ we can do nothing towards this account; but in and with Him enabling us to it we can do all things. And enable us He will as not only having passed the resurrection, but being the Resurrection itself. If in the days of His flesh there went virtue out from even the edge of His garment, much more from His own self, and those two principal and powerful actions of His own self, there issueth a Divine power: from His death a power working in the old man, or flesh, to mortify it; from His resurrection a power working on the new man, or spirit, to quicken it. A power able to roll back any stone of an evil custom and to dry up any issue though it have run upon us twelve years long. And this power is that Divine quality of grace which we receive from Him. (*Bp. Andrewes.*)

The undying one:—Note—I. THE REALITY OF THE RESURRECTION: "Christ being raised from the dead." 1. The resurrection asserts a truth not always learnt from Nature, viz., that the spiritual is higher than the material. There are no doubt abstract arguments which go to prove this; but the resurrection assures us that the laws of animal existence may be set aside in obedience to a higher spiritual interest. 2. The resurrection is not merely an article of the Creed; like Christ's eternal sonship, which belongs to another sphere, and is believed on account of the trustworthiness of Him who has taught it. But that Christ rose is a fact which depends on the same sort of testimony as any event in the life of Cæsar; with this difference, that no one ever died to maintain that Cæsar defeated Vercingetorix or Pompey. Our Lord was seen five times on the day that He rose, and six separate appearances are afterwards recorded; while it is implied that they were only a few of those which actually occurred. And when He was gone, His apostles went forth especially as "witnesses of His resurrection," and were prepared to attest its truth with their blood. 3. If this testimony concerned a political occurrence, or a fact of natural history, nobody would think of denying its cogency; and those who reject the resurrection quarrel, for the most part, not with the proof, but with the supposition that such a thing could ever happen. Look, they say, at the fixed order of nature; year after year it is what, within our memories, it always has been. When man dies his body mingles with the dust for good and all; he does not, so far as we can see, break the bonds of death. The fixed order of nature! (1) Fixed by whom or what? By some fated necessity? But you know that you can speak, move, act, or the reverse, as you will. And surely this may be also true of the highest Being of all. For that such a Being exists, Nature assures you by its existence; and that He is an ordering and disposing Intelligence, the order and symmetry of Nature assure you too. The order of Nature, then, is fixed not by fate, but by a will which can at pleasure innovate upon it. The power to work miracles is implied in the power which created Nature. (2) "God *can* work them," you say; "but will He? Are not miracles a libel upon His wisdom and far-sightedness? God in creation is the supreme engineer; it is only the unskilful workman who, having set his machine in motion, has to trust in his hand in order to correct some defect, or to communicate some new impulse for which no provision was made originally." (*a*) But the universe is something more than a machine; since it contains not merely matter, but free spirits, able consciously to yield or to refuse obedience to the true law of their being. A God is much greater than a supreme engineer. He is a moral governor, a father. His first care is for His intelligent offspring; and the universe was framed for them. If man had not been created, miracle might have been superfluous. But if the education and redemption of a rational soul be God's noblest purpose in creation, then we shall expect Him to make the world of matter instruct and improve us, by deviating, if need be, from its accustomed order, as well as by observing it. (*b*) We may go further. The order of nature, no doubt, teaches the believer the precious lesson that order is a law of the Divine Mind. But for thousands upon thousands that order paralyses the spiritual sense. If we could watch a fellow-creature continuing undeviatingly a single movement for twenty years, we should come to look at him also as a machine, instead of as a free agent. And so many, marking how undeviating God's

work is, presume that it must always be what it has hitherto been; and such men gradually come to think of this visible scene as the whole universe of being. They drop out of mind that more wonderful world beyond it; they forget Him who is the King of this world as well as of that. Nay, there are times when the physical world lies like a weight, or like a nightmare, upon our thoughts; when we long for some higher promise of blessedness and perfection than any which a fixed order of Nature can give. (c) Christ's resurrection breaks down the iron wall of uniformity which goes so far to shut out God. It tells us that matter is controlled by mind; that there is a Being who is not bound by the laws of the universe; that He is their Master. God had said this before, but never so clearly as in the resurrection of our Lord. If ever interference with the order of the world was required it was here. When Jesus died the purest of lives seemed to have ceased to be. The holiest of doctrines appeared to have died away amid blasphemies. Apart from the question who the Sufferer was, there was the question whether a righteous God did really reign: and the resurrection was the answer. It was the finger of God visibly thrust down amid the things of sense; disturbing their usual order; bidding men know and feel that the truths which Christ has taught us about God and the soul are higher and deeper than any which are written on the face of Nature. II. THE PERPETUITY OF CHRIST'S RISEN LIFE. 1. The resurrection was not an isolated miracle, done and over, leaving things as they had been before. The Risen Christ is not like Lazarus, destined again to be a tenant of the grave. Christ rises for eternity: "He dieth no more." His risen body is made up of flesh, bones, &c., but it has superadded qualities. It is so spiritual that it can pass through closed doors. It is beyond the reach of those causes which bring down our bodies to the dust. Throned in the heavens now, It is endowed with the beauty and glory of an eternal youth—"Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more." 2. Nor is this, in itself, a new miracle. The real miracle was that the sinless Christ should have died at all. Death was an innovation upon the true conditions of His existence; and the resurrection was but a return to His rightful and normal immortality. Adam died because he sinned. If Adam had not sinned he would not have died. But when the Second Head of our race appeared, cut off from the entail of corruption by His supernatural birth, and exhibiting in His life absolute conformity to eternal moral law, He was, by the terms of His nature, exempt from the law of death. In His case, death was a momentary innovation upon the true law of being. And therefore when He had paid the mighty debt which the human family owed to the deeply-wronged righteousness of God, life resumed its suspended sway in Him as in its Prince and Fountain (See Rev. i. 18; Acts ii. 24). 3. Now observe how the perpetuity of the life of the Risen Jesus is the guarantee of the perpetuity of the Church. (1) Alone among all forms of society, the Church is insured against dissolution. The Roman Empire seemed to our Lord's contemporaries destined to last for ever. Since then it has vanished, and other kingdoms have in turn gone their way. Nor is there any probability that any one of the existing forms of civil government will last. And there are men who tell us that the kingdom of Christ is no exception to the rule. We Christians know that they are wrong, because Christ's Church draws strength from sources which cannot be tested by our political or social experience. For indeed she is endowed with Christ's own undying life (Matt. xxviii. 20). (2) But, although insured against dissolution, she is not insured against vicissitudes. Her Lord is Divine, but her members are human. She has not always triumphed; she has been corrupted, and division has followed, so that she no longer presents a united front to the powers of evil. And there have been times when it has seemed as if the world was right. But that which is so striking in her history is her power of self-restoration. The tendency to dissolution has clearly been arrested by an inward influence against which ordinary circumstances could not prevail. What is this but the presence of Him who, being raised from the dead, dieth no more? And who shall forecast the future? This only is certain—she will exist while the world shall last (Psa. xlvi. 5, 6). (3) It may indeed be said, "Why should I rejoice in the perpetuity of the Church? To me Christianity is a personal matter." Such isolated Christianity is not that of the New Testament. Christ came to found a Divine society, and the life of Christians comprises duties to, and privileges intimately bound up with that society. Glorious things are spoken of thee, thou city of God; because thou art the home of the living Christ; because, as in thy chequered story, thou traversest the centuries, thou dost always bear with thee, in thy assured and indestructible vitality, the certificate of thy Lord's deathless life. III. THE SECRET AND MODEL OF PERSE-

VERANCE IN THE LIFE OF GODLINESS. 1. Christ risen from death, who dieth no more, is the model of our new life in grace. Just as He left His tomb on Easter morning, once for all, so should the soul, once risen, be dead indeed unto sin. There must be no hovering about the sepulchre, no treasuring the grave-clothes, no secret hankering after the scent and atmosphere of the guilty past. You have great need to persistently set your affections on things above; that you desire passionately to live as those who are alive from the dead. 2. Not that God, having by His grace raised us from death, forces us whether we will or no to live on continuously. The Church has indeed received from the King of kings a charter of perpetuity. But to no mere section of the universal body, and much more to no single soul on this side the grave, is it said that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against" it. The examples of Judas, Demas, the Galatians, and Paul himself trembling lest he himself should be a castaway, are conclusive of this. No force is put upon us; no man is carried up to heaven mechanically if he prefers to go downwards, or even does not sincerely desire to ascend. 3. But how can we rejoice in our risen Lord if we are so capable, in our weakness, of being untrue to His example? I answer, because that life is the strength as well as the model of our own (Rom. viii. 11). The Risen Christ in us is "the hope of glory." (*Canon Liddon.*)

Christ's resurrection not a return to the former life:—No one who has studied St. Paul's Epistles can have failed to observe the distinction which they draw between the result of Christ's death and the effect of His resurrection. The death destroys death, the resurrection gives life. The effect of His death on human nature was instantaneous, once and for ever, as death itself is, the fleeting of a breath in a moment, and a passing out of this world for ever. But in His resurrection is the gift of life, eternal life, always to be enjoyed, and of infinite extension; not the mere extinction of darkness by a sudden gleam, but the dispersion of an equable, serene, and constant light. Christ's resurrection imparts a new life. Why? This I will try to answer. I. WHEN HE ROSE FROM THE DEAD, IT WAS NOT TO RETURN TO HIS FORMER LIFE. His nature entered into new relations with God and man; His body experienced a mighty change; it became a spiritual, glorified body. This thought of Christ's onward passage to a new and more glorious life will add another sense to the words already so full of meaning, "Christ our Passover." Israel, saved by grace, rescued from Egypt, was cut off from his enemies, passed over the Red Sea, and onward to the promised land, fulfilling the prophecy, "Out of Egypt have I called My son." Had the Jews, on the other hand, passed over the Red Sea, and on seeing their enemies perish in its waters, returned in safety to Egypt, would that have been a fulfilment of the promise? No more would our Lord's resurrection have satisfied God's design of mercy, had He merely risen to return to His former state. It would have been, according to the homely but lively image of an old divine, "As when a prisoner escapes from prison with a chain still hanging from his wrist, by which death, that hath still dominion over him, shall draw him back into his own hands." II. SOME REASONS, FOUNDED ON SCRIPTURE, WHY OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR AT HIS RESURRECTION DID NOT COME BACK, BUT WENT ONWARD TO A NEW AND GLORIFIED STATE. For instance, the scheme of redemption through Christ is this:—Man was created in a body free from pain, and not destined to die; but he sinned, and with sin came death; his body became liable to pain and death, as his soul to sin; and his condition of body and soul descended to his family. Christ Jesus came to restore man to his first estate; an estate in which originally death had no part. So He overcame death by giving up His life of His own will to it, instead of suffering it to be taken from Him by force; and while in the arms of death, of His own will He rose again; thence He became a new creature, the first of a new race, the second Adam, the spiritual forefather of another family, which He could not have been had He merely risen from death to come back to His former life. Death was instantaneous and for a moment, even while He drew His last breath and gave up the ghost. The resurrection is permanent, continuous, of infinite extension. Death is an interval in the economy of the world, as sin; life is eternal, as God. An army retreating before overwhelming numbers flies over a bridge, already mined: it is their means of rescue, their passage to a safe frontier: but they do not linger on it; their eyes are set upon the road beyond. Now it has saved them in their extremity, and they regard it for ever with thankfulness and emotion; even its ruin and havoc is dear to their sight, for by it alone have they been saved—saved for victory and peace in the happy land, "where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest." III. WHAT PRACTICAL EFFECT HAS THIS DOCTRINE OF THE RESURRECTION UPON OUR-

SELVES? The same question may be, and by persons of a certain disposition is, often asked concerning every doctrine of the gospel. The great practical result of this teaching I believe to be, that Christians are made aware of the unspeakable blessings of their present communion with Christ. Their eyes are opened to the glory of the estate into which they have been translated. They cease to regard their religion as belonging to the past, and to the future, but learn to live upon its blessings in the present. Go to St. Paul: hear him, how he pours out of his abundant heart the utterance of his joy in the blessings shed by Christ upon His own. Do his words refer only to heaven to come? or are they not rather a description, for the most part, of the privileges of the Christian upon earth? Go to St. Peter, and mark the nobleness of his demeanour, the resolute will, the clear conviction, the happy assurance of his faith, as he appears in his later history, and in his own letters to the Church. How did this change of character arise? By his spiritual communion with Christ, and the sense of present enjoyment and power which the possession of such blessings ensures. Go to St. John: you see a Divine peace, a heavenly love that lies like moonlight upon the waves of a restless world. Is the expression of his face the look of one who merely lingers in the past, or looks to expected joy in a distant day to come? Is it not rather the peace of present joy, a reflection of the thought which his own pen has translated from the words of Christ, signifying the present sunshine of the Christian's life—"He is passed from death unto life"? "Forward!" is the Christian motto, founded on the Master's history. He went on through death to life, not backward, no, not even back to the life so pure and lovely as that which He lived on earth before He died; but forward to a more glorious estate, and in His glory we see the earnest of our inheritance. (*Canon Furse.*) *Christ's immortality*:—At the door of the grave lies a whole sheaf of sceptres. Death sits in the palace of the sepulchre, and the potentates of earth are his cup-bearers; and, as the old blind monarch staggers around his palace, ever and anon he trips on some new fallen coronet. They set up Charlemagne in his grave, and put a crown on his pulseless temples, and a sceptre in his lifeless hand; yet that could not bring back his kingdom. Our King is immortal! (*Te De Witt Talmage.*) **For in that He died, He died unto sin once.**—*Christ's death and life*:—I. THE LORD'S DEATH. We arrive most easily at what the apostle intends by his phrase, "He died unto sin," if we start from a familiar form of speech. Nothing is more impressive than the sudden and total stop which death puts to the relationships of life. Of him who died only an hour ago, we say that he is done with this world. Whatever interest he possessed in it is at an end. The ties which bound him to it are cut. From every obligation which it imposed on him he is discharged. Yesterday the man formed a busy unit in the complicated system of society, entangled by a thousand threads of family, trade, and public life. In the thick of it all, how has one swift scythe-sweep cut him clear! Neither love, nor hate, nor desire, nor care, comes here to move him more. His world is elsewhere; his life is far away. When we apply this definition of the phrase to the case of Jesus, and inquire what is meant by affirming of Him, "The death that He died, He died unto sin (ver. 10, R. V.), two thoughts emerge. 1. The connection of the Lord Jesus with sin in His earthly life was the most complete possible for a sinless person to have. "He knew no sin" by that sad experimental knowledge which implies its entrance within the soul to stain and wreck it. When you have named this exception you have named all. What else have we to do with it which He had not? Ours, not His, is the doing of sin with the will's consent; whatever follows on the doing of it was His as well as ours—*e.g.*, (1) In the constitution of His body, born with the same frailty and exposure to ill as we all share; in the curse of sweat for daily bread, when He wrought at the bench; in the endurance of fatigue and want. (2) His soul shared the same curse; for if it is sin which turns the honey of affection into gall, He surely had His share of distrust, unkindness, misconstruction, treachery. If fear of death be born of sin, may we not compare with that the mysterious gloom which deepened over the Christ as His career drew towards its end? (3) And then the awful experience of forsakenness on the Cross gives a hint of deeps of spiritual distress which we are unable to sound. Connection with sin! He was all sin's own; its prey, surrendered for some Divine necessity to the devourer; the choicest portion ever seized upon to be borne down to the keeping of sin's child, death, within sin's home, the grave. 2. The whole of this connection with sin is said to have terminated at death. (1) It has not been so with any other man. Men who stand on the verge of the unseen world have no reason to look forward to

the act of dying as an escape either from sinful habits, or from the judgment of heaven upon their misdeeds. So far from that, the instinctive voice of conscience confirms the declaration of Holy Writ that "after death comes the judgment." Nor is there the slightest ground for supposing that death can operate as a purifier. It is far more rational to apprehend that the human spirit, when set free from the restraints of the present state, and flung loose in all its abused but magnificent strength to do what it pleases, may indulge in the spiritual sins of pride, hatred, and defiance of God on a scale rarely if ever beheld on earth. (2) But what no other man's death can be expected to do was done by the death of Jesus the sinless. It closed His connection with sin, for that had been outward, not inward; a guiltless submission to sin's penalty, not a guilty surrender to sin's power; that of a sufferer who owes a death to justice for imputed sins of other men. Once that death was paid, His connection with imputed sin was of necessity dissolved. II. FROM SUCH A DEATH AS THIS THERE COULD ISSUE ONLY LIFE UNTO GOD. 1. Jesus having ceased to be under the power of the world's sin could not but live anew. For to "die unto sin" must mean to die unto death. When the law's sentence has been endured, and the power of sin as guilt has been exhausted, the royalty of death is over. It was "not possible" that Jesus should be holden of death. 2. The life which emerges when sin and death have been died to, is a life "unto God." The new state of human existence is the negation of the old—its clear contrary. It is more; it is its counterpart. It is nothing which the old life was, as a life unto sin; it is everything which the former was not. 3. Thus, having seen how the earthly condition of Jesus involved a close contact with sin, we can readily trace the contrast which His risen life has to offer. (1) Over against that body, alive to sin and consequently heir to infirmity, mortality, and pain; over against its exposure to waste and want and weariness, its mean necessities, its honourless condition when men tore it and marred it with shameful violence and insult, must be set a godlike organ for Divine life to inhabit, and now found fit to move amid celestial scenes with unfatigued strength, and to be the centre in its unwithering beauty of celestial homage as it sits upon the throne of God. O grave in Joseph's garden, where is thy victory? (2) To this changed constitution of His body falls to be added a corresponding change also in Christ's manner of life. Lifted up far above the reach of sorrow, reproach, vexation, or wrong, He inhabits now the cloudless, passionless dwelling-place of God. Within such a Divine home had dwelt the Everlasting Son before the days began when He lived unto sin. To it He has now borne back from earth a human nature—the body, soul, and spirit, which, living here below, lived unto sin, and dying, died unto it, but now that it liveth again, liveth for ever unto God. (*J. Oswald Dykes, D.D.*) *Christ dying for our sin, and living for our salvation*:—With the consciousness of past transgression must ever be associated in man's mind the anticipation of future punishment. Conscience almost forestalls the declaration of Holy Writ, "that he which doeth wrong shall suffer for the wrong." And reason, by itself, would tell us that as we cannot undo the error committed, so neither can we escape the penalty deserved. To be awakened, therefore, only under a dispensation of natural religion, would set before us judgment without mercy; but, happily for us, the awakening is under a dispensation of love that goes back to cancel the record of past sin, and goes forward to insure the constant communication of grace. Accordingly we have a Saviour who died once, and who ever lives. I. THE REASONS OF CHRIST'S DEATH, stated in part. 1. There are two interpretations of the expression, "He died unto sin," by reason of sin in Himself, or on account of sin in others. The former is utterly untenable, inasmuch as "He knew no sin." Then He must have died on account of others; a view which there are abundance of Scriptures to confirm, as there were, in the former, abundance of Scriptures to contradict. It is on account of the sinless offering for sin that we charge him who rejects it with consummate folly, and that we cheer him who accepts it with unbounded solace. Has Christ died for you? is our demand of the former; then how can you answer it, that you do not live for Christ? Has Christ died for you? is our demand of the latter; then how can you doubt that you shall live with God for ever? 2. Christ died—(1) For the conviction of sin. Why was such a victim needed? Why, excepting that, from the immensity of the ransom offered, might be inferred the enormity of the guilt and the imminence of the peril? It is not from human nature, even in its most distorted and degraded aspects, that we learn what an evil thing is sin; our true estimate must be grounded on that which it cost to redeem the sinner. (2) To remove or cancel sin. His death is adequate to the necessities of all who

believe. Not only does the apostle declare that there is "no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus," but he asks the question, "Who is he that condemneth?" only that he may answer it by another, Is it not "Christ that died?" II. THE PURPOSES FOR WHICH HE LIVETH? 1. To guide. "I am the way," &c. He lives to act as a Captain in guiding many sons to glory. 2. To govern. "All power is given unto Me, in heaven and in earth." He is silently, therefore, but effectually, working round all things to the establishment of His own will. All nature is subject to His will, nay, He works even by unwilling instruments; the evil passions and principles of men all are constrained by Him to compass the end designed. He is the Head over all things to the Church; we may, therefore, repair to Him in every difficulty, and commit to Him every consequence. 3. "To make intercession for us." III. THE PRACTICAL ISSUE OF THE WHOLE MATTER. You are placed here in the position of those for whom the Son of God once died unto sin, and for whom He now lives. Conviction of sin is thus placed before you with an alternative; to be condemned by Christ's death, or to be saved by His life. It is no common responsibility which lies upon such as are now solemnly reminded that for them "Christ died unto sin once." But neither is it a precarious comfort, or a dubious assurance, which arises to them from the consideration, "In that He liveth, He liveth unto God." He lives for the glory of God, for the good of His Church, for the triumph of the gospel, for the salvation of the sinner, for the complete overcoming of death, and of him that has the power thereof, for every conceivable purpose of diffusing happiness and dispelling misery, and it may be for far higher purposes than have ever entered into the imagination of man. But, for whatever else He lives, He lives to guide, and to govern, and to intercede for you. (*T. Dale, M.A.*)

Vers. 11-14. **Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus.**—*Death a duty*:—The Bible speaks of three kinds of deaths. 1. That which is a necessary event—the death of the body. 2. That which is a moral crime—death in trespasses and sins. 3. That which is a righteous obligation—death unto sin. This is a death which every man should die, though few men do so. It is a death which requires earnest individual effort, and involves the agonies of a self-crucifixion. What is meant by being "dead indeed unto sin"? I. NEGATIVELY. It does not mean—1. Being dead to the existence of sin. Every soul should realise this. Without a due regard to this we shall be incompetent to appreciate the history of Providence. 2. Being dead to the memory of our own sins. We can and ought never to forget the fact that we have sinned. The memory of the fact will serve to restrain from the wrong, to stimulate to the right; it will heighten our gratitude to pardoning mercy, and swell the joys of eternity. 3. Being dead to the effects of our sin upon our own history. The pardon of sin does not free us from all the effects of sin. The law of moral causation goes on. The sins that we have in youth committed against our constitution, intellect, interests, follow us to old age. It was so in the case of Job. 4. Being dead to the ruinous workings of sin around us. David beheld the way of transgressors and was grieved. So did Jeremiah. So did Paul at Athens. So did Christ, &c. So must all good men. We are to battle against it. II. POSITIVELY. It may involve three things. 1. The death of all interest in its attractions. Sin in our world has wonderful attraction. The taste, the skill, the genius of ages, have been expended in investing it with all conceivable charms. But the holy soul sees through it, and is disgusted. To it, all its attractions are but as a spangled dress that robes an ugly theatrical. 2. The death of all desire for its pleasures. Sin has "pleasures for a season." The holy soul has higher—the pleasures of a purified imagination, an exalted hope, a God-inspiring soul, an approving conscience, a smiling God. 3. The death of all fear about its penalties. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The burial of the past*:—1. Life is a series of fresh beginnings. We cannot really undo the past, but still we have to do as much towards it as we can. Nothing is more natural than to say to ourselves, "Let me begin again; all this has been a very foolish mistake; I am very sorry that I took the turn I did." The beginning again is made impossible by the indelible character of what we have done. Besides the reputation we have acquired, there is the memory of our past life. If we could but wipe out the past, and retain the experience that we have gained without the pain and sin through which we gained it, that would, as it seems, wholly satisfy our need, and we could really commence afresh. We do not quite ask to be put on the same level as we might have reached if we had been more careful, more in

earnest. What we ask for is to be enabled to fight the next battle without the burden of the past on us. We want, in short, to bury a great deal of the past, and not have its presence haunt us any more. 2. To this need Easter Day is the answer. You are at full liberty to do all you ask. Let not the memory of sin haunt you with any such daunting terrors or shames. Bury the dead past with all its sins; on this one condition, that you are "alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." If you can learn from the past your weak points, your besetting sins; if you can gather out of it that which came from God, and that which you can use in the service of God, then, by all means, bury the rest, and defy its power; and live in the power of the Son of God. 3. It is true that every deed passes into the substance of our being, and we can never be after it what we were before. But for all that, the sins that we have committed must not be allowed to work upon us beyond the measure that God has assigned to them. You have sinned, and you cannot be what you were, nor what you might have been. But you still can be a servant of God, and even your past sins can become in His hands instruments of His will. The fall of David gave us the thirty-second Psalm; the fall of St. Peter fitted him to strengthen his brethren. The weakness of St. Paul taught us the lesson, "My grace is sufficient for thee; for My strength is made perfect in weakness." There is even in evil a good element; and out of sin we may draw strength; and when we have drawn out all that may help us for the future, we need not fear to bury all the rest. Christ has expressly taken all that on Himself. We have, in the death and resurrection of Christ, the certain assurance that they who live unto Him need fear no condemnation. 4. Not with the past is our chief business, but with the present and the future. Let me then give a few cautions to those who really desire to reckon themselves to be dead unto past sins, but alive unto God. It is not at all uncommon to find that a high festival like Easter gives us a sense of recovered freedom, and a sort of confidence in our strength to win the battle. And then this excitement wears off, and we are not only back where we were before, but have the additional weakness caused by an additional defeat. Now—I. BEWARE OF CONFOUNDING A SLIGHT REPULSE WITH A REGULAR DEFEAT, and of allowing your enemy to win, not because you are really beaten, but because you merely fancy you are. A temptation comes to you in the shape of an evil thought. Do not yield as if the evil thought were as bad as the evil word or deed. Cast out the foe, and let him not drive you to sinful actions. Or, again, if you have actually given way, do not say that this is complete defeat. Fight every inch of ground. However much you may be defeated, the mere fact of your having kept up the battle retains you on Christ's side, and ensures you His help. II. In recommencing the battle with sin, DESPISE NOT THE DAY OF SMALL THINGS. Life to our foolish eyes seems not so earnest, not so solemn as we had thought it. We had been prepared for something extraordinary, and we find nothing that is not commonplace. We are like soldiers who have been drilled for a pitched battle, and then find nothing but a war of outposts, and so become discontented and careless. But the power of the Spirit of God is as much shown in small things as in great. The microscope proves that God's hand will fashion the wing of an insect as carefully as the grandest and most complicated animal structure. So, too, is it in the spiritual world; and the Creator would have the slightest impulse of the will as perfect and as pure as the deliberate choice of the reason. III. BE NOT CONTENT WITH NEGATIVES. Do not only resist temptation, but seek to serve God by diligent discharge of duties, by kindness, by turning your thoughts to your Father in heaven, to the Cross of your Redeemer. And I put the first of these first, though the last is the most important, because it is with the first, the outer duties, that we always have to begin. Begin with such duties, for those you are justified in even forcing yourself to do, and however much your inclination may lead you another way, still these duties are to be done. I cannot, in the same sense, bid you force yourself to love God and Christ; but God will most assuredly give you at last, if not at once, the power of loving Him if you are doing your best to obey Him, and when thoughts of Him and of Christ enter your heart, do not turn away. (*Bp. Temple.*) *Life in death*:—I. PAUL HERE EXHORTS TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF AN IDEAL SCHEME OF LIFE. 1. The facts of Christian experience are to be recognised. The moral antagonism of "flesh" and "spirit," represented by the dispositions of the body and mind, is to be reckoned with (chap. vii. 21, 23). 2. They are to be interpreted in agreement with the facts of Christ's crucifixion and resurrection. (1) The body being "mortal," we are to regard it as suffering the penalty of sin, even as our Lord's body was crucified. (2) Morally its promptings and tendencies

are not to be accepted as the law of conduct, but to be subordinated to the purer and higher impulses of the spirit, which has already entered upon the resurrection life, being mystically united to Christ Jesus (ver. 13). II. THE PRACTICAL INFLUENCE OF THIS UPON CONDUCT. 1. This is not to be a merely abstract distinction; it is to be acknowledged as the law according to which we are to act, just as elsewhere the apostle exhorts Christians not to consider themselves dead to sin, but to become so (Gal. v. 24; Col. iii. 5). 2. Nor is this to be understood as a violation of our physical nature, as if the spirit were to be benefited at the expense of the body. Asceticism is not countenanced by Paul or his Master. 3. It is but an assertion of the true order of our nature, in which conscience and the spiritual impulses are *de jure* the ruling authority and power. Our appetites and affections are not evil in themselves, but become so when allowed to rule. 4. The spirit in which this service is to be rendered is one of—(1) Liberty; for the tyranny of sin, the worst of masters, is thus broken. (2) Sacrifice; of ourselves to God through Christ; the sacrifice being possible and acceptable through association with that of His Cross. So it is, in a sense, a crucifixion, through which death voluntarily endured in one sphere, conduces to life in a higher one. 5. All this is not to be regarded as a mere taking for granted or figurative supposition, but is an exercise—(1) Of faith, identifying us with Christ. (2) Of free will determining that the ideal shall be realised. III. THE ENCOURAGEMENT TO THIS COURSE. 1. A promise. "Sin shall not," &c. 2. The nature of the Divine economy under which we elect to live. As we are incapable of obeying the law, and the law, when unfulfilled, tends to death, we can only rely upon God's grace or favour, which abolishes not only the penalty of sin, but its influence, presence, and attraction. (*St. J. A. Frere.*) *Dead but alive*:—1. How intimately the believer's duties are interwoven with his privileges! Because he is alive unto God he is to renounce sin, since that corrupt thing belongs to his estate of death. 2. How intimately both his duties and his privileges are bound up with Christ Jesus his Lord! 3. How thoughtful ought we to be upon these matters; reckoning what is right and fit; and carrying out that reckoning to its practical issues. We have in our text—I. A GREAT FACT TO BE RECKONED UPON. 1. The nature of this fact. (1) We are dead with Christ to sin by having borne the punishment in Him (vers. 6, 7). (2) We are risen with Him into a justified condition, and have reached a new life (ver. 8). (3) We can no more come under sin again than He can (ver. 9). (4) We are therefore for ever dead to its guilt and reigning power (vers. 12–14). 2. This reckoning is based on truth, or we should not be exhorted to it. (1) To reckon yourself to be dead to sin, so that you boast that you do not sin at all, would be a reckoning based on falsehood, and would be exceedingly mischievous (1 Kings viii. 46; 1 John i. 8). None are so provoking to God as sinners who boast their own fancied perfection. (2) The reckoning that we do not sin must either go upon the antinomian theory, that sin in the believer is no sin, which is a shocking notion; or else our conscience must tell us that we do sin in many ways; in omission or commission, in transgression or short-coming, in temper or in spirit (Jas. iii. 2; Eccles. vii. 20; Rom. iii. 23). (3) To reckon yourself dead to sin in the scriptural sense is full of benefit both to heart and life. Be a ready reckoner in this fashion. II. A GREAT LESSON TO BE PUT IN PRACTICE (ver. 12). 1. Sin has great power; it is in you, and will strive to reign. It remains as—(1) An outlaw, hiding away in your nature. (2) A plotter, planning your overthrow. (3) An enemy, warring against the law of your mind. (4) A tyrant, worrying and oppressing the true life. 2. Its field of battle is the body. (1) Its wants—hunger, thirst, cold, &c.—may become occasions of sin, by leading to murmuring, envy, covetousness, robbery, &c. (2) Its appetites may crave excessive indulgence, and unless continually curbed, will easily lead to evil. (3) Its pains and infirmities, through engendering impatience and other faults, may produce sin. (4) Its pleasures also can readily become incitements to sin. (5) Its influence upon the mind and spirit may drag our noble nature down to the grovelling materialism of earth. 3. The body is mortal, and we shall be completely delivered from sin when set free from our present material frame, if indeed grace reigns within. Till then we shall find sin lurking in one member or another. 4. Meanwhile we must not let it reign. (1) If it reigned over us it would be our god. It would prove us to be under death, and not alive unto God. (2) It would cause us unbounded pain and injury if it ruled only for a moment. Conclusion: Sin is within us, aiming at dominion; and this knowledge, together with the fact that we are nevertheless alive unto God, should—1. Help our peace; for we perceive that men may be truly the Lord's, even though sin struggles within

them. 2. Aid our caution: for our Divine life is well worth preserving, and needs to be guarded with constant care. 3. Draw us to use the means of grace, since in these the Lord meets with us and refreshes our new life. Let us come to the table of communion and to all other ordinances, as alive unto God; and in that manner let us feed on Christ. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Dead to sin and alive unto God*:—The great object of this chapter is to establish the alliance between a sinner's acceptance through Christ and his holiness. And here there is a practical direction given for carrying this alliance into effect. 1. Now, if these phrases be taken in their personal sense they would mean that we are mortified to the pleasures and temptations of sin, and alive to nothing but the excellencies of God's character, and a sense of our obligations to Him; or in other words, we are to reckon ourselves holy in order that we may become holy. It were a strange receipt for curing a man of his dishonesty, to bid him reckon of himself that he is an honest man. How, by the simple act of counting myself what I really am not, can I be transferred to that which I choose to imagine of myself? How can I reckon that to be true which I know to be false? We have heard much of the power of imagination; but this is giving it an empire that exceeds all which was before known. 2. Now you free the passage of these difficulties by taking the phrases forensically. To be dead unto sin is to be in the condition of one on whom death, the sentence of sin, has already been inflicted—if not in his own person, in that of his representative. To be alive unto God is to live in the favour of God—to which we have been admitted through Christ. To reckon that Christ died for the one purpose, and that He brought in an everlasting righteousness for the other, is to reckon, not on a matter of fancy, but on a matter proposed on the evidence of God's own testimony to faith. And when, instead of looking downwardly on the dark and ambiguous tablet of our own character, we look upwardly to the Saviour, we rest on the completeness of a finished expiation and perfect obedience, and transfer our reckoning from a ground where conscience gives us the lie, to a ground where God, who cannot lie, meets us with the assurances of His truth. 3. But it may be said, might not this be an untruth also? The apostle says to his converts, "Reckon yourselves dead unto sin"—but is it competent to address any one individual at random, to reckon himself in this blessed condition? Might not he, in so reckoning, be as deluded as in the other reckoning? I answer, It is nowhere said that Christ died so for me in particular, as that the benefits of His atonement are mine in possession; but it is everywhere said that He so died for me in particular, as that the benefits of His atonement are mine in offer. They are mine if I will. Such terms as "whosoever," and "all," and "any," and "ho, every one," bring the gospel redemption specifically to my door; and there it stands for acceptance as mine in offer, and ready to become mine in possession on my giving credit to the word of the testimony. The terms of the gospel message are so constructed that I have just as good a warrant for reckoning myself dead unto sin, as if I had been singled out by name. 4. And what is more. You will not acquire a virtuous character by imagining that you have it. But there is another way in which it may be acquired. Not by any false reckoning about your actual character; but by a true reckoning about your actual condition. It is not by imagining I am a saint that I will become so; but by reflecting on the condemnation due to me as a sinner—on the way in which it has been averted from my person—on the passage by which, without suffering to myself, I have been borne across the region of vindictive justice, and conclusively placed on the fair and favoured shore of acceptance with God. The sense and the reckoning of all this may transform me from the sinner that I am into the saint that I am not. How shall I, now that I have been made alive again, continue in that hateful thing, of whose malignant tendencies in itself, and of whose utter irreconcilableness to the will and character of God, I have, in the death of my Representative and my Surety, obtained so striking a demonstration? 5. Mark, then, the apostle's receipt for holiness. It is not that you reckon yourself pure, but that you reckon yourself pardoned. And how it should fall with the efficacy of a charm on a sinner's ear, when told that the first stepping-stone towards that character of heaven after which he has been so hopelessly labouring, is to assure himself that all the guilt of his past ungodliness is now done away—that the ransom of iniquity is paid, and that by Christ's death the penalties of that law he so oft has broken shall never reach him. It is this which brings home to the believer's heart the malignity of sin; it is this which opens to him the gate of heaven, and, disclosing to his view the glories of that upper region, teaches him that it is indeed a land of sacredness; it is this which inclines his footsteps along

the path to immortality, which the death of Christ alone has rendered accessible; it is this which conforms his character to that of the celestial spirits who are there before him; for the will of Christ, whom he now loves, is that he should be like unto him; and the grateful wish and grateful endeavour of the disciple, draw forth from his labouring bosom that prayer of faith, which is sure to rise with acceptance, and is sure to be answered with power. (*T. Chalmers, D.D.*) *Dead to sin, alive to God*:—I. WHAT IT IS WE ARE TO RECKON OURSELVES AS BEING. 1. Dead unto sin. (1) He who is dead is bereft of all power of thought or action. We may call him by his old familiar name, but he knows it not. We may appeal to him by all in which he used to be most keenly interested, but our words fall unheeded. (2) Such it is to be dead to sin. Temptation comes to him who is dead to sin and finds no part in him. Old sins which were once full of attraction he now cares not for; and they have no power over him. They are as much matters of indifference to him as last year's news, or last year's fashions. 2. Alive unto God. (1) To be alive to anything is to take a keen interest in it. The mother is alive to the needs of her children; the tradesman to the variations of the market; the general to every point of advantage for his own forces, or of difficulty to those of his adversary. (2) The Christian is alive towards God. He is sensitive to His smallest revelation. He listens for every whisper of His Spirit. He recognises His presence in all things. He is alive towards God because he has learned that he lives on God. Like the flower that ever opens its petals to the sun and closes them when the light and warmth of its rays are withdrawn, so the Christian soul is ever open to all the influences of God, and closed to the dark and chilling atmosphere of the world. II. WHAT RIGHT HAVE WE THUS TO RECKON OURSELVES AS DEAD UNTO SIN AND ALIVE UNTO GOD? Because we are members of Him who died unto sin once, and who now for ever liveth unto God. 1. Jesus our Head and Representative lived a life that was completely dead unto sin (John xiv. 30), and His final struggle with it was on the Cross, which was the completion of His death unto sin. "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" is His own challenge to His enemies, and one by one they were forced to own His sinlessness. Judas, Pilate, the penitent thief, the Roman centurion. 2. He liveth unto God. Throughout His earthly ministry He did so. From the first He is "the Son of Man who is in heaven"; He is never alone, for His Father is with Him. But it is in His resurrection that He is visibly shown to be living unto God. 3. It is into Him that we are incorporated. Therefore as He died unto sin and liveth unto God, it is both our duty and our right that we should thus claim the privilege He has won for us. III. THE BENEFIT WHICH WE GAIN BY THUS RECKONING OURSELVES. 1. To believe that we can do a thing goes a long way in enabling us to do it. We may have the power, yet if we do not believe that we have it, we lose all its benefits. This belief does not make the power, but it makes it operative. In like manner, to reckon ourselves to be anything is a great help towards being it. No doubt if we reckon ourselves to be what we are not we are guilty of self-deceit and vanity. But in seeking to avoid this mistake we must not fall into its opposite by refusing to claim what it is our right and duty to claim. 2. As Christians we have a right to reckon ourselves dead to sin and alive to God, and the fact that we can claim it will go far to make the claim a reality. When we realise that our true position is that we are dead to sin we can face temptation with certainty of success. When we are assured that we are alive to God we can feel more confidence that He is living in us, and that His life will be perfected in us. Many a battle has been lost through fear which would have been won if the defeated army had only "reckoned themselves" equal to the conflict. IV. HOW MAY WE BE SURE THAT THIS RECKONING IS NO MERE FEAT OF IMAGINATION OR FIGURE OF SPEECH, BUT A SOLID FACT? 1. As a matter of fact we do not find ourselves to be dead to sin. If it does not now win us by its open allurements, it lies in wait for our own unguarded moments. Neither are we yet truly alive unto God. Our moods vary. We are keenly alive to Him at one hour, and cold and indifferent the next. 2. There is but one way by which our actual condition may be made to correspond with our ideal; "through Jesus Christ our Lord." (1) It is because we are united to Him that we may reckon ourselves dead to sin. (2) It is because He to whom we are united is "our Lord," that we have confidence that that which He bids us to be we may be. The more we realise that He is Lord of our inmost being, just so far will He bring it into subjection to Himself, and mould it after His own pattern. Is not all power given to Him? Has He not therefore power to make us indeed dead to sin and alive unto God? Believe it. Trust Him. (*Canon Vernon Hutton.*) *Dead to sin and alive unto God through Christ*:—I.

WHAT IT IS TO BE DEAD UNTO SIN. Obviously the opposite of being dead in sin. As he who is dead has nothing more to do with earthly things, so he who is dead to sin has nothing to do any more with sin or its attractions. II. WHAT IS IT TO BE ALIVE UNTO GOD? To be full of life for Him—to be altogether active and on the alert to do His will. III. WHAT IS IT TO RECKON OURSELVES DEAD INDEED UNTO SIN? To believe, esteem yourselves dead to it. Regard this as truly your relation to sin; it shall have no more dominion over you. IV. WHAT IS MEANT BY RECKONING YOURSELVES ALIVE INDEED UNTO GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST? That you are to expect to be saved by Christ and to calculate on this salvation as your own. V. WHAT IS IMPLIED IN THE EXHORTATION? That there is an adequate provision for realising these blessings in fact. A precept requiring us to account ourselves dead to sin and alive to God, would be utterly untenable if no provision were made for its accomplishment. VI. WHAT IS IMPLIED BY COMPLYING WITH THIS INJUNCTION? 1. Believing such a thing to be possible. 2. Ceasing from all expectation of attaining this state of ourselves. 3. A present willingness to be saved from sin, and the actual renunciation of all sin as such. 4. An entire committal of our whole case to Christ, not only for the present, but for all future salvation from sin. 5. The foreclosing of the mind against temptation, in such a sense that the mind truly expects to live a life purely devoted to God. Christians in this state of mind no more expect to commit small sins than great sins. Hating all sin for its own sake and for its hatefulness to Christ, any sin, however small, is to them as murder. 6. That the Christian knows where his great strength lies. He knows it does not lie in works, but only in Christ received by faith. Conclusion: 1. This text alone entirely justifies the expectation of living without sin through all-abounding grace. 2. To teach that such an expectation is a dangerous error is to teach unbelief. Dangerous to expect salvation from sin? If so, what is the gospel worth? Some expect to have to count themselves not dead indeed unto sin, but somewhat alive to it, and in part alive to God through all their mortal life. It follows as quite a thing of course that expecting no complete victory over sin they will use no appropriate means, since faith stands foremost among those means, and faith must include at least a confidence that the thing sought is possible to be attained. An elder I knew rose in a meeting and told the Lord he had been living in sin thus far, and expected to go on in sin as long as he lived; he had sinned to-day and should doubtless sin to-morrow, and so on—and he talked as calmly about it all as if it were foolish to make any ado, as well as impossible to attempt any change for the better. How horrible! Suppose a wife should say to her husband, "I love you some, but you know I love many other men too." And yet this is not to be compared in shocking guilt and treason with the case of the Christian who says, "I expect to sin every day I live," with unmoved carelessness. You expect to be a traitor to Jesus each day of your life; to crucify Him afresh each day; and yet you talk about having a good hope through grace! But tell me, does not every true Christian say, "Do not let me live at all if I cannot live without sin; for how can I bear to go on day by day sinning against Him I so much love!" *(C. G. Finney, D.D.)* *Dying to sin and living to God*:—Paul's object in this chapter is to exhibit the inconsistency of sin with the Christian faith and position. We are, he says, planted together with Christ, and baptized into His death that we may pass with Him into a new life. There is only one kind of perfect human life, the life exemplified in Jesus Christ; and to this there is only one possible path, viz., death. The grub cannot pass to the higher life of the dragon-fly without first sickening and becoming dead to all the life it has been familiar with, and we, in order to enter the true life of man, must die to the old. I. WHAT IS IT TO BE DEAD TO SIN? 1. To be beyond its power to inflict penalty upon us. If a servant has come to a settlement with his master there remains no longer any bond between them. Now the wages of sin is death, and our wages have been paid in the death of Christ. The law has no claim upon a man who has suffered its extreme penalty, and this the old legal phraseology of Scotland brought out when it spoke of criminals being justified in the Grassmarket, when they were hung there. By death they cleared scores with the law. Thus we have by the death of Christ the removal of our guilt. 2. To be irresponsive to the appeals of sin. How unmoved, how irresponsive the dead are! Let the master shout at his slave's dead body; not one finger stirs to obey his orders. Was the dead man vain and fond of applause? the acclaims of a world bring no smile of pleasure to his face now. Was he mean and greedy? Fill the dead hand with gold; the fingers will not close upon it. The soldier who a few months before sprang forward at the sound of the bugle, now knows no difference

between the charge and the retire. The most passionate kiss that love presses on the face of the dead wins no acknowledgment, no returning embrace. Such is the insensibility of the true Christian who avails himself of his position. The man who was led by his appetites, and could not walk the streets without sinning, sets the Cross of Christ before him, and finds he can as little sin as if he were a corpse. 3. Not only a complete but a final severance from sin. Death is a state from which no one returns to the old life. So it was with Paul himself, who realised his position in Christ. (1) There are animals which hibernate, and for all practical purposes are dead for a season; they cease to be a terror to their natural prey, they entirely abandon their haunts and habits; but when the warmth of spring penetrates to their temporary burying-place there is a revival of their old instincts, energies, and habits. With many persons the abandonment of sin is a mere hibernation. For a while they seem to have lost all taste for their old ways, and, in the ardour of a newly conceived idea of life, the man is impregnable to all that would lead him from it. He is wrapped up in his new and strong resolve, and while that lasts he is insensible to the storms that would drive him from his path. Or something has made the world distasteful; his prospects have been blighted, and he withdraws from his former keen engagement in this world's affairs. Or there comes to the man of pleasure higher and better impulses; the Spirit of Christ strives with him, or some outward event warns him, and for the present he becomes dead to the solicitations of appetite. Or a young person comes under the influence of some one who does live a consecrated, unselfish, Christ-like life, and the influence is commanding while it lasts. All those temporary abandonments of sin are mere sleeps, or states of torpor; the soul of sin lives on securely underneath the lethargic surface, and, when the period of slumber passes and the cause of insensibility has exhausted itself, will return again with renewed and stronger life to all its old habits and ways. (2) Men sometimes commit suicide. They see that things have gone so far wrong as to be irretrievable. To go into hiding and wait for a better time is in vain; carefully weighing probabilities, they conclude that their severance from the world must now be final. This requires a clear judgment and a strong will. The same deliberate and decisive finality of action is required of us. Less than this will not do. We cannot get into a new life in any other way than by dying to the old. Yet how many of us stand, like Nero, with the dagger at our throat but with a hand far too nervous to drive it home. It is this great act of will that marks the second birth. II. WHAT IS MEANT BY LIVING TO GOD? This aspect of our participation with Christ is more important. 1. To die to sin is but a necessary preliminary. By itself it is incomplete and ineffective. Death can never form a desirable state, but only life, and it is because death of this kind promises fuller life that we pass through it. 2. Some persons, however, are dead to sin, but they are dead to everything else. Religion, instead of enlivening and enlarging them, seems to benumb and deaden them. For all the active good they do they might as well be in the grave. The poor man who needs help would as soon think of knocking at a tombstone as of knocking at their door; active beneficence on their part would startle us as if the sheeted dead had come to our aid. Where there is fulness of life there is activity, joy, love, intensity; not coldness, selfish caution, parsimony, and seclusion from the woes, the joys, the interests of men. 3. And where there is life it will appear; burying the seed beneath the clod, the life that is in it will work its way through, and show what it is. The body of Christ could not be held under the power of death, and if the Spirit of life that was in Him be really in us, that life will break through all that overlies it. And if you do not fill your life with Christian activities, and your heart with Christian joys, they will soon be filled and flooded with the old life. Do not make it needful that men should feel your pulse, or hold a mirror to your mouth to see if you be really alive; but let it be seen by the brightness of your vision, by the activity of your step, by the force and helpfulness of your hand, that you have a more abundant life. 4. This life, like Christ's resurrection life, is real. Our Lord took pains to prove that His risen body was not a phantom. Our risen life must be equally substantial. From the first some have had a name to live while really dead. Their appearance of newness does not bear scrutiny; they are airy nothings, pithless, pretentious, disappointing appearances; they imitate the conduct of those who have real life, or they are lifted up and carried along by the crowd around them, but when left to act in their own strength they are found to be powerless—dead. All about them is unreal; the religious expressions they use are borrowed, learned as a foreign tongue, so that you can readily detect the accent. Their prayers are forced; their whole religious

life is a make-up; not an actual, constant, self-supporting, free life. Strive to be true, to stand upon your feet, to act upon convictions of your own, to speak as you feel, without being an echo of other persons. Be sure that in yourself there is a true, risen life. (*Marcus Dods, D.D.*) *Dying to sin and living unto God*:—The apostle exhorts us to reckon ourselves to be—I. "DEAD UNTO SIN." 1. This involves death. (1) To its ensnaring artifices. Moses "chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." Hence we learn that sin is not without its pleasures, and that if we will cast in our lot with the people of God we must lay our account with losing them. (*a*) But these pleasures last but for a season. (*b*) They are only pleasures when viewed in a false light. Let but the light of truth dawn in upon the soul, and we find that we have been embracing disappointment and vanity and pain (ver. 21). (2) To the indwelling love of it. This will follow on the true discovery of its nature. When we are conscious of having had a deception practised upon us, our hatred is proportionate to the measure of our former love. We find that we have been nursing a viper in our bosom, and therefore, on discovering it, we are anxious to cast it away. (3) To its reigning power. This, indeed, is the only true mortification of sin. "Mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the earth." Let the natural man be pierced through and through, until ye have crucified the whole "body of sin." The head of pride must be crowned with thorns; the hands of covetousness must be pierced with nails; the unruly appetites must be put off with vinegar and gall. Yea, the whole man must be laid in the grave, must be buried with Christ, in order that with Christ also it may rise to newness of life. 2. Here is the design of all religious ordinances, viz., that the root of bitterness may be destroyed in the soul. We are buried with Christ in baptism, in faith that our corruptions shall be drowned, even as the Egyptians were when they lay dead on the seashore. We approach the Lord's table in faith that the food which we there receive spiritually into the soul shall operate as a poison to all those corruptions which yet reign within us. Every prayer we offer up is a blow at sin; every self-denial we practise is to starve out corruption from the soul. But, in order to the completeness of this death of sin within us, it is needful that we take away all the means of life. "Fire is as effectually put out by taking wood away as by throwing cold water upon it." We must take care to blockade all the avenues of temptation; we must intercept those supplies which "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life," are for ever conveying into the soul. II. "ALIVE UNTO GOD." We are not to give a dead carcase to a living God; neither, on the other hand, when the members of the old man have been crucified, are they to remain idle. No; after they are buried, they are to rise again, and be laid as a free-will offering on the altar of God. Being dead to sin we must henceforth be alive to God. 1. To the honour of God's name. 2. To the interests of His kingdom. 3. To the glory of His grace in the entire sanctification of our souls. Conclusion: 1. All comes to us through Jesus Christ our Lord. If there be any subjugation of the power of sin in the soul, "His right hand hath got the victory"; if there be any quickening to a renewed existence, He it was who began, and who must complete the work. 2. Let shame prompt you to die to sin. If Christ died for sin, the least we can do is to die to sin. 3. Let gratitude prompt us to "live to God." (*D. Moore, M.A.*) *Dying to sin and living unto God*:—I. THE BELIEVER'S TRUE POSITION. 1. Dead to sin: to—(1) Its attractions. (2) Dominion. (3) Condemnation. 2. Alive unto God. (1) His presence. (2) His favour. (3) His influence. (4) His authority. II. THE MEANS THROUGH WHICH IT IS ATTAINED—Jesus Christ. 1. Faith in Him. 2. Identification with Him. III. THE DUTY OF REALISING THIS. 1. Theoretically. 2. Experimentally. 3. Practically. IV. THE MOTIVES BY WHICH IT IS ENFORCED—"likewise." (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Christians dead unto sin and alive unto God*:—We are reminded that Christians are—I. "DEAD INDEED UNTO SIN." 1. This implies more than their avoiding sin. A man from fear of loss, hope of advantage, or from reference to his reputation, may be induced to avoid what he loves: and there are many who are ready to wish that it were lawful to indulge in sin. Lot's wife left Sodom, but her heart was in it still, and if all those were to become pillars of salt who profess to forsake the world, while hankering after it, we should hardly be able to move about. 2. Christians are mortified to sin. The Christian's aversion to sin is natural, and we know that all natural aversions operate universally. It is not to some particular vice to which he may have no constitutional propensity or little temptation. If it were lawful to say to a mother, "Why you may take your child and throw it out of the window," she could not do it. And why? Has she not

strength to open the window? Has she not arms to throw it out? Oh! but it would violate every feeling of her nature; it would be impossible: and this would be a safer prevention than any argument or threatening against it. So the Christian "doth not commit sin"—that is, as others do, and as he once did—"for His seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin because he is born of God." 3. You see how the apostle treats this matter: "How shall we, who are dead to sin," by profession, by obligation, by inclination, "live any longer therein?" (ver. 2). As no creature can live out of its own element, so it is impossible for the Christian, now that he is regenerated, to live in sin. II. "ALIVE UNTO GOD." If there were no instance of immorality in the world, I should want no other proof that man was a fallen creature than his insensibility and indifference towards God. That a subject should be dead to his sovereign, a child to his father, the creature to his Maker, a beneficiary to his benefactor; can you imagine that God made man with such a disposition as this? Now real religion must commence in the destruction of this insensibility. Christians are alive unto—1. God's favour. While many ask, "Who will show us any good?" he prays, "Lord, lift up the light of Thy countenance upon me." He knows and feels now that "His favour is life," and His "loving-kindness better than life." This makes him happy, whatever may be his outward condition. 2. His presence. Is the sanctuary now attractive to him? It is principally because it is "the place where His honour dwelleth." Does he love the retirement of the closet? It is because there he holds communion with his God. He loves the company of the godly because they remind him of God, and considers heaven as the perfection of his happiness because he will be for ever with the Lord. 3. His glory. It is this that led the apostle therefore to say, "Whether we eat or drink," &c. Hence he sympathises with the cause of God in all its variations. If professors fall away, and bring a scandal upon it, he is sorrowful. On the other hand, if the Word of the Lord runs and is glorified, and if believers walk in the fear of the Lord, in this he rejoices. III. "THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD." As—1. Their Example. In His principles, temper, practice, they see the character which we have described fully embodied. In Him there was no sin; He always did the things that pleased the Father: He was our religion incarnate. 2. Their Teacher. He has set before us those arguments and motives which have the greatest tendency to turn us from sin and to God, so that we may be dead to the one and alive to the other. 3. Their dying Friend. Is it possible for me to love and live in that which crucified the Lord of glory? 4. Their meritorious Saviour. When He died for their sins He at the same time obtained for them grace for trial, duty, and conflict. IV. "RECKON YOURSELVES" AS SUCH. 1. In order to maintain the conduct that is suitable to such; for your conduct should correspond with your character and your condition. The way to know what you ought to do is always to consider what you are. 2. In order to keep you from wondering at the treatment of such. 3. In order that ye may rejoice in the portion of such. If the world frowns on you, God smiles; if they condemn you, He is near to justify. You may be losers in His service, but you can never be losers by it. (*W. Jay.*) *Alive unto God*:—This means that a man—I. BREATHES GOD'S LIFE. There was a man taken out of the water apparently dead. The physician came and breathed into the nostrils and mouth of the poor fellow, and then pressed the breast; breathed in again and pressed the breast. At last he had the joy of hearing a gasp, and then of seeing the opened eye. "Alive unto God" means that God has breathed into you His breath; the breath of life and of righteousness. II. PUTS FORTH EFFORT. There is a picture in Brussels of a man thought dead of the plague. He was not dead. After a time, awaking, he felt he was nailed up in the coffin, and the picture shows him to be in the act of pushing up the lid. So it is with the man who is "alive unto God." He puts forth efforts, and he repeats them till he is delivered. III. REQUIRES FOOD, TO SUSTAIN THE NEW LIFE. IV. DESIRES THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD. What efforts some men make to acquire knowledge of earthly things. The Christian, whilst not despising that knowledge, desires especially to know God. V. RESISTS SIN. There is that fight going on. The unconverted man reasons—"Don't sin, because you may be found out." The devil strikes him down to the ground, and he says, "There is no life in him now." But how is it with the Christian when Satan endeavours to overcome him? He has God's armour on, and the sword of the Spirit, and he stands, because he is alive unto God. VI. BEARS THE CROSS. Being "alive unto God," and having Christ's love in the soul, we can lift up and carry the heaviest burden with rejoicing of heart, for we have His life; the life that Christ had, that same life is in us. Conclusion: 1. Is it not being alive in faith to

God? It is not alive unto creeds, but unto God. It is faith in the presence of God. 2. It also is alive in hope to God—that hope which is the anchor holding on amidst all earth's tempests and all the wild sea's roar. 3. It is alive in love to God. What will not the soul endure for those whom it loves! It imitates the example of those who have its affection. (*W. Birch.*) *The transfer of life to God*:—In the days of King John of England the dignity of the English crown was brought to its lowest. King John submitting to the Pope as a vassal, and before the Pope's legate, taking off his crown, he handed it to the legate, who took it, put it down for a moment to show his possession of it, then handed it back to John to be held by him as a vassal of Rome. But this incident illustrates how we Christians can die to ourselves, yet be living for Christ. We take our life in our hands, and hand it over to God. But see, He lifts it again and holds it out towards us, saying, "Take this life and use it for Me, as My vassal, My servant." (*J. Hamilton.*) *Holiness the Church's life*:—Holiness is the life of the Church; it is this that makes the Church a living body, and consequently the means and agent of its own growth and happiness. A living thing grows from itself, and not by accession from without, as a house or a ship grows. A flower does not grow by adding a leaf to it, nor a tree by fastening a branch to it, nor a man by fixing a limb to his frame. Everything that has life grows by a converting process, which transforms the food into means of nourishment and of growth and enlargement. A holy Church lives, and its holiness converts all its ordinances and provisions into means of deep-rooted, solid, enlarged, and beautiful holiness. (*T. W. Jenkyn, D.D.*)

Ver. 12. **Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body.**—*The reign of sin*:—"Let not sin reign" because it is—I. A TYRANNIC REIGN. 1. Sin has usurped its sway over the heart. It forms no part in the original plan of our world. 2. It gains the ruling power gradually. If the criminal knew from his first sin the tremendous power it would have upon his life his downward course would have been arrested. The chain was drawn tighter by degrees. 3. As Britons we hate everything oppressive, the public sentiment is against all tyrants; still the greatest of all is tolerated in the hearts of thousands. II. A DISHONOURABLE REIGN. Occasionally we are obliged to blush at the deeds done in the name of England. But as a rule we are proud of our country, not so much on account of its wealth and military strength as the position it has gained for uprightness. Sin is dishonourable to God and to man. It is the transgression of the best law, and the highest ingratitude. III. A DESTRUCTIVE REIGN. Peace, moral beauty, and strength are destroyed wherever sin has the ruling power. It is a cancer that eats its way gradually, yet effectually, to the very roots of our being. Conclusion: Subjects we must be; it is for us to decide under whose government. We cannot govern ourselves, we must serve either righteousness or sin. How thankful we ought to be that there is a higher, stronger, purer power ready to enter the heart and rule there. We are under no obligation to let sin have the throne. The Spirit is willing to govern if man will open his heart. (*Jenkin Jones.*) *The reign of sin*:—I. WHAT IS IT FOR SIN TO REIGN OVER US. 1. All men are sinful (Rom. iii. 10–12). 2. There is no sin but all men by nature are prone to (Psa. li. 5). 3. But there is some sin that every one is inclined to more than others (Psa. xviii. 23), by—(1) The constitution of his body (1 Cor. ix. 27). (2) Vocation. (3) Custom (Jer. xiii. 23). (4) Condition in the world (Prov. xxx. 8, 9). (5) Temptations (1 Pet. v. 8). 4. The sins we are most inclined to may have a prevalency over us, either—(1) Partial (Rom. viii. 20, 21), or—(2) Plenary, without resistance (Rom. vi. 12, 20). 5. When sin has a full prevalency in us it is said to reign over us. Because we—(1) Are subject to its power. (2) Obey its motions (Rom. vi. 16, vii. 5). II. WHY SHOULD NOT SIN REIGN OVER US. Because—1. It has no right or title to this kingdom, but only God as—(1) Our Creator. (2) Preserver (Acts xvii. 28). (3) Redeemer (1 Cor. vi. 20). 2. We are buried with Christ by baptism into His death, and so are free from sin (Rom. vi. 1–3, 7, 10, 11, 14). 3. If it reign in us it will ruin us (Rom. vi. 23). III. HOW SHALL WE OBTAIN THE VICTORY OVER IT. By—1. Faith in Christ. 2. Prayer (Psa. cxix. 133; Rom. vii. 24). 3. Watchfulness (Prov. iv. 23). IV. USES. 1. Of examination. That is a reigning sin—(1) Which is your chief end and greatest pleasure (Col. iii. 5; Phil iii. 19). (2) Which is made habitual by custom (Jer. xiii. 23). (3) Which your thoughts run most upon and study most for (1 John iii. 8, 9). (4) Which we most willingly submit to (John viii. 44; Rom. vi. 13, vii. 21, 22). (5) Which we we do not love to hear reproved. (6) That for whose sake we commit others (Psa. xviii. 23), as David's murder for

adultery. (7) Which distracts us in holy duties (1 John ii. 15). 2. Of exhortation. Consider—(1) Sin is the greatest slavery in the world (2 Pet. ii. 19; Titus iii. 3). (2) Christ came into the world to redeem thee from it (Rom. iii. 26). (3) If sin reign in thee, thou hast no part in Christ (Matt. vi. 24), for Satan reigns over thee (2 Tim. ii. 26). (4) Thou wilt have but bad wages for thy service. (*a*) In this life—the torture of a guilty conscience—a curse on thy estate (Mal. ii. 2)—the wrath of an offended God (Psa. vii. 11). (*b*) In the life to come—separation from God—imprisonment in hell (ver. 23). (*Bishop Beveridge.*) *The tyranny of sin*:—I. THE TYRANNY OF SIN. It has—1. Made the body mortal. 2. Developed its lusts. 3. Through it enslaved the soul. II. THE DUTY OF RESISTING IT. 1. We ought, because Christ has redeemed us. 2. We can, through grace. 3. We must if we would be saved. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *An indomitable will needed*:—If a man has a strong besetment, he must treat it as he would a savage dog. He must keep it kennelled and chained, and never suffer it to go beyond its tether, however it may bark or growl. He will have to say to it every now and then, "Down, sir." He will sometimes require the stern resoluteness expressed in John Foster's saying, "This soul shall either conquer this body or shall leave it." Ruthless, bloodless, indomitable will is needed sometimes in order that a man may fight well the battle of his life. *Sin dwelling in but not reigning over the believer*:—1. Some would substitute here in place of "mortal," as liable to death, the idea of actual death in Christ. Sin having been plucked of its sting, our Saviour having received it in His own body, therefore there is no more power in our adversary to inflict its mortal poison upon us; he is not only disarmed of his right to condemn us, but of all ability to tyrannise over us. In virtue of his defeat he will not obtain the dominion over our hearts unless we let him. Our resistance, backed as it is by the plea of a Saviour crucified, and by the power of a Saviour exalted, will be greatly too much for him. We who have been baptized into Christ are somewhat in the same circumstances that the children of Israel, after being baptized into Moses in the Red Sea, were in reference to the tyranny of Egypt. Their enemy was engulfed in that abyss over which they found a shielded way; and, placed beyond his dominion, it was now their part to exchange the mastery of Pharaoh for the mastery of God; but those who rebelled were cut off in the wilderness. 2. And this analogy does not fail us if we take "mortal" in the customary signification. While in these mortal bodies, we are only on a road through the wilderness of earth to the blessedness of heaven. All who are really partakers with Christ in His death have got over a mighty barrier. They have been carried through the strait gate of acceptance, and have now to travel along the narrow way of duty and discipline, "not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Let not sin reign over us on the passage that we have yet to traverse. Let us stifle every rising inclination for the carnalities of Egypt, and come not under the power of those lusts which war against the soul, till we reach the spiritual Canaan where every inclination to evil shall cease to exist and so cease to annoy us. 3. We cannot fail to perceive how widely diverse the injunction would have been, if instead of, "Let not sin reign," Paul had said, "Let sin be rooted out"; or if, instead of saying, "Obey not its lusts," he had bid us eradicate them. The more enviable state, of course, would be to have no inclination to evil, and could we attain that higher state, we would become on earth what angels are in heaven; but if doomed to the lower state during all our abode here, then we may understand that the life of a Christian is a struggle of two adverse elements, and the habitual prevalence of one of them, and that sin is not to be exterminated, but to be kept at bay. Let us try to banish it, and defeated in this effort, we may give up in heartless despair the cause of our sanctification; but trying to dethrone it, and succeeding in this effort, while we mourn its hateful company, we may both keep it under control and calmly look onward to the hour of release. We cannot obtain such a victory as that we shall never feel the motions of the flesh, but we may obtain such a victory as that we shall not walk after the flesh. The enemy is not so killed as that we are delivered from his presence; but, by an unremitting strenuousness on our part, we may keep him so chained as that we shall be delivered from his power. 4. The time is coming when, freed from every opposing tendency, we shall expatiate over the realms of ethereal purity and love—just as the time is coming when the chrysalis shall burst with unfettered wing from the prison in which it is now held; and where, we doubt not, that it is aspiring and growing into a meetness for traversing at large the field of light and air above it. This representation of indwelling sin—I. CONDUCES TO THE PEACE OF A BELIEVER. The very occurrence of a sinful desire, or feeling, harasses a

delicate conscience, and he may be led to suspect therefrom his interest in the promises. But it will quiet him to be told that there is a distinction between the saint who is struggling below and the saint who is triumphing above. II. CONDUCES TO THE BELIEVER'S PROGRESS, for it leads to a most wholesome self-distrust which, for one thing, will save him from needlessly thrusting himself into a scene of temptation. God will grant succour against the onsets which temptation maketh upon us, but He does not engage Himself to stand by us in the presumptuous onsets which we make upon temptation. III. LEADS US TO SUCH MEASURES AS MAY STRENGTHEN THE GRACIOUS PART OF OUR CONSTITUTION for every such encounter as cannot be shunned. Temptation will come, though we should never move a step towards it. What, then, is the best method of upholding the predominance of the good principle over the evil one? A fresh commitment of ourselves in faith and in prayer to Him who first put the good principle into our hearts—another act of recurrence to the fulness that is in Christ Jesus—a new application for strength from the Lord our Sanctifier to meet this new occasion for strength which He Himself has permitted to cross our path. (*T. Chalmers, D.D.*) *Follow after holiness*:—I. HOW MUST WE DO THIS? 1. By breaking the power of sin (ver. 12). 2. By yielding ourselves to God (ver. 13). II. IS IT POSSIBLE? Grace destroys—1. The dominion of sin (ver. 14). 2. The love of sin (ver. 15). III. WHY OUGHT WE TO DO IT? It is required—1. By the obedience of faith (ver. 16). 2. By gratitude to God for His gracious help (ver. 17). 3. By our merciful emancipation from the bondage of sin. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The obligation of a holy life*:—I. ITS ELEMENTS. 1. Subjection of natural lusts. 2. Renunciation of the service of sin. 3. Consecration of all the powers to God. II. ITS POSSIBILITY (ver. 14). As Christians—1. We are not under the law. 2. But under grace. 3. Consequently receive dominion over sin. III. ITS INDISPENSABLE NECESSITY. Because—1. Grace requires it. 2. Practice determines to whom we belong. 3. Obedience is the perfection of righteousness. (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 13. **Neither yield ye yourselves as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God.**—*Yielding*:—Yielding is an image carried over from the world of matter into the world of mind. In every case of yielding you have pressure meeting with resistance and overcoming it. Note then—I. THE PRESSURE. There are many kinds of pressure. When your shoe pinches you it presses upon one small point only, but the kindly pressure of the air is upon every part of your body. And such is Heaven's gentle pressure upon your soul. God presses us through—1. The experiences of life. These Romans before their yielding were great pleasure-seekers, and Paul asks what they had gained by it all. The answer is, nothing but shame and death (vers. 21, 23). They were like their own Cæsar, who, when at the height of his glory, asked, "And is this all?" Chrysostom tells us that the pressure of disgust at heathen pleasures brought him to the yielding point, and that many young men in his day had the same experience. And life is the same in every age. At a Jewish wedding the priest places an empty wineglass on the floor, and the bridegroom, setting his heel upon it, splinters it into fragments. The strange custom is meant to remind the newly-married pair that their earthly happiness is just as fragile. If so, we must ask whether there is no cup for mortals that can never be broken. Thus life puts upon us a strong pressure which should make us yield unto God. 2. His law. This Epistle is full of this pressure. It says, You are under God's law and you ought to obey it. But you are ever breaking it. What, then, are you to do? Escape from its terrors there is none but by yielding. The law drives the law-breaker into the open arms of the Law-fulfiller. 3. His love. Paul has very great faith in the power of this pressure. He states all the facts of Christ's life and death, and shows how they all reveal God's kindness to sinners. He does everything to win attention to Christ's redeeming love, for he knows how it can bring the soul up to the bending temperature. Often the quietest and gentlest influences conquer resistance that defies all other pressure. Arctic explorers frozen in amid blocks of ice would fain set themselves free by main force, but in vain. But the sun at length smiles upon the stubborn snow-mountain, and grim winter lets go his hold and quietly yields. Thus the resistance of our frozen hearts is melted away by Divine love. 4. In pressing a man towards Christ the Holy Spirit often unites these three and other kinds of pressure. II. MAN'S RESISTANCE. 1. There is a resistance called *vis inertiæ*, *i.e.*, the power of doing nothing. That rock which came thundering down the hill, and now blocks the highway by its dead weight, overcomes all the pressure

one hundred men can bring to bear upon it. And some offer a rock-like resistance to God. Their habits are all against God, and they won't consider whether their habits should be changed. Habit is the Latin word *habet*; it *has* them. They are slaves with a wish to be free. 2. But others resist of set purpose. The murderers of Stephen were of this class. Some do this who are outwardly respectable; theirs is resistance without violence. Others do not care to hide their resistance. "I hated the gospel," one confessed, "and my soul hissed against it as cold water hisses when it meets fire." The resisting, defying power of man's will is awful. Milton in "Paradise Lost" makes this the explanation of Satan's character. I have read that the physician who attended a dying nobleman, famed for his genius and godlessness, one day overheard him saying, "Shall I yield? Shall I pray?" The physician held in his breath for the answer, as the dying man was not aware that any one was within earshot. After a pause, the dying poet said, firmly, "No, no weakness!" Ah! there it is; yielding seems weakness to the unhumbled heart. Think of it—a weakness to yield to God and Christ, to eternal truth and mercy! III. THE YIELDING-POINT. That point is reached when man's resistance gives way under God's pressure. 1. The Christian life begins with an act of yielding. The Christian does not yield as the defeated soldier yields to his foe who slays him, but with the consent of all that is within him, as one "alive from the dead." Often a small thing, as it seems to us, makes the happy day that fixes the choice on the Saviour. The turning-points of life are like the water-partings of great rivers, where a raindrop's destiny is often decided by a breath of wind. While the gentlest touch may make the pressure greater than the resistance, there must be a yielding in every case, and it must be a yielding of the whole man for the whole life. A rich Australian in his youth was a poor plough-boy. A free passage was offered to him. By faith in that offer he left his native land, crossed the deep, began life anew, and so became a rich landowner. That offer was to him "a faithful saying and worthy of acceptation," but his belief of it did him no good till he had yielded himself to it in every possible way. 2. The Christian life from beginning to end is a yielding. The Roman Christians had yielded in conversion, and Paul wishes them to rise to the highest life, and his message to them is still, "Yield." They are the best Christians who are best at yielding, and who are always in the yielding mood. 3. The passage (vers. 12–23) is full of military images. The last verse means, "The soldier's wages—the rations—of sin is death," it is not merely a punishment in the future. And the exact meaning of our text is, offer yourselves as volunteers unto God, and all your faculties of mind and body as soldiers' weapons in the cause of holiness. When war breaks out many an officer who might enjoy every luxury at home, who is even an heir to a peerage, offers to serve his country on the battlefield. He offers himself by an act of the will, and the spirit of that act is carried into his whole service. His heart is stirred to its depths by soldierly ambition. Rome was a city of soldiers, and every Roman would thoroughly understand the apostle when he urged them to be the courageous and devoted soldiers of Christ. You see, then, that this yielding is not an abject, spiritless, lazy thing. It is the beginning of a life of great energy. "Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead." Have you ever spent an hour with the convalescent, "alive from the dead"? Did you ever see such zest in the work and enjoyments of life? Well, that should be the spirit of those who have devoted themselves to the service of their God. Almost every verse in this chapter testifies to the apostle's anxiety that they would be whole-hearted in the service of Christ. When Moshesh, the chief of the Basutos, received the missionaries, he advised his chiefs to have one foot in the Church and the other out. But one chief became an earnest Christian, and said to Moshesh, "I put only one foot in the Church at first, as you advised me, but the love of Christ soon drew in my whole body." The apostle counsels each Roman convert to give his whole soul and body. For he who does not yield everything really yields nothing. The true yielder moves together when he moves at all. Calvin chose for his seal and motto a hand holding a heart on fire, with the words, "I give thee all. I keep back nothing." The apostle (ver. 19) pleads with them to serve Christ now as they used to serve Satan. (*J. Wells, M.A.*) *Yield unto God*:—I. THE DUTY ITSELF. 1. In general it implies, that whatever we possess, all that we are, or have, or can do, should be consecrated to God, and devoted to His service and honour. The being which we have is derived from Him; every blessing which we enjoy is the fruit of His bounty; every talent with which we are distinguished was freely bestowed by Him. To Him, therefore, they

ought to be entirely surrendered, and in the advancement of His glory at all times employed. 2. More particularly, we must yield to God our immortal souls, with all the intellectual powers which they possess. (1) We must dedicate our understanding to the Father of Lights, to be illuminated by Him with saving knowledge, to be employed in contemplating His nature and perfection; above all, to know Jesus, and Him crucified, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. (2) We must dedicate our will to that holy rule of resignation which David expressed when he said, "Here I am, let the Lord do unto me what seemeth good in His sight," and which David's Lord expressed in circumstances infinitely more trying, "Father, not My will, but Thine be done." (3) We must consecrate our memories to be treasures of Divine truth, our affections to the pursuit of those things which are above, our senses to the salutary discipline of self-denial, and our members as instruments of holiness to God. 3. All our possessions and enjoyments must be devoted to God. II. FOR WHAT PURPOSES WE ARE THUS TO YIELD OURSELVES UNTO GOD. 1. We are to yield ourselves to God, to do whatsoever He commands; in all instances of duty, to give a prompt and cheerful obedience to His authority. 2. We must yield ourselves to God not only to do but to suffer His will. We are already in the hand of God, by our essential dependence; let us likewise be so by our own consent and choice. This is the true balm of life. It is this that softens adversity, and alleviates the load of sorrow. In this we unite the noblest duty which we can perform, and the most precious benefit which we can reap. 3. We must yield ourselves to God, to be disposed of by His providence, as to our lot and condition in the world. 4. As we must be resigned to the will of God with respect to our outward lot, so we must be satisfied with His disposal, as to the measure of spiritual gifts which He is pleased to bestow on us. Should He make us but as the foot, we must be as well contented as if He had made us the hand or the head, and rejoice that we are found qualified for being even the least honourable member in Christ's mystical body. III. THE MANNER IN WHICH WE OUGHT TO PERFORM THIS DUTY OF YIELDING OURSELVES UNTO GOD. 1. Before we can perform this duty in an acceptable manner, it is necessary that we have just views both of God and of ourselves. We must yield ourselves to God like condemned rebels, who cast themselves on the mercy of their sovereign. Yet, while sensible of our miserable state, we must also have a view of those riches of mercy which are open to the chief of sinners. 2. We must yield ourselves unto God with serious, attentive, and awakened minds. We must remember that yielding ourselves to God will involve in it the renouncing of many favourite engagements, the performing of many difficult duties, and the mortifying of many desires, which hitherto, perhaps, it has been the whole plan of our lives to gratify. 3. In yielding ourselves unto God, our hearts must be humbled with deep repentance, for having so long gone astray from Him and His service. 4. We must yield ourselves unto God without any secret reserve or limitation, imploring that He may take the full possession of our hearts, and cast out of them whatever opposeth or exalteth itself against Him. 5. All this must be done with an explicit regard to the Lord Jesus Christ, through whom alone we have access to the Father. IV. ENFORCE THE EXHORTATION BY SOME MOTIVES AND ARGUMENTS. 1. Need I represent to you the necessity of this duty? Can you withdraw yourselves from being the property of God as His creatures? Can you evade the dispensations of His providence, or snatch from Him those issues of life and death which are incontrollably in His hands? 2. Consider the reasonableness of this duty. If there is reasonableness in acknowledging our debts, and in being thankful for our benefits; if there is reasonableness in submitting to be guided by unerring wisdom, and to be disposed of by infinite goodness; it is that we should yield ourselves to that God who made us, who preserves and hath redeemed us, and hath pledged His faithfulness to conduct all those to happiness who put their confidence in Him. 3. And this leads me to the last argument which I shall use for enforcing this exhortation, which is the advantage with which it will be attended. At the same time that we yield ourselves to God, He gives Himself to us in all the fulness of His grace. (*R. Walker.*) *Yielding the members as instruments*:—I. YIELD. Present: allusion to entrance on military service. II. YIELD WHAT? "Your members." The whole man, more especially the bodily members, which are the organs of internal principles. III. WHAT AS? "Instruments"—weapons, arms. The members are weapons used on one side or the other of the conflict between sin and righteousness; employed in the service of one or other of two masters or sovereigns. The body is an arsenal of arms or a warehouse of tools for good or evil. (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) *Yielding*

unto God:—The word "yield" in Luke ii. 22 means "present," and so it does in Acts xxiii. 23, 24, and in Eph. v. 27. "Yielding," then, is to present ourselves to God as His servants, His property, wholly consecrated to Him. Consider—I. THE REASONS WHY IT IS OUR DUTY TO YIELD OURSELVES UNTO GOD. Because—1. He is absolute sovereign, and we must do His will. It is obviously, therefore, the greatest folly and danger to have a will opposed to Him in any respect. 2. He is of infinite excellence. He not only must and will rule, but He ought to rule. Who should possess supreme power but that Being who is wise, generous, patient, faithful, true, and infinitely so beyond all His creatures? 3. He has absolute right to rule. For whom ought all our faculties and powers to be employed but for Him who is their Maker? To what can we trace our blessings but to His bounty? He made these faculties and the objects around us so exactly suited to our wants. 4. He has redeemed us. Far less benefit than this bestowed by a fellow creature would make us yield ourselves as debtors to him all our lives. 5. Our best interests in time and in eternity are involved in this step. To refuse to obey this command is to refuse to be enriched by His bounty, to be preserved by His care, to taste of His love, and to enjoy His glory. II. THE EXTENT OF THIS COMMAND. It does not mean that you are to submit your power, though you must do that. God will not suffer any of His creatures eventually to persevere in opposition to Him; and therefore we are now, before that moment of compulsion comes, called to submit. 1. It is His revealed will that each sinner who hears the gospel should believe on His Son, look for sanctification of his nature through the work of the Holy Spirit, depend on Him to bring him to everlasting happiness, and come to an unreserved obedience to the whole of His law who is our rightful Lord. 2. But this is not all. The passage obviously means, "Present yourselves a living sacrifice to God." While it requires us to resign ourselves absolutely to the whole will of God, it calls upon us to give Him all our faculties, and to devote our affections to Him. He has planted in us the powers of fear, of hope, of desire, of delight, of love: it is His will that all these affections, especially the master affection, love, should be occupied chiefly with Him; we are to love Him supremely, and all the rest will follow. He who yields himself to God, yields all his property, his influence, his time, whatever he possesses, for it is God's. (*Baptist Noel, M.A.*) *Yielding to God*:—I. THE PRECEPT. To yield implies that two persons have been opposed one to the other, and that now one submits to the other. This submission may be a willing or unwilling, unreserved or reserved, permanent or temporary. 1. As between man and God, to yield implies that there is a great gulf which sin has caused to exist between man and God. There is no love to God in man's natural heart. Hence the unrest and misery of so many men. They are not at peace with God. 2. Into the midst of this moral chaos God has descended, and in the person of His Son has opened a way by which the sinner may be received back to God. And hence the language of God to the sinner is, "Be ye reconciled." "Yield yourselves unto God." 3. This submission must be accompanied by heartfelt sorrow for, and a determination to forsake sin, and faith in Christ. 4. It must be a willing submission. There must be no reserve, no condition, no hanging back. 5. It must be a permanent submission, not only for the present, but for the future, for time and for eternity. II. WHY IT SHOULD BE OBEYED. "Yield" because—1. It is your duty. There is in the hearts of Englishmen a strong feeling of the principle of duty. That famous signal—"England expects every man to do his duty," rings through the hearts of thousands when they hear it. And it is that which carries the Englishman wherever his country calls him. But, alas! there may be a sense of duty as regards man, and no such sense as regards God. But still remember that it is your duty. (1) God is your Creator. Why were you called into being? Go and ask yon tiny insect and yon blade of grass, which, if they could speak would say, "For God." And for what is the most wonderful of God's creatures except to obey Him? (2) God is your king. Satan exercises a mighty power, but his is an usurped dominion. (3) God is your benefactor. Whence your life, health, comforts? Whence the forbearance, the goodness through the mercy of God to you? (4) If you are not yielding yourselves unto God you are yielding yourself to some false god. It is impossible that man can serve two masters. 2. It is our life. (1) Forgiveness is life. As long as a man has unforgiven sin upon his conscience, that man is dead in the sight of God. There is free and unconditional forgiveness promised to all who believe in the Saviour. (2) The new birth is life. Have you ever thirsted for this life? It is told us of the wounded upon the field of Waterloo, that what they longed for during that terrible

night, was not the relief which surgical aid could afford, not an escape from that bloody field, but simply water to quench their burning thirst. Have you, beneath a sense of sin, a sense of your wounds thirsted for the water of life? "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." 3. It is your death if you refuse to yield (Matt. xxv. 30, 41, 46). III. THERE ARE MANY WAYS IN WHICH IT MAY BE MET. 1. By obedience. But you may ask, "How am I to do it?" Just as the Lord Jesus said to the man with the withered hand, "Stretch forth thy hand," and the man stretched it forth and it was whole; so, in the same way, if a sinner present feels guilty and helpless, and hears the word of command, and makes the effort, praying for the Divine assistance, seeking to obey the precept, that man will find the needed help afforded him. Just as when Peter was sinking beneath the waves, and cried out, "Lord, save me," and the Lord caught the sinking apostle, do you say, from the bottom of your heart, now, at this moment, "Lord, save me"; and in the effort you shall find that God does save you. 2. By a refusal, "We will not have this Man to reign over us." "I love pleasure; I dislike self-denial and religious efforts." Now, I would not deny that there are such things as the pleasures of sin; but remember they are for a season only. Afterwards, there is "the worm that dieth not," &c. But I doubt whether you do find that those pleasures of sin satisfy you. "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." And though there may be the noisy laugh, and the outward appearance of indifference, yet I believe that no one can hear God's word and remain in indifference, without some qualms of conscience, some dread of eternity. Oh, then, beware how you say, "I will not yield." "See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh," &c. 3. By attempting a compromise; by delay, for example. You wish for time. Now, there is no such thing as neutrality in religion. There may be neutrality as between states; between man and man; but there is no such thing as neutrality in the case of man's service to God. "He that is not with Me, is against Me." Besides, if you now despise the mercy of God, and use the promise of mercy as an excuse for continuance in sin, what right have you to expect that God will continue to show mercy? You may say, "Was there not mercy for that man who entered the vineyard at the eleventh hour, and for the thief upon the cross? Their case was altogether different from yours. The instance of a delayed repentance is very different from the case of a late repentance. They had not had the invitation and warning before as you have. Besides, how do you know that at any future time you will be one whit more willing? The chances are, humanly speaking, that you will be less willing. It is told of one who gained his livelihood by searching the nests which were built in the cliff, that upon being let down from the summit, he gained a footing on a jutting crag beneath. He suddenly let go the rope by which he had descended. His position was most critical. The rope was swaying backwards and forwards in the air, and each time it came less near to him than before. He saw his danger; he saw the necessity of instant decision. He must either seek to grasp it by jumping from his crag, or it may be lost for ever. There was no time; it must be done at once. He did it. He sprang from his crag; he seized upon the rope, and he was saved. And so, if you are conscious that at this moment you are an unsaved sinner, you have but one course open to you. It is that you now yield yourself to God. "Behold, now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." (*Emilius Bayley, B.D.*) *Yielding to God*:—I. YIELD. Free enlistment to God as our lawful sovereign. No forced service: a willing heart the best sacrifice (2 Cor. ix. 7). Willingness of spirit and weakness of flesh accepted (Mark xiv. 38). The work done not so much regarded as the will to do it. II. YOURSELVES. Not merely your estate. The whole man (1 Thess. v. 23). The Macedonians first gave themselves, then their substance (2 Cor. viii. 5). Self surrender the fruit of love. Love's language is Psa. cxvi. 16. The heart is man's citadel. That surrendered the whole man yields. All our offerings worthless without ourselves (Prov. xxiii. 26). Ananias gave his goods, not himself. To yield ourselves wholly to God is the conquest of His grace. Christ's people a free-will offering in the day of His power (Psa. cx. 3). The means of effecting it, the constraining power of His love (2 Cor. v. 14). III. UNTO GOD. 1. Your rightful sovereign. 2. The best of masters. 3. Your Father through Christ. Not to yield ourselves to God is to yield ourselves to sin. (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) *Yielding to God*:—In 1845 Hugh Miller, as he tells us in his "First Impressions of England," visited Olney, the home of the poet Cowper. It was then a Babel of blackguards. He thought that all the bad-looking fellows in England had been drawn together there. Two prize-fighters, named Bendigo and Caunt, were about to fight for the

championship and three hundred guineas. After ninety-three rounds Bendigo beat. Hugh Miller saw him after the fight standing at the door of a whisky shop, with his face all bruised. What would Hugh have said if any one had prophesied that that battered pugilist should be "born again" in his old age, and become an earnest student of the Bible, and worker for Christ? The idea of that man taking to the Bible! Not very likely. Like Sarah, he might have laughed at the prophecy. The scene changes. Thirty years have passed, and Bendigo is now about sixty years of age, and is in gaol for the twenty-seventh time. One Sabbath he hears in prison an address on David and Goliath. Bendigo listened, as the subject was just in his line. He understood it all: Goliath was just another Caunt. He forgot where he was, so interested was he; and at the close bawled out, "Bravo, I'm glad the little 'un won." He kept thinking about it in his cell, and decided that somebody must have helped the little one to kill the big giant. Next Sabbath the sermon was on Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He fancied that the name of the third was Bendigo, and said to himself, "If one Bendigo may be saved, why not another?" The subject for the following day was "The Twelve Fishermen"; again he was thoroughly interested, as he was a keen fisher himself. The next sermon was about the seven hundred left-handed men in the twentieth chapter of Judges; once more he is all ear, being himself a left-handed man. The Bible seemed to him a very strange book; it was all written for himself! Upon getting out of gaol he found his old companions waiting for him; but he declared that he would never enter another public-house. He went to a mission meeting; and that very night, on his way home, he fell on his knees in the snow, and yielded himself to the Saviour. He had been in twenty-one matched fights, and had not been beaten in one; "but," said he, "when I came to the Cross of Christ, I was quite beat at the first round." He was then doing his desperate utmost to master the A B C, that he might be able to read God's blessed book; and he wound up, the reporter said, by declaring, "If God could save Bendy, He could save anybody." (*J. Wells, M.A.*) *Surrender to God*:—The apostle has just warned his readers not to surrender their limbs and bodily organs to sin as the conquered surrender their weapons to the conqueror. Now he is pressing upon them to whom they should surrender, not only their limbs and organs, but their whole being, their very selves. We notice that such surrender—I. FULFILS THE SUPREME DUTY OF LIFE. It is surrender—1. To the rightful Sovereign of the soul. 2. To the loving Father. 3. To the sacrificial Redeemer, and therefore—4. To the absolute Proprietor of the soul. So that whatever other duties a man discharges if this surrender is neglected, or defied, he is unloyal, unfilial, a moral felon. II. REALISES THE HIGHEST SATISFACTION OF LIFE. A man may yield labour, time, money to God, and find no satisfaction; but if he yields his very self, the needle has found the magnet, the river has reached the ocean, and there is rest. Why? Because in that surrender—1. The self contradictions of human hearts are harmonised. The harp of human nature is then in the hand of the Infinite Harpist. 2. The intellect becomes the docile scholar of the True Teacher. "Speak Lord, for Thy servant heareth." 3. Conscience has accepted the Perfect Guide. III. ENSURES THE NOBLEST USEFULNESS OF LIFE. It was this that made Paul what he was. All things answer their highest ends just as they are completely within the realm of law, *i.e.*, just as they are most completely surrendered to God. Conclusion: To those who surrender themselves to God—1. The enigma of duty is solved. 2. The secret of peace is found. 3. The way to usefulness is dicovered. (*U. R. Thomas.*) *Surrender must be complete*:—It is related in Roman history, that when the people of Collatia stipulated about their surrender to the authority and protection of Rome the question was asked, "Do you deliver up yourselves, the Collatine people, your city, your fields, your water, your bounds, your temples, your utensils, all things that are yours, both human and Divine, into the hands of the people of Rome?" And on their replying, "We deliver up all," they were received. (*J. Harris.*) *Surrender must be unconditional*:—At the battle of Fort Donelson, when ready for the final assault, General Buckner, the Confederate commander, proposed an armistice to settle terms of capitulation. Grant wanted no armistice. He knew his advantage, and replied, "No terms but unconditional and immediate surrender can be accepted. I propose to move immediately upon your works." Buckner surrendered. (*C. E. Little, M.A.*) *Submission the best defence*:—Having offended the Romans, whose power was incomparably superior to their own, the Tusculans were threatened with vengeance by the marching of Camillus, at the head of a considerable army, towards their country. Conscious of

their inability to cope with such an adversary, they adopted the following method of appeasing him:—They declined to make resistance, set open their gates, and applied themselves quietly to their proper business, resolving to submit since they found it impossible to contend. Camillus, on entering their city, was struck with their prudence, and spake as follows: "You only, of all people, have found out the true method of abating the Roman fury; and your submission has proved your best defence. Upon these terms we can no more find it in our hearts to injure you, than, upon other considerations, you could have found power to oppose us." Thus the chief inducement for a sinner to submit to God is a persuasion that He is not inexorable, but that there is forgiveness with Him through Jesus Christ. *Self devotion a Christian duty*:—I. THE STATE OF THOSE HERE ADDRESSED. 1. As the apostle did not speak to disembodied spirits, or to persons literally raised he must refer to a spiritual resurrection. Nor does he speak of such as have escaped great dangers, or been recovered from great afflictions, although these may, in a sense, be said to be "alive from the dead." But he speaks of a resurrection from a death of sin to a life of righteousness. This death is alluded to in Col. ii. 13; Eph. ii. 1. 2. To be alive from this death includes repentance unto life (Acts xi. 18); living faith, whereby the just live (Heb. x. 38); justification of life (chap. v. 18); regeneration; the being "risen with Christ," even from temporal death, and to eternal life, as it respects a title to, meetness for, expectation, prospect, and anticipation of it. II. THE EXHORTATION GIVEN TO THEM. 1. "Yield yourselves," exhibit, present, place as a sacrifice at the altar. That which we are to present is not merely our prayers, praises, alms, duties, but "ourselves," our persons, souls and bodies, to God, who does not want "ours but us," that we may belong to Him, may be appropriated to Him only. Thus St. Paul (Acts xxvii. 23). 2. But how are we to present ourselves to God? As subjects to a king; as servants to a master (ver. 16); as soldiers to their general—hence the word used for "instruments" denotes, properly, military weapons; as children to a father; as a wife to a husband; as a man's field or house may be said to be at his disposal, to be cultivated or employed as he pleases. 3. Thus we are to yield or present to God all our members, faculties, talents, time: we should consider they may be "instruments" and weapons "of unrighteousness," employed in the service of sin, fighting for it, and for its master, Satan, against God; or they may be "instruments and weapons of righteousness," employed in the promotion of piety and virtue for God's service and glory, fighting His battles, and opposing the designs of our spiritual enemies. III. MOTIVES ENFORCING THE EXHORTATION. 1. Justice and reason; we are God's by creation, preservation, redemption. 2. Gratitude to God for His inestimable mercies. 3. Love to man. 4. And even self-interest requires it. (*J. Benson.*) *Alternating between amendment and relapse*:—Lady Montagu, in one of her letters, describes in her own peculiar way a stormy passage which she had just made across the Bristol Channel. She tells of a lady on the steamer whose fears were divided between being lost herself and losing her smuggled headdress. She had bought a fine point-lace cap which she was contriving to conceal from the custom-house officers. When the wind grew high and the little vessel creaked, she fell very heartily to her prayers, and thought wholly of her soul. When it seemed to abate she returned to the worldly care of her headdress. This easy transition from her soul to her headdress, and the alternate agonies that both gave her, made it hard to determine which she thought of greatest value. This, we fear, is a little picture of many lives as they cross the channel between the two eternities—alternating from amendment to relapse; driven now by some sudden calamity to think of the soul, but with every lull in the dark providence falling back to caress some smuggled habit from the land of sin. *Surrender of the soul to God*:—Horace Bushnell was a teacher in Yale College at a time of religious awakening there; and although not an atheist, not an infidel, was greatly disturbed by doctrinal unrest. He was settling his opinions; he was passing through that tumultuous period known in the experience of most diligent inquirers, in which he could raise more questions than he could answer. The pupils under him were profoundly affected by the religious movement in the college. His great manliness, his benevolence, his social feeling, caused him extreme pain in view of the fact that he seemed to stand in the way of the religious reformation of his own scholars. He paced up and down his room, meditating on his personal duty, and finally came to this proposition: "I have no doubt that there is a distinction between right and wrong. I feel sure on that one point; am I willing to act according to my

belief? I have perfect confidence that there is a distinction between right and wrong; am I willing to throw myself over the line between the wrong and the right, towards the side of the right, and hereafter consecrate myself irrevocably, utterly, affectionately, to the following of the best religious light I possess?" He knelt down. He consecrated himself to the performance of all duty known to him. He rose with a forehead white, and the light of a star in his soul. Were all his doubts dissipated at an instant's notice? Not at all. But they were like the mighty pines on the mountain tops after the lightning had smitten them. They do not fall, but they cease to grow. They are no longer trees; they are timber. He went on and on, until he came to be a prince with God, one of the leaders of religious discussion, one of the most spiritually-minded of theologians. I do not accept all his speculations; but the element in him that strikes all men who once fairly see it is his spirituality. It strikes even those of a faith opposed to his. I think that our friends in the Liberal school in theology revere the memory of Horace Bushnell for his sermons on the new life as well as for his philanthropic efforts. But the central thing in him, the pillar of fire which led him into the promised land, was surrender to God, or to what he knew to be duty, and to the whole of it. At the instant of irreversible, affectionate surrender, at the instant of that adjustment of the lenses of his soul, God flashed through him. (*J. Cook.*) *Gospel service*:—I. "AS THOSE WHO ARE ALIVE FROM THE DEAD." This cuts up legalism by the roots. To work legally is to work for life; to work evangelically is to work from life. You are not here called upon to enter the service of God, as those who have life to win; but to enter the service of God, as those who are already alive—as those who can count upon heaven as their own. In this expression there are three distinct suggestions all regarding that new gospel service upon which we enter at the moment of our release from the sentence and state of death. 1. The hopefulness of such a service. The same work that, out of Christ, would have been vain for all the purposes of acceptance, is no longer vain in the Lord. The same labour that would have been fruitless may now be fruitful of such spiritual sacrifices as are acceptable to God through Christ. The same offerings which would have been rejected as an equivalent for the wages of a servant may now be rejoiced over and minister complacency to the spirit of our heavenly Father, when rendered as the attentions of His reconciled children. 2. The principle of such a service—gratitude to Him who had received us. "Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price," &c. It is just yielding up to Him in service that which He has conferred upon us by donation. It is turning to its bidden use the instrument He has put into our hands. 3. The power for the service. The faith which receives Christ receives power along with Him to become one of God's children. The instant of our believing is the instant of our new birth. The same faith which reconciles is also the faith which regenerates; and you, in yielding yourselves to the service of God, will be upheld by the influences which descend on the prayer of faith. II. "AND YOUR MEMBERS AS THE INSTRUMENTS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS UNTO GOD." How naturally the apostle descends from the high principle to the plain work of obedience! To yield yourselves unto God is a brief expression of that act by which you submit your person and bind over all your performances to His will. To yield your members as the instruments of righteousness unto God is, in the language of the lawyers, like an extension of the brief. Did you at one time put forth your hand to depredation or violence—now let it be the instrument of service to your neighbour and honest labour for your families. Did your feet carry you to the haunts of profligacy—now let them carry you to the house of prayer and of holy companionship. Did your tongue utter forth evil speakings—let it now be the organ of charity and peace, and let the salt of grace season its various communications. Did your eyes go abroad in quest of foolishness—let the steadfast covenant now be made with them that they may be turned away from every intruding evil. Did you give your ears to the corruptiug jest, or to the refined converse that is impregnated with every charm but that of Christianity—let them now be given up to the lessons of eternal wisdom, and to the accents of those who fear the Lord and talk often together of His name. In this way you turn your members into so many instruments of righteousness. (*T. Chalmers, D.D.*) *Christians serving God as those that are alive from the dead*:—As, then, Lazarus, or the son of the poor widow of Nain, or the saints which arose after the crucifixion of Christ, must have conceived, and felt, and acted, under impressions peculiarly their own; so those who are spiritually alive from the dead, who are quickened by the Divine Spirit, have conceptions, and feelings, and impressions, which dis-

tinguish them from the rest of mankind; we may observe, then—I. Christians, as those that are alive from the dead, are to yield themselves unto God, WITH LIVELY PERCEPTIONS OF THE THINGS WHICH ARE NOT SEEN AND ETERNAL. Had the earthly house of your tabernacle been dissolved, and your spirits permitted to take their flight to an eternal world, and for a season to dwell there; with what vivid perceptions of Divine things should you afterwards have yielded yourselves unto God! Oh, how subduing would be the visions of heaven! And are not you Christians alive from the dead? Has not God quickened you? Has He not given you that faith which is the substance of things hoped for; the evidence of things not seen? Is not your conversation in heaven? Have you not obtained affecting, realising views of an eternal world? Calculating everything by the standard of God manifest in the flesh, God in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, living, and dying, and rising, and ascending, and interceding for men, what impressions do you receive? What an overwhelming evil does sin appear, what an importance attaches to the soul, and to heaven, and eternity, and holiness, and everything connected with the inheritance of the saints in light! By enlightening your understandings, God has given you an impulse, a new nature, and has awakened your consciences, and engaged your affections, and made obedience, and zeal, and devotedness delightful. Then quench not the heavenly light, counteract not the heavenly impulse, resist not the Divine nature, but yield yourselves unto God, by dying unto sin, by living unto God, by glorifying God with your bodies, and with your spirits which are God's. II. Christians, as those that are alive from the dead, are to yield themselves unto God, UNDER A SENSE OF DIVINE FAVOUR, AND WITH SENTIMENTS OF GRATITUDE AND JOY. If you are alive from the dead, it is all gain and no loss. How much do you owe to God and Christ, and the riches of His grace! You were earthly, sensual, devilish; now you are pure, peaceable, without partiality, and without hypocrisy; full of mercy and of good fruits. You were children of the wicked one; now you are children of God. Once you were condemned; now there is no condemnation to you. You are now the children of God, and the inheritance is yours. You have nothing, however, in all this that you have not received. All is of grace. When you can determine what you owe to God, and to Christ, and His grace; then you have ascertained your obligations to God in being alive from the dead. Oh, what an impelling, absorbing gratitude, should influence your hearts, and souls, your thoughts, your words, and works. III. Christians, as those that are alive from the dead, are to yield themselves unto God THAT THEY MAY BE INSTRUMENTAL IN CONVINCING OTHERS OF THE REALITY OF THINGS NOT SEEN. You are designed to live a life so spiritual, so holy, so heavenly, a life which so marks your connection with eternity, that you may, by that, testify to your brethren, and save their souls alive; this will be no less efficacious than miracles, and signs, and wonders. Your own personal salvation is not the only thing connected with religion which you are to care about, and to promote. Higher aims are to be yours; for you are designed for higher and nobler purposes. You are to show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into the marvellous light of the gospel. You are to be to the Lord for a name; for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off. (*M. Jackson.*)

Ver. 14. **For sin shall not have dominion over you.**—*Domineering sin* (a Lenten sermon):—There are different states of "sin." There is sin latent, and fully manifest; there is sin you are striving to subdue, and sin dominant. It is concerning this last state that we have this promise—"Sin shall not lord it over you." And there is a state beyond this when the sin is so conquered that it is actually changed into grace. A besetting sin, a characterising virtue; strong passions, ardent love; fear, humility; credulity, faith; weakness, leaning on the strong. Consider—I. HOW THE STATE OF DOMINEERING SIN IS FORMED. 1. We must never forget that it is in sin's nature to grow. Weeds very generally grow faster than flowers. And this is the process. First, an empty space; a life unfenced; no sense of danger; no watch; no self-distrust; no trust in God. Under such conditions "sin," in some form or other, must come in and get stronger and stronger and stronger, till it over-crops and over-shadows the whole moral being of the man. 2. Sin has a strange power of hiding itself, partly because Satan can "turn himself into an angel of light," and trace everything in forms of beautiful colours, and partly because "sin" warps the judgment and dims the eye. And still more it hardens the heart and sears the conscience. II. HOW IT IS TO BE

OVERCOME. I will suppose the case of one who has been conscious of the growth of some "sin" in his own heart, and who is very desirous of getting rid of it. What should you do? 1. Thank God that you have this consciousness and desire. It is a proof that the Holy Spirit has not left you. 2. Claim this as the ground of your argument with God: "Lord, Thou hast showed me my sin, and made it hateful. Now, Lord, complete Thine own work." 3. Having said this to God, attend to the little things. Listen for the still small voices, and act out at once every conviction and any better desire which God has given you. 4. Next, have some definite work in hand which is for God's service and Christ's sake. Impart what you feel and what you know. By warming another's heart, you best warm your own. A work for Christ is a great antagonism to a domineering sin. 5. Then take care of the first signs of declension from what you now begin to do. Remember that in your heart there is a great danger of a re-action taking place. 6. Do not be discouraged by your feeling and the returning of besetting sins. A religious life is a campaign; and in that campaign some battles will be victories, and others defeats. The great principle is how to rally after defeat. 7. Be very careful to encourage the habit of silent prayer at the critical moment, when you know that you are getting into danger, when you feel the enemy is strong. 8. Remember that spiritual life is in Christ. He is the life, and nothing lives but as it is in union with Him. Then, as He says, "Because I live, ye shall live also." 9. There must be the constant inward breathing of the Holy Spirit in you. He must prompt, guide, strengthen, give both the will and the power. The only way to get rid of any "sin" is to put God in His right place. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *Sin dethroned*:—I. THE EVIL WHICH WE ARE ENCOURAGED TO RESIST. The dominion of sin. St. Paul represents sin as a mighty usurper, exercising absolute dominion over the sinner, taking the heart for his throne, and the members for his slaves (chap. v. 20, 21; vi. 12, 20). By a successful stratagem sin obtained the supremacy over our first father; and his posterity, while they remain in their natural state, have never been able to break the yoke (1 John v. 19). This dreadful dominion of sin is promoted—1. By ignorance of God's will. In some countries this is almost total; in ours it is partial, and in a great measure wilful (chap. i. 28; John iii. 19). 2. By our corrupt passions and sensual propensities, which will be gratified, though health, reputation, yea, life itself, are at stake (Job. xv. 16; Isa. v. 18). 3. By the worldly interests of men, to which they readily give the decided preference, when they happen to clash with their duty to God. Thus, for the sake of the world, the guests invited to the gospel-feast, with one consent, desired to be excused; and the rich man departed from Jesus full of sorrow. 4. By the powerful temptations of Satan. 5. By the countenance and example of the multitude. Sinners readily follow the multitude to do evil. The broad road that leads to destruction is thronged with travellers. II. THE MEANS AFFORDED FOR OUR ENCOURAGEMENT IN RESISTING SIN: "for ye are not under the law, but under grace." 1. Grace is here opposed to the law, and signifies the gospel (John i. 17; 2 Cor. vi. 1; Acts xiv. 3). 2. The law was a system of just, but awful severity, and God had wise and holy designs in the establishment of it (chap. v. 20). It was introduced among the Jews, not that they might be justified by it, but that, by discovering how far they fell short of the obedience it required, they might be more deeply impressed with a sense of their abounding sins; and thus it became a schoolmaster to lead them to Christ (Gal. iii. 24), and that so, where sin had abounded, grace might much more abound (chap. v. 20). 3. Now, believers in Christ are "not under the law"; they are "dead to the law" (chap. vii. 4); they are "delivered from the law" (chap. vii. 6). By these expressions we are not to suppose that they are discharged from obedience (1 Cor. 21); but they are no longer under the law considered as a covenant, the terms of which are, "the man that doeth them" (all and every one perfectly) "shall live in them" (Gal. iii. 12). Christ hath fulfilled all righteousness for His people (chap. x. 4). Being accounted righteous through faith in Christ, they are redeemed from the curse of the law (chap. viii. 1, 2). 4. Christians possess greater advantages for the destruction of sin than those under the law. (1) While the law justly demanded obedience, it afforded no aid for the performance of it. Nor could it encourage any one to hope for pardon in case of disobedience. The case is now altered. We are not called to "Mount Sinai" to hear the terrible threatenings of the law; but we are come to "Mount Sion," where grace and mercy are published. (2) The law included the substance of all the holy precepts now contained in the New Testament; but in the gospel they are expanded and full blown, and appear in all the beauty of holiness. (3) There is a more abundant

measure of the Holy Spirit poured out upon the people of God, by which they not only attain a clearer knowledge of His will, but a larger degree of His gracious assistance in overcoming sin (Heb. viii. 10). (4) All grace is treasured up in Jesus for the use of His people; and of this fulness they may receive, daily, grace for grace (John i. 16; Phil. iv. 13; 2 Cor. xii. 9). (5) The love of Christ is another grand assistant in our victory over sin. Love is the most strong and generous of all the passions, and the hardest service becomes easy when this prevails (2 Cor. v. 14). (6) The grace of the gospel affords yet further aid in this great conflict by the cheering views it presents of everlasting glory (chap. viii. 31; 1 Cor. xv. 55; 1 John iii. 3). Conclusion: 1. Who can behold the general dominion of sin over the world without the deepest concern (Jer. ix. 1). 2. Having learned that no means are effectual to stop the progress of sin but those afforded by the gospel of grace, let this serve to render the gospel more precious. 3. This subject effectually refutes that vile slander which is so unjustly cast on the doctrines of grace, that they are conducive to sin and unfriendly to holiness. (*G. Burder.*) *Believers free from the dominion of sin*:—We have here—I. A PECULIAR POSITION. "Ye are not under the law." 1. We no longer dread the curse of the law which those who are under the law may well do. The careless try to shake off the thought, but still more or less it disturbs them; but when once awakened the dread of punishment fills them with terror. Now believers have no such fear, for our sin was laid upon Jesus, who "hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." 2. We no longer drudge in unwilling obedience, seeking to reach a certain point of merit. The man under the law who is awakened labours as men who tug at the oar to escape from a tempest. But, alas! he has no power to attain even to his own ideal. His servile works are ill done, and fail to yield him peace. Now Christ has fulfilled the law for us, and we rest in that finished work. We now obey out of love, and delight in the law after the inner man. 3. We are no longer uncertain as to the continuance of Divine love. Under the law no man's standing can be secure, since by a single sin he may forfeit his position. But the merit of Christ is always a constant and abiding quantity; if, therefore, we rest thereon, our foundation is always secure. "If, when we were enemies," &c. 4. We are no longer afraid of the last great day. Judgment is a terrible word to those who are hoping to save themselves, for their doings are sure to be found wanting. But judgment has no terror in it to a believer, "Bold shall I stand in that great day," &c. 5. We have no slavish dread of God. The soul under the law stands as the Israelites did, far off from the mountain, with a bound set between themselves and the glory of God. But we have access with boldness to the throne of grace, and we delight to avail ourselves of it. "Perfect love has cast out fear." "Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty," &c. II. A SPECIAL ASSURANCE. "Sin shall not have dominion over you." 1. This is a very needful assurance. (1) All around us we see sin's operations and deadly results; and we cry in alarm, "It will surely drag me down one of these days," but the dread fear is removed by the assurance, "Sin shall not have dominion over you." (2) Alas, the evil assails ourselves, and we are apt to be cast down. Here the sweet assurance cheers us—"Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." (3) Sometimes sin forces its way into our souls and rouses our inward evil to an awful degree. Readers of the "Holy War" will remember how Diabolus besieged Mansoul after it had been occupied by Immanuel. After many battles and cunning plots the enemy entered into the city, filled all the streets with the yells of his followers, and polluted the whole place; but yet he could not take the castle, which held out for Immanuel. So sin may vex you and thrust itself upon you, but it cannot become your heart's lord. (4) Sometimes sin prevails, and we are forced in anguish to confess that we have fallen beneath its power. Still a temporary defeat is not sufficient to effect a total subjugation. Though the believer fall he shall rise again. (5) There are times when we feel greatly our danger; our feet have almost gone, our steps have well-nigh slipped; then how sweetly doth this assurance come, "The Lord is able to keep you from falling." 2. This assurance secures us from the danger of being under the absolute sway of sin. What is meant by this? (1) There are men who live in sin, and yet they do not appear to know it; but you shall be instructed, so that when you sin you shall be well aware of it. (2) Many men live in gross sin and are not ashamed, they are at ease in it; but God has so changed your nature by His grace that when you sin you shall be like a fish on dry land, you shall be out of your element, and long to get into a right state again. (3) An ungodly man loves sin, but as for you, you shall hate yourself to think you ever consented to its

solicitations. 3. This assurance is confirmed by the context—"Sin shall not have dominion over you," because you are dead to it by virtue of your union to Christ. Besides, you live in Christ in newness of life by reason of His living in you. You are bound for victory and you shall have it. III. A REMARKABLE REASON. "For ye are not under the law, but under grace." Those who are under the law must always be under the dominion of sin, because—1. The law condemns immediately upon transgression, and affords no hope and no encouragement. It is not so with those who are under grace, for they are freely forgiven. The amazing love of God when shed abroad in the heart creates a desire for better things, and what the law could not do grace accomplishes. 2. The law drives to despair, and because there is no hope the sinner will often plunge into iniquity. The child of God saith, "God, for Christ's sake, hath cast my sins behind His back, and I am saved. Now, for the love I bear His name, I will serve Him with all my might." 3. The law rouses the opposition of the heart. There are many things which people never think of doing till they are forbidden. Lock up a closet and say to your children, "Never enter that closet, nor even look into the keyhole," and they who have never wanted to look into the dingy old corner before now pine to inspect it. Law, by reason of our unruly nature, creates sin. But when we are under grace we love God for His love to us, and labour to please Him in all things. 4. The law affords no actual help. All it does is to say, "Thou shalt," and "Thou shalt not"; but grace brings the Holy Spirit into the soul to work in us holy affections and a hatred of sin, and hence what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, grace accomplishes for us by its own almighty power. 5. The law inspires no love, and love after all is the fulfilling of the law. Law is hard and cold, like the two tables of Moses. Look at the legalist; he is a bondslave, and nothing more. But grace fires a man with love to God and enthusiasm for holiness. The most pleasing service in the world is that which is done from motives of affection and not for wages. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The upper hand*:—I shall use the text as—I. A TEST. Has sin dominion over you? If so, then you are not a believer. Try your own selves by this test. You may be under the dominion of sin, while successfully resisting some forms of it; but if there be but one sin that usurps authority, then sin has dominion over you. Satan does not send to all men the same temptations. The sin is adapted to the constitution. 1. Some are under the dominion of sin in the form of anger. Those who have a quick, hot temper, are like the small pot that quickly boils over and scalds terribly. There are others whose temper is rather slower in coming up, but when it has once risen it will last long, and make them sulky and unforgiving. Now if any man says, "My temper is so bad that I cannot curb it," that temper has got dominion over him, and, according to my text, he is not a Christian. If the grace of God does not help us to bridle that lion that is within us, what has it done for us? 2. The propensity of others is to murmur. I know some who grumble at everything. Trade is always bad with them, and as for their meals—instead of being thankful to God they are perpetually finding fault. Their very garments are never to their minds. The weather never suits them. Now if any man murmurs, he may be a Christian needing to be purged of this defilement, but if you say, "I cannot help murmuring," then it has got dominion over you. You must wage war against it, for if you are a child of God this sin shall not have dominion over you. 3. With others the reigning sin is covetousness. I do not say that they should be indifferent to business, but why so penurious? "Covetousness is idolatry." Of course you may fall into fits of covetousness and yet be Christians, but if you are habitually covetous then your covetousness has got dominion over you, and according to the text you cannot be a child of God. Do then as the good man did who had resolved to give a pound to some good cause, and the devil tempted him not to do it. Said he, "I will give two now." The devil said, "Nay, you will be ruining yourself." Said he, "I will give four." Another temptation came, and he said, "I will give eight; and if the devil does not leave off tempting me I do not know to what lengths I shall go, but I will be master of him somehow." Do anything rather than let the golden calf run over you. 4. Perhaps the sin of pride may be in the ascendant. Now, I do not say that you are no Christian because you occasionally forget the lowliness and modesty that become you, but I do say that if you tell me that you cannot help being proud, then pride is your master and Christ is not. 5. The dominant sin of many is sloth. Is there any reigning sin in your hearts? Never mind what it is. Then Christ cannot be in your soul, for "When He comes, He comes to reign." II. A PROMISE. It does not say that sin shall not dwell in you. In the holiest

there is enough sin to destroy if it were not for the grace of God, which restrains its deadly operation. Nor are you told that you shall never fall into sin. Need I mention such as David? The security is that "sin shall not have *dominion* over you." The fair and lovely dove may fall into the mire, but the mire has not any dominion over it; but let the swine go there, and it rolls in it, for the mire has dominion over its nature. Notice—1. A few of the general reasons for the promise. Sin cannot get confirmed dominion over the child of God because—(1) God hath promised that it shall not. (2) You belong to Christ, and He bought you at such a price that He will never lose you. (3) The Holy Spirit has come to dwell in you. (4) The Spirit has begun a good work in you, and it is His rule never to leave His work unfinished. (5) There is in every Christian a new nature which cannot die and which cannot sin—"a well of water springing up into everlasting life," "a living, incorruptible seed, which liveth and abideth for ever." Now, if this seed be incorruptible, then sin cannot corrupt it; if it abideth for ever, then sin cannot expel it. (6) Your will is not the slave of sin. You sin, but if you could you never would sin. The bent and bias of your mind are towards righteousness. Now, if such be the case, sin can never get dominion over your whole nature, for the sovereignty of all your manhood lies with Him who possesses the mastery of your will and your affections. You know how Bunyan represents Feeble-mind in the cave of Giant Slaygood. The giant had picked him up on the road, and taken him home to devour him at his leisure; but Feeble-mind said he had one comfort, for he had heard that the giant could never pick the bones of any man who was brought there against his will. 2. The reason given in the text—"For ye are not under the law, but under grace." There are two principles in the world that are supposed to promote holiness—law and grace. (1) It is a popular notion that if you tell men their duty, prove the authority of the law-giver, and show the penalty of wrong-doing—this will give a just bias to their inclination, and help to keep their conduct right. All history goes to show that this is without proof. Those who are under the law are always under sin. The moment we are commanded not to do a thing, such is our perverse disposition, we try to do it. Even the terrible penalties of hell have failed to inspire fear or promote holiness. When was there ever so much sheep-stealing, and theft, and highway robbery, and forgery, as when men were hanged for these things? (2) There is another principle, however, which is a main instigator to righteousness—the principle of grace and faith. Grace does not say to a man, "You must do this or you shall be punished," but it says this, "God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven you; you are saved; heaven is yours; now, for the love you bear to God, who has done this for you, what will you do for Him?" A constraining power, strong as death, has availed to consecrate the lives of those who have felt the sacred spell. III. AN ENCOURAGEMENT. 1. There are not a few who are strangers to the holy jealousy which keeps a watch over the heart and a guard upon the lips, lest they should sin. Cultivate this jealousy; be very watchful, and let the text animate you. 2. There are some who are consciously very weak. Be encouraged. Sin shall no more get dominion over the weak than over the strong. The spark shall not be quenched, nor the bruised reed broken. 3. There are those who are fighting with some great sin. Put this cool water to your lips and be refreshed. You shall conquer yet; fight on! 4. There are those who have been lately converted. Your chains are broken, but there are some links that are left hanging, and sometimes they will catch hold of a nail, and you will think you are tied up again. But if you have given your heart to Christ you shall yet be helped. 5. Perhaps I address a backslider. Do you now hate your sin? Do you cry unto God for mercy, and rest in the work of Jesus? If so, be of good courage still, you shall be saved. (*Ibid.*) **For ye are not under the law, but under grace.**—*Grace the deliverer from the bondage of sin:*—1. Man is constituted to obey! Thus constituted, his nature was provided for. Upon his first entrance on the stage of being he was placed under the dominion of holiness. But man severed himself from God. In the first act of disobedience, however, he was obedient to Satan, and at every step in his subsequent history we find him still under his dominion. 2. Man has never been able to free himself from this bondage. Philosophy has not helped him; and our text declares law has not. But we are to consider that which does. Notice—I. THE ASPECT OF SIN AS A DOMINION. 1. The willing character of it. The consciousness of humanity ever charges itself with voluntary submission to such a dominion. Moreover, the Bible declares that man chooses it. 2. Its deceitful character. Having the "understanding darkened." Satan promised our first parents to be as gods—he meant

them to be the opposite. 3. Its gradual character. Like the conquest of a country, step by step new territory is won, and dominion gained in the heart of it. 4. Its cruel character. All its servants are slaves, and are led on to disaster and death. The cruelty of this dominion is seen in the increase of evil desires, and the diminution of pleasures to be derived from them; every desire ultimately ending in dissatisfaction and pain. II. THE INABILITY OF LAW TO FREE FROM THIS DOMINION. 1. Law manifests sin. "By law comes knowledge of sin." Think of the flame from the volcano revealing cities and plains in the far-off distance. So law enlightens conscience, casts its glare into the innermost recesses of the whited sepulchre, and discovers a dead soul. 2. Law causes disquietude about sin, showing its character and consequences. 3. Law revives the strength of sin (chap. vii. 8). III. THE DELIVERING POWER OF GRACE. 1. The law which condemns sin is satisfied. We are delivered from sin as a curse. Christ bare our transgressions. This curse had dominion over us—made us fear death, judgment, &c. 2. "The law of the Spirit of Life" is imparted to us. "Nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Sin may exist, but it cannot reign in the heart of a Christian. (See preceding context.) Christ has promised that this Spirit shall quicken life in us. Let us escape from the slavery of sin, and become the servants of righteousness, and "yield ourselves" unto Christ. (*T. G. Horton.*) *Believers not under the law but under grace* :—I. THEY ARE NOT UNDER THE LAW. 1. The law of which the apostle is speaking is not of man's making, but is the law of God; and is unlike any human law. Note, *e.g.*—(1) Its universality. Man's laws are confined to particular governments and countries. But the law of God is meant for every creature He has made. (2) The length to which it goes. Human laws lay down rules for the conduct of the outward man, and even then do not take notice of every instance of iniquity. But God's commandment is "exceeding broad." It passes sentence on the very thoughts, and makes no allowances whatever for sin. Sins which we are apt to look upon as small and pardonable are in God's sight without excuse. (3) The sentence which it passes. Human laws make great distinctions between one crime and another. God's law makes no differences, and its sentence is, in every instance, death. 2. The state of those for whom this law was made. This law is made for man. Is man then a fulfiller of this law? It is an awful truth that, so far from being frightened out of any evil practice by knowing that it is forbidden by the law of God, his knowing it to be forbidden makes him feel a greater relish for it, and so much the more desirous to commit it (chap. vii. 8). 3. Believers are not under the law. They are not under—(1) The curse and condemnation of the law (Gal. iii. 13; Col. ii. 14; chap. viii. 33, 34). (2) The law is "the covenant of works"—a dispensation in which he is taught to look for acceptance with God as the consequence of his own merits. The law of God says, "He that doeth these things shall live by them." Now, the Saviour does not say, "Earn but heaven by your works—establish a righteousness of your own, and you shall purchase heaven by it." No; but He says, "I have been your Law-fulfiller, and My righteousness is unto all and upon all them that believe." II. THE BELIEVER IS UNDER GRACE. 1. He is "under" the "grace of our Lord Jesus Christ." He is a man whom the free and undeserved love of his Redeemer has chosen unto life eternal. He is placed under a dispensation in which all he has, and all he hopes to have, are freely given him, "not for works of righteousness which he has done," but as "the gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." 2. He is under grace, because the grace of the Divine Spirit enters in and dwells in him. His soul is made the temple of the Holy Ghost. It is illuminated, sanctified, and comforted by that glorious inhabitant. III. THE CONSEQUENCE OF BEING NOT UNDER THE LAW, BUT UNDER GRACE. "Sin shall not have dominion over you," because—1. "The love of God is shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Ghost which is given unto you." A sense of the unspeakable mercy which our Lord has shown us begets such lively feelings of gratitude and love that to delight in that which God abhors becomes a thing impossible. Our heart burns, on the other hand, with holy fervour to render our redeemed life unto the Lord (2 Cor. v. 15). 2. You are a partaker of a new nature (2 Cor. v. 17). Sin is not indeed utterly destroyed, but it has no longer the dominion. (*A. Roberts, M.A.*) *Grace, not law, the motive for holiness* :—Wherein lies the force of the reason advanced? What is there in the covenant of grace, as set in contrast with the covenant of works, on which to rest the above declaration? At first sight we might be apt to suppose (arguing from the tendencies and susceptibilities of the human constitution) that men would be more energetic after holiness if left to earn heaven for themselves than if invited to

accept it as a gift. But on second thoughts this will not be found so. Look at—I. THE COVENANT OF WORKS. 1. As it requires perfect obedience without containing any provision for pardon, mediation, or escape, will it not produce despair and even recklessness to fallen beings in whom there is a tendency to sin, and a decay in all the powers of resistance, and who at the best can only give an imperfect obedience, which is of no avail? 2. Such is the constitution of our nature that the prospect of success is indispensable for vigour and exertion. Place me, therefore, under a covenant of works—shut out from me all notices of a Redeemer—read me that, by keeping them, I may insure myself a blessed immortality—and I shall either fold my arms in inactivity or resign myself to my sinfulness. Why mortify imperious desires, why deny craving appetites in the face of a moral certainty that I could not come up to what the law demanded, and that, if I failed, I was irretrievably condemned? No, there must be some provision in the case of failure, else will there never be any effort to obey. There must be room for second thoughts for repentance, otherwise will the law, with all its rewards, be set at nought as unadapted to the beings on whom it is imposed. II. THE COVENANT OF GRACE. 1. There is an energy of motive of the most powerful character. There is more—immeasurably more—to lead to the hatred of sin and the striving after holiness in the fact that Christ died for me than in a thousand statute books with multiplied enactments and many rewards. Only let this fact seat itself in the soul, and it must excite such love to the Being who bought us with His blood—such abhorrence of the sin which caused that blood to be shed—as will urge a man to exert every power that he may not crucify the Son of God afresh. And as he gathers all his strength to the overcoming of evil, urged by the freeness of salvation as proffered to him—every blessing reminding him of Calvary, every promise being eloquent of the great propitiation—and thus the whole Christian system exciting, in all its workings, recollections which make him shun even the appearance of evil—oh, will he not furnish the strongest practical evidence that St. Paul advanced an argument which made good his proposition when he gave, "Ye are not under the law, but under grace" as his reason for saying, "Sin shall not have dominion over you"? 2. The words are also a promise or prophecy. (1) They point to Divine assistance. They assure us of the aids of the Holy Spirit in the mortification of evil passions, the abandonment of evil pursuits, and in the attainment of holiness and righteousness. (2) Hence the gospel makes victory possible—nay, sure—exciting the spirit and then providing the means of resistance. It does all which the moral combatant can need; so that he who would have succumbed at once, feeling the case to be desperate, had he been brought under the law, girds himself to the task of the resisting of sin because brought under grace. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*)

Ver. 15. **What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace?**—*The doctrines of grace do not lead to sin:*—1. Grace is the soul of the gospel: without it the gospel is dead. Grace is the music of the gospel; without it the gospel is silent as to all comfort. From the "A" to the "Z" in the heavenly alphabet everything in salvation is all of free favour, nothing of merit. "By grace are ye saved through faith," &c. 2. No sooner is this doctrine set forth, however, than men begin to cavil at it; it is so humbling to human pride. God alone is exalted in the sovereignty of His mercy; this is not pleasant to the great minds of our philosophers and the broad phylacteries of our moralists. Straightway comes the objection that such doctrine must lead to licentiousness. 3. Now I admit that some turned the grace of God into lasciviousness; but cannot every truth be perverted? Is there not an almost infinite ingenuity in wicked men for making evil out of good? But let us act like rational men. We do not find fault with ropes because men have hanged themselves; nor do we destroy the wares of Sheffield because edged tools are the murderer's instruments. 4. Looking back in history I see upon its pages a refutation of the oft-repeated calumny. Who were the men that held these doctrines most firmly? Men like Owen, Charnock, Manton, Howe, and Cromwell. What kind of men were these? Every historian will tell you that the greatest fault was that they were too precise for their generation, so that they were called Puritans. And if we are ever to see a godly England we must have a gospelised England. The gospel of the grace of God promotes real holiness. I. THE SALVATION WHICH IT BRINGS IS SALVATION FROM THE POWER OF SIN. What we mean by salvation is deliverance from the love of habit and desire of sin. Now if that boon is the gift of Divine grace, in what way will it produce sin? The worse men are the more gladly would we see them embracing this truth, for

they most need it. II. ITS PRINCIPLE OF LOVE HAS BEEN FOUND TO POSSESS VERY GREAT POWER OVER MEN. In the infancy of history nations dream that crime can be put down by severity, but experience corrects the error. Our forefathers dreaded forgery, and made it a capital offence. Yet the constant use of the gallows was never sufficient to stamp out the crime. But some offences have almost ceased when the penalty has been lightened. 1. Love makes sin infamous. If one should rob another it would be sufficiently bad; but suppose a man robbed a friend who had helped him often when he was in need, every one would say that his crime was most disgraceful. 2. Love has a great constraining power towards the highest form of virtue. Deeds to which a man could not be compelled on the ground of law, men have cheerfully done because of love. Would our brave seamen man the lifeboat to obey an Act of Parliament? Remember chap. v. 7, 8. Goodness wins the heart, and one is ready to die for the kind and generous. Look how men have thrown away their lives for great leaders. The wounded French soldier, when the surgeon, searching for the bullet cut deeply, cried out, "A little lower and you will touch the Emperor." Love to Jesus creates a heroism of which law knows nothing. All Church history is a proof of this. 3. Love, too, has often changed the most unworthy. We have often heard of the soldier who had been flogged and imprisoned, and yet would get drunk and misbehave himself. At last the commanding officer said, "I have tried almost everything, I will try one thing more. You seem incorrigible, but I will freely forgive you." The man was greatly moved by this, and became a good soldier. A man woke up one morning from his drunken sleep and saw his only child getting his breakfast. Coming to his senses he said to her, "Millie, why do you stay with me?" She answered, "Because you are my father, and I love you." He looked at himself, and saw what a ragged, good-for-nothing creature he was, and he answered her, "Millie, do you really love me?" The child cried, "Yes, father, and I will never leave you, because when mother died she said, 'Millie, stick to your father, and always pray for him, and one of these days he will give up drink and be a good father to you'; so I will never leave you." Is it wonderful that Millie's father became a Christian? According to our moralists she should have said, "You are a horrible wretch! I have stuck to you long enough; I must now leave you, or else I shall be encouraging other fathers to get drunk." Under such dealing I fear Millie's father would have drank himself into perdition. But the power of love made a better man of him. Hear another story. There lived in Cheapside one who feared God and attended the secret meetings of the saints; and near him there dwelt a poor cobbler, whose wants were often relieved by the merchant; but the man, from hope of reward, laid an information against his kind friend on the score of religion. This accusation would have brought the merchant to death by burning if he had not found a means of escape. Returning, the injured man behaved more liberally than ever. The cobbler, however, avoided him, but one day was obliged to meet him, and the Christian man asked him gently, "Why do you shun me? I know all that you did to injure me, but I never had an angry thought against you. Let us be friends." Do you marvel that they clasped hands and that ere long the poor man was found at the Lollards' meeting? The Lord knows that bad as men are the key of their hearts hangs on the nail of love. III. ITS OPERATIONS ARE CONNECTED WITH A SPECIAL REVELATION OF THE EVIL OF SIN. Iniquity is made to be exceeding bitter before or when it is forgiven. A burnt child dreads the fire. By the operations of grace we are made weary of sin; we loathe both it and its imaginary pleasures. It is a thing accursed, even as Amalek was to Israel. IV. IT MAKES A MAN A NEW CREATURE IN CHRIST JESUS. His ignorance is removed, his affections are changed, his understanding is enlightened, his will is subdued, his desires are refined, his life is changed—in fact, he is as one new-born, to whom all things have become new. All beings live according to their nature, and the regenerated man works out the holy instincts of his renewed mind. A new heart makes all the difference. Given a new nature, and then all the propensities run in a different way. V. IT PROVIDES CLEANSING THROUGH ATONEMENT. The blood of Jesus sanctifies as well as pardons. The sinner learns that his free pardon cost the life of his best Friend. What! live in the sin which slew Jesus? Impossible! Thus you see that the gifts of free grace, when handed down by a pierced hand, are never likely to suggest self-indulgence in sin, but the very reverse. VI. IT SECURES DAILY HELPS FROM GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT, who deigns to dwell in every man whom God has saved by His grace. 1. He leads believers to be much in prayer, and what a power for holiness is found in this. 2. The renewed man is also quickened in conscience; so that things which heretofore did not strike

him as sinful are seen in a clearer light, and are consequently condemned. 3. The good Spirit leads us into high and hallowed intercourse with God, and I defy a man to live upon the mount with God and then come down to transgress like men of the world. Thou art of another race; "thy speech betrayeth thee." The perfume of the ivory palaces will be about thee, and men will know that thou hast been in other haunts than theirs. VII. IT ELEVATES THE ENTIRE MAN. 1. What do men most think about? Bread-and-butter, house-rent, and clothes, and are as children playing with little sand-heaps on the seashore; but the believer in free grace walks among hills and mountains, and his mental stature rises with his surroundings, and he becomes a thoughtful being, communing with sublimities. The man has now obtained a different view of himself. He says, "I am one of God's chosen, joint-heir with Jesus Christ, and as such I cannot be godless, nor live for the common objects of life." 2. He rises in the object of his pursuit. He feels that he is born for Divine purposes, and he feels that God has loved him that His love may flow forth to others. God's choice of any one man has a bearing upon all the rest. We are each one as a lamp kindled that we may shine in the dark and light up other lamps. 3. New hopes come crowding on him. His immortal spirit enjoys glimpses of the endless. As God has loved him in time he believes that the like love will bless him in eternity. Conclusion: A profligate son had been a grief to his father; he had robbed and disgraced him, and at last brought his grey hairs in sorrow to the grave. He attended his father's funeral and stayed to hear the will read, having fully made up his mind that he was cut off with a shilling; and he meant to make it very unpleasant for the rest of the family. To his great astonishment the will ran something like this: "As for my son Richard, though he has wasted my substance and grieved my heart, I would have him know that I consider him still to be my own dear child, and, in token of my undying love, I leave him the same share as the rest of his brothers." He left the room mastered by the surprising love of his father. Said he to the executor, "You surely did not read correctly?" "Yes I did: there it stands." "Then I feel ready to curse myself that I ever grieved my dear old father. Oh, that I could fetch him back again!" Love was born in that base heart by an unexpected display of love. May not your case be similar? Our Lord Jesus Christ is dead, but He has left it in His will that the chief of sinners are objects of His choicest mercy. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Vers. 16–18. **Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey.**—*The service of sin and the service of righteousness*:—I. THE CRITERION OF BOTH—obedience. A disobedient servant is a contradiction in terms. Disobedience vitiates service and ensures formal dismissal from it. By obedience to the behests of sin sinners are to be distinguished. Sin's code is the ten commandments with the "nots" omitted; and the world swarms with men and women who yield the most constant and earnest obedience to each. From these the servants of righteousness are distinguished not by their profession, garb, postures, ritual, and shibboleth of righteousness, but by their obedience to the commands of righteousness. Many will present themselves before the Great Tribunal on other grounds, but the King of Righteousness will judge them exclusively by this criterion. "Not every one that said unto the Lord, Lord," &c. II. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE TWO SERVICES. 1. The service of sin is—(1) Wrong. A usurper is served in a way which wrongs the lawful master and the rightful law; and inasmuch as men were made for righteousness they wrong themselves. (2) Fruitless (ver. 21). Sin's service is disappointing, and sinners are deluded in it. Apart from what it ends in, "the *way* of transgressors is hard." (3) Ruinous—"sin unto death" (see also ver. 23). 2. The service of righteousness is—(1) As the name implies, right. That should settle the matter. Only when a man yields to it does he put himself right with God, the law, his own conscience, the universe. (2) Fruitful. Its "ways are ways of pleasantness," &c. Even in this life it is worth all it costs. Righteousness is a good master and pays as it goes along. (3) Eternally profitable—life is the guerdon of righteousness. III. THE CHANGE FROM ONE SERVICE TO THE OTHER. 1. All men are servants. Man was not made, and will never become independent. Servitude is the law of his nature, and of the two masters he must serve one. 2. All men have been the servants of sin. They are born in it and continue in it; some all their lives, others up to a certain point. 3. All men may become servants of righteousness. (1) By a definite act of self-devotion. (2) By a precious act of Divine acceptance. (*J. W. Burn.*) *Master or servant*:—One day a Mr. Charles was about to start from home to fulfil a preaching appointment, when rough weather

set in, and he hesitated whether he ought to brave the storm. He consulted a Mr. John Evans on the point. "Tell Mr. Charles," was the message returned, "that if he is a master he may stay at home, but if a servant he ought to keep his appointment." (*Christian Journal.*) *Obedience to Christ*:—Come to Him. "I do not know what it is to come," says one. Well, coming to Christ is simply the trusting Him. You are guilty, trust Him to save you. "But if I do that," says one, "may I then go on and live as I did before?" No, that you cannot. If a ship at sea needed to be brought into harbour, and they took a pilot on board, he would say to the captain, "Captain, if you trust me I will get you into the harbour all right; let that sail be taken down." But they do not reef it. "Here," says he, "attend to the tiller and steer as I bid you." But they did not attend. "Well," says the pilot, "I thought you said you trusted me." "Yes," says the captain, "and you said that if we trusted you you would get into port, and we are not into port." "No, but I understood if you trusted me you would do as I bade you. It cannot be a true trust that is disobedient to my command." If then you trust Christ you must do as He bid you, take up His cross and follow Him, and then that trust of yours shall surely have its reward. You shall be saved now, and saved for ever. *The devil's slaves*:—If a pirate, or, worse, the master of a slave-ship, has made a good thing of his unlawful traffic, I do not see why he should reluctate about going into a lawful traffic on the ocean, because he does not know what the ocean will do to him. If a man is safe in sailing against God's laws and everything that is good, how much more will God prosper him if he applies to legitimate commerce the same skill and enterprise and industry that he is now applying to that which is illegitimate. I have seen men work ten times as hard to be villains as they would have been obliged to work to be honest men. The greatest slaves I know anything about are those whom the devil has got the upper hand of, and whom he is compelling to dodge between the supreme law of God and their worldly prosperity. They may secure some sort of prosperity, but, you may depend upon it, they work hard for it. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Moral slavery*:—James II., on his death-bed, thus addressed his son, "There is no slavery like sin and no liberty like God's service." Was not the dethroned monarch right? What think you of the fetters of bad habits? What think you of the chains of indulged lust? The drunkard who cannot resist the craving for the wine—know you a more thorough captive? The covetous man who toils night and day for wealth—what is he but a slave? The sensual man, the ambitious man, the worldly man, those who, in spite of the remonstrances of conscience, cannot break away from enthralment—what are they, if not the subjects of a tyranny than which there is none sterner, and none more degrading? (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) **Ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine.**—*The apostolical form of doctrine*:—I. WHAT IS IT? II. HOW SHOULD IT BE RECEIVED? III. WHAT IS ITS EFFECT? IV. WHAT FEELINGS OUGHT THIS RESULT TO INSPIRE? (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Obedience to the form of doctrine*:—1. The question, Whose servants are ye? resolves itself into a matter of fact. The apostle, on looking to his disciples, pronounces them by the test of obedience to have become the servants of righteousness. And he not only affirms this change, but he assigns the cause of it. They obeyed from the heart. There might have been the form of a yielding; but some latent duplicity brought a flaw unto it by which it was invalidated. Now God be thanked, says the apostle, this is not the way with you. I look at your fruit, and I find it the fruit of holiness. I look at your life, and I find it to be the life of the servants of God. 2. But what is it that they are said here to obey from the heart? The term "doctrine" in the original may signify the thing taught, or the process of teaching—a process which may embrace many items, and consist of several distinct parts, to obey which from the heart is just to take them all in with the simplicity and good faith in which a child believingly reads its task-book. This last view is very much confirmed by the import of the Greek equivalent for "form," viz., a mould that impresses its own shape to the yielding substance whereunto it is applied. And it would be still more accordant with the original if we render the whole sentence. The mould or model of doctrine "into which ye have been delivered." Christian truth, in its various parts and various prominences, is likened unto a mould, into which the heart or soul of man is cast that it may come out a precise transcript. 3. It should be obedient to every touch, and yield itself to every character that is graven thereupon. It should feel the impression, not from one of its truths only, but from all of them, else, like the cast which is in contact with the mould but at a single point, it will shake and fluctuate, and be altogether wanting in settled conformity to that with the likeness of which it ought to be every-

where encompassed. You know how difficult it is to poise one body upon another when it has only got one narrow place to stand upon, and that, to secure a position of stability, there must at least be three points of support provided. There is something akin to this ere the mind of an inquirer is rightly grounded and settled on the basis of God's revealed testimony. How it veers and fluctuates, when holding only by one article and fails of a sufficiently extended grasp on the truths of Christianity! How those who talk, *e.g.*, of the bare fact of faith vacillate and give way in the hour of temptation. How those who admit both the righteousness of Christ and the regeneration of their own characters to be alike indispensable, have nevertheless been brought to shipwreck; and that just because, though adhering in words to these two generalities, they have never spread them abroad over their whole history in the living applications of prayer and watchfulness. They need the filling up of their lives and hearts with the whole transcript of revelation. One doctrine does not suffice for this, for God in His wisdom has thought fit that there shall be a form or scheme of doctrine. The obedience of the heart unto the faith is obedience unto all that God proposes for the belief and acceptance of those who have entered on the scholarship of eternity; and for this purpose there must be not a mere assent of the understanding to any given number of articles, but a broad coalescence of the mind with the whole expanse and magnitude of the book of God's testimony. 4. A scheme of doctrine, then, implies more truths than one; and St. Paul has now gone beyond the announcement of his one individual item. He was very full on Christ as the propitiation for sin, and on the righteousness of Christ as the plea of acceptance for sinners; and then, when he came to the question, Shall they who are partakers of this benefit continue in sin that they may get still more of the benefit? he pronounces a negative. Here there was not one truth, but a compound of truths; a mould graven on both sides of it with certain various characters, and the softened metal that is poured therein yields to it all round and takes the varied impression from it. And so of him who obeys from the heart the form of doctrine into which he is delivered. He does not yield to one article and present a side of hardness and of resistance to another article. He is thoroughly softened and humbled under a sense of sinfulness, and most willingly takes the salvation of the gospel on the terms of the gospel. He does not, like the sturdy controversialist, cull out from the Word his own favourite position; but, like the little child, he follows on to know the Lord, just as the revealed things offer themselves to his docility and notice on that inscribed tablet which the Lord hath placed before him. 5. The way for you to make good the transition from sin to righteousness is to have the same obedience of faith. It is to spread out the tablet of your heart for the pressure thereupon of all the characters that are graven on the tablet of revelation; it is to incorporate in your creed the necessity of a holy life, in imitation and at the will of the Lord Jesus, along with a humble reliance on His merits as your alone meritorious plea for acceptance with the Father; it is to give up the narrow, intolerant, and restrictive system of theology which, by vesting a right of monopoly in a few of its favourite positions, acts like the corresponding system of trade in impeding the full circulation of its truths and of its treasure through that world within itself, which is made up of the powers and affections. Be your faith as broad and as long as is the record of all those communications that are addressed to it—and be very sure that it is only when you yield yourselves up in submission to all its truths that you can be made free from sin by sharing in the fulfilment of all its promises. 6. You often hear of the power of the truth. It is a just and expressive phrase, and is adverted to in the text. But this power of the truth is the power of the whole truth. Mutilate the truth and you cripple it. Pare it down and you paralyse its energies. And thus, as you hope to be rescued from the tyranny of sin by the power of Christian truth, you must foster the whole of it. Divide, and you darken. The whole of that light which one truth reflects upon another is extinguished when the inquirer, instead of looking fearlessly abroad over the rich and varied landscape of revelation, fastens his intent regards on one narrow portion of the territory and shuts out the rest from the eye of his contemplation. Yet let us not think that we, of our proper energy, can supply as it were the first condition on which our deliverance from sin is made to turn. The glory of this is due to grace, which has softened your hearts under the impression of the truth, which has moved you to an aspiring obedience thereto, which will lead you, I trust, to carry out the principle into practice, which will vent itself upward to the sanctuary in prayer, and bring down that returning force which can unchain you from the bondage of corruption and give you impulse and strength for all the

services of righteousness. (*T. Chalmers, D.D.*) *The form of teaching* :— There is room for difference of opinion as to what Paul precisely means by "form" here. It signifies originally a mark made by pressure or impact; then a mould, pattern or example, then the copy of such an example or pattern, or the cast from such a mould. It also means the general outline which preserves the distinguishing characteristics of a thing. Now we may choose between these two meanings in our text. If the apostle means type in the latter sense of the word, then the rendering "form" is adequate, and he is thinking of the Christian teaching which had been given to the Roman Christians as possessing certain well-defined characteristics which distinguished it from other kinds of teaching—such, for instance, as Jewish or heathen. But if we take the other meaning, then he is, in true Pauline fashion, bringing in a vivid and picturesque metaphor to enforce his thought, and is thinking of the teaching which the Roman Christians had received as being a kind of mould into which they were thrown, a pattern to which they were to be conformed. I. PAUL'S GOSPEL WAS A DEFINITE BODY OF TEACHING. The gospel in its first form as it comes to men fresh from God is not a set of propositions, but a history of deeds that were done upon earth. And, therefore, is it fitted to be the mould of every character. Jesus Christ did not come and talk to men about God, and say to them what His apostles afterwards said, "God is love," but He lived and died, and that mainly was His teaching about God. He did not come to men and lay down a theory of atonement or a doctrine of propitiation, or theology about sin and its relations to God, but He went to the Cross and gave Himself for us, and that was His teaching about sacrifice. He did not say to men, "There is a future life, and it is of such and such a sort," but He came out of the grave and He said, "Touch Me, and handle Me. A spirit hath not flesh and bones," and therefore He brought life and immortality to light, by no empty words but by the solid realities of facts. He did not lecture upon ethics, but He lived a perfect human life out of which all moral principles that will guide human conduct may be gathered. And so, instead of presenting us with a botanic collection of scientifically arranged and dead propositions, He led us into the meadow where the flowers grow, living and fair. His life and death, with all that they imply, are the teaching. Let us not forget, on the other hand, that the history of a fact is not the mere statement of the outward thing that has happened. Christian teaching is the facts plus their explanation; and it is that which differentiates it from the mere record which is of no avail to anybody. So Paul Himself in one of His other letters puts it. This is his gospel: Jesus of Nazareth "died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and He was buried, and rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures." That is what turns the bald story of the facts into teaching, which is the mould for life. II. THIS TEACHING IS IN PAUL'S JUDGMENT A MOULD OR PATTERN ACCORDING TO WHICH MEN'S LIVES ARE TO BE CONFORMED. There can be no question but that, in that teaching as set forth in Scripture, there does lie the mightiest formative power for shaping our lives, and emancipating us from our evil. Christ is the type, the mould into which men are to be cast. The gospel, as presented in Scripture, gives us three things. It gives us the perfect mould; it gives us the perfect motive; it gives us the perfect power. And in all three things appears its distinctive glory, apart from and above all other systems that have ever tried to affect the conduct or to mould the character of man. We have in the Christ the one type, the one mould and pattern for all striving, the "glass of form," the perfect Man. And that likeness is not reproduced in us by pressure or by a blow, but by the slow and blessed process of gazing until we become like, beholding the glory until we are changed into the glory. It is no use having a mould and metal unless you have a fire. It is no use having a perfect Pattern unless you have motive to copy it. If we can say, "He loved me, and gave Himself for me," then the sum of all morality, the old commandment that "ye love one another," receives a new stringency, and a fresh motive as well as a deepened interpretation, when His love is our pattern. The one thing that will make men willing to be as Christ is their faith that Christ is their Sacrifice and their Saviour. Still further, the teaching is a power to fashion life, inasmuch as it brings with it a gift which secures the transformation of the believer into the likeness of his Lord. Part of "the teaching" is the fact of Pentecost; part of the teaching is the fact of the ascension; and the consequence of the ascension and the sure promise of the Pentecost is that all who love Him, and wait upon Him, shall receive into their hearts the "spirit of life in Christ Jesus," which shall make them free from the law of sin and death. III. THIS MOULD DEMANDS OBEDIENCE.

By the very nature of the teaching, assent drags after it submission. You can please yourself whether you let Jesus Christ into your minds or not, but if you do let Him in, He will be Master. There is no such thing as taking Him in and not obeying. And so the requirement of the gospel which we call faith has in it quite as much of the element of obedience as of the element of trust. And the presence of that element is just what makes the difference between a sham and a real faith. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Moulded by the truth*:—The gospel here is compared to a mould into which the soul is delivered. We take our character from the truth we receive. Our affections are moulded, formed, fashioned, directed by the gospel we obey. Sometimes it is compared to a mirror (2 Cor. iii. 8). The gospel reveals to us Jesus, and as we look into that glass the light falls upon our souls and assimilates us to Him. Here it is a mould. We are cast into the mould of the truth which from the heart we obey. The gospel is not only a directing power, but a transforming influence; you cannot believe it without being moulded by it. Any man who says he believes it, whose character is not moulded by it, is deceiving himself. How, then, can this be corrected? Not by poring over the thoughts and feelings of our own poor hearts, but by examining the testimony God has given us concerning Christ, by mixing faith with the promises given us, that by them we might be partakers of the Divine nature. The entrance of His Word will not only give light to our understandings, but it will transform us into His image; and as we receive the doctrine into our hearts, we shall be delivered into it as into a mould, and our tastes and character and desires and ways and aims, will be fashioned thereby. This is the constant teaching of Scripture (Eph. ii. 10; Luke i. 74; Titus ii. 11). (*M. Rainsford, B.A.*) *Branded with the truth*:—It was the custom to impress a distinctive mark or brand on the slaves belonging to different masters. A slave might thus, by no uncommon metonymy, be spoken of as belonging to a certain mark, the mark being put for the master whose mark it was; and when a slave was transferred from one master to another, as being delivered over to a new mark or brand, that is, to a new proprietor or master, to whom, or, by the same figure, to whose mark he was then to consider his person attached and his service and obedience due. This is probably the true meaning, "Ye have obeyed from the heart that mark [or brand] of doctrine to which ye have been delivered over"; this translation giving every word its full and proper effect. They passed from one service to another, distinguished by a new mark, to which, as reminding them of their new master, and the appropriate symbol of his property in them and his power over them, they were thenceforward to render their obedient service. The "doctrine" of Christ is the distinguishing badge, or appropriate mark, of all His servants. They bear the profession and impress of His truth; and, under the influence of that truth, they serve Him as the Master who has stamped its impression upon them, in a spirit of reverential love. (*R. Wardlaw, D.D.*) *Transformation of grace*:—A short time ago the manufacturers of lighting gas were puzzled to know how to dispose of the coal-tar left in the retorts. A more useless, nauseous substance was hardly known to exist. Chemistry came to the rescue, and to-day not less than thirty-six marketable articles are produced from this black, vile, sticky slime—solvents, oils, salts, colours, flavours. You eat a bit of delicious confectionery, happily unconscious that the exquisite taste which you enjoy so keenly comes from coal-tar; you buy at the druggist's a tiny phial of what is labelled "Otto of Roses," little dreaming that the delicious perfume is wafted, not from "the fields of Araby," but from the foul gas retort. Christianity is a moral chemistry. Well were it for nations if it held a higher place among their social economics. Tar-saving is all well enough, but soul-saving is better. Grace transforms a villain into an honest man, a harlot into a holy woman, a thief into a saint. Where fœtid exhalations of vice alone ascended, prayer and praise are to be found; where moral miasmata had their lair, righteousness and temperance pitch their tent. Every sort of good thing is produced by godliness, and that too in hearts once reeking with all manner of foulness. Should not this stay every persecuting hand, hush every railing tongue, and incite every sanctified spirit to continued and increasing energy. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) **Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.**—*Freedom from sin and subjection to righteousness*:—I. THE BONDAGE SUPPOSED. Those only can be made free who were the subjects of bondage. Many resent this charge and exclaim, as the Jews did, "We were never in bondage to any man." And so long as men remain under the infatuation that they are free, they will never welcome the tidings of a deliverance. We are in bondage—1. To a law which we have violated. A perfect nature was capable of performing the require-

ments of a perfect law; but an imperfect nature never can meet those requirements. Those, therefore, who are seeking acceptance with God by the works of the law, are under the curse—bound and sentenced by it. 2. To a God whom we have displeased. Perfectly sensible that "God is love," we also believe that He is a God of justice. God's character, regarded as a whole, demands that He should maintain the honour of His law; and therefore He is bound by every principle of His nature, and by every qualification of His office as the Ruler of the universe, to punish the sinner. 3. To corruptions which he has indulged. (1) Man has fallen under the government of the passions, of which there are three classes—the animal, which lead to all manner of impurity; the malevolent, which lead to all manner of cruelty; and the secular, which go to make men altogether base and sordid. (2) There are also intellectual sins under which men are bound, and even sold—pride, a presumptuous obtrusion into things sacred and prohibited, and infidelity in rejecting the testimony which God has given of His Son. But whether men are bound by the intellectual or sensual sins, they are alike slaves. 4. To the world which we have idolised. There are some who would not for worlds rebel against the laws of fashion. They would rather commit an enormous sin against God than they would violate the etiquette of this world. The man who is devoted to the love of money is just as much bound as ever one who was fastened to the galleys for life. The man who loves the pleasures of this world, though he turns from them with disgust again and again, yet to-morrow it is just the same thing over and over again. And as to the ambitious, see what slaves they are—how servile when they have an object to accomplish; how insolent when that object is once attained; and how dissatisfied with the highest pinnacle to which human ambition can soar. 5. To a death which we cannot shun. Some "are all their life-time subject to bondage through fear of death," either the act itself or the consequences. II. THE FREEDOM THAT IS BESTOWED. 1. From the guilt of sin by virtue of the expiatory death and all-atoning sacrifice of the Divine Redeemer. 2. From the punishment of sin. The chain is broken—the debt is cancelled—the indictment is rebutted, and the justified believer can say, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" 3. From the dominion of sin. How can I love that which crucified the Saviour? 4. Ultimately from the presence of sin. There shall in no wise enter into the heavenly Jerusalem anything that defileth or that worketh abomination. III. THE SUBSEQUENT SUBJECTION OR SUBORDINATION. "Ye became the servants of righteousness." 1. By faith in the doctrine of righteousness (ver. 17). All the doctrines of the gospel are according to godliness. They fix salvation on the great principles of eternal rectitude; for God does not forgive merely by an act of clemency; but by an act of equity. 2. Love to the principle of righteousness. 3. Submission to the rule of righteousness—God's will—not our opinion—not the laws of our fellow-creatures. 4. Studious determination and constant aim towards the practice of universal righteousness. (*C. Bradley, M.A.*) *Our change of masters*:—1. Man was made to rule. He was intended for a king, who should have dominion over the beasts of the field, &c. Yet is it equally true that he was made to serve. He was placed in the garden to keep it, and to dress it, and to serve his Maker. Throwing off his allegiance to his rightful Master, he has become the slave of evil passions. 2. When God of His infinite mercy visits man by His Spirit, that Spirit does not come as a neutral power, but enters with full intent to reign. Man cannot serve two masters, but he must serve one. Alexander conquered the world, and yet he became the captive of drunkenness and his passionate temper. Rome had many slaves, but he who wore her purple was the most in bonds. High rank does not save a man from being under a mastery: neither does learning nor philosophy. Solomon, the most sagacious ruler of his age, became completely subject to his fleshly desires. 3. Who, then, shall be man's master? Our text speaks of "being made free from sin," and in the same breath it adds, "Ye became the servants of righteousness." There is no interregnum. Man passes from one master to another, but he is always in subjection. Consider—I. OUR CHANGE OF MASTERS. 1. In describing this revolution we will begin with a word or two upon our old master "sin." We were not all alike enslaved, but we were all under bondage. (1) Sin has its liveried servants. If you want to see these dressed out in their best or their worst, go to the prison, or to the places of vicious amusement. Many of them wear the badge of the devil's drudgery upon their backs in rags, upon their faces in the blotches born of drunkenness, and in their very bones in the consequences of their vice. (2) But great folks have many servants who are out of livery, and so has sin. We were not all open transgressors. Selfish caution restrains from overt acts of transgression. Hypocrites are worse

slaves than others, because they are laid under the restraints of religion without their consolations, and practise sins without their pleasures. (3) The servants of sin are not all outdoor servants. Many keep their sin to themselves. They are excellent in their outward deportment; but they are the indoor servants of Satan for all that. (4) There are, however, many who were once outdoor servants, sinning openly and in defiance of all law. 2. Believers are made free from sin. (1) From the condemnation of sin (chap. viii. 1). (2) From the guilt of sin. As you cannot be condemned so does the truth go further, you cannot even be accused. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" (3) From the punishment of sin. (4) From its reigning power. 3. How came we to be free? (1) By purchase, for our Saviour has paid the full redemption money. (2) By power. Just as the Israelites were the Lord's own people, but He had to bring them out of Egypt, so has the Lord by power broken the neck of sin and brought us up from the dominion of the old Pharaoh of evil and set us free. (3) By privilege. "Unto as many as believed Him, to them gave He the privilege to become the sons of God." His own royal, majestic, and Divine decree has bidden the prisoners go forth. (4) By death. If a slave dies his master's possession in him is ended. "He that is dead is free from sin." (5) By resurrection. A new life has been given to us; we are new creatures in Christ Jesus. 4. Ye became the servants of righteousness. A righteous God has made us die to sin; a new and righteous life has been infused into us, and now righteousness rules and reigns in us. The text says we are enslaved to righteousness, and so we wish to be. II. THE REASONS FOR OUR CHANGE. 1. We changed our old master because we were illegally detained by him. Sin did not make us, does not feed us, has no right to us whatever. Besides, our old master was as bad as bad could be. We ran away from him because we had never any profit at his hands. "What fruit had ye then?" Ask the drunkard, the spendthrift, any man that lives in sin, what he has gained by it, and we will find it is all loss. Beside that, our old master brought shame. "Those things whereof ye are now ashamed." Moreover, its wages are death. 2. But why did we take up with our new Master? In the first place, we owe ourselves wholly to Him; and in the next place, if we did not, He is so altogether lovely, that if we had a free choice of masters we would choose Him a thousand times over. His service is perfect freedom and supreme delight. He gives us even now a payment in His service. III. THE CONSEQUENCES OF THIS CHANGE. 1. That you belong wholly to your Lord. Numbers of professing Christians seem mostly to belong to themselves, for they never gave God anything that cost them a self-denial. But if you are really saved, not a hair of your heads belongs to yourselves; Christ's blood has either bought you or it has not, and if it has, then you are altogether Christ's. Just as a negro used to belong to the man that bought him, every inch of him, so you are the slave of Christ; you bear in your body the brand of the Lord Jesus, and your glory and your freedom lie therein. 2. Because you are Christ's His very name is dear to you. You are not so His slave that you would escape from His service if you could; you want to be more and more the Lord's. Where there is anything of Christ there your love goes forth. Hadyn one day turned into a music-seller's, and asked for some select and beautiful music, and was offered some of his own. "Oh," said Haydn, "I'll have nothing to do with that." "Why, sir, what fault can you find with it?" "I can find a great deal of fault with it, but I will not argue with you, I do not want any of his music." "Then," said the shopkeeper, "I have other music, but it is not for such as you." A thorough enthusiast grows impatient of those who do not appreciate what he so much admires. You can be no friend of mine if you are not a friend of Christ's. 3. All your members are henceforth reserved for Christ. When Satan was your master you did not care about Christ, you went wholly in for evil. You did not require to be egged on to it. Now you ought not to want your ministers or Christian friends to stir you up to good works; you ought to be just as eager after holiness as you were after sin. As you have given the devil first-rate service, let Christ have the same. Some of you never stood at any expense—I wish we could serve Christ thus unstintedly. The poor slaves of sin not only do not stop at expense, but they are not frightened by any kind of loss. See how many lose their characters for the sake of one short hour of sin. They ruin their peace and think nothing of it. They will lose their health, too; nay, they will destroy their souls for the sake of sin's brief delights. In the same way should we serve our Lord. Be willing to lose character, health, life, all, if by any means you may glorify Him whose servant you have become. Oh, who will be my Master's

servant? Do you not see Him? He wears upon His head no diadem but the crown of thorns; His feet are still rubied with their wounds, and His hands are still bejewelled with the marks of the nails. This is your Master, and these are the insignia of His love for you. What service will you render Him? That of a mere professor, who names His name but loves Him not? That of a cold religionist, who renders unwilling service out of fear? Do not so dishonour Him. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The strictness of the law of Christ*:—1. The apostle is not content with speaking half the truth; he does not merely say that we are set free from guilt and misery, but he adds, that we have become the slaves of Christ. He has not bought us, and then set us loose upon the world. He has given us that only liberty which is really such, bond-service to Himself, lest if left to ourselves we should fall back again to the cruel bondage from which He redeemed us. 2. This needs insisting on; for a number of persons think that they are not bound to any real service at all, now that Christ has set them free. Men often speak as if the perfection of human happiness lay in our being free to choose and to reject. Now we are indeed free, if we do not choose to be Christ's servants, to go back to the old bondage. We may choose our master, but God or mammon we must serve. We cannot possibly be in a neutral state. Yet a number of persons think their Christian liberty lies in being free from all law, even from the law of God. In opposition to this great mistake, St. Paul reminds his brethren in the text that when they were "made free from sin," they "became the servants of righteousness." He says the same in other Epistles (1 Cor. vii. 22, 23; Col. iii. 22, 24; 1 Cor. ix. 21). 3. Religion, then, is a necessary service; of course it is a privilege too, but it becomes more and more of a privilege, the more we exercise ourselves in it. The perfect Christian state is that in which our duty and our pleasure are the same, it is the state in which the angels stand; but it is not so with us, except in part. Upon our regeneration indeed, we have a seed of truth and holiness planted within us, a new law introduced into our nature; but still we have that old nature to subdue, a work, a conflict all through life. 4. Now most Christians will allow in general terms that they are under a law, but they admit it with a reserve; they claim for themselves some dispensing power. I. WHAT IS THE SORT OF MAN WHOM THE WORLD ACCOUNTS RESPECTABLE AND RELIGIOUS? At best he is such as this. He has a number of good points to his character, but some of these he has by nature, others he has acquired because outward circumstances compelled him to acquire them. He has acquired a certain self-command, because no one is respected without it. He has been forced into habits of diligence, punctuality, and honesty. He is courteous and obliging; and has learned not to say all he thinks and feels, or to do all he wishes to do on all occasions. The great mass of men, of course, are far from this; but I am supposing the best—viz., those who only now and then will feel inclinations or interest to run counter to duty. Such times constitute a man's trial; they are just the times on which he is apt to consider that he has a leave to dispense with the law, when it is simply the law of God, without being also the law of self, and of the world. He does what is right, while the road of religion runs along the road of the world; when they part company awhile he chooses the world, and calls his choice an exception. For instance—1. He generally comes to church, it is his practice; but some urgent business or scheme of pleasure tempts him—he omits his attendance; he knows this is wrong, and says so, but it is only once in a way. 2. He is strictly honest in his dealings; it is his rule to speak the truth, but if hard pressed, he allows himself now and then to say a slight falsehood. He knows he should not lie, he confesses it; but he thinks it cannot be helped. 3. He has learned to curb his temper and his tongue; but on some unusual provocation they get the better of him. But are not all men subject to be overtaken with ill temper? That is not the point; the point is this—that he does not feel compunction afterward, he does not feel he has done any thing which needs forgiveness. 4. He is in general temperate; but he joins a party of friends and is tempted to exceed. Next day he says that it is a long time since such a thing happened to him. He does not understand he has any sin to repent of, because it is but once in a way. Such men, being thus indulgent to themselves, are indulgent to each other. Conscious of what might be said against themselves they are cautious what they say against others. These are a few out of a multitude of traits which mark an easy religion—the religion of the world; which would cast in its lot with Christian truth, were not that truth so very strict, and quarrels with it—because it will not suit itself to emergencies, and to the tastes of individuals. II. THIS IS THE KIND OF RELIGION WHICH ST. PAUL VIRTUALLY

WARNS US AGAINST, AS OFTEN AS HE SPEAKS OF THE GOSPEL AS BEING A LAW AND A SERVITUDE. 1. He indeed glories in its being such; for, as the happiness of all creatures lies in their performing their parts well, where God has placed them, so man's greatest good lies in obedience to God's law and in imitation of God's perfections. Therefore Paul insists on the necessity of Christians "fulfilling the righteousness of the law." Hence James says, "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." And our Saviour assures us that, "Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments," &c., and that "Except our righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees," which was thus partial and circumscribed, "we shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." And when the young man came to Him, He pointed out the "one thing" wanting in him. Let us not then deceive ourselves; what God demands of us is to be content with nothing short of perfect obedience—to avail ourselves of the aids given us, and throw ourselves on God's mercy for our shortcomings. 2. But the state of multitudes of men is this—their hearts are going the wrong way, and their real quarrel with religion is not that it is strict, but that it is religion. If I want to travel north, and all the roads are cut to the east, of course I shall complain of the roads. So men who try to reach Babylon by roads which run to Mount Sion necessarily meet with thwartings, crossings, disappointments, and failure. They go mile after mile, watching in vain for the turrets of the city of Vanity, because they are on the wrong road; and, unwilling to own what they are really seeking, they find fault with the road as circuitous and wearisome. 3. But religion is a bondage only to those who have not the heart to like it. Accordingly, in ver. 17, St. Paul thanks God that his brethren had "obeyed from the heart that form of teaching, into which they had been delivered." We Christians are cast into a certain mould. So far as we keep within it, we are not sensible that it is a mould. It is when our hearts would overflow in some evil direction, then we consider ourselves in prison. It is the law in our members warring against the law of the Spirit which brings us into a distressing bondage. Let us then see where we stand, and what we must do. Heaven cannot change; God is "without variableness or shadow of turning." His law is from everlasting to everlasting. We must change. We must go over to the side of heaven. Never had a soul true happiness but in conformity to God. We must have the law of the Spirit of life in our hearts, "that the righteousness of the law may be fulfilled in us." 4. Some men, instead of making excuses, such as I have been considering, and of professing to like religion, all but its service, boldly object that religion is unnatural, and therefore cannot be incumbent. Men are men, and the world is the world, and that life was not meant to be a burden, and that God sent us here for enjoyment, and that He will never punish us for following the law of our nature. I answer, doubtless this life was meant to be enjoyment; but why not a rejoicing in the Lord? We were meant to follow the law of our nature; but why of our old nature and not of our new? Now that God has opened the doors of our prison-house, if men are still carnal, and the world sinful, and the life of angels a burden, and the law of our nature not the law of God, whose fault is it? We Christians are indeed under the law, but it is the new law, the law of the Spirit of Christ. We are under grace. That law, which to nature is a grievous bondage, is to those who live under the power of God's presence, what it was meant to be, a rejoicing. (*J. H. Newman, D.D.*) *True liberty*:—"Is it your opinion," said Socrates, "that liberty is a fair and valuable possession?" "So valuable," replied Euthydemus, "that I know of nothing more precious." "But he who is so far overcome by sensual pleasure that he is not able to practise what is best, and consequently the most eligible—do you count this more free, Euthydemus?" "Far from it," replied the other. "You think, then," said Socrates, "that freedom consists in being able to do what is right, and slavery, in not being able; whatever may be the cause that deprives us of the power?" "I do, most certainly." "The debauchee, then, you must suppose is in this state of slavery?" "I do, and with good reason." (*Xenophon.*) *True liberty*:—You think the charter would make you free—would to God it would. The charter is not bad if the men who use it are not bad. But will the charter make you free? Will it free you from slavery to ten-pound bribes? Slavery to gin and beer? Slavery to every spouter who flatters your self-conceit, and stirs up bitterness and headlong rage in you? That, I guess, is real slavery; to be a slave to one's own stomach, one's own pocket, one's own temper. Will the charter cure that? Friends, you want more than Acts of Parliament can give. Englishmen! Saxons! Workers of the great

cool-headed, strong-handed nation of England, the workshop of the world, the leader of freedom for seven hundred years; men, you say you have common sense! then do not humbug yourselves into meaning "license" when you cry for "liberty." Who would dare refuse you freedom? for the Almighty God and Jesus Christ, the poor man who died for poor men, will bring it about for you, though all the mammonites of the earth were against you. A nobler day is dawning for England—a day of freedom, science, industry. But there will be no true freedom without virtue, no true science without religion, no true industry without the fear of God and love to your fellow-citizens. Workers of England, be wise, and then you must be free, for you will be fit to be free. (*C. Kingsley, M.A.*) *The liberty of the believer*:—The liberty of the subject could never be preserved in a lawless state of society, but violence and tyranny would reduce to a slavish obedience the weak and the timid. The palladium of civil liberty is law; law well defined, excluding the fluctuations of caprice on one side, and of aggression on the other; law rigorously executed also, for the best code is a dead letter if it be not accompanied by a living and firm executive. So the liberty of the believer is secured by the law of God, when brought under its guidance and government. While living under the misrule of his fallen nature, he is the sport of every capricious imagination, and successively the slave of his predominant passions (ver. 16.) But let Christ's government be set up, and he becomes Christ's freeman; "sin has no more dominion over him"; he is no longer its wretched captive, but is under gracious law, for "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." (*G. H. Salter.*)

Vers. 19, 20. **I speak after the manner of men.**—*Apostolic exhortation*:—I. ITS METHOD. "After the manner of men," *i.e.*, (Gr.) humanly—as men ordinarily speak, borrowing any illustrations from common life. Spiritual subjects are made plainer by familiar comparisons, and so preachers should use simple language and homely illustrations. This was exemplified in Christ, and inspired writers in general. The most useful preachers have ever been those who speak most humanly. The arrow too high flies over the head; too low falls short of the mark. II. THE REASON FOR THE METHOD. "The infirmity of your flesh"—imperfect knowledge through the flesh—an apology for the use of the expression "slaves," &c. Some believers are still babes and carnal (1 Cor. iii. 1–4; Heb. v. 12–14); others are spiritual and of a full age. In God's family are fathers, young men, little children (1 John ii. 12–14). The flesh is an impediment to the apprehension of truth. Carnal nature views holiness not as liberty but as bondage. Arguments and modes of speaking to be adapted to the hearer's state. Let not the mature and enlightened, then, cavil at methods adapted to reach the immature and ignorant and *vice versâ*. III. ITS SUBSTANCE. 1. A reminiscence. "As ye have yielded your members" servants—(1) To uncleanness, a characteristic of heathen life in general (chap. i. 24). Uncleanness is sin against oneself: unchastity of life. All sin is uncleanness; some sins especially so (chap. xiii. 13). The greatest slave is he who serves sensual pleasures. (2) To iniquity—unlawfulness—what is opposed to God's law, and even the laws of human society (Luke xviii. 4). Uncleanness and iniquity include the whole circumference of sin (Matt. xv. 19). (3) Unto iniquity—to the practice of iniquity as a result; to an always still greater progress and depth in iniquity. The practice is the necessary effect of the bondage. Sin allows none of its servants to remain idle. 2. An enforcement of duty. "Even so now"—as heartily and thoroughly, and in consideration of the past "yield your members"—(1) Servants to righteousness. Still servants, but to righteousness instead of sin. Christ gives His disciples a yoke, but it is an easy one. Servitude to righteousness means truest liberty. (2) Unto holiness—so as to practise and grow in it. Holiness is that which is in accordance with God's will, and embraces the whole man (1 Thess. v. 23). It is a matter of growth. The faithful performance of one duty prepares for that of another. Victory over one sin strengthens us for victory over a second. The practice of righteousness confirms the principle of holiness. Gracious acts strengthen gracious habits, as labour adds to muscle. (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) *Will ye be the servants of sin or the servants of God?*—To determine your choice consider—I. THE CONTRAST. 1. Sin conducts you from iniquity to iniquity. 2. God will lead you in the path of holiness. II. THE IMMEDIATE CONSEQUENCES. 1. The fruit of sin is shame. 2. Of faith is holiness. III. THE FINAL RESULT. 1. The wages of sin is death. 2. The gift of God eternal life. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Forsake the service of sin; enter the service of righteousness*;—

Then you escape—1. Out of disgraceful impurity into true holiness (vers. 19–21). 2. Out of dishonourable servitude into true freedom (vers. 20–22). 3. Out of death and condemnation into eternal life (vers. 21–23). (*W. Hauck.*) *Two ways and two ends*:—I. The one WAS BITTER SERVITUDE; the other SWEET LIBERTY. II. The one HAS DISGRACEFUL NOTORIETY; the other PRAISEWORTHY MODESTY. III. The one has ETERNAL DEATH; the other ETERNAL LIFE. Note what Jesus says of these two ways and their ending (Matt. vii. 13). (*W. Ziethe.*) *The slavery of sin unlawful—a ground of hope to the sinner*:—Luther's domestic, Elizabeth, in a fit of displeasure, left his service without notice. She subsequently fell into sin and became dangerously ill. Luther visited her, and, taking his seat by her bedside, she said, "I have given my soul to Satan." "Why," rejoined Luther, "that's of no consequence. What else?" "I have," continued she, "done many wicked things; but this is what most oppresses me, that I have deliberately sold my poor soul to the devil, and how can such a crime ever find mercy?" "Elizabeth, listen to me," rejoined the man of God. "Suppose, while you lived in my house, you had sold and transferred all my children to a stranger, would the sale or transfer have been lawful and binding?" "Oh no," said the deeply humbled girl, "for I had no right to do that." "Very well, you had still less right to give your soul to the arch-enemy; it no more belongs to you than my children do. It is the exclusive property of the Lord Jesus Christ; He made it, and when lost also redeemed it; it is His, with all its powers and faculties, and you can't give away and sell what is not yours; if you have attempted it, the whole transaction was unlawful, and entirely void. Now, do you go to the Lord, confess your guilt with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, and entreat Him to pardon you, and take back again what is wholly His own. And as for the sin of attempting to alienate His rightful property, throw that back upon the devil, for that, and that alone is his." The girl obeyed, was converted, and died full of hope. *Changed uses*:—Among the spoils taken when Alexander conquered and captured Darius was a richly jewelled cabinet or casket in which the Persian king kept his perfumes and sweet ointments. It was carried to Alexander, who at once turned it to another and nobler use, and added a syllable to its name. He placed in it his copy of the "Iliad," saying, "This shall no longer be called myrrh-box, but Homer-box." What the "myrrh-box" became by passing under Alexander's hands illustrates what the soul becomes by passing under the hands of its Divine Inspirer. By unseen influences (as certainly as by the miracle touch) God adds to the graces of "a chosen vessel" the gift of spiritual power and expression. He makes it empty that He may fill it with greater riches. **For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.**—*The servants of sin*:—1. There is no condition so sad as that of a slave; and no slavery so hard as that of sin. There was once a tyrant who ordered one of his subjects to make an iron chain of a certain length. The man brought the work, and the tyrant bade him make it longer still. And he continued to add link to link, till at length the cruel taskmaster ordered his servants to bind the worker with his own chain, and cast him into the fire. That hardest of tyrants, the devil, treats his slaves in like manner. At first the chain of sin is light, and could easily be cast off. But day by day Satan bids his victims add another link. The servant of sin grows more hardened, daring, reckless in his evil way. He adds sin to sin, and then the end comes. 2. Very often the slaves of sin do not know that they are slaves. They talk about their freedom from restraint, they tell us they are their own masters, that the godly are slaves. Once I visited a madhouse. Some had one delusion, some another. One thought he was a king, another the heir to a fortune. But one thing they all believed, that they were in their right minds. 3. The servants of sin bear about the marks of their master. I have seen gangs of convicts working on Dartmoor. You could not mistake them for anything else if they were dressed in the best of clothing. The word convict is stamped upon every grey face, as plainly as the Government mark is stamped upon their clothing. The servants of sin have their marks also. Look at the shifty eyes, and downward glance of the knave and the false man; the flushed brow and cruel eyes of the angry man; the weak lips and trembling hand of the drunkard. 4. The servants of sin have their so-called enjoyments, these are the baits with which the tyrant gets them into his power. For a time the way of transgressors is made easy and pleasant. The broad road is shaded, and edged with fair fruits and flowers. A saint of old once saw a man leading a herd of swine, which followed him willingly. When the saint marvelled, the man showed him that they followed him for the sake of the sweet food in his hand, and knew not whither they were going. So the

servants of sin follow Satan for the sake of the sweet things which he offers, and know not that they are going to their death, even the living death of a lost soul. (*J. H. W. Buxton, M.A.*) *Freedom from righteousness:*—Standing altogether outside it, having no relation to it, destitute of it, entirely unaffected by it; strangers therefore to its happy and gainful service. Possessing a freedom which is a bane and a bondage. A planet's freedom from the law which preserves it in its orbit; a child's freedom from the restraints of a happy home. This freedom pleases the flesh, but ruins the man; it is not mercifully given, but madly taken; it is Satan's miserable choice, "Better to reign in hell than serve in heaven." Note the latent irony of the text; "Ye were free"; but what kind of freedom? A freedom akin to that of hell. Freedom from righteousness a man's greatest misery; freedom in righteousness his greatest mercy. (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) *Liberty and restraint:*—You hear every day greater numbers of foolish people speaking about liberty, as if it were such an honourable thing; so far from being that, it is, on the whole, and in the broadest sense, dishonourable, and an attribute of the lower creatures. No human being, however great or powerful, was ever so free as a fish. There is always something that he must or must not do; while the fish may do whatever he likes. All the kingdoms of the world put together are not half so large as the sea, and all the railroads and wheels that ever were or will be invented, are not so easy as fins. You will find, on fairly thinking of it, that it is his restraint which is honourable to man, not his liberty; and, what is more, it is restraint which is honourable even in the lower animals. A butterfly is more free than a bee, but you honour the bee more just because it is subject to certain laws which fit it for orderly function in bee society. And throughout the world, of the two abstract things, liberty and restraint, restraint is always the more honourable. It is true, indeed, that in these and all other matters you never can reason finally from the abstraction, for both liberty and restraint are good when they are nobly chosen, and both are bad when they are badly chosen; but of the two, I repeat, it is restraint which characterises the higher creature, and betters the lower creature; and from the ministering of the archangel to the labour of the insect, from the poising of the planets to the gravitation of a grain of dust—the power and glory of all creatures and all matter consist in their obedience, not in their freedom. The sun has no liberty, a dead leaf has much. The dust of which you are formed has no liberty. Its liberty will come—with its corruption. (*J. Ruskin.*)

Ver. 21. **What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?**—*The characters of sin:*—Sin is here arraigned in all the periods of time. I. FOR THE PAST AS UNFRUITFUL. "What fruit had ye?" Sin ought to produce something: for it costs much. Now, for a man to labour and give up all the advantages of religion for nothing is hard indeed! And is not this the case? Read the history of wicked nations, families, individuals. Does the sinner ever gain what deserves the name of "fruit"? It promises much, but how does it perform? (Job xx. 11–14). Sinful gratifications continue no longer than the actions themselves; for then, consequences begin to be thought of; reason ascends the throne, and scourges; conscience awakes, and condemns. Suppose the swearer was to tell us what he has gained by his oaths, the drunkard by his cups, the sensualist by his uncleanness, the prodigal by his extravagance, the proud, the envious, the malicious, by indulging their vile tempers; suppose the sinner was to balance his accounts at the end of a year, of a week, of a day—surely he must find that his gains do not counterbalance his loss, his pleasures do not make him amends for his pains even in the lowest degree. II. FOR THE PRESENT AS DISGRACEFUL. "Ye are now ashamed." And well ye may, for there is nothing so scandalous as sin. It is not a shame to be poor and distressed—but it is shameful to be a fool, a base coward, a traitor to the best of kings, and to be ungrateful to the kindest of friends. 1. There is a natural shame which arises from the commission of sin. This it was that made our first parents hide themselves, so closely did shame tread on the heels of guilt. This class of emotions may be in a great measure subdued by continuance in sin; for some "glory in their shame." But this is not general (Job xxiv. 15–17). Hence they not only elude observation—which they would not do if there was anything that tended to their praise, but frame excuses. But why deny or palliate? Why plead mistake, ignorance, surprise, infirmity unless disparaging to character? The sinner is ashamed even to meet himself, and finally abandons the moral world, and mingles only with those of his own quality; for here mutual wickedness creates mutual confidence, and keeps them from reproaching one another. 2. There is also

a gracious shame which accompanies "repentance unto life." (1) This does not spring from a fear of disbovery, but from a sense of the odiousness of sin. The real penitent is now ashamed of things which pass uncensured in the world, and which once produced no uneasiness in himself. (2) This will be in proportion to our perception of the glory and goodness of God. The more we think of His patience while we are rebelling, of His mercy in pardoning us and adopting us into His family after all our provocations, the more shall we be affected with our vileness in offending Him. 3. There is also a penal shame. For God has so ordered things that if a man be not ashamed of his sins, he shall be put to shame by them. (1) How often is the transgressor dishonoured in this world! See the miser. "He is a proverb and a by-word." See the extortioner. How many "curse his habitation"! "A wicked man is loathsome, and cometh to shame." (2) But this will be more especially the case hereafter. The wicked will "rise to shame and everlasting contempt"—ashamed in themselves; and contemned by each other, by saints, by angels, and by the Judge of all. III. FOR THE FUTURE AS DESTRUCTIVE. "The end of these things is death." 1. The death of the body was the produce of sin. 2. There are many instances recorded of God's inflicting death immediately upon sinners in a way of judgment. 3. Death sometimes attends sin as a natural consequence of vice. How frequently do persons, by anger, intemperance, and such like courses, hasten on dissolution, and become self-murderers! A physician of great repute has given it as his opinion that scarcely one in a thousand dies a natural death. 4. But what the apostle principally intends is the "second death." (1) It is a dreadful end. Nothing that we can here feel or fear deserves to be compared with it. (2) It is a righteous end. Hence the wicked themselves will be speechless. (3) It is a certain end. From what quarter can you derive a hope to escape? The power of God enables Him, His holiness excites Him, His truth binds Him to inflict this misery. Conclusion: Mark the difference between the service of sin and the service of God. It holds in all the articles we have reviewed. If sin be unfruitful, "godliness is profitable unto all things." If sin is shameful, holiness is honourable and glorious. If sin ends in death, religion ends in "everlasting life." (*W. Jay.*)

The Christian's review:—I. WHAT FRUIT HAD YOU IN THE WORKS OF SIN? 1. They are not innocent. If we permit the noblest object God ever built to take the place of God in our esteem, and every unregenerate man does, God must feel Himself robbed and insulted. 2. They are not rational. (1) It surely is most reasonable that men put themselves under the guidance of their Maker, and obey Him in all things, and on Him place supremely their affections. But none of these is true of the ungodly. (2) They consist in the gratification of their appetites and passions, not in those pursuits that elevate the mind and mend the heart. 3. They are not satisfying. That which is neither innocent nor rational, we should not expect would be satisfying; we should promptly declare it impossible. God has made the brute creation, but not man, to be satisfied with the gratifications of appetite. Of them God has not required a higher aim, nor even this; He requires nothing. Of man He requires that we give Him our hearts, and man He has made capable of a higher enjoyment through the medium of the moral affections than through the gratifications of appetite. And He requires us to be happy through this higher medium. He will not be satisfied that our noblest powers lie dormant; and while He is not so, neither shall we be. 4. They are not calculated to elevate, but to depress their nature. They take pleasure in objects beneath the dignity of their being. I remember the disgust it gave me when I read of one of the emperors of antiquity that most of his time was spent in catching flies. Though a mere child when I met with this historical fact, I involuntarily inquired, why his crown, and throne, and sceptre? A beggar boy might succeed as well as he in his sordid occupation. But why did he appear meanly occupied, but as I compared his employment with some nobler business that might have occupied him? 5. They are not abiding. What joy they have, and it is far beneath what they might have, is fleeting and transitory. Every object on which their joy depends is perishing—is a dying and a transitory object. They were not created to be the permanent food of an immortal mind. To expect permanent bliss, and base the hope of it on that which worms can devour, and thieves break through and steal, is to expect grapes of thorns and figs of thistles; is to sow to the wind and reap the whirlwind; is to pierce ourselves through with many sorrows. 6. They are dangerous, being guilty and forbidden. That a nature capable of loving his Maker should fix his supreme attachment elsewhere is offering God a perpetual insult, and exposing the offender to the indignation and wrath of the holy and jealous Jehovah. Having noticed how entirely

without any fruit or enjoyment was the good man in his unconverted state in those things which he once tried to enjoy we shall—II. VIEW HIM UNDER THE OPERATION OF THAT SHAME AND REGRET TO WHICH HIS PAST CONDUCT HAS SUBJECTED HIM. He is brought to see that God is worthy of his whole heart, and that he has withheld it, and has worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is over all, God blessed for ever. He becomes conscious of a quarrel with his Maker, but for no reason that he dare now assign. Every attribute of His nature is glorious, and every act of His government holy, and just, and good. And still the sinner has placed the supreme love on some idol, and refused to love and worship his Maker and his Redeemer. "Then shalt thou be ashamed," says the prophet in the name of the Lord, "and never open thy mouth any more, because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done." And the Psalmist says, "Thou makest me to bear the iniquities of my youth." His shame is greatly enhanced by the consideration that he must now be indebted, as he always has been, for all his benefits to one whom he has always expelled from his affections. He sees, too, that the ground of his preference for idols was a depraved heart, that would prefer anything to God, would love a stock or a stone more than the infinitely adorable and kind Creator; and in the meantime would not be convinced that the course he took ruined him, that his misplaced affections polluted and belittled his mind, and that he was ensnared, and impoverished, and destroyed by the works of his own hands. Now it is that the man becomes filled with shame and confusion of face. III. THE END OF THESE THINGS WOULD NATURALLY HAVE BEEN, TO THE NOW REGENERATE MAN, AND MUST BE TO ALL MEN WHO DO NOT REPENT, DEATH. 1. A course of sin leads to bad society. If men will be transgressors, they must of necessity associate with men of similar pursuit. Make the attempt to collect a company of sober, serious, thoughtful, ungodly men, and if you do not soon discover that no such society can be formed, then have we very much mistaken the true state of the world. 2. A course of sin absorbs precious time. Unregenerate men throw away very many years of their probation. All that time that the Christian must spend in his closet, in the study of the Bible, and in the duties of domestic worship, the ungodly have to spare. This shortens life, and begets the habit of not thinking—the habit of placing the mind in an attitude of listlessness and inattention, than which no habit can be more ruinous to one whose happiness in this life and in the life to come depends so much on prompt and vigorous action. If we are to reach heaven, and would be prepared for it, we must form soon the very opposite habit, and must learn to husband well every hour that lies between us and the grave. 3. A course of sin is death, as it leads to the adoption of bad sentiments, and engenders an erroneous creed. There is an whole system of infidelity taught and believed in the promiscuous associations of the ungodly. It may not be styled infidelity, and lectures may not be given in the formal didactic mode, but the result may be the same. 4. A course of sin benumbs the right affections. It tends to destroy filial confidence, and fraternal, and parental, and conjugal affection. Devotion to some idol easily becomes stronger than any of the natural relationships, and thus neutralises many a restraint, that the God of nature, as the infidel would name Jehovah, has imposed. But when we pass these and speak of the religious affections, it hardly need be said that all these are suppressed and quenched by a course of sin. 5. A course of sin ends in death as it nourishes the unhallowed passions. Men grow worse day by day while they remain in the gall of bitterness and under the bonds of iniquity. Their position is never stationary, but their course downward, downward, downward toward the blackness of darkness for ever. 6. A course of sin tends to death as it offers constant provocation of the Spirit of God. On the operations of His Spirit we are dependent for life and salvation. There is no amount of means, or force of human eloquence, or impetus of natural resolution that can arrest the course of sin. Men will not try to stop themselves, nor allow themselves to be stayed in their course by any human power. Hence our only hope is that God will make them willing in the day of His power. But every act of sin is resistance made to the efforts of His mercy and the influence of His Spirit. (*D. A. Clark.*) *Apples of Sodom: or the fruits of sin*:—The son of Sirach prudently advised, "Judge none blessed before his death; for a man shall be known in his children." This holds good concerning the family of sin: for it keeps a good house which is full of company and servants; it is served by the possessions of the world, courted by the unhappy, flattered by fools, and feasted all the way of its progress. But if we look to what are the children of this splendid family, and see what issue sin produces, it may help to untie the charm. Sin and concupiscence marry

together and feast highly; but the children of their filthy union are ugly, foolish, and ill-matured—shame and death. These are the fruits of sin—apples of Sodom, fair on the outside, but within full of ashes and rottenness. And the tree with its fruits go together; if you will have the mother, you must take the daughters. In answer to the question of the text we are to consider—I. WHAT IS THE SUM TOTAL OF THE PLEASURES OF SIN. Most of them will be found very punishments. 1. To pass over the miseries ensuing from envy, murder, and a whole catalogue of sins, every one of which is a disease, we may observe that nothing pretends to pleasure but the lusts of the flesh, ambition, and revenge. These alone cozen us with a fair outside; and yet on a survey of their fruits we shall see how miserably they deceive us. 2. For a man cannot take pleasure in the lusts of the flesh unless he be helped forward by inconsideration and folly. Grave and wise persons are extremely less affected by them than the hare-brained boy. It is a strange beauty that none but the blind or blear-eyed can see. 3. The pleasures of intemperance are nothing but the relics and images of pleasure, after nature has been feasted; for so long as she needs, and temperance waits, pleasure stands by: but as temperance begins to go away, having done the ministries of nature, every morsel and drop is less delicious and endurable, but as men force nature to stay longer than she would. 4. With these pretenders to pleasure there is so much trouble to bring them to act an enjoyment, that the appetite is above half tired before it comes. An ambitious man must be wonderfully patient; and no one buys death and damnation at so dear a rate as he who fights for it, enduring heat and cold and hunger; and who practises all the austerities of the hermit, with this difference that the one does it for heaven and the other for hell. And as for revenge, its pleasure is like that of eating chalk and coals, or like the feeding of a cancer or a wolf; the man is restless till it be done, and when it is every one sees how infinitely removed he is from satisfaction. 5. These sins, when they are entertained with the greatest fondness from without, must have little pleasure, because there is a strong faction against them. Something within strives against the entertainment, and they sit uneasy on the spirit, when the man is vexed that they are not lawful. They are against a man's conscience, *i.e.*, against his reason and his rest. 6. The pleasure in those few sins that pretend to it is a little limited nothing, confined to a single faculty, to one sense; and that which is the instrument of sense is its torment. By the faculty through which it tastes it is afflicted, for so long as it can taste it is tormented with desire, and when it can desire no longer it cannot feel pleasure. 7. Sin hath little or no pleasure in its enjoyment because its very manner of entry and production is by a curse and a contradiction. Men love sin because it is forbidden, some out of the spirit of disobedience, some by wildness, some because they are reproved, many by importunity; and sins grow up with spite, peevishness, and wrath. 8. The pleasures in the enjoyment of sin are trifling because so transient; if they be in themselves little this makes them still less; but if they were great this would change the delight into torment. Add to this that it so passes away that nothing pleasant remains behind: it is like the path of an arrow; no man can tell what is become of the pleasures of last night's sin. 9. Sin has in its best advantages but a trifling pleasure, because not only God, reason, conscience, honour, interest, and laws sour it, but the devil himself makes it troublesome; so that one sin contradicts another and vexes the man with a variety of evils. Does not envy punish flattery, and self-love torment the drunkard? Which is the greater, the pleasure of prodigalities or the pain of the consequent poverty? 10. Sin has so little relish that it is always greater in expectation than possession. If men could see this beforehand they would not pursue it so eagerly. 11. The fruits of its present possession, the pleasures of taste, are less pleasant, because no sober or intelligent man likes it long. He approves it in the height of passion and under the disguise of temptation, but at all other times he finds it ugly and unreasonable, and the remembrance abates its pleasures. II. WHAT FRUITS AND RELISHES SIN LEAVES BEHIND IT BY ITS NATURAL EFFICIENCY. 1. Paul comprises them under the scornful appellation of "shame." The natural fruits of sin are—(1) Ignorance. (*a*) Man was first tempted by the promise of knowledge; he fell into darkness by believing that the devil held forth to him a new light. It was not likely that good should come from so foul a beginning: the man and the woman knew good, and all that was offered them was the experience of evil. Now this was the introduction of ignorance. When the understanding suffered itself to be so baffled as to study evil, the will was so foolish as to fall in love with it, and they conspired to undo each other. For when the will began to love it, then the understanding was set on work to advance, approve, believe it,

and to be factious on behalf of the new purchase. Not, however, that the understanding received any natural diminution, but received impediment by new propositions. It lost and willingly forgot what God taught, went from the fountain of truth, and gave trust to the father of lies. (*b*) It is certain that if a man would be pleased with sin, or persuade others to be so, he must do it by false propositions. Who is a greater fool than an atheist who sees rare effects and denies their cause, an excellent government without a prince? But in persuading men to this the devil never prevailed very far, although he has prevailed in a thing almost as senseless, viz., idolatry, which not only makes God after man's image, but in the likeness of a cat, &c. But he has succeeded yet farther in prevailing upon men to believe that evil is good and good evil, that fornication can make them happy and drunkenness wise, and that sin has pleasure and good enough in it to make amends for the pains of damnation. Sin has no better argument than a fly has to enter a candle. Such is the sinner's philosophy, and no wiser are his hopes, viz., that he can in an instant make amends for the evils of years, or else that he shall be saved whether he will or no, or that heaven shall be had for a sigh; *i.e.*, he hopes without a promise and believes that he shall have mercy for which he never had a revelation. If this be knowledge or wisdom then there is no such thing as folly or madness. (*c*) There are some sins whose very formality is a lie. Superstition could not exist if men believed that God was good, wise, free, and merciful, and no man would do in private what he fears to do in public if he knew that God sees him there and will bring that work of darkness into the light. He who excuses a fault by telling a lie, believes it better to be guilty of two faults than one. The first natural fruit of sin then is to make a man a fool, and this is shame enough. (2) But sin also makes a man weak, unapt to do noble things; by which is not meant a natural disability, for it is equally ready for a man to will good as evil; the understanding being convinced the hand can obey, and the passions be directed to God's service. But because they are not used to it, the will finds a difficulty to do them so much violence. There is a law in the members, and he that gave that law is a tyrant, and the subjects of it slaves; who often love their fetters and labour hard; the basest of services for the most contemptible rewards. And then custom brings in a new nature and makes a bias in every faculty. Two things aggravate the slavery and weakness of the sinner. (*a*) He sins against his own interest. He knows that he will be ruined by it, but the evil custom remains. (*b*) Custom prevails against experience. Though the man has been disgraced and undone it will not cure him. (3) Sin naturally introduces a great baseness on the spirit, expressed sometimes by the devil's entering into a man. Men fall by this into sins of which there can be no reason given, which no excuse can lessen, and which are set off by no allurements. 2. Although these are the shameful effects of sin, yet there are some sins which are directly shameful in their nature, and every one of which has a venomous quality of its own. Thus the devil's sin was the worst because it came from the greatest malice; Adam's because it was most universal; Judas' because against the most excellent Person. This is a strange poison in sin that of so many sorts every one of them should be the worst. Every sin has an evil spirit of its own to manage and embitter it, but to some sins shame is more appropriate, such as lying, lust, vow making, and inconstancy. And such is the fate of sin that the shame grows more and more; we lie to men and excuse it to God. And the shame will follow the sin beyond the grave. III. WHAT ARE ITS CONSEQUENCES BY ITS DEMERIT AND THE WRATH OF GOD WHICH IT HAS DESERVED. 1. The impossibility of concealment. No wicked man ever went off the scene of his unworthiness without a vile character. The intolerable apprehensions of sinners themselves, and the slightest circumstances often bring to light what was transacted behind the curtains of light. 2. Sin itself; and when God punishes in this way He is extremely angry, for then it is not medicinal but exterminating. One evil invites another, and when the Holy Spirit is quenched the man is left to the mercy of his merciless enemy. 3. Fearful plagues, and even when God forgives the sinner retribution is not wholly withheld. It is promised through Christ that we shall not die, but not that we shall not be smitten. (1) There are some mischiefs which are the proper scourges of certain sins and attend them—drunkenness by giddiness, lying by being given over to believe a lie, &c. (2) There are some states of sin which expose a man to all mischief by taking off every guard. (3) The end of all this is death eternal. (*Jeremy Taylor.*) *The fruits of sin*:—I. IT IS UNPROFITABLE. "What fruit had ye?" 1. Some sins are plainly mischievous to the temporal interest of men, as tending either to the disturbance of their minds, or the endangering of their health and lives, or to

the prejudice of their estates, or the blasting of their good name. 2. There are other sins which, though they are not so visibly attended with mischievous consequences, bring no real advantage either in respect of gain or pleasure; such are the sins of profaneness and swearing. 3. Even those sins which make the fairest pretence to be of advantage to us, when all accounts are cast up will be found in no degree able to perform and make good what they so largely promise. (1) Some pretend to bring in great profit, and tempt worldly-minded men; such are the sins of covetousness and oppression, of fraud, and falsehood, and perfidiousness. (2) Others pretend to bring pleasure, which is a temptation to sensual men; such are the sins of revenge, and intemperance, and lust. II. IT IS SHAMEFUL. Most men when they commit a known fault are apt to be ashamed whenever they are put in mind of it. Some, indeed, have gone so far in sin as to be past all shame (Jer. vi. 15). But yet even these, when they become sensible of their guilt so as to be brought to repentance, cannot then but be ashamed of what they have done. Sin contains in it whatsoever is justly accounted infamous, together with all the aggravations of shame and reproach that can be imagined. And this will appear by considering sin—1. In relation to ourselves. (1) The natural deformity of sin renders it shameful. Men are apt to be ashamed of anything in them that looks ugly. Now, in regard to our souls, sin hath all the monstrousness which we can imagine in the body, and much more. It is the blindness of our minds, the crookedness of our wills, and the monstrous irregularity of our affections and appetites, the misplacing of our powers and faculties—all which is ugly and unnatural. There is hardly any vice but at first sight hath an odious appearance. Drunkenness and passion, pride and falsehood, covetousness and cruelty, are matter of shame in the sincere opinion of all mankind. And though a man, by the frequent practice of any of these vices, may not be so sensible of the deformity of them in himself, yet he quickly discerns the ugliness of them in others. (2) It is a great dishonour to our nature. (*a*) Therefore the Scripture likens it to the meanest condition among men—slavery. So that to be a sinner is to be a slave to some vile passion or irregular desire; it is to part with one of the most valuable things in the world, our liberty, upon low and unworthy terms. (*b*) There is no greater argument of a degenerate spirit than to do such things as a man would blush to be surprised in, and would be troubled to hear of afterwards, and which is more, after he hath been convinced of this, to have so little self-command as not to be able to free himself from this bondage. (*c*) And that sin is of this shameful nature is evident, in that the greatest part of sinners take so much care to hide their vices (1 Thess. v. 7). (3) It is a great reproach to our understandings and a foul blot upon our prudence and discretion. Either men do not understand what they do when they commit sin, or, if they do know, they do not consider what they know. Did men attentively consider what it is to offend God, who "is able to save or to destroy," they would discern so many objections against the thing, and would be filled with such fears of the fatal issue and event of it, that they would not dare to venture upon it (Psa. xiv. 4; Deut. xxxii. 28, 29). No man can engage in a sinful course without being so far infatuated as to be contented to part with everlasting happiness and to be miserable for ever. So that, if it be a disgrace to a man to do things plainly against his interest, then vice is the greatest reproach that is possible. (4) We choose this disgrace, and willingly bring this reproach upon ourselves. We pity an idiot, but every one despiseth him who plays the fool out of carelessness and a gross neglect of himself. And this is the case of a sinner; there is no man that sinneth but because he is wanting to himself; he might be wiser and do better, and will not. 2. In respect of God. (1) Whenever we commit any sin, we do it before Him to whom of all persons in the world we ought to pay the most profound reverence. (2) He likewise is incomparably our greatest benefactor, and there is no person in the world to whom we stand so much obliged, and from whom we can expect so much good. (3) We are ashamed to be guilty of any fault before persons who are clear of anything of the like nature. Men are not apt to be ashamed before those who are their fellow-criminals. Now, whenever we commit any sin, it is in the presence of the Holy Ghost, who hath no part with us in it, and whose nature is as contrary to it as can be. (4) We are apt to be ashamed to do anything before those who detest what we do. To do a wicked action before those who are not offended at it, or perhaps take pleasure in it, is no such matter of shame. Now, of all others, God is the greatest hater of sin, and the most perfect enemy to it in the whole world (Hab. i. 3; Psa. v. 4, 5). (5) We are ashamed likewise to do anything that is evil and unseemly before those who we are afraid will make known

and expose the folly of them. Now, whenever we sin, it is before Him who will most certainly one day bring all our works of darkness into the open light. (6) We are ashamed and afraid to commit a fault before those who we believe will call us to an account for it and punish us severely. Now, whenever we commit any wickedness, we do it under the eye of the great Judge, whose omnipotent justice stands by us ready armed and charged for our destruction, and can in a moment cut us off. III. IT IS FATAL. No fruit then when ye did these things; shame now that you come to reflect upon them; and death at the last. The principal ingredients of this miserable state. 1. The anguish of a guilty conscience, "the worm that dies not." Though God should inflict no positive punishment, yet this is a revenge which every man's mind would take upon him. 2. Another ingredient. The lively apprehension of the invaluable happiness which they have lost by their own obstinacy and foolish choice. 3. A quick sense of intolerable pain aggravated by—(1) The consideration of the past pleasures which they have enjoyed in this life. (2) The despair of any future ease; and when misery and despair meet together, they make a man completely miserable. (*Abp. Tillotson.*) *The fruits of sin*:—I know a man at the present moment—a man I said, but, alas! poor wretched mortal, he looks hardly like a man. I saw him in rags, shivering in the drenching rain but yesterday. He came of reputable parents; I knew his relatives well. He had some four hundred pounds or more left him a few years ago. As soon as ever he could get hold of it he came to London, and in about a month he spent it all in a hideous whirlwind of evil. He went back a beggar and in rags, full of horrible sickness, loathsome, and an outcast. Since that time he has been so often aided by his friends that they have entirely given him up, and now this poor wretch, with scarce enough rags to hide his nakedness, has no eye left to pity him, and no hand to help him. He has been helped again and again and again; but to help him appears to be useless, for at the very first opportunity he returns to his old sins. The workhouse, the hospital, the grave are his portion, for he seems unable to rise to the dignity of labour, and no one will harbour him. I could fairly cry at the sight of him, but what can be done for him if he will destroy himself by his sins? If you say to him, "Why do your friends not notice you?" he will tell you, "They cannot notice me." He has brought his mother to the grave; he has wearied out everybody who has pitied him, for his life has been so thoroughly bad that it excites no pity, but disgusts his own relatives. For the love of the Lord Jesus I will try this unhappy man again, and intend to-morrow to see him washed, and clothed, and fed, and put in a way of livelihood, but I have very slender hope of being of any lasting service to him, for he has been tried so often. Yet I never saw a wretch in such misery. He is emaciated, ragged, and has known hunger, and cold, and nakedness month after month, and unless he mends his ways this will be his lot till he dies. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The fruits of sin*:—I remember once seeing a mob of revellers streaming out from a masked ball in a London theatre in the early morning sunlight, draggled and heavy-eyed, the rouge showing on the cheeks, and the shabby tawdriness of the foolish costumes pitilessly revealed by the pure light. So will many a life look when the day dawns and the wild riot ends in its unwelcome beams. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The fruits of sin*:—Evil premeditated is evil at its best—attractive, desirable, full of promises which the senses can understand and the passions love; but evil perpetrated is evil at its worst—hideous, hateful, stripped of its illusions and clothed in its native misery. In his anger at finding Jesus not to be the Christ he had hoped for and desired, Judas deserted and betrayed Him; in the terrible calm that succeeded indulgence he awoke to the realities within and about him, saw how blindly he had lived and hated, how far the Messianic ideal of Jesus transcended his own. (*A. M. Fairbairn.*) *The unfruitfulness of sin*:—It is recorded of himself by one who, in his unconverted state, was as remarkable for his gay and reckless disregard of religion as he afterwards, by the grace of God, became for his spirituality and devotedness, that when some of his dissolute companions were once congratulating him on his distinguished felicity, a dog happening at the time to come into the room, he could not forbear groaning inwardly and saying to himself, "Oh that I were that dog!" *The unfruitfulness and misery of sin*:—One of the surest means by which Satan keeps men under his power is by keeping them in ignorance of their state. Did they once see what sin really is, they would quickly leave it. Our text sets sin before us in its true colours, and shows us what it is when stripped of every covering. I. SIN YIELDS NO PRESENT FRUIT, nothing which deserves the name of fruit. It may furnish some short gratification, but this is not fruit. Sin makes, indeed large

promises, but it cannot fulfil them. Compare Eve in the Garden of Eden, Judas, the Prodigal Son. II. Sin IS FOLLOWED BY SHAME. Shame is that confusion of mind which arises from a consciousness of guilt. For a time men may sin without feeling shame, but a day is coming when every "hidden thing of darkness" will be brought to light. Look at Peter when he saw his guilt in having denied his Master. III. Sin ENDS IN DEATH (Jas. i. 15; Gen. ii. 17). Death is the certain consequence of sin. Death, in this sense, means the separation of the soul from the favour, the presence, and the Spirit of God. Consider these things, forsake sin, and turn to God. (*E. Cooper.*) *The unprofitableness of sin*:—Walking in the country, I went into a barn where I found a thresher at his work. I addressed him in the words of Solomon: "In all labour there is profit." Leaning upon his flail, with much energy he answered, "Sir, that is the truth, but there is one exception to it: I have long laboured in the service of sin, but I have got no profit by my labour." "Then you know something of the apostle's meaning when he asked, 'What fruit'? &c." "Thank God," said he, "I do; and I also know that even 'being made free from sin,' &c." How valuable this simple faith in the Word of God! and how true is the saying of a deceased writer that "piety found in a barn is better than the most splendid pleasure of a palace!" (*W. Jay.*) *The folly of sin*:—It is not only a crime that men commit when they do wrong, but it is a blunder. "The game is not worth the candle," according to the French proverb. The thing that you buy is not worth the price you pay for it. Sin is like a great forest tree that we sometimes see standing up green in its leafy beauty and spreading a broad shadow over half a field; but when we get round on the other side there is a great dark hollow in the very heart of it, and corruption is at work there. It is like the poison-tree in travellers' stories, tempting weary men to rest beneath its thick foliage, and insinuating death into the limbs that relax in the fatal coolness of its shade. It is like the apples of Sodom, fair to look upon, but turning to acrid ashes on the unwary lips. It is like the magician's rod that we read about in old books. There it lies; and if, tempted by its glitter or fascinated by the power that it proffers you, you take it in your hand, the thing starts into a serpent with erected crest and sparkling eye, and plunges its quick barb into the hand that holds it, and sends poison through all the veins. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Sin sadly recollected*:—I heard one of the best men I ever knew, seventy-five years of age, say, "Sir, God has forgiven all the sins of my lifetime, I know that; but there is one sin I committed at twenty years of age that I never will forgive myself for. It sometimes comes over me overwhelmingly, and it absolutely blots out my hope of heaven." (*T. De Witt Talmage.*) *Terrible fruits of sin*:—The worldly spirit makes possession the object of life. Christ makes being, character, the object. The world asks, "What do you possess?" God asks, "What are you?" A gentleman once said to a wicked man, "You do not look as if you had prospered by your wickedness." "I have not prospered at it," cried the man. "With half the time and energy I have spent I might have been a man of property and character. But I am a homeless wretch; twice I have been in State prison. I have made acquaintance with all sorts of miseries; but I tell you, my worst punishment is in being what I am." Without doubt it would be delightful to have the possessions of an angel, but it would be ten thousand times better to be an angel. Not what have I, but what am I? not what shall I gain, but what shall I be? is the true question of life. *The wages of sin in time*:—The author of evil has ever tempted with a lie, and offers what it is not in his power to give. "Ye shall be as gods," was his first promise; "ye shall not surely die." But mark its fulfilment: the image of God was shattered; "sin entered into the world, and death by sin." And when the Second Adam was shown "all the kingdoms of the world," the devil said, "All this power will I give Thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will, I give it" (Dan. ii. 21; 1 Chron. xxix. 11, 12). It was false. It is always so. In answering the question, What are the wages of sin in time? my reply must be—I. SIN DOES NOT PAY WHAT IT PROMISES. I do not deny that sin has its pleasures, nor that the worldly may obtain certain advantages not to be found in the way of religion; but I assert that those who have made the perilous trial have not received what they expected; sin has paid them in debased coin. Take, *e.g.*—1. The pleasures promised by the sensual appetites, painted in voluptuous day-dreams, or as sung by poets who profane the gift of song; all is bright, exhilarating, delicious; but the palled profligate will tell you that the mad pleasure was disappointing as well as brief, and that there is a thirst left which it is sin to satisfy and agony to deny. While for those who have thrown themselves into the

current of worldly dissipation, till the jaded soul has ceased to live for God, nothing is more common than the self-condemning excuse that they are weary of a life which they persuade themselves they are obliged to lead. 2. And so it is with wealth, the glittering bait which some pursue in despite of the laws of God, but many more by that respectable covetousness which hardens the heart to the love of God and man and the influence of His Spirit. And for what? It is idle to undervalue the comforts which wealth can command; but it would be as idle to deny that the pleasure of possession is alloyed by its cares, and fades quickly with its novelty; that the habits formed by acquiring frequently preclude from enjoying (Eccles. viii. 11). 3. Praise, honour, power, again, are among sin's promises, but lose their worth precisely as far as they are obtained by sin. As the result of honest duty and self-sacrifice, especially when from holier motives, these have their value, but when attained by sinful compliances, or hypocritical pretence, in the unwilling judgment of the inner man, as honours undeserved they are worthless, and conscience contradicts the voice of praise; and the fruits of reputation, which are held out as an encouragement to persevering duty, when grasped by the hand of sin, become like apples of Sodom. Again sin has shuffled her wages; she has paid her servants with a lie. II. BUT WE ARE NOT TO THINK THAT SIN HAS NO WAGES IN THIS LIFE. She has them, and for the most part they are duly paid. Note—1. The effects of sin upon man's outward fortunes and circumstances, which, although not uniform when they do follow, they follow as the effects of sin; when they do not follow, it is because they have been, in spite of sin, diverted or delayed. The ruined spendthrift, who has destroyed the means of gratification while strengthening the appetite for indulgence, and who has involved others, perhaps, in common misery; the palled voluptuary, who has overtaxed the powers of nature, and bears passions still unslaked in an effete and feeble body, suffering, weary, and querulous, unloving and unloved, the very wreck of what was once a man; the doting drunkard, alternating his miserable hours of mad mirth and maudlin penitence, enslaved by a habit which disgusts although it masters him, and sinking with weakened mind and trembling limbs to an early grave; the poor lost woman, whom folly led on to sin, and sin launched into the full current of passion, and her name became a reproach, and the door of return was shut, and excitement was a necessity, and there was remorse and loathing, but no penitence, till vice and disease had done their ghastly work, and death closed the short and fevered scene; the dishonoured man of business, who, under the cover of a high character, was tempted to gamble with his credit, then to retrieve his losses by dishonesty, till his astute schemes broke down by their own weight, the disguise fell off, and amidst the curses of those whom he has impoverished and betrayed he sinks into disgrace and ruin; or, most fearful retribution of all, the irreligious parent, heart-struck to see his children reproducing his own vices and pressing on deafly on the road to endless ruin to which he first had pointed them the path—these are witnesses which meet us everywhere, all testifying that the wages of sin are sorrow, disappointment, and misery, all replying with melancholy unanimity to the apostle's question. "The end of those things is death." 2. But the outward course of retribution is crossed by many exceptions, and often, indeed, the heaviest judgment here may be prosperity. "Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone." There are, besides, many sins telling less sensibly upon the outward circumstances of those who commit them. (1) There is a sore and uneasy conscience. In the heart's secret tribunal, even when the sin is unknown to others, there is a verdict, and, to some extent, a penalty, and the sinner finds himself self-condemned and self-punished. Nor is the penalty a light one. At first the suffering is acute, and even though the perverse will spurns against the correction, still conscience perseveres, and, though in feebler accents, she reiterates her sentence; still, though there may be no longer a pang of sharp remorse, there is in the bosom a dull but wearing sore. More terrible is the dull apathy of a seared conscience, as it lies heavily, though motionless, on the sinner's spirit, damping each emotion of hope, and keeping down each stirring of penitence, inflicting the fearful retribution for pleadings unheard and warnings disregarded, that warnings can be regarded and pleadings can be heard no longer. (2) Hence, too, the sinner is thrown out of harmony even with external things. The intellectual pleasures which belong to science may not be greatly affected, perhaps, by habits of sin; but the simpler taste for nature's beauty—one of the purest and healthiest of our instinctive sentiments—is dulled and enervated, if not destroyed, by self-indulgence. And so it is, and still more sadly, with the social affections; sin robs them of their purity and pleasure. I am not speaking of its outward

manifestations, which break up the peace of families. The domestic affections are often secretly poisoned by sin, even when not outwardly violated or apparently ruffled; and there is many a heart on which the smile and voice of love fall cold and cheerless, because it has within an uneasy conscience, or lawless passions, or thoughts it dares not divulge; and there is a felt and painful contrast between its own polluted self and the innocent purity of those who share its home. (3) Hence, too, results a peevish and restless dissatisfaction, venting itself on others. (4) And we are thus led to the most fearful of sin's wages in time, involving, as it does, the still more fearful wages of eternity—hardness of heart and the grieving and quenching of God's Spirit. God's Spirit will not always strive with rebellious man. He requires our co-operation, though He gives us the will and the power; and He ceases to plead and aid when He pleads and aids in vain. There are warnings, merciful though solemn warnings, and the last loving pleadings of Him who willeth not the death of a sinner; but at length the trial is over, the probation has failed, and he who might have been a vessel made for heaven, a temple of the Holy Ghost, is "given over to a reprobate mind." "The light within is darkness; and how great is that darkness!" We must not omit, in reckoning up the sinner's payment here, his forebodings of what is to come hereafter. (*Bp. Jackson.*) *The evil effects of past sin on a believer*:—The apostle's question is addressed to Christians, and he says not only that they had no fruit in their sins, whilst they were living in them, but that now, after they had abandoned them, they were still ashamed. See also Ezek. xxxvi. 31; xvi. 62. To the child of God, the penal consequences of guilt are for ever remitted, and the dominion of the principle of evil is dethroned. Still in many ways does his past iniquity ever continue to molest him, and to the end of his days will not cease to mingle painfully in his otherwise joyous and blessed cup. How often, for example, are a Christian's efforts at usefulness impeded by the recollection that others have of what he once was. It is said of one of the most eminent ministers in modern times, that at an early period of his life, deeply tinctured with infidelity, he made active efforts to instil its principles into others. With some he awfully succeeded, and these, at a later and a better period, he sought anxiously but fruitlessly to reclaim from the fearful sin into which he had himself been the means of seducing them. What, think you, would have been his answer to the apostle's "What fruit had ye then in those things whereof you are now ashamed?" Would he not have said, truly then they were fruitless and unsatisfactory, but now they are, and ever will remain, sources of the bitterest shame and sorrow. Then, again, every exercise of a sinful principle contributes to the formation of an evil habit. The more and the longer it is acted on, the stronger the habit becomes; and the stronger the habit is, the more difficult, of course, will it afterwards be to subdue and eradicate it; the more constantly and readily will the mind yield to every little temptation that may arise to excite it, and the more naturally will the thoughts recur, when most unbidden and most distasteful, to the scenes of their former associations. Thus does the indulgence of sinful propensities heap up fuel for future difficulties and future pain. Every corrupt habit forms a barrier to what will then be our leading object in life, to grow in grace and purity—and increases the number and strength of the enemies we shall have to contend with; while ideas, easily and involuntarily arising within us, which our former courses have suggested, but which we now loathe and detest, will add to our pain and self-reproach and confusion of face. Oh, how can men talk lightly of sin? how can they go on from day to day in reckless and obstinate perseverance in ways that are ungodly and corrupt? Why is it that they will rather lay up for themselves, as it were, a pile that will consume themselves, and forget the end that must arrive at last? (*J. Newland, A.M.*) *Remorse of a wasted life*:—The following epitaph was written by Lord Byron to the memory of his thirty-third birthday, "Here lies in the eternity of the past, from whence there is no resurrection of the days, whatever there may be for the dust, the thirty-third year of an ill-spent life; which, after a lingering disease of many months, sunk into a lethargy and expired on January 22, 1821, leaving a successor inconsolable for the very loss which occasioned its existence." (*J. F. B. Tinling, B.A.*) *The law of seed-sowing and after harvest*:—The season of the year reminds us of that great and universal law of seed-sowing and harvest. The name Autumn in its original signifies to increase. The law that fruitage follows seed-sowing is as evident in the moral universe as in the physical. Conduct has its reward. I. THE SOWING OF VICE HAS ITS LEGITIMATE AND NECESSARY HARVEST. 1. The habit of vice follows vice. The wistaria throws out its little tendrils. How very feeble are they at first.

As they feel their way for support they seem to plead for help. You build for them a trellis, and, by and by, those tendrils have become so strong that they pull the posts aside, and on the walls they even move the solid brick. As I have watched and admired this vine with its cataract of bloom, I have thought of the growth and force of the habit of wrong-doing. 2. Conscience grows weaker. 3. The loneliness of vice is part of the harvest. Men say, "I do not believe that there are lost souls in God's universe." You can see many of them in this world. As they sink in vice they become isolated. 4. The evil propensities, passions, appetites, grow stronger by exercise. 5. Spirituality is crowded out by worldliness. The mental and spiritual vision is blinded. It is a silent progress of decadence—a silent, steady ripening of the sown seed. We stand upon one of the Alps and see the avalanche as it plunges thunderingly, irresistibly downward. At first it was but a bit of soft snow, little harder than the common snow, that began to move. So a lost soul begins its downward course in a seeming harmless thought or whim, but at last the final destruction is sudden, awful. II. THIS LAW IS TRUE IN THE MENTAL WORLD. III. IT IS ALSO TRUE OF THE SPIRITUAL WORLD. 1. Right-doing also ends in habit, and habit in character. A man said of his father, and it was true, "He could not be dishonest if he tried." Life-long honesty makes character, and that determines action. 2. Christian experience is enjoyed. 3. Christian motives crystalise in deeds, and these latter bring their reward. 4. A sweet communion with Christ. 5. A communion of spiritually developed, kindred souls. 6. A steadfast hope that adverse influence can no more move than can a child shake with its tiny finger the great pyramid. 7. A likeness to Christ. 8. Heaven is the final fruit, "the end everlasting life." Conclusion: In nature God does not arrest and change growth to something else. There is a different law applied in the moral universe. A man is growing wrong, the harvest is nearly ripened, when all is changed, and there is a new seed-sowing and a new harvest. Here is then the test by which to measure ourselves. Is the fruitage within us one of humility, of desire for usefulness, for the spirit of Christ? (*R. S. Storrs, D.D.*) *The comparative desirableness of the service of sin and the service of God:*—I. AS TO PRESENT ENJOYMENT. "What fruit had ye then?" 1. The "fruit" of particular principles is the conduct which they produce—the fruit of a particular course of conduct the consequences to which it leads. He appeals to themselves whether their new service was not even now happier, more honourable and more useful; whether its present fruit was not richer in its relish and more excellent in its nature. "What fruit!"—"Wild grapes," "clusters that were bitter"; "grapes of gall." Such were the fruits, if we understand the question as meaning what kind of fruit had ye? 2. But it may strongly convey, as such questions often do, their having had no fruit; in which case "fruit" signifies benefit. It is not a fair and just description of the service of sin to denominate it "the unfruitful works of darkness"? It is true, there are pleasures in sin. These are the allurements to its service. Yet, still, the question may be emphatically put—What fruit have they? Is there any real solid satisfaction worthy of a rational, immortal, accountable being? (1) What fruit in prosperity—from the ungodly use of Divine bounties? It is true that the more thoroughly a man can divest himself of all the restraints of religious principle—the more insensible his conscience becomes—the more complete will be his enjoyment in the service of sin. But is it not fearful for a reasonable creature to call that a relish to prosperity which is the deepest curse with which humanity can load itself—the curse of moral insensibility?—How different, how much purer, richer, and worthier is the relish imparted to prosperity by the service of God! He enjoys this world best, who receives it from God, uses it for God, and enjoys God with it. (2) And in adversity, what fruit of his service has the slave of sin when prosperity is withdrawn? Has his master any comfort for him then? any stay to his sinking heart, any balm for his wounded spirit? Alas! if, having served sin, he looks to sin for comfort! While prosperity continued, the poor slave was taxed to the uttermost for the pampering of the "lusts of the flesh," and when these have got all, the tyrant has nothing for his infatuated and abject drudge but the smile of bitter scorn, or the stingings of angry reproach. How different in adversity the condition of the servant of God! The Master whom he serves is "the God of all comfort." He has a sweeter smile for His faithful servants in their distresses than in their prosperity. He "sheds His love abroad in their hearts." He gives them "everlasting consolation and good hope." And in Himself they still retain "the portion of their inheritance and cup." When He covers their sky with clouds, He "paints a rainbow on the storm"; and the darker the

cloud, the brighter are the tints of the symbol of reconciliation and peace. And has not "the fruit of affliction been to take away sin," the highest and richest of all profit? "Ye have your fruit unto holiness," which is fruit unto happiness. II. As to SUBSEQUENT REFLECTION. Of service of sin all who ever come to see it aright are ashamed (Ezek. xxxvi. 31, 32; xvi. 62, 63), a feeling which can never have place as to the service of God—except indeed the shame of having so imperfectly fulfilled its duties. They are ashamed of—1. Their folly. There is no infatuation like that which prefers the service of sin to the service of God! It is the preference of degradation to honour; of the most miserable of slaveries to the most blessed of liberties; of earth to heaven; of time to eternity; of Satan to God! 2. Their ingratitude. When they think of God as the Source of every joy, and who "has not spared His own Son," and feel aright their obligations to Him, they look back with bitter self-reproach on the vileness of that ingratitude which their previous course involved. They blush for the baseness of having lived in rebellion against rich and unmerited kindness; and especially of having slighted His mercy. III. In THEIR ULTIMATE CONSEQUENCES. "Death" is the end of one: "life" of the other. The one closes in eternal confirmation in sin, alienation from God, a sense of His wrath, and consequent misery; the other in eternal confirmation in perfected holiness, spotless likeness to God, communion with Him, the enjoyment of His love, unmarred and uninterrupted by sin, and consequent happiness; happiness without alloy, without abatement, and without cessation. But while such are the ends, respectively, of the two services, there is one marked difference between them. The one is wages—a merited reward; the other a gift—a gratuitous bestowment (ver. 23). (*R. Wardlaw, D.D.*)

Ver. 22. **But now being made free from sin.**—*The freedom and dignity of the Christian:*—I. WE ARE "FREE FROM SIN." 1. We are free from—(1) Its guilt and pollution. Sin is represented as an evil of enormous magnitude. It is said to be a plague and a leprosy, foul, odious, detestable. But now there is a fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness. "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." (2) Its curse and condemnation. "So many as are of the works of the law are under the curse." The acts of our disobedience are innumerable, and the curse of heaven comes down where sin is. But "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." Therefore is there now to us no condemnation. (3) Its tyranny. Before our conversion it did reign; we obeyed not God but sin. Since our conversion sin has not had dominion over us; for we are not under the law, but under grace. (4) Its sting and bitterness. There is no comfort, no peace, as long as we are indulging sin and under the power of it. Christ makes us free. His precious blood, presented to us, pacifies and purifies the conscience. (5) All its consequences perfectly and for ever. "The wages of sin is death"; but "he that believeth My sayings," says Jesus Christ, "shall never see death." "Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory by our Lord Jesus Christ." 2. We are made free. There is some power exerted upon us distinctly Divine: we call it grace or the work of God. God calls us to come forth from our bondage; and we, hearing His voice, do come; but the power which gives us the ability to assert our freedom is His own. This freedom is ascribed—(1) To the Father: "You hath He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins"; "We give thanks to the Father, who hath translated us out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of His dear Son." (2) To Christ. He was anointed to preach the opening of the prison doors to them who are bound; "and if the Son shall make us free, we shall be free indeed." (3) To the Holy Ghost. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." The plan emanates from the Everlasting Father; the carrying of it into execution is the work of the Son; and its application to our minds, by which we are personally made free, is the work of the Holy Ghost. 3. The instruments employed. (1) The truth. "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (2) Grace; and the more we know of it, the better we understand the riches of the grace of God. (3) The ministry. "I have sent thee to open their eyes and to turn them from darkness to light," &c. And all these conspire and unite. II. WE BECOME "SERVANTS OF GOD." Our deliverance from sin is in order to this. 1. This name, "servant," is a name of glory because it has been borne by Christ, and by the most distinguished men that ever lived. Moses, Job, David, Paul, James. These triumphed in nothing so much as rendering service in their free state to God. His service is perfect freedom. 2. How is it brought about? We first receive the truth; the blessings of the gospel, freeing us from sin, are brought by faith and

knowledge into our nature. The natural effect of this is confidence and love towards God. We cease to be afraid; the spirit of bondage gives way; and the Spirit of adoption comes in its stead. This new view of God induces consecration. We yield ourselves unto God as those that are alive from death, and our members as the instruments of righteousness unto God. 3. What will the Master have us to do? It is required in a servant that there be—(1) Integrity. (2) Faithfulness. (3) Diligence. (4) Affection. III. OUR FRUIT IS UNTO HOLINESS. 1. Beautiful fruit; "fruit meet for repentance." "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering," &c. "Holy fruits": that is, fruits that are vital, fresh, blooming, luscious. 2. There never has been any fruit unto holiness separate from the principles of the gospel. There may be morals, dry and barren, but there is no holiness but as it arises out of faith and love towards Jesus. 3. In order to fruitfulness there must be cultivation. There must be a diligence and a care that we show forth in our tempers and practice the various points of that blessed light and beauty which is called in the text holiness. IV. THE END IS EVERLASTING LIFE. The end is everything. If it were so that the course of religion in this world were a course of sorrow, if the end were everlasting life, it were worth the while to walk it. But it is not: the way is peace, the path is light, the progress is joy, and then the end is everlasting life. The more I see of this life, the more I feel that it is a poor, dissatisfied life. Irrespective of God, it is not worth having. And I am increasingly persuaded that the life to come is unbounded, and perpetual, and everlasting activity, conscious purity, splendid glory, and rest in His beatific vision. (*J. Stratten.*) *The redeemed soul*:—I. AS GLORIOUSLY EMANCIPATED. 1. It is "made free from sin"—from its power, its guilt, and its consequences. 2. This emancipation is the most real, valuable, and lasting of any. II. AS DIVINELY CONSECRATED. "Become servants to God." His service is the most—1. Reasonable. 2. Free. It insures the free action of all the powers of the soul. 3. Honourable. What an honour to be employed by Him! III. AS PROSPEROUSLY EMPLOYED. "Fruit unto holiness." Holiness is the perfection of being. "Having the fruit to holiness" implies that every thought, word, and deed bears towards perfection. IV. AS EVERLASTINGLY BLESSED. "The end everlasting life." Life without end. 1. Free from all evil. 2. Possessed of all good. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Right! left! right!*—I. The first stage of the Christian journey is CONVERSION, "now being made free from sin." What, then, is this "freedom from sin"? What, then, this emancipation we get at the Cross? Sin is here. Sin is in us, sin is on us. Sin has flung on our soul the double coiled chain of penalty and power. We are prisoners bound by the two-twisted grapple of guilt, but it is all snapped and shivered in the surrender of the soul to the Lord. "He hath sent Me to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." Here's the gospel for you. "The Lord hath laid upon Him the iniquity of us all." "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree." "While we were yet sinners Christ died for us." Every fraction of my awful debt Christ has rendered, and now I am pardoned, justified, "reconciled unto God by the death of His Son," and God righteously bestows upon me the full remission of my sins, "that He might be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." I am, in conversion to Christ, free from sin, its penalty. Yet once more, conversion brings freedom from the power and presence of sin. Slaving in the rice fields of sin was I! hoeing along in the heat of the plain of hell was I! manacled was I! But, "happy day!" on the horizon a broad sail appeared, and a vessel bore down to the terrible shore, and lo, the blood-stained banner of the Cross of Christ waved its welcome to my weary soul, and I lifted myself from the swamps and fled, and plunged into the deep with a cry for help. "Lord, save me, I perish." Help came, salvation came, the Lord walked on the wave and brought me on board, and "I fell down at His feet as if dead." II. The second station on the line to glory is what we call, for want of a better name, CONDUCTION, "become servants to God." You know what conduction in physical science is. It is the communication of heat from one body to another by contact. There must be touch, or there will be no passing along of the caloric wave. Can't you realise this "natural law in the spiritual world"? It is the secret of effective service to God. Examine the extremities and see that the touch is certain. Is your soul, Christian worker, in contact with God? Is your soul, Christian worker, in contact with man? Have you regeneration from God? Have you sympathy with man? A soul saved, and a soul-seeker. That is service. Bring the soul into living contact with the living

God, and the Divine heat by the law of conduction will ripple its waves through the mass of humanity till all the earth shall acknowledge Him; "and they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord." But where shall I work? How shall I serve? how labour for God on the earth? Where you are called, there preach. Serve God with your new life where He gave it you. Serve you your God by doing His will in "the trivial round, the common task." "Who sweeps a room as for His laws makes that and the action fine." Be a "servant to God." III. The third platform we reach on this royal route to heaven is CONSECRATION: "Ye have your fruit unto holiness." Rowland Hill says truly, "he wouldn't give a fig for a man's religion if his very cat wasn't the better of it!" Be a fruiterer in the Christian life, not a florist. It was said of one of those perfection-florists, "Ay, he's perfect, he says, but ask his wife!" Many will pray that will never pay, and yet paying not praying is the "fruit unto holiness." To one of those florists of holiness I once lent my last coin, and I've never seen it nor him, and it's ten years now since he, with three or four hundred more of the coins of others to keep mine company, took his spring-heeled flitting in the bonnie moonlight! Many will talk that will never walk, and yet walk not talk is the "fruit unto holiness." The world needs Christs, be you a Christ! Live holiness by living Christ, for the blessing is not an it, but a "He." Christ in you, working through you, that "we should be to the praise of His glory." IV. And now, the terminus of this railway journey to "the regions beyond" is what we call, also for the want of a better name, and to keep to our "cons" for your memory's sake, CONGREGATION, "the end, everlasting life." Right has been, left has been, right again has been, it is now straight on! On screams the engine whistle, and the piston plunges, and the wheels move. Night! Thunders the iron steed on its ringing track, smoothly on, steadily on, into the darkness. (*John Robertson.*)

The blessedness of believers:—I. THEIR FREEDOM FROM SIN. Consider—1. Wherein this freedom consists. It does not mean that they are made free from the being of sin. This will be the case by and by, when they shall be like Christ as well as see Him as He is. But it does mean that they are free from—(1) Its penal consequences. Christ hath redeemed them from the curse of the law, being made a curse for them. (2) As to its empire. "Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace." And what is grace if it suffers sin to conquer? (3) From its love. Persons may leave what they do not loathe, and still may be hankering after it. This was the case with the Israelites and Lot's wife, but it is not the case with the real Christian. The streams of sin are embittered to him; he can never love that again which killed Him, who is all his salvation and all his desire. And this aversion extends not to sins to which he has no propensity, but to his darling lusts, to those which are as dear as a right eye or a right hand. 2. But a deliverance supposes a Deliverer. Did they make themselves free? Did creatures, ministers, or angels? No, it was the work of God Himself. II. THEIR CONSECRATION TO GOD'S SERVICE. Negative religion is not enough. It is not enough that you cease to do evil; you must learn to do well. It is not enough that you are made free from sin; you must become the servants of God. 1. God has every claim. We are His absolutely. He made us. Were He to suspend His sustaining influence we should relapse into nothingness. And you are not your own in a much nobler sense; you are bought with a price, and therefore you are bound to glorify God, &c. 2. Notice the nature of this service. (1) There is a sense in which all are God's servants. Nebuchadnezzar was "the rod of His anger and the staff of His indignation, but he meant not so, neither did his heart think so." He maketh the wrath of man to praise Him, and restrains the remainder of it, just as the miller draws off the hatch and lets in as much water as the grinding requires, and then lowers it again and restrains the rest. (2) But there are servants from conviction and disposition. They are made willing in the day of His power, and hold themselves at His disposal, asking, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" (3) This service is not confined to official characters. Moses, Job, David, &c. Ministers are called the servants of God, but the name itself is applicable to all real Christians. The highest angel is no more than a servant of God, and the poorest believer on earth is nothing less. The man of five talents can serve God as well as the man of ten. (4) This service is not confined to attendance upon the means of grace. These are not religion, but are the means, because they are those things in the use of which we obtain the supply of the Spirit to go forth and live to God entirely. Whether, therefore, a Christian is on the throne or on the bench, in the shop or on

the road, he may be still serving God and have the testimony that he pleases God. (5) This service is passive as well as active. They also serve who wait, and they who suffer. And perhaps God's people never glorify Him more than in the fires. Perhaps nothing impresses others so much as the passive graces in Christians. III. THEIR PRESENT PRIVILEGES. The fruit of a tree is something from which we derive pleasure and profit, and by which it is known and identified. "Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." What fruit? 1. True profit. In the days of Job, infidels asked, "What is the Almighty, that we should serve Him?" &c., and in the days of Malachi they were audacious enough to say, "It is vain to serve God," &c. To all which the apostle returns a perfect answer: "Godliness is profitable to all things," &c. 2. Safety. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" 3. Peace. "Great peace have they that love Thy law." "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace," &c. 4. Pleasure that deserves the name, pleasure that reaches the very soul, and produces sunshine and satisfaction there. "Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound," &c. 5. Health, if it be good for you; sickness, if it be good for you; wealth, if it be good for you; reputation, if it be good for you; for "no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly." Therefore the Saviour says, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God," &c. IV. THEIR FINAL BLESSEDNESS. "The end everlasting life." (*W. Jay.*) *The blessed state of believers:*—I. THEY ARE FREE FROM SIN. 1. Its accumulated guilt. 2. Its tyranny. 3. Its love. 4. Its defilement. II. THEY ARE THE SERVANTS OF GOD. 1. Governed by His will. 2. Supported by His grace. 3. Interested in His cause. III. THEIR FRUIT IS UNTO HOLINESS. The fruit of their—1. Heart. 2. Lips. 3. Lives. IV. THEIR END IS EVERLASTING LIFE. A state of—1. Uninterrupted and eternal union with Christ. 2. Active and delightful employment. 3. The highest enjoyment. (*Biblical Museum.*) **Servants to God.**—*God's servants:*—I. THE GROUND OF THEIR SERVICE. They are God's property (Titus ii. 14; 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20; 1 Pet. i. 18). II. ITS DIGNITY. It is a great thing to be a servant of an earthly monarch; but what a dignified and dignifying service is spoken of here! Contrast it with that out of which we are taken. III. ITS FREEDOM. Observe the words "become servants." Although the introduction to His service is an act of grace towards you, you are not forced into it contrary to your will (2 Cor. v. 14). It is a service of love, the yoke is easy and the burden light. This service is perfect freedom. IV. ITS PRIVILEGES. A good master—1. Provides for his servants, thinks for his servants. Oh, how God's servants are provided for! what angels' food, what raiment, what protection! 2. Upholds his servants, and our Master will uphold His. His name is upon them, His honour is identified with them, their cause is His. If one of the servants of the Queen, representing us in a foreign land, be insulted, in a moment the whole country is in arms. V. ITS CHARACTERISTICS AND DUTIES. 1. A good servant is described to us in Scripture; he has—(1) A watchful eye. "As the eyes of servants look unto the hands of their masters," &c. In Eastern countries instead of giving directions by word of mouth, they are often given merely by indications of the hand or of the eye. A good servant will have the eye of faith on the Master's hand, and watch the indication of the Master's eye, that there may be no delay in serving; and the promise is, "I will guide thee with Mine eye." (2) A listening ear: "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth." (3) A ready foot. "I will run in the way of Thy commandments." (4) A ready heart. "An offering of a free heart will I give Thee." (5) A submissive, obedient will. 2. There is a beautiful directory for servants of the Lord in 2 Tim. i. and ii. A good servant must—(1) Be a praying servant. "Stir up the gift of God that is in thee." (2) Not be ashamed of his master. "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord." (3) Hold fast the truth. "Hold fast the form of sound words." (4) Be true to his trust. "That good thing which was committed unto thee, keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us." (5) Be "strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." (6) "Endure hardness." (7) Study "to show himself approved unto God." (8) "Flee youthful lusts: but follow righteousness," &c. (9) Persevere (chap. iii. 14). VI. ITS FUTURE. How the Spirit loves to light up that future (Col. iii. 24; John xii. 26; Rev. xxii.; Luke xii. 37)! (*M. Rainsford.*) **Ye have your fruit unto holiness.**—*Fruit unto holiness:*—I. GOD'S GLORY REQUIRES IT (John xv. 8). II. CHRIST'S FULNESS REQUIRES IT. For what purpose has He this fulness, but that He may give it out to us as the root to the branches grafted into it. What we want is faith to draw upon that fulness. There is life, truth, strength, holiness enough in Jesus, to carry us triumphantly through every difficulty; but the stint and straitening is in our own faith. III. THE SPIRIT'S INHABITATION REQUIRES IT. Will God put His Spirit into us, and be content that we should

walk at the low rate at which men walk who have no such privileges? "The fruit of the Spirit is love," &c. IV. THE SAINT'S PEACE REQUIRES IT. How much unhappiness we bring upon ourselves by the devious ways we take, the dark paths we wander into, and by the neglect of the means God has provided for our being strengthened and helped, and for our having the joy of the Lord for our strength. (*Ibid.*) *Fruit unto holiness*:—1. Two great principles pervade and rule the universe—sin and holiness. There are but these two. There will ever be these two. Now that the second has entered, it would seem neither can be wholly destroyed. 2. It is to one of these two principles we are directed in the text. As the dark ground on which it may best appear, look first at the other. Evil, wrong, sin—the first word betokening its nature, the second its opposition to right, the third its relation to law—what a curse it has been to creation! Gather in thought all the evils which now afflict humanity, add to them all those under which creation groans, add still all those which in another world will continue for ever—and you see the elements of that evil thing which has mysteriously sprung up in God's universe; which He hates, which angels deplore, and which we call sin. It is like emerging from a dark tunnel to sweet air and clear sunshine, to turn from this subject to the one before us. I. WHAT IS HOLINESS? 1. It has many counterfeits. (1) You see yonder the Pharisee. Men call him holy, because he wears a holy garment with a broad phylactery, is unctuous in his speech, loud in his profession, fluent in his prayers. (2) In ancient times you might have seen another sort of man, in a cell, wearing a filthy garment, living upon roots, scowling on the outside world, for which he did nothing, and pretending thus to "mortify the deeds of the body." (3) Yonder is another character, absorbed about spiritual subjects, a great authority on abstruse doctrines, yet withal exclusive, proud, "soon angry," intolerant, unlovely at home. (4) Or look at a collective scene. See that crowd thronging to hear a favourite preacher, or to swell the enthusiasm of a public meeting, or to observe some saint's day, all wearing the air of religiousness, and all yielding themselves to the fascination of spiritual excitement. Now far be it from me to suggest that it may not exist in some of these, but they are not the thing. 2. The simplest definition of holiness is conformity to God. So far as we can understand God's holiness, it consists in infinite rectitude of thought, feeling, nature, and it is essential to Him, so that without it He could not be. He is the Holy One. This holiness regulates all He does. But who can stand in His holy place to gaze upon and imitate Him? Though we cannot do this, however, recollect He has given us reflections of His holiness. 1. God's Word is a reflection of Himself. In a book you get a man's thoughts and spirit. All its injunctions and prohibitions are on the side of holiness. By common consent it is "the Holy Bible," and we are like God, holy as He is holy, in proportion as we "look into the perfect law," catch and reflect its image. 2. Not in a book only, but in a living person has God exhibited His holiness. How holy Christ was! If you cannot imitate the original, then look at the copy. Our holiness consists in being like Christ. As you look at Christ, too, you see what holiness is not, as well as what it is. It is not asceticism. Christ "was in the world"; yet He was holy. It is not absence from temptation. He was in "all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." It is not morbid sensibility, ever weighing experience and scrutinising motive. Christ was active, "went about doing good," was healthy in His moral temperament. It was not unnaturalness, the assumption of anything peculiar, whether in dress, speech, or behaviour. Christ was perfectly natural; the light shone because it was there. 3. Though this is perhaps a sufficient definition, it is not a complete one, for there are elements which go to make up our holiness which could not exist in Christ. In order to holiness in us there must be contrition for sin, and this of course Jesus had not. 4. Still, the definition is not complete. Were it possible to express in a word the nature of absolute holiness, we could not do better than adopt the word "Love." God is love, Christ was love, and the nearest approach we can make to perfect holiness is pure love. II. WHY SHOULD WE BE HOLY? Why should we not; what reason can be urged for sin? It is unreasonable. Holiness is the highest reason. 1. Consider—(1) It was God's original purpose with regard to us. And this first purpose He has steadily adhered to. How holy the creature He formed! "God made man upright." In the "image of God created He man." How powerful this motive! God meant us, made us, to be holy. As sin does not destroy law, nor alter the Divine perfection, so neither does it disturb the Divine purpose. (2) If anything can be stronger as a motive than that "good and acceptable and perfect will of God," it is to be found in the great work of Christ. "God

so loved the world." Why? To promote the interests of holiness, to vindicate His own and to secure that of His creatures. The atonement of Christ does both. (3) Nor did He only die for this. For this, too, He lives and reigns. The first gift He bestowed after His ascension was the royal one of the Holy Spirit, whose work is emphatically to promote holiness. 2. In thus gathering motives from the throne, the Cross, the work of the Spirit, forget not personal ones. The apostle urges these strongly. (1) Your profession. You have made this, have been baptized, taken upon you the badge of discipleship. What means this? "How shall we who are thus by profession dead to sin, live any longer therein?" Consistency with what you profess requires holiness. Either give up your profession, or give up sin—the two are incompatible. (2) Nor this only. If believers, you are one with Christ; as such, should be like Him. He was raised from death by the glorious power of the Father; we should rise too. (3) Still farther; recollect your sinful nature. "The old man," corrupt according to deceitful lusts, is legally destroyed. Not only are motives to sin withdrawn, but right is removed. Therefore "reckon" this to be your state, and "yield not your members as its instruments." 3. Motives of a less personal kind yet remain. As believers formed into a collective fellowship, the object of the Church is twofold—its own culture, and the benefit of the world. Both these will be best secured by growing holiness. III. HOW MAY HOLINESS BE BEST SECURED? 1. Negatively. (1) Not without effort. Wishing, desire, will not avail. If this fruit is ever to be secured, it must be cultivated, nurtured, tended, and sometimes watered with tears. A careless soul will never be a holy one. As little is it to be obtained without Divine help. With a corrupt nature, a vigilant adversary, and a sinful world, as little can a spark live in the ocean, or fruit grow on a rock, as the celestial principle flourish without help from above. Divine in its nature, it requires Divine succour, and none but the Spirit of God can sanctify the soul. (2) Not suddenly, all at once. As the sun does not at once reach the zenith, nor the summer its solstice, nor the fruit its maturity, so neither does holiness at once secure the ascendency in any soul. It is a habit rather than an act. 2. Positively. Holiness—(1) Must have a basis of intelligence. How often the apostle prays that believers may increase "in knowledge." Would you be holy? Think on Divine things. The mind grows by what it feeds on. (2) Is a thing of the heart. If you would be holy, "keep your heart with all diligence." It is the citadel. (3) Is a matter of practice. Sin within is bad; allowed to come out, it is worse, not only for its influence upon others, but on self too. There is no exercise so hallowing as communion with God. Entering into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, we are surrounded by the fragrant incense which will perfume our very garments, and be exhaled in the breath of our lips. As Moses, radiant from the Mount, so shall we reflect the glory of the Lord. Like him, we may "wist not," but others will see, and will take such knowledge of us as will bless and stimulate them. Conclusion: 1. Holiness is within the reach of all. Many things are not so. Wealth, fame, honour, position may be coveted by many, who strive to obtain, but win not. The highest distinction to be won on earth is open to the meanest. 2. Holiness is not destroyed by occasional failures. Try, try again; the steps backward may help the spring forward; the wave receding becomes stronger in its rebound. 3. The conscious absence of perfect holiness should endear the atonement. "If any man sin"—and who does not daily?—"we have an Advocate with the Father," &c. 4. In heaven holiness will be complete. (*J. Viney.*) *Fruitfulness a Christian's glory*:—As the glory of a healthy apple-tree is its fruit, so the glory of a genuine Christian is his usefulness. He does not merely blossom out with a good profession; he bears fruit with all his might and main. There is not a sapless twig or a barren bough on the whole tree which is planted by the rivers of grace but yieldeth its fruit every month. (*T. L. Cuyler.*) *Fruit unto holiness*:—It is remarkable that Paul speaks of holiness as the fruit, and not as the principle of our service to God—as the effect which that service has upon the character, and not as the impelling moral power which led to the service. And this accords with ver. 19, where they who had yielded their members servants to iniquity are represented as having thereby reaped fruit unto iniquity—or, in other words, as having, by their own sinful work, aggravated and confirmed the sinfulness of their own characters. And, on the other hand, they who had yielded their members servants to righteousness, are represented as having reaped thereby fruit unto holiness—or, in other words, they, by doing that which was right, rectified their own moral frames; and a perseverance in holy conduct made them at length to be holy creatures. This is the very process laid down in the verse before us. In virtue of

having become servants to God, they had their fruit unto holiness. No doubt there is a germ of holiness at the very outset of the new life, but still a coarser principle of it may predominate at the first; and the finer principles of it may grow into establishment afterwards. The good things may be done, somewhat doggedly as it were, at the will of another; but the assiduous doing of the hand may at length carry along with it the delight of the heart; and this certainly marks a stage of higher and more saintly advancement in personal Christianity. It evinces a growing assimilation to God—who does what is right, not in force of another's authority, but in force of the free and original propensities of His own nature to all that is excellent. By such a blessed progress of sanctification as this do we at length cease to be servants and become sons; the Spirit of adoption is shed upon us, and we feel the glorious liberty of God's own children. And when the transition is so made that the work of servitude becomes a work of felicity and freedom, then is it that a man becomes like unto God, and holy even as He is holy. One most important use to be drawn from this argument is, that you are not to suspend the work of literal obedience till you are prepared for rendering unto God a spiritual obedience. In every case it is right to be always doing what is agreeable to the will of God. There may be a mixture at first of the spirit of bondage, so that the apostle would say of these babes in Christ, "I speak unto you not as unto spiritual but as unto carnal"; yet still it is good to give yourselves over, amid all the crude and embryo and infant conceptions of a young disciple, to the direct service of God. Break loose from your iniquities at this moment. Turn you to all that is palpably on the side of God's law. Do plainly what God bids, and on the direct impulse, too, of God's authority; and the fruit of your thus entering upon His service will be the perfecting at length of your own holiness, purified from the flaw of legal bondage or of mercenary selfishness—a holiness that finds its enjoyment in the service itself, and not in the hope of the great reward which is to come after the keeping of the commandments; but a holiness upheld by the present experience, that in the keeping of the commandments there is a great reward. (*T. Chalmers, D.D.*) **And the end everlasting life.**—*The believer's end*:—I. THERE IS SOMETHING VERY SOLEMN IN THAT WORD, "THE END!" (Prov. xxiii. 18). What of our end? Look around you and see the speculations, the anxieties, the labours of the men of this world—they all will have an end; see men of pleasure, living for pleasure—the laughter, the songs, the entertainments and revellings will all have an end; and this world will have an end. Every day, every journey, every conflict, every life has an end. What of our end? It is sure; the end will come, and it may be very near. "Oh, that we were wise, that we did consider our latter end." Yet death is not the end of you. The dust will return to the earth whence it came, but the spirit will have gone to God who gave it—whether clothed in the righteousness and washed in the blood of Christ, or not, is the solemn question. II. But the text speaks of THE BELIEVER'S END. The end of his pilgrimage, his conflict, his prayers, his faith; "receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls," or as it is here expressed, "everlasting life." Who can fully comprehend the subject? Life is the perfection of being, and everlasting life is the perfection of life. All that the love of God can bestow, all that the blood of Christ can procure, all that the indwelling Holy Ghost can enable us to enjoy, this is everlasting life—the fruition of the fruit of all the travail of Christ's soul, the enjoyment of all the fulness of God, everlastingly to behold His glory, to be assimilated to Christ, to have mortality swallowed up of life—this is "everlasting life." The consummation of all possible privileges, the fulfilment of all Divine promises, the issue of all God's purposes, God's rest of love. How small the world looks in contrast with such an end, and what a poor consolation will it be for any of us to have attained even the whole world, if we lose it. (*M. Rainsford.*) *The life everlasting*:—More than 1200 years ago, when Bishop Paulinus came to Edwin, king of Deira, and asked permission to preach the good news to his people, that monarch gathered his nobles and wise men to take counsel together. Then one of the thanes arose and said, "Truly the life of a man in this world, compared with the life we wot not, is on this wise: It is as when thou, O king, art sitting at supper with thy oldermen and thanes in the time of winter, when the hearth is lighted in the midst and the hall is warm, but without the rains and the snow are falling, and the winds are howling; then cometh a sparrow and flieth through the house, she cometh in by one door and goeth out by another. While she is in the house, she feeleth not the storm of winter, but yet when a little moment of rest is past she flieth again into the storm and passeth from our eyes. So is it with the life of man; it is but for a moment;

what goeth afore it, and what cometh after it, wot we not at all. Wherefore if these strangers can tell us aught, that we may know whence man cometh and whither he goeth, let us hearken to them and follow their law." This beautiful parable is a witness to us both of the darkness of man without Christ, and also of the greatness of the gift which God has given us through His Son. God has not made us for Himself, redeemed us through Christ, given us His Spirit to dwell in and sanctify us, to cast us into the abyss of death. The whole revelation of the gospel, as admirably summed up in the Apostles' Creed, is a pledge that our end is everlasting life. Note by way of introduction that this life will be—1. A continuation of a present personal life. 2. A fully developed and perfected spiritual life, of which we have the pledge and foretaste here. Hence our Lord speaks of both in the same terms (Matt. xxv. 46; John iii. 36, v. 24; 1 John iii. 14, 15). From what we know, therefore, of the spiritual life here, we may gather what it will be by and by. Everlasting life will be—I. THE COMPLETE AND FINAL EMANCIPATION FROM SIN. Here we have victory over its dominion, but it never ceases to harass us. Here we may go to the fountain for cleansing, but the defilement which necessitates this is a sore trial. But yonder there will be no tempter, no predisposition to evil, no bad examples, no world to allure, no flesh to weaken and ensnare. II. THE IMMEDIATE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD. We have that here too (John xvii. 3), but how fragmentary is it! We know but in part, and see only through a glass darkly. We know Him, yet we know Him not. We hear but a whisper of God's ways and see but the skirt of His robe. But we shall then see Him as He is, and know even as we are known—know His character, attributes, work, ways, and have in that knowledge fully, as we have it now in a measure, everlasting life. III. A LIFE OF ACTION. True, heaven is described as a perpetual Sabbath; and compared with this feverish state the life to come will be a life of rest—rest from sorrow, suffering, conflict, doubt, weariness, and, above all, from sin. But rest without action is monotonous, and more irksome than toil; and it cannot be that the whole condition of our existence will be changed, and our very nature unmade, when we enter the heavenly rest. 1. What is the rest of the heavenly host? They indeed cry "Holy, holy, holy," as they veil their faces, but they have wings and feet as servants ever ready to do the will of Him that sitteth on the throne. And we read that they are "ministering spirits" (Heb. i.), and surely if we are to be "like the angels" we shall be like them in this. As for the service, I do not imagine that the glorified will have reached such perfection as to need no instruction or aid. There will be no sin and no infirmities, but there will still be diversities of character and attainment. And then who knows what opportunities of service will be afforded in the distant provinces of God's kingdom, and on what errands of mercy and hope we may be employed. 2. God "worketh hitherto." His rest has been a rest of action. And if we are to be like Him our life will be one of ceaseless beneficence. IV. A LIFE IN THE IMMEDIATE, UNVEILED PRESENCE OF CHRIST. One element, of course, will be reunion with those we have loved on earth; but eternal communion with Christ will be its perfection, in that will be comprehended all that the heart can desire. Paul had dear friends, yet when he looked forward to his heavenly rest, everlasting union with Christ was the burden of his hope. Yet that was because to him to live was Christ. Here we enjoy Christ's presence by faith; but our communion is interrupted, and He is unseen. But in the life to come we shall see Him as He is, behold His glory, inherit the kingdom He has prepared for us, and share His throne for evermore. (*Bp. Perowne.*) *Everlasting life, an education:*—Eternal life is not a gift as of something fixed, finished, accomplished, and passed over. It is a gift as education is. It is something wrought patiently and long in a man. Eternal life is a gift to us as the sunlight is to the flowers—an influence which enters into them and fashions them. Eternal life from the hand of God is a gift to mankind, as healing is a gift from the physician to the patient. It is that which is slowly wrought in them. Eternal life is wrought in us by the power of the Highest, by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. And the hope of the future is that God's Spirit, entering into the soul, will give it eternal life. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Everlasting life: its progressiveness:*—Eternity will be one glorious morning, with the sun ever climbing higher and higher; one blessed springtime, and yet richer summer—every plant in full flower, but every flower the bud of a lovelier. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*)

Ver. 23. **For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life.**—*The wages of sin and the gift of God:*—I. THE WAGES OF SIN IS DEATH. "Wages" here means "the rations" supplied as pay to a soldier. If sin is your commander, you

will have "death" to eat as your pay. "Sin" is treated as a person, oven as "God" is, and the more we treat it as a living enemy, the more we are likely to fight against it manfully. "Death" may be defined as separation. Spiritual death is a present separation from God. Physical death is a separation of body and soul, and the separation of both from this world. Eternal death is final, total separation of body and soul from heaven, and from God for ever. Now we are prepared to unravel the sentence. 1. God treats "sin" as a master. "Whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin," and "his servants ye are to whom ye obey." Now sin is any violation of God's will which a man does with his eyes open. We can make no scale of sin. The only measure of the sin is the light which it darkens, and the grace which it resists. Bad temper at home—pride and unkindness—want of truth—self-indulgence and sloth—lust and uncleanness—meanness—"covetousness, which is idolatry"—a cherished scepticism—and all the negatives—no prayer, no love to God, no usefulness—all, and many else, are equally "sin." 2. Every "sin" has its "wage"; and the devil is the paymaster. (1) He promises, indeed, very different "wages" from what he gives. He promises the gay, and the affectionate, and the satisfying. But God has drawn up the compact, and He has shown it to you, "The wages of sin is death." (2) Now the expression implies that there is a deliberate engagement—a title. You have a right to your "wages." A servant can claim his "wages," and the master must give them: for whosoever "sins" is doing his employer's work. (3) Let me tell you what it is. First, to destroy your own soul; then to spread a contagion, and hurt others' souls, so to increase your master's kingdom, and give him another and another victim! Is that all? No. To insult God—to grieve the Holy Ghost—to rob Christ of a jewel—that is the work which every one who "sins" is doing for his employer. (4) And often it is very hard work. How hard a man of the world is working; and how little he knows of the employer he is working for. And shall not the wages be a proportionate wages?—the more work, the more pay. (5) The "wages" generally given are to be paid soon; not all at once, they accumulate. Happy are you if you at once recognise it as your "wages," and determine that you will earn no more of them! Happy if you resolve, "I will quit the service!" For, if not, the "wages" will go on being paid. Little by little, the separation from the good and the pure will widen. The Bible will be put further and further aside. Gulfs will come in between you and God. And out at that distance, the soul will have got very cold; heavenly things will wither! But there is a great deal unpaid yet. Perhaps there will come a separation unmitigated by any real hope of a reunion: to go out—where? To a land of darkness! No voice in the valley! no arm in the crossing! And, then, separation for ever! Separation from that father of yours, that mother, that husband, that wife, that child, that saint, that church, that happy fellowship, that God! II. "THE GIFT OF GOD IS ETERNAL LIFE." Here, too, is service—real, severe, lifelong. And "wages"? Yes; certain wages—wages in a most just degree. But it would not be right to call them so. "Wages" do not precede the work. But here the "wages" do precede the work. You do not work to get your "wages," but you work because you have them. But they are infinitely disproportioned to the work; rather, all the work is so bad, that it wants to be forgiven, and a part of the wages is that God does forgive. But were it "wages," and deserved, it would not be half so happy as now—to be an unearned thing—a gift of the love of God! What would heaven be, were it not a gift? Nevertheless, it is "wages." God is just to give it, because deserved by "Jesus Christ our Lord." (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *The wages of sin and the gift of God:*—I. THE FIRST FACT. St. Paul does not say, "The punishment of sin is death," however true that may be. He uses the word "wages." These we earn—1. When we dishonour our bodies. (1) We do this when we forget them, or withhold from them that on which their health, and vigour, and usefulness depend. We see this on a large scale when we face the terrible effects of preventible disease. Now, is it not a sin to allow bad air, water, drainage, filth, and overcrowding to court these fiends, and bid them come and do their work among us? We say pestilence is the judgment of God, and so it is; but it is His judgment on wilful neglect, blindness, selfishness, and wrong. (2) When you give way to drunkenness, destroying thereby the high faculties of your manhood; when you yield to lust, surrendering yourselves to "the strange woman"; when you throw the reins on the neck of pleasure, and chase it wherever it may lead you; when in this way you lay deep and sure the seeds of premature decay, are you not learning by the bitterest experiences that "the wages of sin is death"? Trifle not with the body. Forget not it was made

by God's hand, and redeemed by Christ's blood. Dishonour not that which should be the temple of the Holy Ghost. The sins of the body will bring their awful retribution. It will come as a curse upon yourselves, and, perhaps, upon your children. 2. When we stifle the voice of conscience within us. (1) Every time you do what you know to be wrong, every time you surrender yourselves to a thought which you know to be evil, you are earning the wages of sin which are death—death to all peace of mind, to all noble feeling, to all nobility of character, to all solid success in life. You go off with companions and give way to drink. Well, what of the morning? You feel that you have lost caste at home, among the friends whose respect you value, and you hate and loathe yourself. (2) And so it is whenever a duty is sacrificed to a selfish pleasure, whenever there is the least departure from strict integrity, for the consequence must be uneasiness of mind, a load upon the heart which cannot be laughed off or drunk away; for God has ordered it. Let me beg you not to stifle the voice of conscience. It will surely, sooner or later, be heard. If you do not heed its gentle remonstrances, it will thunder condemnation. Say not that you make good resolutions, but that you are too feeble to keep them. Ask God, by His Spirit, to make you a man, and not suffer you to be a miserable weakling. Trust to yourselves, and you are no match for the devil. 3. When we reject the offers of the gospel (Prov. i. 24, &c.). There is no sin so awful in its character and so terrible in its results as unbelief. That sin some of you are committing every day, every hour; and its wages are death—death to that peace which a man can only know when he has been cleansed by the blood of Christ; death to that hope of a happy hereafter which a firm trust in his Saviour alone can bring to him, and the death which never dies. What I have as the consequence of my sin, either here or hereafter, I have earned, and must have. I may, by God's grace, give up my sin, but the wages of sin are shown in my shattered health, and, it may be, by the sickliness of my children. And if the death of the body sees me unsaved, how my misery will be deepened when I am constrained to say, "I have earned damnation." II. THE SECOND FACT. Poor, lost, unworthy sinners may have eternal life in Christ, and that as a gift from God, and not as something which is to be had in another world, but something which may be had in this. See you not what a grand, brave, and noble thing it is to live in this world knowing that we belong to God, that our bodies are His, our minds His, our souls His, and that, by His grace, we are using them to His glory? Then choose ye this day whom ye will serve. (*J. Burbidge.*) *Wages?—or gift?*—The more important any matter is, the more need there is that we view it in a right light. A human face rich with expression, or a monument of architecture rich with grandeur, or a bit of landscape rich with beauty, cannot have all that is in them set forth in one picture. Even a picture cannot set forth the Christian life: it must be experienced to be known. I. THE WAGES SYSTEM OF HUMAN EXISTENCE. In all departments work is a marketable article, of which wages is the price. The one balances the other. Wages, as distinguished from other modes of income, is something that stands due though the account is seldom presented: they are paid directly to the man after a period of work is finished. St. Paul says that sin is an employer of labour. It pays wages, is bound by strong law to do so. True it does not pay in full as work is done, but will in the end clear up the debt. This is one system under which men live. Not always is this a matter of definite purpose, but it is of prevailing disposition. Their trust in this system is not always strong—are they likely after all to earn much that is desirable? But things cannot drive them hard under a God who is good. Unhappily they are not apprehending what their decision means—that it is wages and the paymaster sin. Let us remove any ambiguity about the terms of this contract: the wages of sin is death. These wages are openly paid. The instalments he pays hint the kind of final recompense to be paid in the end: he now pays in disorders, loss, calamity, disease, discontent, hatred, uneasy forebodings. He cannot hide the character of these payments. God has revealed this as the recompense. This system goes on unchecked because sin is what it is; it rests upon the nature of things, God is the one source of life; if He is forsaken death must be the result. Am I working for so sad a result? II. THE FREE GIFT SYSTEM OF HUMAN EXISTENCE. We now pass into a different climate of things. It is as if we had been walking along the northern side of a mountain in the springtime, within the chill shadow of its peaks, where the lingering wind of winter is blowing across the slushy snow, the fields bare—and now had travelled round the mountains into the southerly sunshine. We have removed from the presence of a rigorous employer to that of a most

munificent friend; from hard earned wages to generous gift; life instead of death. It seems very evident that the gift system of living is brighter than the wages system of living. There must be some powerful prejudice to make men choose the latter. In other matters between God and men in the world the gift system is actually at work and men do not quarrel with it. Providence not less than grace is pervaded by this system. What do we render for the sunlight; are weal of body or mind, safety, earned? A pure wages system in the world would mean death. Sin pays like sin; God gives like God. He will give life, real, unbounded, happy. It is too great to be earned. And this is a gift from Him whom we have greatly wronged. In Christ the wages system has been broken down. Christ has earned the gift for us. (*J. A. Kerr Bain, M.A.*) *Wages versus gift*:—I. SIN AND ITS WAGES. 1. Sin a service, (1) Not an independence, as the world thinks. (2) A service to which wages are attached; each sin has its consequence. 2. These wages are "death," and are invariably paid. II. GOD AND HIS GIFT. A gift—(1) To those who are not earning it, for they are in the service of another. (2) To those who do not want to earn it, for they have yielded themselves to another service. (3) To those who cannot earn it, for they cannot atone for one sin, and their very efforts to do so impair God's one condition (Eph. ii. 8, 9). (4) Which all may have for the taking (Isa. lv. 1; Rev. xxii. 17). 2. That gift is eternal, (1) Christ Himself. Life (*a*) From Christ, depending solely on His substitution. (*b*) In Christ, ours only by appropriation. (*c*) A part of Christ, continued to us only by indwelling. (2) Eternal life (*a*) Begun when Christ began. (*b*) Begun to us when we grasped it. (*c*) Continuing till—eternity. (*J. H. Rogers, M.A.*) *Death and life: the wage and the gift*:—I. DEATH IS THE WAGES OF SIN. 1. Death is the natural result of all sin. When man acts according to God's order he lives; but when he breaks his Maker's laws he does that which causes death. (1) The further a man goes in iniquity, the more dead he becomes to holiness: he loses power to appreciate the beauties of virtue, or to be disgusted with the abominations of vice. You can sin yourself into an utter deadness of conscience, and that is the first wage of your sin. (2) Death is the separation of the soul from God. Can two walk together except they be agreed? Man may continue to believe in the existence of God, but for all practical purposes God to him is really non-existent. (3) As there is through sin a death to God, so is there a death to all spiritual things (1 Cor. ii. 14). (4) Inasmuch as in holy things dwells our highest happiness, the sinner becomes an unhappy being; at first by deprivation of the joy which spiritual life brings with it, and afterwards by suffering the misery of spiritual death (Rom. ii. 9). 2. The killing power of some sins is manifest to all observers. (1) See how by many diseases and deliriums the drunkard destroys himself; he has only to drink hard enough, and his grave will be digged. The horrors which attend upon the filthy lusts of the flesh I will not dare to mention; but many a body rotting above ground shall be my silent witness. (2) We have all known that sins of the flesh kill the flesh; and therefore we may infer that sins of the mind kill the mind. Death in any part of our manhood breeds death to the whole. 3. This tendency is in every case the same. Even the Christian cannot fall into sin without its being poison to him. If you sin it destroys your joy, your power in prayer, your confidence towards God. If you have spent evenings in frivolity with worldlings, you have felt the deadening influence of their society. 4. Death is sin's due reward, and it must be paid. A master employs a man, and it is due to that man that he should receive his wages. Now, if sin did not entail death and misery, it would be an injustice. It is necessary for the very standing of the universe that sin should be punished. They that sow must reap. The sin which hires you must pay you. 5. This wage of sin is in part received by men now as soldiers receive their rations, day by day. "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die"—such a life is a continued dying. "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." The wrath of God abideth on him that believeth not on the Son of God; it is there already. 6. But then a Roman soldier did not enlist merely for his rations; his chief pay often lay in the share of the booty which he received at the end of the war. Death is the ultimate wage of sin. Sin will perpetuate itself, and so for ever kill the soul to God, and goodness, and joy and hope. Being under the ever-growing power of sin, it will become more and more a hopeless thing that you should escape from death which thus settles down upon you. 7. The misery of the misery of sin is that it is earned. If men in the world to come could say, "This misery has come upon us arbitrarily, quite apart from its just results," then they would derive some comfort. But when they will be obliged to own that it was their own choice in choosing sin, this will

scourge them indeed. Their sin is their hell. 8. It will be the folly of follies to go on working for such a wage. Hitherto they that have worked for sin have found no profit in it (ver. 21). Why, then, will you go further in sin? 9. It ought to be the grief of griefs to each of us that we have sinned. Oh, misery, to have wrought so long in a service which brings such terrible wages! 10. It must certainly be a miracle of miracles if any sinner here does not remain for ever beneath the power of sin. Sin has this mischief about it, that it strikes a man with spiritual paralysis, and how can such a palsied one ward off a further blow? It makes the man dead; and to what purpose do we appeal to him that is dead? What a miracle, then, when the Divine life comes streaming down into the dead heart! What a blessedness when God interposes and finds a way by which the wage most justly due shall not be paid! II. ETERNAL LIFE IS THE GIFT OF GOD. 1. Eternal life is imparted by grace through faith. (1) The dead cannot earn life. Both good works and good feelings are the fruit of the heavenly life which enters the heart, and make us conscious of its entrance by working in us repentance and faith in Christ. (2) Since we received eternal life we have gone on to grow. Whence has this growth come? Is it not still a free gift? (3) Yes, and when we get to heaven, and the eternal life shall there be developed as a bud opens into a full-blown rose; then we shall confess that our life was all the free gift of God in Christ. 2. Observe what a wonderful gift this is, "the gift of God." (1) It is called "life" *par excellence*, emphatically "life," true life, real life, essential life. This does not mean mere existence, but the existence of man as he ought to exist—in union with God, and consequently in holiness, health, and happiness. Man, as God intended him to be, is man enjoying life; man, as sin makes him, is man abiding in death. (2) Moreover, we have life eternal, too, never ending. 3. It is life in Jesus. We are in everlasting union with the blessed person of the Son of God, and therefore we live. Conclusion: 1. Let us come and receive this Divine life as a gift in Christ Jesus. If any of you have been working for it, end the foolish labour. Believe and live. Receive it as freely as your lungs take in the air you breathe. 2. If we have accepted it let us abide in it. Let us never be tempted to try the law of merit. 3. If we are now abiding in it, then let us live to its glory. Let us show by our gratitude how greatly we prize this gift. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Death and life*:—The Word of God abounds with striking contrasts, which picture the opposite character and portion of the two great classes into which all mankind are divided before God. Poverty and riches, slavery and freedom, darkness and light; but no contrast is so forcible as that between death and life. I. DEATH. 1. Its origin. It is the wages of sin. The apostle sets before us what fallen man loves, what he dreads, and the union between the two. Fallen man loves sin and dreads death. Yet the death he dreads is the inevitable consequence of the sin he loves. Sin is discovered under two distinct aspects. It is—(1) Whatever is not in accordance with the character of God. All deviations from truth and holiness. (2) Whatever is not in accordance with the law of God. All that goes beyond, and all that falls short of this Divine standard, is sin. (3) Now death is not, therefore, what men sometimes call it, the debt of nature. It is the righteous recompense by which God shows His displeasure against sin. He has set such a mark upon it as compels every individual to feel and show in his own person the guiltiness of this accursed thing. 2. Its nature. Death is separation. We call it dissolution. (1) Bodily death is the separation of the soul from the body. (2) Spiritual death is the separation of the soul from God, in whose favour is life. (3) Eternal death is the perpetual separation of both body and soul from God's presence and favour. This is called in Scripture "the second death" (Rev. xx. 14). II. LIFE. 1. How is it procured? (1) At the first, life was the gift of God. It was solely of His goodness, and for His glory. And, as at the first creation, so in the new. Life is not the wages of our obedience. It was forfeited by sin; it can never be recovered on the ground of our own merit. Death is rendered to us in justice. Life can only be restored to us in grace. The very God whose honour we have outraged by sin, comes forward to "seek and save the lost." (2) It is a free gift so far as we are concerned, but not so far as Christ was concerned. Before He could obtain life for us, He must taste death for every man (Heb. ii. 9). (3) Christ is also the fountain that contains this life. It is treasured up in Him for all who will come to Him for it (1 John v. 12; John x. 14). 2. In what does it consist? It is in all respects the opposite to the death. It is the antidote to spiritual death, for it brings us into union with God. It is the destruction of bodily death; for it secures to the glorified body and soul an everlasting home in God's presence, where is "fulness of joy and pleasure for evermore." (*W. Conway*,

M.A.) *Hard work and bad pay; no work and rich reward*:—I. HARD WORK AND BAD PAY. 1. Who are the servants who receive the pay? (1) All by nature. We are slaves born upon the estate of sin. (2) But we are servants also by voluntary choice. (3) The servants of Satan are many. His workshop is the world. Go where you please you find his liveried servants. Unlike other employers he never diminishes the number of his hands, for if any are by grace persuaded to leave his service it goes much against his grain. It matters not to him whether trade be slack or otherwise, he can always find employment for all. (4) They belong to all ages. Children not in their teens, and lads not out of them, are every day through the medium of our police courts astonishing even a sinful world with their proficiency in guilt; and side by side with them stands the criminal whose locks have grown white in the service of the same relentless master. (5) They belong to all grades of society. In the sight of God there is not much to choose between Bethnal Green and Belgravia, Westbourne and Whitechapel. Kings, princes, statesmen, and paupers are all equally his servants. 2. The work they have to perform. To be Satan's servant is no sinecure. (1) To one he says, "Get rich": and at the word of command the poor wretch at once begins to toil, and laborious toil it is. The miser is a lump of incarnate misery. (2) To another he gives an order summed up in the word drink, and there is no slavedom more killing both to body and soul than slavedom to the drink. He who enters a drunkard's grave has worked hard for the result. (3) He sets another to obtain pleasure. Men will even in the most lawful pleasures do that which if required of them in an ordinary day's work would be the subject of much grumbling. Who does not know by experience that a day's pleasuring is more tiring than an equal number of hours' work? And how much more is this true with the gay man of the world. Possessed with the evil spirit, he goes hither and thither seeking rest and finding none. The quiet of the home he terms slow, so he launches into a whirlpool of dissipation, and singing "Begone, dull care." The pleasure that once enchanted him by frequent indulgence becomes insipid; something stronger, more vicious is needed to stimulate his jaded spirits. He goes from bad to worse, until at last every sinful pleasure has in its turn been tried, and in its turn grown tame. Of all the miserable sights on earth that of an aged *roué* is the most miserable. (4) Satan sets a fourth to act the hypocrite, and for this service he pays the highest wages, and right he should, for the work must be tremendous. How great a strain to have always to remember the part he has to act. But whatever the work may be to which the sinner is set it is work without a pause. Satan has no old pensioners permitted to end their days in peaceful idleness. 3. The wages paid them. (1) The death of the body is but the result of sin. For six thousand years men have been receiving the wages of death. But death here is placed in contrast to "eternal life," and means eternal death. (2) Sin pays some of its wages on account, it gives sometimes an instalment of hell on earth. The wretched debauchee often finds it so. Mark his haggard countenance, his trembling gait, follow him to the hospital—nay, don't—let his end remain secret; terrible are the wages he receives on account. And yet after all this is nothing. Eternity is one long pay day, and the wages paid is death. II. NO WORK AND RICH REWARD. 1. The pivot word is "gift." God absolutely refuses to sell salvation. He will give to any, but barter with none. 2. The blessing specified. "Eternal life"; and this the Lord permits His children to enjoy on earth; for as part of the wages of sin is paid on account in this life, so even in this life foretastes of the gift of God are enjoyed by the saints. Peace with God, quiet trustfulness as to the future, beside a thousand other joys, are some of the clusters of the grapes of Eschol, that refresh the wearied one on his journey to the land where the vine grows. And how about the end, when the gift is received in full? 3. Forget not the channel through whom it flows; it is a gift to thee, because thy Lord paid all. (*A. G. Brown.*) *The wages question*:—Men are born to serve. The majority are materially. All are morally. Only a choice of service open to us—the service of sin, or of righteousness. We are keen on "the wages question" in matters material; much more ought we to be in matters moral. Of these two services mark—I. THE CONTRAST IN THEIR BEGINNINGS. 1. The service of sin is at first promising. (1) Its demands are easy. To serve Satan, self, the world, is attractive to human nature. Like prospectuses promising 30 per cent. (2) And it begins well. At first delightful. Pays dividends at first. 2. The service of righteousness is at first unpromising. (1) Its demands are high. The opposite of those of sin. Self-control, self-denial, self-sacrifice. Service of virtue and truth. Hence it begins with sorrow, conviction

of sin, penitence. (2) And no wages can be earned therein. An apparently hard service, slow progress. When done all, unprofitable servants, (R.V.) "free gift." All we get comes undeserved. II. THE CONTRAST IN THEIR ISSUES. 1. The service of sin ends badly. (1) It issues in death. "The wages of sin is death." "Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." Death, physical, moral, eternal. Sinner like some decoyed drudge worked to death. Yet the service has a fatal fascination for many. (2) And death deserved. These wages are earned. Had power of choice, are responsible. Will be paid in full. But sin pays them, not God. Hate it, not Him! 2. The service of righteousness ends blessedly. (1) It issues in eternal life. "Gift of God is eternal life." A service which is its own reward, which ennobles, which confers "glory, honour, immortality" upon its servants." The servant is taken into partnership, is lifted up to the throne, partakes of the King's life. It has, if not wages, an exceeding great reward, passing all possible desert. (2) Which not only consummates, but accompanies it. It is through and "in Jesus Christ our Lord," who supplies the working strength. Hence this hard service becomes easy. Hence it does not weaken and wear us out like human and sinful service, but we are renewed day by day. "In Him is life." (*S. E. Keeble.*) *The wages of sin inevitable:*—Escape is contrary to the laws of God and of God's universe. It is as impossible as that fire should not burn, or water run up hill. Your sins are killing you by inches; all day long they are sowing in you the seeds of disease and death. There are three parts of you—body, mind, and spirit; and every sin you commit helps to kill one of these three, and in many cases to kill all three together. The bad habits, bad passions, bad methods of thought, in which they have indulged in youth, remain more or less, and make them worse men, sillier men, less useful men, less happy men, sometimes to their lives' end; and they, if they be true Christians, know it, and repent of their early sins, and not once for all only, but all their lives long, because they feel that they have weakened and worsened themselves thereby. It stands to reason that it should be so. If a man loses his way and finds it again, he is so much the less forward on his way, surely, by all the time he has spent in getting back into the road. If a child has a violent illness it stops growing, because the life and nourishment which ought to have gone towards its growth are spent in curing the disease. And so, if a man has indulged in bad habits in his youth, he is but too likely (let him do what he will) to be a less good man for it to his life's end, because the Spirit of God, which ought to have been making him grow in grace, freely and healthily to the stature of a perfect man, to the fulness of the measure of Christ, is striving to conquer old habits and cure old diseases of character, and the man, even though he does enter into life, enters into life halt and maimed. (*Canon Kingsley.*) *Sin and its wages:*—We have to notice three words. I. SIN. "Sin is the transgression of the law." Its fundamental idea is deviation from the law, as a standard of excellence or as a rule of conduct. Now, the law supposes a lawgiver, and the possibility of God's law being disobeyed, *i.e.*, that it has to do with moral agents. Well, then, we have to think of them as failing from some cause or other to do God's will, which is sin. Sin is set forth under three aspects. 1. As a principle or law (chap. viii. 2). (1) As sin is the rejection of God's authority, the refusal to let Him reign over us, it follows that by it we set up our own will in opposition to His. See, then, what such autonomy involves. (*a*) The basest ingratitude, for who can deny that we owe all our powers and happiness and our very being to God? (*b*) An imputation upon God's character, viz., that He is unworthy to govern us, that His will is unjust, His law unkind. (*c*) Rebellion against Him. (*d*) Usurpation of His place; and hence idolatry and self-deification. (2) Why should any creature throw off God's authority and govern himself? It must be for some object of self-gratification incompatible with obedience to God. Now, God's law seeks the greatest good of all; and therefore, to set it at nought for the sake of personal indulgence, is to violate the principle of benevolence. (3) This selfishness may assume a great variety of forms. Many men have as many different ways of enjoying themselves, yet all may be equally selfish. Some are sensual, some are covetous, others ambitious, and not a few are fired with the intellectual passion for fame. 2. As an act or acts. The law, though in principle always one, has nevertheless many particular precepts, and is outraged by the violation of any of those precepts. There are sins of deed, of speech, of deportment, of looks, of motive, desire, imagination, thought, of negation, and omission. All these are the outgrowth of that self-will and selfishness in which sin essentially consists. 3. As a state. Hence, we read of men being "born in sin," and remaining "dead in

trespasses and sins." Before we commit any acts of sin, and as the source of all we do commit, we have a sinful nature—a bias to go and to do wrong. The thoroughly sinful soul may be said to live in sin always. Sin is its element and vital air. It lives without God. II. DEATH. 1. Spiritual death. The soul is dead when destitute of holiness and happiness; of the disposition to do well, and of the power to enjoy God. It admits of degrees; the more it prevails, the more it grows, and the commission of sin inevitably paves the way for the perpetration of many more; and the final stage is reached when the conscience is seared as with a hot iron, proof against every appeal, and resolutely bent on his own eternal destruction. 2. Eternal death. Let us suppose a man, whose soul is dead through sin, removed out of this world into the next, and what shall we behold concerning him? His case is a million-fold more terrible than before. For—(1) It is confirmed unalterably for ever. Though countless ages roll over his head, he that is unholy must be unholy still; he that is filthy must be filthy still. (2) Besides, he is still the subject of the law of progress; and therefore, as the ages of his immortality advance, each will leave him worse than it found him. (3) This development of evil will be incalculably accelerated and aggravated by the absence of everything enjoyed on earth, and which helped either to restrain the malignity of the disposition or to relieve the wretchedness of the feelings. (4) The positive infliction of punishment as a token of God's anger at sin. III. WAGES. This word denotes a relation of equity between sin and death. The sinner earns death as his rightful recompense. This connection is—1. Natural. You have only to study the human mind, its laws of association and of working, to be convinced that sin, when it is finished, must bring forth death. 2. Judicial. The wicked are turned into hell by a just and holy God; and the same reasons which send them there must avail to keep them there. They have no power to make themselves good, and being immortally evil they must be immortally shut out from heaven. Certainly God will not lay upon the wicked more of these terrible "wages" than they individually deserve. But who shall determine the full and adequate deserts of sin? Conclusion: 1. Christians should not live in sin, but utterly hate and discard it, and earnestly strive to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord. They have done with it as a state; let them have done with it as a law, and in its individual acts. 2. Here is a message of warning to the ungodly. See for what wages you are working; part are being paid now, but immense arrears are being treasured up in the future. You think you are working for pleasure, for gold, for honour, but lo! it is for death. (*T. G. Horton.*) *Death the wages of sin:*—I. WHAT SIN IS. 1. Original sin. Sin bears date with our very being, and indeed we were sinners before we were born (Eph. ii. 3). There are some who deny this to be properly sin at all, because nothing can be truly sin which is not voluntary. But original corruption in every infant is voluntary, not indeed in his own person, but in Adam his representative. Pelagians, indeed, tell us that the sons of Adam came to be sinners only by imitation. But, then, what are those first inclinations which dispose us to such bad imitations? 2. Actual sin may be considered—(1) According to the subject-matter of it. (*a*) The sin of our words (Matt. xii. 37). (*b*) The sin of our external actions, theft, murder, uncleanness; and to prove which to be sins, no more is required but only to read over the law of God, and where the written letter of the law comes not, men are "a law to themselves." (*c*) The sin of our desires. Desires are sin, as it were, in its first formation. For as soon as the heart has once conceived this fatal seed, it first quickens and begins to stir in desire; so that the ground and the principal prohibition of the law is, "Thou shalt not covet." Indeed, action is only a consummation of desire; and could we imagine an outward action performable without it, it would be rather the shell and outside of a sin than properly a sin itself. (2) According to the measure of it; and so also it is distinguished into several degrees, according to which it is either enhanced or lessened in its malignity. (*a*) As when a man is engaged in a sinful course by surprise and infirmity. (*b*) When a man pursues a course of sin against the reluctancies of an awakened conscience; when salvation waits and knocks at the door of his heart, and he both bolts it out and drives it away; when he fights with the word, and struggles with the Spirit; and, as it were, resolves to perish in spite of mercy itself, and of the means of grace (Isa. i. 5; John ix. 41). (*c*) When a man sins in defiance of conscience; so breaking all bonds, so trampling upon all convictions, that he becomes not only untractable, but finally incorrigible. And this is the *ne plus ultra* of impiety, which shuts the door of mercy and seals the decree of damnation. Now this differs from original sin thus, that that is

properly the seed, this the harvest; that merits, this actually procures death. For although as soon as ever the seed be cast in there is a design to reap; yet, for the most part, God does not actually put in the sickle till continuance in sin has made the sinner ripe for destruction. II. WHAT IS INCLUDED IN DEATH WHICH IS HERE ALLOTTED FOR THE SINNER'S WAGES? 1. Death temporal. We must not take it as the separation of the soul from the body, for that is rather the consummation of death, the last blow given to the falling tree. (1) Look upon those forerunners of death—diseases; they are but some of the wages of sin paid us beforehand. And to the diseases of the body we may add the consuming cares and troubles of the mind, all made necessary by the first sin of man, and which impair the vitals as much as the most visible diseases can do. (2) To these we may subjoin the miseries which attend our condition; as the shame which makes men a scorn to others and a burden to themselves; which takes off the gloss and air of all other enjoyments, and damps the vigour and vivacity of the spirit. Also the miseries of poverty which leave the necessities and the conveniencies of nature unsupplied. Now all these things are so many breaches made upon our happiness and well-being, without which life is not life, but a thin, insipid existence. 2. Death eternal, in comparison of which the other can scarce be called death, but only a transient change; easily borne, or at least quickly past. (1) It bereaves a man of all the pleasures and comforts which he enjoyed in this world. How will the drunkard, the epicure, and the wanton bear the absence of those things that alone used to please their fancy and to gratify their lust! (2) It bereaves the soul of the beatific fruition of God (Psa. xvi. 11). (3) It fills both body and soul with anguish (Luke xvi. 24). III. IN WHAT RESPECT DEATH IS PROPERLY CALLED "THE WAGES OF SIN." 1. Because wages presuppose service. And undoubtedly the service of sin is of all others the most laborious. It will engross all a man's industry, drink up all his time; it is a drudgery without intermission, a business without vacation. Such as are the commands of sin, such must be also the service. But the commands of sin are for their number continual, for their vehemence importunate, and for their burden tyrannical. (1) Take the voluptuous, debauched epicure. What hour of his life is vacant from the slavish injunctions of his vice? Is he not continually spending both his time and his subsistence to gratify his taste? And then, how uneasy are the consequences of his luxury! when he is to grapple with surfeit and indigestion? (2) The intemperate drinker; is not his life a continual toil? To be sitting up when others sleep, and to go to bed when others rise; to be exposed to quarrels, to have redness of eyes, a weakened body and a besotted mind? (3) The covetous, scraping usurper: it is a question whether he gathers or keeps his pelf with most anxiety. 2. Because wages do always imply a merit in the work requiring such a compensation. It is but equitable that he who sows should also reap (Gal. vi. 8). (1) But to this some make the objection that since our good works cannot merit eternal life, neither can our sins merit eternal death. But to merit, it is required that the action be not due; but every good action being commanded by the law of God is thereby made due, and consequently cannot merit; whereas, a sinful action being altogether undue and not commanded, but prohibited, it becomes properly meritorious; and, according to the malignity of its nature, it merits eternal death. (2) But some further urge that a sinful action is but of a finite nature, and proceeds from a finite agent; and consequently there is no proportion between that and an eternal punishment. But we answer that the merit of sin is not to be rated either by the act or the agent; but by the proportions of its object, and the greatness of the person against whom it is done. Being committed against an infinite majesty, it rises to the height of an infinite demerit. (*a*) Sin is a direct stroke at God's sovereignty. We read of the kingdom of Satan in contradistinction to the kingdom of God, into which sin translates God's subjects. No wonder if God punishes sin, which is treason against the King of kings, with death; for it puts the question "Who shall reign?" (*b*) Sin strikes at God's very being (Psa. xiv. 1). Sin would step not only into God's throne, but also into His room. Conclusion: Sin plays the bait of a little, contemptible, silly pleasure or profit; but it hides that fatal hook by which that great catcher of souls shall drag them down to his eternal execution. "Fools make a mock at sin." Fools they are indeed for doing so. But is it possible for anything that wears the name of reason, to be so much a fool as to mock at death too? In every sin which a man deliberately commits, he takes down a draught of deadly poison. In every lust which he cherishes, he embraces a dagger and opens his bosom to destruction. He who likes the

wages, let him go about the work. (*R. South, D.D.*) *Eternal life*:—I. ITS NATURE. A life of—1. Perfect immunity from all the sufferings and dangers to which we are here exposed. 2. Pre-eminent intellectual enjoyment—"Here we know in part," &c. 3. Social happiness. 4. Unspotted holiness. 5. Incessant activity. 6. Endless improvement. II. THE FREENESS OF ITS DISPOSITION. 1. It cannot be purchased. 2. It is not the reward of merit. 3. It is everything; leading to it is the gift of God. The promises by which the believer is led to expect it—the great change by which he has become entitled to it and qualified for its enjoyment—the Lord Jesus, by whose merit eternal life was purchased—all these are gifts of God. III. THE MEDIUM THROUGH WHICH IT FLOWS. 1. For this end—to put men in possession of eternal life—the Redeemer was given; for this purpose He laboured, suffered, instituted His gospel, and sent forth His ministers. 2. We should, however, do great injustice to this subject, were we not to observe that Christ died—(1) To procure our pardon, in consequence of which the sentence of the law is reversed, and believers freed from that death to which their crimes had exposed them. (2) To deliver us from a state of moral death. (3) To secure our adoption into God's family, which entitles to this eternal life. (4) To create in us that holiness of heart and life which makes us "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." (5) To communicate that grace which enables us to lay hold on eternal life. (*J. Rigg.*) *Eternal life*:—I. IS NOT WHOLLY IN THE FUTURE WORLD. This life begins here at the moment of conversion, when the soul passes from death into life. He that hath the Son hath life. The righteous do enter into life, become heirs of life, enjoy ante-pasts of the infinite fulness which is to be hereafter revealed. These foretastes involve freedom from condemnation, communion with God, and growing likeness to Him. The soul is divested of the fear of death, and Christ fills the believer with His joy, and that joy is full. Satisfaction comes from what we are, and not from what we get. I have seen homes of princely wealth which were but brilliantly garnished sepulchres, their luxury a solemn mockery; and I have seen homes of poverty full of the joy of God, the peace of the eternal life begun. It is false to conceive of the Christian life as a joyless way of self-denial trod by us to purchase a bliss beyond. II. IS THE SAME AND IS NOT THE SAME TO EVERY SAVED SOUL. 1. Heaven is not a sea of bliss in which each of us is to float in equal content. In heaven, as here, there is an infinite variety. What a vast transition from an oyster to the leviathan! There is one glory of the sun, another of the moon, another of the stars. The penitent thief is saved as truly as Paul; but one has built on hay, wood, and stubble, and is "scarcely saved"; the other receives "an entrance abundantly"; one gives the fag-end of a godless life to Christ and is "saved so as by fire"; the other can say, "I have fought a good fight." The riches, joys, and capabilities of the celestial life are measured by the service rendered; "to every man according to his works," "five cities," or "ten cities," as the case may be. Secular papers often make merry about the statement that "scaffold penitents" are received to heaven. It is true that grace does save such. But their heaven is not Paul's heaven. 2. In three respects heaven is the same to all. (1) In freedom from sin. Harlots and murderers, washed in the cleansing blood, are as free from defilement as angels. The malefactor is made as pure as a babe. (2) In freedom from physical and mental pain and sorrow. There will be no anxiety, distrust; no pang or grief. (3) No death. Perpetual freedom from all these is a common blessing to all. 3. It may be objected that if one is wholly happy, according to his capacity, what matters it if there be those of larger capacities than his? A snail is happy, I answer, so is a lark. Is there nothing to choose between them? There is a short radius to a child's circumference of happiness. A man has a thousand-fold larger scope. Is there no preference? The ear of one is satisfied with a rude melody; another man is thrilled to the depths of his being by delicious harmonies. Is there no preference? There is no room for question. What a contrast between one who is a single remove from a laughing idiot, and an angel of God! We are to "seek for honour and glory," even an entrance that shall be "administered abundantly." III. IS INCREASINGLY GLORIOUS FOR EVER. Memory shall lose nothing, the mind pervert nothing, and the heart shall repel nothing. All that God has shall be spread out and open to us for ever in riches of grace inconceivable in their glory and infinitude. The possibilities of the soul are beyond conception. God reveals Himself to the righteous through the ages, their capacities ever enlarging and the reality for ever increasing—joy, power, blessedness, beyond all thought! These all are the gift of God, bought, and given to believers. (*Prof. Herrick Johnson,*) *Eternal life*:—I. THE

GIFT. 1. Life. Life, eternal life, and life everlasting, are very frequent designations of the salvation of the gospel (John xvii. 1, 2). This life consists of—(1) A right state of affection and feeling toward God, the Father of our spirits, combined with a happy consciousness of His love and favour toward us. Where this life is, there is freedom from guilt. (2) A renewed state of the affections and will: the law of God is approved, and the love of God is established in the heart, as its supreme and governing motive. (3) Honour and happiness, the enjoyment of true pleasure, derived from the purest sources of holiness, and love, and fellowship with heaven. (4) A blessed activity of the soul, engaged in the worship and service of Jehovah. Where these exist, the soul lives, fulfils its proper functions, answers the ends of its creation, and realises its most true and noble bliss. We sometimes call this life integrity, which is wholeness or soundness of being: sometimes rectitude, which is erectness and strength: and sometimes sanctity, which is separatedness from evil and devotedness to God. 2. The epithet, "eternal." (1) This word denotes everlastingness of duration. (2) But where this is, there must also be uncorruptedness or perfection of nature. (3) And where this perfection relates to a spiritual creature like man, there must be incessancy of progress, or development. II. ITS GRATUITOUS CHARACTER. 1. It is the gift of God, inasmuch as—(1) No man possesses it by nature. (2) No man could procure it for himself. 2. We are to receive it as such, in simplicity of spirit and with grateful joy. And let us learn not to look at anything in ourselves to justify our expectation of it: and let us not, when we find nothing but demerit in ourselves, be disheartened, but believe that when we were fit only for everlasting punishment, God stepped forward to grant unto us eternal life. This He has done from the impulse of His own amazing generosity and love. III. THE MEDIUM OF ITS BESTOWMENT. 1. God gives it to us through Jesus Christ, not in an arbitrary manner, but on the ground of what He has done and suffered in our stead. 2. So, we accept it through Christ (1 John v. 11). Indeed, we may say that Jesus is our eternal life. It is by being found in Him that we have pardon and holiness, happiness and heaven. When we reach the celestial world, we shall find that there as well as here, Christ is "all in all." (*T. G. Horton.*) *Eternal life a gift*:—1. Men are so accustomed to the exchange of equivalents, that any other course comes with an element of surprise. If the reward be not in the grosser form of money, or in that which money can purchase, still it is true that one earns his wages. These may be the wages that improved faculties would add—the reward of an approving conscience, of a sense of usefulness—perhaps a sense of increased influence for good, by reason of that which has been faithfully and unselfishly done; or in the very highest possible service of philosophic endeavour or Christian duty. In all these there is that feeling of reward expected, because it has been earned. The idea of a gift coming to one suddenly and undeserved he does not entertain, except as a fiction, such as may amuse him as a day-dream. And more than all is one surprised to find that he is the recipient of such a gift from one unknown, or one to whom he has stood in the relation of neglect, perhaps of hostility. 2. At the same time it is true that men are receiving gifts from another, where they cannot make any return whatever. Everything that comes to us from the past is a gift. Individual minds have toiled and studied, and we reap the fruits of their patience, skill, and success. We make the lightning to run on our errands, and we take the vapour that lifts the lid of the kettle to propel the mammoth ship across the sea, or the car which carries us over mountains, or sets in motion thousands of factories all over our land. This we received from those to whom it came as an inspiration of Providence, and an operation of intelligent, unwearied power. The institution of society comes to us a grant from the past. We pay for our primary schooling; but for the great thoughts of men who have lived, what returns can we make? What to any of the great philosophers who brought us the laws and principles we possess? How shall we compensate the artist whose gifts quicken our minds to higher perceptions of beauty, or the poet who sings us into the Elysium of thought? There are still higher endowments that come to us from those whom we only know by those impressions made upon us by their chivalric career, and to whom we can make no more return than we by lighting matches can add to the splendour of the distant, brilliant sun. So, if a man should say, "I expect only that which I have earned, and demand only that which I have deserved and have properly acquired," and should that prayer be answered, he would, to-day, be a beggared savage. Thus we see how many of the things which we enjoy have come to us as gifts. And it is the desire of every noble, unselfish mind to carry on to the future their beneficent influence, that the coming generation may surpass the present. 3. Turn now to

the things which come from God. For these many make no acknowledgments whatever; while He continues to shower His gifts upon them. He gives life through Christ. The life of the present is an undeserved gift. It is not the reward of our deserts. The faculties of mind, all opportunities for enjoyment, and all inspirations of thought and effort—these are not earned by us. No man can stand up and say, "I have done so and so, and God owes me that." God gives the sunshine and the shower. They come, not because we deserve them. They come sometimes in the face of protest. He gives the great inspirations of thought to man, and great deliverance to nations from impending calamity. He gives to the individual soul all he possesses, and to society all it has. This argument as to the right of the race to eternal life lies at the basis of our thought this morning. The parallel in natural life is the same. No man has a right to exist in infancy. It is the gift of God; and no man has earned the right to happiness in the present, and to hope in the future. It is the gift of God. Eternal life, however, is the best gift of God. But it is a gift that comes only on certain conditions. Sunshine requires the open eye, but a man may refuse to open his eye; still it is God's gift. So we do not receive inspiration from any great mind, except as we bring our mind into responsiveness to it. So we do not receive eternal life unless the conditions are accepted with which God invests His gift—humble penitence for sin and faith in Christ. Sin earns wages, but eternal life is the gift of God, as personal life is a bestowment: it crowns and glorifies all others. Here is—I. A SECRET OF THE CHRISTIAN'S UNREST. Life is not something to be earned. The soul of the Christian who thus views it grows restless and troubled, like Galilee's waves, till the feet of the Lord brought them to a level. It is dark, as was the mount, until the Lord rose, in the luminous majesty of His presence, above it. II. THE SECRET OF PEACE, in simply accepting this Divine gift from the source of infinite compassion and grace. Sometimes this peace may come suddenly, filling the soul with glory; sometimes it may come after long, weary searching for it; sometimes at the end of life; when the light of life has almost gone out, as it flickers in the socket and speech falters, I say, "I can do nothing; I take the gift of God!" Then comes "the peace which passeth all understanding." III. THE BURDEN WHICH RESTS ON HIM WHO REJECTS ETERNAL LIFE. When one comes to us with a great thought or a rare opportunity, and we turn away to a trivial theme, we grieve him. Let us not thus treat God. Here is the gift of eternal life. Shall I put it aside as if it were the merest summer breeze which by my hand I could arrest and push back into the air? I may, as I may put aside sunshine itself, by shutting my eyes to it. The responsibility is mine. IV. THE IMPULSE OF CHRISTIAN SERVICE. Freedom and gladness come from other gifts, but here is the supreme one of all. When received by us, what service is too hard, what sacrifice too vast, what worship too exultant! If this consciousness comes into our soul, then no sword or stake can fright us, for our life is interlocked with heaven. The realisation of it dispels our sorrows and forbids our tears. V. THE SWEETNESS OF HEAVEN. Gratitude for God's gift impels every touch of the heavenly harp. It gives the melody to every song, and joy to all the work of heaven. (*R. S. Storrs, D.D.*) *Life in Christ*:—A new convert said, "I could not sleep, thinking over that passage, 'Whosoever believeth on the Son hath life;' and so I got up, and lighted a candle, and found my Bible, and read it over, 'Whosoever believeth on the Son hath life.'" "Why," says some one, "didn't you know that was in the Bible before?" "Oh, yes," he replied, "I knew it was in the Bible, but I wanted to see it with my own eyes, and then I rested." (*T. De Witt Talmage.*) *The gift of God*:—I was out on the Pacific coast, in California, two or three years ago, and I was the guest of a man that had a large vineyard and a large orchard. One day he said to me, "Moody, whilst you are my guest, I want you to make yourself perfectly happy, and if there is anything in the orchard or in the vineyard you would like, help yourself." Well, when I wanted an orange, I did not go to an orange-tree and pray the oranges to fall into my pocket, but I walked up to a tree, reached out my hand, and took the oranges. He said, "Take," and I took. God says, "Take," and you do it. God says, "There is My Son." "The wages of sin is death; the gift of God is eternal life." Who will take it now? *Eternal life the gift of God*:—A man may as well think of buying light from the sun, or air from the atmosphere, or water from the well-spring, or minerals from the earth, or fish from the sea, &c., as think of buying salvation from God with any kind of price. The sun gives his light, the atmosphere its air, the well-spring its water, the earth its minerals, the sea its fish; all man has to do is to take them and use them. So God has given salvation to man. All he has to do is to use it, in the use of means, and enjoy it. (*J. Bate.*)

CHAPTER VII.

VERS. 1–6. Know ye not, brethren . . . how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?—*Believers not under the law as a covenant of works:*—I. ALL MEN ARE, NATURALLY, UNDER THE LAW AS A COVENANT OF WORKS. 1. As men. God made man capable of moral government; he was naturally bound to obey the will of his Maker. The moral law: perfect obedience to this law could never entitle him to any greater degree of happiness, yet God was pleased to superadd a promise of everlasting life upon obedience, to which He annexed His awful sanction, "In the day that thou sinnest, thou shalt surely die." This is what we call a covenant: as such it was proposed on the part of God, and it was accepted on the part of man. Now as this covenant was made with Adam as the federal head, so all men are naturally under it. 2. As sinners. In this view sinners are under the law as a broken covenant, which therefore can afford no relief to them that seek salvation by it (Gal. iii. 10–12). II. TO BE UNDER THE LAW, AND ESPECIALLY AS A BROKEN COVENANT, IS A MOST DREADFUL THING. 1. The law requires perfect, universal, and everlasting obedience of all that are under it. Now this law is not abolished or made void, either by Christ or by any of His apostles. "I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil; for verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Matt. v. 17, 18; Rom. iii. 31). How dreadful then is such a state, since no mere man can thus keep it. And while the Christian betakes himself to the mercy of God in Christ, as his only hope, the sinner supports his vain confidence in the supposition that God will not insist on His claim. 2. It denounces against every transgressor the most awful curse (James ii. 10, 11; Gal. iii. 10). III. MANY HAVE OBTAINED A GLORIOUS DELIVERANCE OUT OF THIS DREADFUL STATE. In Christ they are made brethren: "Know ye not, brethren." IV. THEY WHO ARE DELIVERED FROM THIS STATE ARE TO BE DISTINGUISHED FROM OTHERS IN THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD. Addressing himself to believers, Paul appeals to their spiritual knowledge and judgment, "Know ye not." 1. There is a knowledge peculiar to the saints, whereby they know the things that are excellent; they have judgment to distinguish betwixt truth and error; an inward principle (1 John ii. 27; v. 20) which teaches them the knowledge of every truth necessary for consolation or salvation. 2. One great reason why many know not the truth, is not merely owing to their ignorance of it, but often to their prejudice against it. 3. Sound and saving knowledge hath respect not only to the truth itself, but also to the use we are to make of it. 4. It is no inconsiderable part of our happiness when we are called to minister unto such as know the truth as it is in Jesus. Conclusion: 1. If all men are naturally under the law as a covenant of works, who can wonder if they seek life by that covenant? Natural light, natural conscience can discover no other way of salvation. 2. If all are miserable who are under the law, especially as a broken covenant, this calls upon men who are under a profession of religion to examine themselves as to their state before God. 3. If believers are delivered from the law as a covenant, yet still let them remember, "They are under the law to Christ." 4. If true believers are to be distinguished from others in the ministry of the Word, let them distinguish themselves, not only by a public profession, but also by a becoming walk and conversation. (*J. Stafford.*) *The believer's relation to the law and to Christ*:—I. THE BELIEVER'S FORMER CONNECTION WITH THE LAW. 1. The law, considered in the figurative capacity of a husband, had a right to full and implicit subjection. But alas! all mankind had violated the authority of this first husband; they had abused his rights, resisted his claims, and thus exposed themselves to the fatal consequences of his just denunciations. 2. Yet, miserable as this state is, men in general are insensible of it. They still show attachment to the law, despite their disobedience; and place, as a wife does on her husband, infatuated dependence. As God said to Eve, "Thy desire shall be to thy husband," so it is with the sinner as to the law. II. THE DISSOLUTION OF THIS CONNECTION. This consists in the sinner's deliverance from the obligation to obedience as the condition of life, and from the curse attending disobedience. 1. When and how does this take place? The answer is—"The law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth." . . . "Ye are become dead to the law." Here is the decease of one of the parties, by which the union is dissolved. 2. This decease refers to the death of the believer in Christ (chap. vi. 7, 8), who bore the curse of the law in his stead (Gal. iii. 13). Thus the effects of the first husband's displeasure cannot reach them. 3. And not only is the

curse of the law removed, but our connection with it, as a condition of life, is for ever done away, as effectually as the relation between husband and wife is dissolved by death. III. He is then "married to another," &c., which expresses THE BELIEVER'S NEW RELATION WITH JESUS (see also Eph. v. 30–32; John iii. 29; Rev. xxi. 2). 1. To this new husband all believers are subject. They feel his authority as that at once of rightful claim and of tender affection. They delight in obeying Him who loves them. And in Him they are truly blessed. He smiles upon them, and enriches them with a dowry of spiritual treasures. 2. This connection, being with "Him who is raised from the dead," is indissoluble (chap. vi. 9). The Husband never dies; nor do they ever die to whom He stands thus related. "Joined to the Lord, they are one spirit;" and the spiritual union is lasting as eternity. IV. THE CONSISTENCY OF THIS NEW CONNECTION WITH ALL THE RIGHTS AND CLAIMS OF THE FIRST HUSBAND. These claims were just, and had a right to be fully implemented. The believer has not satisfied them in his own person; but his Substitute has by His obedience and death "magnified the law and made it honourable." Hence the law's claims upon him cease as completely as the claims of a husband when dead on the surviving wife. V. THE ABSOLUTE NECESSITY OF THE DISSOLUTION OF ALL CONNECTION WITH THE LAW, IN ORDER TO A SINNER'S BEING JOINED TO CHRIST. The two connections cannot subsist together. The sinner who is joined to Christ must die completely to the law. While he retains any counection with it, in the way of seeking or expecting life from it, he is not united to Christ. As the worship of idols was styled adultery, when practised by that people whom Jehovah had espoused to Himself—so all such connection with the law is unfaithfulness to our Divine Husband. He must be "all our salvation, and all our desire." Let no one, however, think that we are pleading for freedom from the law as the rule of life. Its obligation in this sense remains immutable (chap. iii. 31; 1 Cor. ix. 21, &c.). VI. THE BLESSED EFFECTS OF THE DISSOLUTION OF THE CONNECTION WITH THE LAW, AND THE FORMATION OF THE UNION WITH CHRIST. The "bringing forth fruit unto God." The fruit meant is, no doubt, holy obedience and service (chap. vi. 22). Such fruit is as naturally the effect of union to Christ, as the fruit of the womb is the expected result of the marriage relation. No fruit acceptable in the sight of God can be produced while the former connection continued (ver. 5). They who are "under the law are in the flesh"; and can bring forth no fruit but "unto death." All is devoid of the only principle of acceptable service—"faith working by love." There is no true fruit unto God produced till the connection with the law has been dissolved, and that with Christ has been formed (vers 6). The fears of the law, uniting with the pride of self-righteousness, may produce considerable outward conformity to the precepts of the law; whilst there is no true principle of godliness within. There may be much in the eyes of men that is amiable; while in the sight of God all the service is rendered in the "oldness of the letter"—under the influence of the principles of the old, is service in "newness of spirit," *i.e.*, to serve God in sincerity, under the influence of those principles and views and dispositions which constitute a mind renewed by the Spirit of God (Ezek. xxxvi. 26). (*R. Wardlaw, D.D.*) *True Christian liberty* implies—I. FREEDOM FROM THE COMPULSORY ACTION OF LAW. It can neither—1. Alarm; 2. Condemn; 3. Become a source of bondage. II. THE FREEDOM OF DEVOTED LOVE TO CHRIST. 1. Who has won the heart; 2. Constrains our service; 3. By His death and resurrection. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Dead to the law, married to Christ*:—1. The apostle has illustrated the transference that takes place at conversion by the emancipation of a slave whose services are due to the lawful superior under whom he now stands enrolled. The apostle now turns to those who know the law, and deduces from the obligations which attach to marriage, the same result, *i.e.*, an abandonment by the believer of those doings which have their fruit unto death, and a new service which has its "fruit unto God." 2. There is a certain obscurity here arising from the apparent want of sustained analogy. True, the obligations of marriage are annulled by the death of one party; but Paul only supposes the death of the husband. Now the law is evidently the husband, and the subject the wife. So that, to make good the resemblance—the law should be conceived dead, and the subject alive. Yet, in reading the first verse, one would suppose that it was on the death of the subject, and not of the law, that the connection was to be dissolved. It is true that the translation might have run thus, "The law hath dominion over a man so long as *it* liveth"; but this does not suit so well with ver. 4, where, instead of the law having become dead unto us, we have become dead unto it; so that some degree of that confusion which arises from a mixed analogy appears unavoidable. It so

happens, too, that either supposition stands linked with very important truth—so that by admitting both, this passage becomes the envelope of two important lessons. I. THE LAW MAY BE REGARDED AS DEAD; and he our former husband, now taken out of the way, has left us free to enter upon an alliance with Christ. 1. The death of the law did indeed take place at the death of Christ. It was then that He blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us. It was then that the law lost its power as an offended Lord to take vengeance of our trespasses. Certain venomous animals expire on the moment that they have deposited their sting and its mortal poison in the body of their victim. And thus there ensues the death of both sufferer and assailant. And on the Cross there was just such a catastrophe. 2. Without Christ the law is in living force against us. Men under earnestness, who have not found their way to Christ, stand related to it as the wife does to an outraged husband: a state of appalling danger and darkness from which there is no relief, but in the death of that husband. 3. The illustration of our text opens a way for just such a relief as would be afforded by the death of the first tyrannical husband, and by the substitution of another in his place, who had cast the veil of oblivion over the past, and who admits us to a fellowship of love and confidence. Christ would divorce you, as it were, from your old alliance with the law; and welcome you, instead, to a new and friendly alliance with Himself. He bids you cease from the fellowship altogether. 4. And to deliver this contemplation from any image so revolting as that of our rejoicing in the death of a former husband; and finding all the relief of heaven in the society of another, you have to remember that the law has become dead—not by an act which has vilified the law or done it violence, but by an act which has magnified the law and made it honourable. 4. When a sense of the law brings remorse or fearfulness into your heart, transfer your thoughts from it as your now dead, to Christ as your now living husband. II. THE BELIEVER MAY BE REGARDED AS DEAD. The other way by which marriage may be dissolved is by the death of the wife. And so the relationship between the law and the subject may be dissolved by the death of the subject (ver. 4). The law has no more power over its dead subject than the husband has over his dead wife. 1. This brings us back to the conception already so abundantly insisted on, that in Christ we all died in law; so that the law can have no further reckoning with us, having already had that reckoning in the person of Him who was our Surety and our Representative. And just as the criminal law has done its utmost upon him whom it has executed, so the law can do no more in the way of vengeance with us, having already done all with Him who was smitten for our iniquities. 2. After our old relationship with the law is thus put an end to, the vacancy is supplied by Him who, after having removed the law through His death out of the station it had before occupied, then rose again and now stands in its place. The wife owes a duty to her second husband as well as her first. It is true that with the former the predominant feeling may have been that of obligation mixed with great fearfulness; and that, with the latter, the predominant feeling may be sweet and spontaneous affection. But still it is evident that there will be service, possibly much greater in amount and certainly far worthier in principle. Under the law we are bidden to do and live; under Christ we are hidden to live and do. In working to the law it is all for ourselves that we may earn a wage or a reward. In working to Christ it is all the freewill offering of love and thankfulness (2 Cor. v. 16). (*T. Chalmers, D.D.*) *Marriage with Christ*:—1. The dissolution of the former marriage. 2. The new marriage. 3. Its fruits. The believer, released from the law by dying in fellowship with the death of Christ, is free to enter into a new union with the risen Christ, in order to bring forth the fruits of holiness to God's honour. (*Archdeacon Gifford.*)

Ver. 4. **Ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ: that ye should be married to another.**—*The sinner married to the law—the believer married to the Lord*:—THE SINNER, BEFORE BELIEVING, IS MARRIED TO THE LAW. 1. This marriage involves certain obligations that correspond to those that grow out of the conjugal relation. The husband is the head of the wife, and his duty is to live with her, provide for her, and love her; the wife's duty is to be subject to her husband, consulting his will, and acting faithfully for his interests. If the law, then, be the sinner's husband, we may say, "Submit yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord." This is your duty, and it is also your interest. The ten rules of your husband's house are equitable and good, tending as much to promote your own happiness as his honour. 2. This marriage is of the Lord. God has joined the

parties together; the marriage was made in heaven. As soon as he is born, the sinner is espoused to the law, yea, before, and there is nothing unfair in placing a sinner under a constitution which is perfectly good. It is just as fair for God to marry the sinner to the law without his consent as to bring him into existence without it. But, in one sense, the sinner has consented. Our first parents consented for themselves and their offspring, and had you been present personally when the covenant was made with them, you could not have refused and been innocent; and had Adam and Eve acted faithfully, the arrangement would have been extolled as wise and good. 3. The chief reason why objections are made is, that it is an unhappy marriage. In the case of unhappy marriages, it is commonly remarked that there is fault on both sides. But this cannot be said of this, for the Husband is uniformly holy, just, and good, and the spouse that faithfully does His will is sure of happiness. But if He be once offended, woe then to the offender; for He will never again be reconciled. Suppose you expostulate, "I wish to do Thy will," He will reply, "Speak not of wishes, but do it." "But I have done it in almost every particular." "That is not enough; My will must be altogether done." "But I am sorry, and mean to reform." "But you cannot now repair the injury you have done." "But may I not be forgiven?" "No—there is no forgiveness in My nature, the soul that sinneth it shall die." 4. But such an unhappy marriage were well dissolved." True, but the marriage is not easily dissolved. It is always a difficult thing to break a marriage. Yet in ordinary cases the wife may desert her husband, or obtain a divorce. But desertion or divorce is impossible in this case. What God has joined together, man cannot and dare not put asunder. The husband, though deeply injured, will not consent to a separation. You may become so depraved as almost to forget that he has any claim upon you. But he will follow you still, and assert his right to you as long as you live. There is only one way of escape, viz., to get married to Him that was raised from the dead. Your second Husband will give ample satisfaction to your first. He will take all your responsibilities on Himself, and deliver you. II. THE BELIEVER IS MARRIED TO THE LORD. Of the second marriage you may notice, just as of the first, that—1. It involves certain obligations. The spouse is bound just as before to be subject to her husband in all things. The identical regulations of the first husband are found word for word in the house of the second. "If ye love Me, keep My commandments." "He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me." 2. It is of the Lord, though it is never consummated without the consent of parties. The believer is espoused to Christ before he is born, but the marriage is not completed until consent is given freely and cordially. But mark the wonders of Christ's love! He has provided the Spirit to operate on the heart, and make us willing in the day of His power. He has instituted the Christian ministry and, like Abraham's servant, every minister is bound to go to the intended bride and tell her of the riches and honours of his Master's Son, in order to gain her consent. 3. It is a happy marriage—as happy as the other is miserable. Christ loves that sinner as He loves Himself. "No man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it." In having Christ, you have all things—pardon, strength, support, and a title to glory. As Elkanah said to his disconsolate spouse, so Christ says to His—"Am not I better to thee than ten sons?" 4. It is one that can never be dissolved. Whom Christ espouses, He espouses for ever. May the spouse then do as she pleases? No; does a woman feel encouraged to insult her husband because she knows he will not put her away? No; she knows he has various ways of expressing his displeasure, though he does not insist on a separation. The want of his love, the frown on his face, will be felt by an affectionate woman to be dreadful enough. III. BEFORE A PERSON CAN BE MARRIED TO THE LORD HIS MARRIAGE WITH THE LAW MUST BE DISSOLVED. 1. This is in accordance with both the law of God and of man, and the apostle assumed it as admitted and well known. As long as both you and the law are alive the marriage must stand (ver. 1). 2. How, then, is it possible for a sinner to be set at liberty? Only by death. No doubt the death of either party would dissolve it, but the Husband cannot die; He is immortal. It is your death, sinner, that must cut the connection. 3. But how can the spouse that dies be married to another? It is the party that survives, that gets married a second time. (1) But this spouse dies not personally, but by substitute—by "the body of Christ." Being represented by Christ, ye were virtually in His person or body when He died. You admire the generosity of the Armenian prince who proposed to the conqueror to give his life as the ransom of his bride, what say you to the generosity of Jesus? The bride

was so overcome that she could attend to nothing else. "What did you think of Cyrus?" said her husband. "I never observed him. I was thinking of that man who proposed to give his life for mine." Herein, indeed, is love, and if Christ's professed spouse refuse to return the affection, let her be anathema maranatha. (2) But the believer dies to the law also in spirit—his hope and his self-righteous confidence die. Married to the law he was at one time alive, cherishing the hope of being able to please it, and ultimately to enter glory. But "the commandment came, sin revived, and he died." Through the law itself he became dead to the law. Its spirituality, its exceeding breadth and purity, put an end to its legal hopes and dependencies. But observe it is not the law, apart from the body of Christ; but the law as magnified and made honourable in that body. In the Cross we see as never before the awful strength and vengeance of the law. If the spouse is alarmed and reduced to despair when she hears her husband's words, she dies altogether when she beholds his doings. She no longer hopes to appease his anger by her repentance, reformation, promises, or duties. 4. At the very time the spouse becomes dead to the law she becomes united to the Lord. The date of her death is also the date of her marriage; hence there is mourning and rejoicing on the same day. There is a strange mixture of emotions experienced, which it is difficult to describe. 5. Let God's people, then, realise their privileges, and know that they are free. Some who are professedly married to the Lord, act as if their first marriage remained still in force. But ye are not under the law, but under grace; and when the law comes to you demanding allegiance, and threatening wrath as formerly, refer it at once to the Lord Jesus. IV. IT IS ONLY WHEN THE FIRST MARRIAGE IS DISSOLVED AND THE SECOND CONTRACTED THAT FRUIT IS BROUGHT FORTH UNTO GOD. 1. The fruit of the first marriage is unto death (ver. 5). The offspring of the first marriage is sin, and as soon as it comes into existence it begins to reign over its own parent, and that unto death. It will murder your precious soul; aye, and your husband will give it authority for this purpose—"The strength of sin is the law." He will at last in justice abandon his guilty spouse to her own monster offspring—the fruit of her infidelity; and sin shall hold her in everlasting death. 2. But the fruit of the second marriage is unto God, viz., holiness (chap. vi. 22); which has—(1) Its commencement in genuine repentance. (2) Its essence in love to God and to His plans. (3) Its external manifestation in the obedience of the life. (*J. Lyon.*) *Married to Christ*:—I. TO HIS MEMORY. 1. When the negroes of the Southern States of America were set free, they were, in many cases, placed in a position of deep misery. Their cry reached the ears of many in the North, and amongst those who went to the rescue was a young man of education, refinement, social position, and wealth, who, soon after commencing his arduous work, sickened and died. Arrangements were made to convey the body to the family sepulchre; but many who had been fed, clothed, instructed and comforted by their deceased friend, entreated that his dust might be allowed to sleep in the scene of his generous labours. The mother consented, and the father; but the consent of another was necessary. Could any wonder if it was but tardily given? At length his betrothed gave her cordial assent, declaring that she would live where her elect husband had died, and by devoting herself to his work, would be married to his memory. 2. More than eighteen centuries ago the Son of God came from heaven to our earth. He went about doing good. He bare our sins in His own body on the tree; He rose again, and ascended into heaven. But there is a remembrance of these things by the writings of the evangelists and apostles. By testimony, the Jesus of the past is with us. The birth at Bethlehem, the teaching, miracles, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension, can only be memories. Let us be married to His memory—(1) By frequently thinking of all that He was, and did, and suffered. We cannot visit Bethlehem, Nazareth, and Calvary, but we can think of them. (2) By cherishing affections corresponding with such thoughts. Thus thinking, gratitude and love will spring up in our hearts. Let us cherish these plants. (3) By contentedly living on this earth so long as we have a work of God to do. Christ came to this world, and remained until His work was finished. His memory seems to say, Pray not to be taken out of the world, but ask for help to complete your work. (4) By working, so far as we can, the works He wrought. He healed, and we may be great healers. He comforted, and the weakest may be a son of consolation. He instructed, and all who have religious knowledge may instruct. He made peace, and a little child may be a peace-maker. (5) By intelligently and devoutly observing the ordinance of remembrance which He founded (1 Cor. xi. 23-25). II. TO THE FELLOWSHIP AND THE SERVICE OF THE LIVING CHRIST. The law, as given by

Moses, has no claim upon us now. Prescription and exclusive sanctity as to place of worship is dead; human priesthood, carnal sacrifices, ritualism, symbolism, the whole Mosaic economy is dead. Let us then be married to the living Christ—1. By the non-recognition of the Mosaic institutes. As they who are married, forsaking all other, cleave to each other as long as both shall live, so the disciple of Jesus must cease to be a disciple of Moses, or refuse to be, if tempted to be. 2. By looking, and continuing to look to Him, for every good thing. All that we really need, the mediation of Jesus Christ can secure. 3. By cherishing and expressing true love for Him. Some appear to be content with knowledge without love, and others reduce their love to mere obligation for redemption from hell. But see 1 Cor. xvi. 22. 4. By obeying His commandments. Verily, these are not grievous; but if they were, true love would make the yoke easy and the burden light. This is one test which Jesus gave His disciples (John xiv. 15). 5. By recognising Himself in His disciples, and by ministering to His needy ones for His sake. 6. By defending His name and His mission. 7. By devoting ourselves to advance the aim of His mediation—to save the world. Conclusion: 1. I know of no illustration of marriage to the Saviour's memory and mission equal to the example of the Apostle Paul. He describes his own death to the law and marriage to Christ, and his previous marriage to the law and death unto Christ, in Phil. iii. 5–10. Paul knew what he was writing when he wrote the text, and as a wife submits herself to her own husband as her head, is subject to him in everything, reverences him, helps him, makes his cares, joys, honours, and burdens her own, and blends her life with his, so did Paul live for Christ. 2. One motive by which we should be constrained to seek and to cherish union with Jesus Christ is this—that only thereby can we live as God's children. The reference in the text is to the fruit of marriage. Elsewhere, with another reference, the same truth is presented (Gal. ii. 22, 23; Eph. v. 9; Col. i. 5, 6, 10). The fruit here named is reconciliation to and oneness with God. It is light in the spirit, love in the heart, and righteousness in the life. It consists of all the fruits of holiness and righteousness and godliness. Peter names them as virtue, &c. (2 Pet. i. 5–7). John represents them as all included in love. Jesus represents union with Himself as essential to all usefulness (John xv. 5). 3. All coming short of this is traceable to non-union with Christ. Some religious people marry themselves to a system of theology, and the fruit is pride and bigotry; others to a round of ceremonies, and the fruit is self-deception and hypocrisy; others to what they account "the Church," and the fruit is a form of godliness without the power; others to a sect, and the fruit is envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness; others but partially identify themselves with Christ, and the fruit is indecision, confusion, and various evil works. The world, the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life make this union partial; in the degree that it is not entire, there cannot be fruit unto God (Psa. xlv. 10, 11). (*S. Martin.*) *The believer's new relations*:—I. DEAD TO THE LAW. 1. This imparts release from its—(1) Condemnation. (2) Penalty. (3) Bondage. 2. Is effected by the body of Christ sacrificed for us. II. MARRIED TO CHRIST. 1. The nature of this union. 2. The honour of it. 3. The result of it. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Make a confidant of the Lord Jesus*:—Make a confidant of the Lord Jesus—tell Him all. You are married unto Him: play the part of a wife who keeps no secrets back, no trials back, no joys back; tell them all to him. I was in a house yesterday where there was a little child, and it was said to me, "He is such a funny child." I asked in what way, and the mother said, "Well, if he tumbles down and hurts himself in the kitchen, he will always go upstairs crying and tell somebody, and then he comes down and says, 'I told somebody'; and if he is upstairs he goes down and tells somebody, and when he comes back it is always, 'I told somebody,' and he does not cry any more." Ah! well, I thought, we must tell somebody: it is human nature to want to have sympathy, but if we would always go to Jesus, and tell Him all, and there leave it, we might often dismiss the burden, and be refreshed with a grateful song. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Vers. 5–6. **But when we were in the flesh, the motions of sin, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.**—*The law and sin*:—We often know that we are ill without knowing precisely what is the matter with us, and this was the case with the large mass of human beings in the pre-Christian world; and, therefore, first of all, God opened the eyes of men to see what their case really was. Nature and conscience did something in this way for the heathen nations. The law of Moses did a great deal

more for the Jews. By the law was a knowledge of sin. The law was the lantern burning with a bright moral light, and revealing the dark and unlovely forms which human life had assumed during long centuries, under the impetus and the operation of sin. But the law only discovered to the patient his real condition; it did not, it could not, cure him. It only made his misery the more intense by making it more intelligent. It made the moral demand for a real remedy greater than ever, but it did not supply that for which it made men crave. (*Canon Liddon.*) *Flesh*:—The term, denoting the soft parts of the body, which are the usual seat of agreeable or painful sensations, is applied in Biblical language to the whole natural man, in so far as he is yet under the dominion of the love of pleasure or the fear of pain, that is to say, of the tendency to self-satisfaction. The natural complacency of the ego with itself—such is the idea of the word in the moral sense in which it is so often used in Scripture. (*Prof. Godet.*) *The law the innocent occasion of sin*:—Though the sun is not only necessary for the light, but for the healthy condition of our globe, yet its bright beams are the occasion of unhealthy effluvia arising from many substances. The fault, however, lies not in the sun, but in the inward corrupt state of the substances in question. So the law, intended to produce beneficial results, became, owing to the depraved condition of man's heart, the innocent occasion of sin. (*C. Neil, M.A.*) *The misery of an unregenerate state*:—Observe here three things in sin which tend to make men miserable. 1. Its reigning power. Wherever sin reigns in the heart, it will prevail in the life; and how miserable must that man be whose heart is in love, in league with sin? 2. Its condemning power. This ariseth from man's disobedience; the curse must follow the offence (1 Cor. xv. 26). 3. Its irritating power. And this is what our apostle refers to in our text. By this I understand that evil propensity of heart which takes occasion to sin from everything it meets with: every object which is presented, even the pure and holy law of God, through the evil temper of our hearts, is liable to be so abused as to excite us to sin. Learn hence—I. THAT THEY WHO ARE IN THE FLESH CANNOT PLEASE GOD. 1. Let us inquire into the meaning of this expression. (1) Some tell us that we are to understand a man's being under the government of a carnal law, viz., the old dispensation. But surely all who were under that old testament were not unable to please God (Heb. xi.). (2) The term is sometimes taken in a good sense, as in Gal. ii. 20: Phil. i. 21, 22. (3) At other times it is used in a bad sense, as in chap. viii. 5, &c., where the apostle fully explains himself. (4) The term is taken for man, and whatsoever is in him, both good and evil. In this sense our Lord uses the term (Matt. xvi. 17; John i. 13, iii. 5, 6). Our apostle (Gal. v. 13, 16, 17) uses the term in the same sense as in our text, as if it were synonymous with sin. By these passages it fully appears that flesh is put for the corruption of our nature (Psa. li. 5). 2. If it be asked why they who are in the flesh cannot please God, I answer, because they are in the flesh. To say that men are in the flesh, is to say much more than that flesh is in them. We read of the flesh lusting against the spirit in the same person, and the spirit against the flesh; but how dreadful must be the condition of that man who is all flesh, all sin! yet such is the description which the searcher of hearts gives a man as a fallen creature (Gen. vi. 5; Psa. liii. 2, 3). How, then, can such an one please God? They have no heart to fear, love, or serve Him. And as they who are in the flesh cannot please God; so neither can God be pleased with them (Psa. v. 4, 5, vii. 11). If God be holy, He must necessarily hate sin and sinners. As they are in a state of sin, they are under the curse; and as their temper is suited to their state, they must be hateful in His sight (Hab. i. 13; Prov. xv. 8, xxi. 27; Eccles. vii. 29; Jer. ii. 21). II. THAT THE TRUE CAUSE OF ALL SIN IS IN OURSELVES, as may fully appear by the motions of sin in our members. 1. So long as a man is in a state of sin, the motions of sin will powerfully work in all the members of the body, and in all the faculties of the soul. I know that some conclude that sin is only seated in the body, and they have invented a variety of methods in order to eradicate sin out of the body; but when they have done all, still the heart remains as bad as ever. "The works of the flesh" (Gal. v. 20, 21) are principally seated in the soul. What the soul conceives, the body executes. 2. Now if these motions of sin work in our members, what can be the reason why they are so little lamented? because men love them; nor can we wonder at it, if we consider that these motions are a part of the old man, which is corrupt with its affections and lusts. These things are unlamented, because they are no more burdensome; for if a man be dead in sin he will have no sensations, and consequently will have no spiritual complaints. III. THAT EVEN THE HOLY LAW OF GOD, WHICH PROHIBITS SIN, AND CONDEMNS FOR IT, CAN

NEVER HELP THEM, BUT RATHER PROVOKES THEM TO SIN. "The motions of sins which were by the law." Not effected, but occasioned by the law. Not that the law gives any just occasion to sin (vers. 8, 11). 1. The law, as commanding perfect obedience, and not giving any supply of grace, will have this tendency (ver. 9). 2. The law, as prohibiting men from evil, hath much the same tendency. It is but like a very weak dam, in the way of a mighty current; it seems to stop its course for a moment till it gain greater strength, by reason of a greater quantity of water, then it rushes forward and bears down all before it. 3. The law, as condemning men for sin, hath sometimes this tendency (Jer. ii. 25). "I shall perish for ever, I will therefore say to my soul, Take thy fill of sin. Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." IV. THAT "THE WAGES OF SIN IS DEATH." (*J. Stafford.*) *A state of nature and a state of grace:*—Let us consider the persons described by the apostle in respect of—I. THEIR FORMER STATE. 1. "When we were in the flesh"; *i.e.*—(1) Under the carnal ordinances of the Mosaic law (Gal. iii. 3, iv. 1–3), which could not make him that did the service perfect as to his conscience (see Heb. vii. 18, 19, ix. 6–10, x. 1–4). (2) Under the law as a covenant of works. (3) Not in Christ (Rom. viii. 1, 2), and therefore not justified. (4) Not in the Spirit, and therefore unrenewed and carnal (Rom. viii. 5–8; John iii. 5–7). 2. While in this state "the motions of sins"—desires after unlawful things, inordinate desires after lawful things, dispositions contrary to the mind of Christ—these which are manifested and irritated "by the law" as well as prohibited and condemned, "did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death"; such fruit as would have issued in eternal death, if God, in His mercy, had not interposed. The law forbids sin, and condemns to death for it, but does not deliver it. II. THEIR NEW OR CHRISTIAN STATE. 1. "But now we are delivered from the law," &c.—(1) From the ceremonial law. This kept the people employed in external things, and so hindered spiritual worship and service. (2) From the moral law, as a covenant of works or means of justification, but not as a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, or a rule of life when we are brought to Him. 2. This implies—(1) Pardon and freedom from guilt, condemnation, and wrath. (2) Confidence towards God and peace with Him. (3) Gratitude and love to Him, causing us to desire and to endeavour to obey Him. (4) Union and communion with Him. 3. The ground of our deliverance, "that being dead wherein we were held." The law is spoken of figuratively, as a person to whom we were in subjection, as a wife to her husband, during his life; but the abrogation of the covenant, which is, as it were, its death, releases us from its authority, so far as that it cannot condemn us, if we are united to Christ. III. THE END FOR WHICH THEY WERE BROUGHT INTO THIS STATE. That we might "serve"; worship (Matt. iv. 10), obey (chap. vi. 16), and promote God's cause (John xii. 26). To serve "in the oldness of the letter," is to serve merely in the strength of our natural powers. But we must serve in the strength of grace. 1. The former is to serve in a mere external way, regarding only the exterior of Divine worship and the letter of the law. We must worship God in the spirit (Phil. iii. 3; John iv. 23, 24), inwardly, and by His Spirit; and must regard chiefly the spiritual meaning of His laws (chap. ii. 28, 29). 2. The former is to serve in a legal righteousness, unpardoned, unchanged. We must serve in an evangelical righteousness (Phil. iii. 9). 3. The former is to serve in unbelief, and in a spirit of bondage. This in faith, and in a spirit of adoption (chap. viii. 15; Gal. iv. 5) and a hope of immortality. 4. The former is to serve from fear of God, and from fear of death and hell: this, from love to God as a Father, and in consequence of His love to us. 5. The former is to serve with reluctance, finding His service a drudgery; this, with delight, finding it perfect freedom. 6. The former is to be scanty, inconstant, mercenary, and selfish in our services: this is, to be abundant, unwearied, generous, and disinterested. (*Jos. Benson.*) *Under the law and under grace: man's condition:*—I. UNDER THE LAW. 1. Enslaved by sinful dispositions. 2. Exposed to death. 3. Serving in the letter. II. UNDER GRACE. 1. Free. 2. Quickened by the Spirit. 3. Serving in newness of life. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) **But now we are delivered from the law.**—*The glorious deliverance, and new obedience of all true believers:*—1. The great design of the gospel is to make men holy, in order to their becoming happy. 2. To this end Christ lived and died, "that He might redeem unto Himself a peculiar people." "If, therefore, the Son make us free, then shall we be free indeed." Of this freedom my text speaks. The nature and extent of this privilege will appear when viewed in contrast with our state of sin (ver. 5), the misery of which consists in the reigning, the condemning, and the irritating power of sin. Now "from all these things we are delivered; from the

reigning power by the law of the spirit of life in Jesus Christ; from its condemning power by the obedience and death of Christ; from its irritating power in some good measure already, and we shall ere long obtain a perfect and everlasting deliverance." 3. Now the end of our being thus delivered is that our obedience should bear some good proportion to our new state, principles, and privileges. "As ye have received a new spirit out of Christ's fulness, let it be your daily labour and pursuit not only to observe the outward letter requiring external obedience to God, but in a spiritual manner" (chap. ii. 29). Learn, hence—I. THAT DELIVERANCE OUT OF THE STATE OF NATURE, FROM UNDER THE POWER OF SIN, AND THE RIGOUR OF THE LAW, IS AN UNSPEAKABLE BLESSING. 1. Herein is freedom from the law of death. It is a law of death, as it commands obedience, but gives no strength for obedience; as it curseth for disobedience, yet, through the corruption of our nature, becomes the occasion of sin, and so brings upon the sinner condemnation. 2. When does this commence? Although the purpose was from everlasting, and takes its rise from the free love of the Father, yet the actual bestowment of this privilege is upon believing: when by the Spirit of grace they become dead to the law by the body of Christ. II. THAT DELIVERANCE FROM THE LAW IS A POWERFUL MOTIVE, AND A SPECIAL MEANS OF GOSPEL-OBEDIENCE, IN ALL THEM THAT BELIEVE. 1. It is a powerful motive. (1) In general, all our deliverances, whether from sin, from dangers, or from death, are to be viewed as fresh obligations to serve the Lord. This is the grand argument constantly used in the Divine word. The goodness of God should lead to repentance. Distinguishing mercies are special claims of God for new obedience (Exod. xx. 2, 3; John viii. 14; Ezra ix. 13, 14; Psa. ciii. 1–4, cxvi.). (2) But what shall we say of that great special mercy, which is the glory of the gospel (chap. viii. 32; John iii. 16; Rom. xii. 1). Our obedience unto God is never more pleasing to Him than when it flows from this noble principle. 2. It is a special means of gospel-obedience. (1) As it removes all hindrances. How can the soul act for God, that is dead in trespasses and sin? It must first live before it can act; but this deliverance includes in it spiritual life. The soul, in its natural state, is not only dead in its moral powers, but also in law, being under the curse; how then can it do anything truly pleasing, or acceptable unto God? Can such an one love God? rather is his heart full of enmity against Him. (2) As it qualifies the soul for spiritual services. It may be said of every natural man, that he has no heart suited to the duties of religion (Deut. xxix. 4). But in order to prepare them for His service the Lord promises a new heart and a new spirit, &c. (Ezek. xxxvi. 25–27). (3) As it animates to all evangelical obedience. It is not only the life, but also the spring of action (2 Cor. v. 14). III. THAT TO SERVE GOD, IN NEWNESS OF SPIRIT, AND NOT IN THE OLDNESS OF THE LETTER, IS THE DISTINGUISHING PRIVILEGE OF THOSE WHO ARE DELIVERED FROM THE LAW. 1. They serve God. They not only profess themselves to be His servants, but they do serve Him. It is their delight so to do, and they are grieved when they are taken off from His service. They serve Him in the duties of public and social worship, in their secret devotions, in their daily callings; they serve Him always and at all times; in their afflictions, by a cheerful submission; in their enjoyments, by improving them to His glory (1 Cor. x. 3). 2. They serve God, not in the oldness of the letter. What the letter of the law is may be learnt by consulting the doctrine of the Scribes and Pharisees of old (Matt. v.), together with the antidote given us by Christ Himself. We may also find much the same doctrine maintained by the Church of Rome. But why blame the Pharisees and Papists? Alas! how often have we condemned their sin, and yet have been guilty of the same folly! 3. They serve Him in newness of spirit, or with a new spirit. They cannot satisfy themselves merely with external service, lip labour, or a lifeless profession. They well know that God is a spirit, and they that worship Him must do it in spirit and in truth; that their worship must not only be real, in opposition to hypocrisy, but spiritual, in opposition to all that is carnal and corrupt. In a word, it must be suited to their new state (Phil. iii. 3). IV. THAT NEW OBEDIENCE, OR TRUE HOLINESS, IS THE WORK OF GOD'S FREE SPIRIT. "I will put My Spirit within you." (*J. Stafford.*) *The believer's freedom*:—I. ITS NATURE. Discharge from the law (R.V.). 1. The law "holds"—(1) As a master does his slaves—taking every precaution against their escape. (2) As justice does condemned criminals in the stone walls of a prison. (3) As death does its victims in the security of the grave. 2. The believer's freedom from the law, therefore, is—(1) Liberty from bondage. (2) Immunity from punishment. (3) Life from the dead. II. ITS MEANS. The death of one party or the other. 1. The A.V. represents the law as dead, which expresses an important truth. The law as a covenant is abrogated for

one thing, and all its demands are exhausted for another. As a venomous reptile is sometimes killed by leaving its sting in the victim it has stung to death, so the law, in executing its vengeance on Jesus our substitute, died. Christ rendered it all the obedience it could demand by His life, and expiated all the offences it condemned by His death. Consequently, being dead, it has no hold on the believer. (1) The dead master has no hold on his slave. "If, therefore, the Son shall make you free," &c. (2) Justice, dead in a sense by the satisfaction of all its claims, has no hold on its once condemned criminal. (3) Death, being now abolished by the death of Christ, and swallowed up in victory, its victims are free. 2. The R.V. represents the believer as dead—another important truth. (1) The master has no hold on a dead slave. (2) Justice has no hold on a dead criminal. And so the believer, by dying with Christ, enters into freedom from both bondage and condemnation. But—(3) Christ's death was followed, and inevitably, by resurrection, and therefore by union with Him the believer is dead to death. III. ITS EFFECTS. "That we should serve." Liberty is not licence. We are discharged from the law as a covenant, but not as a rule of life. Our liberty is transference to another Master, whose service is perfect freedom and whose law is the "perfect law of liberty." So, then, the believer serves—1. Not in the oldness of the letter. There is a way of literal conformity to all the precepts of the law which is consistent with breaking every one of them. We may have no idols of wood and stone, and yet worship self, wealth, &c. We may not actually take a man's life, but we may murder his interests and reputation. We may commit adultery in thought as well as in deed, &c. 2. But in the newness of the spirit. (1) By the help of the Spirit who makes all things new. (2) By new motives. (3) In a new way. (*J. W. Burn.*) **That we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.**—*The old service and the new*:—I. NEWNESS OF SPIRIT implies such principles, dispositions, and views, as the Spirit of God implants in hearts which He renews. Serving in the spirit is a service of filial obedience to Him who gave Himself for us, as constrained by His love, and in the enjoyment of all the privileges of the grace of the new covenant. Believers have thus, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, become capable of serving God with that new and Divine nature of which they partake, according to the spiritual meaning of the law, as His children, with cordial affection and gratitude. It is the service not of the hireling but of the son; not of the slave but of the friend; not with the view of being saved by the keeping of the law, but of rendering grateful obedience to their almighty Deliverer. II. THE OLDNESS OF THE LETTER respects such service as the law, by its light, authority, and terror, can procure from one who is under it, and seeking life by it, without the Spirit of God and His sanctifying grace and influence. Much outward conformity to the law may in this way be attained from the pride of self-righteousness, without any principle better than that of a selfish, slavish, mercenary, carnal disposition, influenced only by fear of punishment and hope of reward. Serving, then, in the oldness of the letter, is serving in a cold, constrained, and wholly external manner. Such service is essentially defective, proceeding from a carnal, unrenewed heart, destitute of holiness. In this way Paul describes himself (Phil. iii.) as having formerly served, when he had confidence in the "flesh," as he there designates such outward service. Serving in newness of spirit and in oldness of the letter are here contrasted, as not only different, but as incompatible the one with the other. (*R. Haldane.*) *Believers serve in newness of spirit* as they serve—1. According to the spirit of the law which is love. 2. With their spirit, instead of an outward formal service. 3. From a new and spiritual nature created in them. 4. By the grace of the Holy Spirit who dwells within (chap. viii. 1, 2, 9, 11). 5. With new means and in new ways. (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) *The true spirit of service*:—In the heroic days when Xerxes led his army in Greece, there was a remarkable contrast between the way in which the Persian soldiers and the Grecian warriors were urged to combat. The unwilling hosts of Persia were driven to the conflict by blows and stripes from their officers; they were either mercenaries or cowards, and they feared close contact with their opponents. They were driven to their duty as beasts are, with rods and goads. On the other side the armies of Greece were small, but each man was a patriot and a hero, and hence when they marched to the conflict it was with quick and joyous step, with a martial song upon their lips, and when they neared the foe they rushed upon his ranks with an enthusiasm and a fury which nothing could withstand. No whips were needed for the Spartan men-at-arms—like high-mettled chargers they would have resented the touch thereof; they were drawn to battle by the cords of a man, and by the bands of patriotic love

they were bound to hold their posts at all hazards. "Spartans," would their leaders say, "your fathers disdained to number the Persians with the dogs of their flock, and will you be their slaves? Say ye, is it not better to die as free men than to live as slaves? What if your foes be many, yet one lion can tear in pieces a far-reaching flock of sheep. Use well your weapons this day! Avenge your slaughtered sires, and fill the courts of Shushan with confusion and lamentation!" Such were the many arguments which drew the Lacedæmonians and Athenians to the fight—not the whips so fit for beasts, nor the cords so suitable for cattle. This illustration may set forth the difference between the world's service of bondage, and the Christian's religion of love: the worldling is flogged to his duty under fear, and terror, and dread, but the Christian man is touched by motives which appeal to his highest nature; he is affected by motives so dignified as to be worthy of the sons of God; he is not driven as a beast, he is moved as a man. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Vers. 7–25. *To whom does the passage refer?*—(1) *To the unregenerate.* It has been much discussed whether this section describes a justified man, or a man still unforgiven. The latter view was held by Origen and the Greek fathers generally. The former was adopted by Augustine and the Latin fathers generally. It was received in the West during the Middle Ages; and by the Reformers. It is now held, I believe, by most Calvinists. Among Arminians the view of the Greek fathers prevails. It is worthy of remark that this is the older opinion, and was theirs who spoke the language in which this Epistle was written. That this section describes Paul's own experience before justification, I hold for the following reasons. 1. In the last section we saw a great change take place in Paul, a change from life to death. This change brought him into the state described in ver. 5. But in ver. 6 Paul says, and he never wearies to repeat it, that another change, as glorious as this was sad, had been wrought in him by the power of God. The completeness of this change has been frequently set before us (chaps. v. 10, vi. 11, 22, vii. 6). Paul is dead to sin, set free from its service, dead to the law which formerly bound him to a cruel master. This second change must be located between ver. 13, which gives the purpose of the first change, and chap. viii. 1, which describes the state of those who enjoy the second. And since vers. 14–25 deal with one subject, we must put the second change either between vers. 13 and 14 or between chaps. vii. and viii. Now we have no hint whatever between vers. 13 and 14 of a change. But in chap. viii. 1 the change is written in characters which no one can misunderstand. The words "made me free from the law of sin" proclaim in the clearest language that the bondage of vers. 23, 25 has passed away. 2. Again, this section contradicts all that Paul says about himself and the Christian life. He here calls himself a slave of sin, and groans beneath its bondage. He is a calamity-stricken man. But in the last chapter he describes his readers as dead to sin, and set free from its service. In what sense could a Roman Christian dare to reckon himself dead to sin, if this section were a picture of the liberty from sin enjoyed by an apostle? Paul here says that sin dwelling in his flesh is the true author of his actions. But in the next chapter he says that they who live after the flesh will die. He here declares that he works out that which is bad. But in chap. ii. 9 he teaches that upon all who do so the anger of God will fall. If these words refer to a justified person, they stand absolutely alone in the New Testament. 3. It has been objected that the language of this section is inapplicable to men not yet justified. But we find similar language in the lips of pagans. "What is it that draws us in one direction while striving to go in another; and impels us towards that which we wish to avoid?" (Seneca). "We understand and know the good things, but we do not work them out" (Euripides). "I have evidently two souls, . . . for if I had only one it would not be at the same time good and bad; nor would it desire at the same time both honourable and dishonourable works, nor would it at the same time both wish and not wish to do the same things. But it is evident that there are two souls; and that when the good one is in power, the honourable things are practised; but when the bad, the dishonourable things are attempted" (Xenophon). "I know what sort of bad things I am going to do: but passion is stronger than my purposes. And this is to mortals a cause of very great evils" (Euripides). "I desire one thing: the mind persuades another. I see and approve better things: I follow worse things" (Ovid). These passages prove that in many cases men are carried along against their better judgment to do bad things, and that even in pagans there is an inward man which approves what God's law approves. 4. What Paul says elsewhere about his religious state before justification confirms the description of

himself here given. He was a man of blameless morality (Phil. iii. 6); it was in ignorance that he persecuted the Church (1 Tim. i. 13); he was zealous for God (Acts xxii. 3); a Pharisee of the strictest sect (Acts xxvi. 5); no doubt he sought to set up a righteousness of his own (Rom. x. 3). Of such a man's inner life we have a picture in this section. His conscience approves the law: he makes every effort to keep it: his efforts only prove his moral powerlessness, and reveal the presence of an enemy in whose firm grasp he lies: he seeks to conquer inward failure by strict outward observance, and perhaps by bloody loyalty to what he considers to be the cause of God. In the conscientious Pharisee we have a man who desires to do right, but actually does wrong. And the more earnestly a man strives to obtain the favour of God by doing right, the more painfully conscious will he be of his failure. 5. It has been objected to the view here advocated that all this *is* the experience of many justified persons. But this only proves that the change in us is not yet complete, and Paul makes this a matter of reproach (1 Cor. iii. 1–4). On the other hand, there are thousands who with deep gratitude acknowledge that, while this section describes their past, it by no means describes their present state. Day by day they are more than conquerors through Him that loved them. 6. Then why did Paul puzzle plain people by using the present tense instead of the past? Let the man who asks this question write out the section in the past tense. "I was a man of flesh: I saw another law fighting against me, and leading me captive: I cried, 'Calamity-stricken man,'" &c. The life and reality of the section are gone. To realise past calamity, we must leave out of sight our deliverance from it. The language of the last section made it easy to do this. Paul's description of his murder by the hand of sin was so sad and so real that he forgot the life which followed. Hence when he came to speak of the state in which that murder placed him, it was easy to use the present tense. Of this change of the point of view we have already had other examples. In chap. iii. 7, Paul throws himself into the position of one guilty of falsehood, and sets up for himself an excuse. In chap. iv. 24, he stands by the writer of Genesis, and looks upon the justification of himself and his readers as still future. In chap. v. 1, he urges them to claim peace with God through justification. In chap. v. 14, after contemplating the reign of death from Adam to Moses, he looks forward to the future incarnation of Christ. In chap. vi. 5, he speaks in the same way of the resurrection life in Christ. We shall also find him, in chap. viii. 30, throwing himself into the far future, and looking back upon the nearer future as if already past. This mode of speech is common in all languages. But it is a conspicuous feature of the language in which this Epistle was written. 7. I cannot agree with those who say that Paul refers in this section to the state of babes in Christ (1 Cor. iii. 1); and in the next, to full salvation. The next chapter certainly describes Paul's own experience, which was that of full salvation. And the language of this section is frequently used by those who are only in part saved from sin. But the least babe in Christ has experienced a resurrection from the dead (Col. ii. 13), and a deliverance purchased with the blood of Christ. Of such resurrection and deliverance there is no hint in this section, till the last verse of it proclaims the dawn of a brighter day. 8. If the above interpretation be correct, we have in this section the fullest description in the Bible of the natural state of man. Even in the immoral there is an inner man which approves the good and hates the bad. But this inner man is powerless against the enemy who is master of his body, and who thus dictates his conduct. In spite of his better self the man is carried along the path of sin. This is not contradicted, nor its force lessened, by Paul's admission in chap. ii. 26, that even pagans do sometimes what the law commands. Their obedience is only occasional and imperfect, whereas the law requires constant and complete obedience. A man who breaks the laws of his country is not saved from punishment by the occasional performance of noble and praiseworthy acts. Although men unforgiven sometimes perform that which deserves approbation, they are utterly powerless to rescue themselves from the power of sin, and to obtain by good works the favour of God. (*Prof. Beet.*) *The character described in the seventh chapter of Romans*:—Attend to—I. THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE STRUGGLE OF SIN IN THE VERY FORMATION OF THE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER. In this process there are three features. 1. The rectification of our judgment on the subject of our relation to God. This is what is called conviction of sin. It arises from a perception of the meaning of the law of God, attention to the Scriptures. Things once deemed innocent are now seen to be evil, and sins once deemed trifling are now felt to be awful. The law appears with its avenging eye, and reiterating its demands. The mind is stripped of its vain hope of escaping Divine justice. This conviction may

be produced gradually, or suddenly. It may be attended with terror, or it may be serene. 2. A strife on the part of the mind to get out of the state. That conviction of sin which has no influence on the conduct, is not a true conviction. Now the most painful part of the Christian life commences. The individual, from a perception of the holiness of God and the evil of sin, sets himself to avoid sin. But sin, indignant at the restraint, like a mighty torrent before a feeble barrier, collects all its strength, and bears all down before it. It makes him sensible of its strength by the vanity of his efforts to check it. Temptation takes him as easily as a whirlwind lifts a straw. He returns to renew his defeated resolutions, but only to have them defeated again. In what a state must this leave the mind! 3. A clear discovery of the gospel mode of deliverance, and the full application of the mind to it. Now commences the life of faith; for as that which is sown is not quickened except it die, so the faith that gives the mind up to Christ, to be saved by His merits and sanctified by His grace, arises out of the death of self-conflict. What is the consequence? Peace takes possession of the mind. There is a principle formed in the mind, and fixed there, directly opposed to sin, and getting the mastery over it. The struggle may be violent, but grace is sure to prevail, and every fresh victory leads to a further one; until the very habits and tastes of the mind become on the side of piety, and the man feels as in the firm grasp of the hand of his God. This is regeneration.

II. THE ILLUSTRATION AND CONFIRMATION OF ALL THIS IN THE CHAPTER BEFORE US. 1. The opinion of several eminent commentators is that Paul here refers to himself and men generally in an unconverted state, and under the law, and of that natural approbation which they have of what is good, though quite unable to follow it. They maintain that the language would not suit any other than an unconverted man, inasmuch as in the conflict sin is represented in every instance as getting the victory. But I think this opinion to be wrong, for—(1) It is contrary to all that we know of the apostle and his history. When was he ever in this state of bondage to sin? Before conversion he was a Pharisee of the strictest sort: he was not only in his own opinion free from this miserable bondage, but he imagined that he was able to keep all the law of God. (2) The language employed is far too strong for any man in an unconverted state. Can any such man say, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man"? 2. There is another opinion totally adverse to this, viz., that the apostle is speaking in his state as a Christian at the time he wrote this Epistle. This opinion, however, I conceive to be equally wrong. (1) It does not agree with the design of the apostle, which was to convince that the law of God was neither an instrument of justification nor of sanctification; but the gospel of both. He has shown in the previous chapters that it was not an instrument of justification. In this chapter he begins to show, that neither was the law an instrument of sanctification, in that it was "weak through the flesh"; that it could only stir and goad sin by being used to oppose it; that, therefore, we must look out for something else, the gospel of Christ. Now how would it have accorded with this design, to have shown that the mature Christian would not be able to keep the law, nor to become sanctified? That would be proving too much, in that not only the law but the gospel could not be the instrument of sanctification, and would be quite foreign to his design. (2) And as it does not conform to his design, so neither does it agree with the progressive representations of this and the following chapters. The seventh chapter should never have been separated from the eighth. And who does not see that the man in the eighth chapter is in a very different state from the man in the seventh, though the same man? (3) It is not agreeable to truth and experience. It is not true of confirmed Christians that they always do the evil they would not, and fail to do the good that they would. Some half-hearted and sluggish Christians may be "carnal, sold under sin"; their "old man" may be as strong in them at the last as it is at the first. But it is not true of such Christians as Paul, who tells us that he "kept under his body," and "brought it into subjection." It is not true of such Christians as John describes when he says, "Whoso is born of God, doth not commit sin." Nay, David says of good men that "they do no iniquity; they walk in Thy way." 3. Then what is the alternative? Look at the person whom I described in the incipient stages of the formation of the Christian character. See if his case does not agree with every part of the representation and design of the apostle. There is one objection, however. Was he not Paul a Pharisee up to the time of his conversion? And did not that in one instant change him into a decided disciple of Jesus Christ? How then can the representations of this chapter be true of him in this point of view? Answer: (1) He is speaking of what is common to converted persons at large. If, therefore, his extraordinary conver-

sion had not allowed him to go through that precise experience, he would not be prevented from speaking of himself in this manner, as that which belongs to all converted persons. Such a mode of speaking is common in the Scriptures. (2) It is not improbable that the apostle did go through something of this kind during the interval which elapsed between his saying, "What wilt Thou have me to do?" and Ananias coming to give him sight along with the gift of the Holy Spirit. He might learn in those three days and nights all that about sin, about the excellence of the law, about human imbecility, and about the mode of Divine deliverance which he here describes, and which many often do not learn in as many years. Conclusion: Is it asked, Why dwell on such minute parts of Christian experience? We think them of importance to correct false views of religion. How many are apt to suppose that religion consists in a few feelings and sentiments of a religious nature, and in a superficial change of the mind and of the behaviour! But religion is a change of character; it is the death of sin in the soul, commencing with a painful conflict, but proceeding to an habitual and a general victory: and nothing short of this will warrant the hope of a state of salvation. (*J. Leifchild, D.D.*) *The moral history of the inner man illustrated by this passage*:—At the outset we observe two remarkable things. 1. Two distinct forces (ver. 15), represented as if they were two *Egos*, the one hating what the other does, the one willing to do what the other strenuously refuses. What are these? (1) The moral desire, going ever with the law of God—which is "holy, just, and good." (2) The animal choice following ever the "law of sin in the members." The choice and the desire, which ought ever to be one in the one being, are in man's case two. All are bound to admit the existence of this fact, however they may differ in their methods of explaining it. 2. The development of these two powers in the same person. The language shows a kind of underlying personality in which these two selves live—"the wretched man" (ver. 24); "the inner man," the moral core of our nature—the man of the man. That there should be an opposition between the desire and the choice of different men is a remarkable fact. But that each man should be a self-divided kingdom, a self-created battleground on which heaven and hell fight their campaigns, is a fact as wonderful as it is evident. Here we have the inner man—I. IN ABSOLUTE SUBJECTION TO THE FLESH—thoroughly animalised. It is the state prior to the advent of the commandment (ver. 10), when "sin was dead," and the man fancied himself morally "alive." The soul of infants, of course, is in this state. It is the creature of bodily appetites and desires. It seems wise and kind that the mind should for a time lie dormant in these frail organisations—that the muscles, limbs, and nerves might get strength. But the language is evidently intended to apply to adults. And are not millions walking after the flesh, and living to the flesh? the great question of their existence being—"What shall we eat, and what shall we drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed?" The passage teaches that the state of the soul in this stage of its history is—1. A state of unconscious sin. "Without the law sin was dead." It produced no compunction. The soul was "dead in trespasses and sin." There is no moral struggle against it. Still, though sin is not a matter of consciousness, it is sin. (1) It is a violation of our constitution. Were we like the brute, without intellect or conscience, it would be proper to give full play to all our animal impulses and desires. But as we have souls connecting us with moral law, whose well-being consists in the possession of virtue, and which outlive the body, to allow the body a mastery over the soul is a more monstrous anomaly than the enthroning of a ruthless savage as the monarch of a civilised people. (2) It is a violation of the design of our being. Why are we thus organised? That our spiritual nature might be buried in the material, that the Divine spark might be extinguished, or even clouded by the animal nature? No. The body is designed as a temple in which the soul is to worship, an organ by which the soul is to subordinate the material universe to its service. (3) It is a violation of Biblical injunctions. We are commanded "to mortify the flesh," &c., to keep in subjection our bodies, &c. 2. A state of false life. "I was alive without the law once"—without the understanding of the law. In this fleshy stage of being, man is so destitute of all sense of responsibility, and all convictions of sin, that he fancies everything right. He lives, it is true. See him revelling in pleasure, or bustling in business. There is life, but it is a false life; not that of an intelligent moral being, made to act to the glory of God. It is the life of a dying man, who in his delirium fancies himself strong and hale; it is the life of a maniac who acts under the impression that he is a king. Such, then, is the state of man in the first stage of his soul's history. II. IN VIOLENT BATTLINGS WITH THE FLESH (vers. 9-24). In the first stage the conscience was asleep. Not so

now. A new era has dawned—conscience is roused from her long slumbers, and a scene of terrible conflicts has commenced. This second stage—1. Is introduced by a spiritual revelation of the Divine law. "The commandment came." The law of God flashed on the conscience and revealed the true moral position. The bodily eye would never be developed without light. It would of course be a perfect organism, but it would not yield the sensation of sight. So with the conscience. It is a perfect organism, but without God's law it will never see. Bring "the commandment" upon it, and it will give the man a new world. When the beams of morning play upon the eyeball, the slumbering tribes awake; so when the light of God's law breaks on the conscience, the man awakes to his true condition. The revelation gives him three horrific feelings. (1) The feeling of utter wrongfulness. He looks within and finds "no good thing." He feels towards the commandment as Hamlet's wicked mother felt towards her reproving son—"Thou turn'st mine eyes into my very soul," &c. (2) The feeling of miserable slavery. (*a*) In corporeal slavery the soul may rise on the wings of devotion, may revel in thought: but here the spiritual faculties are manacled. (*b*) Death puts an end to physical and political slavery; but this spiritual slavery, death has no power to destroy. (3) The feeling of moral death. Sin woke into consciousness, and "I died." The law was "found to be unto death." It "slew" him. What is the feeling of the criminal, who has been cheering his doleful state with the delusive hope of pardon, when the executioner tells him the fatal hour is come? What is the feeling of the young man whose blood is warm, heart buoyant, and hopes high, when the physician tells him that a fatal plague has seized him? The feeling of death! What is it? The question produces a cold shiver throughout the frame. But the feeling of death in relation to the soul, what can be more horrific? 2. Is characterised by a struggle to get deliverance by the law. In the first stage the law was disobeyed, but then there was no feeling about it; it was done mechanically. But now there is a struggle for a deliverance by the law. (1) And this is futile, because the revelation of the law stimulates the tendency to disobey it. "It wrought in me all manner of concupiscence." Without the law sin was dead. To our depraved nature, "stolen waters are sweet." The moment a thing is prohibited our desire to obtain it is increased. (2) And the struggle is painful, because whilst the law stimulates the tendency to sin, it deepens the impression of its enormity. It is when conscience approves of what we practically oppose that our life becomes intolerable. Thus the sinner in this state cries out, "O wretched man that I am," &c. This, then, is the second stage of the soul's history. Some reach it and agonise there for ever. Cain, Belshazzar, Judas, did. Some reach it as did the thousands on the day of Pentecost, and thence pass on to the peaceful and perfect stage of being. III. IN VICTORIOUS SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE FLESH. "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." 1. The deliverance comes not by the law. The law brought on the conflict. The law exposed the disease, but had no remedy; the slavery, but it could not emancipate; the danger, but it could not deliver. 2. As an illustration of the enormity of sin. It is sin that has reduced man to this state in which he cries out, "O wretched man that I am," &c. 3. As a proof of the glory of the gospel. Science, education, law, the utmost human ingenuity and effort, none of these can deliver man. The gospel alone can do it, has done it, does it, and will do it. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*)

Vers. 7–13. **What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid.**—*The law*:—I. ITS NATURE—1. Moral. 2. Spiritual. 3. Exemplified by the particular commandment quoted. II. ITS USE—1. To describe the nature. 2. Detect the presence. 3. Reveal the sinfulness of sin. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The law vindicated and commended*:—I. THE LAW VINDICATED. The apostle had affirmed that the law constituted that to be sinful, that without the law could have had no such character—nay, that the law called forth sinful affections which, but for its provocation, might have lain dormant. And he seems now to feel as if this might attach the same sort of odiousness to the law that is attached to sin itself. This he repels with the utmost vehemence. 1. The law acts as a discoverer of sin (ver. 7). But it is no impeachment against the evenness of a ruler, that by its application you can discover what is crooked. On the contrary, its very power of doing so proves how straight it is in itself. The light may reveal an impurity which could not be recognised at night; yet who would ever think of ascribing to light any of that pollution which it reveals. It were indeed strange if the dissimilarity of two things should lead us to confound them. When one man stands before you full of moral worth, and another full of vice, the presence of the first may generate

a keener repugnancy towards the second; and this not surely because they have anything in common, but because they have everything in wide and glaring opposition. And the same of sin and of the law. 2. The law aggravates this deformity by making sin more actively rebellious (ver. 8). The law not curing the desire of man's heart towards any forbidden indulgence, this desire is thereby exasperated. The man who sins and thinks no more of it may never repeat it till its outward influences have again come about him, it may be, long after; but the man who is ever brooding under a sense of guilt has the image of allurement present to his thoughts during the whole time when they are not present to his senses. And thus the law turns out an occasional cause, why with him there should be both a more intense fermentation of the sinful appetites than with another, who is reckless of law and undisturbed by its accusing voice. And what adds to the helplessness of this calamity is, that while the law thus gives a new assailing force to his enemies, it affords no force of resistance to the man himself. Depriving him of the inspiring energy that is in hope, it gives him in its place the dread and the desperation of an outlaw. And yet the law here is not in fault. It is sin which is in fault, which, at sight of law, strengthened itself the more in its own character. 3. And it is in this sense only that the law is the occasion of death. (1) This sore infliction is due to sin, which taketh occasion by the law. The very company of a good man may so degrade in his own eyes a bad man as that, with the desperate feeling of an outcast he might henceforth give himself over to the full riot of villainy, and even become a murderer; and so entail upon himself a death of vengeance. But who would ever think of laying either his own blood, or the blood of his victim, to the door of him whose excellence had only called out into display the hatefulness of his own character? (2) Then again, sin slays its victim by a process of deception of which the law is made the instrument. It may do this in various ways—(*a*) As the man's remorse broods over the transgression, so sin may take advantage by leading the man to dwell as constantly on the temptation which led to it. (*b*) Or it may represent the man to himself as the doomed victim of a law that can never be appeased, and thus, through means of this law, may drive him onward to recklessness. (*c*) Or it may soothe him by setting forth the many conformities to honesty, or temperance, or compassion, or courteousness, by which he still continues to do the law honour. (*d*) It may even turn his very compunction into a matter of complacency, and persuade him that, in defect of his obedience to the law, he at least gives it the homage of his regret. 4. "For without the law sin is dead" (ver. 8)—dead in respect of all power to condemn, and in respect of its inability to stir up the alarms of condemnation: and as to its power of seducing or enslaving you by means of a remorse or terror. And in the next verse Paul is visited with the remembrance of his own former state, when, ignorant as he was of the exceeding breadth of God's commandment, he looked forward to a life of favour here and of blessedness hereafter, on the strength of his many outward and literal observations. He was thus alive without the law once; and it was not till the commandment came—not till he was made to see what its lofty demands were, and what his wretched deficiencies therefrom, that sin revived in him, and dislodged him from his proud security, and made him see that, instead of a victorious claimant for the rewards of the law, he was the victim of its penalties. This state (see also ver. 9) is the prevalent state of the world. Men live in tolerable comfort and security because dead to the terrifying menaces of the law. It is because the sinner is thus without the law that he sees not the danger of his condition. And thus it is that it is so highly important when the Spirit lends His efficacy to the Divine law—when he thereby arouses the careless sinner out of his lethargies, and persuades him to flee for refuge to the hope set before him. II. THE LAW COMMENDED. The apostle having cleared the law from all charge of odiousness, now renders it the positive homage which was due to its real character—as the representation of all moral excellence. If the law be the occasion of death, or of more fell depravity, it is not because of any evil that is in its character, which is holy and just and good (ver. 12). This may lead to the solution of a question by which the legal heart of man often feels itself exercised. Why should the law, that is now deposed from its ancient office of minister unto life to that of minister unto death, still be kept up in authority, and obedience to it be as strenuously required? In order that God should will our obedience to the law, it is not necessary to give to it the legal importance and efficacy that it had under the old dispensation. At the outset of our present system, the Spirit of God moving upon chaos educed the loveliest forms of hill and dale and mighty ocean and waving

forests, and all that richness of bloom and verdure which serves to dress the landscapes of nature. And it is said that God saw everything to be good. Now there was no legality in this process. The ornaments of a flower, or tree, or the magnificence of outspread scenery, cannot be the offerings by which inanimate matter purchases the smile of the Divinity. The Almighty Artist loves to behold the fair composition that He Himself has made; and wills each of His works to be perfect in its kind. And the same of the moral taste of the Godhead. He loves what is wise and holy and just and good in the world of mind; and with a far higher affection. And the office of His Spirit is to evolve this beauteous exhibition out of the chaos of ruined humanity. And to forward this process it is not necessary that man be stimulated to exertion by the motives of legalism. All that is necessary is submission to the transforming operations of the Divine Spirit, and willingness to follow His impulses. And must God, ere He can gratify His relish for the higher beauties of morality and of mind, first have to make a bargain about it with His creatures? So, then, though the old relationship between you and the law is dissolved, still it is this very law with the requirements of which you are to busy yourselves in this world; and with the graces and accomplishments of which you must appear invested before Christ at the judgment-seat. It was written first on tables of stone, and the process was then that you should fulfil its requisitions as your task, and be paid with heaven as a reward. It is now written by the Holy Ghost on the tablets of your heart; and the process is now that you are made to delight in it after the inward man. With gold you may purchase a privilege or adorn your person. You may not be able to purchase the king's favour with it; but he may grant you his favour, and when he requires your appearance before him, it is still in gold he may require you to be invested. And thus of the law. It is not by your own righteous conformity thereto that you purchase God's favour; for this has been already purchased by the pure gold of the Saviour's righteousness, and is presented to all who believe on Him. But still it is with your own personal righteousness that you must be adorned. (*T. Chalmers, D.D.*) *The excellence of the law*:—I. IT EXPOSES SIN. 1. Its nature. 2. Its existence in the heart. 3. Its activity (vers. 7, 8). II. IT CONDEMNS THE SINNER. 1. Destroys his self-complacency. 2. Awakens conscience. 3. Pronounces sentence of death (vers. 9, 10). III. DEMONSTRATES ITS OWN PERFECTION. 1. By the display of its own nature, holy, just, good. 2. By exhibiting the exceeding sinfulness of sin. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) **Nay, I had not known sin but by the law.**—*Revelation of sin by the law*:—Sin lies concealed in man, however fair and refined he may appear to the world, just as even in ice there exists hundreds of degrees of latent heat. The argument is that the law brings to light sin, and is not its parent nor in any sense responsible for its existence, as it is not its physician nor capable of removing its guilt and remedying its effects (chap. iii. 20). The law does not in any sense create or cause sin by exerting any deleterious influence, as the frost, by withdrawing the heat from water, freezes it. Nay, the function of the law is to reveal and expose sin, as the office of the sun is to bring to light the dust and dirt which existed, but escaped notice before its rays entered the apartment. (*C. Neil, M.A.*) *The mercifulness of the law in the revelation of sin*:—Just as a mirror is not an enemy to the ugly man, because it shows him his very self in all his ugliness, and just as a medical man is not an enemy to the sick man, because he shows him his sickness, for the medical man is not the cause of the sickness nor is the mirror the cause of the ugliness, so God is not the cause of the sickness of our sin or its ugliness, because He shows it to us in the mirror of His Word and by the Physician Christ, who came to show us our sins and to heal them for us. (*T. H. Leary, D.C.L.*) *Sin aroused by the law*:—A contented citizen of Milan, who had never passed beyond its walls during the course of sixty years, being ordered by the governor not to stir beyond its gates, became immediately miserable, and felt so powerful an inclination to do that which he had so long contentedly neglected, that on his application for a release from this restraint being refused, he became quite melancholy, and at last died of grief. How well this illustrates the apostle's confession that he had not known lust, unless the law had said unto him, "Thou shalt not covet!" "Sin," saith he, "taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence." Evil often sleeps in the soul, until the holy command of God is discovered, and then the enmity of the carnal mind rouses itself to oppose in every way the will of God. "Without the law," says Paul, "sin was dead." How vain to hope for salvation from the law, when through the perversity of sin it provokes our evil hearts to rebellion, and works in us neither repentance nor love. (*C. H.*

Spurgeon.) *The conviction of sin:*—I. WHAT IT INCLUDES. 1. Knowledge of sin. 2. Consciousness of it. 3. Sense of its demerit and punishment. II. HOW IT IS PRODUCED—by the law, which—1. Detects; 2. Exposes; 3. Condemns it. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) **I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.**—*Paul's early experience:*—In this picture of his inner life Paul gives us, without intending it, a very high idea of the purity of his life as a child and a young man. He might, when confronted with the nine commandments, have to the letter claimed for himself the verdict, Not guilty, like the young man who said to Jesus, "All these things have I kept from my youth up." But the tenth commandment cut short all this self-righteousness, and under this ray of the Divine holiness he was compelled to pass sentence of condemnation. Thus there was wrought in him, Pharisee though he was, without his suspecting it, a profound separation from ordinary Pharisaism, and a moral preparation which was to lead him to Christ and His righteousness. To this so mournful discovery was added (δε ver. 8) by and by a second and more painful experience. (*Prof. Godet.*) **Sin taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence.**—*Sin and its work in relation to the law:*—I. SIN. Indwelling sin; depravity inherent in fallen humanity, personified as something living and intelligent. II. ITS OCCASION—the law, which shows it in its true character. Sin is in its nature opposition to God and His law (chap. viii. 7). The presence of the law, therefore, is the occasion for sin to act. It is to sin as water to hydrophobia. Corruption arouses itself to resist the law which opposes it. Sick men and children often desire what is forbidden, because it is so. The law and sin act on each other as an acid and an alkali. The effect of the contact is like the effervescence of the mixture. III. ITS WORK. 1. "Wrought," produced, called into operation. Sin is an active principle stirring up evil thoughts, &c. Its nature is to foam against the law as water against a barrier. 2. "In me." Sin's activity viewed as internal, not external. 3. "All manner"—both as to kind and degree. The heart is like a neglected garden full of all sorts of weeds. Lust may shrink into a dwarf or swell into a giant. Covetousness and lust are hydras, monsters with many heads. 4. "Of concupiscence." Inordinate sinful desire. From sin springs lust, as the stream from the fountain. Evil desire not restrained brings forth sin in the act (James i. 15). Already in the heart it is excited by the law which forbids it. Weeds seeming dead in winter shoot up in the warmth of spring. Vipers torpid in the cold are excited to life and action by the fire. Like a revived viper, sin hisses against the law which disturbs it. (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) *The law irritates sin:*—A rock, flung into the bed of some headlong stream, would not arrest the stream, but only cause it, which ran swiftly yet silently before, now furiously to foam and fret round the obstacle which it found in its path. (*Abp. Trench.*) *Restraint quickens:*—The child is often most strongly tempted to open gates which have been specially interdicted. If nothing had been said about them, probably he would not have cared to open them. *The law rouses sin:*—Sin full-grown defies law because it is a law: resists restraint because it is restraint; contests authority with God because He is God. Says Cain, as depicted by Lord Byron in colloquy with Lucifer: "I bend to neither God nor thee." Lord Byron knew whereof he affirmed. That is the legitimate heroism of sin. Sin runs to passion: passion to tumult in character: and a tumultuous character tends to tempests and explosions, which scorn secrecies and disguises. Then the whole man comes to light. He sees himself, and others see him, as he is in God's sight. Those solemn imperatives and their awful responses: "Thou shalt not"—"I will"; "Thou shalt"—"I will not"—make up, then, all that the man knows of intercourse with God. This is sin, in the ultimate and finished type of it. This it what it grows to in every sinner, if unchecked by the grace of God. Every man unredeemed becomes a demon in eternity. (*Austin Phelps.*) **For without the law sin was dead.**—*Unawakened:*—I. WITHOUT THE LAW—in its application to the conscience, or in the knowledge of its spirituality and extent. It is easy to have the law and yet to be without it, which is the case of most. An unawakened man has the law in his hand; he reads it: an awakened man has it in his conscience; he feels it: a regenerate man has it in his heart; he loves it. II. SIN WAS DEAD—1. As to any consciousness of its existence. 2. Comparatively as to its activity. 3. As to any knowledge of its true character as opposed to God's law. The strong man armed keeps his house and goods in peace. The heart's opposition to the law only bound by its presence. Sin dead, and put to death, two different things; it is dead in the unawaked, but put to death in the believer. Sin never has more power over a man

than when dead in him, is never less dead than when it appears or is felt to be so. It has to be aroused into life before it is actually put to death. Dead in the soul, it shows that the soul is dead in sin. Sin was alive in the Publican, but dead in the Pharisee (Luke xviii. 10–14). It must be roused to life and slain here, or live for ever hereafter. (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) **For I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.**—*The sinner without and under the law*:—I. WITHOUT THE LAW. 1. Alive. 2. But sin is dead. II. UNDER THE LAW. 1. Dead. 2. But sin lives. III. THE RATIONALE OF THE CHANGE. 1. A change not of moral condition but of moral consciousness. 2. Effected by the revelation of the law. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Paul without and under the law*:—I thought all was well with me. Was I not a Hebrew of the Hebrews? Was I not a Pharisee? Was I not strict and zealous? But all that time I was in reality "without the law." I knew it then in the letter only, not in its spirit and power. But "when the commandment came," when it was brought home to my conscience, when my eyes were opened, then, "sin revived," gained a new vitality, sprang into life as a serpent that had been frozen and was thawed. I felt it in all its power; I knew it in its guilt and condemnation; I was as one who had received a death-blow; I despaired, my heart died within me. (*F. Bourdillon.*) *Conscience quickened by the law*:—1. Paul had lived with a conscience, but one that was not rightly instructed. He had kept his conscience on his side, though he was living wickedly. But there came a time of revelation in which his conscience took sides against him. And the result was that right before him rose his whole lifetime of sin, by which, as it rushed upon him, he was swept away slain. "I used, before I knew what God's true light was, to be active and complacent; but when that spiritual law was revealed to me, all my life seemed like the unfolding of a voluminous history of transgression. And I fell down before the vision as one dead." 2. The difference between a man when his conscience is energised and when his conscience is torpid is a difference as great as that between a man that is dead and a man that is alive and excited to the utmost tension of endeavour. 3. Excitement is itself a matter of prejudice; but no one objects if it is the excitement of enterprise; if it is physical or civic excitement. When it becomes moral, then men begin to fear wild-fires and fanaticisms. 4. Now excitement is only another name for vitality. Stones have no excitability. The vegetables rank higher, because they are susceptible of excitement, although they cannot develop it themselves. An animal ranks higher than a vegetable, because it has the power of receiving and developing excitability. Man is the highest; the capacity of excitability marks his position in the scale of being. 5. Now, when excitement is out of all proportion to the importance of the objects presented, or the motive powers, then there is an impropriety in it; and this prejudice against it has arisen from its abuse. There have been moral excitements that are disastrous; but these are effects of a prior cause, namely, absence of wholesome excitement before. You will find frequently where Churches are dead that there will come a period of fanatical revival influence. It is reaction, the violent attempt of life to reinstate itself. But at its worst this is far better than death. I. RATIONAL MORAL EXCITEMENT LEADS MEN TO APPLY TO THEIR LIFE AND CONDUCT THE ONLY TRUE STANDARD, NAMELY, THAT OF RIGHT AND WRONG, upon a revealed ground. 1. Ordinarily, men judge their conduct by lower standards. Most men judge of what they are by the relations of their conduct to pleasure and pain, profit and loss; that is, by the law of interest. But if that is all, how mean it is! Men are apt to measure themselves as they stand related to favour. That is, they make others' opinions of them the mirror in which to look upon their own faces. Now, it is true that a man's reputation is apt to follow closely upon his character, but there is an interval between that men skip. Men measure themselves by the law of influence, and by ambitious aspirations. Then public sentiment, fashions, customs, the laws of the community, are employed by men to give themselves a conception of what they are. 2. Now not one of these measurings is adequate. No man knows what he is that has only measured himself by them. A man desires to know what he is as a man, and he calls in his tailor. He only judges him as a man with clothes. He calls in his shoemaker. He only judges him with relation to shoes. He calls in the surgeon and the physician, and they, having examined him in every part, pronounce him sound and healthy. Is there nothing more? Yes, there are mental organs. Then call in the psychologist. Has the man yet come to a knowledge of what he is? Is there nothing to be conceived of as moral principle? Is there nothing called manhood, in distinction from the animal

organism, &c.? 3. We need to go higher before we can consider this case settled. It must be submitted to the chief justice sitting in the court of the soul. Conscience calls in review all these pre-judgments; not because they are wrong in themselves, but because they are inadequate. Conscience introduces the laws of God. Men are called to form a judgment of what they are, not so much from what they are to society as from what they are in the sight of God. You never can get this judgment except where conscience has been illuminated by the Divine Spirit. I am only measured when the soul is measured; and only can it be measured when it is put upon the sphere of the eternal world, and upon the law of God. This is the first great element that enters into moral excitability. II. AN INCREASED SENSIBILITY OF CONSCIENCE IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT RESULTS OF GENERAL MORAL EXCITEMENT. 1. The not using of one's conscience works lethargy and blindness. But when the conscience is fired by the Divine Spirit, it awakes and glows. You know what it is to have your hand numb; and what it is to have it acutely sensitive. You know what it is to have the eye blurred, and what it is to have it clear. So conscience may exist in a state in which things pass before it, and it does not see them; but lies at the door like a watch-dog that is asleep, past which goes the robber into the house and commits his depredations undisturbed. It is a great thing for a man to have a conscience that rouses him up and makes him more and more sensitive; but just as soon as the conscience becomes sensitive, it brings a man's sins to a more solemn account than before. 2. There are many things that we adjudge to be sinful. A man says, "Profanity or dishonesty is sinful"; but, after all, he has a good-natured way of dealing with these things. If men were as good-natured to their enemies as they are to their own sins, there would be much less conflict in the world. A man had a huge rock in his field. He did not want to waste time to remove it; he planted ivy, and roses, and honeysuckles about it, to cover it up; and he invited people to come and see how beautiful it is. A certain part of his farm was low, moist, and disagreeable; and, instead of draining it, he planted mosses, ferns, rhododendrons, &c., there; and now he regards that as one of the handsomest parts of his farm. And men treat their faults so. Here is a man that has a hard and ill temper; but he has planted all about it ivy and roses and honeysuckles. He thinks he is a better man because all his imperfections are hidden from his sight. Here is a man that does not drain his swamps of evil courses, but covers them over with mosses and various plants, and thinks he is better because he is more beauteous in his own eyes. Men lose their conviction of the hatefulness of sins, they get so used to them. But there come times when God makes sin in these respects appear so sinful that they tremble at it. You know how bonds go up. To-day they are worth a hundred; to-morrow they are a hundred and five. And then when it is understood that they are going up, they begin to rush; and in the course of a few months they have got up to two or three hundred. When a man is running up values on his sins, they do not go down again. Under the power of an illuminated conscience a man says, first, "Why, sin is sinful!" Next, "It is very sinful!" Next, "It is exceedingly sinful!" Next, "It is damnably sinful!" 3. The next fact of this reviving of the conscience is that it brings into the category of sins a thousand things that before we never have called such. When gold comes into the assay office, they treat it as we do not treat ourselves. It is carefully weighed, and during the process it is worked up to the very last particle. Yea, the very sweepings of the floor are gathered and assayed again. Now men throw in their conduct in bulk, and do not care for the sweepings; and vastly the greatest portion of it comes out without being brought to any test. But it is to the last degree important that there should come periods in which men are obliged to bring into the category of sins those practices which otherwise they would call their faults, or weaknesses. 4. In New York there is a board of health. And how much dirt there was found the moment there was an authority to make men look for it. It is not half as dirty as it was a little while ago; but the dirt is more apparent, because it is stirred up. Only give a clearer sense of what is right to men, and they will instantly see in themselves much wrong that they have not before discovered. The probability is that now, in New York, there is more apprehension of danger from a want of cleanliness than there has been during the last twenty-five years put together. This has arisen from the increased sensibility of men on the subject, and the application of a higher test to it. There is special need of an awakened conscience to bring to light these things, that are not less dangerous because men do not know of them, but all the more dangerous. III. AN AWAKENED CONSCIENCE CANNOT FIND

PEACE IN ANY MERE OBEDIENCE. There is this benefit—that when once a man's conscience has begun to discriminate, he naturally betakes himself to reformation to satisfy his conscience. But his conscience becomes exacting faster than he can learn how to perform. So that the more he does, the less he is satisfied. Here stands an old house, that has been a hundred years without repair. The old master dies, and a new man comes in. He sends for the architect, who commences searching, and it is found that there is decay all through the building. Part leads to part, and disclosure to disclosure, and decay to decay; and it seems as though it were almost impossible ever to make it good. That is but a faint emblem of the work of reformation in the human soul. A house offers no resistance to his attempts to renovate it; but the human disposition is an ever-fertile, ever-growing, ever-recreating centre. And a man is conscious that the more he tries to regulate it, the harder it is to do it. A man who has been drinking all his life, and lost his name and his business, and nearly ruined his family, attempts to reform. After a month he says, "I never had so much trouble in all my experience. It has seemed as though everything went against me, and was determined that I should not lead a good life, and I am almost in despair." Oh, yes. Laws are like fortifications. They are meant to protect all that are inside, and repel all that are outside; and, if a man gets outside and attempts to come back, he must do it against the cross-fire of the garrison. No man departs from the path of rectitude that, when he comes back, does not come back by the hardest. There is the experience of the apostle, "When I would do good, evil was with me. I perceived that the law was holy and just and good, and I approved it in the inward man. But the more I struggled to obey it the worse I was. "O wretched man that I am," &c. Then rose up before him that which must rise up as the ground of comfort in every awakened soul—namely, Jesus Christ. IV. THE ONLY REFUGE OF AN EXCITED CONSCIENCE, as a judge and schoolmaster, MUST BE TO BRING THE SOUL TO CHRIST. A child is taken by a teacher out of the street, wretchedly clad, bad in behaviour, and wofully ignorant. The old nature is strong. Still he begins to study a little, while he plays more. He is fractious, and comes to grief every day; but by and by he comes to that point where he feels himself to be a bad scholar, and in a flood of tears goes to the teacher and says, "It is useless to try and make anything out of me, I am so bad." The teacher puts his arm round the child, and says, "Thomas, if I can bear with you, can you with me? I know how bad you have been. But I love you; and I will give you time, and you shall not be ruined." Cannot you conceive that, under such circumstances, there might spring up in the heart of the child an intense feeling of gratitude. And so the teacher carries the child from day to day. Now this is just the work that God's great heart does for men. And where there is a man that has a rigorous conscience, let him take refuge with one that says, "Shift the judgment-seat. I will not judge you by the law of justice, but by the law of love and of patience." By faith and love in Christ Jesus we may find rest. (*H. Ward Beecher.*) *Place of the law in salvation of sinners*:—1. Salvation has been provided; the world's chief need now is a sense of sin. Food is not wanting, but hunger. There is healing balm; where are the broken hearts? Christ's work is complete; we need that of the Spirit. 2. This chapter is the history of a holy war, and in the text you have a bird's-eye view of the whole campaign. In the books of Moses you may find the same three things it contains. (1) In Egypt Israel were slaves, yet were satisfied with its carnal comforts. This is like Paul's first life, with which he was quite satisfied, "I was alive," &c. (2) The exodus, comprehending the Red Sea, the perils of the wilderness, and the passage of Jordan, correspond to Paul's escape, "The commandment came," &c. (3) The promised land, with its plenty, liberty, and worship, corresponds to Paul's new life in the kingdom of God. We have here—I. A LIFE WHICH A MAN ENJOYS IN AND OF HIMSELF BEFORE HE KNOWS GOD. "I was alive without the law once." 1. The natural state of fallen man is here called life, and elsewhere death. In God's sight it is death; in man's imagination life. Paul gives his view of his unconverted state when he was in it. Ask him now about it, and he will declare, "I was dead in trespasses and sins." 2. But how could he be so blind as to count himself just with God while running counter to the law? The explanation is, he was alive "without the law." He could not have lived with it. Why have men so much peace in sin? Because they live without God's law. Daring speculators cook accounts in order to stave off the evil day. Bolder cheats modify the law of God, that its incoming may not disturb their repose. There is a malformation in some member of your body, and you are ordered to wear an

instrument to bring it back to a normal condition. Dreading the pain of the anticipated operation, you secretly take a cast of your own crooked limb, and thereon mould the instrument. When the instrument so prepared is laid upon the limb, the limb will feel easy, but it will not be made straight. Thus men cast upon their own hearts their conception of the Divine law, and, for form's sake, apply the thing that is labelled God's Word to their own hearts again, but the application never makes them cry, and the crooked parts are not made straight. The process is pleasant, and it serves the deceiver for a religion. II. THE ESCAPE FROM THAT FALSE LIFE BY A DYING: "The commandment came, sin revived, and I died." 1. "The commandment came." (1) It is no longer an imitation law, but the unchanging will of the unchanging God, with the demand, "Be ye holy, for I am holy"; and the sentence, "The soul that sinneth it shall die." (2) This newcomer is felt an intruder within the conscience, and an authority over it. Hitherto the man had procured a painted fire, but now the law becomes a consuming fire, working its way into all the interstices of his heart and his history. This commandment came into the man, and found him "enmity against God." 2. "Sin revived" at the entrance of this visitant, and thereby he first felt sin, like a serpent creeping about his heart, and loathed its presence. (1) Hitherto the disease was undermining his life, without giving him pain. The evil spirit met no opposition, and therefore produced no disturbance. The commandment (ver. 7) did not cause but only detected sin. The course of his life was like a river, so smooth that an observer could not tell whether it is flowing at all. A rock revealed the current by opposing it. But the rock that detects the movement did not produce it; neither is it able to reverse it. The river rises to the difficulty, and rushes down more rapidly than before. It is thus with the commandment, it has power to disturb, but none to renew. (2) The difference between a man who is "without the law" and a man into whose conscience "the commandment has come," is not that the one continues sinning and the other has ceased to sin. It is rather that the one tastes the pleasures of sin, such as they are, while the other writhes at its bitterness. (3) The coming of the commandment for the conviction of sin is not necessarily the work of a day or an hour. In Paul's case the process was short. During that journey to Damascus, it seems to have begun and ended. But in most cases the law enters the conscience as a besieging army wins a fortress, by slow and gradual approaches. Sometimes the will drives back the law; at other times the law, under cover, perhaps, of some providential chastening, renews the assault, and gains a firmer footing further in. But whether by many successive stages, or by one overwhelming onset, the issue is, "Sin revived, and"—3. "I died." The life in which he had hitherto trusted was extinguished then. (1) Convictions rose and closed round like the waves of a flowing tide, until they quenched his vain hope. Departments of his heart and history, which till now he had thought good against the final judgment, were successively flooded by the advancing, avenging law. Prayers, penances, and a long catalogue of miscellaneous virtues, floating down the stream of daily life, had coalesced and consolidated, as wood, hay, stubble, stones, mud, carried down by a river sometimes aggregate into an island in the estuary. The heap seemed to afford a firm footing for the fugitive in any emergence. (2) Upon this heap "the commandment came" with resistless power. It rose like the tide over the pieces of merit on which the man had taken his stand, and blotted them out. Where they lay, nothing now remains but a fearful looking for of judgment. (3) But still the commandment comes. The convict, trembling now for his life, abandons all that seems doubtful, and hastily gathering the best and surest parts of his righteousness, piles them beneath his feet. He will no longer give himself out as a saint; he even owns that he is a sinner. He claims only to have sinned less than some he knows, and to have done some good things which might, at least, palliate the evil. The law pays no respect to this refuge of lies, and shows no pity to the fugitive. Wave follows wave, until the law of God has covered all the righteousness of men, and left it lying deep in everlasting contempt. (4) This death of false hope is, as its name indicates, like the departure of the spirit. Disease having gained a footing, makes its approaches. Member after member is overtaken and paralysed. The soul abandons one by one the less defensible extremities, and seeks refuge in its own interior fastnesses. Still the adversary, holding every point that he has gained, presses on for more. To one remaining foothold the distressed occupant clings a while; but that refuge, too, the inexorable besieger takes at last. Chased by the strange usurper from every part of its long-cherished home, the life flickers over it a moment, like the

flame of an expiring lamp, and then darts away into the unseen. So perished the hope of the self-righteous man. He died. What then? III. HE LIVES IN ANOTHER LIFE. 1. No interval of time separated the two. The death that led from one life was the birth into another. We do not read, "I am dead," but, "I died." It is the voice, not of the dead, but of the living. The dead never tell us how they died. The death through which Paul passed at conversion is like that which lays a Christian's weary body in the grave, and admits his spirit into the presence of the Lord. "He that believeth on Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." The fact, like the person, has two sides. If you stand on this side and look, he dies. If you stand on that side and look, he is born. 2. Throughout the whole of his previous history, Paul had stood on the ground and breathed the atmosphere of his own merits. Probably, like other people, he had frequently to remove from place to place in that region. But even the law could not drive him forth. What the law could not do, God did by sending His Son. Christ brought His righteousness into contact with Paul's. Now, the law chasing him once more, chased him over. Out of his own merits went the man that moment, and into Christ. Then he died; and from the moment of his death he lived. Henceforth you find him continually telling of his life, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me"; "Our life is hid with Christ in God." 3. Let the line be distinctly marked between what the law can, and what it cannot do. It may shake down all the foundations of a man's first hope, but it cannot bear away the stricken victim from the ruins. It can make the sinner more miserable, but it cannot make him more safe. It is only when Christ comes near with a better righteousness that even the commandment, raging in the conscience, can drive you from your own. We owe much to that flaming justice which made the old life die, but more to that love which received the dying as he fell into life eternal. (*W. Arnot, D.D.*) *The condemnatory power of the law:*—I. In the way of PRELIMINARY OBSERVATION it may be noticed that by the law here mentioned we are to understand the moral law. It is the moral law which says, "Thou shalt not covet," as we read in ver. 7. It is by the moral law we arrive at the knowledge of sin, as we see from the text, compared with chap. iii. 20. It is to the moral law, as a covenant of works, that believers are dead in consequence of their union with the living head of the Church. It is by the moral law that sin takes occasion to deceive and destroy mankind, as you read in ver. 11. And finally, it is the moral law which is holy, just, and good, in its precepts, promises, and even threatenings. II. Consider THE FALSE OPINION which Paul entertained of himself before his conversion. So completely was he blinded by sin, that he falsely imagined himself to be alive—that is, he thought that he had well-grounded hopes of the favour of God and of eternal life, while in reality he was dead in trespasses and in sins. He was therefore at that time under the influence of a strong delusion. It will be of great consequence here to mark out the circumstances which, through the blindness of his mind, occasioned his mistake, that so we may place a beacon upon the rock which, without the interposition of Divine grace, had proved fatal to the apostle. He laid great stress on his religious education (Acts xxii. 3). Now, this was in itself a very distinguished privilege. But Paul in his unconverted state did not understand the proper improvement of it. Instead of rendering these advantages subservient to a higher end, he valued himself so much upon them that he thought they would contribute towards his acceptance with God. Another circumstance which, through the blindness of his mind, tended to mislead him was his full connection with the Jewish Church, whereby he was entitled to a variety of high external privileges. Had these things been kept in their proper place and rendered subservient to a higher end, they would have formed such beauties of character as to render it an object of admiration. But, alas! Paul being at this time under the influence of a self-righteous spirit, he considered these as constituting his title to eternal life, and so foolishly concluded that he was "alive," while in reality he was under the sentence and the power of death, both spiritual and eternal. But further, Paul's delusion in his unconverted state was chiefly owing to his deep ignorance of the purity, spirituality, and extent of the holy law of God. A thorough, inward, deep, and personal conviction of sin is that which lies at the very foundation of vital Christianity, and all religion without this must be delusion for without a sense of sin men will not come to the Saviour, and unless they come to the Saviour they must be irrecoverably undone. III. THE MEANS THAT WERE BLESSED OF GOD for correcting the erroneous opinion which Paul entertained of his spiritual state while a Pharisee. 1. The first means employed by God for discovering his real

character was the coming of the commandment. The Lord Jesus, appearing to him when he was near to Damascus, sent by His Spirit the law or commandment home to his conscience in the extent of its requisitions, with such light, authority, and energy as produced a complete revolution of sentiment. This discovery destroyed the very foundation of the delusive hopes of eternal life which he previously entertained. 2. Another means here mentioned which, under Divine influence, subserved the purpose of correcting the erroneous opinion which Paul, when a Pharisee, entertained of himself was the reviving of sin. In the apostle's state of unregeneracy sin lived in its latent powers and principles; but through the blindness of his mind he did not perceive its existence, neither was he sensible of its various operations in his soul. But when the commandment came with light, authority, and energy, he obtained such a view of the numberless evils of his own heart which he never saw before; that sin which once appeared to be dead, now revived. And this is the first view in which sin appears to be alive in the soul of a true penitent. Again, sin revived upon the coming of the commandment, because that commandment, being enforced by the power of the supreme Lawgiver, vested sin with a power to condemn. Sin revived in him on the coming of the commandment also, because the more the holy law urged obedience, the keener opposition did the heart naturally corrupted give to the requirements of the law. And now sin was found not only to exist, but to exist in all its power and strength. 3. The next means which, under Divine influence, corrected the mistaken apprehension which Paul once entertained of himself was that which is here mentioned, "I died." The death here mentioned is nothing else than the death of legal hope; and yet no sinner will submit to this kind of death till the law is applied to his conscience by the Holy Ghost convincing him of guilt and of its tremendous demerit. (*John Russell.*) *The law and the gospel*:—The main design of the apostle in this chapter is to show that the law would not give peace of mind to the troubled sinner. Note man's condition—I. WITHOUT THE LAW. When I was unacquainted with its high, spiritual demands, I was peaceful and self-satisfied. I lived an earthly life, trusting to my own righteousness. II. UNDER THE LAW. When the law was revealed to me in its purity and integrity, I discovered my sinfulness, and fell down as one slain. III. ABOVE THE LAW. Having found that there is no life in the law, I turned to the gospel. This is the purpose of the law—a schoolmaster. In Christ I found life. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Want of conviction the source of mistaken apprehensions*:—We have here —I. THE GOOD OPINION WHICH PAUL ONCE HAD OF HIMSELF, WHILE HE WAS IN AN UNREGENERATE STATE. "I was alive." This is no uncommon thing. Many have deceived themselves with a name to live, while they are dead. He doubtless refers to the time when he was a Pharisee; and there were such persons long before the Pharisees (Job. xxx. 12; 2 Kings x. 16–31; Isa. xxix. 13, lviii. 1, 2, lxv. 5). Concerning Paul himself, read Phil. iii. 5. And yet, when it pleased God to call him by His grace, he saw himself "the chief of sinners." What an amazing change was here! Though once alive in his presumptions and performances, he finds himself dead in law, dead in sin. II. THE GROUND OF THE APOSTLE'S MISTAKE. "I was without the law." 1. Not that the apostle could be so ignorant as to imagine that he was without law; for as a Jew he had the written law, and as a Pharisee he made his boast of it, and expected life by his own obedience to it. 2. He means, "I was alive without the law in its purity and spirituality. I only considered the letter, especially I fell in with the glosses of our Rabbins. But when I was led to view the law in all its extent and spirituality, I saw my mistake —I condemned myself as a most miserable sinner." 3. While men aim only at the external law, there is little difficulty in obeying its precepts; but when they consider it as the very image of God Himself, it is no wonder if their fears begin to be awakened. Without the law, separated from and uninfluenced by it, the sinner receives no uneasiness; but if it be impressed upon his conscience, all his vain hopes are at an end. So, then, the true reason of the apostle's mistake was the want of better acquaintance with the law. They who have most light have the lowest thoughts of themselves. Hence we see—(1) That there is much carnal security in every unregenerate man (Luke xi. 21). The children of God may be often in fear and doubt. If they look to the glories of heaven they think themselves altogether unworthy of them: if they look to the horrors of hell their hearts die within them: while sinners have none of these sorrows; securely they live, and, very often, peacefully they die (Psa. lxxiii. 4). Now and then their consciences may render them uneasy; but the old stupidity returns, and there may be little

interruption as to their quiet. Oh, but it would be their greatest mercy to have it interrupted by the coming of the law in its purity and power. (2) There is much presumption as the ground of their security (John viii. 41, 54, 55). (3) There is also much false joy, as the offspring of groundless hope, built upon their religious education, church privileges, pride, self-love, and their self-comparison with those that are more grossly wicked; but all this is being without the law, or the not judging of themselves by the right rule. III. THE MEANS BY WHICH HIS MISTAKE WAS RECTIFIED. 1. The commandment came, the law, in its pure and holy precepts. Now, if it be inquired how it is that the law comes home to the conscience, we answer, It is by the Spirit of the Lord. He opens the blind eye to discern the purity of the object presented, and exerts His almighty power to put the sinner upon comparing his heart and life with this law, and to hold him to it. 2. Sin revived. (1) Sin more and more appeared, and made itself manifest. (2) It awoke and more powerfully exerted itself. While Satan can keep men quiet in carnal security he is content; but no sooner does a man begin to be weary of his yoke and cry out for deliverance, than Satan apprehends the loss of a subject. Then he endeavours to excite and provoke his lusts to the uttermost, in order to overwhelm his soul with despair. (3) It revived as to its guilt, or its condemning power. He once thought that sin was dead; but the law, when it came, plainly discovered to him its sting, "For the sting of death is sin." 3. "I died." "I saw myself to be in a state of death and condemnation. I found myself insufficient to anything. All my attempts were fruitless, and I lay at the foot of mercy without any claim or plea." In this hopeless and helpless state does Christ find us when He comes to bring us salvation. Oh, how precious is pardon to the ungodly, hope to the hopeless, mercy to the miserable! Conclusion: A word—1. To such as are dead, while they think themselves alive. How necessary is self-examination! The apostle, having been convinced of his past mistake, earnestly recommends this (2 Cor. xiii. 5). 2. Those that feel themselves dead, bless God for the discovery. Where God hath made this discovery of sin, He will lead the heart to Him who is able to subdue sin. 3. Let all who have received life from Christ seek daily supplies from Him. Guard against all sin as contrary to that new life you have in and from Christ (Col. iii. 1). (*J. Stafford.*) *The effect of law on obedience*:—The terrors of the law have much the same effect on our duty and obedience as frost has on a stream—it hardens, cools, and stagnates. Whereas, let the shining of Divine love rise upon the soul, repentance will then flow, our hardness and coldness thaw and melt away, and all the blooming fruits of godliness flourish and abound. (*Toplady.*) *Death of the moral sense*:—The gambler that can take another's money, and feel no compunction of conscience at his villainy, who can continue to walk the streets as if he were an honest man, while all the time a gambler's money is in his pocket and a gambler's joy in his heart, illustrates how thoroughly sin can get the mastery of a human being. How many people can lie in the way of slander, in the way of innuendo, in the way of suspicion, and still sleep at night as if they were as innocent as babes. Such people are dead in trespasses and sins. You run a pin into your body and you scream, because it is a live body. And so, while conscience is alive, the thrust of a wicked thought through it causes exquisite torture. But when one can lie, and steal, and be drunken—when these barbed iniquities can be driven day by day into the very centre of a man's life, and conscience receives the stab without a spasm—then is it dead. And this is the law, that with whatever faculty you sin, the sin which that faculty commits kills the corresponding moral sense. Hence, sin is moral suicide; the drug works slowly but surely. The spirit which is compelled to eat of it is thrown gradually into a torpor, which deepens and deepens with every breath, until the capacity for inspiration is fatally weakened and the spirit dies. (*W. H. H. Murray.*) *Experience teaching the value of grace*:—In the olden time when the government of England resolved to build a wooden bridge over the Thames at Westminster, after they had driven one hundred and forty piles into the river, there occurred one of the most severe frosts in the memory of man, by means of which the piles were torn away from their strong fastenings, and many of them snapped in two. The apparent evil in this case was a great good; it led the commissioners to reconsider their purpose, and a substantial bridge of stone was erected. How well it is when the fleshly reformations of unregenerate men are broken to pieces, if thus they are led to fly to the Lord Jesus, and in the strength of His Spirit are brought to build solidly for eternity. Lord, if Thou sufferest my resolves and hopes to be carried away by temptations and the force of my corruptions, grant that this blessed calamity may drive me to depend

wholly on Thy grace, which cannot fail me. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Moral life and death:*—The death of sin is the life of man; and the life of death is the sin of man. (*Calvin.*) **And the commandment which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death.**—*The fatal effects of the law:*—Suppose a person liable to two bodily disorders of a different kind. He is weak, but the means taken to restore health and strength raise a fever in his veins. If we could keep him weak, he might live; as it is, he dies. So it might be said of the law, that it is too strong a medicine for the human soul. (*Prof. Jowett.*) *The original and the actual relation of man to law:*—1. The reader of St. Paul's Epistles is struck with the seemingly disparaging manner in which he speaks of the moral law. "The law entered that the offence might abound"; "the law worketh wrath"; "sin shall not have dominion" over the believer, because he is "not under the law," has "become dead to the law," is "delivered from the law," and "the strength of sin is the law." This phraseology sounds strange. "Is the law sin?" is a question which he himself asks, because aware that it will be likely to start in the mind of some of his readers. 2. The difficulty is only seeming, and the text explains it. The moral law is suited to produce holiness and happiness. It was ordained to life. If everything in man had remained as it was created, there would have been no need of urging him to "become dead to the law," to be "delivered from the law," &c. 3. The original relation between man and the moral law was precisely like that between nature and its laws. There has been no apostasy in the system of matter. The law of gravitation rules as it did on the morning of creation. The law here was ordained to life, and the ordinance still stands and will stand until a new system of nature and a new legislation for it are introduced. But the case is different with man. He is out of his original relations to the law and government of God, and therefore that which was ordained to him for life, he now finds to be unto death. The food which is suited to minister to the health of the well man, becomes death to the sick man. 4. Let us now consider some particulars in which the commandment is found to be unto death. The law of God shows itself in the human soul in the form of a sense of duty. Every man hears occasionally the words, "Thou shalt; thou shalt not," and finds himself saying to himself, "I ought; I ought not." This is the voice of law sounding in the conscience. Cut into the rock of Sinai or printed in our Bibles, it is a dead letter; but wrought into the fabric of our own constitution, and speaking to our inward being, the law is a possessing spirit, and according as we obey or disobey, it is a guardian angel or a tormenting fiend. We have disobeyed, and therefore the sense of duty is a tormenting sensation; the commandment which was ordained to life is found to be unto death, because—I. IT PLACES MAN UNDER A CONTINUAL RESTRAINT. 1. To be reined in and thwarted renders a man uneasy. The universal and instinctive desire for freedom is a proof of this. Now, the sense of duty opposes the wishes, thwarts the inclination, and imposes a restraint upon the desires and appetites of sinful man. If his inclination were only in harmony with his duty, there would be no restraint from the law; in doing his duty he would be doing what he liked. 2. There are only two ways whereby contentment can be introduced into the soul. If the Divine law could be altered so that it should agree with man's sinful inclination, he could be happy in sin. But this method, of course, is impossible. The only other mode, therefore, is to change the inclination. Then the conflict between our will and our conscience is at an end. And this is to be happy. 3. But such is not the state of things in the unrenewed soul. Duty and inclination are in conflict. And what a dreadful destiny awaits that soul for whom the holy law of God, which was ordained to life and joy, shall be found to be unto death and woe immeasurable! II. IT DEMANDS A PERPETUAL EFFORT FROM HIM. 1. No creature likes to tug and to lift. Service must be easy in order to be happy. (1) If you lay upon one's shoulders a burden that strains his muscles almost to the point of rupture, you put him in physical pain. His physical structure was not intended to be subjected to such a stretch. In Eden physical labour was pleasure because the powers were in healthy action. Before the Fall, man was simply to dress and keep a garden; but after, he was to dig up thorns and thistles, and eat his bread in the sweat of his face. And now the whole physical nature of man groaneth and travaileth in pain together, waiting for the redemption of the body from this penal necessity of perpetual strain and effort. (2) The same fact meets us when we pass to the moral nature. By creation it was a pleasure for man to keep the law of God. Holy Adam knew nothing of effort in the path of duty. By apostasy, the obligation to keep the Divine law became repulsive. It was no longer easy for man to do right, and it has never

been easy or spontaneous to him since. 2. Now in this demand for a perpetual effort, we see that the law which was ordained to life is found to be unto death. The commandment, instead of being a pleasant friend and companion, has become a rigorous task-master. It lays out an uncongenial work, and threatens punishment if not done. And yet the law is not a tyrant. It is holy, just, and good. This work which it lays out is righteous work, and ought to be done. The wicked disinclination has compelled the law to assume this attitude. That which is good was not made death to man by a Divine arrangement, but by man's transgression (vers. 13, 14). For the law says to every man what St. Paul says of the magistrate: "Rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil," &c. Conclusion: We are taught by the subject, as thus considered—1. That the mere sense of duty is not Christianity. For this alone causes misery in a soul that has not performed its duty. The man that doeth these things shall indeed live by them; but he who has not done them must die by them. Great mistakes are made at this point. Men have supposed that an active conscience is enough, and have therefore substituted ethics for the gospel. "I know," says Kant, "of but two beautiful things: the starry heavens above, and the sense of duty within." But is the sense of duty beautiful to a being who is not conformed to it? Nay, if there be any beauty, it is the beauty of the lightnings, terrible. So long as man stands at a distance from the moral law, he can admire its glory and its beauty; but when it comes home to him and becomes a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart, then its glory is swallowed up in its terror; then he who was alive without the law becomes slain by the law; then this ethical admiration of the Decalogue is exchanged for an evangelical trust in Jesus Christ. 2. The meaning of Christ's work of redemption. The law for an alienated and corrupt soul is a burden. Christ is well named the Redeemer, because He frees the sinful soul from all this. He delivers it from the penalty by making satisfaction to the broken law. He delivers it from the restraint and irksome effort by so changing the heart that it becomes a delight to keep the law. Obedience then becomes a pleasure, and the service of God the highest liberty. (*Prof. Shedd.*) *Mistaken apprehensions of the law destructive to the souls of men:*— I. THE LAW OF GOD IS ONE OF THE GREATEST BLESSINGS THAT HE EVER BESTOWED UPON THIS WORLD, for "it was ordained unto life." 1. Our apostle refers to the true nature and use of the law when first given to man in his innocency. It proposed life upon reasonable terms, such as were in the power of man to give, and such as were proper for God to require and accept (Gal. iii. 12). Life is put for present happiness and future glory, and both might have been obtained by the law. 2. But perhaps it may be objected, whatever blessing it might have been to man obedient to all its requirements, could any blessing arise to him who found the commandment to be unto death? Yes, if by seeing himself lost and ruined by the law, he sought salvation in Christ. Not that the law can bring man to Christ of itself, but as it shows a man his need of Christ. II. THE LAW, WHICH MIGHT ONCE HAVE GIVEN LIFE TO THE OBEDIENT, IS NOW NO LONGER ABLE TO DO IT. An objection has been started, taken from the case of the young man who inquired: "Good Master, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?" Christ refers him to the law; but it is very evident that our Lord's immediate design was to convince him of sin. Had this young man been convinced of sin, Christ would probably have given him a more direct answer to his inquiry. Instead of this, he was directed to the law, and not for justification but for conviction—to take off his heart from all legal expectations, that he might become a proper subject of Christ's kingdom. III. SIN MUST BE THE GREATEST AND THE WORST OF EVILS, AS IT TURNS THE BLESSING INTO A CURSE. "The commandment I found to be unto death." Nor is this the only instance. It aims at the same end in all its operations. Nor need we wonder at this; for if it hath done the greater, it will effect the less. Blessings still abound among us, but alas! how are they abused to the most licentious purposes! Or, on the other hand, if men do not presume, yet they are under the influence of a kind of secret despair. The blessings of the gospel are either too great to be obtained, or too good to be freely bestowed. In fine, what is there which is not abused to the worst of purposes? Wisdom, courage, riches, honours, pleasures, all excellent in their natures, yet sin, in the heart, turns all into a curse! IV. WHETHER MEN LOOK TO THE LAW FOR LIFE OR DISREGARD IT, THEY MUST EQUALLY FIND IT DEATH TO THEIR SOULS. It is true the apostle found that to be death from which he formerly expected life; but did this lead him to disregard the law? Far from it; he declares it to be holy and just and good. Nay, his complaints are all taken from his want of greater conformity to it. V. IF

A POOR SINNER WOULD OBTAIN A TITLE TO ETERNAL LIFE, HE MUST NOT SEEK IT BY OBEDIENCE TO THE LAW, BUT BY FAITH IN CHRIST. (*J. Stafford.*) **For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me.**—*Sin's use of the law:*—I. FOR DECEPTION. Sin's nature, like Satan's, is to deceive. Eve was seduced by Satan through the commandment (Gen. iii. 1-6). How intensely evil must that be which makes so vile a use of what is good. Sin—1. Seduces men to break the law, and so works their ruin. 2. Persuades men to an equally fatal extent that they are able to keep it. A man's case is never worse than when expecting heaven from his works. Israel was thus deceived (chap. x. 3); and the Pharisee (Luke xviii. 11). 3. Excites to rebellion against it as if opposed to our good (ver. 8). II. FOR DEATH. Sin, like Satan, only deceives to destroy. This death is—1. Judicial death: the condemnation of the law. 2. Moral death: despair of ever being able to satisfy the requirements of the law. 3. Spiritual death: the execution of the sentence of the law. (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) *The deceitfulness and ruinousness of sin:*—The metaphor is taken from a robber who leads a man into some by-path and then murders him. The word principally denotes an innate faculty of deceiving. We read of the deceitfulness of riches (Matt. xiii. 22); the deceitfulness of unrighteousness (2 Thess. ii. 10), which is their aptitude, considering the sinful state and the various temptations of men, to deceive them with vain hopes and to seduce them into crooked paths. Once it is put for sin itself (Eph. iv. 22). Here, as it is joined with sin, it denotes that habitual deceit that is in indwelling sin, whereby it seduceth men, and draweth them off from God (Heb. xii. 13). I. SIN IS OF A SUBTLE AND DECEIVING NATURE. Sin deceives the souls of men—1. As it blinds their understandings (chap. i. 21, 22; Eph. iv. 18). This blindness of the mind consists in ignorance of God and of our own interests, giving us light thoughts of sin and extenuating it. 2. As it presents various false appearances to the fancy in order to engage the affections. It allures with the specious prospect of riches, but it steals away our best treasure; it flatters us with hopes of honour and happiness, but rewards with disgrace and misery; it promises liberty, but binds us with fetters stronger than iron (Prov. xvi. 25). 3. It has a great advantage in its very situation: it is within, ever present, and sometimes it makes a man become a tempter to himself. There is nothing either within or without but may be, and often is, turned into the nature of sin. The very heart is deceitful, and it aims to deceive the superior powers of the soul. Who can tell how many ways it has to deceive itself? It calls evil good, and good evil. 4. As it turns aside the thoughts from the punishment of sin. 5. Finally, as it sometimes lead men to think, that because they are sinners, the great God is become their enemy, and that there is no hope of reconciliation through Christ. II. WHERE SIN HATH DECEIVED IT WILL ALSO KILL, EITHER HERE OR HEREAFTER. The apostle intends that it brought him into a state of aggravated condemnation, or, as it were, delivered him over to eternal death, so that the more he reflected upon it, the more was he convinced that he had been grossly imposed upon by the fascinating power of sin (Job xx. 12-14; Prov. xx. 17, vi. 32, 33; James iii. 15). Achan thought to obtain a goodly prize; but how did sin wound his conscience and at length slay his soul! III. THE DECEITFULNESS OF SIN IN THE HEART OF MAN IS UNSEARCHABLE. "The heart is deceitful above all things," and if the heart be so deceitful, what must sin be when it gets possession of such an heart! As we know not the hearts of one another, so neither do we fully know our own hearts. Who can tell how our hearts would act if suitable objects, inclinations, and temptations were to unite and concur at any time? (*J. Stafford.*)

Ver. 12. **Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.**—*The law:*—I. ITS NATURE. It is—1. Universal in its extent. It is binding at all times, in all places, and upon all. 2. Perpetual in its obligation: it can allow of no change. Other laws, the ceremonial laws, *e.g.*, may be abrogated or altered, but the moral law, being founded upon the Divine nature, knows no change. "Heaven and earth shall pass away," &c. 3. Perfect in its character. Being the expression and emanation of the perfect nature and will of God, "the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." 4. Spiritual (ver. 14). It comes from God who is Spirit; and it demands of man spiritual obedience. 5. "Holy"; free from all spot and blemish. 6. "Just," founded upon the eternal principles of right. 7. "Good," benevolent in its design, tending to promote happiness, and promising life to those that observe it. II. ITS EXCELLENCE AND IMPORTANCE. This is implied in its nature; but it will further appear if we consider—1. It was originally im-

planted in the constitution of man's nature. A written law was not necessary, for the love of God, the essential principle of this law, was bound up in the constitution of Adam (Gen. i. 27; Rom. ii. 15). And it is the purpose of God to replace the law in the position which it originally occupied; to rewrite it upon man's heart. 2. In the giving of this law at Sinai we see another illustration of its excellence. (1) The law contained in the ten commandments was given directly by word of mouth from God. All the other commandments were given through Moses. (2) It was written twice by the finger of God upon both sides of the tables, perhaps covered the whole of them to show that there was to be no addition or alteration. (3) It was written not upon parchment, but upon stone, to show its perpetual obligation. 3. Our Lord (1) Ever recognised it, vindicated its authority, expounded its import, and enforced it by His own sanction and teaching. (2) Not only taught the law, but practised it, rendering it a perfect and sinless obedience. (3) Honoured it by undergoing the penalty which it threatens against all that break its enactments. III. ITS USE. 1. To mankind at large—(1) It exhibits, magnifies, and explains the character of God. (2) It teaches men the principles of right and wrong, and how they are bound to act with reference to God, their neighbour, and themselves. The gospel has in no sense superseded or abrogated the law. It comes in as a supplemental system, saving man from the penalty which the law threatens, and placing man in a position whereby he may render obedience to that law. 2. But whilst saying this a considerable difficulty suggests itself as to the relation of the believer to the law. We find a class of passages which appear to teach its eternal obligation upon all men (Matt. v.; Rom. iii. 31, xiii. 10; James i. 25, ii. 8). But we find other passages which appear to teach that the Christian is not under the law (1 Tim. i. 9; Rom. vi. 14, vii. 6). How are we to understand this? The true believer is not under the law—(1) As a ground of condemnation or as a ground of justification. Inasmuch as Christ has perfectly obeyed the law, and atoned for the law's breach, that work is imputed and made over to him that believes, so that he is delivered from the condemnation of the law (Rom. viii.). So far therefore as his judicial standing before God is concerned, he and the law are altogether separated. (2) In regard to sanctification. When a man believes truly in Christ, he has not only imputed to him the merits of Christ, but he has imparted to him the power of Christ's new life. He is born again of the Spirit. And where that Holy Spirit is, every desire which He inspires, every principle which He suggests, is holy. The man is no longer under the law as a handwriting against him, for he has its principle implanted in his heart, and he can say, "Oh, how I love Thy law; it is my meditation all the day." 3. Of what use then is the law to a believer? I answer that if the work of grace were perfected within us, that if we acted in perfect harmony with the instincts and quickenings of the Spirit of God, it would be of no use. But inasmuch as the work of grace is not perfected within us, inasmuch as there is a tendency oftentimes towards evil, the law of God is necessary for him who is not under the law, but under grace. (1) In keeping us under grace. The law not only leads him as to a schoolmaster first of all to Christ, but keeps him trusting in the Saviour. (2) In restraining the believer from sin. There are those who think there is but one motive which ought to influence a Christian's heart—love, and no doubt perfect love would be enough. But we are not perfect, and therefore, though we are delivered from the fear of bondage and the fear of terror, yet the fear of reverence ought ever to influence the Christian. 4. As regards the unconverted, the law is of great importance. (1) As a restraining principle to keep them back from open and notorious sin. (2) As a convincing principle (ver. 9). (3) As a principle of conversion. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." Use it honestly, prayerfully, perseveringly, and you will find you can have no rest, until it has shut you up into the faith, until it has been the means of driving you to that refuge which is open for the sinner in Christ. (*E. Bayley, B.D.*) *The law holy and just and good:*—Observe—I. THE DOCTRINE laid down in my text. 1. The law has different meanings. At one time it stands for the whole religion of Moses; as when the Jews are said to "make their boast of the law." In another place it means the ceremonies which formed a prominent part of that religion; in which sense "the law had a shadow of good things to come." But, very frequently the ten commandments are meant, as here. (1) By quoting the tenth commandment in ver. 7, Paul shows that the whole argument relates to the moral law. (2) This allusion also explains the repetition in the text. The whole law, but particularly that commandment to which I have alluded, is "holy, just, and good." (3) The selection of this particular command shows that Paul viewed it as a

spiritual law; extending, not to actions only, but to desires. He never knew what the law was till this tenth commandment came with power to his conscience; *e.g.*, the sixth, he thought, forbad only actual murder; the seventh, actual adultery; the eighth, actual stealing. But when at length it was said, "Thou shalt not covet," he then perceived that even the desire of things forbidden was sinful. 2. What, then, is the doctrine laid down by St. Paul concerning this heart-searching law? (1) It is holy. (*a*) The things which it forbids are evil; the dispositions which it requires are excellent. (*b*) By what standard shall we estimate holiness and unholiness? There is none other but the will and character of God. Those actions and dispositions which are agreeable to His nature, and which resemble His inimitable perfections, are holy; those of a contrary kind are unholy. God's law is the very copy of His own Holy character; were it perfectly obeyed man would be holy, as God is holy. (2) It is just. (*a*) God could require nothing short of this. Anything less than entire purity of heart is not only different from God's nature, but directly opposed to it. We may, without offence, be less wise or powerful; but it is impossible to admit the thought of His consenting that we shall be less holy. God made man "in His own image, and after His own likeness"; "God made man upright." Was it unreasonable to require that man should preserve this holy likeness? (*b*) But you may object that we have now lost our original likeness to God; and that it is therefore no longer just to demand from us perfect obedience. But God's rights cannot be diminished by any change in our condition. A bankrupt has lost the power of paying his debts; yet it is still just in the creditor to demand them, especially when, as is the case with men, the bankruptcy is the result of wickedness. (3) It is good. The whole of it tends to our welfare. If we had never broken it, there would have been no such thing as sorrow; and, if men would govern their hearts and lives by it, the world's miseries would soon have an end. For what is the sum and substance of its requirements? Love to God above all, love to our neighbour as to ourselves. Now we know that love is happiness. The joys of heaven will consist of perfect love to God, and the mutual love of each other. II. ITS PRACTICAL USES. Learn—1. A lesson of the deepest self-abasement. The law, when first given to man, only made known to him his duty; but ever since the fall it has taught "the knowledge of sin." The law is holy; but what are we? Moreover, the doctrine shuts out all excuse. We cannot complain of the law, for it is just and good. Yet have we all our lives acted contrary to it. 2. A lesson of despair. Whatever it may have been to man in a state of innocence, it is now the ministration of condemnation. It pronounces a curse on every transgressor; it worketh wrath; it has shut us up like prisoners, under a charge of sin so fully proved that it cannot be evaded. From all this let us learn that by the deeds of the law no flesh can be saved. Perfect obedience is necessary if we are to be justified by it. Can you, then, stand up and claim a full acquittal? If once you have sinned your soul is lost. Learn this and you will then be prepared to hear of a Saviour, who hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, and despair will prove the parent of hope and joy. 3. How you ought to walk and please God. The law is what it ever was, holy, and just, and good. And therefore, though it cannot justify us as a covenant, it must still instruct us as a guide. (*J. Jowett, M.A.*) *The law holy and just and good:*—I. HOLY. 1. In principle. 2. In requirement. 3. In operation. 4. In tendency. As a whole and in each commandment it bears the character and expresses the mind and will of Him who is infinitely holy, and requires only what is holy and pure (Micah vi. 8). II. JUST. It demands what is just and right and nothing more, and requires only what man was made capable of rendering. It tends to promote justice and righteousness everywhere; and secures to each his due—God, our neighbour, ourselves. III. GOOD—useful, beneficial, tending to the happiness of man. The commandment broken was Paradise lost; the commandment observed will be Paradise restored. (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) *The law holy and just and good:*—Some think these high characters are given to the law as being holy, in teaching us our duty towards God; just in prescribing our duty towards our neighbour, and good in regard to ourselves. Others thus, the law is holy respecting the matter of it, because it prescribeth holy things; just in propounding rewards and punishments, and good in respect to the end, leading to holiness and happiness. But I think we ought to carry the point much further: all these titles are given to the law, both in relation to the Author, the matter, and the end of the law. The Author of the law is holy, just and good; so is the doctrine or matter contained in the law; and so is the end proposed by the law. (*J. Stafford.*) *The excellence of*

the law :—Holy in its origin, just in its requirements, good in its purpose. (*Archdn. Farrar.*) *The holy law* :—Holy in its nature, just in its form, good in its end. (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) *Perfection of the law* :—God's justice is seen in the law given to man as the universal law of his existence. To give law to rational creatures is the prerogative of their Creator, and His law is, by an inevitable consequence, holy, just and good; it neither prohibits nor enjoins anything that is not in the most perfect accordance with the infinite perfections of God and the true and best interests of man. "It represents Him as the Righteous Governor of the universe, whose laws are in perfect consistency with the principles of equity, and whose character is in accordance with His laws. Referring to these principles of morality which are engraven on the heart of man, it declares that they were engraven by the finger of God, and that conscience is His vicegerent, speaking to us in His name, and making known to us the principles of His moral administration. And it unfolds a more copious code of morality, in which the same principles are revealed, for our better information and surer guidance—principles which, being engraven in the book of nature, and revealed in the written Word, are infallibly certain, and ought to be regarded as a true manifestation of the righteous character of Him who is the Author alike of nature and of revelation." (*J. Buchanan.*) *The law and the gospel* :—I. THEIR DIFFERENCE. 1. In time and mode of original relation. The law is coeval with creation; the gospel was made known after the fall. The law is discoverable by the light of nature, the gospel is a hidden mystery. 2. The law addresses man as a creature, the gospel as a sinner. 3. Command, the characteristic of the law; promise of the gospel is the promise of life in Christ. Contrast between the covenant of Sinai and the covenant of grace. 4. The law condemns, the gospel justifies. Law only acquits or condemns, mercy is revealed in the gospel. 5. The law requires, the gospel enables. No enabling power in a command; motive and power supplied by the gospel. II. THEIR HARMONY. 1. There is no real antagonism. (1) The law prepares the way for the gospel. (2) The gospel fulfils, and so establishes the law. There are two ways of dealing with law, repeal and relaxation. Neither mode supposable in Divine government. How can man be saved and yet the law upheld? Perfect obedience the one condition of life. Christ undertakes for man. Fulfilment in man's own person. Faith lays hold of precepts as well as promises. The law is a rule of life, written on the heart. The gospel secures its fulfilment for man and in man. (*a*) Assigns its just place and value to the Law in the Christian scheme. (*b*) Assigns its just place and value to the gospel. Conclusion; 1. How sure a foundation laid for the believer's hope. 2. How sure a provision made for the believer's holiness. (*E. Bayley, B.D.*)

Ver. 13. **Was then that which is good made death to me? God forbid.**—*The law vindicated* :—The text is explanatory of two statements apparently contradictory, viz., that the law is holy, &c., and that this law worked death. 1. The apostle foresaw that a difficulty might arise, so, with his anxiety to be clear, he assumes the position of objector. "Was then that which was good," &c. Death here means the depraving influence of sin upon the moral nature of its victim. The expression "working in me" favours the notion, as does the result of it as described in the last clause of the verse. "Exceeding sinful" is tantamount to "death." This being so, the apostle's meaning is—The law has been shown to be holy, &c.; but death is an evil; is it then true that this evil can be wrought by that which is so good? Here is the difficulty. 2. Now for the answer. There is—(1) The usual emphatic denial. "God forbid." (2) The explanation, which is that the law is not the cause of this evil condition of death, but sin using the law as an occasion. Suppose a person afflicted with a certain disease. He partakes of food, but this food, by reason of certain ingredients, in themselves wholesome, nourishes and feeds the disease. The man dies. The cause of death was not the food but the disease, working through that which was good. In like manner sin, that it might appear in its true character, that the fearful malignity of its virus might show itself, becomes exceedingly sinful, *i.e.*, stronger and stronger through the commandment, which is holy, &c. The extreme heinousness of sin is demonstrated by this fact—its conversion of that which was best and holiest into an instrument of so much evil. (*A. J. Parry.*) **But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good.**—*The work of sin* :—1. Sin slays by that which is good. 2. That thereby it may accomplish an act worthy of its nature. 3. And that thereby (final end) this nature may be manifested clearly. (*Prof. Godet.*) *The deadly nature of sin manifested* :—It is as though there were a certain poisoned river, and

a parent had often said to his children, "Drink it not, my children, it is sweet at first, but soon it will bring on you pains most fearful, and death will shortly follow. Do not drink it." But these children were very wilful and would not believe it; and, albeit that sometimes a dog or an ox would drink of it and be sore pained and die, they did not believe in all its injurious effects to them. But by and by One made like unto themselves drank of it, and when they saw Him die in anguish most terrible, then they understood how deadly must be the effects of this poisoned stream. When the Saviour Himself was made sin for us and then died in griefs unutterable, then we saw what sin could do, and the exceeding sinfulness of sin was displayed. To use another illustration: you have a tame leopard in your house, and you are often warned that it is a dangerous creature to trifle with; but its coat is so sleek and beautiful, and its gambols are so gentle that you let it play with the children as though it were the well-domesticated cat: you cannot have it in your heart to put it away; you tolerate it, nay, you indulge it still. Alas, one black and terrible day it tastes of blood, and rends in pieces your favourite child, then you know its nature and need no further warning; it has condemned itself by displaying the fell ferocity of its nature. So with sin. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Silent soul operations*:—What a loom we carry in us! We stand by the side of a Jacquard loom, and wonder how wit could invent a machine that should act so like life. We wonder how any apparatus can be constructed to produce a fabric which shall come out with figures on it of birds, and men, and all manner of figures wrought apparently by the intelligent intent of the machine itself. But, strange as that may seem, it is not to be thought of in comparison with that loom which, without crank or shuttle, is perpetually producing fabrics which every sort of figure in the form of reason, and moral sentiments, and social affections, and passions and appetites. What a vast activity there is going on in the human mind so silently that there is no clanking heard! We go by men every day in each of whom are these fiery, flashing elements of power. Here are companies of them, here is an army of them, here is a city full of them, and there is the vastest activity in the mind of each; and who can conceive what is going on in the multitude of beating, throbbing lives which are flaming forth and reaching out to the uttermost in every direction, all as silent as the dew which is distilled on the myriad flowers in the meadow? Really vast, infinite, is this activity, when you think of it; and yet it goes on in perfect silence. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The perversion of the moral law*:—I. THE FORM OF EXPRESSION IS OBVIOUSLY INTENDED TO THROW EMPHASIS ON THE FALSE AND ABNORMAL RELATION OF CAUSE AND EFFECT HERE SPOKEN OF. We do not wonder at evil producing evil, and good good; but the cause to which the apostle here points us is like that of wholesome food producing the effects of poison, of pure air and other conditions of health issuing only in disease and death, and the idea he wishes to bring out is, that it is the worst and most appalling characteristic of sin that it sometimes manifests its presence by a result of this unnatural kind. It is sad enough when men become vitiated and degraded by the operation of influences that appeal directly to their evil desires. But we are here taught of a more subtle manifestation of sin. It is possible for sin to get hold of the very instruments of goodness, and to turn these to its own ends. The law of God instead of enlightening and quickening, may lead to destruction. II. THE PARTICULAR WAY IN WHICH THE APOSTLE CONTEMPLATES THE DIVINE LAW AS BRINGING ABOUT THIS UNNATURAL RESULT IS—1. By awakening in the soul a discord which the law itself cannot heal. (1) Conscience, *i.e.*, the sense of right in us, appealed to by the moral law, may be strong enough to disquiet where it is not strong enough to rule. The eternal realities present themselves in many instances under form of an outward law, which secures the consent of our reason and conscience, but which has no power to subdue the passions or govern the will. (2) Now for the man who is in this state of mind, the law, in itself good, becomes a minister of death and not of life. It has killed out the lower life and happiness, and yet it has not borne to the blessedness of the life of the spirit. There are many people who would have been far happier as animals than as men; and better to be a mere animal, with the animal's untroubled satisfaction, better to be a creature without reason and conscience, if reason and conscience cannot control your life, for then you would be no longer humiliated by the ever-recurring feeling that you cannot keep out of degradation; then you would be free to revel in the lusts of the flesh without one pang of remorse. 2. By infusing a new intensity into our sins. (1) We become worse people because we have a moral nature. The barren or scanty soil will grow neither a good crop nor a bad, but if a rich soil is left uncultured its very fertility and

richness may manifest itself by the rampant growth of noxious weeds and thorns. So it is with man's spiritual nature. In the merely animal nature the passions are natural tendencies seeking their own needs, but in man they cannot remain as they are in the animal. They draw unto them a kind of false boundlessness stolen from the higher nature. If you ask me how this comes about, I answer that the sinful man is ever trying to find in sinful gratification the happiness which God and goodness alone can give him. Evil inclinations and desires would never be so intense in us, if it were not that we are trying to obtain a fictitious happiness out of them. The spiritual nature, capable of Divine satisfaction, could never be happy in the pleasures of the brute, if it were not that insensibly we made these things assume a deceptive show of the blessedness for which as spiritual beings we were made. But these earthly pleasures can never be commensurate with a nature made in God's image, capable of sharing in a Divine and eternal life. You have something in your craving for spiritual food which these husks can never satisfy, but we may make them seem to satisfy. (2) I may illustrate this by what sometimes happens in our social relations. We sometimes see a man of a refined nature wreck his happiness by union with a woman immeasurably his inferior, and we explain the mistake by saying that it was not the weak, silly creature that the man really loved, but a being of his own imagination, invested with ideal charms, into which he had unconsciously transformed her, and in that case it may be said that it was the very elevation of the man's nature that made him capable of forming such an ideal that was the secret of the wreck of his happiness and the ruin of his life. In like manner may we pronounce that all men who seek their happiness in the things of the world are the fools of their fancy. The very infinitude of our nature makes it possible for us to paint the idols of time and sense with imaginary glory, and to waste upon them a disproportionate devotion. III. THE FOREGOING TRAIN OF THOUGHT FINDS CONFIRMATION IN ONE PECULIAR FEATURE OF THE TEACHING OF ST. PAUL. In treating of particular sins it is his characteristic to place by the side of the sin of which he is speaking the grace of which it may be said to be the counterfeit. We find him rebuking the sin of drunkenness not by simply denouncing it as bad, but by contrasting the false and spurious illusion of the drunkard with another and legitimate means of spiritual exhilaration. "Be ye not drunk with wine, wherein is excess, but be ye filled with the Spirit." Again, with regard to the sin of covetousness. "Trust not in worldly riches, but in the living God." The covetous man is unconsciously trying to find in money the happiness that can be found only in God. Let me illustrate this. 1. There is a sense in which so common a vice even as drunkenness may be said to work death in us in virtue of its likeness to what is good. The capacity of religion is a capacity to forget and cast behind us the stains of the past, to feel no more the earthly troubles, and to rise into a region where the interests and agitations of time become dwarfed, to an ecstacy of spiritual emotion where we can have communion with things eternal and unseen. It is of this experience of religion the vice I speak of can give a spurious imitation. It can make us forget for a moment the past; it can lift for a time into a rapturous elevation above care and sorrow, and transport the sin-stained soul into a sham heaven of sensuous enjoyment. Ah! it is but a sham self-forgetfulness, and its joyous transports are succeeded by an awakening to more hideous realities. In salvation through Christ can we find complete obliteration of the sins of the past, and "the peace of God that passeth all understanding." 2. The secret of the mastery which covetousness gains over so many minds. Paul finds in this, that the love of money is misdirected worship. The covetous man is an idolator, and gives to mammon the trust, homage, and surrender that are intended for the living God. In its seeming omnipotence, in its capacity to gain us all our hearts can wish, money may present a certain sham resemblance to that to which our capacity of religion points. Now the one thing which makes man a religious being and shows that he was made for God is the capacity of absolute trust. I want in my conscious helplessness some presence near me in whose all-embracing power I can find—come good, come ill, come life, come death—the rock and refuge of my soul. Ah! but it is this capacity which can find its true object only in God, that makes it possible for me to waste on all manner of objects a boundless devotion. We cannot serve God and mammon, yet mammon presents to many a strange resemblance to Him who has power to prostrate and save. Sin, again, working ruin and death in us by that which is good. (*J. Caird, D.D.*) *On the quality of vice*:—I. That vice possesses some unknown malignant quality may be inferred from the observation that THE CONSEQUENCES OF IT BEAR NO PROPORTION TO OUR IMMEDIATE

SENTIMENTS CONCERNING IT. Revelation represents it as sweet in the mouth and bitter in the belly. II. That vice possesses a malignity with which we are at present but very imperfectly acquainted, may be concluded from THE ACTIVITY OF THIS QUALITY AND THE UNEXPECTED BUT CERTAIN PROGRESS WHICH IT MAKES WHEREVER IT HAS BEEN ONCE ADMITTED. It is an infection which from the slightest taint spreads actively throughout the whole character. And it exhibits the very same progress in societies as in individuals. III. That vice possesses a malignity unknown to us appears from THE REMORSE WHICH FOLLOWS IT, AND THE UNACCOUNTABLE TERRORS WITH WHICH IT AGITATES THE MIND. As soon as it has gained your confidence, it stings your bosom. It is a friend who flatters you into a bad action for some purpose of his own, and then leaves you to your reflections. IV. That vice possesses some uncommon malignity of quality is evident from this remarkable observation, that THE CONSEQUENCES OF IT ALMOST ALWAYS REACH BEYOND THE MAN HIMSELF WHO COMMITS IT, AND AFFECT NUMBERS OF OTHER PEOPLE. The vices of every individual affect his neighbourhood and disturb the circle, whatever it is to which he is attached. The vices of the children affect the parents, and the vices of the parents result upon the family, and upon all who may have transactions with it. The vices of the magistrate affect the district over which he presides; the vices of the minister or sovereign affect the nation which they guide, and often pull down enormous ruin upon the community. V. The same doctrine arises and receives new force from A GENERAL VIEW OF THE WORLD AND OF ITS ESTABLISHMENTS. Mankind are collected everywhere into societies; these societies are bound by laws and united under distinct governments. What, then, is the great object of laws and of society itself? To protect from injury, or, in other words, to restrain vice. The different establishments of religion have the same object. VI. The malignity of vice will be made manifest from a view of THE EFFECTS WHICH, NOTWITHSTANDING ALL THE PRECAUTIONS WE CAN TAKE, IT HAS PRODUCED AND IS PRODUCING DAILY AMONG MANKIND. The earthquakes which overturn the cities are not more fatal than the extensive and continued movements with which it agitates our system. No barriers avail, no defences are found sufficient. Though mankind are everywhere arrayed against it, yet it breaks in and spreads misery and destruction round it. The happiness of individuals, the peace of families, the order of society, and the harmony of nations are swept before it. In private and public life what disorders and distress does it accumulate! It produces want, infamy, and death. But the effects of it in private life, amazing as they are, fall vastly short, both in number and extent of mischief, of its effects in public. Here it acts upon a larger theatre, and displays itself more fully as it acts without restraint. VII. It will complete this argument to observe that REVELATION AGREES PERFECTLY WITH REASON IN HER VIEWS OF VICE, AND HOLDS IT OUT AS THE SAME MALIGNANT AND FATAL ENEMY. On the other hand, representing vice as the source of misery, Scripture discovers the Supreme Being, the wise and benevolent Parent of His creation, as obstructing its progress; extracting, in the first instance, all the good possible from it; and, in the last, taking the strongest measures to defeat and expel it finally from the system. (*J. Mackenzie, D.D.*) *The monster dragged to light:*—I. To MANY MEN SIN DOES NOT APPEAR SIN. 1. In all men there is an ignorance of what sin is. Man will not come to the light lest he should know more than he wishes to know. Moreover, such is the power of self-esteem that the sinner seldom dreams that he has committed anything worse than little faults. 2. This is due—(1) To that dulness of conscience which is the result of the fall. (2) To the deceitfulness both of sin and of the human heart. Sin assumes the brightest forms even as Satan appears as an angel of light. And the heart loves to have it so, and is eager to be deceived. We will, if we can, extenuate our faults. (3) To ignorance of the spirituality of the law. If men read, *e.g.*, "Thou shalt do no murder," they say, "I have never broken that law." But they forget that he that hateth his brother is a murderer. If I wilfully do anything which tends to destroy or shorten life, I break the command. 3. Thus you see a few of the reasons why sin cheats impenitent and self-righteous minds. This is one of the most deplorable results of sin. It injures us most by taking from us the capacity to know how much we are injured. Sin, like the deadly frost, benumbs its victim ere it slays him. Man is so diseased that he fancies his disease to be health, and judges healthy men to be under wild delusions. He loves the enemy which destroys him, and warms at his bosom the viper. The most unhappy thing that can happen to a man is for him to be sinful and to judge his sinfulness to be righteousness. The persecutor hounded his fellow creature to prison and to death, but he thought he verily did God service. With

the ungodly this pestilential influence is very powerful, leading them to cry "peace, peace," where there is no peace. And also even John Newton, in the slave trade, never seemed to have felt that there was any wrong; nor Whitefield in accepting slaves for his orphanage in Georgia. 4. Before we can be restored to the image of Christ, we must be taught to know sin to be sin; and we must have a restoration of the tenderness of conscience which would have been ours had we never fallen. A measure of this discernment and tenderness of judgment is given to us at conversion; for conversion, apart from it, would be impossible. Unless sin is seen to be sin, grace will never be seen to be grace, nor Jesus to be a Saviour. II. WHERE SIN IS MOST CLEARLY SEEN, IT APPEARS TO BE SIN. 1. There is a depth of meaning in the expression, "Sin, that it might appear sin"—as if the apostle could find no other word so terribly descriptive of sin as its own name. (1) He does not say, "Sin, that it might appear like Satan." No, for sin is worse than the devil, since it made the devil what he is. Satan as an existence is God's creature, and this sin never was. Sin is even worse than hell, for it is the sting of that dreadful punishment. (2) He does not say, "Sin, that it might appear madness." Truly it is moral insanity, but it is worse than that. (3) There are those who see sin as a misfortune, but this, although correct, is very far short of the true view. (4) Others have come to see sin as a folly, and so far they see aright, for "a fool" is God's own name for a sinner. But for all that, sin is not mere want of wit or mistaken judgment, it is the wilful choice of evil. (5) Some, too, have seen certain sins to be "crimes." When an action hurts our fellow-men, we call it a crime; when it only offends God, we style it a sin. If I were to call you criminals, you would be disgusted; but if I call you sinners, you will not be at all angry; because to offend man is a thing you would not like to do, but to offend God is to many persons a small matter. 2. Sin must appear to be sin against God; we must say with David, "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned," and with the prodigal, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before Thee." Think how odious a thing sin is. (1) Our offences are committed against a law which is holy, and just, and good. To break a bad law, may be more than excusable, but there can be no excuse when the commandment commends itself to every man's conscience. (2) The Divine law is binding, because of the authority of the Lawgiver. God has made us, ought we not to serve Him? Yet, after all His goodness, we have turned against Him and harboured His enemy. Had the Eternal been a tyrant, I could imagine some dignity in a revolt against Him; but seeing He is a Father, sin against Him is exceeding sinful. Sin is worse than bestial, for the beasts only return evil for evil; it is devilish—for it returns evil for good. 3. It would appear that Paul made the discovery of sin as sin through the light of one of the commands (ver. 7). III. THE SINFULNESS OF SIN IS MOST CLEARLY SEEN IN ITS PERVERTING THE BEST OF THINGS TO DEADLY PURPOSES. "Working death in me by that which is good." God's law, which ordained to life, for "He that doeth these things shall live in them," is wilfully disobeyed, and so sin turns the law into an instrument of death. It does worse still. It is a strange propensity of our nature, that there are many things which we lust after as soon as they are forbidden. 1. How many there are who turn the abounding mercy of God, as proclaimed in the gospel, into a reason for further sin! 2. There are individuals who have greatly sinned, and escaped the natural consequences. God has been very longsuffering; and therefore they defy Him again, and return presumptuously to their former habits. 3. Look again at thousands of prosperous sinners whose riches are their means of sinning. They have all that heart can wish, and instead of being doubly grateful to God they are proud and thoughtless, and deny themselves none of the pleasures of sin. 4. The same evil is manifested when the Lord threatens. 5. We have known persons in adversity who ought to have been led to God by their sorrow, but instead have become careless of all religion, and cast off all fear of God. 6. Familiarity with death and the grave often hardens the heart, and none become more callous than grave-diggers and those who carry dead men to their graves. 7. Some transgress all the more because they have been placed under the happy restraints of godliness. As gnats fly at a candle as soon as ever they catch sight of it, so do these infatuated ones dash into evil. The younger son had the best of fathers, and yet he could never be quiet till he had gained his independence, and had brought himself to beggary in a far country. 8. Men who live in times when zealous and holy Christians abound, are often the worse for it. When the Church is asleep the world says, "Ah, we do not believe your religion, for you do not act as if you believed it yourselves," but the moment the Church bestirs herself, the world cries, "They are a set of fanatics; who can

put up with their ravings?" Sin is thus seen to be exceeding sinful. The Lord brings good out of evil, but sin brings evil out of good. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) **That sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.**—*Sin established by the law:*—1. In the natural world there are several elements that are generally beneficent, notwithstanding that certain combinations among them are pernicious. But in the moral world there is an element which is wholly and always bad, viz., evil or sin. This is a mighty and permanent reality, and is perceived in some degree by all, however dull their apprehension. But to apprehend, in any due measure, its extreme malignity is a rare attainment; for it infects the very judgment which is to estimate it. 2. But nothing is more necessary than that there should be a clear understanding of the quality of sin, and a strong impression of it, because fatal consequences are involved in insensibility. The man, not aware what a dreadful serpent he has to deal with, being easy in its presence, playing with it, will certainly be destroyed. 3. In what way are men to be apprised of the quality of sin? All men, indeed, are in some general manner apprised of it, by seeing what dreadful mischief it does; but this gives but a crude and limited apprehension of it. It is the Divine law spiritually apprehended that must expose the essential nature of "that abominable thing." 4. As the Maker of creatures who are to be wholly dependent on Him, God must necessarily have them under His sovereign authority. He must have a will with respect to the state of their dispositions and the order of their actions. And He must perfectly know what is right for them. He would therefore prescribe a law unless He should will to constitute His creatures such that they must necessarily act right, leaving no possibility of their going wrong. In that case, there would be no need of a formal law. But the Almighty did not so constitute any natures that we know of. Even angels could err and fall. Therefore a law is appointed. And proceeding from a perfectly holy Being, it could not do less than prescribe a perfect holiness in all things; for a law not requiring perfect rectitude would give a sanction to sin. And again, a law from such an Author cannot accommodate itself to an imperfect and fallen state of those on whom it is imposed; for this would allow all the vast amount of unholiness beyond. The economy of mercy is quite another matter. That reveals a possibility of pardon to the creature's failure of conformity to the Divine law; but it pardons the failure as guilt. And look into the sacred volume, and see whether the law has been accommodated to man's imperfection. Can we conceive how law could be more high and comprehensive than as there set forth? (*J. Foster.*) *The sinfulness of sin* (Children's Sermon):—The course usually taken to explain the meaning of words is to use other words. We do not say that laziness is lazy, that goodness is good, that cowardice is cowardly. We try to exhibit in different words what these things mean. And yet Paul, when he tells us what sin really is, can call it by no worse name than its own. Notice the things to which the Bible likens sin—darkness, scarlet and crimson, filth, chains of slavery, incurable disease, gall of bitterness, poison, the sting of an adder, the burning of fire, death. And we obtain the proper idea of sin when we place it beside the holy law. Put coal beside a diamond, and it will seem all the blacker. Look up at the clouds some stormy day, when the sun breaks out for a moment between them, and they appear the darker and more dismal. So God would have us look at sin in close comparison with His holy law, so that we may see how exceeding sinful it is. I. IT IS DECEITFUL (ver. 11). It makes many fair promises, but always breaks them. It holds out many joys, but gives much sorrow. There once sailed from New Orleans a steamer laden with cotton, which, while being taken aboard, became slightly moistened by rain. During the first part of the voyage all went well, but one day there was a cry of "Fire!" and in a few moments the ship was enveloped in flames. The damp and closely packed cotton had become heated; it smouldered away, until at last it burst out into flame, and nothing could stop it. Now, that is like sin in the heart. All the while it is working away, but no one perceives it, until, in an unexpected moment, it breaks out into some awful deed of wickedness. Beware, then, of this fatal cheat. "Take heed lest any of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin." II. IT MAKES UNCLEAN. It puts a soil upon us which all the soap and water in the world cannot wash away. It defiles and pollutes the whole soul, and is likened in the Bible to leprosy. III. IT IS RUINOUS. Sin is a master who always pays with death. Years ago a young man went to Mexico. The war which broke out not long after put an end to the business of all Americans residing there, and to his among the rest. When the war closed he presented to the Government a claim for the loss of a silver mine, which he said he owned in Mexico, and was

paid £84,000. He dashed about for a time in great style. But, suspicions being aroused, gentlemen were sent to Mexico to ascertain the truth. The whole thing proved a fraud, and the young man was sentenced to solitary confinement for ten years. Unable to bear his shameful fate, he poisoned himself, thus fulfilling that passage: "He that pursueth evil, pursueth it to his own death." Another young man, an Englishman, related to persons of high rank, having committed forgery in order to keep up a dissipated life, was sentenced to be hung. While in prison a minister went to see him, and urged him to repent of his sins, and trust in Jesus, who was able to save to the uttermost. He listened with much impatience, and then said: "Sir, I honour your motives. I am not ignorant of the truths you have been stating. But I am not so mean and cowardly as to cry for mercy, when I know it cannot be shown me. I cannot feel, and I will not pray." Then, pointing to the pavement on which he stood, he continued, "You see that stone: it is an image of my heart, insensible to all the impressions you are striving to make." Is not the way of the transgressor hard? Some of the heathen, to please their gods, go out in a little boat, with a vessel in their hand to fill it with water. By degrees the boat becomes fuller and fuller, sinks to its edge, trembles for an instant, and then goes down with its occupant. And this is just what is continually going on with every sinner. IV. IT IS HATEFUL. It is hateful on all the accounts we have just noticed, because it is deceitful, defiling, and ruinous. And it is hateful in its own nature, because it is directly opposed to the holy God. There are three solemn scenes in the Bible which lead us to determine that sin must be unspeakably hateful in the sight of God. The drowning waters of the Deluge, the crucifixion of God's beloved Son, and the devouring fires of hell, are all most certain witnesses of the exceeding sinfulness of sin. (*E. Woods.*) *The sinfulness of sin*:—I. THERE IS A GREAT DEAL OF EVIL AND SINFULNESS IN SIN. 1. In the general. This may appear—(1) By the names of sin. What evil is there but sin is invested with the name thereof?—filthiness (Ezek. xxxvi. 25); nakedness (Rev. iii. 18); blindness (Matt. xv. 14); folly (Psa. lxxxv. 8); madness (Luke xv. 17; Acts xxvi. 11); death (Eph. ii. 1); an abomination (Prov. viii. 7); and because there is no word that can express the evil of sin the apostle calls it "exceeding sinful." (2) The effects of sin. (*a*) Separation from God the chief good (Isa. lix. 2). (*b*) Union to Satan (John viii. 44). Sin makes us the children of the devil. (*c*) The death of Christ (2 Cor. v. 21; 1 Pet. ii. 24). (*d*) A general curse upon the whole creation (Gen. iii. 17). (*e*) The soiling and staining of all our glory, and the image of God in us (Rom. iii. 23). (*f*) Horror of conscience. (*g*) Sin is that brimstone that hell-fire feeds upon to all eternity. 2. More particularly—(1) The sin of our nature. (*a*) That leprosy is worst which is most universal and over-spreading. Now sin spreads over all our faculties: our understanding, reason, will, affections. (*b*) That disease is worst which is most incurable; and no human remedy has been found for sin. (*c*) That is most formidable which is most unwearied, and sin is as unwearied as the fountain in sending up water. (2) The sin of our hearts and thoughts. These are the most incurable, and are the parents of all our sinful actions (Psa. xix. 12, 13). By them our former sin that was dead is revived again, and hath a resurrection by our contemplating it with delight. Thereby also a man may possibly sin that sin in effect which he never did commit in act. Thereby a man may or doth repent of his very repentance. (3) As for the sin of our lives and practice, especially living under the gospel, the evil thereof is very great; for—(*a*) Sin under the gospel is sinning against the remedy, and against the greatest obligations. By our sinning under the gospel we sin against mercy and grace, and thereby engage God, our greatest friend, to become our greatest adversary. (*b*) The more repugnancy there is betwixt the sin and the sinner the greater is the sin. Now, there is a special repugnancy betwixt the gospel and a man that sins under the gospel; for he professes the contrary, and therefore sin there is the greater. (*c*) The more hurtful any sin is the greater is that sin: sinning under the gospel is very hurtful to ourselves; as poison taken in something that is warm is the most venomous, so sin under the gospel is the deadliest poison, because it is warmed with gospel heat; and it is hurtful to others, because they are hardened. (*d*) The more that a man casts contempt upon the great things of God by his sin the greater and worse is his sin. Sins under the gospel cast contempt upon the glory of God, the glorious offer of His grace. (*e*) The more costly and chargeable any sin is the worse it is. Now, a man that sins under the gospel cannot sin at so cheap a rate as another (Luke xii. 47). II. THOUGH THERE BE THUS MUCH EVIL

IN SIN, THIS DOTH NOT APPEAR TO MAN UNTIL HE TURNS UNTO GOD: till then his sin is dead, but then it is revived. 1. For—(1) Till then a man is in the dark; and who can see the greatness of an evil in the dark? (2) Till then, grace, the contrary, is not placed in the soul; one contrary doth show the other. (3) And till then sin is in its own place. Water is not heavy in its own place, in the river; but take but a pailful of water out of the river and you feel the weight of it. Now, till a man turn unto God sin is in its own place, and therefore its sinfulness doth not appear. 2. But you will say, How comes this to pass? (1) I answer, Sin is a spiritual thing; and a man that liveth by sense cannot see what is spiritual. (2) A man is blind unto what he loves; till a man turn unto God he loves his sin, and therefore the evil of sin doth not appear. (3) The more blinds a man hath that cover his sin the less he sees it: now, before a man turn unto God all his morality is but a blind. "True," says he, "I am a sinner; but I pray and perform duty, therefore am not so great a sinner." (4) The more a man looks upon sin the less it appears to be. There he sees profit, pleasure, and this makes his sin appear little. (5) Sometimes by the providence of God sin meets with good events; and holiness meets with bad events in the world, and so the evil and sinfulness of sin is hidden. (6) The less a man is at the work of private examination the less sin appears to be sin. III. WHEN A MAN TURNS UNTO THE LORD, THEN SIN APPEARS IN ITS SINFULNESS. For then—1. He is weary and heavy-laden under the burden of his sin; the more weary he is the more sin appears evil (Matt. xi. 28). 2. Then he sees God, and not till then; the more a man sees the glory, goodness, wisdom, and holiness of God the more sin appears in its sinfulness (Isa. vi. 5; Job xlii. 5, 6). 3. Then a man sees Christ crucified, and not till then; and there is nothing can give us such a sight of sin as that (chap. iii. 20). 4. When a man hath got the true prospect of hell, and of the wrath of God, then sin appears sinful. 5. When a man's heart is filled with the love of God, and possessed with the Holy Ghost, then sin appears to him to be very sinful (John xvi. 8). (*W. Bridge, M.A.*)

The exceeding sinfulness of sin:—I. AS TO THE SIN ITSELF. It is a sin which is inward in the heart, not outward in the life (ver. 17). A sin which gives being to all other sins, and gives strength for the performance. A sin which dwelleth in us (ver. 17), is ever present with us (ver. 21), an inherent, deceitful, tyrannical evil (vers. 11, 20, 23), is ever presenting occasion of sinning, and pushing on the soul to acts of sin. What can this be but the sin of our nature, or that perverse propensity to sin which is derived as a punishment of the first man's first offence! 1. It is a plague which has infected the whole man. The understanding, what is it but the seat of darkness, misapprehension, and error? (Rom. iii. 11). What is the will but enmity and rebellion against God (John v. 40)? The affections, which are as wings to raise the soul to God and heavenly things, are turned quite downwards, being set on things on the earth. Conscience itself is become defiled by this sinful sin, so that it neither witnesses, reproves, or judges, according to God's direction, but becomes first easy, then remiss, next hardened and feared. Yea, our very memories are drawn over to the corrupt part; like leaky vessels, whatever is good and pure they let out, and keep in little but what is filthy and evil. Yea, these very bodies of ours are become vile bodies, through sin that dwelleth in us; subject to diseases and corruptions, and are tempters of the soul to sin, and servants of it in all outward acts of sinning (ver. 5). 2. It is the cause of all those sins which are in the life (Jas. i. 14). This is the fountain, particular sins are but the streams. 3. This sin of our nature is, virtually, all sin. Sin in the gross, in all the seeds of it; the combustible matter which only waits for outward occasions and temptations to blow it into a flame; it is a body which hath many members, and it is working in order to make provision for them all. 4. It is more durable and abiding than all other sins, therefore more exceedingly sinful. It may change its course in a natural man, but it never loses its power. 5. It is exceeding sinful sin, because it is ever encompassing and warring against the soul, in whom it dwells. It envenoms every action, every thought and duty, which proceed from the regenerate themselves. 6. It is an hereditary evil; all men are defiled with it, therefore all are concerned in it (1 Cor. xv. 22.) II. HOW, OR BY WHAT MEANS THE EXCEEDING SINFULNESS OF THIS SIN APPEARS. "That sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful." 1. By the commandment, therefore, we are to understand the whole moral law which the Spirit of God has given on purpose, and which He ever makes use of to convince of sin. 2. How sin is made by the commandment to appear exceeding sinful? (1) The law or commandment shows the soul that it is against God; it is a depravation of His whole

image, a contrariety to His whole will, opposite to His justice, holiness, and truth, and enmity to all His purposes of grace and mercy. That law which condemns sin in the act, much more condemns it in the principle. (2) It shows the soul that death which God has threatened against it (Eph. ii. 3). That is the dismal peal which it rings in the sinner's ears. (3) Another way in which the law convinces of the exceeding fulness of this, and of all other sins, is by burdening the conscience with a sense of it. It brings God's word and man's sin together (Psa. li. 3). But think not that the law does this of itself. The law is but the instrument or means of conviction, the Spirit is the great efficient (John xvi. 10). The law is the glass wherein sin is seen, the Spirit holds it up to the sinner, and causes him to see his own face in it. The law is the hammer, but it is the Spirit that works by it. III. WHY IS IT THAT GOD SUFFERS THE MOTIONS OF SIN, IN SUCH WHOM HE KNOWS TO BE HIS OWN, TO BE SO EXCEEDING VIOLENT AND DREADFUL? In general it is that the sin of our nature might always appear sin. 1. Therefore such a fight as this sets and keeps open a spring of repentance towards God always. The sin of our nature is what we are to be humbled for, and to repent of, every day we live (Ezek. xvi. 61). 2. Another use of the prevalency of corrupt nature in the saints is to divorce them from their own righteousness, and to slay carnal confidence in them all their life long. 3. It is to show the suitableness of Christ as the believer's surety, and to stir us up unto more earnest believing every day. 4. These workings of sin are of use to make us very watchful in our Christian walk. Where there is godly mourning there will be godly fear; both are where there is a due apprehension of the sinfulness of that sin that dwelleth in us. Uses: 1. Is there so much sin in us? Let this silence all murmurings against God under the burden of our afflictions. 2. Is the sin of our nature so exceeding sinful? Then let the youngest lay it to heart. 3. Does sin by the law become exceeding sinful? Then the law is a blessing as well as the gospel. The one shows what the disease is, the other directs to the only remedy. 4. See the wisdom of God in making the greatest contraries work together for His people's good. Even the working of sin in the regenerate is a means of quickening their trust upon Christ and their life in Him. (*John Hill.*) *The sinfulness of sin*:—We can best estimate the extent of any good by filling our minds with the vastness of the evil which that good was destined to take away. If I were standing upon the margin of the sea, and pondered the greatness of its capacity, and, as I thought, some vast mountain were to roll itself into its bosom and disappear, would not the thought help me to the exceeding depth of those mighty waters? So, by God's grace, the contemplation of the enormity of my "sin" will assist me to some measure of that love in which that enormity has been absorbed. I. WHAT IS "SIN"? 1. The transgression of the law. Our first parents had a law—"Thou shalt not eat of it." They transgressed that one law, and it was "sin." We have one law—love. We transgress it, and it is "sin." 2. Rebellion—the resistance of a human mind against the sovereignty of its Creator. It little matters in comparison what may be the act: the fact is the important thing. Man measures "sin" by the injury it inflicts upon society, or upon the sinner. God measures it by the degree of its rebellion against Himself. 3. No "sin" is single. You commit some offence, and it breaks all God's laws. "Whosoever shall offend in one point is guilty of all." (1) The principle of obedience is a single thing: the man that has broken one law has violated this principle, and therefore he is as much a breaker of the law as if he had broken a thousand things. (2) All God's law is one—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God." He that had done one "sin," did not love God. (3) If you take any one "sin," you will be surprised to find how many "sins" lie rolled and coiled up in that little compass. Remember, first, that all "sins of commission" begin in "sins of omission." And if you add to that the thought, the desire, the motive, the act itself and its consequences, and when you put all this over against the mercies, how will that, which once looked one, swell out a thousandfold? II. WHAT DOES SIN DO? 1. Any sin occupies a certain space, and there is a certain period of sinning. The spot and the period may be very small; nevertheless, that was God's place, and "sin" had no right to be there. Therefore that sin was a trespasser. It came wrongfully upon God's territory. 2. It did much more than "trespass." By your sin you have taken a jewel out of the crown of God. Therefore I charge upon every sin with robbery. 3. Further, when God draws the real character of a murderer, he draws it thus—"Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God made He man." Now, "the image of God" is innocence, and purity, and love.

But sin violates these, and therefore breaks God's image and is a murderer. But of what sort? The most aggravated possible. For if there had been only one "sin," that one "sin" would have required the blood of Jesus Christ to wash it out. And if it be thus with all "sin," how much more must it be with some of you who "crucify the Son of God afresh"? III. WHERE WILL IT END? I have said that every sin lies in a series; and none can calculate what will be the chain of consequences, which shall stretch on and on beyond time into eternity. The Bible tells us of an awful state in which a soul may pass into a hopeless and unpardonable condition. First there comes the grieving; then the resisting; then the quenching; then the blaspheming of the Spirit; and so the reprobate state draws on. But it is quite clear that every sin which a man wilfully does is another and another step in advance towards the unpardonable state: and in all sin there is a tendency to run faster, faster, as it makes progress. Indeed, there is not a "sin" which has not death bound up in it. A sin leads to a habit, a habit to a godless state of mind, and the godless state of mind to death. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *A grave charge*:—Why didn't Paul say exceeding "black," or "horrible"? Because there is nothing in the world so bad as sin. For if you call it black there is no moral excellency or deformity in black or white; black is as good as white. If you call sin "deadly," yet death hath no evil in it compared with sin. For plants to die is not a dreadful thing; is part of the organisation of nature that successive generations of vegetables should spring up, and in due time should form the root-soil for other generations to follow. If you want a word you must come home for it. Sin must be named after itself. I. SIN IS IN ITSELF "EXCEEDING SINFUL." 1. It is rebellion against God. It was God's right that whatsoever He in wisdom and goodness made should serve His purpose, and give Him glory. The stars do this. The world of matter does this. We, favoured with thought, affection, a high spiritual and immortal existence, were especially bound to be obedient to Him that made us. Ah, it is "exceeding sinful" when the crown-rights of Him upon whose will we exist are ignored or contravened! 2. How exceeding sinful is this rebellion against such a God! God is good to the fullest extent of goodness. It were heaven to serve Him. Ah! sin is base indeed, a rebellion against monarch's gentlest sway, an insurrection against parent's tenderest right, a revolt against peerless benignity! 3. What an aggravation of the sinfulness of sin is this: that it rebels against laws, every one of which is just! The State of Massachusetts at first passed a resolution that they would be governed by the laws of God until they found time to make better? Will they ever improve upon the model? The law forbids that which is naturally evil, and commends that which is essentially good. 4. Sin is "exceeding sinful," because it is antagonistic to our own interest, a mutiny against our own welfare. Whenever God forbids a thing we may rest assured it would be dangerous. What He permits or commends will, in the long run, be in the highest degree conducive to our best interests. Yet we spurn these commands like a boy that is refused the edged tool lest he cut himself, and he will cut himself, not believing in his father's wisdom. 5. Sin is an upsetting of the entire order of the universe. In your family you feel that nothing can go smoothly unless there is a head whose direction shall regulate all the members. 6. If you want proof that sin is exceedingly sinful, see what it has done already in the world. Who withered Eden? Whence come wars and fightings but from your own lusts and from your sins? What is this earth to-day but a vast cemetery? All its surface bears relics of the human race. Who slew all these? Who indeed but sin? II. SOME PARTICULAR SINS ARE EXCEEDING SINFUL ABOVE ANY ORDINARY TRANSGRESSION. Of this kind are sins against the gospel. To reject faithful messengers sent from God, loving parents, earnest pastors, diligent teachers; to slight the kind message that they bring and the yearning anxiety that they feel for us. To set at naught the dying Saviour, whose death is the solemn proof of love; to play false towards Him after having made a profession of your attachment to Him; to be numbered with His Church and yet to be in alliance with the world; to sin against light and knowledge; to grieve the Holy Spirit; to go on sinning after you have smarted; to push onward to hell, all this is "exceeding sinful." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Vers. 14-25 (Whole passage). The whole falls into three cycles, each closing with a sort of refrain. It is like a dirge; the most sorrowful elegy which ever proceeded from a human heart. The first cycle embraces vers. 14–17. The second, which begins and ends almost in the same way as the first, is contained in vers.

18-20. The third, which differs from the first two in form, but is identical with them in substance, is contained in vers. 21–23, and its conclusion, vers. 24, 25, is at the same time that of the whole passage. It has been sought to find a gradation between these three cycles. Lange thinks that the first refers rather to the understanding, the second to the feelings, the third to the conscience. But this distinction is artificial, and useless as well. For the power of the passage lies in its very monotony. The repetition of the same thoughts and expressions is, as it were, the echo of the desperate repetition of the same experiences, in that legal state wherein man can only shake his chains without succeeding in breaking them. Powerless he writhes to and fro in the prison in which sin and the law have confined him, and in the end of the day can only utter that cry of distress whereby, having exhausted his force for the struggle, he appeals, without knowing Him, to the Deliverer. (*Prof. Godet.*) *Man's natural incapability of good:*—I. WHENCE IT ARISES. 1. The law is spiritual. 2. Human nature is carnal. II. HOW IT DISCOVERS ITSELF. 1. In the contradiction of practice and conviction; this proves that the law is good, but sin works in us (vers. 15, 17). 2. In the inefficacy of our resolutions; this shows that sin is more powerful than our good purposes (vers. 18–20). 3. In the failure of our good desires; this indicates that our delight in what is good is overpowered by the love of evil. III. WHAT SHOULD BE ITS EFFECT? It should inspire—1. An earnest aspiration for deliverance. 2. Gratitude for the salvation of the gospel. 3. A firm resolution to embrace it. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The condition of the awakened sinner:*—He feels himself—1. At variance with God's law (ver. 14). 2. At variance with himself (vers. 15–17). 3. Utterly helpless (vers. 18, 19). 4. The slave of sin (vers. 20–23). 5. Miserable and without hope, excepting in Christ (vers. 24, 25). (*Ibid.*) *Legal experience a defeat:*—The interpretation of this passage has been embarrassed by the unnecessary assumption that it must describe either a regenerate or an unregenerate man. The alternative question as we should state it is, Is this set forth as a distinctively evangelical experience, or as one of a legal type, in whomsoever it may be found? If this is the real point, then both classes of interpreters may be partly right and partly wrong, for the passage may describe the experience which is but too common in Christians, and be purposely set forth as defective in the evangelical element, as abnormal to a proper Christian state, and as exemplifying the operation of law rather than of gospel in the work of sanctification. And this is our idea of it. The arguments on both sides are inconclusive. Those who make out the case of a converted man point to the use of "I" and "me," and of the verbs in the present tense, as though Paul told of his present state. They further point to such expressions as to sin as "what I hate" and "the evil which I would not"; also to such language respecting holiness as, "what I would," "I delight in the law of God, after the inward man," and "I myself serve the law of God." But, on the contrary, those who insist on making out an unconverted man, have their equally strong expressions, which seem only appropriate to one yet unregenerate; such as, "I am carnal, sold under sin," "sin that dwelleth in me," "how to perform that which is good I find not," "the law of sin which is in my members," "oh, wretched man that I am!" &c. Thus they in a measure balance and neutralise each other. But the two classes of expressions taken together show a state of mind which may have much which is truly Christian, while yet the experience as a whole is sorrowfully legal and weak. The gospel offers something more victorious and blissful. I. THE DRIFT AND NECESSITIES OF THE APOSTLE'S ARGUMENT REQUIRE THIS VIEW. In order to prove the need of the gospel salvation, and its efficacy, he demonstrates in the early chapters the universality of sin and ruin, and the impossibility of justification by the law. Then he brings forward Christ's atoning sacrifice, and the offer of a free pardon to the penitent believer, and defends the scheme from the charge of doing away with the need of holiness. And this occupies him nearly to the middle of this seventh chapter, when there remains the important question, Whether the law, though a failure as to justification, may not suffice as a sanctifying influence? Is Christ as necessary for sanctification as for justification? If that be not discussed, and settled against the law, then Paul's argument is plainly incomplete: not only so, but if the experience here given be his own at the time, and the normal experience of saints, he seems to concede a failure in the gospel. II. THE PASSAGE TAKEN AS A WHOLE, APART FROM SINGLE EXPRESSIONS, NECESSITATES THE SAME VIEW. After all that can be urged from words and phrases indicative of a regard for holiness and a dislike of sin, the all-significant fact remains, that there is nothing but utter, habitual defeat! Not a note of victory is anywhere heard. The only word of cheer is in a parenthetical clause:

"I thank God through Jesus Christ, our Lord"; which he throws in by way of anticipation of the deliverance which he depicts in the next chapter, as the result of another and far higher experience. This unrelieved aspect of defeat shows that Paul writes here of legal failure and not of gospel success. III. THIS VIEW IS CORROBORATED BY THE PURPOSELY CONTRASTED EXPERIENCE WHICH IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWS. The eighth chapter tells only of victory. It cannot possibly mean the same generic experience as the preceding one of lamentation and defeat. Both cannot be truly evangelical, though both may be found in converted men. It must be Paul's intent to call men out of the first into the second, as the genuine gospel state into which he himself had entered. For, mark, he not only uses the same impersonation, but the expressions in the eighth chapter are specifically chosen to represent the contradiction of the state in the seventh chapter. Thus in the seventh: "I am carnal," and "in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing"; but in the eighth: "Who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," and "To be carnally-minded is death, but to be spiritually-minded is life and peace." In the seventh: "I see another law . . . bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members"; "who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" but in the eighth: "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." In the seventh: "Oh, wretched man that I am!" but in the eighth: "There is now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus." This contrast of language hardly allows one to think otherwise than that Paul sets forth the legal experience in the seventh chapter, and the evangelical in the eighth. IV. THERE IS A FURTHER CORROBORATION IN THE MORE INSPIRING AND HOPEFUL VIEW WHICH IT PRESENTS OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. The idea that the highest type of attainment is described in the seventh chapter, is greatly discouraging to the more earnest believers, while it acts as an opiate to the consciences of the worldly-minded. The Church sadly needs lifting, first out of worldliness, and secondly out of legality. Christians must learn that sanctification, as well as justification, is by faith; that spiritual victory is not by natural law, but by grace. (*W. W. Patton, D.D.*) **For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.**—*The spirituality of the Divine law and the sinfulness of man*:—I. THE CHARACTER OF THE DIVINE LAW. There can be no doubt that the moral law is meant; for the ceremonial could not be denominated spiritual, being composed of external rites, not in themselves holy, although adapted to promote holiness, and especially to typify a holier dispensation. But the moral law is entirely spiritual. It directs to what is essentially right and pure, and requires perfect purity in man. The substance of it is given in Matt. xxii. 37. 1. The requirements of this law are such as necessarily imply a spiritual obedience. Not only are they the requirements of an infinitely holy Being, who is a Spirit, but the very root and spring of the obedience itself is a spiritual exercise. It is, in its nature, distinguished from all the practices of paganism, from all human enactments, and even from the ritual injunctions of the Mosaic law. There might be a strict and regular obedience to the letter of such laws, without a right state of feeling towards the authority which enjoined them. But to the moral law of God there can be no real obedience except so far as it is the obedience of love. There is no possibility of substituting appearances for realities, profession for action, or actions themselves for affection and principle. The law therefore reaches the inmost thoughts. 2. The spirituality of the law is also shown by the extensiveness of its demands. It requires obedience to be not only pure in its nature, but perfect in its amount. Love to God must not be contaminated by a single sinful thought. It is a law for the whole heart, and requires all that man possessed when God created him in His own image. It allows of no change—it admits of no deficiency—it makes no allowances—it bends to no circumstances. Nor should it be forgotten that this applies to the duties of the second table, as well as those of the first. As the one requires perfect love to God, producing spotless obedience to Him, so the other requires perfect love to man, producing spotless conduct towards our neighbour. Nor are its demands satisfied by external compliances. The world may be content with politeness, but the law of God enjoins inward righteousness and benevolence, such as is fit to be looked upon by the eye of Omniscience, and worthy to be approved by Him who formed the nature of man to be the image of His own. II. THE IMPRESSION PRODUCED ON THE MIND WHICH HATH A RIGHT APPREHENSION OF THE LAW. "I am carnal, sold under sin." The word carnal is sometimes used to denote an entire alienation from God. But here, as in some other passages, it is used in reference to the imperfect state of Christians. In comparison with the spirituality of the law, the holiest of men are carnal. The apostle felt conscious of

his own imperfection, just in proportion as he discerned the holiness of the law. And when he describes himself as "sold under sin," it intimates how deep his conviction was. Notwithstanding the freedom which, since his conversion, he had obtained from his former prejudices and sins, he still found some fetters remaining. "He had not yet attained, neither was he already perfect." On this we remark—1. That a right knowledge of the law must convince every one of the utter impossibility of obtaining salvation by it. You then perceive how you have failed, and therefore how impossible it is to stand on the ground of self-righteousness. Measured by the standard of right, it is altogether defective and defiled. It is an error to suppose that although the case is bad, yet it may be mended by doing now the best you can. There is little probability of your doing the best you can; but if you did, still the case is not essentially altered. You are still a sinful creature, and therefore the law still condemns you. 2. That the confession of the apostle was made long after his conversion. It is therefore an indication that the holiest of men are not wholly set free from the sin of our nature. Paul, with all his holy attainment and fervent zeal, needed a thorn in the flesh, lest he should be exalted above measure. 3. There should be an earnest desire and aim to obtain greater freedom from carnality and sin. In the twenty-second and following verses Paul did not content himself with making confession; he sought deliverance; he consented to the law that it was good; and such was his delight in it, that he sought conformity to it more and more. Nor can there be any genuine piety towards God where there is not a hatred of sin, and a prevailing concern to be delivered from its influence, as well as its curse. Conclusion: Infer from this—1. How needful is it to "Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world." 2. Learn to value the means of grace, and seek improvement in the use of them. 3. Cherish a spirit of dependence on the Holy Spirit, who rendereth His own means effectual. 4. Maintain a spirit of watchfulness, in order to be steadfast and faithful unto death. (*Essex Congregational Remembrancer.*) *Believers carnal in comparison with the law which is spiritual:*—Men are, usually, strangers to themselves; but the law discovers to us our sin and misery. He who knows that the law is spiritual sees himself to be carnal. I. ALL TRUE BELIEVERS ARE MADE ACQUAINTED WITH THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE LAW. By comparing these words with 1 Cor. ii. 14 we learn that the apostle, being spiritual, was led to see that spirituality in the law of which men are ignorant in their unregenerate state. 1. The law, *i.e.*, the moral law, is spiritual. The apostle had already declared it to be holy, and just, and good; and now he adds, "The law is spiritual." The general reasons given for this are the law is spiritual, as it proceeds from God, who is a pure Spirit; as it directs men to that worship of God which is spiritual; as it can never be answered by any man who hath not the Spirit; as it is a spiritual guide, not only of our words and actions, but also reaching the inward man; and as it requires that we perform the things which are spiritual in a spiritual manner. All these things may be included; but spiritual is to be understood as set in opposition to carnal. The law requires a righteousness in which there is nothing but what savours of the Spirit. Now if this be a true representation, who would not confess with our apostle, "Lord, I am carnal; when I think of Thy law I am ashamed of myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job xv. 14-16). 2. All true believers are made acquainted with the spirituality of the law. "We know that the law is spiritual." This expression well agrees with ver. 1. Others, who make their boast of it, and of their conformity to it, know not what they say. They only know it who love it. They can never know it, or love it, unless it be first written in their hearts. And this light bringeth heat with it. The right knowledge of God in the soul begets in it love to Him. A supernatural sanctified knowledge of God is the law of God written in the heart. And this will be attended with obedience; and this obedience, though it be not absolutely perfect as to any one of the commands, yet it will have respect to them all, and from this respect to the law will flow evangelical grief and sorrow whenever we break it or come short of it. II. THE BEST OF SAINTS, COMPARING THEIR HEARTS AND LIVES WITH THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE LAW, WILL FIND GREAT REASON TO COMPLAIN OF THEIR REMAINING CARNALITY. We cannot suppose that the apostle had so much cause to complain as we have; but he might see and feel more than we do, because he was more spiritual. Complaints of the remaining power of sin, so far from being evidences that we are strangers to the grace of Christ, will prove that He hath begun to convince us of sin and to make it hateful to us. Abraham, when viewing the purity of the Divine nature, confesseth himself but dust and ashes, and utterly unworthy to hold converse with God. Jacob confesseth himself not worthy of the

least mercy. Job abhors himself, and repents in dust and ashes. Isaiah cries out, "Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts." Conclusion: 1. It is not likely that any who are made acquainted with the spirituality of the law should pretend to sinless perfection. 2. If believers themselves are carnal, then they cannot be justified by their best obedience. (*J. Stafford.*) *The law, man, and grace*:—I. THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE LAW. In its—1. Source. 2. Nature. 3. Requirements. 4. Application. 5. Means. 6. Effects. II. THE IMPOTENCE OF HUMAN NATURE. 1. Carnal in its—(1) Proclivities. (2) Aims. (3) Desires. (4) Acts. 2. Sold under sin. (1) Degraded. (2) Oppressed. (3) Enslaved. III. THE CONSEQUENT NEED OF SAVING GRACE. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Carnality and slavery*:—A fundamental lack: pungent convictions of sin. Tendency to apologise for it as a disease, misfortune, heredity, &c. Theo. Parker defines sin "a fall forward." No sense of its enormity and deformity is to be found. Compare chaps. i. and ii., in which it is held up before us as monstrous and hideous. Here Paul makes two statements: as to—I. CARNALITY. There is in the very nature sin and guilt, like grain in wood, temper in metal. There is a drift, always downward, never upward; a relish for sin; a fatal facility toward transgression. It is this carnal mind that constitutes the essence of enmity to God (chap. viii.). This carnality betrays itself in native and habitual resistance—1. To law. Even when recognised as holy, just, and good. The very existence of a command incites to rebellion (*cf.* chap. vii. 7). 2. To light (*cf.* John iii. 19, 20). Men are like bugs under a stone: turn up the stone and they run to their holes. 3. To love. Even the tender persuasions of grace are resisted by the sinner. II. CAPTIVITY. "Sold under sin." There is a voluntary surrender to the power of evil. 1. Dominion of evil thoughts, opening the mind to the entrance of images of lust, and cherishing imaginations and corrupt desires. 2. Sway of vicious habits. Even when the bondage is felt to be heavy the sinner will rivet his own chains (*cf.* Prov. xxiii. 35). 3. Control of Satan. For the sake of a brief pleasure found in sin men will submit to slavery under the implacable foe of God and man. (*Homiletic Monthly.*) **Sold under sin.**—*Thraldom of sin*:—I have seen a print after Correggio, in which three female figures are ministering to a man who sits foot-bound at the root of a tree. Sensuality is soothing him. Evil Habit is nailing him to a branch, and Repentance at the same instant of time is applying a snake to his side. When I saw this I admired the wonderful skill of the painter. But when I went away I wept, because I thought of my own condition. Of that there is no hope that it should ever change. The waters have gone over me. But out of the black depths, could I be heard, I would cry out to all those who have set a foot in the perilous flood. Could the youth, to whom the flavour of his first wine is delicious as the opening scenes of life or the entering upon some newly-discovered paradise, look into my desolation, and be made to understand what a dreary thing it is when a man shall feel himself going down a precipice with open eyes and a passive will—to see his destruction and have no power to stop it, and yet to feel it all in a way emanating from himself! (*Charles Lamb.*) *Sold to sin*:—One of these victims said to a Christian man, "Sir, if I were told that I couldn't get a drink until to-morrow night unless I had all my fingers cut off, I would say, 'Bring the hatchet and cut them off now.'" I have a dear friend in Philadelphia whose nephew came to him one day, and when he was exhorted about his evil habit said, "Uncle, I can't give it up. If there stood a cannon, and it was loaded, and a glass of wine were set on the mouth of that cannon, and I knew that you would fire it off just as I came up and took the glass, I would start, for I must have it." Oh, it is a sad thing for a man to wake up in this life and feel that he is a captive! He says, I could have got rid of this once, but I can't now. I might have lived an honourable life and died a Christian death; but there is no hope for me now; there is no escape for me. Dead, but not buried. I am a walking corpse. I am an apparition of what I once was. I am a caged immortal beating against the wires of my cage in this direction; beating against the cage until there is blood on the wires and blood upon my soul, yet not able to get out. (*T. De Witt Talmage.*) **For that which I do I allow not.**—*A common experience*:—Every Christian can adopt the language of this verse. Pride, coldness, slothfulness, and other feelings which he disapproves and hates, are, day by day, reasserting their power over him. He struggles against their influence, groans beneath their bondage, longs to be filled with meekness, humility, and all other fruits of the love of God, but finds he can neither of himself, nor by the aid of the law, effect his freedom from what he hates, or the full performance of what he desires and approves. Every evening witnesses

his penitent confession of his degrading bondage, his sense of utter helplessness, and his longing desire for aid from above. He is a slave looking and longing for liberty. (*C. Hodge, D.D.*) *The bad in the good*:—Once a man appeared in Athens who gave out that he could read character correctly at sight. Some of the disciples of Socrates brought their master forward, and bade the physiognomist try his power upon him. "One of the worst types of humanity in the city," he declared; "a natural thief, a constitutional liar, a sad glutton." At this moment the friends of Socrates interrupted with rebuke and denial. But Socrates stopped them to say that the man was too certainly and sadly right, that it was the struggle of his life to master just these defects of character. "I am more afraid of my own heart than of the Pope and all his cardinals," said Martin Luther. "For that which I do, I allow not; for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I," exclaimed St. Paul. *Principles and conduct at variance*:—It is one thing to give assent to good principles, it is quite another to put them in practice. A bright little Kansas boy was sent home from school for bad behaviour. A kind neighbour said to him, "Willie, I am sorry to hear such an account of you. I thought you had better principles." "Oh," he answered, "it wasn't the principles; my principles are all right, it was my conduct they sent me home for." **For what I would, that do I not.**—This θέλω is not the full determination of the will, the standing with the bow drawn and the arrow aimed; but rather the wish, the inclination of the will—the taking up the bow and pointing at the mark, but without power to draw it. (*Dean Alford.*) **If then I do that which I would not.**—*The Christian's conflict*:—1. The Christian is not yet a just man made perfect, but a just man fighting his way to perfection. The text is taken up with this war—the conflict which arises from the flesh lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh. 2. It is a puzzle to many that a man should do what is wrong while he wills what is right; and grieve because of the one, and press on towards the other. But this is not singular. The artist does not the things that he would, and does the things that he would not. There is a lofty standard to which he is constantly aspiring, and even approximating; yet along the whole of this path there is a humbling comparison of what has been attained with what is yet in the distance. And thus disappointment and self-reproval are mixed up with ambition—nay, with progress. 3. Now what is true of art is true of religion. There is a model of unattained perfection in the holy law of God. But just in proportion to the delight which believers take in the contemplation of its excellence, are the despondency and the shame wherewith they regard their own mean imitations of it. Yet out of the believer's will pitching so high, and his work lagging so miserably after it, there comes that very activity which guides and guarantees his progress towards Zion. 4. Paul once was blameless in the righteousness of the law, so far as he understood of its requirements. But on his becoming a Christian he got a spiritual insight of it, and then began the warfare of the text—for then it was that his conscience outran his conduct. He formerly walked on what he felt to be an even platform of righteousness; but now the platform was as if lifted above him. Then all he did was as he would; but what he now did was as he would not. His present view of the law did not make him shorter of it; but it made him feel shorter. 5. Figure, then, a man to be under such aspirings, but often brought down by the weight of a constitutional bias; and there are a thousand ways in which he is exposed to the doing of that which he would not. Should he wander in prayer—should crosses cast him down from his confidence in God—should any temptation woo him from purity, patience, and charity—then on that high walk of principle upon which he is labouring to uphold himself, will he have to mourn that he doeth the things which he would not; and ever as he proceeds, will he still find that there are conquests and achievements of greater difficulty in reserve for him. And so it follows that he who is highest in acquirement is sure to be deepest in lowly and contrite tenderness. 6. In the case of an unconverted man the flesh is weak and the spirit is not willing; and so there is no conflict. With a Christian, the flesh is weak too, but the spirit is willing; and under its influence his desires will outstrip his doings; and thus will he not only leave undone much of what he would, but even do many things that he would not. But the will must be there. The man who uses the degeneracy of his nature as a plea for sinful indulgence is going to the grave with a lie in his right hand. That the will be on the side of virtue is indispensable to Christian uprightness. Wanting this, you want the primary and essential element of regeneration. 7. God knows how to distinguish the Christian, amid all his imperfections, from another who, not visibly dissimilar, is nevertheless destitute of heartfelt desirous-

ness after the doing of His will. Let me suppose two vehicles, both upon a rugged road, where at last each was brought to a dead stand. They are alike in the one palpable circumstance of making no progress; and, were this the only ground for forming a judgment, it might be concluded that the drivers were alike remiss, or the animals alike indolent. And yet, on a narrower comparison, it may be observed, from the loose traces of the one, that all exertion had been given up; while with the other there was the full tension of a resolute and sustained energy. And so of the Christian course. It is not altogether by the sensible motion, or the place of advancement, that the genuineness of the Christian character is to be estimated. Man may not see all the springs and traces of this moral mechanism, but God sees them; and He knows whether all is slack and careless within you, or whether there be the full stretch of a single and honest determination on the side of obedience. 8. In ver. 17 there is a peculiarity that is worth adverting to. St. Paul throughout utters the consciousness of two opposite principles which rivalled for dominion over his now compound because regenerated nature; and he sometimes identifies himself with the first and sometimes with the second. In speaking of the movements of the flesh, he sometimes says that it is I who put forth these movements. "I do that which I hate," &c., &c. Yet notice how he shifts the application of the "I" from the corrupt to the spiritual ingredient of his nature. It is I who would do that which is good, &c. And, to fetch an example from another part of his writings, it is truly remarkable that, while here he says of that which is evil in him, "It is no more I," &c., there he says of that which is good in him, "Nevertheless not me, but the grace of God that is in me." We bring together these affirmations to make more manifest that state of composition in which every Christian is. In virtue of the original ingredient of this composition, he does well to be humbled under a sense of his own innate and inherent worthlessness. And yet, in virtue of the second or posterior ingredient, the higher faculties of his moral system are now all on the side of new obedience. 9. And the apostle, at the end of this chapter, lays before us the distinction between the two parts of the Christian nature when he says, that with the mind I myself serve the law of God, and with the flesh the law of sin. But ever remember that it is the part of the former to keep the latter under the power of its presiding authority. Were there no counteracting force, I would serve it; but, with that force in operation, sin may have a dwelling-place, but it shall not have the dominion. When the matter is taken up as a matter of humiliation, then it cannot be too strongly insisted upon that it is I who am the sinner; but when it is taken up as a topic of aspiring earnestness, it cannot be too strongly urged on every Christian to feel that his mind is with the law of God; and though the tendencies of his flesh be with the law of sin, yet, sustained by aid from the sanctuary, does he both will and is enabled to strive against these tendencies and to overcome them. 10. It is under such a feeling of what he was in himself on the one hand, and such an earnestness to be released from the miseries of this his natural condition upon the other, that Paul cries out, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!" And mark how instantaneous the transition is from the cry of distress to the gratitude of his felt and immediate deliverance—"I thank God through Jesus Christ my Lord." This we hold to be the exercise of every true Christian in the world. Evil is present with him, but grace is in readiness to subdue it; and while he blames none but himself for all that is corrupt, he thanks none but God in Christ for all that is good in him. (*T. Chalmers, D.D.*) **I consent unto the law that it is good.**—*Believers consent unto the law that it is good*:—I. BELIEVERS, IN THE MIDST OF ALL THEIR COMPLAINTS, MAY YET FIND MANY EVIDENCES OF TRUE GRACE IN THEIR HEARTS. 1. There are few but generally have the evidences hinted at in my text—an hatred to sin, a love to holiness. Whenever a godly man sins, he always does the evil which he allows not; but when wicked men do evil, they do it with both hands earnestly. The wicked, too, love evil, but the Christian ever consents to the law that it is good. 2. Now this consent is the effect of likeness or similarity. A man must be changed into the very image of the law before he will consent to it that it is good. The soul must renounce all obedience to the old law of sin, and give up itself wholly to receive the impression of the law of God; and then, having the law written upon his heart, he will inwardly consent to it and outwardly obey it. 3. The image thus impressed abideth; and where that is, there must be ground of evidence that such an one belongs to God. For as in the old creation you are constrained to confess there must be some first cause; so, wherever we find the new creature, we ought to conclude that this is the work of God. II. THESE EVIDENCES ARE NOT

ALWAYS PLAIN AND LEGIBLE. Weakness of grace, strength of corruption, assaults of temptation, have a sad tendency to obscure the evidences even of the best of saints. So it was with Job (Job xxiii. 8-11). III. IT SOMETIMES REQUIRES THE EXERCISE OF GREAT WISDOM IN ORDER TO FIND OUT THOSE EVIDENCES WHICH MAY REMOVE ALL DOUBTS AND FEARS. This was so even with the apostle. IV. IF A MAN, UNDER ALL HIS WEAKNESS AND COMPLAINTS, CAN FIND IN HIS HEART LOVE TO THE LAW OF GOD, HE MAY—NAY, HE OUGHT TO—LOOK UPON IT AS AN INDISPUTABLE EVIDENCE OF HIS BEING REGENERATE. This is the grand point the apostle would arrive at; with this conclusion he seems to rest satisfied. (*J. Stafford.*) *Sensitiveness increases with soul development*:—The greater the soul's development, the greater its sensitiveness. This explains the spiritual throes of saintly men—why Fénélon and Edwards write hard things against themselves, while Diderot and Hume put on the robes of self-complacency. The higher the development, the more vulnerable. Matter in an inorganic state is untroubled; but as soon as it begins to take living, pulsating form, and becomes replete with nerve-power, it begins to be vulnerable, and has to fight its way through antagonists. The corn yet unsprouted mocks the frost; but when the tiny blade appears above the soil, the frost preys upon its tenderness, and the weeds plot against it. A cold-blooded animal runs into few dangers in coming into the world. A warm-blooded animal meets more; man, most of all. And when, in man, we pass from the lowest to the highest part of his being, we find his sensitiveness and vulnerability increasing at every step. The mind feels pain quicker than the body; the conscience and the heart are tenderer to the touch of stings than the reason. And so it is we naturally look for and find the greater sensitiveness in the souls that have been most quickened, and that are largest in their development. The keenness, then, of your sense of sin, shows not that you are a greater sinner than other men, but that your spirituality is more quickly and painfully convulsed by the intrusive poison. The pain you feel bears the clearer witness to your heavenly life. *The harmony of the law and conscience*:—Conscience—I. IS A LAW IN THE HEART. II. NEEDS TO BE ENLIGHTENED BY THE REVELATION OF THE LAW. III. CONSENTS TO AND JUSTIFIES THE LAW. IV. CONDEMNS THE SINNER. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The sinner without excuse*:—I. Because HE VIOLATES KNOWN LAW. II. Because THE LAW IS GOOD. III. Because HE ACTS IN OPPOSITION TO HIS OWN CONVICTIONS. (*Ibid.*) **Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.**—*Indwelling sin*:—I. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SUBJECT. Redemption is deliverance from sin. Hence the theory of redemption and its practical application—*i.e.*, both our theology and our religion are determined by our views of sin. 1. As to theory. (1) If there is no sin there is no redemption. (2) If sin consists merely in action, and can be avoided, then redemption is a small matter. (3) But if sin is a universal and incurable corruption of our nature, then redemption is the work of God. 2. As to practice. The religious experience of every man is determined by his view of sin. It is his sense of guilt which leads him to look to God for help, and the kind of help he seeks depends upon what he thinks of sin. II. THE NATURE OF INDWELLING SIN. The Scriptures teach—1. The entire and universal corruption of our nature. 2. That this corruption manifests itself in all forms of actual sin, as a tree is known by its fruits. 3. That regeneration consists in the creation of a new principle, a germ of spiritual life, and not in the absolute destruction of this corruption. 4. That consequently in the renewed there are two conflicting principles—sin and grace, the law of sin and the law of the mind. 5. That this remaining corruption, as modified and strengthened by our actual sins, is what is meant by indwelling sin. III. THE PROOF OF THIS. 1. Scripture, which everywhere teaches not only that the renewed fall into actual sins, but that they are burdened by indwelling corruption. 2. Personal experience. Conscience upbraids us not only for actual sins, but for the immanent state of our hearts in the sight of God. 3. The recorded experience of the Church in all ages. IV. ITS GREAT EVIL. 1. It is of greater turpitude than individual acts. Pride is worse than acts of haughtiness or arrogance. 2. It is the fruitful source of actual sins. 3. It is beyond the reach of the will, and can only be subdued by the grace of God. V. WHAT HOPE HAVE WE IN RELATION TO IT? The new principle is generally victorious, constantly increases in strength, and constitutes the character. It has on its side God, His Word, His Spirit, reason, and conscience. The final victory of the new principle is certain. We are not engaged in a doubtful or hopeless conflict. VI. THE MEANS OF VICTORY. 1. The Word. Sacraments and prayer. By the assiduous use of these, the principle of evil is weakened and that of grace is strengthened. 2. Acts of faith in Christ, who dwells

in our heart by faith. 3. Mortification—refusing to gratify evil propensities and keeping under the body. (*C. Hodge, D.D.*) *The prevalence of indwelling sin*:—These words must not be understood as an attempt to escape from the responsibilities of occasional violations of Divine law in opposition to a habitual will to yield obedience, by transferring them to something that was in Paul but not of him. They are rather a strong and enigmatic statement of the conclusion to which his premises fairly led him—that these exceptional transgressions were not the true exponents of his character; that, notwithstanding these, he "in his mind" was "a servant of the law of God" (ver. 26). When the apostle, speaking of his labours, says, "Not I, but the grace of God that was with me" (1 Cor. xv. 10), he does not mean that he did not perform them, but that he performed them under the influence of the grace of God. When he says, "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. ii. 20), he means merely that to Christ he was indebted for the origin and maintenance of his new and better life. And here he means not to deny that he did those things, but to assert that he did them under an influence that was no longer the dominant one in his mind. Suppose a good man—say Cranmer—from the terror of a violent death should make a temporary denial of the faith, would not every one understand what was meant by "It was not Thomas Cranmer, but his fear, that dictated the recantation"? (*J. Brown, D.D.*) *Sin dwells even where it does not reign*:—I. WHEN EVIL IS DONE BY ANY MAN AGAINST HIS MIND, WILL, OR FREE CONSENT, IT MAY, IN SOME SENSE, BE SAID NOT TO BE HIS SIN. This is an inference deduced from the two preceding verses—viz., that since he did not approve, but hated sin, he might justly conclude, "It is no longer I, my whole self, much less is it my better self, as renewed by the power of Divine grace." But before a man can take comfort from this consideration, he must be able to see that there is no consent, either express and formal, or interpretative and virtual. By express consent we intend a man's yielding up himself to any lust, as Cain expressly consented to the murder of his brother, and Judas to betray his Lord and Master. But a virtual consent is, when we yield to that from which such a sin will probably follow: thus a man that is violently intoxicated, if he kill any one, &c., he may virtually be said to will whatever wickedness he may commit, though for the present he knoweth not what he doth. On the other hand, where sin is hateful, the believer may, and ought to, form his estimate, not from the corrupt, but from the better part of himself. II. THERE IS A GREAT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE REGENERATE AND THE UNREGENERATE, BOTH IN THEIR INWARD CONFLICTS AND THEIR DAILY SINS. This difference may be learnt from—1. The nature of the principles engaged in this conflict. The conflict may be known, whether it be natural or spiritual, from the quality of the principles which are engaged in it. If only the understanding or knowledge be set against sin, or if conscience be the only opposing principle, this, as it may be found in an unregenerate man, is very different from the conflict which was found in our apostle, and in all true believers. 2. The nature of the motives by which it is carried on. These motives are many and various, suited to the principles of the persons engaged in the conflict—such as the fear of man, the loss of worldly interest, character, or reputation, the loss of bodily health, &c.—and the greatest principle may be that of self-love, or the love of human applause, all which considerations when alone, and when they are the sole grounds or motives in men's opposition to sin—these and such like motives, as they spring from pride, flattery, and self-love, in opposition to the love of God, are no better than a prostitution of spiritual things to carnal purposes, and therefore they are far from affording any good evidence that such a heart is right with God. 3. The different desires, aims, and ends proposed in the conflict. The highest and best that can be proposed by a rational creature is the glory of God; but no such end was ever proposed by an unregenerate man; no, not in any one action—not in his best frames or highest attainments; and yet without this men do but serve themselves and not God. 4. The manner of sinning, both as to temper and behaviour. When believers sin—(1) It is not with their full and free consent, at any time, or upon any occasion. Once they did as fully and freely consent to it as any other sinners in the world (Eph. ii. 2), but now it is not so. (2) Yet sin does not reign in them, as it once did, or as it now does in others. (3) They do it not habitually and customarily, as they once did, and as others still do. (4) They do it not, as Satan does, out of malice and hatred against God. (5) They do not abide or continue in it and under it, as others do, or as they themselves once did. (6) They sin not without the loss of their peace and comfort as others do, or as they themselves once did. (7) It is generally out of weakness, and not out of wickedness; it is for want of strength to

conquer, or it is through infirmity. III. THAT THE BEST OF SAINTS ARE NOT ONLY LIABLE TO SIN, BUT THEY HAVE ALSO SIN DWELLING WITHIN THEM. It is evident that we must understand original sin or corruption in the immediate actings of it in the heart of a believer. If it be inquired, "Why does our apostle call the corruption of human nature the sin that dwelleth in us?" we answer—because—1. It hath taken possosslon of us, and its abode is in us as its house. 2. Of its permanency or its fixed and stated abode in us. It dwelleth in us, not merely as a stranger or a guest. 3. It is a latent evil, and herein lies much of its security. (*J. Stafford.*) I. ENDEAVOUR TO EXPLAIN THE TEXT. The apostle did not mean to offer any apology for sin; he did not mean to tell us that it did not emanate from himself. No; he was conscious it did, and this humiliating truth was eminently blest to him, as it has been, and ever will be, to all the family of heaven. 1. He was justified completely from sin. This is the glory of the Christian religion. Every other religion binds man hand and foot, soul and body; but there is this glorious provision in the covenant of the Eternal Three: in the work of the Son, and in the fulfilment of the covenant offices of God the Holy Ghost, the sinner is justified by faith in Christ, and the condemnation is transferred from the sinner to sin. 2. Sin was dethroned in the apostle's affections. "For," says he, "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Sin is such a monster that no one can confine it but the Almighty. He is destined to die, and that too in a threefold manner. (1) By famine (chap. xiii. 14). (2) By poison. Mercy is the food of the soul and the poison of sin (Psa. cxxx. 3, 4). (3) By suicide. II. THE LESSONS WHICH THE BELIEVER IS DESTINED TO LEARN FROM THE CEASELESS ATTACKS OF INDWELLING SIN. 1. We learn sin in its origin and evil, necessarily connected with what we experience, with what God has been pleased to reveal to us. 2. The glory of Jesus Christ as a Mediator between God and man. 3. Self-knowledge. And this lies at the root of all religion. It is the foundation of everything that is excellent. 4. Wisdom and circumspection. We read of some who are "taken captive by the devil at his will"; and, indeed, their own will is fully identified with his will; and this is the reason he takes them captive so easily. 5. Sympathy. Sinners not changed by the grace of God hate each other, not their sins. Awful consideration! they love sin but hate sinners; they hate too the consequences of sin, when obliged to feel them; but sin itself they love. Not so when man has been changed into the image of the living God—he is taught to love and pity the sinner, while he abhors his sin. 6. His absolute dependence on a covenant God for everything, and to prize that dependence. 7. Gratitude in the midst of the deepest calamities. 8. Sin is suffered to dwell within us, to prepare the saint for heaven. The daily conflict within gradually lessens his attachment to the things of time and sense. (*W. Howels.*)

Ver. 18. **For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.**—*Grace in believers weakened by the flesh:*—I. THERE IS NO GOOD THING BY NATURE FOUND IN ANY UNRENEWED HEART. And where there is no good there must be much evil. II. THE PEOPLE OF GOD, WHOSE EYES ARE ENLIGHTENED BY DIVINE GRACE, ARE FULLY CONVINCED THAT IN THEIR FLESH DWELLETH NO GOOD THING. I know it, says our apostle. It is a part of the new nature to know it; for grace is a Divine light in the soul, discovering the true nature of things. III. THE CHILDREN OF GOD NOT ONLY KNOW THIS WANT OF ANY GOOD IN THEMSELVES, BUT THEY ACKNOWLEDGE IT WHENEVER THEY THINK THAT GOD MAY THEREBY BE GLORIFIED. This, I doubt not, was the principal design of our apostle here. IV. NOTWITHSTANDING ALL THIS, YET THE PEOPLE OF GOD HAVE ALWAYS SOMETHING WITHIN THEM WHICH MAY BE PROPERLY CALLED A WILL TO DO GOOD. "To will is present with me." V. ALL THE PEOPLE OF GOD FIND THAT THEIR PERFORMANCE OF GOOD IS NEVER EQUAL TO THEIR DESIRES. "How to perform that which is good I find not." (*J. Stafford.*) *Nature and grace in the same individual:*—I. WE HAVE ALL FELT THE EXCEEDING DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TONE AND TEMPER OF THE MIND AT ONE TIME FROM WHAT IT IS AT ANOTHER. 1. Many of you can recollect that under a powerful sermon, in church, you caught something like the elevation of heaven; and that when you passed into another atmosphere, the whole of this temperament went into utter dissipation. And again, how differently it fares with us in devotional retirement, and in the world! 2. And many who are not, in the spiritual sense of the term, Christians, will not be surprised when they are told of two principles in our moral constitution—which, by the ascendancy of the one or the other, may cause the same man to appear in

two characters that are in diametric opposition—and of two sets of tendencies, one of which, if followed out, would liken them to the seraphs, and the other to the veriest grub-worm. 3. We appeal to a very common experience among novel-readers—how they kindle into heroism, and melt into tenderness, and appear while under the spell to be assimilated to that which they admire. And yet all flees when again ushered into the scenes of familiar existence. There is one principle of our constitution that tends to sublime the heart up to the poetry of human life; and there is another that weighs the heart helplessly down to the prose of it. 4. A conspicuous instance of the same thing is the susceptibility of the heart to music. You have seen how the song that breathed the ardour of disinterested friendship blended into one tide of emotion the approving sympathies of a whole circle. It is hard to imagine that on the morrow the competitions and jealousies of rival interest will be as busily active as before, and will obliterate every trace of the present enthusiasm. And yet there is in it no hypocrisy whatever. The finest recorded example of this fascination is that of the harp of David on the dark and turbulent spirit of Saul. During the performance all the furies by which his bosom was agitated seem to have been lulled into peacefulness. II. LET US UNFOLD THE USES OF THIS INCIDENT IN THE ARGUMENT BEFORE US. 1. (1) Saul was refreshed and became well under the operation of this music. In which case it was his duty to call in the harp on the very first approaches of the threatening visitation; for by it alone, it seems, could his tranquillity be upheld. (2) Further conceive of Saul on the strength of the foreign application, ever at hand and never neglected, conquering the rebellious tendencies of his inner man. (3) Consider how Saul should have felt as well as acted, under the consciousness of what he natively was. Should he not have been humbled when he bethought him that, to sustain his moral being, he had to live on supplies from abroad, because in himself there was the foul spirit of a maniac and a murderer; and it would have become this monarch, even when feeling at his best, to loathe his savage propensities in dust and in ashes. (4) That sense of depravity which prompted the self-abasement of his spirit would prompt an unceasing recurrence to that by which its outbreakings were repressed; and so the more intense his detestation of his own character, would be the vigour and efficacy of that alone practical expedient by which his character was transformed. 2. And thus, in all its parts, does it hold of a Christian. (1) He feels that in himself he is like Saul without the harp. The streams of his disobedience may not be of the same tinge, but they emanate like his from the heart. The Christian feels that in that part of his constitution which is properly his own, there is a deeply-seated corruption, the sense of which never fails to abash and to humble him. (2) What, then, is it which serves to mark him as a Christian? Not most assuredly that he is free of a carnal nature, but that he has access to an influence without, by which all its rebellious tendencies are thereby overborne. The Christian hath learned whither to flee in every hour of temptation; and thus it is that a purifying influence descends upon his soul. (3) There was a personal agent called in by Saul—the son of Jesse. In the former case, the power to soothe lay materially and directly in the music—though, to bring it into contact with the organ of hearing, there needed one to perform it. In the latter case, the power to sanctify lies materially and directly in the doctrine—though, to bring it into contact with the organ of mental perception, there needed to present it the Holy Spirit, whose office it is to bring all things to our remembrance. And so, when like to be overborne by the tyranny of your own evil inclinations, is it your part, depending on the Holy Ghost, to go forth and meet His manifestations, as He takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto your soul; and the heart will be kept in the love of God; and this will attune it out of all discord and disorder. In conclusion, learn from these observations how it is that by means of a power external to the mind of man, he may be so transformed as to become a new creature. If eloquence, or romance, or poetry, or music attune the heart to nobler and better feelings than those by which it is habitually occupied, shall we wonder that, upon faith realising the promises and the prospects of the gospel, the heart shall be translated into a new state? What music can be sweeter to the soul than when peace is whispered to it from on high; or what lovelier vision can be offered to its contemplation than that of heaven's Lord and of heaven's family; or what more fitted to lay the coarse and boisterous agitations of a present world than the light which has pierced across the grave and revealed the peaceful world that is beyond it? (*T. Chalmers, D.D.*)

Willing inability:—How much waste there is in the world! Beauty, and no eye to see it; music, and no ear to hear it; food, and no creature to eat it; land, barren for

want of cultivation. As in nature, so among men. Paul was not peculiar in his experience. There is—I. MUCH NATIVE TALENT UNDEVELOPED. Parents pay no attention to the natural aptitudes of their children. One has vocal powers, another musical, others artistic, poetic, oratorical, or mechanical. In after life, when a born singer feels the rising of music in his soul, he would sing, but cannot, because lacking the acquired skill. So with the artist and the engineer. This is waste; loss to the community and to the individual. Many a gifted soul has been compelled to say, "I would, but I can't; and I can't, not because I want the ability, but the acquired art." II. MUCH SKILLED TALENT UNUSED. Men who have educated their minds, trained their fingers, and matured their natural aptitudes, cannot employ them. 1. Cannot find an appropriate sphere for them. They must live, and so are obliged to do something less genial and remunerative. The man who should have been at the plough is in the pulpit, and the man who should have been in the pulpit is behind a counter. These misplaced men say, "I would do better, but can't." 2. Many who have found appropriate spheres, cannot do their best, because they are hindered and discouraged. (1) Many a skilled artisan would do more and better work if better placed. Many a servant would be better with better masters. And many a Christian worker would do more if there were fewer hindrances and more helpful and stimulating conditions. (2) Men who can rise above such conditions are not always the best. They have often more force than intellect or goodness. There are many men and women who have good heads, warm hearts, and skilled fingers, but lack force, because the body is disordered. The helm, the compass, the captain, and the sea may be all right, but if there is no steam in the machine the vessel will make no headway. III. MUCH NATURAL AFFECTION UNEXPRESSED. There may be sap in the plant, but if there is no sun there will be no flower or fruit. Many hearts want sunshine; the cold chills them. They recoil from uncongenial influences. 1. Sometimes the head is so full of cares that the heart has no play. The mind may be so distracted that it has no time to think of the claims of the heart, or no time or power to respond to its promptings. 2. There are many who can, and who do, both think and feel, but "cannot" for want of means. How gladly would you do many things for those you love! But the hand is empty, the heart swells, and the tongue is dumb. "The good I would do, I do not," because I cannot. IV. MUCH SINCERE AND ARDENT PIETY UNMANIFESTED. "When I would do good, evil is present with me." Evil stands like a sentinel at the door of the heart to prevent good getting out, and if it gets out, to distort, cripple, and pollute it. 1. If veneration struggles to express itself in prayer, incarnate evil is at the heart and lips pleading "no time"; and if it struggles through, and makes time, then it distracts the thoughts. 2. If our affections would rise up to God, incarnate evil is there to fetter the soul; and if it escapes, then it presents innumerable idols to eye and heart. 3. If benevolence would show itself, incarnate selfishness bars the way; and if you overcome it, it will fill you with low motives. 4. If your affections try to be beautiful and tender, an evil temper distorts and pollutes them. 5. The life of the soul may be chilled and dwarfed by the want of piety in those around you. Conclusion: 1. It is possible for a man to feel himself to be greater than his little world, and greater than he can make it. 2. God does not expect more from us than we are capable of being and doing. Virtue under difficulties is of finer quality than under more favourable circumstances, and God regards quality more than quantity. The widow's mite was of more value than the greater offerings of the rich. He regards and rewards "the willing mind" where nothing more is possible. 3. We might have been better than we are. None of us have made the best use of our opportunities. 4. We might have done better than we have done. There is more cause for humility than for complaint. 5. We may do better in the future. There is no cause for despair. Let us not forget that it is in little things that love best expresses itself. Oh that we may so live and die that we may receive from the Master, "She hath done what she could." (*Wickham Tozer.*) *Inefficacious convictions*:—1. It may be true that the apostle was describing a man under the bondage of the Jewish law, but it is no less true that he might have uttered these words concerning himself. But it must have been a humiliating confession. How much he wished the case to be otherwise! Adam did not more fervently wish it possible to go back into paradise. 2. But we have sometimes heard confessions, in something like the same terms, made in a very different spirit. Confessions that certainly there is something very wrong with us; but, then, there is no helping it; it is the common condition of man. I. LET US DESCRIBE THIS STATE OF MIND. A clear apprehension as to the necessity of a serious attention to certain great

concerns, and an earnest desire that these great concerns were duly attended to. But, still, they are not or in no such manner as it is felt they ought. Some fatal prevention lies heavy on the active powers, like the incubus in a dream. Again and again the conviction returns upon the man; and he wishes and resolves, but nothing is done. He wishes some mighty force might come upon him, and would be almost willing to be terrified by portentous phenomena. But nature is quiet, spirits do not encounter him, and he remains unmoved. II. How COMES SO DEPLORABLE A CONDITION of a being "made a little lower than the angels"? It comes of the disorder and ruination of our nature. What is the disorder, the ruination of anything, but its being reduced to a state that frustrates the purpose of its existence, be it a machine, a building, or an animal? III. BUT WHAT SHALL A MAN, CONSCIOUS OF AND LAMENTING SUCH A STATE OF MIND, DO? Shall he absolve himself from all duty respecting it? Soothe himself into a stupid contentment? Resign himself to despair? Infallibly the time must come when he will feel that this was not the way. No; he has a solemn work to do, and he must think of means. The immediate cause of this inefficacy is, that the motives are not strong enough. We want to be under a constant, mighty, driving power of good motives. When a mariner suffers a long, dead calm, how oft he looks up at the sails, and says, "Oh, if the winds would but blow!" Now, there may be persons who will aver that a man can do no more respecting his motives than the mariner respecting the winds. We must think differently, and wish to inquire what practicable means he may find for strengthening the operation of good motives upon his mind. 1. We must deeply think what it is that all the great motives are required for. What in us, for us, by us? This serious thinking will tend to render luminously distinct those grand considerations which ought to constitute our chief motives. 2. Then these being acknowledged, it should be our study to aggravate the force of those considerations in all ways. "There is something that needs to be reinforced. It should be so to-day." We should watch for anything to be added to their power, seize on everything that can be thrown into the scale. Observe how this takes place in the case of a motive which falls in with our natural inclination. The motive, then, of itself, as by an instinct for its good, catches all these things that serve to strengthen it. Without our care it avails itself of each casual thought, each passing impression. Observe, too, how fast the very worst motives may grow upon a man, and he never intend it! Oh! not such the condition of the good ones! 3. But, besides this general vigilance, there must be a direct, earnest effort to bring before the mind those realities which are adapted to make the right impressions. And here we appeal to the man who laments in the language of the text, and say, "Cannot you do this?" And if he is sincere he will be willing to sustain a painful repetition of these applications. And if he feels that the motive takes hold of him, oh, let him be earnest that it may be retained and prolonged! 4. In connection with this, it will be well, by an exercise of thought, to endeavour to combine all the motives that tend to the same effect. But take special care of admitting an evil or doubtful principle into this combination. Revenge may work to the same point as justice; but here the companionship of the bad will vitiate the good. Each good motive must, to be of any essential value, be part of a whole system. There must be a vital circulation of the holy principles through the whole soul. The single part cannot by itself have pulsation and warmth and life. 5. Our concern respecting the influence of motives upon us must be directed to this indispensable point—the earnest cultivation of vital religion. This alone can put conscience into them. 6. Dwell often on the most instructive and impressive examples. And also there are many affecting scenes and events applicable to the principles that should move us (the death of friends, dreadful deaths, &c.). 7. Choose the society which furnishes the best incitements. 8. Motives work best in fire, that is, in the warmth and animation of the passions. Where these are faint, so will be the actuating principles. Where, then, there is little fire of soul, let it not be wasted on trifling things, but applied and consecrated to give efficacy to the best principles. When there are barely combustibles enough for offering a sacrifice, it were sacrilege to take them away for baubles and amusements. But there is fire enough in heaven for all our noblest uses, and we want it as much as Elijah, when his altar and offering were drenched in water. But God has put into our hands that which will bring it down. He has promised the Divine energy of His Holy Spirit to those that ask Him. Then what have we to say to Him? "Oh! infuse into these convictions, these motives, Thine own omnipotence! Here is a solemn consideration that glimmers in my mind—make it

lighten! Here are the motives which Thou hast sent; but there is something between them and me; oh! make them break in upon me! Here is a languid, unavailing strife of the better principles against an overpowering force; oh! arm those principles with all that there is in heaven that belongs to them, and then my deadly oppressors will be drawn away! Here is a wretched corrupted nature averse to Thee and all that is good; oh! lay Thy new-creating hand upon it and it will be for ever Thine!" (*John Foster.*)

Ver. 19. **For the good that I would I do not: but the evil that I would not, that I do.**—*The inward conflict:*—I. THE two I's; the I that wills; the I that does. II. THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN THEM. III. THE RESULT. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Christians not to overlook the grace they have:*—The sight Christians have of their defects in grace, and their thirst after greater measures of grace, make them think they do not grow when they do. He who covets a great estate, because he hath not so much as he desires, therefore he thinks himself to be poor. Indeed, Christians should seek after the grace they want, but they must not therefore overlook the grace they have. Let Christians be thankful for the least growth; if you do not grow so much in assurance, bless God if you grow in sincerity; if you do not grow so much in knowledge, bless God if you grow in humility. If a tree grows in the root, it is a true growth; if you grow in the root-grace of humility, it is as needful for you as any other growth. (*T. Watson.*) *Two hearts:*—A well-known missionary tells of a poor African woman who once said to him that she had two hearts, one saying, "Come to Jesus," the other saying, "Stay away"; the one bidding her to do good, and the other bidding her to do evil; so that she knew not what to do. He read to her the seventh chapter of the Romans. When he came to the verse, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" she said, "Ah, Massa, that me; and me know not what to do." And when he afterwards added the words, "I thank God through Jesus Christ," and explained them, she burst into tears of grateful joy. *A rising barometer:*—The barometer indicates approaching changes of weather—not by the high and low stand of the mercury in its tube, but by the rising or falling of the mercury. If a low barometer indicated storm, then there never would be fair weather on the tops of the mountains, where the rarity of the atmosphere causes a perpetual low barometer. But on the mountains, as everywhere else, the value of the barometric warnings lies in the tendency which they reveal. In like manner, many a poor Christian, surrounded by disadvantages and drawbacks, as by an atmosphere affording too little oxygen and lacking in pressure, displays to his own despondent self-examination a very low barometer of moral character and attainment. For his comfort we say, "Do not be discouraged; but take many readings, and find out whether the mercury is rising. It is not a high, but a rising barometer that should give you joy." (*Christian World Pulpit.*) *Contrary influences:*—The picture in the South Kensington Museum called "Contrary Winds" well illustrates the opposing influences of which we all—especially those who, like the drunkard, have long been the slaves of an evil habit—are more or less the subjects. A toy vessel is in a tub of water. Two little boys are seen bending over the tub, exactly opposite each other, blowing with all their might, in order to get the mimic barque to go. Which shall prove the more powerful, which shall eventually conquer in the case of the soul, ofttimes seems a doubtful question. *The real and the ideal:*—I. THERE IS A FACULTY IN THE MIND WHICH PHILOSOPHERS CALL IDEALITY. 1. It is that quality which figures to our inward self something higher and more perfect than the actual; showing all things, not as they are, but as they might be. 2. See how this principle operates upon matter. A diamond in the rough is hardly better than quartz crystal; but the lapidary sees in it a blazing star. He has an idea, and he reproduces it on his wheel. Then how much higher is the diamond than it was in its undeveloped state! 3. This quality is at work upon society. It is the root of refinement in language. It is at work upon dress. It removes conduct far away from the gross and the vulgar, and gives a conception under which the family becomes nobler. It presents a view of the sweetness of affection which makes love more elevating and stimulating. 4. This principle, moreover, is the root-stock of faith—that quality by which we discern relations and conditions, above all that nature knows, or that the ordinary thoughts of men have created. We hear men talking of reveries and poets' dreams. I tell you, the best things in this world are the things that men themselves create, and that fill the air round about them with strange thoughts, and noble desires, and higher intercourse

than ever the vulgar necessities of life permit. II. THIS QUALITY ENTERS INTO MORALITY AND RELIGION, BOTH FOR THEIR ELEVATION AND THEIR VEXATION. 1. Of sincere and earnest Christians four-fifths might trace their troubles to not knowing the difference between ideal and real standards of conduct. Not Paul alone, but a great company bear witness, "The good that I would I do not," &c. Is there anything this morning that seems to you meaner than a lie? And yet you will tell lies before next Saturday, and be ashamed of it, and wish you had not, and swear that you will never do it again, and then do it. There is not a man here who has not a sense of what is honourable; but you are jostled by anger, rivalry, fear, avarice, and the vision fades in the actual, and goes out, and you enter into a vulgar bargain with your neighbour by which you gain and he loses, and if the grace of God is with you you are ashamed of it. So all the way through life. 2. No man's real conduct comes up to his ideal if he has the slightest faculty and exercise of ideality. How low, poor, unfruitful, the man who never has a sight of anything higher than that which he every day does! A man without a desire is not a man; he is an animal. And there is a perpetual struggle going on in the attempt to harmonise the ideal with the real. And this is the very groundwork of religious endeavour; and it works both ways. A man that is honestly trying to conform his life to the principles of Christ must become a miserable man. I cannot conceive of anything so horrible to a fine-strung nature as to have a vivid ideal of love, as made manifest by Christ, and then to measure by that the actual development of love in his own life. As ideality takes on the colours of things beautiful, so it intensifies the colours of things ugly. It is when the ideal comes down and gives a heightened glory to truth that transgression becomes intolerable and unbearable; and many persons are so weighed down by it that it deranges their whole balance of mind. III. SUDDEN OR RAPID REALISATION OF THE IDEAL IS NOT TO BE EXPECTED. If a cannon ball should be fired through an organ, and I should say, "Return, you ball; and you, broken pipes, get up and put yourselves in your places," it would not be more absurd than for a man to say to himself, "Now everything in me has got to be harmonious at once." Harmony in a man is the result of a life-long education and drill. A man feels, "It was my duty to have acted thus and so." Yes, just as it is the duty of my apple-trees to bear fruit; but my apple-trees will not bear fruit until they are grown. And a man wants, in every process of his development, to wait for its ripeness. No one expects a young man just graduated from the law school to be an old-headed lawyer at the beginning. He may have the making of one; but there must be a great deal of unfolding by which he shall come to it. No man imputes blame to the child because he does not know the exercise of the gymnasium at first. And yet it is supposed that when a man is converted the whole weight of responsibility instantly rests upon him; and men feel, "There I come short; there I overreach; and God sets down great black marks against me"; and one and another give up. Now, rawness is not sinfulness, nor is imperfection disobedience. Where a man knows what he ought to do, and can do it, but deliberately omits it, that is a sin; but the omission is not sinful in one who is not competent or who does not know. How much more the Psalmist knew than we do (read Psa. ciii. 13–17). It is under the benediction of this God that I say to nervous and self-condemnatory people, who fear God and desire to obey His commandments, but who are constantly stumbling from imperfections, Be not ashamed; for you are under the administration of a God that pities as a father pities, and that bears with the world's imperfections as a schoolmaster bears with the imperfections of his scholars. If a child of eight cannot write a fine hand, how shall a man without a period of education write the invisible letters that come from the inspiration of God's Spirit? IV. THE ATTEMPT TO REALISE IDEALS IS NEARER PERFECTION IN THOSE GREAT NATURES WHO HAVE BEEN AT ONCE THE STARS THAT GUIDED HUMAN NATURE UPWARD, THAN THE COMETS THAT HAVE FALLEN ON IT AND BLASTED MAN'S HOPES. Jonathan Edwards was a type of Christianity that flew, and he has developed a conception of possible being. It is transcendent literature that we cannot afford to lose; and yet, let men take Edwards' writing to test themselves by, and it will drive nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thousand into despair; and they will say, "If that is the test of being a Christian, I am not one, and I never can be one." And by holding up this conception before the young and the infirm, we shut the door of heaven. It throws a pall over the Christian life; whereas the voice of wisdom says, "All her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke; it is easy. Take My burden; it is light." V. THE WAY OF RELIGION IN THIS MATTER IS A GREAT

DEAL EASIER THAN THE WAY OF NATURE. The way upward is easier than the way downward. At every step gained the complication grows less, and the impulse grows more. The religion of the New Testament is hopeful. It is dark only to those who know what it is, and whose reason recognises it as being holy, just, and good, but who deliberately say, "I will have none of it." They are on the same plane with him who knows very well what fire is, but who says, "I do not care, I will walk in the fire." So he can, and he will take the consequences. They are on the same plane with the man who says, "I know that drink fires the blood; nevertheless I will drink." So it is throughout the whole sphere of God's law of moral conduct. God says to every man that wants to learn, "I will give you time, opportunity, and encouragement; and I will forgive all your infirmities and transgressions so long as your face is toward the heavenly land"; but if a man says, "I do not care for the heavenly land," and does not strive to rise toward it, but follows his own devices, woe be to him. (*H. Ward Beecher.*) *The Christian's conquest over the body of sin*:—The text is one of those hard places of St. Paul which, as St. Peter says, the ignorant and unstable wrest to their own destruction. For the proper stating of this case of conscience there must be considered—I. WHAT ARE THE PROPER CAUSES WHICH PLACE MEN AND KEEP THEM IN THIS STATE OF A NECESSITY OF SINNING, so that we cannot do the good we would? &c. 1. The evil state of our nature which we may know by experience. 2. The evil principles which are sucked in by the greatest part of mankind. We are taught ways of going to heaven without forsaking our sins, repentance without restitution, charity without hearty forgiveness and love, trust in Christ's death without conformity to His life, once in God's favour always in it, that God's laws are for a race of giants. No wonder, then, that men slacken their industry, and so find sin prevail. 3. Bad habits. An evil custom is as a hook in the soul which draws it whither the devil pleases. Thus evil natures, principles, and manners are the causes of our imperfect willing and our weaker acting in the things of God. But what then? Cannot sin be avoided? Cannot a Christian mortify the deeds of the body, or Christ cleanse us from our sins? The next particular to be inquired of is—II. WHETHER OR NO IT BE NECESSARY AND THEREFORE POSSIBLE FOR A SERVANT OF GOD TO HATE EVIL AND AVOID IT? "He that saith he hath not sinned is a liar"; but what then? Because a man has sinned it does not follow that he must do so always. "Go and sin no more," saith Christ. The case is confessed "that all have sinned"; but is there no remedy? God forbid. There was a blessed time to come, and it has long since come; "Yet a little while and iniquity shall be taken out of the earth, and righteousness shall reign among you"; for this is the day of the gospel. When Christ comes to reign in our heart by His Spirit, Dagon and the Ark cannot stand together—we cannot serve Christ and Belial. As in the state of nature no good thing dwells within us, so when Christ rules in us no evil thing can abide. "Every plant that my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up." "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." As there is a state of carnality in which a man cannot but obey the flesh; so there is a state of spirituality, when sin is dead and righteousness alive. In this state the flesh can no more prevail than the spirit could in the other. Some men cannot but choose to sin (chap. viii. 7); but we are not in the flesh, and if we walk in the Spirit we shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh (see 1 John iii. 9; Matt. vii. 18). Through Christ that strengtheneth us we can do all things. So it is necessary and possible to mortify sin and escape the slavery of "the good that I would I do not," &c. III. IN WHAT DEGREE THIS IS TO BE EFFECTED, for no man can say he is totally free from sin. All men's righteousness will be found to be unrighteous if God shall enter into judgment with us: therefore after our innocence, we must pray for pardon. But concerning good men, the question is not whether or no God could not in the rigour of justice blame them for their indiscretion, or chide them for a foolish word and a careless action, a fearful heart and trembling faith; these are not the measures by which He judges His children; but the question is whether any man that is covetous, proud, or intemperate, can at the same time be a child of God? Certainly he cannot. But then we know that God judges us by Jesus Christ, *i.e.*, with the allays of mercy; with an eye of pardon; with the sentences of a father. By the measures of the gospel He will "judge every man according to his works." These measures are—1. In general, this. A Christian's innocence is always to be measured by the plain lines of the commandments, but is not to be taken into account by uncertain fond opinions and scruples of zealous or timorous persons. Some men say that every natural inclination

to a forbidden object is a sin; if so, then a man sins whether he resists his inclinations or not. And there is no difference but this: he that yields, sins greatest; and he that never yields, but fights on, sins oftenest: hence the very doing our duty supposes sin. But God judges of us only by the commandment from without, and from the conscience within. He never intended His laws to be a snare to us. He requires of us a sincere heart and a hearty labour in the work of His commandments: He calls upon us to avoid all that His law forbids and our consciences condemn. 2. In particular—(1) Every Christian is bound to arrive at such a state that he have remaining in him no habit of any sin whatever. Our old man must be crucified; the body of sin must be destroyed. (2) He that commits any one sin by choice and deliberation is an enemy of God, and under the dominion of the flesh. (3) Every Christian ought to attain to such a state as that he shall never sin, even by passion, *i.e.*, no passion ought to make him choose a sin. (4) The Christian must strive to gain so great a dominion over his sins that he be not surprised on a sudden. This indeed is a work of time, and it is well if it ever be done, but it must be attempted. IV. BY WHAT INSTRUMENTS ALL THIS IS TO BE DONE. 1. Faith. He that hath faith like a grain of mustard seed can remove mountains: "All things are possible to him that believeth." We pray in the *Te Deum*, "Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us this day without sin." Have we any faith when we so pray? 2. Watchfulness—by running away from temptation, being always well employed, and laying in provisions of reason and religion. 3. The mortification of sin, which should be so complete that no nest egg, no principles of it or affections to it, be willingly or carelessly left. But if sin be thus eradicated some argue that we shall become proud. But how should pride spring up if there be no remains of sin left? Will a physician purposely leave the relics of a disease and pretend he does it to prevent a relapse? Is not a relapse more likely if the sickness be not wholly cured? 4. Experiment. Let us never say that we cannot be quit of our sin before we do all we can to destroy it. Put the matter to the proof, and trust to the all-sufficiency of grace. 5. Caution concerning thoughts and secret desires. "Lust, when it is conceived, bringeth forth death"; but if it be suppressed in the conception it comes to nothing. 6. If sin hath gotten the power of you, consider in what degree it has prevailed; if only a little, the battle will be more easy, and the victory more certain. But then be sure to do it thoroughly. If sin has prevailed greatly, you have much to do; therefore begin betimes. Conclusion: Every good man is a new creature, and Christianity is a Divine frame and temper of spirit, which, if we pray heartily for and obtain, we shall find it as hard and uneasy to sin as now we think it to abstain from our most pleasing sins. (*Jeremy Taylor.*)

Vers. 21–25. **I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.**—*The inward conflict*:—There is no word with which we are more familiar than "conflict." We see strife everywhere; amongst the elements of nature, the beasts and birds, nations and families. On the arena of political, mercantile, and social life there is ever a ceaseless conflict between opposing interests and wills. But there is no strife so severe as that which is carried on between the principles of good and evil in the soul. I. THE GROUND OF THE CHRISTIAN'S COMPLAINT. "The law in his members," which—1. Prevents him from attaining that standard of excellence which is presented before him in the Word of God. He "cannot do the things that he would." His desire is to be perfectly conformed to the law of God, but it is thwarted by corrupt inclinations, and often he is betrayed into acts which he bitterly deplores. 2. Hinders the full development of his spiritual life. Every Christian has the outline of Christ's image. Just as the oak is folded up within the acorn; just as the first beam of light is the sure precursor of noon; just as in the child there is the man, so in grace are all the elements of glory. The imperfection of Christ's image in the Christian arises solely from the corruptions of his nature; hence it is like the sun obscured by a mist, or a plant whose vitality is impaired by a poisonous atmosphere. The brightest light burns but dimly if the atmosphere is impure, and an instrument that is out of tune will give forth discordant notes, even though the hand of a master should sweep the chords. It is this corrupt nature that weakens your faith, contracts your knowledge, and damps your zeal. 3. It produces much mental distress. How can there be peace when there is constant warfare within? How can "a holy God" look with approval on beings so sinful? Hence doubt, discouragement, and fear Moreover, anxiety is sometimes felt as to the result of the conflict. II. THE SOURCE OF THE CHRISTIAN'S HOPE. 1. Deliverance from the power of evil comes to us from

without, not from within. Sin never works its own cure, nor does the sinner ever release himself from its miserable bondage. A poison may lose its virulence, and for a broken or a wounded limb nature has a healing art. But who ever heard of sin dying out from the soul? 2. This deliverance is vouchsafed to us by God through Christ. In no other way can deliverance from the power of sin be achieved. A man who has nothing to oppose to temptation but the power of his will, or his fear of consequences, is like a man walking on thin ice. Christianity finds an infinite evil and proposes an infinite remedy. Beholding us under the dominion of sin, it provides for us release, for "if the Son make you free, ye shall be free indeed." And He does so through His Spirit. What we need is no external reformation, such as law or moral precepts effect, but an inward and spiritual change. And God alone can do this. It matters not what is the evil that you dread, by the grace of God you can overcome it. 3. This deliverance will be progressive and eventually final. There may be many an alternate victory and defeat; but courage, the work is begun, and perfect freedom will come at length. (*H. J. Gamble.*) *The inward conflict:*—Notice—I. THE LEADING DESIRE OF ALL TRUE BELIEVERS: "they would do good." 1. Every real Christian would be conformed to the will of God in heart and life. Whatever advance he has made, he is still sensible of deficiency, and presses after higher attainments. 2. The spiritual principle imparted in regeneration has a necessary tendency to what is good. What the enlightened understanding approves the sanctified will prefers. 3. This prevailing inclination of the will to what is good is a manifest token of Divine grace, for it is God that worketh in us to will. The will is the man, and the obedience of the will is the obedience of the man (2 Cor. viii. 12). II. THE IMPEDIMENTS TO THIS DESIRE: "evil is present with me." 1. Sudden and unseasonable discursions of the mind, unfitting and indisposing us for duty (Job. xv. 12; Jer. iv. 14). 2. Unbelieving jealousies and suspicions, either with respect to ourselves or God. Faith animates the soul, but unbelief weakens and destroys its energies. If the soul makes some efforts heavenwards this clips its wings (Psa. xlii. 5; lxxiii. 13; lxxxvii. 9). 3. Unworthy motives and sinister ends. We are in danger of being influenced by selfishness, pride, or legality, in all our religious duties; and ere we are aware they become polluted with some evil which is present with us (Isa. lviii. 3; Zech. vii. 5). 4. Worldly thoughts and cares. If we do not decline the invitation of the gospel, and go to our farms and our oxen, yet our farms and our oxen will come to us. In running the Christian race we must lay aside every weight, and the sin which easily besets us; and the world is a weight sufficient to impede our spiritual progress (Psa. cxix. 25). III. THE REASON WHY THE ATTAINMENTS OF BELIEVERS ARE SO INADEQUATE TO THEIR WISHES AND DESIRES. "I find then a law," that when I would do good, evil is present with me. 1. This "law" is indwelling sin, which is said to be—(1) A law in the members (ver. 23), not only because it resides in the members, but because it employs them in its service. (2) The law of sin and death, being that which impels to sin and leads to death (Rom. viii. 2; James i. 15). 2. It is a law within us, which we carry with us into the closet, into the temple, into the city, into the wilderness, and even to a sick and dying bed. It mingles with our choicest duties, and spoils our sweetest enjoyments. It makes this world a Bochim, a place of tears (Rom. vii. 24; 2 Cor. v. 2). 3. Indwelling sin still has the force of law, maintaining a complete ascendency over every unrenewed heart; and though it was not a law to Paul, yet it was a law within him, and the source of daily vexation. Conclusion: 1. We see that the Christian is better known by what he would be than by what he really is. If his progress were as rapid as his desires are strong, how happy would he be! 2. The best of men have no need to be proud of their performances, every work is marred in their hands. 3. Since the saints on earth have no perfection in themselves, let them be thankful for that perfection they have in Christ (Col. ii. 10). 4. We see the difference between the hypocrite and the real Christian. Sin has the consent of the will in the one, but it is not so with the other. 5. It is no wonder that amidst the conflicts and dangers of the present state the Christian longs to be in heaven (Rom. viii. 22, 23). (*B. Beddome, M.A.*) *The inward conflict:*—I. THE CONDITION OF THE AWAKENED SINNER. 1. Miserable. 2. Salutary. 3. Hopeful. 4. Perilous. II. THE STARTLING DISCOVERY OF THE AWAKENED SINNER. He finds—1. That he is not free to do good. 2. That evil predominates over him. 3. That this is the law of his corrupt nature. III. THE HAPPY CHANGE EFFECTED BY CHRIST IN THE HEART OF THE AWAKENED SINNER. 1. Condemnation succeeded by peace. 2. Sorrow by joy. 3. Complaining by gratitude. 4. Conflict by

conquest. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The daily struggle*:—A "law" here means an habitual thing: as we speak of the laws of nature, the laws of electricity, &c. I. THE LAW OF THE NEW MAN. 1. The Christian "would do good," &c. The desires are an index of the affections. If a man loves a thing he desires that thing. The mother parted from her child desires her child again; the patriot, far from his country, desires and seeks to return to it. The child of God would do good, not merely to escape hell, but because he has a love for holiness. 2. He delights in what is good (ver. 22). "O how I love Thy law!" is the language of all the children of God. What excites the repugnance of the unrenewed mind is delightful to the new mind. "I love it, though my utmost efforts only show me how far I come short of its perfection; I welcome it, though it condemns, and I long to wake up after its perfect image." 3. He actually does good. We have no right to use a lower language than God uses; and therefore every child of God is called upon to do good, and may do good, and God is well pleased with the good he does. God hears the prayers and praises of His people, and has complacency in them. God marks the labours of love of His people, and will reward them. As far as anything we do is of the new nature it is good, for whatever is of the Spirit is spiritual, and whatever springs from the new nature is of God; "for we are His workmanship, created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works." And not only so, but being a law, it lasts, and being lasting, he will persevere in doing good. "He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved." II. But that the Christian may know the conflict he is to maintain, let us look at THE LAW OF THE OLD MAN. "I find a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me." 1. Now this is not the mere sense of natural conscience that now and then reproves and then evil inclinations rise and burst like the waters when they are dammed up; for the spiritual conflict issues in habitual, I do not say invariable, victory. If a man were all holy, as he will be in heaven, there would be no conflict; but if a man is a heavenly scion grafted by the Spirit upon the old nature, so that the old stem is still corrupt, whilst the new branches of the new tree are holy, and therefore their fruit good, then there will remain the old stem. Still in the old man the imaginations, desires, affections, motives, are always downward, earthward, sinward; the desires, aspirations, affections, hopes of the new man are pure and heavenward and Godward: so you have the man as he was, and the new man as through grace he is. No man this side of heaven is out of the reach of sin and out of the danger of temptation. Opportunity acting upon sinful inclination may lead the best of men to fall into sin. 2. Then we have an evil world. This world which is ever about us, in our families, relationships, business; the world with all its show and pride, tempting some with its pleasures, baiting the hook for others with its riches, how tempting a world it is—when the Christian would do good it is present with him. 3. And when the believer would do good, the evil spirit is present with him. Satan with his emissaries is trying to hinder, harass, and destroy. Conclusion: 1. Does not this teach us that we have constantly to watch and pray, that we enter not into temptation? If you have not looked upon your Christian life as a conflict, you have not taken a right view of it. 2. And then, is there not in all this an encouragement to go continually to Him in whom we have righteousness and strength? "If any man sin we have an advocate with the Father," &c. (*Canon Stowell.*) *The bondage of sin*:—I. WHEREIN IT CONSISTS. 1. The will desires, approves, attempts what is good. 2. But is overpowered and led captive by that which is evil. II. WHY IS IT THE SOURCE OF SO MUCH MISERY? Because it makes man at variance—1. With himself. 2. With the law of God. 3. With his own interest, bringing condemnation and death. III. HOW WE MAY BE DELIVERED FROM IT. 1. By the grace of God. 2. Through Christ. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The law of sin in believers an evil ever present*:—Learn—I. THAT THERE IS AN EVIL PRINCIPLE EVEN IN THE HEARTS OF TRUE BELIEVERS. By nature it is treated as our familiar friend (ver. 20); not as a wayfaring-man, or as a stranger that tarrieth for a night. It is ever ready to betray us into evil, or to interrupt us in duty, so that when we would do good evil is present with us, at all times, in all places, and in all duties. II. THIS ABIDING PRINCIPLE HAS THE FORCE AND POWER OF A LAW. As the word, when applied to the principle of grace, in ver. 18, implies not merely the presence, but also the activity of it; so here. And though it be weakened, yet its nature is not changed, and this teacheth us what endeavours it will use for regaining its former dominion; and what advantage it has against us. It "doth easily beset us." An inmate may dwell in an house, and yet not be always meddling; but this law so dwells in us that when with most earnestness we desire to be quit

of it, with most violence it will force itself upon us. "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." III. THOUGH THIS LAW BE NATURALLY PRESENT WITH ALL MEN, YET IT IS THE DISTINGUISHING PRIVILEGE OF SOME TO FEEL IT, AND TO MOURN CONTINUALLY UNDER IT. 1. How few are there who are concerned about it! As it is natural to us, so most men are ready to imagine, either that there is no such principle within them, or that if there be, it cannot be sinful, but only constitutional. Others represent it as belonging to the very essence of the soul, and they conclude it is all in vain for any to strive against it. But our apostle clearly distinguishes between sin and the faculties of the soul. The inhabitant must be different from the house in which it dwelleth. 2. If there be such a law of sin, it is our duty to find it out. What will it profit a man to have a disease and not to discover it; a fire lying secretly in his house and not to know it? So much as men find of this law in them, so much they will abhor it and no more. Proportionably also to their discovery of it will be their earnestness for grace. IV. THAT THEY WHO FEEL THIS EVIL LAW, EVER PRESENT WITH THEM, WILL COMPLAIN MOST WHEN THEY AIM BEST. When I would do good, evil is present with me. (*J. Stafford.*) *Heart, its aberrations*:—The compass on board an iron vessel is very subject to aberrations; yet, for all that, its evident desire is to be true to the pole. True hearts in this wicked world, and in this fleshly body, are all too apt to swerve, but they still show their inward and persistent tendency to point towards heaven and God. On board iron vessels it is a common thing to see a compass placed aloft, to be as much away from the cause of aberration as possible; a wise hint to us to elevate our affections and desires; the nearer to God the less swayed by worldly influences. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) **For I delight in the law of God after the inward man.**—*Delight in the law*:—I. INDICATES THE TENDENCY OF THE HEART. II. MAY CO-EXIST WITH MUCH EVIL. III. HAS ITS FULL EXPRESSION IN A HOLY LIFE. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Delight in the law of God*:—I. WHY? 1. Because it is the transcript of the mind and will of God our Father. 2. Because it is salutary and beneficial both to ourselves and to others. 3. Because it is congenial to our renewed nature. II. HOW MANIFESTED? 1. By studying it. 2. By practising it. 3. By trying to bring others under its acknowledged authority. The word *συνήδομαι* is a very strong expression, implying real sympathy and inward harmony with the commandments. You might as well talk of a person without an ear for music delighting in the oratorios of Mendelssohn, as of one dead in trespasses and sins delighting in the Divine law. No unrenewed person ever yet delighted in the law as the law of God, and that too "in the inward man." A rebel may be able to see the wisdom of the measures framed by the monarch for the guidance of his subjects, but he cannot delight in them in his innermost soul as the laws proceeding from the throne. For this there must be a change in his mind, he must become loyal. (*C. Neil, M.A.*) *Delighting in the law of God*:—I. DIFFERENT SENSES OF THE TERM "LAW." 1. That which binds: hence the law of God as a rule of life whether revealed in the Scriptures or in the heart. 2. The law as distinguished from the prophets. 3. The law as distinguished from the gospel. 4. The whole revelation of God as contained in the Scriptures. This is the sense in which the word is often used in the Psalms, and in which we now take it. II. WHAT IS MEANT BY DELIGHTING IN IT. In general this is "to regard with lively satisfaction and pleasure." But what the expression really implies, depends on the nature of the object. To delight in a landscape expresses a different state of mind from delighting in a friend, and delight in a poem from delighting in the law of God. There is—1. An æsthetic delight in the Scriptures such as Lowth strongly expresses in his "Hebrew poetry." Many admire the histories, prophecies, and portraiture of character in the Bible. 2. An intellectual delight in the wisdom of its laws and institutions. The principles of its jurisprudence and government have been the admiration of statesmen. 3. A mere delight in the purity of its precepts. This is exhibited by those who deny its Divine origin. All this is different from what is meant in the text. III. TRUE DELIGHT IN THE LAW OF GOD IS DUE TO THE INFLUENCE OF THE SPIRIT. 1. This influence is—(1) A subjective change in the mind analogous to opening the eyes of the blind; such a change as imparts the power of spiritual vision. This is not enough. A man may have the power of vision in a dark room. (2) It produces a revelation of the truth in its true nature and relations. This is experienced much more abundantly at some times than at others. 2. The effect of these operations is—(1) An apprehension of the truth and, consequently, of the Divine origin of the law. (2) An appreciation of its excellence. (3) An experience of its power to

sanctify, console, guide, &c. (4) An acquiescence in it and rejoicing in it as an exhibition of God's character, the rule of duty, the plan of salvation, the person and work of Christ and the future state. Conclusion: The more we delight in the law of God the more we shall be conformed to it, and the better able to teach it. (*C. Hodge, D.D.*) *Delight in the law, a good sign of a gracious heart*:—1. Of the blessed man the Psalmist says (Psa. i.) that "his delight is in the law of the Lord," and therefore doth he meditate in it, day and night. That which is the burden of a carnal heart is the delight of the renewed soul. This was the happy experience of our apostle. In the preceding verse he speaks of a living principle within him, willing that which is good. Here he carries his thoughts further: for to delight in the law of God is more than to will that which is good. 2. The word, here rendered "delight," is not found anywhere else in the New Testament. The apostle makes use of an uncommon word to express unspeakable satisfaction. I. IT IS THE DISTINGUISHING CHARACTER OF A GOOD MAN, THAT HE DELIGHTS IN THE LAW OF GOD. 1. The children of God delight to know and do the will of their Father (1 John v. 3). 2. As every child of God hath his measure of light to behold the excellency of the Divine law, so he hath his measure of delight in it. 3. If you love the law of God, you will take pleasure in it, even though it condemns you; you will not wish it were changed for one less holy. You will also meditate upon it, and study conformity to it. II. A TRUE DELIGHT IN THE LAW OF GOD IS AN UNSPEAKABLE BLESSING. 1. Such a delight must spring from love; and you know how studious love is to please; preferring the will of the object beloved to its own will. So love to God will turn all duty into delight. 2. This delight in the law of God supposeth some good degree of conformity to the object beloved. In all love three things are necessary. Goodness in the object, knowledge of that goodness, and suitableness, or conformity. These three things united beget love, and, if they increase, they will produce that delight which our apostle professes in the law of God. 3. This delight can never be produced, but by seeing the law as it is in Christ. It was in the heart of Christ: "Thy law is within My heart." By viewing the law in Christ, the believer unites the law with the gospel, and they mutually embrace each other: while both agree to promote the happiness of the creature, and the glory of the Creator and Redeemer. III. ALTHOUGH THIS DELIGHT IS A PROOF OF OUR CONFORMITY TO CHRIST, YET OUR APOSTLE WOULD NOT HAVE US CONCEIVE TOO HIGHLY OF IT IN THE PRESENT IMPERFECT STATE. There is something, even in believers themselves, which does not, cannot delight in the law of God. So far as a man is sanctified, so far will he delight in the law of God, and no further. There is flesh as well as spirit in the best of saints upon earth. (*J. Stafford.*) *The opposing laws*:—I. THE CONFLICT. 1. It is a strife between two instincts called laws. The law of God desires to obtain the mastery over the soul. But the law of nature resists its influence. 2. This strife originates the fact of our dual nature. The inner man is the spirit of life which naturally has heavenly instincts and desires. But the "members" composed of the earth naturally desire earthly things. Hence the two desires do pull different ways. 3. The strife exists because the fall of man into sin. Originally man's higher nature was obedient to God. He sinned through yielding to the outer man. Through his higher instincts yielding to bodily impulses, he cast to the wind all the nobler feelings of the inner man. II. THE NATURE OF THIS CONFLICT. 1. It is, in a Christian man, a strife between what he loves and what he hates, between what he knows to be right and for his good and what he knows will be his ruin. 2. Although we are conscious of this fact, still we find the law of sin prevailing. In the warfare we find that the spiritual law and desire and knowledge often get the worst of it. III. WHAT IS THE MORAL INFLUENCE OF THIS INEVITABLE CONFLICT? 1. To teach us not to expect too much in this world. We are not to be cast down by failure. Half of those who go back do so owing to discouragement. They are too sanguine. We are not to look upon life in this world as life in heaven, where it will be without temptation. But—2. We are not to relax in our struggles. The fact of our having to fight shows that God never intended us to enter heaven without doing something to show that we are worthy of the reward. We may not be able to obtain a victory at present, but we may hold our own and make advance. Conclusion: We learn—1. That it is not always knowledge of what is right nor love of what is good that saves a man. The inner man may delight in Divine things, but worldly things may be too strong for him. What are you to do, then? Fight, strive. 2. That we long for that time when our higher nature shall be victorious, and our lower nature purified. 3. How foolish it is to meet worldly temptations with worldly weapons. The arm of flesh can never resist flesh. Arguments, reasonings, &c., are vain.

4. To appreciate the heavenly armour, and the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit. 5. Humility, and that victory is not to the strong. (*J. J. S. Bird, B.A.*)

Why am I thus?—I. IN EVERY TRUE CHRISTIAN THE RULING POWER IN HIM DELIGHTS IN THE LAW OF GOD. 1. The new nature cannot sin because it is born of God. We are made partakers of the Divine nature, and therefore delight in the law of God. (1) We would not wish to have one syllable of that law altered, though it condemns us. We perceive it not as truth established by investigation, but as truth all radiant, shining in its own majesty. (2) Nor would we have the spirituality of the law in any degree compromised. We are not only pleased with the law as we read it, but with the very spirit of the law. He never thinks that God is too exacting. (3) We desire to have no dispensation from the law. In the Church of Rome indulgences are regarded as a blessing. We ask no such favour. A license even for a moment would be but a liberty to leave the paths of light and peace to wander in darkness and danger. (4) We desire to keep the law according to the mind of God. If it were proposed to us that we should have whatever we should ask for, the gift we should crave beyond every other is holiness. 2. Now, every Christian that has that desire within his soul will never be satisfied until that desire is fulfilled, and—(1) This shows that we delight in the law of God after the inward man. (2) This, however, is proved in a more practical way when the Christian overcomes many of the desires of the flesh and of the mind. Often in striving to be holy he has to put himself to much stern self-denial; but he does it cheerfully. When a man is willing to bear reproach for righteousness sake, then it is that the man gives proof that he delights in the law of God. II. WHERE THERE IS THIS DELIGHT IN THE LAW OF GOD, YET THERE IS ANOTHER LAW IN THE MEMBERS CONFLICTING WITH IT. Paul could see it first, and then he had to encounter it, and at length to some extent he was enthralled by it. 1. There is in each one of us a law of sin. (1) It may be seen even when it is not in operation, if our eyes are lightened. Whenever I hear a man say he has no propensity to sin, I infer at once that he does not live at home. Sometimes it is dormant. Gunpowder is not always exploding, but it is always explosive. The viper may be coiled up doing no damage; but it hath a deadly virus beneath its fangs. (2) Sin generally breaks forth suddenly, taking us by surprise. (3) But note when there is most money in the house, then is the likeliest time for thieves to break in; and when there is most grace in the soul the devil will try to assault it. Pirates were not accustomed to attack vessels when they went out to fetch gold from the Indies: they always waylaid them when they were coming home. Let us be more watchful than in seasons of tranquility. (4) It is remarkable how sin will show itself in the holiest of duties. When you feel that you ought to pray, do you not find sometimes an unwillingness? When your soul is led away with thoughts of things Divine, straight across your soul there comes a bad thought. Or perhaps you get through your devotion with much delight in God; but presently there steals over your mind a self-satisfaction that you have prayed so well that you must be growing in grace. Perhaps, again, you did not feel any liberty in prayer, and then you will murmur you might as well give up praying. 2. And this law in his members "wars against the law of the mind." There must be two sides to a war. (1) We have known this warfare on this wise. A wrong desire has come and we have utterly loathed it, but it has followed us again and again. We have been harassed with doubts, yet the more bitterly we have detested them the more relentlessly they have pursued us. Mayhap, a hideous sentiment is wrapped up in a neat epigram, and then it will haunt the memory, and we shall strive to dislodge it in vain. (2) Whence these evils? Sometimes from Satan; but most commonly temptation derives strength as well as opportunity from the moods or habits to which our own constitution is prone. (3) But the war carried on by this evil nature is not always by the continual besieging of the soul, at times it tries to take us by assault. When we are off our guard up it will come and attack us. 3. This warring brought Paul into captivity to the law of sin. Not that he means he wandered into immoralities. No observer may have noticed any fault in the apostle's character, but he could see it in himself. It is a captivity like that of the Israelites in Babylon itself when a child of God is suffered to fall into some great sin. But, long before it comes to that pass, this law of sin brings us unto captivity in other respects. While you are contending against inbred sin doubts will invade your heart. Surely if I were a child of God I should not be hampered in devotion or go to a place of worship and feel no enjoyment. Oh, what a captivity the soul is brought into when it allows inbred sin to cast any doubts upon its safety in Christ. III. IT IS SOME COMFORT THAT THIS WAR IS AN INTERESTING PHASE OF

CHRISTIAN EVIDENCE. Such as are dead in sin have never made proof of any of these things. These inward conflicts show that we are alive. The strong man while he keeps the house will keep it in peace. It is when a stronger than he comes to eject him that there is a fight. Do not be depressed about it. The best of God's saints have suffered in this very same manner. Look up yonder to those saints in their white robes! Ask them whence their victory came. The richest consolation comes from the last verse. Though the fight may be long and arduous, the result is not doubtful. You will have to get to heaven fighting for every inch of the way; but you will get there. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The Christian warfare and victory:*—I. A BELIEVER DELIGHTS IN THE LAW OF GOD (ver. 22). 1. Before a man comes to Christ he hates the law of God (chap. viii. 7) on account of—(1) Its purity. It is infinitely opposed to all sin. But natural men love sin, and therefore they hate the law, as bats hate the light and fly against it. (2) Its breadth. It extends to all their outward actions, seen and unseen; to every idle word; to the looks of their eye; it dives into the deepest caves of their heart; it condemns the most secret springs of sin and lust that nestle there. (3) Its unchangeableness. If the law would let down its requirements then ungodly men would be well pleased. But it is unchangeable as God. 2. When a man comes to Christ this is all changed. He can say, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man." "O how I love Thy law." "I delight to do Thy will." There are two reasons for this: (1) The law is no longer an enemy. "Christ hath redeemed me from the curse of the law," &c. (2) The Spirit of God writes the law on the heart (Jer. xxxi. 33). Coming to Christ takes away our fear of the law; the Holy Spirit coming into our heart makes us love the law. II. A TRUE BELIEVER FEELS AN OPPOSING LAW IN HIS MEMBERS (ver. 23). When a sinner comes first to Christ, he often thinks he will never sin any more. A little breath of temptation soon discovers his heart, and he cries out, "I see another law. "Observe—1. What he calls it, "another law"; quite different from the law of God—"a law of sin" (ver. 25); "a law of sin and death" (chap. viii. 2). It is the same law which is called "the flesh" (Gal. v. 17); "the old man" (Eph. iv. 22); "your members" (Col. iii.); "a body of death" (ver. 24). 2. What His law is doing—"warring." There never can be peace in the bosom of a believer. There is peace with God, but constant war with sin. Sometimes, indeed, an army lies in ambush quiet till a favourable moment comes. So the lusts often lie quiet till the hour of temptation, and then they war against the soul. The heart is like a volcano, sometimes it slumbers and sends up nothing but a little smoke; but the fire will soon break out again. Is Satan ever successful? In the deep wisdom of God the law in the members does sometimes bring the soul into captivity. Noah was a perfect man, and walked with God, and yet he was drunken. Abraham was the "friend of God," and yet he told a lie. Job was a perfect man, and yet he was provoked to curse the day of his birth. And so with Moses, David, Solomon, Hezekiah, Peter, and the apostles. (1) Have you experienced this warfare? It is a clear mark of God's children. (2) If any of you are groaning under it—(*a*) Be humbled. (*b*) Let this teach you your need of Jesus. (*c*) Be not discouraged. Jesus is able to save you to the uttermost. III. THE FEELING OF A BELIEVER DURING THIS WARFARE. 1. He feels wretched (ver. 24). There is nobody in this world so happy as a believer. He has the pardon of all his sins in Christ. Still when he feels the plague of his own heart he cries, "O wretched man that I am!" 2. He seeks deliverance. If lust work in your heart, and you lie down contented with it, you are none of Christ's! 3. He gives thanks for victory. Truly we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us; for we can give thanks before the fight is done. (*R. M. McCheyne, M.A.*) *Sin—conflict with—victory over:*—We have here—I. PAUL'S EXPERIENCE. 1. That there were within himself two conflicting principles. 2. That these principles were under the direction of opposing intelligences—"Warring." The conflict is not a collision between blind forces. In every war there is intelligence on both sides. The "law of the mind" is under the direction of the "Captain" of our salvation. That of "the members" is under the direction of the devil. The "Holy War" in the "Town of Man-soul" is more than a poetic dream. 3. That the tendency of sin is to make men slaves to itself. When sin is indulged in for a length of time the power of resistance is weakened, and man becomes the helpless prey of the foe. Witness the miser, sensualist, opium eater, drunkard, &c. The grasp of sin is a tenacious one. It rallies, too, after many a defeat, and clings with deadly obstinacy oftentimes to those most "valiant for the truth." II. PAUL'S EMOTIONS IN THE FACE OF HIS EXPERIENCES. He felt—1. "Wretched." 2. Loathsome. Sin was as hateful as a

corpse is to living men. 3. Helpless. "Who shall deliver me?" 4. Hopeless. The whole verse seems a wail of despair. "*Who* shall," &c. III. PAUL'S DELIVERANCE. "I thank God," &c. The darkest hour is nearest the dawn. This deliverance was—1. From God. God alone is able. "Who can forgive sins but God?" It is He only who giveth us the victory, &c. 2. Through Christ. Paul knew of no other way. His good moral life (Phil. iii.), his mental culture (Acts xvii.), his zeal for the cause of God (2 Cor. xi.); in none of these does he hope. IV. PAUL'S INFERENCE FROM THE WHOLE. "So then with the mind," &c. Victory is at hand. The enemy is routed from the citadel. 1. The better part of his nature—the immortal part—was in the service of God. 2. Only the inferior part—the mortal members of the flesh—were in any sense in the service of sin. (*R. T. Howell.*) *Victory amid strife*:—1. Such is the weary conflict which Adam's fall entailed on all born in the way of nature. In paradise there was no disturbance; God had made them for Himself, and nothing had come between them and God. They knew not sin, and so knew not what it was to sin; they could not even fear sin which they knew not. Man lived as he willed, since he willed what God commanded; he lived enjoying God, and from Him, who is good, himself was good. 2. To fall altered the whole face of man. Easy was the command to keep. The heavier was the disobedience which kept not a command so easy. And so, because man rebelled against God, he lost the command over himself. He would not have the free, loving, blissful service of God; and so he was subjected to the hateful, restless service of his lower self. Every faculty became disordered. Yet is there, even in unregenerate man, some trace of his Maker's hands. He cannot truly serve God, but he cannot, until he has wholly destroyed his soul's life, tranquilly serve sin. Yet, "lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and pride of life," are the more powerful. He obeys, though unwillingly, "the law of sin" which he had taken upon himself; not wholly lost, because not willingly. 3. Such was our state by nature, to heal which our Redeemer came. He willed to restore us; but He willed not to restore us without cost and trial of ours. He wills that we should know how sore a thing is rebellion against God. He willeth to restore to us the mastery over ourselves, but through ourselves; to give us the victory, but by overcoming in us. The strife then remains. To have no strife would be a sign not of victory, but of slavery, not of life, but of death. But the abiding state whereof Paul speaks cannot be that in which a Christian ought to be. "To be sold under sin," (which is only said of the most wicked of the wicked kings of Israel), to be "carnal," to "serve with the flesh the law of sin," to be "brought under captivity to it," cannot be our state as sons of God and members of Christ. If this were so, where were the "liberty wherewith Christ has made us free"? To what end would be the gifts of the Holy Ghost, the power of Christ within us, His armour of righteousness, wherewith He compasses us? No! the end of the Christian's conflict must be, not defeat, but victory. There are, says an ancient father, four states of man. In the first, man struggles not, but is subdued; in the second, he struggles, and is still subdued; in the third, he struggles, and subdues; in the fourth, he has to struggle no more. The first state is man's condition when not under the law of God. The second is his state under the law, but not with the fulness of Divine grace. The third, wherein he is in the main victorious, is under the full grace of the gospel. The fourth, of tranquil freedom from all struggle, is in the blessed and everlasting peace. 4. But however any be under the power of grace, they, while in the flesh, must have conflict still. It would not be a state of trial without conflict. In us, although re-born of God, there yet remains that "infection of nature whereby the desire of the flesh is not subject to the law of God." "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves." 5. Yet through this very truth some deceive, some distress themselves wrongly. They argue in opposite ways. We have a nature ready to burst out into sin, unless it be kept down by grace. But by grace it may be kept down increasingly. What is evil ought to be continually lessened; what is good ought to be strengthened. Yet this infection within us, although of "the nature of sin," unless our will consent to its suggestions; and so long as, by God's grace, we master it, is not sin, but the occasion of the victories of His grace. People distress themselves by not owning this; they deceive themselves if they make it the occasion of carelessness. The one says, "My nature is sinful, and therefore I am the object of God's displeasure," the other, "My nature is sinful, and therefore I cannot help it, and am not the object of God's displeasure, although I do what is wrong." The one mistakes sinfulness of nature for actual sin, the other excuses actual sin because his nature is sinful. Each is untrue. A man is

not the object of God's displeasure, on account of the remains of his inborn corruption, if he in earnest strive with it. If he strive not in earnest with it, he is the object of God's displeasure, not on account of the sinfulness of his nature, but on account of his own negligence as to that sinfulness of nature, or his sinful concurrence with it. Nothing is sin to us, which has not some consent of the will. We are, then, to have this conflict; we ought not, by God's grace, in any of the more grievous sins, to be defeated in it. 6. This conflict is continual. It spreads through the whole life, and through every part in man. Man it besieged on all sides. No power, faculty, sense, is free from it. But though the whole man is besieged thus, his inward self, where God dwells, is hemmed in, but not overcome, unless his will consents. "Sin lieth at the door." The will holds the door closed; the will alone opens the door. If thou open not the door thyself, sin cannot enter in. Do thou submit thy own will to God, and God will subject this contrary will to thee. Thou canst not have victory unless thou be assaulted. Fear not. Rather thou mayst take it as a token of God's love, who sets thee in the conflict. He will uphold thee by His hand, when the waves are boisterous. So shalt thou have the victory through His Spirit. (*E. B. Pusey, D.D.*) **But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind.**—*The dual nature and the duel within*:—I. THERE ARE IN ALL BELIEVERS TWO PRINCIPLES. 1. The first in order of time is the old Adam nature. It is born of and with the flesh. Some fancy that it is to be improved, gradually tamed down and sanctified; but it is enmity against God, and is not reconciled to God; neither, indeed, can be. (1) This old nature lives in our members; its nest is the body, and it works through the body. There are certain appetites of ours which are perfectly allowable, nay, even necessary; but they can be very easily pushed to sinful extremes. (2) The sin which lurks in the flesh will grow weaker in proportion as the holy principle grows stronger; and it is at no time to be tolerated or excused, but we are to fight against it, and conquer it. 2. When we are born again there is dropped into our soul the living and incorruptible seed of the Word of God. It is akin to the Divine nature, and cannot sin, because it is born of God. It is at deadly enmity with the old nature, which it will in the end destroy; but it has its work to do, which will not be accomplished all at once. II. THE EXISTENCE OF THESE TWO PRINCIPLES NECESSITATES A CONFLICT. The lion will not lie down with the lamb. Fire will not be on good terms with water. Death will not parley with life, nor Christ with Belial. The dual life provokes a daily duel. 1. The conflict is not felt by all young Christians at the first. Christian life may be divided into three stages. (1) That of comfort, in which the young Christian rejoices in the Lord. (2) That of conflict. The more of this the better. Instead of being children at home we have grown into men, and therefore we must go to war. Under the old law, when a man was married, or built a house, he was excused from fighting for a season, but when that was over, he must take his place in the ranks; and so is it with the child of God. (3) That of contemplation; in which the believer sits down to reflect upon the goodness of the Lord towards him, and upon all the good things in store for him. This is the land Beulah, which Bunyan describes as lying on the edge of the river, and so near to the Celestial City that you can hear the music and smell the perfumes from the gardens of the blessed. That is a stage which we must not expect to reach just now. 2. The reason of the fight is this; the new nature comes into our heart, to rule over it, but the carnal mind is not willing to surrender. A new throne is set up, and the old monarch, outlawed, and made to lurk in holes and corners, says to himself, "I will not have this. I will get the throne back again." (Read the "Holy War.") And let me warn you that the flesh may be doing us most mischief when it seems to be doing none. During war the sappers and miners will work underneath a city, and those inside say, "The enemy are very quiet; what can they be at?" They know their business well enough, and are laying their mines for unexpected strokes. Hence an old divine used to say that he was never so much afraid of any devil as he was of no devil. To be let alone tends to breed a dry rot in the soul. III. THIS WARFARE SOMETIMES LEADS US INTO CAPTIVITY. This sometimes consists in—1. The very rising of the old nature. The old nature suggests to you some sin: you hate the sin, and you despise yourself for lying open to be tempted in such a way. The very fact that such a thought has crossed your mind is bondage to your pure spirit. You do not fall into the sin; you shake off the serpent, but you feel its slime upon your soul. What a difference. A spot of ink on my coat nobody perceives; but a drop on a white handkerchief everybody at once detects. The very passing of temptation across a renewed soul brings it

into captivity. I saw in Rome a very large and well executed photograph of a street and an ancient temple; but I noticed that right across the middle was the trace of a mule and a cart. The artist had done his best to prevent it, but there was the ghost of that cart and mule. An observer unskilled in art might not notice the mark, but a careful artist, with a high ideal, is vexed to see his work thus marred; and so with moral stains, that which the common man thinks a trifle is a great sorrow to the pure-hearted son of God, and he is brought into captivity by it. 2. The loss of joy through the uprising of the flesh. You want to sing the praises of God, but the temptation comes, and you have to battle with it, and the song gives place to the battle-shout. It is time for prayer, but somehow you cannot control your thoughts. In holy contemplation you try to concentrate your thoughts, but somebody knocks at the door, or a child begins to cry, or a man begins to grind an organ under your window, and how can you meditate? All things seem to be against you. Little outside matters which are trifling to others will often prove terrible disturbers of your spirit. 3. Actual sin. We do, in moments of forgetfulness, that which we would willingly undo, and say that which we would willingly unsay. The spirit was willing, but the flesh was weak; and then the consequence is, to a child of God, that he feels himself a captive. He has yielded to treacherous banishments, and now, like Samson, his locks are shorn. He goes out to shake himself as he did aforetime, but the Philistines are upon him, and it will be a happy thing for him if he does not lose his eyes, and come to grind at the mill like a slave. IV. THIS WARFARE, AND THIS OCCASIONAL TRIUMPH OF THE FLESH, MAKE US LOOK TO CHRIST FOR VICTORY. Whenever there is a question between me and the devil my constant way is to tell the accuser, "Well, if I am not a saint I am a sinner, and Jesus came into the world to save sinners, therefore I will go to Christ, and look to Him again." That is the way to conquer sin, as well as to overcome despair; for, when faith in Jesus comes back to your soul, you will be strong to fight, and you will win the victory. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The conflict in natural and spiritual persons*:—Note here—1. The combatants or champions—the law of the mind, and the law of the members. Grotius distinguisheth of a fourfold law—(1) The law of God; recorded in Scripture. (2) The law of the mind; the judgment between things honest and dishonest. (3) The law of the members; the carnal or sensual appetite. (4) The law of sin; the custom of sinning. To complete which we must add—(5) The law of original sin propagated by generation, which is strengthened by custom, and, together with our sensual appetite depraved, makes up the law of sin. (6) The law of sanctifying grace infused in regeneration; which completes the law of the mind. 2. The equality of this fight; sin indwelling fighting against grace indwelling, there being a pitched battle, in which some graces and corruptions bear the office of commanders, others of common soldiers. 3. The disparity of the fight, managed by way of "rebellion" on the part of sin, by way of loyality and authority on the part of grace. 4. The dubiousness of the fight, both parties often fighting, as it were, with equal prowess and success; sometimes one, sometimes the other, seeming to get the better (Exod. xvii. 11). 5. The sad event too often on the better side which is led captive. In which term yet there is a mixture of comfort; sin, when in triumph, acting as a tyrant, not as a lawful sovereign. The law of the mind may be overborne by, but never indents with, the law of the members. Withal, note in the text a mixture of civil and military terms to illustrate the spiritual conflict; there being a law-suit, as well as a pitched battle, between grace and corruption. I. IN EVERY MAN, ESPECIALLY IN THE REGENERATE, THERE IS A CONFLICT BETWEEN THE LAW OF THE MIND AND THE LAW OF THE MEMBERS. 1. This appears—(1) By the testimony of nature speaking in the heathen—"Video meliora, proboque: Deteriora sequor." (2) By testimony of Scripture—(*a*) As to the godly (Gal. v. 17). (*b*) As to the unregenerate (Mark vi. 26; Rom. ii. 14, 15). (3) By every man's experience. 2. Concerning this conflict note as follows—(1) As the great, so the little, world (man) is made up of contraries. The outward man of contrary elements, health, and sickness; the inward man, of contrary principles, reason and passion, conscience and sense. (2) Man is both an actor in, and a theatre of, the greatest action and noblest conflict in the world. He that conquers himself is a nobler hero than Alexander, who conquered a great part of the world (Prov. xvi. 32). (3) In the state of innocency there was no conflict: in the state of glory there will be no conflict, there being no corruption to combat with grace. In infants there is a conflict; in a state of corruption there is no spiritual conflict, because there is no renewing grace to combat with corruption (Luke xi. 21, 22). (4) The natural conflict is in every godly man, the spiritual conflict is in no natural

man. This I note to allay the fears of drooping saints. (5) As the great wisdom of God lies in governing the great world made up of contraries, so the great wisdom of a godly man lies in governing the little world made up of like contraries. (6) This government lies principally in discerning these conflicting contraries, and improving their contrariety for the advantage of the outward and inward man. In this government Christ is principal (Psa. cx. 2); a saint instrumental (Hos. xi. 12). (7) This singular wisdom is attainable in the use of ordinary means, and that by the meanest who have grace to follow Christ's conduct; yet not by the power of free-will or human industry, but by the bounty of free and special grace (2 Tim. iii. 15; James i. 5; Rom. ix. 16). (8) It cannot be expected that any unregenerate person should understand to purpose the difference between these two conflicts; because he hath no experience of this double state, and double principle. II. WHEREIN DOTH THE NATURAL AND SPIRITUAL CONFLICT DIFFER? 1. In the ground or cause of the fight; which—(1) In the unregenerate, is—(*a*) Natural principles, or the relics of God's image in the understanding. The notion of a deity, and of loving my neighbour as myself, cannot be razed out of any man's heart; nor can these principles lie always idle, but will more or less be in action against corrupt inclinations. (*b*) Acquired principles, from education and custom. This light discovers more of sin's obliquity and danger, thereby laying on stronger restraint, through fear, shame, &c. (*c*) The natural temper of the body, which indisposes to some special sins, and disposes to some special graces, or the reverse. (*d*) The contrariety of one lust to another. Thus ambition says, "spend"; covetousness, "spare"; revenge incites to murder; self-love restrains, for fear of a halter. Here, now, is a combat, but only between flesh more refined and flesh more corrupted. (2) On the other hand, in the regenerate, the combat ariseth from the antipathy of two contrary natures perfectly hating each other (Gal. v. 17). Of all affections, love and hatred are most uncompounded. A godly man hates sin as God hates it, not so much for its danger as for its loathsomeness. As in persons, so much more in principles, there is a mutual abomination (*cf.* Psa. cxxxix. 22; Prov. xxix. 27; Psa. xcvii. 10, cxix. 128; Rom. viii. 7). Enemies may, but enmity can never, be reconciled. 2. In the object or matter of conflict; which—(1) In a natural man, is—(*a*) Grosser evils that startle the conscience. (*b*) Infamous evils that are attended with worldly fear or shame; or—(*c*) Some particular evils that cross temper, education, or custom, &c. (2) But in spiritual persons it is—(1) Little sins, as well as great. (2) Secret sins, as well as open. (3) The first risings, as well as the gross acts. (4) Sins which promise worldly safety, credit, profit, contentment, as well as those sins that threaten the contrary. (5) In a word, all moral evil; hatred and antipathy being of the whole kind (Psa. cxix. 128); especially of those evils which most endanger the new man (Psa. xviii. 23); and such as are beloved sins (Matt. xviii. 8, 9). 3. In the subject of the conflict. In natural men the fight is in several faculties; reason fighting against sense and passion, or the conscience against the corrupt inclination of the will; whence the fight is more at a distance by missile arms. But in the regenerate the fight is more close in the same faculty; the wisdom of flesh and spirit counteracting, in the same understanding, the lustings of the flesh and spirit in the same will; whence the fight is between veterans of approved courage, grace and corruption immediately; which at first, haply, was managed by the spear-men and targetiers, reason and interest. The former is like the fight of the soldiers of fortune, more lazy, and by way of siege; the latter more keen and vigorous, by way of assault and onslaught, like that of Scanderbeg, who fought with his enemies breast to breast in a box or grate. 4. In their weapons. The natural man's weapons are, like himself, carnal; to wit, natural or moral reason, worldly fears or hopes, and sometimes spiritual fears or hopes, but carnalised—*i.e.*, slavish and mercenary. But the regenerate man's weapons are spiritual (2 Cor. x. 4); to wit, gracious interest, and all the spiritual armour (Eph. vi. 11–18). 5. In the manner of the fight. The natural man's combat is more mercenary; admits of more parleys. But the spiritual man, as such, fights it out to the last, and will give no quarter. The former is like the strife between wind and tide, which often come about, and are both of one side; the latter is like the dam and the tide, that strive till one be borne down; or like stream and tide meeting and conflicting till one hath overborne the other. 6. In the extent of the conflict, in relation to its subject and duration. (1) The extent of the subject is double—(*a*) As to the faculties; the seat of war in the regenerate is every faculty, flesh and spirit being ever mixed; as light and darkness in every point of air in the twilight (1 Thess. v. 23). So that, in the regenerate, there is at

the same time both a civil and a foreign war; that in the same faculty, this in one faculty against another. Contrariwise, in the unregenerate, there is usually nothing but a foreign war between several faculties, there being nothing of spiritual good in their wills and affections, to set the same faculty against itself. (*b*) As to acts, it extends to every act of piety and charity, especially if more spiritual (ver. 21); for which the natural man hath no conflict, but against them. Nor, indeed, doth he know experimentally what spiritual acts of piety are. But the regenerate find it by constant experience; faith and unbelief, humanity and pride, ever opposing and counter-working each other; whence he is forced to cut his way through his enemies, and to dispute it step by step. Others may seek, but he strives (Luke xiii. 24), and takes the kingdom of heaven by a holy violence (Matt. xi. 12). (2) As to the extent or duration of the war, which, being in the regenerate irreconcilable, must needs be interminable, like the war between the Romans and Carthaginians; or as fire and water will fight for ever, if together for ever. In the natural man, contrariwise, the quarrel is soon taken up; as between the Romans and other nations; there being not that antipathy between reason and corruption as there is between grace and corruption. 7. In the concomitants and consequents of the fight. (1) Godly men sin more with knowledge, but wicked men more against knowledge. (2) The fight in natural men seeks only the repression, not the suppression, of sin; to lop the superfluous branches, not stub up the root; to charm the serpent, not to break its head. But the spiritual fight seeks the full mortification and abolition of sin (chap. vi. 6), and the complete perfection of grace (Phil. iii. 10-14). (*Roger Drake, D.D.*) *The conflict and captivity; or the law of the mind and the law in the members:*—I. THE LAW OF THE MIND. The mind has laws of sensation, perception, apprehension, imagination, comparison, memory, reasoning, and volition. But that law of which the apostle speaks is a law which has relation to morals and religion. It is that law in virtue of which we consent to the law of God that it is good, and delight therein after the inward man (vers. 16, 22); that law which prompts us to good, and restrains us from evil (ver. 19); that law which congratulates and makes us glad when we render it obedience (2 Cor. i. 12), but which reproves and makes us miserable when we dare, against its warnings, to do that which is evil (Rom. ii. 14, 15, and this whole section). In one word, that law is "conscience." But we observe more particularly—1. That it is of the very essence of this law to affirm the binding force over the man of truth, goodness, and righteousness. Its proper function is, not to determine what is right in any given case, but to affirm that the right is a matter of moral obligation in all cases. The function of conscience is not to make, perceive, or define law, but to affirm that we are bound to the lawful and right. Conscience, as is indicated by the very name, involves a complex knowledge. It includes a knowledge of—(1) Myself as capable of moral actions. (2) Of an external law of righteousness, according to the requirements of which I am bound to act; and—(3) Of the fact that I am so bound. 2. That this law, while it does morally bind, nevertheless does not compel, but only impel. (1) Prospectively, it impels to the right, or restrains from the wrong, and therefore acts as a motive force affecting the determinations of the will. (2) Retrospectively, it congratulates the mind, when the right has been chosen and achieved in opposition to the solicitations of wrong; and reproaches the mind, when the wrong has been elected and done in opposition to the inner consciousness of duty (Heb. x. 22; 1 Pet. iii. 16). 3. That this law has its ground in the reality of moral distinctions. That of which it affirms the binding force is something distinct from and independent of itself. It recognises the distinction between right and wrong, good and evil, because that it has a special aptitude for such recognition; and, on the same ground, it affirms its own peculiar relationship to these discriminated things as a moral subject. 4. That this law involves implicitly the recognition of an absolute and infallible Administrator of righteousness. For it not only affirms that the law is binding, but also that it will certainly be in the end enforced. The joy of a good conscience, and the remorse of an evil one, are, in no case, pronounced by conscience itself to be final awards, but only premonitory and anticipative. II. THE LAW IN THE MEMBERS. 1. This is the law of the animal organism, which, inasmuch as it pertains to that in man which is lower, ought always to be subject to that which is superior. 2. Now this law is in itself, and within its proper sphere, perfectly right and good (Gen. i. 28). It includes—(1) The appetites of hunger and thirst, which are at the base of all the labour of mankind, to insure a continuous supply of food. (2) The susceptibility of pain and injury, which is at the foundation of all manufacture, architecture, hunting, and war.

(3) The social and family affections, which are developed in marriage, in the care of children, and in the love of relatives and race. III. THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE TWO. 1. In man's complex consciousness the two laws meet. Both alike are laws of his nature, and obedience to both, within certain limits, is required. So long as they impel onwards in the same direction there can be no difficulty. Within its own domain the inferior law is right. But it must not break through the fences set up by the moral law. It must not provide for the defence, support, or enjoyment of the animal life by any means that offend against truth, justice, and mercy. 2. It is just here that the conflict begins. The law in the members, regardless of any rule of morality, impels onward to the attainment of one end only, the preservation and self-satisfaction of the animal life. Then the law of the mind interposes to arrest that action. Then the inferior law, made all the more clamorous by the invention of authority, may prevail, and the whole man will be delivered captive to that other "law" which is described as "the law of sin and death" (James i. 14, 15). (*W. Tyson.*) *Spiritual fluctuations*:—As the needle of a compass, when it is directed to its beloved star, at the first waves on either side, and seems indifferent to the rising or declining sun, and when it seems first determined to the north, remains a while trembling, and stands not still in full enjoyment till after first a great variety of motion, and then an undisturbed posture; so is the piety, and so is the conversion of a man, wrought by degrees and several steps of imperfection; and at first our choices are wavering, convinced by the grace of God, and yet not persuaded; and then persuaded, but not resolved; and then resolved, but deferring to begin; and then beginning, but, as all beginnings are, in weakness and uncertainty; and we fly out often in large indiscretions, and we look back to Sodom, and long to return to Egypt; and when the storm is quite over, we find little bubblings and unevennesses upon the face of the waters, and often weaken our own purposes by returns of sin. (*Jeremy Taylor.*) *Sin tolerated and sin kept down*:—What swarms of rabbits the traveller sees on the commons and fields near Leatherhead (in Surrey), and yet a few miles further on at Wootton one scarcely sees a single specimen of that prolific race. The creature is indigenous to both places, but at Leatherhead he is tolerated, and therefore multiplies, while at the other places the gamekeepers diligently shoot down all they see. Sins are natural to all men, but it makes all the difference whether they are fostered or kept under; the carnal mind makes itself a warren for evil, but a gracious Spirit wages constant war with every transgression. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Vers. 24, 25. **O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?**—*Soul despotism*:—I. THE SOUL'S OPPRESSIVE DESPOT. "The body of this death." What is meant by this? Corrupt animalism. What is elsewhere called the flesh with its corruptions and lusts. The body, intended to be an instrument and servant of the soul, has become its sovereign, and keeps all its power of intellect and conscience in subjection. Corrupt animalism is the moral monarch of the world. It rules in literature, in politics, in science, and even in churches. This despot is death to all true freedom, progress, happiness. II. THE SOUL'S STRUGGLE TO BE FREE. This implies—1. A quickened consciousness of its condition. "O wretched man that I am!" The vast majority of souls, alas! are utterly insensible to this; hence they remain passive. What quickens the soul into this consciousness? "The law." The light of God's moral law flashes on the conscience and startles it. 2. An earnest desire for help. It feels its utter inability to haul the despot down; and it cries mightily, "Who shall deliver me?" Who? Legislatures, moralists, poets, philosophers, priesthoods? No; they have tried for ages, and have failed. Who? There is One and but One, and to Him Paul alludes in the next verse and the following chapter. "Thanks be to God," &c. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The cry of the Christian warrior*:—The cry not of "a chained captive" to be set free, but of a "soldier in conflict" who looks round for succour. He is in the fight; he sees the enemy advancing against him, with spear in hand, and chains ready to throw over him; the soldier sees his danger, feels his weakness and helplessness, yet has no thought of yielding; he cries out, "Who shall deliver me?" But it is not the cry of a vanquished but of a contending soldier of Jesus Christ. (*F. Bourdillon.*) *Victory in the hidden warfare*:—To enter into the full meaning of these words, we must understand their place in the argument. The great theme is opened in chap. i. 16. To establish this, Paul begins by proving in the first four chapters that both Jew and Gentile are utterly lost. In the fifth he shows that through Christ peace with God may be brought into the conscience of the sinner. In the sixth he proves

that this truth, instead of being any excuse for sin, was the strongest argument against it, for it gave freedom from sin, which the law could never do. And then, in this chapter, he inquires why the law could not bring this gift. Before the law was given, man could not know what sin was, any more than the unevenness of a crooked line can be known until it is placed beside something that is straight. But when the law raised before his eyes a rule of holiness, then, for the first time, his eyes were opened; he saw that he was full of sin; and forthwith there sprang up a fearful struggle. Once he had been "alive without the law"; he had lived, that is, a life of unconscious, self-contented impurity; but that life was gone from him, he could live it no longer. The law, because it was just and good, wrought death in him; for it was a revelation of death without remedy. "The law was spiritual," but he was corrupt, "sold under sin." Even when his struggling will did desire in some measure a better course, still he was beaten down again by evil. "How to perform that which was good he found not." Yea, "when he would do good, evil was present with him." In vain there looked in upon his soul the blessed countenance of an external holiness. Its angel gladness, of which he could in no way be made partaker, did but render darker and more intolerable the loathsome dungeon in which he was perpetually held. It was the fierce struggle of an enduring death; and in its crushing agony, he cried aloud against the nature, which, in its inmost currents, sin had turned into corruption and a curse. "O wretched man that I am!" &c. And then forthwith upon this stream of misery there comes forth a gleam of light from the heavenly presence; "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Here is deliverance for me; I am a redeemed man; holiness may be mine, and, with it, peace and joy. Here is the full meaning of these glorious words. I. THEY LIE AT THE ROOT OF SUCH EXERTIONS AS WE MAKE FOR THOSE WHOM SIN HAS BROUGHT DOWN VERY LOW. 1. They contain the principle which should lead us most truly to sympathise with them. This great truth of the redemption of our nature in Christ Jesus is the only link of brotherhood between man and man. To deny our brotherhood with any of the most miserable of those whom Christ has redeemed, is to deny our own capacity for perfect holiness, and so our true redemption through Christ. 2. Here, too, is the only warrant for any reasonable efforts for their restoration. Without this, every man, who knows anything of the depth of evil with which he has to deal, would give up the attempt in despair. Every reasonable effort to restore any sinner, is a declaration that we believe that we are in a kingdom of grace, of redeemed humanity. Unbelieving men cannot receive the truth that a soul can be thus restored. They believe that you may make a man respectable; but not that you can heal the inner currents of his spiritual life, and so they cannot labour in prayers and ministrations with the spiritual leper, until his flesh, of God's grace, comes again as the flesh of a little child. To endure this labour, we must believe that in Christ, the true Man, and through the gift of His Spirit, there is deliverance from the body of this death. II. IT IS AT THE ROOT ALSO OF ALL REAL EFFORTS FOR OURSELVES. 1. Every earnest man must, if he sets himself to resist the evil which is in himself, know something of the struggle which the apostle here describes; and if he would endure the extremity of that conflict, he must have a firm belief that there is a deliverance for him. Without this, the knowledge of God's holiness is nothing else than the burning fire of despair. And so many do despair. They think they have made their choice, and that they must abide by it; and so they shut their eyes to their sins, they excuse them, they try to forget them, they do everything but overcome them, until they see that in Christ Jesus there is for them, if they will claim it, a sure power over these sins. And, therefore, as the first consequence, let us ever hold it fast, even as our life. 2. Nor is it needful to lower the tone of promise in order to prevent its being turned into an excuse for sin. Here, as elsewhere, the simple words of God contain their own best safeguard against being abused; for what can be so loud a witness against allowed sin in any Christian man as this truth is? If there be in the true Christian life in union with Christ for every one of us this power against sin, sin cannot reign in any who are living in Him. To be in Christ is to be made to conquer in the struggle. So that this is the most quickening and sanctifying truth. It tears up by the roots a multitude of secret excuses. It tells us that if we are alive in Christ Jesus, we must be new creatures. And herein it destroys the commonest form of self-deception—the allowing some sin in ourselves, because in other things we deny ourselves, because we pray, because we give alms, &c. And this self-deception is put down only by bringing out this truth, that in Christ Jesus there is for us, in our struggle with "the body of this death," an entire conquest, if we will but honestly and earnestly

claim it for ourselves; so that if we do not conquer sin, it must be because we are not believing. 3. This will make us diligent in all parts of the Christian life, because all will become a reality. Prayer, the reading of God's Word, &c., will be precious after a new sort, because through them is kept alive our union with Christ, in whom alone is for us a conquest over the evil which is in us. So that, to sum up all in one blessed declaration, "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus will make us free from the law of sin and death." (*Bp. S. Wilberforce.*) *The body of death*:—I. WHAT IS MEANT BY THE BODY OF DEATH OF WHICH THE BELIEVER COMPLAINS. 1. Indwelling sin is called the body of this death, as it is the effect and remains of that spiritual death to which all men are subject in unregeneracy. 2. The remains of sin in the believer is called the body of this death, on account of the deadness and dulness of spirit in the service of God, which it so often produces. 3. Remaining depravity is called the body of death, because it tends to death. (1) It tends to the death of the body. As it was sin that brought us under the influence of the sentence of dissolution; as it is sin that has introduced into the material frame of man those principles of decay which will bring it to the grave; as it is sin which is the parent of those evil passions which, as natural causes, war against the health and life of the body, so it is the in-bred sins of the believer that require his flesh to see the dust. (2) But this is not all. Remaining depravity tends to spiritual and eternal death, and on this account, also, is justly called the body of this death. II. THE GRIEF AND PAIN WHICH REMAINING DEPRAVITY OCCASIONS TO THE BELIEVER. 1. Remaining depravity is thus painful and grievous to the Christian, from his acquaintance with its evil and malignant nature. 2. Remaining sin is thus painful to the Christian, from the constant struggle which it maintains with grace within the heart. Even in eminent saints the contest is often singularly obstinate and painful; for where there is strong grace there are also, sometimes, strong corruptions. Besides, where there is eminent spirituality of mind, there is an aspiration after a freedom from imperfections which scarcely belongs to the present state. III. THE EARNEST LONGINGS AND CONFIDENT AND JOYFUL ASSURANCE OF DELIVERANCE FROM INDWELLING SIN WHICH THE CHRISTIAN ENTERTAINS. 1. Mark his earnest longings—"Who shall deliver me?" The language implies how well the Christian knows he cannot deliver himself from the body of sin. This is the habitual desire of his soul—the habitual object of his pursuit. For this end he prays, he praises, he reads, he hears, he communicates. So earnest, in short, is his desire of deliverance, that he welcomes with this view two things most unwelcome to the feelings of nature—affliction and death. 2. Mark his confident and joyful assurance of deliverance. Weak in himself, the Christian is yet strong in the Lord. All the victories he has hitherto achieved have been through the faith and by the might of the Redeemer. All the victories he shall yet acquire shall be obtained in the same way. 3. Mark the gratitude of the Christian for this anticipated and glorious deliverance. Sin is the cause of all the other evils in which he has been involved, and when sin is destroyed within and put for ever away, nothing can be wanting to perfect his blessedness. Well then does it become him to cherish the feeling and utter the language of thankfulness. (*James Kirkwood.*) *The spectre of the old nature*:—1. Some years ago a number of peculiar photographs were circulated by spiritualists. Two portraits appeared on the same card, one clear and the other obscure. The fully-developed portrait was the obvious likeness of the living person; and the indistinct portrait was supposed to be the likeness of some dead friend, produced by supernatural agency. The mystery, however, was found to admit of an easy scientific explanation. It not unfrequently happens that the portrait of a person is so deeply impressed on the glass of the negative, that although the plate is thoroughly cleansed with strong acid, the picture cannot be removed, although it is made invisible. When such a plate is used over again, the original image faintly reappears along with the new portrait. So is it in the experience of the Christian. He has been washed in the blood of Christ; and beholding the glory of Christ as in a glass, he is changed into the same image. And yet the ghost of his former sinfulness persists in reappearing with the image of the new man. So deeply are the traces of the former godless life impressed upon the soul, that even the sanctification of the Spirit, carried on through discipline, burning as corrosive acid, cannot altogether remove them. 2. The photographer also has a process by which the obliterated picture may at any time be revived. And so it was with the apostle. The sin that so easily beset him returned with fresh power in circumstances favourable to it. I. THE "BODY OF DEATH" IS NOT SOMETHING THAT HAS

COME TO US FROM WITHOUT, an infected garment that may be thrown aside whenever we please. It is our own corrupt self, not our individual sins or evil habits. And this body of death disintegrates the purity and unity of the soul and destroys the love of God and man which is its true life. It acts like an evil leaven, corrupting and decomposing every good feeling and heavenly principle, and gradually assimilating our being to itself. There is a peculiar disease which often destroys the silkworm before it has woven its cocoon. It is caused by a species of white mould which grows rapidly within the body of the worm at the expense of its nutritive fluids; all the interior organs being gradually converted into a mass of flocculent vegetable matter. Thus the silkworm, instead of going on in the natural order of development to produce the beautiful winged moth, higher in the scale of existence, retrogrades to the lower condition of the inert senseless vegetable. And like this is the effect of the body of death in the soul of man. The heart cleaves to the dust of the earth, and man, made in the image of God, instead of developing a higher and purer nature, is reduced to the low, mean condition of the slave of Satan. II. NONE BUT THOSE WHO HAVE ATTAINED TO SOME MEASURE OF THE EXPERIENCE OF ST. PAUL CAN KNOW THE FULL WRETCHEDNESS CAUSED BY THIS BODY OF DEATH. The careless have no idea of the agony of a soul under a sense of sin; of the tyranny which it exercises and the misery which it works. And even in the experience of many Christians there is but little of this peculiar wretchedness. Conviction is in too many instances superficial, and a mere impulse or emotion is regarded as a sign of conversion; and hence many are deluded by a false hope, having little knowledge of the law of God or sensibility to the depravity of their own hearts. But such was not the experience of St. Paul. The body of corruption that he bore about with him darkened and embittered all his Christian experience. And so it is with every true Christian. It is not the spectre of the future, or the dread of the punishment of sin, that he fears, for there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus; but the spectre of the sinful past and the pressure of the present evil nature. The sin which he fancied was so superficial that a few years' running in the Christian course would shake it off, he finds is in reality deep-rooted in his very nature, requiring a life-long battle. The fearful foes which he bears in his own bosom—sins of unrestrained appetite, sins that spring from past habits, frequently triumph over him; and all this fills him almost with despair—not of God, but of himself—and extorts from him the groan, "O wretched man that I am!" &c. III. THE EVIL TO BE CURED IS BEYOND HUMAN REMEDY. The various influences that act upon us from without—instruction, example, education, the discipline of life—cannot deliver us from this body of death. IV. THE WORK IS CHRIST'S AND NOT MAN'S. We are to fight the battle in His name and strength, and to leave the issue in His hands. He will deliver us in His own way and time. Conclusion: We can reverse the illustration with which I began. If behind our renewed self is the spectral form of our old self, let us remember that behind all is the image of God in which we were created. The soul, however lost, darkened, and defaced, still retains some lineaments of the Divine impression with which it was once stamped. The image haunts us always; it is the ideal from which we have fallen and towards which we are to be conformed. To rescue that image of God, the Son of God assumed our nature, lived our life, and died our death; and His Spirit becomes incarnate in our heart and life, and prolongs the work of Christ in us in His own sanctifying work. And as our nature becomes more and more like Christ's, so by degrees the old nature photographed by sin upon the soul will cease to haunt us, and the image of Christ will become more and more vivid. And at length only one image will remain. We shall see Him as He is, and we shall become like Him. (*H. Macmillan, LL.D.*) *The body becoming a second personality*:—The writer represents himself as having two personalities—the inner man, and the outer man, *i.e.*, the body. A word or two about the human body. I. IT IS IN THE UNREGENERATE MAN A PERSONALITY. "I am carnal," that is, I am become flesh. This is an abnormal, a guilty, and a perilous fact. The right place of the body is that of the organ, which the mind should use for its own high purpose. But this, through the pampering of its own senses, and through the creation of new desires and appetites, becomes such a power over man that Paul represents it as a personality, the thing becomes an *ego*. II. AS A PERSONALITY IT BECOMES A TYRANT. It is represented in this chapter as a personality that enslaves, slays, destroys the soul, the inner man. It is a "body of death." It drags the soul to death. When man becomes conscious of this tyranny, as he does when the "commandment" flashes upon the conscience, the soul becomes intensely miserable, and a fierce battle sets in between the two personalities

in man. The man cries out, "What shall I do to be saved?" "Who shall deliver me?" III. AS A TYRANT IT CAN ONLY BE CRUSHED BY CHRIST. In the fierce battle Christ came to the rescue, and struck the tyrant down. In this Epistle the writer shows that man struggled to deliver himself—1. Under the teachings of nature, but failed (see chap. i.). He became more enslaved in materialism. 2. Under the influence of Judaism, but failed. By the deeds of the law no man was justified or made right. Under Judaism men filled up the measure of their iniquities. Who, or what, then, could deliver? No philosophers, poets, or teachers. Only one. "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ." (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The body of death*:—1. St. Paul was not thinking with any fear of death. Indeed, toil-worn and heart-wearied as he was, he often would have been glad, had it been the Lord's will. There was something that to a mind like Paul's was worse than death. It was the dominion of the carnal nature which strove to overrule the spiritual. The body of sin was to him "the body of death." Who should deliver him from it? 2. Now, is the feeling from which such a cry as Paul's proceeds a real and noble feeling, or is it the mere outcry of ignorance and superstition? There are not wanting those who would say the latter. "Why trouble ourselves," says one of these apostles of the new religion of science, "about matters of which, however important they may be, we do know nothing, and can know nothing? We live in a world full of misery and ignorance; and the plain duty of each and all of us is to try and make the little corner he can influence somewhat less miserable and ignorant. To do this effectually, it is necessary to be possessed of only two beliefs; that we can learn much of the order of nature; and that our own will has a considerable influence on the course of events." That is all that we need attend to. Any idea of God and a moral law belongs to cloudland. But is there not an instinct within us which rebels against this cool setting aside of everything that cannot be seen or handled? And is that instinct a low one? or is it the instinct of minds that come nearest to Divine? 3. Which is the higher type of man—which do you feel has got the firmer grip of the realities of life—the man calmly bending over the facts of outward nature, and striving to secure, as far as he can, conformity to them: or, the man, like Paul, believing that there was a moral law of which he had fallen short, a Divine order with which he was not in harmony—good and evil, light and darkness, God and the devil, being to him tremendous realities—his soul being the battle-field of a war between them, in the agony and shock of which conflict he is constrained to cry out for a higher than human help? I should say the man in the storm and stress of the spiritual battle; and I should say that to deny the reality of the sense of such a conflict was to deny facts which are as obvious to the spiritual intelligence as the fact that two and two make four is to the ordinary reason, and was to malign facts which are much higher and nobler than any mere fact of science, as the life of man is higher and nobler than the life of rocks or seas. 4. Minds wholly engrossed with intellectual or selfish pursuits may be unconscious of this conflict, and disbelieve its existence in other minds. So may minds that have reached that stage which the apostle describes as "dead in sin"; but to other minds, minds within which conscience still lives, within which exclusive devotion to one thought or interest has not obliterated every other, this conflict is a stern reality. Who that has lived a life with any spiritual element in it, and higher than the mere animal's or worldling's, has not known that consciousness, and known its terror and power of darkness when it was roused into active life? It is of this consciousness Paul speaks. Under the pressure of it he cries out, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" 5. And what answer does he find to that cry? Does the order of nature, or the powers of his own will help him here? Does not the very sight of the unbroken calm and steadfast regularity of the law and order of external nature add new bitterness to the conviction that he has forgotten a higher law and disturbed a still more gracious order? Is not the very conviction of the weakness of his own will one of the most terrible elements in his distress? Speak to a man under this consciousness of the power of sin about finding help to resist, through studying the laws of that nature of which he is himself a part, and through exercising that will, whose feebleness appals him, and you mock him, as if you spoke to a man in a raging fever of the necessity of studying his own temperament and constitution, and of the duty of keeping himself cool. What is wanted in either case is help from some source of energy outside himself, who should restore the wasted strength from his own fountains of life—who should say to the internal conflict, "Peace, be still." And that is what Paul found in Christ. He found it nowhere else. It is not to be found in knowledge, in in philosophy, in nature, in culture, in self. 6. Now, how did Paul find

this in Christ? How may all find it? He was speaking about something infinitely more terrible than the punishment of sin, viz., the dominion of sin. What he wanted was an actual deliverance from an actual foe—not a promise of exemption from some future evil. And it was this that Paul realised in Christ. To him to live was Christ. The presence and the power of Christ possessed him. It was in this he found the strength which gave him the victory over the body of death. He found that strength in the consciousness that he was not a lonely soldier, fighting against an overpowering enemy, and in the dark, but that One was with him who had come from heaven itself to reveal to him that God was on his side, that he was fighting God's battle, that the struggle was needed for his perfecting as the child of God. It was in the strength of this that he was able to give thanks for his deliverance from the "body of death." 7. The consciousness of this struggle, the engagement in it in the strength of Christ, the victory of the higher over the lower, are in all the necessary conditions of spiritual health and continued life. To deny the reality of that conflict, and of the Divine life for which it prepares us, does not prove that these are not real and true. I take a man who does not know the "Old Hundredth" from "God Save the Queen," and play him a piece of the sweetest music, and he says there is no harmony in it. I show a man who is colour-blind two beautifully contrasted tints, and he sees but one dull hue: but still the music and the beauty of the colours exist, though not for him, not for the incapable ear and the undiscerning eye. So with the spiritual life. It is for the spiritual. (*R. H. Story, D.D.*) *The body of death*:—In Virgil there is an account of an ancient king, who was so unnaturally cruel in his punishments, that he used to chain a dead man to a living one. It was impossible for the poor wretch to separate himself from his disgusting burden. The carcase was bound fast to his body, its hands to his hands, its face to his face, its lips to his lips; it lay down and rose up whenever he did; it moved about with him whithersoever he went, till the welcome moment when death came to his relief. And many suppose that it was in reference to this that Paul cried out: "O wretched man that I am!" &c. Whether this be so or not, sin is a body of death, which we all carry about with us. And while I do not wish to shock your taste, yet I do wish to give you some impression of the unclean, impure, offensive nature of sin. And think—if our souls are polluted with such a stain—oh! think what we must be in the eyes of that God in whose sight the very heavens are not clean, and who charges His angels with folly. (*E. Woods.*) *The body of death*:—Doddridge thus paraphrases the latter half of this verse: "Who shall rescue me, miserable captive as I am, from the body of this death, from this continued burden which I carry about with me, and which is cumbersome and odious as a dead carcase tied to a living body, to be dragged along with it wherever it goes?" He adds in a note: "It is well known that some ancient writers mention this as a cruelty practised by some tyrants upon miserable captives who fell into their hands; and a more forcible and expressive image of the sad case represented cannot surely enter into the mind of man." "Of this atrocious practice one of the most remarkable instances is that mentioned by Virgil when describing the tyrannous conduct of Mezentius:—

> The living and the dead at his command
> Were coupled, face to face, and hand to hand;
> Till, choked with stench, in loathed embraces tied,
> The lingering wretches pined away and died.—(Dryden.)

Doddridge is not by any means singular in his opinion that the apostle derives an allusion from this horrid punishment; although perhaps the text is sufficiently intelligible without the illustration it thus receives. Philo, in an analogous passage, more obviously alludes to it, describing the body as a burden to the soul, carried about like a dead carcase, which may not till death be laid aside." (Kitto.) During the reign of Richard I. the following curious law was enacted for the government of those going by sea to the Holy Land—"He who kills a man on shipboard shall be bound to the dead body and thrown into the sea; if a man be killed on shore the slayer shall be bound to the dead body and buried with it." **I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.**—*Christ the Deliverer*:—I. MAN'S NEED. 1. While man is, in special organs, inferior to one and another of the animals, he is collectively by far the superior of every one. And yet, large as he is, man is not happy in any proportion to his nature, and to the hints and foregleams which that nature gives. He has, in being clothed with flesh, all the points of contact with the physical world that the ox or the falcon has. He is born; he grows up with all the instincts and

passions of animal life, and without them he could not maintain his foothold upon the earth. But man is also a creature of affections, which, in variety, compass and force, leave the lower creation in a vivid contrast. He is endowed with reason, moral sentiment and spiritual life; but he has learned but very imperfectly how to carry himself so that every part of his nature shall have fair play. The animal propensities are predominant. Here, then, begins the conflict between man's physical life and his moral life—the strife of gentleness, purity, joy, peace, and faith, against selfishness, pride, and appetites of various kinds. 2. To all souls that have been raised to their true life the struggle has been always severe. To have the power over our whole organisation without a despotism of our animal and selfish nature is the problem of practical life. How can I maintain the fulness of every part, and yet have harmony and relative subordination, so that the appetites shall serve the body, and the affections not be dragged down by the appetites; so that the moral sentiments and the reason shall shine clear and beautiful? II. WHAT REMEDIES HAVE BEEN PROPOSED! 1. To give way to that which is strongest, has been one special method of settling the conflict. Kill the higher feelings and then let the lower ones romp and riot like animals in a field—this gives a brilliant opening to life; but it gives a dismal close to it. For what is more hideous than a sullen old man burnt out with evil? When I see men suppressing all qualms, and going into the full enjoyment of sensuous life, I think of a party entering the Mammoth Cave with candles enough to bring them back, but setting them all on fire at once. The world is a cave. They that burn out all their powers and passions in the beginning of life at last wander in great darkness, and lie down to mourn and die. 2. Another remedy has been in superstition. Men have sought to cover this conflict, rather than to heal it. 3. Others have compromised by morality. But this, which is an average of man's conduct with the customs and laws of the time in which he lives, comes nowhere near touching that radical conflict which there is between the flesh and the spirit. 4. Then comes philosophy, and deals with it in two ways. It propounds to men maxims and wise rules. It expounds the benefit of good, and the evils of bad conduct. And then it proposes certain rules of doing what we cannot help, and of suffering what we cannot throw off. And it is all very well. So is rose-water where a man is wounded unto death. It is not less fragrant because it is not remedial; but if regarded as a remedy, how poor it is! 5. Then comes scientific empiricism, and prescribes the observance of natural laws; but how many men in life know these laws? How many men are so placed that if they did know them, they would be able to use them? You might as well take a babe of days, and place a medicine chest before it, and say, "Rise, and select the right medicine, and you shall live." III. What, then, is the final remedy? WHAT DOES CHRISTIANITY OFFER IN THIS CASE? 1. It undertakes to so bring God within the reach of every being in the world, that He shall exert a controlling power on the spiritual realms of man's nature, and, by giving power to it, overbalance and overbear the despotism of the radical passions and appetites. There is a story of a missionary who was sent out to preach the gospel to the slaves; but he found that they went forth so early, and came back so late, and were so spent, that they could not hear. There was nobody to preach to them unless he should accompany them in their labour. So he went and sold himself to their master, who put him in the gang with them. For the privilege of going out with these slaves, and making them feel that he loved them, and would benefit them, he worked with them, and suffered with them; and while they worked, he taught; and as they came back he taught; and he won their ear; and the grace of God sprang up in many of these darkened hearts. That is the story over again of God manifest in the flesh. 2. Many things can be done under personal influence that you cannot in any other way. My father said to me, when I was a little boy, "Henry, take these letters to the post-office." I was a brave boy; yet I had imagination. I saw behind every thicket some shadowy form; and I heard trees say strange and weird things; and in the dark concave above I could hear flitting spirits. As I stepped out of the door, Charles Smith, a great thick-lipped black man, who was always doing kind things, said, "I will go with you." Oh! sweeter music never came out of any instrument than that. The heaven was just as full, and the earth was just as full as before; but now I had somebody to go with me. It was not that I thought he was going to fight for me. But I had somebody to succour me. Let anything be done by direction and how different it is from its being done by personal inspiration. "Ah! are the Zebedees, then, so poor? John, take a quarter of beef and carry it down, with my compliments. No, stop; fill up that chest, put in those cordials, lay them on the cart,

and bring it round, and I will drive down myself." Down I go; and on entering the house I hold out both hands, and say, "Why, my old friend, I am glad I found you out. I understand the world has gone hard with you. I came down to say that you have one friend, at any rate. Now do not be discouraged; keep up a good heart." And when I am gone, the man wipes his eyes, and says, "God knows that that man's shaking my hands gave me more joy than all that he brought. It was himself that I wanted." The old prophet, when he went into the house where the widow's son lay dead, put his hands on the child's hands, and stretched himself across the child's body, and the spirit of life came back. Oh, if, when men are in trouble, there were some man to measure his whole stature against them, and give them the warmth of his sympathy, how many would be saved! That is the philosophy of salvation through Christ—a great soul come down to take care of little souls; a great heart beating its warm blood into our little pinched hearts, that do not know how to get blood enough for themselves. It is this that gives my upper nature strength, and hope, and elasticity, and victory. Conclusion: We learn —1. What is a man's depravity. When you say that an army is destroyed, you do not mean that everybody is killed; but that, as an army, its complex organisation is broken up. To spoil a watch you do not need to grind it to powder. Take out the mainspring. "Well, the pointers are not useless." Perhaps not for another watch. "There are a great many wheels inside that are not injured." Yes, but what are wheels worth in a watch that has no mainspring? What spoils a compass? Anything which unfits it for doing what it was intended to do. Now, here is this complex organisation of man. The royalties of the soul are all mixed up. Where conscience ought to be is pride. Where love ought to be is selfishness. Its sympathy and harmony are gone. It is not necessary that a man should be all bad to be ruined. Man has lost that harmony which belongs to a perfect organisation. And so he lives to struggle. And the struggle through which he is passing is the cause of human woe. 2. Why it is that the divinity of Christ becomes so important in the development of a truly Christian life. As a living man, having had the experiences of my own soul, and having been conversant with the experiences of others, what I want is power. And that is what they lack who deny the Divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ. God can cleanse the heart. Man cannot. And that God whom we can understand is the God that walked in Jerusalem, that suffered upon Calvary, and that lives again, having lifted Himself up into eternal spheres of power, that He might bring many sons and daughters home to Zion. (*H. Ward Beecher.*) *The believer's gratitude to God through Christ*:—I. SOULS GROANING UNDER THE BODY OF SIN AND DEATH CAN FIND NO RELIEF BUT THROUGH JESUS CHRIST. None but an almighty Saviour is suited to the case of a poor sinner. This doctrine reproves the Church of Rome, and others, for directing men, not to Christ, but to themselves; to their vows, alms, penances, and pilgrimages; or, to their greater watchfulness and strictness in life. But as Luther observes, "How many have tried this way for many years, and yet could get no peace." Now, what is there in Christ that can relieve a soul? 1. The blood of Christ, which was shed as an atoning sacrifice for sin. 2. A perfect and everlasting righteousness. This our apostle, doubtless, had in view: for he immediately adds (chap. viii. 1). "Christ is made unto us of God, wisdom and righteousness." 3. The Spirit of Christ which is given to all true believers, as an abiding principle, teaching them to fight and war with sin. II. THAT SOULS THUS EXERCISED, FINDING RELIEF ONLY IN CHRIST, WILL ACTUALLY RECEIVE AND EMBRACE HIM. None will receive Christ, but they only who are taught to see their need of Him. III. THEY, WHO SEE THIS RELIEF IN CHRIST, WHO RECEIVE AND EMBRACE IT, MUST AND WILL GIVE THANKS TO GOD FOR IT. The angels, those disinterested spirits, bringing the joyful news to our apostate world, sung, "Glory to God in the highest, for peace on earth, and good will towards men." And surely, if we who are redeemed to God by His blood, should hold our peace on so joyful an occasion, "the stones would immediately cry out." IV. ALL THOSE WHO HAVE RECEIVED CHRIST, AND HAVE GIVEN THANKS TO GOD FOR HIM, WILL LOOK UPON HIM AS THEIR LORD AND THEIR GOD. (*J. Stafford.*) *Nothing can equal the gospel*:—There is nothing proposed by men that can do anything like this gospel. The religion of Ralph Waldo Emerson is the philosophy of icicles; the religion of Theodore Parker was a sirocco of the desert covering up the soul with dry sand; the religion of Renan is the romance of believing nothing; the religion of Thomas Carlyle is only a condensed London fog; the religion of the Huxleys and the Spencers is merely a pedestal on which human philosophy sits shivering in the night of the soul, looking up to the stars, offering no help to the nations that crouch

and groan at the base. Tell me where there is one man who has rejected that gospel for another, who is thoroughly satisfied, and helped, and contented in his scepticism, and I will take the car to-morrow and ride five hundred miles to see him. (*T. De Witt Talmage.*) *Victory through Christ*:—I can well remember a portion of a sermon which I heard when I was only five years of age. I recollect the cast of the preacher's features, the colour of his hair, and the tone of his voice. He had been an officer in the army, and was in attendance on the Duke of Wellington during the great battle of Waterloo. That portion of the sermon which I can so well remember was a graphic description of the conflict which some pious souls have experienced with the powers of darkness before their final victory over the fear of death. He illustrated it by drawing in simple words a vivid description of the battle at Waterloo. He told us of the cool and stern nature of the "Iron Duke," who seldom manifested any emotion. But the moments came when the Duke was lifted out of his stern rut. For a short time the English troops wavered, and showed signs of weakness, when the Duke anxiously exclaimed, "I would to God that Blucher or the night had come!" After a while a column of the French was driven before the English guards, and another column was routed by a bayonet-charge of an English brigade. Wellington then calculated how long it would take to complete the triumph. Taking from his pocket his gold watch, he exclaimed, "Twenty minutes more, and then victory!" When the twenty minutes had passed the French were completely vanquished. Then the Duke, again taking out his watch, held it by the short chain, and swung it around his head again and again, while he shouted, "Victory! Victory!" the watch flew out of his hand, but he regarded gold as only dust compared with the final triumph. This graphic description made a powerful impression on my childish mind. Young as I was, I at once saw the aptness of the illustration. I often dreamt about it, and told other lads the story. When I was a weeping penitent, praying for pardon, and struggling with unbelief, the scene of Waterloo came before me; but the moment the light of the Saviour's smile fell upon my heart, I instinctively sprang to my feet and shouted, "Victory! Victory!" Many times, since I have been exclusively engaged in conducting special services, my memory has brought before me the preacher and the part of the sermon which I heard when I was only five years of age, and this has had its influence on me in my addresses to both old and young. (*T. Oliver.*) **So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.**—I. OF WHOM DOES THE APOSTLE SPEAK? Of those—1. Who are enlightened. 2. But still under the law. II. WHAT DOES HE AFFIRM RESPECTING THEM? 1. That they naturally approve the law. 2. Yet serve sin. III. WHAT IS THE NECESSARY CONCLUSION? 1. That there is no deliverance by the law, or by personal effort. 2. But by Christ only. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Believers serve the law of God, though hindered by the law of sin:*—I. THE LIFE OF A BELIEVER IS CHIEFLY TAKEN UP IN SERVING THE LAW OF GOD. For this end the law is written upon his heart, and, therefore, he serves God with his spirit, or with his renewed mind. His whole man, all that can be called himself, is employed in a life of evangelical and universal obedience. II. THE BELIEVER MAY MEET WITH MANY INTERRUPTIONS WHILE HE IS AIMING TO SERVE THE LAW OF GOD. "With my flesh the law of sin." 1. Had our apostle contented himself with the former part of this declaration, it would doubtless have been matter of great discouragement to the children of God. But when we find that the apostle himself confesseth his weakness and imperfection, whose heart would not take courage, and go forth more boldly to the conflict than ever? 2. After all the encouragement afforded to the mind of a believer, yet this is a very humbling subject. We may learn hence, how deeply sin is inwrought in our nature. III. ALTHOUGH THE BELIEVER MEETS WITH MANY INTERRUPTIONS, YET HE HOLDS ON SERVING THE LAW OF GOD, EVEN WHEN HE IS DELIVERED FROM ALL CONDEMNATION. I ground this observation on the close connection in which these words stand with the first verse of the next chapter. They are delivered from condemnation, and yet they serve the law of God, because they are delivered. (*J. Stafford.*)

CHAPTER VIII.

The place of the chapter in the argument:—The struggle has passed away and the conqueror and the conquered are side by side. The two laws mentioned in the last chapter have changed places, the one becoming mighty from being powerless, the other powerless from being mighty. The helplessness of the law has been done away in Christ, that its righteous requirement may be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit. The apostle returns upon his previous track that he may contrast the two elements, not as in the previous chapter in conflict with each other, hopelessly entangled by "occasion of the commandment," but in entire separation and opposition. These two, the flesh and the spirit, stand over against one another, as life and death, as peace and enmity, with God. Do what it will the flesh can never be subjected to the law of God. (*Prof. Jowett.*) *The connection between chaps. vii. and viii.*:—The eighth chapter of Romans, and the preceding one, are the most profound psychological passages in the Bible; and in the higher spiritual elements they are more profound than anything in literature. The seventh chapter is the problem of conscience. The eighth is a solution of that problem by the formulas of love. In the seventh, a just man, tender of conscience and clear of understanding, with an active ideality, seeks to make a symmetrical life and perfect character—a thing which is impossible in this world. Under such circumstances every mistake rebounds, and every imperfection is caught upon the sensitive conscience, and becomes a source of exquisite suffering and of discouragement; so that, from the necessary conditions of human life, a just man will be made miserable in proportion as he seeks more vehemently to be just. One way out of this trouble would be to lower the standard of character and to lower the moral value of conduct. But the ease that comes from lowering our rule of right and our responsibilities to it is degrading. Thus to seek ease sends us down toward animals; and that is the true vulgarity. It is better to die in the prison-house of the seventh of Romans than, missing the eighth, to get relief in any other direction. The problem of the higher moral life is how to maintain a higher transcendent ideal of character and conduct, and yet have joy and peace, even in the face of sins and imperfections. That is the problem. And its solution can only be found in one direction—in the direction of Divine love. A proper conception of God in the aspect of love, and a habit of bringing the instruments, and customs, and laws of paternal love to the consideration of our personal religious life, will go far to enlighten, stimulate, and comfort us. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Out of the seventh chapter into the eighth*:—I defy any man to accomplish this except by that one word "Christ." He who attempts it is like a leaf caught in the eddy of a stream: it whirls round and wants to get down the stream, but cannot go. The seventh of Romans is an eddy in which the conscience swings round and round in eternal disquiet; the eighth is the talisman through which it receives the touch of Divine inspiration, and is lifted above into the realm of true Divine beneficence. Or the transition may be illustrated thus—During the Indian Mutiny, when the English army were shut up in a city, besieged, almost at the point of death from starvation, and decimated by the constant assaults of the adversary, a Scotch lassie, who belonged to a Highland regiment, all at once thought she heard the sound of bagpipes afar off; and the soldiers laughed her to scorn. But after a little time others heard it. And then there came in note after note. By-and-by the sounds of the instruments of a full military band were recognised. And soon, from out of the forest, came the relief army, that broke up the siege and gave them deliverance. And with flying colours and glorious music they came marching up to the now released city. Such is the difference between the seventh chapter and the eighth. For here, in the seventh, is that first, far-off note of victory. After that descant of his own wretchedness, and poverty, and moral imbecility, comes the exclamation: "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Then, in the eighth chapter, he breaks into a discussion of the spirit-life and the redemption of the flesh, and there are snatches, again and again, of that victorious note, growing stronger and fuller, till he comes clear down to the end, when he breaks out: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" &c.: and there comes in the flying banners, the band and the full army. (*Ibid.*) *Living in the eighth chapter*:—A minister was once expounding the seventh and eighth chapters of Romans to a class of coloured Bible-women, deeply experienced as to their hearts, but very ignorant, as he supposed, in their heads. After he had been talking quite eloquently for a little while, an old coloured woman

interrupted him with: "Why, honey, it 'pears like you don't understand them chapters." "Why not, auntie?" he said. "What is the matter with my explanation?" "Why, honey," she said, "you talk as if we were to live in that seventh chapter, and only pay little visits to the blessed eighth." "Well," he answered, "that is just what I think. Don't you?" With a look of intense pity for his ignorance, she exclaimed: "Why, I lives in the eighth." *Bishop Temple's testimony*:—Bishop Temple, preaching his farewell sermon in Exeter Cathedral, took for his text Rom. viii. 38, 39. This eighth chapter, he said, always had a strange fascination for him above all other chapters in the New Testament. He did not speak of himself as having lived in the spirit of such a chapter, but he had found in it a picture of the man he would fain have been if he could. There was support in it which he had turned to over and over again for nearly fifty years and never without finding fresh power within it to help him on. The life therein pourtrayed was the life, if his weakness permitted, he desired to realise; and he urged upon his hearers to keep the chapter before them, to read it, repeat it constantly, making it the pattern they were endeavouring to realise while they were striving, in accordance with St. John's exhortation, to purify themselves even as Christ is pure. *The chapter as a spiritual palace*:—Astyages determined on the death of the infant Cyrus. He summoned Harpagus, an officer of his court, and committed to him the destruction of the royal babe. Harpagus gave the babe to the herdsman Mithridates that he might expose him in the mountains. But Spaco, the wife of the herdsman, adopted the babe instead. Therefore Cyrus grows up in the peasant's hut. He thinks the herdsman and his wife to be his parents. Ignorant of his birth, of his rightful destiny, of the palace and kingly state which were really his, he thinks himself only a peasant's child. At last the secret of Cyrus's birth and rightful place gets known, and he goes on to be the man standing out in such grand figure amid the dimness of that early time. What may be only legend about Cyrus is too sadly fact about too many Christians. They too often think themselves but peasants when they are really kings. They dwell in huts when God has built a palace for them. And the difficulty is that even when they may they will not see the palace in which God means that they shall dwell. This chapter is the spiritual palace in which God would have His children dwell. Let us glance at it. I. There is in it NO CONDEMNATION (ver. 1). II. REAL INTERNAL SPIRITUAL ABILITY (vers. 2–4). Christ is not simply for the Christian in the no condemnation; Christ is also in the Christian in the indwelling Spirit of life. III. THE SPIRIT OF ADOPTION (ver. 15), *i.e.*, there is for the Christian a genuine son-placing. IV. THE WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT (ver. 16). V. HEIRSHIP (ver. 17). Poor the Christian may be here, but he walks the earth with all the wealth of heaven in reversion. VI. THE CERTAINTY THAT ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD. VII. NOTHING THAT CAN REALLY BAFFLE HIM, FOR TRIUMPH IS HIS SURELY SINCE GOD IS ON HIS SIDE (vers. 31–39). (*Homiletic Review.*) **There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.**—*No condemnation*:—There is therefore "now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." This is the result of the complete Divine provision which is made for our justification. There is therefore "*now* no condemnation"; this does not mean at this time, although that is perfectly true, but the word "now" means in this state of things. "No condemnation." There is no damnatory sentence against them. There is no curse hanging like a thundercloud over their heads. There is no penal consequence following them. "Who walk"—that is, who act and who live "not after the flesh"—that is, not under the influence of the things which appeal to the eye and to the ear of the body—not under the power of the feelings which these things chiefly awaken and appeal to, and not according to the impulses and desires of human nature in its unsanctified state. Who walk "not after the flesh," but after the Spirit"—that is, in obedience to the dictates of the Spirit, and in response to the propensities of a soul possessed, not by the world and by the things of the world, but possessed and moved in all its impulses and in all its resolutions by the Spirit of God and the Spirit of holiness. I. THERE IS NO CONDEMNATORY SENTENCE IN EXECUTION AGAINST CHRISTIANS NOW. Believers in Christ Jesus sin. And their sins are noticed by God, and God is displeased with them; and God sometimes chides and corrects Christians for their sins, but He does not treat Christians as criminals. God deals with Christians as with children. There is no sentence of condemnation in execution against the disciples of Christ—none is being executed outwardly. Christians are exposed to suffering, but when they are corrected, the chastisement is paternal; when they are checked, the restraint is pitiful and loving; when they are disciplined, the training is in kindness; when

they are called to die, death to them is but the commencement of a new and an everlasting life; so that it may be said with reference to them, that all things work together for their good. No sentence of condemnation is being executed against a Christian now outwardly, and none inwardly. You see that such a sentence might be executed in a Christian's body, or in a Christian's circumstances; or it might be executed inwardly without touching the body and without affecting the circumstances through such feelings as fear and remorse. But, "being justified by faith, we have peace with God." II. THERE IS NO SENTENCE OF CONDEMNATION RECORDED FOR EXECUTION. The disciple of Christ is not reprieved, but pardoned; and his pardon is full and complete. Suppose that you wish to save some criminal under a sentence of death, what must you do for him? You must first get a remission of the capital punishment. The next thing that you must do for that man is to get him restored to his family and friends and to his former social position; and when you have done that, you must adopt some means by which to change the heart and the character of that man; and then you must effect the restoration of his possessions. This is the salvation that God dispenses to us. The man who trusts in Jesus Christ is immediately brought back to the position of a righteous being, and all the providences of God and the government of God have toward that man a thoroughly paternal aspect. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." III. THE ABSENCE OF ALL CONDEMNATION IS ACCOUNTED FOR BY THAT WHICH CHRIST IS TO THE SOUL THAT RELIES UPON HIM. Christ Jesus is the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world, and faith in Jesus Christ appropriates the sin-offering to the believer, so that all its sufficiency becomes ours when we trust to it. Observe further, that Christ Jesus is the High Priest who ever lives to make intercession for us, and faith in Jesus gives us a personal interest in that intercession. Again, Christ Jesus is the second Adam, by whose obedience many are to be made righteous, and faith in Jesus makes that obedience the garment of our salvation. So that if all this be true, you see at once how impossible it is that there should be any condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. But a question may arise, How may I know that I am trusting in God's Christ? The reality of our reliance in the Christ of God is proved by the character and style of our life—"who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Jesus Christ leads all His disciples to walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. (*S. Martin.*) *The privilege of the saints:*—I. THE PERSONS MENTIONED. Those which are in Christ Jesus. Yea, so near and close an union as this indeed in the true nature of it, as that sometimes from hence we shall find the Church called by the name of Christ Himself, as 1 Cor. xii. 12. Though Christ, considered personally, is full and absolute in Himself, yet, considered relatively and mystically, so He is not full and complete without believers who are members of Him. We shall further inquire into the causes and grounds of this union. 1. We are knit to Christ, and made one with Him by His Spirit. Look as that member of the body is not united to the head, that is not animated and informed with the same soul that is in the head, so neither is that Christian truly united to Christ who is not quickened and enlivened by that Spirit which is the Spirit of Christ. If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His (ver. 9). The second Adam is made a quickening spirit (1 Cor. xv. 45). And He quickeneth whom He will (John v. 21; 1 John iv. 21). 2. Another bond whereby we are knit to Christ is faith, which is a special gift and fruit of the Spirit; whereby, secondarily, we are united to Him, and lay hold on that righteousness which is in Him, and receive all that grace which is offered and tendered by Him in the gospel. The just shall live by faith (Gal. v. 5). We through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith (Gal. ii. 20). The life only I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God. This is a very high honour and dignity unto them, and so to be accounted of by them; and, accordingly, it should have answerable effects and operations upon them, as—(1) To exceeding joyfulness and exultation in this their condition: we see how all men for the most part do rejoice in the excellency of their relations, wives in their husbands, children in their parents. The nearer is the union to those who are of worth and renown the greater is the contentment; why, thus it should now be with believers in regard of Christ. (2) It should work us to a conformity to Christ in our carriage; being one with Him we should behave ourselves suitably to Him. It is a shame for those who are one with Christ to walk in ways of opposition to Him. (3) It may encourage God's servants to depend upon Him for all things fitting and convenient for them, and to persuade themselves of His favour

towards them. Therefore He will hear their prayers. And, on the other side, those that wrong them may be advised to take heed how they do so, for He takes their wrongs as done to Himself. "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" Isa. lxiv. 9, &c. And so much may be spoken of the first description of the persons here mentioned, taken from their state and condition. 2. The second is taken from their life and conversation; "who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit." These two they go still together; union with Christ and holiness of life they are inseparable. This passage before us is considerable here of us two manner of ways, separately and jointly. Separately, and so it consists of two distinct branches—the negative and the affirmative. The negative is in these words, which walk not after the flesh. The affirmative in these, but after the Spirit. (1) To look upon it in the negative. Those that are true believers, and that are mystically united to Christ Jesus, they do not walk after the flesh. This is one character which is upon them. Thus, "They which are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts" (Gal. v. 24). For the better understanding of this point, it is worth our while to inquire what it is to walk after the flesh, and who they are which are said thus to walk. By the flesh, then, we are here to understand not only that part of man which is commonly so called, to wit, the bodily lump; but by flesh here is meant corrupt nature, that is, that part of the man which is unsanctified and unregenerate in him. Not only the depravation of the inferior faculties of the soul, which we commonly call sensuality, but also a corruption of the superior, namely, the mind and understanding and will. Now, to walk after this flesh it is to be wholly led and carried and guided by the motions of it. Then men walk after the flesh when their whole course is carnal, when they are carnal in their judgments, following the dictates and suggestions of carnal reason; and carnal in their affections, setting their hearts and desires upon carnal things; and carnal in their lives, conversing and bestirring themselves in carnal ways. To walk after the flesh is not only to have the flesh in us; but to have the flesh prevailing in us, and to give ourselves up to the power and dominion of it. There is a walking in the flesh, and there is a walking after the flesh, as the Apostle Paul does plainly distinguish them concerning himself (2 Cor. x. 2, 3). (2) The second is the affirmative, but walk after the Spirit. Those who are the children of God and true believers, they are careful to do this. And so they are represented in Scripture. Hence they are said to walk in the Spirit, to walk in newness of life, to serve in newness of Spirit, to walk with God, to have their conversation in heaven, and such phrases as these are. What is to be understood by walking after the Spirit we may gather from what was said of the contrary, namely, of walking after the flesh; and that is, to be guided and led and directed by the blessed and gracious Spirit of God in all our ways. Walking, it is a continued motion; it is a motion of perseverance; and so does denote constancy in him that uses it. And thus it is with those that are in Christ. They walk thus: the ground and foundation of this truth is the conformity of the members to the Head, and the obedience to the workmanship to Him who is the workman and fashioner of it. The union of a believer with Christ, and the relation wherein he stands unto Him, is not empty and fruitless, but is powerful and efficacious to a godly and holy life. Where there is an union with Christ's person there is a communion in His graces and an habitation of His Spirit in us. Therefore, accordingly, we may judge of the one by the other. We may know what we are by considering how we walk, and what is the frame and course of our lives (1 John i. 6, 7). 3. We may look upon it in its connection and conjunction of the parts of it with one another. (1) Here is the addition of the one to the other, in that walking after the Spirit must be joined with not walking after the flesh. It is not enough for any to abstain from acts of wickedness, but they must also, and moreover, perform acts of goodness. (2) Here is the exclusion of the one by the other. Walking in the flesh, it does take away walking after the Spirit (Gal. v. 16; Phil. iii. 19, 20). There is no man that can serve two masters, especially such kind of masters as these are. II. The second is THE PRIVILEGE OR BENEFIT BELONGING TO THESE PERSONS; and that is freedom and exemption from wrath and condemnation. There is no condemnation to them. Now for the better prosecution of it at this present time, we may look upon it as it lies here in the text three manners of ways, especially—First, in its specification. Secondly, in its amplifications. Thirdly, in its restriction or limitation. 1. In consideration of what Christ hath done for them. Those who are true believers, and who are incorporated into Christ Jesus, Christ hath done that for them which does absolutely and necessarily exempt them and free them from condemnation. As to instance in some particulars—(1)

He hath by His blood-shedding taken away the guilt of sin from them. What is the guilt of sin? It is the desert of sin, which, by order of God's justice, does bind the sinner over to punishment. This now by Jesus Christ is taken away from all believers (John i. 29; Psa. xxxii. 12). This is that which Christ by His death hath obtained for us, that sin should not be imputed to us (Isa. xxxviii. 17). (2) As He hath taken away the guilt of sin from us, and freed us from condemnation in that respect, so He hath likewise imputed His righteousness to us, and freed us from condemnation. (3) Christ hath fully answered the law, which is the strength of sin, fully paying the debt which was owing upon our account, both by enduring the penalty and doing that which the law requireth of us to be done by us (chap. x. 4). 2. Now, further, it is clear also that He hath done so from consideration of what He is to us. God justifies Christ, and in Him justifies us; sanctifies Christ, and through Him sanctifies us; glorifies Christ, and in Him glorifies us. He saves us not only personally, as we are such and such particular men—Peter, or James, or John—considered in *individuo*; but also relatively, with respect had to His Son, as we are parts and members of the mystical body of Christ, and are knit and united to Him as members to the Head. There is no condemnation to those who are the children of God, because they are in Christ Jesus. From the circumstance of their life and conversation, because they "walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit." An holy conversation in life shall have a happy condition after life; and there is no condemnation at all which does follow upon it. (1) Here is the extent of the benefit or privilege itself in the expression of universality: there is no condemnation whatsoever. This is true according to all the references of it. First, as to the ground or matter of condemnation. There is nothing which does afford occasion hereunto. (2) In reference to the parties condemning. No condemnation to neither. Where there is nobody to condemn there can be no condemnation. (3) In reference to the kinds of condemnation itself: neither present nor future, neither temporal nor eternal. The persons to whom the privilege does belong in the indefiniteness of the expression, "Those that are in Christ Jesus, and that walk," &c., whosoever they be. This privilege of exemption from hell is not restrained only to some few particular Christians, but to all saints and believers in general without exception. The reason of it is this, because all are members of Christ, one as well as another. This is matter of comfort and encouragement to the poorest and meanest Christian that hath the truth of grace in him. The weakest believer hath an interest in eternal salvation as well as the greatest, even as the Apostle Paul himself. This is no ground for any to set themselves any stint or measure in holiness, or the improvement of grace in them; no, but rather to push on to perfection, as the apostle himself did, for his particular (Phil. iii. 13, 14). Though every Christian shall be alike saved from condemnation, yet those which are eminent Christians, and do abound in grace above others, they have an advantage in two particulars. First, in the degrees of comfort here in this world. And, secondly, in the degrees of glory in the world to come. The restriction or limitation. "To those who are in Christ Jesus, and who walk after the Spirit," &c., and none besides. The ground of this truth is this, because all the benefit we have from Christ flows from our union and communion with Him. Now the use and application of all which hath been said to ourselves may be reduced to two heads especially. 1. For matter of comfort and consolation. First of all, here is ground of very great encouragement and rejoicing to all true believers which are regenerate and born again, and incorporated and united to Christ, they are freed from condemnation; and, upon that account, from the greatest evil that their natures are capable of. (1) If we speak of the evil of sin. God's children they are not wholly exempt from this while they live here in this world. They have sin still abiding in them. Yea, but it is not in them so as to expose them to condemnation for all that. What a great advantage and happiness is this, if it be but duly and seriously considered. (2) As to the evil of the affliction. It is a very great comfort and encouragement in this likewise. The saints and servants of God, while they live here in this world, they are subject to various afflictions: "Many are the afflictions of the righteous" (Psa. xxxiv. 19). Yea, but as long as they are freed from condemnation, this may very much satisfy and content them. That though they are afflicted yet they are not, nor shall not, be condemned. Freedom from condemnation may swallow all other evils and inconveniences. That because they are afflicted therefore they are not condemned. Their present affliction secures them from future condemnation. This is that which the Apostle Paul does expressly declare unto us there in that place (1 Cor. xi. 31; 2 Cor. iv. 17). The second improvement of this

point is in a way of counsel and admonition, and that to a twofold purpose and effect. First, to be careful to make good our interest in Christ. And, secondly, to be careful to order aright our lives and conversations. (*Thomas Horton.*) *Absolute safety in Christ*:—I. THE INCOMPARABLE POSITION CHRISTIAN BELIEVERS OCCUPY. "In Christ Jesus." This expression—1. Is in keeping with what our Lord said in parable of vine and branches, and may be illustrated by reference to Noah's safety in ark; manslayer's security in city of refuge. 2. Means—in His hands, thoughts, company, confidence, heart; to possess Him, and to be possessed by Him; to live in the circle of His love, and embrace of His power. 3. No wonder the highest ambition of the apostle was "to be found in Him." To be in Christ now is the preparation for being with Him for ever. II. THE INESTIMABLE BLESSINGS CHRISTIAN BELIEVERS ENJOY. "No condemnation." 1. This does not mean—(1) There is no accusation; for Satan and our own hearts will accuse and seek to condemn. (2) No ill deserts; for the life will not be perfect, there will be a constant falling short of the glory of God. 2. We are free from condemnation, because our Surety has died and satisfied the claims of Divine justice for us. Then—(1) We can look back with joy. All wrong has been forgiven. (2) We can look around. No officer of justice ready to arrest us, no sword of judgment ready to fall upon us. (3) We can look forward and upward. The grave, the judgment-seat, have no terrors, for God will glorify those whom He justifies. 3. "No condemnation" is but the negative side of salvation. There is a positive side; for we are not only freed from death, but lifted into life. III. THE INFALLIBLE EVIDENCE BY WHICH WE MAY KNOW WHETHER OR NOT SUCH POSITION AND BLESSEDNESS ARE OURS. "Who walk not," &c. The words have been omitted in R.V., but we may take and use them here as embodying truths frequently expressed elsewhere. (*F. W. Brown.*) *The great assimilation; or, man christianised*:—Man in Christ is—I. FREED FROM SIN. The great inquiry of the world has been, How can man be thus freed? All temples, synagogues, mosques, and churches, have recognised the momentousness of the question. The struggles of expiring victims—the deep groans of humanity—have borne it aloft to the throne of the Eternal. The Eternal Himself has deigned to solve the difficulty, and to answer the inquiry. 1. Though man is not freed from sin as a matter of recollection, or from its natural sequences, or indiscriminately and unconditionally. Still in the highest sense he is consciously and progressively freed from the evil forces that enchain his being, to rise to altitudes far transcending those from which he fell. 2. This freedom is effected by the redeeming agency of Christ. Christ, in the entirety of His history, is condemnatory and destructive of all sin. Let a man be in communion with Christ, and with the certainty and uniformity of law his sin shall be destroyed. No being but Christ can hush the moral thunders which rumble in the conscience; no sacrifice but His can teach the tremendous evil of sin—no power but His can burst the bonds of evil habits—no spirit but His can engage the heart's affections, and restore them to the right object. II. ADVANCED IN MORAL EXCELLENCY. 1. He realises the true idea of Divine holiness. "That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us." The law is a transcript of the moral and transcendent excellency of the Divine nature, and man's heart becomes its abode. His holiness is not among the indigenous conceptions of the human mind, such as Roman bravery, Grecian beauty, Stoic passivity, and Pharisaical sanctity! Christ is our "sanctification." 2. He minds the Spirit. The Divine Spirit speaks, and he attends to what is said. 3. He has a peaceful life. 4. He has the Spirit of Christ. III. DESTINED TO FUTURE GLORIFICATION (vers. 10, 11). Though he is freed from sin, and advanced in spiritual excellency, still he must die; but born to die, he dies to live. In the case of Christ Himself, death was the condition of a higher life. The mind must die to one life to live another: it must renounce one set of ideas and dispositions to embrace higher ones. All around us seem to be the germs of the future. Man in the future is the continuation of man in the present. The principle of life casts off its exuviæ, and constructs other and higher organisms. IV. WILL ENJOY THE GLORY WHICH BELONGS TO CHRIST HIMSELF (ver. 17; *cf.* 1 John iii. 2; Phil. iii. 20, 21). (*J. Davies.*) *At peace with God*:—I. THE CHRISTIAN'S STATE. "In Christ." A union—1. Vital. 2. Visible. II. HIS CHARACTER. He walks—1. Not after the flesh—crucifixion: regulation. 2. After the Spirit—guidance; co-operation. III. HIS PRIVILEGE. "No condemnation" for —1. Past offences. 2. The corruption of his nature. 3. His defective service. 4. His involuntary errors. (*W. W. Wythe.*) *No condemnation*:—I. THE APOSTLE DOTH NOT SAY THERE IS NOW NO AFFLICTION OR CORRECTION. It is one thing to be afflicted, another thing to be condemned (1 Cor. xi. 32). Grace secures from eternal,

not from temporal, evils. God cannot condemn and yet love, but He can chasten and yet love; nay, He chastens because He loves. II. THE APOSTLE DOTH NOT SAY THERE IS NO MATTER OF CONDEMNATION. There is a vast difference between what is deserved and what is actually inflicted. There is in all a corrupt nature, which puts forth itself in evil motions. III. IT IS GOD'S CONDEMNATION ONLY FROM WHICH WE ARE EXEMPTED. 1. Men condemn. What more common than for the godly to have their persons and practices, strict walking, condemned. Oh, they are hypocrites, factious, unnecessarily scrupulous, proud, and what not! Sometimes the condemnation is only verbal, going no further than bitter words, wherein their names are aspersed and their cause blackened. Sometimes it rises even to the taking away of their lives (James v. 6). But yet God condemns not (Psa. xxxvii. 32, 33). 2. Sometimes conscience condemns (1 John iii. 21). The inferior judge condemns in the court below, but the supreme Judge acquits and justifies in the court above. 3. Satan too condemns. He that is but God's executioner will take upon him to be a judge. And as his pride puts him upon judging, so his malice puts him upon condemning. IV. THE PARTICLE "NOW" IS TO BE TAKEN NOTICE OF. I suppose the apostle doth not intend by it to point to any circumstance of time, as, namely, the present time of life, or the present time of the gospel. I make this to be only a causal particle; since things are so, as the apostle had made out in his preceding discourse, there is now—or upon all this—no condemnation. The apostle crowds the force of all that he had said by way of argument into this little word, and lays the whole stress of his conclusion upon it. V. THE ORIGINAL WILL BEAR IT IF WE READ IT—"NOT ONE CONDEMNATION." Such is the grace of God to believers, and such is their safety in their justified estate, that there is not so much as one condemnation to be passed upon them, the pardon being plenary and full (Jer. l. 20). VI. THE APOSTLE SPEAKS INDEFINITELY WITH RESPECT TO THE SUBJECT. He takes all in Christ into the privilege. Had he spoken in the singular number, many poor, weak Christians would have been afraid to have applied this blessedness to themselves. The difference in Paul's expressing himself is very observable. Take him in the former chapter where he is bewailing sin, there he goes no further than himself. But now, where he is treating of privileges, he speaks altogether in the plural, as taking in the whole body of believers. VII. THE POSITIVE IS INCLUDED IN THE NEGATIVE. They shall not only, upon their being in Christ, be looked upon as not guilty, or barely kept out of hell, but they shall be judged completely righteous, and they shall also be eternally glorified. (*T. Jacomb, D.D.*) *No condemnation*:—We have here—I. A NEW ERA. There has been a transition—1. In the history of the Divine dispensation. "Now" we are no longer under the law of rite and precept, but under a covenant of gospel, wherein promise takes the place of threat, and the Holy Spirit is given to enlighten and sanctify. 2. In the experience of Christian life. The actual experience of believers comes to correspond with God's dispensation. In the previous chapter the conflict of sin is described. "Now" we have the victory. II. A NEW CONDITION—"In Christ Jesus." 1. Spiritual incorporation. 2. Vital union. 3. Efficient transfer. The Holy Spirit, on the part of God, and faith, on the part of man, are the instruments. 4. Practical reality. It is no superficial theory which fails before the progress of philosophy and reason. It is a certainty. God's plan and all things in heaven and earth—conscience, death, judgment, &c.—will arrange themselves finally in accordance with it. III. A NEW FREEDOM—"No condemnation." 1. The state goes before, involves, and it is itself greater than the privilege. You may bestow a gift on a strange child, but on your own you lavish affection and indulgence. The Christian is adopted into the family of God and possesses a child's privileges thereby. 2. Condemnation is more than sin—the simple transgression of the law. It is more than guilt—liability to punishment. It is doom pronounced after proved guilt. 3. Observe, the freedom does not remove the fact nor the guilt of sin, but arrests its effect—the punishment is repealed. To those who are not of Christ the sentence is still unrepealed. 4. "No condemnation." (1) None from God He has cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. (2) None from the law. Because the penalty has been paid. (3) None from conscience. There is no condemnation like that of an awakened conscience until the blood of Christ speaks peace. (4) None from sin. If God has forgiven it, it cannot rise to condemnation. (5) None at judgment. Conclusion: The subject—1. Urges those who have the evidence of faith to take firm gospel ground, to realise all that is intended by this negative way of putting the doctrine of justification. Live up to your privileges. 2. Addresses the Christless soul. You may be religious, but you

are not falling into God's method. You are labouring for that which is not bread, and perishing within sight of plenty. (*Percy Strutt.*) *Real Christians, absolved from condemnation*:—I. THE PERSONS DESCRIBED. Those who are "in Christ Jesus." There is no phrase more frequently employed in the New Testament to denote a real Christian than this. 1. The phrase means something more than the being a Christian by a baptismal admission to the visible Church. But—2. They represent Christ as a "refuge," in which believers take shelter from that "wrath of God," which naturally, by reason of sin, rests upon every man. II. THE BLESSING WHICH THEY ENJOY—"No condemnation." 1. Then we are led to infer that out of Christ Jesus there is "condemnation"; and this is a truth which Scripture everywhere proclaims. Our own state, then, as we stand by ourselves, is one of certain ruin. It is in vain for us to flatter ourselves that we can ward off this impending anger by throwing around our characters the supposed defence of natural moral virtues. God regards us as transgressors, and, viewing us in that light, He cannot but inflict upon us sin's tremendous penalty. "He that hath not the Son hath not life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." 2. But for the Christian there is "no condemnation." Being "in Christ," God no longer regards him as standing alone, and not as he was in Adam. As one with Adam, he had Adam's guilt imputed to him. But now, being one with Christ, Christ's righteousness is imputed to him. Now God loves him, and blesses him, for the sake of Him who has become his Saviour. III. THE EVIDENCE AFFORDED OF THEIR BEING IN POSSESSION OF THE BLESSING—"Walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." You have heard men speak of resting on Jesus; they have talked of His merit, of His dying for their sins, and they have professed to believe on His name. But the profession of faith has been everything, and the practice of faith has been nothing. Now the text only expresses what is expressed in Scripture over and over again; that every child of God will be a lover of practical piety. Faith in Christ will always bring forth the fruit of holiness. (*W. Curling, M.A.*) *Present discharge from condemnation must produce a present joy*:—Open the iron-bound door of the condemned cell, and by the dim light that struggles through its bars read the sovereign's free pardon to the felon, stretched, pale and emaciated, upon his pallet of straw; and the radiance you have kindled in that gloomy dungeon, and the transport you have created in that felon's heart, will be a present realisation. You have given him back a present life, you have touched a thousand chords in his bosom, which awake a present harmony; and where, just previous, reigned in that bosom sullen, grim despair, now reigns the sunlight joyousness of a present hope. Be yours, then, a present and a full joy. (*O. Winslow, D.D.*) *No condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus*:—I. WHEN A SINNER CLOSES WITH CHRIST, GOD TAKES HIM ON THE INSTANT INTO RECONCILIATION. He should therefore feel his conscience to be relieved from the guilt and dread of his sins; and, instead of being any longer burdened with them as so many debts subject to a count on some future day, he has a most legitimate warrant for looking on the account as closed. Christ hath made atonement, and with it God is satisfied; and if so, well may you be satisfied. II. WHO THEY ARE THAT HAVE THIS INESTIMABLE PRIVILEGE. 1. They are in Christ. But lest we should wander into a region of obscurity, let us not forget that, for the purpose of being admitted into this state of community with the Saviour, the one distinct thing which you have to do is to believe in Him. There is nothing mystical in the act by which you award to Him the credit for His declarations; and this is the act by which you are grafted in the Saviour. As you hold fast the beginning of your confidence and persevere therein, the tie will be strengthened; the relationship will become more intimate; the communications of mutual regard will become more frequent, and more familiar to your experience. 2. They walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit. (1) Your release from condemnation is suspended on your being in Christ Jesus. But it is not so suspended on your walking not after the flesh, &c. The first is the origin of your justification; the second is the fruit of it. Mark the embarrassment of that disciple who postpones his enjoyment of this privilege until he is satisfied with himself that he walketh not after the flesh but after the Spirit. Look to the heavy disadvantage under which he toils at the work of new obedience; and how the spirit of bondage is sure to be perpetuated within him. There may be the outward compliance of a slave, but none of the inward graces or aspirations of a saint. The truth is, that if this immunity from condemnation is a thing purchased by us because of our walking not after the flesh, then will conscience ever be suggesting to us that the purchase has not been made good; and all the jealousies of

a bargain will ever and anon rise up between the parties. God will be feared, or distrusted; but He cannot be loved under such an economy. (2) There is a better way of ordering this matter. Deliverance from condemnation is not the goal, but the starting-post of the Christian's race; and, instead of labouring to make good the inaccessible station where forgiveness shall be awarded to him, he is sent forth with the inspiration of one who knows himself to be forgiven on the way of all the commandments. Delivered from the engrossment of his before slavish apprehensions, he can now with new-born liberty walk after the Spirit on the path of a progressive holiness. First trust in the Lord, and then be doing good. A workman to whom a tool is indispensable, you would never bid him work for the tool, but you would put the tool into his hand and bid him work by it. (3) But mark this distinction between the consequence and the cause, though it gives to the obedience of a believer its proper place, does not make that obedience less sure. What the worldly or hypocritical professor thinks to be faith is nought but fancy or worse if it be not followed by the walk of godliness. It is just as true as if your virtue were the price of your salvation, that there will be no salvation for you if you have no virtue. The ultimate design of the gospel economy is to make those who sit under it zealous of good works. (*T. Chalmers, D.D.*) *No condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus*:—I. THE CONDEMNATION HERE MENTIONED. As to its direct and proper notation, it signifies judgment against one. The non-condemnation of persons in Christ may be proved by, or is grounded upon—1. Their justification. He that is a justified man cannot be a condemned man, for these two are contrary and incompatible. 2. Their sanctification. Wherever the union is with the Son there is sanctification by the Spirit. Now such as are sanctified shall never be condemned (Rev. xx. 6), for upon this the power and dominion of sin is taken away, the bent of the heart is for God, and there is the participation of the Divine nature. 3. Their union with Christ. Those that are so near to Christ here, shall they be set at an eternal distance from Him hereafter? will the Head be so severed from His members? Besides, upon this union there is interest in all that Christ hath done and suffered; he that is in Christ hath a right to all of Christ. II. THE APPLICATION. 1. This proclaims the misery of all who are not in Christ Jesus. The cloud is not so bright towards Israel but it is as dark towards the Egyptians. There is no condemnation to them who are in Christ; what more sweet? but there is nothing but condemnation to them who are out of Christ; what more dreadful? (1) It is God Himself who will be your judge, and who will pass the condemnatory sentence upon you. (2) Think with yourselves what this condemnation is. (3) The condemnatory sentence being once passed it will be irreversible and irresistible. (4) The unbeliever will be condemned by himself. (5) This condemnation will be the sadder to such who live under the gospel, because they will lie under the conviction of this, that they have foolishly brought all this misery upon themselves. 2. I would exhort you to make sure of this exemption from condemnation. What can be so worthy of our utmost endeavours! what pitiful trifles and very nothings are all other things in comparison of these! What are we to do that it may be to us no condemnation? (1) Let sin be condemned in you and by you. For sin must either be condemned by you, or you for it. (2) Condemn yourselves and God will not condemn you. (3) Speedily get your peace made with God through Christ Jesus. (4) Pray that it may be to you exemption from condemnation. Of all evils deprecate this as the greatest evil. (5) Make sure of faith, which secures us from condemnation, both as it is the grace which unites to Christ, and also as it is the great condition of the gospel upon which it promises life and salvation. Unbelief is the damning sin, and faith is the saving grace. (6) Get into Christ, so as to be in Christ Jesus. For they, and they only, are out of the danger of condemnation. 3. I would speak to those who are in Christ, to excite them to be very thankful and highly to admire the grace of God. How doth the traitor admire the grace and clemency of his prince who sends him a pardon when he expected his trial and sentence to die? And as you must be thankful to God the Father, so, in special, to Jesus Christ; it is He who was willing to be condemned Himself that He might free you from condemnation. 4. The main tendency and drift of this truth is comfort to believers. This no condemnation is the ground of all consolation. (1) Get assurance in your own souls that there is to you no condemnation. It is a sad thing to live under peradventures about this. (2) Let this happiness be a great incentive to holiness. It is good to infer duty from mercy. (*T. Jacomb, D.D.*) *In Christ no condemnation*:—1. Paul having said, "So then with the mind I my-

self serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin," goes on to say, without any break, "There is therefore now," &c. Believers are in a state of conflict, but not in a state of condemnation. The man to whom every sin is a misery is the man who may with confidence declare, "There is therefore now no condemnation." 2. The text is written in the present tense. This "now" shows how distinctly the statement of non-condemnation is consistent with that mingled experience of the seventh chapter. With all my watching and warring, yet will I rejoice in the Lord even now; for "there is therefore now no condemnation." 3. Observe our apostle's change of expression. When he is speaking about the inward contention he speaks of himself, but when he comes to write upon the privileges of the children of God, he speaks of them in general terms. His is the confession, and theirs is the confidence. Note—I. A REFUTATION OF THE OLD SERPENT'S GOSPEL. Say "There is no condemnation," and this false gospel is before you. The serpent promulgated this in Eden, when he said, "Ye shall not surely die." Some teach that you may live in sin, and die impenitent, but at death there is an end of you. Others tell us that if you die unforgiven it will be a pity, but you will come round in due time, after a purgatorial period. Here is Paul's refutation. They would be condemned, every one of them, if it had not been that they are in Christ Jesus. The word "now" is as applicable to these condemned ones as to those who are freed from condemnation. "He that believeth not is condemned already." There is nothing but condemnation so long as they remain in that state. "He that believeth not shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." II. A DESCRIPTION OF THE BELIEVER'S POSITION—"in Christ Jesus." 1. By faith. By nature I am in myself, and in sin, and, therefore, condemned; but when I fly to Christ, and trust alone in His blood and righteousness, He becomes to me the cleft of the rock, wherein I hide myself. "He that believeth shall not come into condemnation." 2. As our federal head. This is the teaching of chap. v. As you were in Adam you sinned, and therefore you were condemned; and as you were in Christ through the Divine covenant of grace, and Christ fulfilled the law for you, you are justified in Him. 3. By a vital union. This is the teaching of chap. vi. (vers. 4, 5). We are actually one with Christ by living experience. 4. By a mystical union (chap. vii. 1-4). Shall the spouse of Christ be condemned with the world? "Christ loved His Church, and gave Himself for it"; shall she be condemned despite His death? III. A DESCRIPTION OF THE BELIEVER'S WALK—"who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." In R. V. this sentence is omitted, and rightly so. The oldest copies are without it, the versions do not sustain it, and the fathers do not quote it. How, then, did it get into the text? Probably by general consent, in order that the great truth of the non-condemnation of those who are in Christ Jesus might be guarded from that antinomian tendency which would separate faith from good works. But the fear was groundless, and the tampering with Scripture was unjustifiable. Where did the man who made the gloss get his words from? From ver. 4. A man in Christ has received the Holy Ghost, for he walks according to His guidance. He is also quickened into the possession of a new nature called the spirit—the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. He is no longer in the flesh, he has become a spiritual man. Observe carefully that the flesh is there, only he does not walk after it. Combine the two clauses. On the one hand look to Christ alone, and abide in Him; and then look for the guidance of the Holy Spirit who is to be in you. By faith we are in Christ, and the Holy Spirit is in us. IV. THE ABSOLUTION OF THE BELIEVER: "There is therefore now no condemnation." This is—1. A bold speech. Free grace makes men speak bravely when their faith has a clear view of Jesus. 2. A proved fact. The demonstrations of mathematics are not more clear and certain than the inference that if we are in Christ, and Christ died in our stead, there can be no condemnation for us. 3. A broad assertion. No condemnation—(1) On account of original sin, though the believer was an heir of wrath even as others. (2) For actual sin, though he greatly transgressed and came far short of the glory of God. If you read to the end of the chapter you see how unreserved Paul was in his statement (vers. 33, 34). Paul makes all heaven and earth and hell to ring with his daring challenge. 4. An abiding statement. It was true in Paul's day, and it is just as true at this moment. If you are in Christ Jesus there is now no condemnation. 5. A joyful realisation. If you have ever been burdened with a sense of sin you will know the sweetness of the text. 6. The most practical thing that ever was, because the moment a man receives this assurance into his soul his heart is won to his loving Lord, and the neck of his sinfulness is broken with a blow. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The blessed experience of those who are in*

Christ:—I. THEY ARE FREED FROM CONDEMNATION. II. THEY ARE MOST CLEARLY DISTINGUISHED FROM THOSE WHO REMAIN UNDER CONDEMNATION. 1. By the temper of their minds (ver. 5). 2. By the condition of their hearts (ver. 6). 3. By their relation to God (vers. 7, 8). 4. By the indwelling of the Spirit of Christ (ver 9). III. THEY ARE BLESSED WITH THE HOPE OF A BETTER LIFE. The Spirit—1. Lives in them, though their bodies are mortal through sin. 2. Is the earnest of a more glorious life. 3. Will ultimately quicken their mental bodies and fashion them like unto Christ (vers. 10, 11). (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The saints' union with Christ*:—Note, by way of introduction—1. The difference betwixt saints being in Christ, and Christ being in them. Christ is in the believer by His Spirit (1 John iv. 13; 1 Cor. xii. 13); the believer is in Christ by faith (John. i. 12). Christ is in the believer by inhabitation (Eph. iii. 17); the believer is in Christ by implantation (John xv. 2; Rom. vi. 3). Christ in the believer implieth life and influence from Christ (Col. iii. 4; 1 Pet. ii. 5); the believer in Christ implieth communion and fellowship with Christ (1 Cor. i. 30). When Christ is said to be in the believer, it is in reference to sanctification; when the believer is said to be in Christ, it is in order to justification. 2. This union in Scripture is set forth sometimes by the saints abiding in Christ and Christ abiding in them (John xv. 4; 1 John iii. 24); sometimes by Christ's living in them (Gal. ii. 20, &c.); sometimes by that oneness that is betwixt Christ and them (John xvii. 21, 22). And some make that gathering together in one all things in Christ (Eph. i. 10) to point to this union. 3. The Scripture speaks of a threefold union. (1) The union of three persons in one nature, as in the Trinity. (2) The union of two natures in one person, as in Christ. (3) The union of persons, where yet persons and natures are distinct. This is the mystical union which is betwixt Christ and believers, concerning which note—I. ITS NATURE. Here is—1. Union but no transmutation, confusion, or commixtion. Believers are united to Christ, but yet not so as that they are changed or transformed into the very essence or being of Christ (so as to be Christed with Christ, as some too boldly speak); or that He is changed or transformed into the essence and being of believers. Christ is Christ still, and believers are but creatures still. 2. Union of persons, but not personal union. And here lies the difference between the mystical union and the hypostatical union. There is this nature and that nature in Christ, but not this person and that person. In the mystical union the person of Christ is united to the person of the believer, for faith being the uniting grace, and this faith receiving the person of Christ, it must also unite to the person of Christ. In the marriage-union it is person joined to person, and so it is in the mystical union. 3. But this union is not personal; it is but mystical. Otherwise it would be so many believers, so many Christs; and then the believer would have no subsistence but in Christ. II. ITS SEVERAL KINDS OR BRANCHES. 1. The legal union. The ground of this is Christ's suretyship (Heb. vii. 22). In law the debtor and the surety are but one person; and therefore both are equally liable to the debt; and if the one pay it it is as much as if the other had paid it. So it is with Christ and us. 2. The moral union. It is called moral from the bond or ground of it, which is love. There is a real oneness between friend and friend. There is a mutual, hearty love between Christ and believers, and by virtue of this there is a real and close union betwixt them. III. THE SCRIPTURE RESEMBLANCES BY WHICH IT IS SET FORTH. 1. That of husband and wife. Christ and believers stand in this relation. He is their husband, they His spouse (2 Cor. xi. 2); married to Christ (Rom. vii. 4); betrothed to God and Christ (Hos. ii. 19); their name is Hephzibah and Beulah (Isa. lxii. 4). This union, in the very height of it, the apostle brings down to Christ and believers (Eph. v. 28, 29). 2. That of the head and members. In the body natural there is a near and close union between these two. Thus it is with Christ and believers in the body mystical; He is the Head, they are the several members (Col. i. 18; Eph. i. 22; 1 Cor. xii. 27; Rom. xii. 5). 3. That of the root and branches. There is also union betwixt these; otherwise how should the one convey juice, sap, nourishment, growth, to the other? So it is with Christ and believers; He is the Root, they the branches (John xv. 5). You read of being planted and ingrafted into Christ (Rom. vi. 5, xi. 17, &c.); of being rooted in Christ (Col. ii. 7). 4. The foundation and the building. In a building all the stones and timber, being joined and fastened together upon the foundation, make but one structure. So it is here. Believers are God's building, and Christ is the foundation in that building (1 Cor. iii. 9, 11; Eph. ii. 20). As a man builds upon the foundation and lays the stress of the whole building upon that; so the true Christian builds upon Christ; all his faith, hope, confidence, is built upon this sure founda-

tion (Psa. xxviii. 26). Hence also they are said, As lively stones to be built up in a spiritual house, &c. (1 Pet. ii. 5). 5. That of meat or food. That which a man feeds upon and digests, it is incorporated with, and made a part of himself. The believing soul by faith feeds upon Christ, so that Christ becomes one with him and he one with Christ (John vi. 55, 56). IV. ITS PROPERTIES. It is—1. A sublime union, in respect of—(1) Its nature. Next to the union of the Three Persons in the sacred Trinity, and the hypostatical union of the two natures in Christ, the mystical union is the highest. (2) Its origin. The more supernatural a thing is the more sublime it is; now this union is purely supernatural as to the thing, and also as to the person to whom it belongs. (3) The high and glorious privileges and consequents of it. (4) Its mysteriousness. The union of the body and soul in man is a great mystery; but the union of Christ and the believer is a far greater. 2. A real union. Not a notional, fantastic thing, or something that dull persons please themselves with the thoughts of (John xvii. 22). 3. A spiritual union. Not a gross, corporeal union. The husband and the wife are one flesh, but he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit. 4. A near, intimate union (1 Cor. vi. 17). 5. A total union (1 Cor. vi. 15). 6. An immediate union. Christ and the believing soul they touch each the other. There is nothing that doth intervene or interpose between Christ and it. 7. An indissoluble union. Christ and believers are so firmly joined together that none shall ever be able to part them. (*T. Jacomb, D.D.*)

Ver. 2. **For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.**—*Law cancelling law*:—1. Few words are oftener on our lips than the word law. But we are in danger of using the word as though laws were impersonal forces, independently of a controlling mind. 2. But a law is not a force. It is only the invariable manner in which forces work. Better still, it is the unvarying method in which God is ever carrying out His infinite plans. How wise and good it is that God generally works in this way, so that we are able to calculate with unvarying certainty on natural processes. 3. And when He wills some definite end He does not abrogate the laws that stand in His way, but cancels their action by laws from higher spheres which counterwork them, *e.g.*, The flight of birds is due to very different causes from a balloon's. Balloons float because they are lighter, but birds are heavier. The law of the elasticity of the air sets the bird free from the law of gravitation that would drag it to the ground. In the autumn fields the children, in gathering mushrooms, unwittingly eat some poisonous fungus which threatens them with death. Some antidote is given, which, acting as "the law of life," counterworks the poison, and sets the children "free from the law of death," which had already commenced to work in their members. So the law of the spirit of life in spring sets the flowers free from the law of death of winter. And "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus," set Lazarus "free from the law of sin and death" which imprisoned him in the tomb. And, similarly, the law of life communicated through the Holy Spirit will set us "free from the law of sin and death" which reigns in our hearts. I. THERE IS IN EACH ONE OF US "THE LAW OF SIN AND DEATH." 1. This evil tendency is derived from our connection with the human family. Races and children alike are affected by the sins and virtues of their ancestors. In every man there is a bias towards evil, just as in the young tiger there is predisposition to feed on flesh, and in the duckling to swim. 2. That tendency survives conversion. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh." Its strivings may be suppressed; but it is still there, only waiting till His repressive influences are withdrawn to spring up in all its pristine vigour. Conversion is the insertion of a new principle of life, side by side with the old principle of death. Consecration is simply the act by which we put the culture of our spirit into the blessed hands of Jesus. There is nothing, therefore, in either of these acts to necessitate the crushing out of any principle of the old nature. II. GOD DOES NOT MEAN US TO BE ENSLAVED BY SIN. What a contrast between chap. vii. 23, 24, and the joyous outburst of this text! The one is the sigh of a captive, this the song of a freed bond-slave. 1. Captivity: you have its symbol in the imprisoned lion, or royal eagle; you have it in the disease which holds the sufferer down in rheumatism or paralysis. But there are forms of spiritual captivity equally masterful. Selfishness, jealousy, envy, and ill-will, sensual indulgence, the love of money. 2. But it is not God's will that we should spend our days thus. We were born to be free; not, however, to do as we choose, but to obey the laws of our true being. When we free an eagle we never suppose that he will be able to dive for fish as a gull, or to feed on fruits

as a humming-bird. But henceforth it will be able to obey the laws of its own glorious nature. III. WE BECOME FREE BY THE OPERATION OF "THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE." "The law of sin and death" is cancelled by "the law of the Spirit of life." Life is stronger than death; holiness than sin; the Spirit than man. The mode of the Holy Spirit's work is thus—1. He reveals to us that in the intention of God we are free. So long as you consider captivity your normal state and expect nothing better there is little hope of deliverance. 2. He makes us very sensitive to the presence of sin. 3. He works mightily against the power of evil. 4. He enables us to reckon ourselves "dead indeed unto sin" (chap. vi. 11). This is the God-given way of overcoming the suggestions of sin. When sin approaches us we have to answer: "He whom thou seekest is dead, he cannot heed or respond." Conclusion: 1. "Walk in the Spirit"; "live in the Spirit"; yield to the Spirit. Do not be content to have merely His presence, without which you could not be a Christian, but seek His fulness. Let Him have His way with you. And in proportion as the law of the Spirit becomes stronger, that of the flesh will grow weaker, until "as you have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity," you will now yield them to righteousness unto holiness. 2. And as you find the Spirit of life working within you you may be sure that you are in Jesus Christ, for He only is the element in whom the blessed Spirit can put forth His energy. He is "the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus." (*F. B. Meyer, B.A.*) *The law of sin*:—I. THE LAW OF SIN. 1. The word "law" taken properly is the edict of a person in authority, wherein he orders something to be done, backing his or their commands with promises of rewards, as also their prohibitions with threatenings of punishment. In this sense there is a law of sin. For—(1) A law is a commanding thing: it lays its imperative injunctions upon men and expects their obedience (chap. vii. 1). Now, in this respect sin is a law; therefore you read of the reigning of sin, of obeying sin, of the dominion of sin (chap. vi. 12, 14). The subject is not more under the law of his Sovereign, nor the servant of his master, than the sinner is under the laws of sin. As there is this domination on sin's part so there is subjection on the sinner's part; no sooner doth it command, but it is presently obeyed (Matt. viii. 9). And where it commands and is obeyed there it condemns, which distinguishes it from all other laws. It rules of itself properly, but it condemns as it lays the foundation of condemnation by another—the law of God. And this speaks the inexpressible misery of the unregenerate. (2) A law is backed with rewards and punishments for the furtherance of men's obedience. Answerably now to this, sin will be pretending to rewards and punishments, which, though in themselves they are but sorry things, yet they have a great power. For instance, sinner, saith sin, do but obey me, and pleasure, honour, profit, shall be thine. But if these enticing arguments will not do, sin then threatens derision, poverty, persecution, and what not. But note—That sin considered as simply commanding is not a law, but it then becomes formally and completely a law when the sinner obeys; so then he owns the power of it. The laws of usurpers, merely as imposed by them, are no laws, because not made by persons in lawful authority; but if a people freely own these usurpers and willingly put themselves under subjection to them, then, to them their laws become valid and obligatory. 2. The word "law" is taken improperly for anything that hath an impelling virtue in it. It hath the force of a law, and doth that which a true law uses to do. And, therefore, when sin is the principle which efficaciously excites a person to those things which are suitable to its own nature, there sin may be called a law. II. ITS MODE OF OPERATION. 1. Sin exerts its powers in its vehement urging to what is evil. Sin in the habit is altogether for sin in the act; indwelling sin is wholly for dwelling in sin. Though there was no devil to tempt the graceless sinner, yet that law of sin which is in himself would be enough to make him sin. Corrupt nature is continually soliciting and exciting the unsanctified man to what is evil; it will not let him alone day or night unless he gratify it. What an instance was Ahab of this. Sin put him upon the coveting of Naboth's vineyard, and this it did with such violence that he would eat no bread because he could not have his will (1 Kings xxi. 5; see Prov. iv. 16). 2. This law of sin shows itself in its opposing and hindering of what is good. It is a law which always runs counter to God's law. Doth that call for such and such duties? Are there some convictions upon the sinner's conscience about them? Doth he begin a little to incline to what is good? How doth sin now bestir itself to make head in the soul against these convictions and good inclinations! III. ITS MISERABLE BONDAGE. Such being under the law of sin, it follows that they are under bondage the very worst imaginable. We pity

those who live under tyrants. But, alas! what is that if compared with this. The state of nature is quite another thing than what men imagine it to be; they think there is nothing but freedom in it, but God knows it is quite otherwise (2 Pet. ii. 19). To better convince you of the evil and misery of this bondage, and excite to the most vigorous endeavours to get out of it, note—1. That bondage to sin is always accompanied with bondage of Satan. The devil's reign depends upon the reign of sin; he rules in the children of disobedience, and takes men captives at his will. Shall a damned creature be thy sovereign—he who will be thy tormentor hereafter? 2. What sin is. (1) Look upon sin in itself. It is the vilest thing that is: the only thing which God never made. It is the only thing that God cannot do. (2) Look upon sin in the management of its power. Usurpers often make good laws; and indeed they had need use their power well who get it ill. The philosopher tells us that the intention of the legislator is to make his subjects good; but sin's intention is only to make its subjects bad. Then, this sin is not only out of measure sinful in the exercise of its power, but it is also out of measure tyrannical. All the Neros, Caligulas, Domitians, &c., that ever lived were nothing to it. This first acted the part of a tyrant in them before they acted the part of tyrants over others. The tyranny of sin appears in many things. Its commands are—(*a*) Innumerable. (*b*) Contrary. Lust clashes with lust (Titus iii. 3). (*c*) Rigorous. It must have full obedience or none at all (Eph. ii. 3). (*d*) Never at an end. (*e*) So imperious and cruel that its vassals must stick at nothing. 3. That it is a soul bondage. The bondage of Israel in Egypt was very evil, yet not comparable to this, because that was but corporal and external, but this is spiritual and internal. There may be a servile condition without and yet a free and generous soul within; but if the soul itself be under servitude then the whole man is in servitude. 4. That of all bondage this is the most unprofitable. As to other bondage the master may be cruel enough, but then he makes some amends by giving good wages; but the sinner serves that master which pays him no wages at all—death excepted (chap. vi. 21). 5. That the worst of this bondage is that they who lie under it are altogether insensible of it. Where it is external and civil bondage men groan under it, would fain be rid of it (Exod. ii. 23). But the poor deluded sinner, like some distracted persons, plays with his chains. 6. That it is the most hurtful and most dangerous bondage: for it makes way for and most certainly ends in eternal death. Death puts an end to other bondage (Job iii. 18, 19); but the worst of spiritual bondage follows after death. You have in the text the law of sin and the law of death coupled together (see also chap. vi. 16, 21, 23). (*T. Jacomb, D.D.*) *The law of the Spirit of life in Christ*:—1. Men of the world think that the gospel has to do only, or chiefly, with death, and that its atmosphere is generally repressive. But the fact is the reverse. The gospel gives life for death, joy for sorrow; a conquering power of soul to meet the disability of the flesh; an abounding sphere beyond this world. 2. Every life force is mysterious. We cannot explain the forces of nature. Nor can we explain the mystery of this unique transformation, but we may study its effects and ask ourselves if they are realised in us. Contemplate the change wrought—I. IN HUMAN ACTIVITIES. I will not select one whose life has been abandoned, but who is no stranger to religion, and who has led an outwardly correct life under the guidance of self-respect, and with regard to the good opinion of others. When renewed by the Spirit of God and freed from the law of sin and death he comes under the control of new influences. The love of Christ constrains, not prudence or sagacity. The charm of the Scriptures and of the sanctuary is something never known before. Resistance to sin is not, as before, a feeble, prudential avoidance, but a vehement hate. Love for holiness is ardent, and Christian work not a burden, but a joy. II. ON ONE'S MENTAL CONVICTIONS. I would not refer to the scoffer, but rather to one who regards himself orthodox. He accepts Christianity as the most rational interpretation of nature. He accepts also the historic Christ, and redemption as well. But when such a person is born again, and sees God as his own Father, and the Saviour as his own Redeemer; when he sees the atonement, not as a philosophic scheme, but as a transcendent fact, involving greater resources than those of creation, a patience and love that shrunk not from the Cross, then a flood of light bursts on epistle, gospel and apocalypse, and a glory in the future rises on his view which is unspeakable. This intellectual elevation comes not from a study of the catechism, from a course of eloquent sermons, or from mere reflection upon the Word of inspiration, but as the result of that transforming power called "the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus." III. ON THE TEMPER OF HIS HEART. The ordinary attitude of a thoughtful mind toward

the realities of religion is one of wonder and admiration. Yet all this sentimentality is inert and inoperative. There is no personal affection for the Saviour. Sometimes the character of an acquaintance is dim and commonplace, until some critical exigency arises which gives beauty and worth to that character. Then a personal and passionate attachment is roused. So with the waking of the new life in the soul, Christ appears in new and alluring loveliness. He seems no more afar off, but near at hand, in closest fellowship day by day. With such a Saviour, daily duties are delights however humble. The temper of heart is changed toward Christ's followers as well. The Christian loves his brethren for the Master's sake. His love is not founded on social or intellectual considerations, but grows out of spiritual unity and kinship, because of likeness to Christ. This change of temper and taste is the result of the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus alone. IV. IN THE EXPECTATIONS OF THE FUTURE. All men, pagan as well as Christian, look forward to a future existence. Unconverted men hope to be Christians before they die, but their ideas of the future are dim. With the believer death is seen to be but a transitional step, the mere portal to the shrine. While the world's law is death in life, the gospel's law is life in death. So the gospel fronts the world. Which is the better? Conclusion: Learn—1. That it is in this gospel that life asserts its freedom. All departments of thought and effort, religious and secular, are alike ennobled and quickened. 2. This is a life which tends to consummation and perfection. The snow-bound field lies bare beneath the fetters of frost. It seems dead and barren, but with the melting warmth of spring there comes a verdure in place of ice and snow. All things are changed. So when this spiritual life force is allowed to exert its renewing and transforming energy on the soul of man, life is perfected and crowned. (*R. S. Storrs, D.D.*) *The Christian liberty achieved; or, the law of the Spirit of life making free from the law of sin and death*:—The "therefore now" does not introduce an inference from the immediately preceding argument—which could not warrant it—but one grounded on the previously affirmed effectiveness of the gospel to accomplish that for believers which the law never could. The justifying ground of this discharge from condemnation was set forth in chap. iii. 21–26. The principle upon which it proceeds was illustrated in chap. v. 12–21. The persons to whom it is extended, and the new life of which they become the participators was specified in chap. vi. 1–11. The reason for the impotence of the law was stated in chap. vi. 14, and this impotence had supplied the theme for illustration in chap. vii. 6–25, and the power of the gospel which had been distinctly stated in ver. 6, with an eye to which the apostle had penned (ver. 25). Note—I. THE LAW OF SIN AND DEATH FROM THE POWER OF WHICH BELIEVERS OBTAIN DELIVERANCE IN CHRIST. It will be observed that the apostle does not speak of two laws, but of the one. Not that the two things are one, but that the one "law" pervades them both, and binds them together (chap. v. 12–21; Ezek. xviii. 4; James i. 15; Eph. ii. 1–5, iv. 17–19). This one law renders it impossible that the sinner can of himself regain the possession of innocence and peace, and evermore impels him onwards and downwards in the fearful descending circle of transgression and punishment. Man in the very act of sinning dies; or, being already dead, plunges into a still deeper death (Heb. ix. 14). II. THE SPHERE WITHIN WHICH LIBERATION HAS BEEN PROVIDED—"In Christ." 1. In Christ the double necessity of man's case has been provided for; the twofold difficulty has been solved; the one by the death of the Son of God, the other by His life (chap. iv. 25, *cf.* v. 18, 21). 2. The actual liberation is conferred on men only as they become united to Christ. It is indeed true that there has come a dispensation of grace and renewed probation to all men; but the actual discharge from condemnation, and the liberty from the "law of sin and death," do not come to any but to those who are found in Christ by faith (*cf.* Eph. 1). III. FOR ALL THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST THE LIBERATION IS ACTUALLY ACCOMPLISHED. 1. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ": He was condemned on their account, and they were condemned in Him. He died for their sins, and they died in Him (chap. vi. 7, 8). 2. The liberation from sin is secured to believers in the active life; "for the law of the Spirit of life," &c. (1) The law of sin is a law of death; and the "law of the Spirit" is a law of life. Sin deals death, and thereby perpetuates both itself and its punishment; but "the Spirit" inspires life, and thereby liberates both from sin and death, and insures everlasting victory and blessedness. (2) But how does the law of this new life in Christ exert within us its liberating power? Does it seize upon us from without, as the Spirit of inspiration seized upon the prophets? Or does it come upon us as a new

constituent element of being? Or is it not the law of a new life which is infused into our spirit by the Spirit of God? (3) The new law acts upon the conscience through the medium of the light and truth of the gospel (John xvii. 3; 2 Cor. iv. 6; 1 Pet. i. 23). This living and abiding Word supplies—(*a*) That precious knowledge of the redemption in Christ which provides peace for the guilty conscience. (*b*) That knowledge of the royal and perfect law of liberty which is a sure and sufficient guide for conscience in the practical life. (*c*) That knowledge of God, as a God of love, as our God and Father in Christ, which imparts joyous courage and prevailing power to conscience. Conclusion: 1. Secure this glorious liberty. (1) Ponder well the terrible power of this law, and the dreadful consequences of remaining beneath its dominion. (2) There is now in Christ a perfect liberty from this law available for all who will accept it. Lay hold, by faith, of the hope now set before you in the gospel of Christ. 2. Having secured this inestimable liberty see that you hold it fast. (*W. Tyson.*) *The law of the Spirit of life in Christ*:—I. THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT signifies the power of the Holy Spirit, by which He unites the soul to Christ, in whose righteousness it therefore partakes, and is consequently justified. This law is the gospel, whereof the Holy Ghost is the Author, being the authoritative rule and the instrument by which He acts in the plan of salvation. It is the medium through which He promulgates the Divine testimony; by which also He convinces of sin and testifies of the almighty Saviour. The gospel may be properly denominated a law, because it bears the stamp of Divine authority, to which we are bound to "submit" (chap. x. 3). It requires the obedience of faith (chap. i. 5; xvi. 26); and when men refuse this submission, it is said that they have not "obeyed the gospel" (chap. x. 16). Although, therefore, the gospel is proclaimed as a grace, it is a grace accompanied with authority, which God commands to be received. Accordingly, it is expressly called a "law" (Isa. ii. 3; Micah iv. 2); and in Psalm cx. 2, referring to the power exerted by its means, it is said, "The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion. Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies"—namely, by thine almighty power. The gospel, then, is the law of the Spirit by which He rules, and the rod of His strength, by which He effects our salvation, just as, in chap. i. 16, it is denominated "the power of God unto salvation." The gospel is itself called "the Spirit," as being administered by the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. iii. 8). II. THE GOSPEL IS THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE, the ministration of which "giveth life," in opposition to the "letter" or old covenant that killeth (2 Cor. iii. 6; *cf.* John vi. 63; Ezek. xxxvii. 14; 1 Cor. xv. 45). Christ is the life itself, and the source of life to all creatures. But here the life is that which we receive through the gospel, as the law or power of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, which the apostle calls "the life of God" (Eph. iv. 18). III. THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE IN CHRIST JESUS. Jesus Christ is set before us in two aspects. As God, the Spirit of life resides essentially in Him; but as Mediator, the Spirit of life has been given to Him to be communicated to all who are one with Him. On this account the Spirit was not given in His fulness (John vii. 39) till Jesus Christ as Mediator had entered into heaven, when the Father, solemnly receiving His satisfaction, gave this testimony of His acceptance, in pouring out the abundance of the Spirit on His people (John xvi. 7; Eph. i. 3). That the Spirit of life is in Jesus Christ, not only as God, but also as Mediator, is a ground of unspeakable consolation. It might be in Him as God, without being communicated to men; but as the Head of His people, it must be diffused through them as His members, who are thus complete in Him. Dost thou feel in thyself the sentence of death? Listen, then—"This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life; and this life is in His Son." "I am come that they might have life." "Because I live ye shall live also." This life, then, is in Jesus Christ, and is communicated to believers by the Holy Spirit, by whom they are united to Christ, and from whom it is derived to all who through the law of the Spirit of life are in Him. (*R. Haldane.*) *Law of the Spirit of life*:—The "law" in the text, whether that of "the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus," or that "of sin and death," is a constraining influence—a moral force, an active power—an agency that acts mightily on the soul. And it is plain from the statements made regarding them, that these laws respectively are paramount at the time; they govern the whole being, either one or the other sits upon the inner throne of a man and governs him. It is a matter of life and death—of happiness or of misery, of freedom or of slavery, of everlasting weal or eternal woe. I. THE INQUIRY RELATES TO THE LAW OF SIN AND DEATH. This must be an influence or force which is evil, which is the parent of sin, driving us along in the path of transgression, and which is not only of the nature of spiritual death, but

which also issues in eternal death. 1. In order that we may ascertain its nature, let some thought be given to the process by which it is first established in the human soul. 2. As a mighty force this law is seen in those ruling passions of mankind which discard the authority of God. What is supreme love of money but self-gratification at the expense of one's allegiance to the Most High. 3. We further discover the might of this law of sin and death in the sins of man against his fellow-man. When one overreaches another in trade, does he not gratify his desire for gain at the expense of another? II. SOME GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THIS LAW. 1. It is often subtle in its actings. 2. It is a law of death as well as of sin. 3. It is slavery. This law of sin and death befools and degrades, and it is an unmitigated despotism. Woe to the soul under its unrestrained power! 4. It has had control universally. III. WE HAVE TO ASK CONCERNING THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE IN CHRIST JESUS. "The Spirit of life in Christ Jesus." 1. It is a Divine implantation. "The Spirit of life" is undoubtedly "the Holy Spirit," who is the Author of spiritual life in the soul. "When He cometh, He shall convince the world of sin." Until He speaks inwardly, the mind seems unaware of the presence and power of the law of sin and death. It is also His gracious office to attract the soul to a vital union with Christ. Under the blessed light which He kindles around and within the heart, the redemption of Christ appears in its true aspect as most full, glorious, and adapted to save. 2. As the other is a law of sin and death, this is one of obedience and life. Self-love now seeks its gratification in pleasing God and doing His will. 3. Observe throughout that it is in Christ Jesus. To those who receive Him, He gives the privilege to become the sons of God. The Cross of Christ slays the enmity of the heart. IV. THIS LAW SETS FREE FROM THE OTHER. If it be established as the governing principle the other cannot be. They are in their own nature opposites. Self-love is gratified in the one case, in opposition to the claims of God and the well-being of others; in the other, by obedience and devotion to the supreme law of our being, love to God and man. Conclusion: 1. The adaptation of the religion of Christ to man. 2. We discover where true freedom and true happiness are found. 3. What we all need, and what the world needs, is to be delivered from the law of sin and death by the working in us of this ennobling force. What a glorious object of pursuit! How well worth all self-sacrifice! (*H. Wilkes, D.D.*) *Believers are freed through the law of the Spirit of life*:—I. THE DELIVERANCE OBTAINED—1. By nature we are all (chaps. vi., vii.) in spiritual bondage. We are "sold under sin," and so necessarily are under death (chap. v. 12). The law of sin and the law of death are one and the same principle disclosing itself in different manifestations and degrees. Poisonous fruit is sap worked up, legitimately developed. 2. This evil principle drives man from God. (1) As it is darkness (1 John i. 5–7; ii. 9), it drives him from the fountain of soul-light. (2) As it is death, from the fountain of life (Acts xvii. 28). 3. From this evil principle believers are made free. Not from death, though its sting is taken away; nor even from sin perfectly. But over against death faith sees the resurrection placed, and over against sin the unblemished perfection of the redeemed. II. THE AGENCY WHEREBY THIS DELIVERANCE IS ACCOMPLISHED. Law counteracting law. 1. The term "law" may mean—(1) A certain code like the Decalogue and the laws of nations. (2) A principle operating with all the regularity and fixedness of statute—in which sense laws of thought, gravitation, refraction, are laws. 2. The latter is the signification here. (1) The "law of the Spirit" this new victorious law is called. It is contrary to whatever is of the flesh. In its origin, nature, mode of working, it is Divine. From God it comes. For God it moves. To God it leads. (2) It is the law of the Spirit of life. As the same Spirit is named the Spirit of wisdom, counsel, &c. (Isa. xi. 2), of holiness (chap. i. 4), of truth (John xiv. 17; xv. 26), because He makes wise, holy, leads into all truth, so He is here named the Spirit of life, as He leads into life, and works life. Of all soul-life He is the Author, Promoter, Regulator, Perfecter (John vi. 63; 1 Pet. iii. 18). This law of the Spirit of life as the stronger man casts out the strong (Luke xi. 22). Water poured into a vessel expels the air. III. THE SPHERE WITHIN WHICH THIS AGENCY IS SO EFFICIENTLY OPERATIVE. Like laws of nature, it works within certain limits. Iron, not glass, will conduct electricity. Dews, droughts, hurricanes are conditioned by varied zones of atmospheric circumstances; so outside the region of "being in Christ Jesus" the law of the Spirit of life does not effect its hallowing results upon our souls. Within that radius, however, its might is sovereign. It frees believers. Conclusion: Note—1. The urgent importance of ascertaining which of these laws is supreme in our soul. If not conscious

of resistance to the law of sin, we are under its sway. We may even be troubled about the commission of certain sins, and give heed to certain duties, and yet be in utter servitude to it (Ezek. xxxiii. 31). 2. The great need of asking the promised Spirit (Matt. vii. 11; Luke x. 13). Regeneration, sanctification only obtainable through His power. 3. The duty of consciously living in this freedom, not confusing liberty with license (Luke i. 74, 75). Carefulness against presumption and despondency alike is indispensable (Eph. vi. 11-13). 4. The strong consolation of knowing that ultimate perfection can be calculated upon with all the certainty of a result of "law." Given the reign of the law of the Spirit of life in a soul, then amid and in spite of all conflicts the beauty of the renewed life will be patent and increase (Psa. cxxxviii. 8; Heb. xii. 23; xiii. 21). (*J. Gage, B.D.*) *The law of the Spirit frees from the law of sin*:—Note—1. The Spirit frees from the law of sin. In reference to this you may consider Him either essentially as He is God, or personally. As it is the Son's proper act to free from the guilt, so it is the Spirit's proper act to free from the power of sin, it belonging to the Son to do all without and to the Spirit to do all within. That which God once said in reference to the building of the temple—"Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit"—is applicable here. 2. This is done by the Spirit of life. This refers either to the Spirit as He is a living Spirit, or refers to the time when the Spirit quickens and thus regenerates, or to the method of regeneration itself. The Spirit who renews, when He renews, by renewing, brings sin under. 3. It is the law of the Spirit by which this is done. Here is law against law, the power and efficacy of the Spirit against the power and efficacy of sin (Eph. iii. 20). The law of sin has a moral and a physical power; and so with the Spirit. He hath His moral power, as He doth persuade, command, &c.; and He hath His physical power, as He doth strongly, efficaciously incline and impel the sinner to such and such gracious acts; yea, as He doth effectually change his heart, make him a new creature, dispossess sin of its regency, and bring him under the government of Christ. And herein the law of the Spirit is above the law of sin. Set corrupt nature never so high, yet it is but a finite thing, and so hath but a finite power; but the Spirit is an infinite being, and puts forth an infinite power. For the better opening of the truth in hand, note—I. THE NECESSITY, SUFFICIENCY, EFFICACY OF THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT IN FREEING MEN FROM THE POWER OF SIN. 1. The necessity of the power of the Spirit. Omnipotency itself is requisite thereunto; that is the strong man which keeps the palace till Christ, through the Spirit (which is stronger than it), comes upon it and overcomes it. The power of nature can never conquer the power of sin, for nature's greatest strength is on sin's side. That the power of the Spirit is thus necessary if you consider that—(1) Sin is in possession. (2) It hath been so a long time. (3) Its dominion is entire; it hath all on its side. When there is a party within a kingdom ready to fall in with the foreign force that comes to depose the tyrant, he may with more facility be vanquished; but if all the people unanimously stick to him, then the conquest is the more difficult. Christ said, "The prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in Me"; so the poor sinner may say, "The sin-subduing Spirit comes, but He finds nothing in me to close with Him." (4) The natural man likes the power of sin. (5) Sin is very resolute for and in the maintaining of what it hath; it will fight it out to the last, and die rather than yield. (6) Satan sets in with it, and upon all occasions gives it all the help he can, as allies do. 2. Its sufficiency. As Christ is able to save to the utmost from sin's guilt, so the Spirit also is able to save to the utmost from sin's power. God once said to Paul, "My grace is sufficient for thee" (2 Cor. xii. 9). Now, as that grace is sufficient to bear up under the heaviest afflictions, so this grace is sufficient to bring down the strongest corruptions. Who is sufficient for these things? Why He, and none but He, who hath infinite power. 3. Its efficacy. (1) He doth not only in a moral way advise, counsel, persuade the sinner to cast off sin's bondage, but puts forth an insuperable strength upon him, and so goes through with the work. (2) When He comes about this or any other saving act, He doth not leave the sinner's will in suspense, but, in a way congruous to its liberty, He overcomes and determines it for God against sin, so as that it shall neither hesitate nor make any resistance to His grace. II. IN WHAT WAYS THE HOLY SPIRIT DOTH EXERT HIS POWER. 1. He effectually works upon the understanding, that being the leading faculty. (1) Whereas He finds it under darkness, He acts as a Spirit of illumination, filling the soul with saving knowledge. It required Omnipotency to say, "Let there be light"; no less a power is requisite to the saving enlightening of the sinner (Eph. v. 8). But this being done, sin is broken in its

power by it; for ignorance is one of its royal forts. (2) Whereas it lies under sad mistakes, therefore the Spirit doth rectify it and makes it to judge aright. (3) Whereas it is full of high and proud thoughts, of strange imaginations and reasonings, He casts them down (2 Cor. x. 5). 2. He then proceeds to the will. (1) Of all the faculties, sin contends most for the will, which, when it hath once gained, it will not easily part with. And so, too, the Spirit contends most for the will. He puts forth the greatest efficacy of His grace for the setting of that right and straight for God, that it may choose and cleave to His holy commands in opposition to the laws and commands of sin. (2) Yet though He acts thus efficaciously, He doth not at all violate its liberty, but exerts all this power in such a way as agrees with that liberty (Psa. cx. 3; Cant. i. 4). He removes that averseness, obstinateness, reluctancy, that is in it against what is holy and spiritual. 3. In acting on the affections, He disengages them from sin, and sets them directly against it, and so freeing the sinner from the love of sin. Application: 1. Let such who desire this mercy betake themselves to the Spirit for it. (1) See that you pray in faith, believing in the sufficiency of His power. (2) Let all other means be joined with prayer. They are but means, and therefore not to be relied upon; yet they are means, and therefore not to be neglected. 2. Let such who are made free from this law of sin own the Spirit of life as the author of their freedom, and ascribe the glory of it to Him. 3. Greatly to love and honour the Spirit. 4. As you have found the law of the Spirit in your first conversion, so you should live under the law of the Spirit in your whole conversation. 5. Set law against law—the law of the Spirit against the law of sin. (*T. Jacomb, D.D.*) *The believer's freedom from the law of sin:*—I. THE LEADING TERMS OF THE TEXT. 1. By the "Spirit of life" we are here to understand the Holy Ghost. Men are spiritually dead; the animal and intellectual life remains; but the spiritual life—the life which connects man with, and qualifies him for the enjoyment of God—was extinguished by the fall, and can only be restored by the "Spirit of life." And hence we are said to be "born again" of the Spirit. And as it is His office to restore spiritual life, so He maintains it. All "good" comes from Him and depends on Him. 2. He is called "the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus." Because—(1) We are indebted to Christ for the gift of the Holy Spirit. It is owing to Christ's meritorious sacrifice that we are enabled and entitled to receive the Spirit. (2) It is the office of Christ to dispense the Spirit. From His "fulness" it is that we are to "receive grace upon grace." II. THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE IN CHRIST JESUS. By this we are to understand the gospel, applied by the Spirit's power to the hearts of men. The gospel is often called a law—"The perfect law of liberty"; "The isles shall wait for His law"; "The law of Messiah shall go forth from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth." What law ever went forth from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth but the gospel? 1. A law is an enactment or command issuing from supreme authority, fully published and made known, and enforced by sanctions of reward to the obedient, or of punishment against the disobedient. This constitutes, when it is published or made known, the rule of action, the standard of character, and the ground of decision and judgment; this is law in general. The gospel answers to this general definition in every particular. (1) It is an enactment or command. It comes with authority. It is not a statement of historical facts, an exhibition of truth, a collection of promises only; it comes to us with authority, that the facts should be credited, the truths received, the blessings included in the promises sought by us; so it may be said of us that we are God's witnesses that the gospel is a "law." Where there is no knowledge of the gospel there can be no obligation to receive it; but the moment the gospel comes to a man, from that time it becomes binding upon his conscience, and it is at his peril if he neglect or disobey it. (2) It is enforced by sanctions; there is reward to the obedient, punishment for the disobedient. (3) It issues from the highest authority in the universe. (4) It is duly published and made known. Whatever may be said of the condition of those who live in the "dark places of the earth," generally speaking, at least, ignorance of the gospel among ourselves is wilful, and therefore criminal. (5) It constitutes the standard of character and the rule of decision. "God will judge the secrets of all hearts," says Paul, "according to my gospel." 2. But why is it called the Spirit's law? Because it is the instrument by which the Spirit most efficiently operates upon the understanding, the will, the conscience, and the character of the man. By, and with it, he operates with the force and the authority of a law, overcoming and reducing and governing the mind. The power that accomplishes the great work of regeneration is the power of the Spirit; but the instrument He employs is the

"Word of truth." III. THE LAW OF SIN AND OF DEATH. 1. By this some understand the moral law considered in its application to fallen man, as the covenant of works. This law, when given to man innocent and holy, in the possession of Divine and spiritual life, was well adapted to his case. But when man became a transgressor, then that which "was ordained unto life" began to operate unto death. It is the "law of sin" to all the unconverted, its very object being to "make sin appear exceeding sinful." By the law is the knowledge of sin. Let a man apply it to his own character, and it will prove, to the conviction of his conscience, that he is a sinner; and, of course, wherever it proves sin it pronounces the sentence of death. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." 2. But others understand (and the general scope of St. Paul's argument is favourable to the opinion) the sinning principle in the nature of fallen man. Wherever this principle of unsubdued enmity to God and holiness exists in the heart, it will manifest itself in outward acts of sin. And these acts become habits, by repetition; and thus sin becomes master. There his law is "a law of death." Wherever there is sin in the root, there is death in the fruit; "the end of those things is death." "Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." IV. THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE MAKES US FREE FROM THE LAW OF SIN AND DEATH." 1. This is true of the law of sin and death, understood as the covenant of works, the broken moral law. It is in reference to this that the apostle seems to be speaking in ver. 1. Before they were "in Christ," they were condemned by the law for having broken it. But no sooner did they put their souls, by penitence and faith, into the Saviour's hands, than all the mass of transgressions and guilt which rested upon them was removed. And now "there is no condemnation," they are "made free from" the condemnatory demands of the moral law, from the curse of the covenant of works. 2. But true believers are delivered from the sinning principle which contaminates our fallen nature. "Sin shall have no dominion over you." V. PRACTICAL INFERENCES. The salvation of Christ is—1. Of indispensable necessity. It is, in fact, "the one thing needful"; "our souls without it die." 2. A present salvation. "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free." 3. That connected with satisfactory evidence of its existence. St. Paul does not speak as if he were at all doubtful; as if it were a business of mere conjecture or probability, of inference or anticipation. He had a consciousness of his freedom. 4. A personal affair. The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free. (*Jabez Bunting, D.D.*) *Freedom from law achieved by law*:—We see this principle at work in the material world. A higher law comes into play and over-rides ordinary law. Thus dynamic law subjugates mechanical force, as in the steam-engine; chemical law, in turn, annihilates dynamic force; and intellectual power is superior to vital law, and moral to intellectual. The lower laws take effect upon the lower natures. The mechanical law of gravitation affects stones; but let a higher law of affinity come into operation, and those stones will be transformed into other combinations, such as gases, which will be above the laws of gravitation, and will form food for plants, &c. Mechanical law, however applied, cannot convert stones into bread. Chemical law can. If you mechanically pound ice or melt it, you can get nothing but water; but chemistry transforms it into power, and gas, and food. In the text the apostle is presenting to us in the kingdom of grace what is taking place in the kingdom of nature—law conquering law—*e.g.*, a human body subject to chemical law ferments, putrifies, decays; but the vital law holds all these in check. It is only when the higher vital law is gone that the lower law reigns. (*Percy Strutt.*) *The two laws*:—I. WHAT IS MEANT BY "LAW." 1. Law is an authoritative code framed by a master for the regulation of his servants. But when we speak of the laws of nature, we denote the process by which events invariably follow each other. The law which accountable creatures are bound to obey is one thing; the law, in virtue of which creatures are always found to make the same exhibition in the same circumstances, is another. 2. It is not difficult, however, to perceive how the same term came to be applied to things so distinct. For law, in the first sense of it, is not applicable to a single command which may never be repeated. True, like all the others, it is obeyed, because of that general law by which the servant is bound to fulfil the will of his master; yet it does not attain the rank of such a denomination unless the thing enjoined be habitual. Thus the order that doors shall be shut, or that none shall be missing after a particular hour, or that Sabbath shall be observed, may be characterised as the laws of the family—not the random orders of the current day. Now this common circumstance of uniformity has extended

the application of the term "law." Should you drop a piece of heavy matter, nothing is more certain nor more constant than its descent—just as if constrained so to do by the authority of a universal enactment on the subject, and hence the law of gravitation. Or, if light be made to fall on a polished surface, nothing more mathematically sure than the path by which it will be given back again to the eye of the beholder, and hence in optics the law of reflection. Or if a substance float upon the water, nothing more invariably accurate than that the quantity of fluid displaced is equal in weight to that of the body which is supported; and all this from a law in hydrostatics. But the difference lies just here. The one kind of law is framed by a living master for the obedience of living subjects, and may be called juridical law. The other is framed by a living master also, for it is God who worketh all in all; but obedience is rendered by the force of those natural principles wherewith the things in question operate in that one way which is agreeable to their nature. This kind of law would by philosophers be called physical law. II. IN WHICH OF THESE TWO SENSES SHALL WE UNDERSTAND "LAW" IN THE TEXT. To determine this, we shall begin with the consideration of—1. The law of sin and death. It is quite obvious that this is not a law enacted in the way of jurisprudence. It is neither more nor less than the sinful tendency of our constitution. It is called a law because, like the laws of gravitation or electricity, it has the property of a moving force, inasmuch as it incessantly aims after the establishment of its own mastery. Death comes as regularly and as surely in the train of our captivity to sin as the fruit of any tree, or the produce of any husbandry, does by the laws of the vegetable kingdom. 2. The law of the Spirit of life just expresses the tendency and the result of an operative principle in the mind that has force enough to arrest the operation of the law of sin and death. The affection of the old man meets with a new affection to combat and to overmatch it. If the originating principle of sin be shortly described as the love of the creature, the originating principle of the spiritual life might also be briefly described as the love of the Creator. These two appetites are in a state of unceasing hostility. The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh. III. THE SECOND OF THESE LAWS. 1. Is called—(1) The law of the Spirit, because referable to the Holy Ghost, by whose agency the new moral force has been made to actuate the soul and give another direction to the whole history. (2) The law of the Spirit of life, because he in whom this law is set a-going is spiritually minded; and as to be carnally minded is death, so to be spiritually minded is life. It is like the awakening of man to a new moral existence, when he is awakened to the love of that God whom before he was glad to forget; like a resurrection from the grave when, aroused from the deep oblivion of nature, man enters into living fellowship with his God. It is only now that he has begun to live. 2. When does this visitation of the Spirit descend upon the soul? This is shown by the words "In Christ Jesus." As surely as when you enter a garden of sweets one of your senses becomes awakened to the perfumes; as surely as when emerging from the darkness of a close apartment to the glories of an unclouded day another of your senses is awakened to the light and beauty, so surely when you enter within the fold of Christ's mediatorship, and are united with Him, then there is an awakening of the inner man to the beauties of holiness. We refer to a law of nature, the impression of every scene, in which he is situated, on the senses of the observer; and it is also by the operation of such a law that, if in Christ, we become subject to a touch that raises us to spiritual life, and maketh us susceptible of all its joys and all its aspirations. 3. What have we to do that we may attain this condition. I know of no other instrument by which the disciple is grafted in Christ Jesus, even as the branches are in the vine, than faith. And "the Holy Ghost is given to those who believe." "The promise of the Spirit is unto faith." (*T. Chalmers, D.D.*) *Delivered from the law of sin:*—Sin and death are partners of one throne and issue one law (*cf.* vers. 14, 21). To obey the one is to obey the other. In former days Paul was compelled to do the bidding of sin. But the Holy Spirit has set him free by making His own will the rule of Paul's life. Just so a conqueror, by setting up his own laws in a conquered country, makes the former laws invalid. That the country obeys the new laws is a proof of conquest. Similarly, the presence and guidance of the Spirit have made Paul free from the rule of sin. This is not a change of bondage, but freedom from all bondage. For the law of the Spirit is the will of our Maker, and therefore the law of our being. And to obey the law of our being is the only true freedom. "In Christ." Paul's deliverance took place objectively in the human body of Christ (chap. iii. 24); subjectively, by Paul's spiritual union with the risen Saviour (chap. vi. 11).

(*Prof. Beet.*) *Free from the law of sin and death*:—I. THE MISERY OF ALL MEN BY NATURE. And that it consists of a state of bondage and captivity, which is here in this Scripture called the law of sin and death. We shall speak of the law of sin. Sin, in those which are unregenerate, does exercise a tyrannical power and authority over them, therefore it hath the denomination of a law given unto it; not that it hath anything which is good or lawful or regular in it, for it is properly the transgression of a law. But it is called a law in regard of that rule which it bears in the hearts of all those that are entangled with it. This is the condition of sin, that it carries with it the nature of a law to the subjects of it. First, in the constant actings of it; sin is like a law so. Things which are acted by law they are acted with a great deal of constancy. The ordinances of heaven and earth, the sun, moon, and stars, they keep their course by a settled decree which is upon them. Even so is it also with those who are carried by this law of sin; it is that which is usual with them, they make a constant course and practice of it as their trade and life. Secondly, it hath the motion of a law in that men are carried to it powerfully and irresistibly without opposition. So is sin to an unregenerate person; it commands him and has power over him, it rules and reigns in him. This is first of all grounded upon that curse which was laid upon man for his first rebellion. But, secondly, sin gets a great deal of power by custom, which has the force of a second nature with it, and in that regard the notion of a law. The Ethiopian may as soon change his skin, and the leopard his spots, as they may cease to do evil that are accustomed to it. Now, for the further illustration of it, we may take notice of the misery of this bondage in these following aggravations. First, in the subject of this thraldom; and that is the soul itself—the immortal soul—that part of man which had the image of God in a special manner imprinted upon it. For this to be in slavery and servitude is a very sad business indeed. We know in the way of the world how bondage is usually aggravated from the quality and condition of the person that is brought into it. Secondly, consider it also in the persons which men are in thraldom to by it, and that is to Satan and his instruments. For a man to be in bondage to a stranger it is not very desirable, but to be in bondage to an enemy or adversary is very abominable. Thirdly, there is an aggravation also in it from the nature and quality and condition of the servitude itself, in all the circumstances of it. Of all servants we count them to be in the worse case that are sold. To this we may further add the insensibleness of this their condition which is usually attendant hereupon. We count them most desperately miserable who discern not the misery which they are in, as mad men that sing in their chains. And so much may be spoken of the first branch of a natural man's captivity, as it is considerable in his thraldom to evil expressed here in the text by the law of sin. The second is as it is considerable in his obligation to punishment: and that is here also expressed by the law of death, which is added and joined to the other and goes along with it. There is a threefold death which the Scripture makes mention of, and they are all of them the wages of sin. First, natural death, which consists in the separation of the soul from the body (chap. v. 12). Secondly, there is also a spiritual death, which consists in a deprivation of the image of God upon the soul, and the withdrawing of His favour from it. When a man is void of all grace and comfort too, he is then thus far in a state of death (Eph. ii. 1). Thirdly, there is eternal death also, which consists in the separation of soul and body from God for ever in hell. Therefore let us accordingly look upon sin and death in this conjunction. Let us not separate or divide these things which God hath thus put together, but in all temptations to the one think of the other. II. The second is the HAPPY RECOVERY AND RESTORATION OF BELIEVERS BY GRACE in these words, "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free." First, here is the remedy itself which is mentioned, "The law of the Spirit of life which is," &c. Where, first, of the meaning of the words. First, there are three terms here before us; there is life, and the Spirit of life, and the law of the Spirit. By life here we are to understand the grace of holiness and sanctification. By the word Spirit joined to life we are to understand either the original, because it is wrought by the Spirit, or the activity and intention of it. By the law of the Spirit we are to understand the power and efficacy of it. For law it is a word of command and hath prevalency with it. Now the point which is here observable of us is thus much, that in the human nature of Christ there is a law of the Spirit of life. There is a fulness and sufficiency of all grace and holiness in Christ considered as He was man. This the Scripture doth sufficiently intimate and confirm unto us in sundry places of it, as in Col. i. 19, "It

pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell." This was requisite thus to be upon a twofold ground and consideration especially—First, in regard of the personal union of His human nature with His Divine. Secondly, as this was requisite in regard of His personal union, so also in regard of His work of mediatorship. First, take it in the preparatory reference; and so the Spirit of life in Christ, it did fit Him and dispose Him and qualify Him for the work of the mediatorship. This we may conceive it to have done in these respects—First, in the sanctifying of the flesh of Christ in the womb of the Virgin. Secondly, it also dignified this nature and advanced it above all other creatures. Thirdly, this Spirit of life in Christ it did also fill His human nature with as much grace as it was capable of, and with all these perfections whereunto the nature of grace doth reach and extend itself. Again, further, it is also considerable in the exertions and transactions of it. Whatever Christ did as mediator, He was more particularly enabled hereunto from this Spirit of life. As first of all, it was this which quickened Him and encouraged Him in His entrance upon it. Secondly, it likewise sustained Him, and upheld Him in the very performance itself. Thirdly, in that moreover it at last revived Him and raised Him from the dead. Adam, he brought down our nature and subjected it to a great deal of disparagement by his transgression; but Christ by His purity and holiness hath set it up, and taken off that disparagement from it which was formerly upon it. Again, further, here is comfort as to the point of continuance of grace and perseverance in it. Forasmuch as that grace and holiness which we now partake of under the gospel, it is in good and safe hands. The grace which we had given us in Adam we lost, but that grace which we have now in the new covenant we have it upon better and surer terms, being such as is now rooted in Christ as the proper subject of it. This law of the spirit of life it is in Christ Jesus. The second is the efficacy of this remedy upon St. Paul and all other believers, "Hath made me free from the law of sin and death": where the remedy is as large as the disease, and the plaster as broad as the sore. Here is the law of the Spirit in opposition to the law of the flesh, and the law of life in opposition to the law of death in us. First, as to matter of justification. This holiness of Christ it frees us from the law of death and condemnation. But secondly, it holds good in point of sanctification likewise. The pure and holy nature of Christ is the spring and original of all holiness in us. "And of His fulness do we all receive, and grace for grace," as the apostle tells us (John i. 12). The Spirit of God does not bestow grace upon us immediately, but He bestows it upon us through Christ. Let us learn from hence to bless God for Christ, and give Him the glory of His own holiness in us. (*Thomas Horton.*) *Spiritual emancipation*:—The word "law" may denote commandment, or the customary habit or state of any creature. In the one sense we talk of the laws of God, or the laws of kings; in the other sense we talk of the laws of nature, of matter, or of mind. It seems much better to understand the verse according to the second or subjective use of the word "law," and then its reference is seen to be to the believer's sanctification. I. MAN'S NATURAL STATE OF MORAL THRALDOM. 1. There is a principle of depravity in every human heart (Rom. iii. 23; Gal. iii. 22). The whole work of Christ, as tasting death for every man, is based upon the assumption that all the world is guilty before God; for if not, there must be some for whom Christ has not died, inasmuch as they needed no atonement. Yet where are these to be found? This principle of evil may be described according to its various modes of manifestation. It is—(1) The love of the creature, in opposition to the love of the Creator. (2) Self-will, or self-assertion, in opposition to the will of God and the requirements of His law. (3) Sensualism, in contrast with that which is intellectual and spiritual. (4) Pride and self-preference. (5) Selfishness and self-seeking. (6) A tendency to falsehood and guile. 2. This principle operates with the regularity of a natural law, determining all our volitions and affections. Man sins with the same certainty that an apple, loosened from the tree, drops to the ground. It is natural for the sun to rise and set, for the moon to wax and wane, for the tides to ebb and flow, for the seasons to revolve, and for the generations of men to be born and die: to do otherwise, in any of these instances, would imply a miracle or a violence done to the uniformity of nature. So likewise it is natural and inevitable that men, unrenewed by grace, should sin. 3. This law of sin is likewise a law of death. God by express enactment has appointed death as the wages of sin. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." But in addition to that external decree, there is an internal tendency in sin to fructify in death (James i. 15), and to destroy the life of the soul. II. THE STATE OF MORAL FREEDOM

ACHIEVED FOR US BY THE GOSPEL. 1. There is a principle of life in them that believe. They live, by having their minds enlightened with the knowledge of God, by feeling the burden of their sins removed, and by being able to look up to God with filial confidence and trust, by having the conscience cleansed from dead works to serve the living God, by being inspired with new emotions, animated by new aims. 2. This life is imparted and sustained by the Holy Ghost. It is not self-generated, but it is given from above. He who receives it is born of the Spirit. 3. This principle of life operates with the regularity of a law. The Spirit takes up His residence in the breast of the converted man, and goes on working till every thought is brought into subjection to Christ, and the work of the believer's sanctification is complete. 4. This Spirit of life is realised only by our being in Christ. (*T. G. Horton.*)

Vers. 3, 4. **For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh.**—*The requirement of the law* :—I. THE DIVINE PURPOSE FOR MAN, WHETHER IN THE OLD TESTAMENT OR THE NEW, IS THE SAME. The reader who turns from the one to the other seems to have passed into a new world. The things, such as sacrifices, &c., that seemed of most importance in the one, seem of no importance at all in the other. But under seeming divergence, there is essential unity—a unity that comes to the surface in the text. Here we read of "the righteousness," or better still, "the requirement of the law." Now what was this? Not what it seemed to the great mass of the Jews. Had the Pharisee who prayed, "God, I thank Thee," &c., been asked, he would have given a list of things to be done or avoided. But now and then a prophet caught a glimpse of this purpose. Now it is the Preacher, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter," &c. Then it is Isaiah (lviii. 6, 7). Now it is Micah (vi. 8). Then it is David in the fifty-first Psalm, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit," &c. The end of the law was not to make formalists, but good men. And the purpose of God is the same under the Christian dispensation. What God desires is not certain forms, services, emotions, but the renewal of the whole nature, inner and outer. II. CHRIST HAS COME THAT GOD'S PURPOSE MIGHT BE COMPLETELY ATTAINED. Attained as it never could have been in any other way—that it might be "fulfilled" in us. The architect sees in vision a glorious building. As yet it is empty. The masons labour and it is filled full, completed, realised. The father has a dream for his son just starting in life. When the son lives that life and becomes the pride of his father, he fulfils it. What St. Paul means is that our Father has had a dream for us. And that that dream might be accomplished, that we might become good, "God sent His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin." And in Christ He did all that was needed. He condemned sin just where it needs condemning, in the sinner's heart. He made a full and complete atonement. He supplied the mightiest of all motives to a new life in the constraining love of Christ. And He promised the most effectual of all help in the gift of His Spirit. Have we, too, a dream? Do we want to be true children of God? Christ is the only Way. Trust, love, and follow Him, and you shall have "the righteousness of the law" fulfilled in you. III. THERE IS BUT ONE PROCESS BY WHICH THIS PURPOSE CAN BE ATTAINED. The sphere in which it is to be done is that of active, not of contemplative life. In business and home duties and cares we have to decide whether we will yield to the cravings of the flesh or the promptings of the Spirit. And it is as we walk in that Spirit, and take up our cross and deny ourselves, that we grow up into Christ, become like Him, and God's plan—our perfection and happiness—is fulfilled in us. (*J. Ogle.*) *Law helpless* :—The "Laocoon" may serve as an artistic embodiment of Rom. vii. 14 to end. But the issues of the struggle differ. Laocoon is overcome; St. Paul conquers, in the grace of Christ. Self-effort for righteousness is a hopeless struggle. St. Paul found the "more excellent way." I. THERE IS ONE THING MAN MUST SOMEHOW ATTAIN—it is "righteousness." 1. Except for this pursuit of righteousness, it is not worth being a man at all. Without it how is man higher than the beast? No man really lives save as he pursues this. No man can ever be satisfied save as he attains this. 2. But what is righteousness? It is—(1) Conformity of inward conditions and outward conduct. It is of the lack of this harmony St. Paul complains. This he called unrighteousness. (2) Conformity of both spirit and conduct to the revealed will of God. For that must be our standard. 3. Taking these ideas of righteousness then, it appears that men wholly fail to attain it by self-effort. And self-effort ends in a despairing sense of the power of sin. Then arises the question—Can we attain righteousness by any helps we can

secure? Try two. II. THE OFFER OF HELP BY THE LAW. What is law? The plain statement of what is right, made to us with befitting sanctions. This cannot help us to righteousness. Because—1. Of its nature. It can only disclose sin and condemn. "I had not known sin, but by the law." It cannot give life. 2. Of the corruption of man. He is "weak through the flesh"; he "cannot do the thing that he would." There is no hope of ever making flesh render perfect obedience. It is plain that "law is helpless." III. THE OFFER OF HELP BY GOD. This help is in no sense intended to set law aside. It is the offer of power to obey. And the offer is made in Christ Jesus, who came into the world bringing a new force of Divine life. How, then, does God in Christ help? Not as law does, trying to shape conduct and force the flesh, but by quickening the spirit, renewing the will, moulding the inclination, inspiring the soul with love to God, and holy desires. And this succeeds. Thus urged and inspired, the spirit can master the flesh, and win the righteousness which the law requires. (*R. Tuck.*) *The law's inability to justify and save:*—I. OF WHAT LAW DOTH THE APOSTLE HERE SPEAK? God's own law, in its strict and proper acceptation, viz., that revelation which the great Law-giver hath made of His will, therein binding the reasonable creature to duty. But what law of God? Either that primitive law which He imposed upon Adam (and in him upon all mankind), upon the keeping of which He promised life, upon the breaking of which He threatened death; or else, that law which He gave Israel from Sinai, namely, the decalogue or moral law, which was but a new draught of the law first made with Adam. II. WHAT IS THE THING IN SPECIAL WHICH THE LAW COULD NOT DO? 1. You read (ver. 1) of exemption from condemnation. Now this the law could not do; the law can condemn millions, but it cannot save one. 2. You read (ver. 2) of being made free from the law of sin and death. Herein, too, was the law impotent; it might lay some restraints upon, but never bring down the power of sin. 3. There is the blessed empire of the spirit over the flesh, as also the full and perfect obeying of the law's commands; neither of these could the law effect. 4. Reformation of life the law could not do. 5. The text speaks of the condemning of sin; the law can condemn the sinner, but not (in a way of expiation) sin itself. 6. There is the reconciling of God and the sinner, the satisfying of infinite justice, the justifying of the guilty, the giving of a right and title to heaven. Now the law was under an impossibility of effecting any of these. III. WHAT IS THE WEAKNESS OF THE LAW HERE SPOKEN OF? 1. The word is used to set forth any debility, whether it be natural or preternatural, as being occasioned by some bodily disease. The apostle speaks of the weakness of the commandment (Heb. vii. 18), and weak and beggarly elements (Gal. iv. 9). Here a higher law was in his eye, and yet he attributes weakness to it also; it could not do because it was weak, and it was weak because it could not do. 2. This weakness of the law is not partial, but total; it is not the having of a lesser strength, but the negation of all strength. A man that is weak may do something, though he cannot do it vigorously, exactly, and thoroughly; but now (as to justification and salvation) the law is so weak that it can do nothing. IV. WHAT THE FLESH IS HERE BY WHICH THE LAW IS MADE THUS WEAK? The corrupt, sinful, depraved nature that is in fallen man. Observe that the weakness of the law is not from the law itself, but from the condition of the subject with whom it hath to do. When man was in the state of innocency, the law (Samson like) was in its full strength, and could do whatever was proper to it; yea (as to itself), it is able yet to do the same; but the case with us is altered; we cannot now fulfil this law, nor come up to what it requires of us, and therefore it is weak. The strongest sword in a weak hand can do but little execution; the brightest sun cannot give light to a blind eye. The law strengthens sin, and sin weakens the law (1 Cor. xv. 56). 1. The special matter of the law's weakness. (1) With respect to justification (chap. iii. 20; Gal. ii. 16, 21, iii. 11, 21, 22; Acts xiii. 39). (2) In reference to eternal life. It never yet carried one sinner to heaven. Consider it as the covenant of work, so its language is "do and live" (chap. x. 5). Now man in his lapsed state cannot do according to the law's demands, therefore by it there is no life for him. 2. The grounds or demonstrations of the law's impotency. (1) It requires that which the creature cannot perform. Before the law can do any great thing for a person it must first be exactly fulfilled; for though man hath lost his power the law hath not lost its rigour. Though the sinner be as the poor broken debtor, yet the law will not compound with him, but will have full payment of the whole debt. Now this is impossible. (2) The law doth not give what the creature needs; it asks above his strength and gives below his want. (*a*) He must have grace, sanctifica-

tion, holiness, &c., but the law will not help him to these. It is holy itself, but it cannot make others holy; it can discover sin, but it cannot mortify sin. The law is a killing thing, but it is of the sinner, not of the sin; it hath by reason of the flesh a quite other effect; for it doth rather enliven, increase, and irritate sin, as water meeting with opposition grows the more fierce and violent; and the disease, the more it is checked by the medicine, the more it rages (chap. vii. 8). (*b*) The law calls for duty, but it gives no strength for the performance of it, Pharaoh-like, who exacted brick but allowed no straw. (*c*) Great is the sinner's need of faith; for without this no justification, no peace with God, no heaven. Now the law knows nothing of faith; nay, it is diametrically opposite to it (Gal. iii. 12). (3) The law could not do, because it could not heal that breach which sin had made betwixt God and the sinner. It can make no reparation for what is past. Suppose the sinner could for the future come up to a full conformity to the law, yet the law would be weak, and the creature could not thereby be justified, because reparation and satisfaction must be made for what is past, which to make is impossible to the law. Application: 1. Here's matter of deep humiliation to us. How should we lament that sinful nature by reason of which the law cannot do that for us which otherwise it would! 2. It is necessary that I should vindicate the honour of the law, and obviate mistakes and bad inferences. (1) Notwithstanding this weakness of the law, yet give it that honour and reverence which is its due. Remember whose law it is, as also what an excellent law it is in itself (chap. vii. 12). (2) Take heed that you do not cast off the law upon the pretence of its weakness, for it is, notwithstanding, obligatory to all (chap. iii. 31). (3) Neither must you look upon the law as altogether—(*a*) Weak. For though as to some things it be under a total impotency, yet as to other things it still retains its pristine power. It cannot take away sin, or make righteous, or give life, but as to the commanding of duty, the directing and regulating of the life, the threatening of punishment upon the violation of it, here it can do whatever it did before. (*b*) Useless. For though the law be not of use as to justification, yet it is of use as a monitor to excite to duty, as a rule to direct, as a glass to discover sin, as a bridle to restrain sin, as an hatchet to break the hard heart, as a schoolmaster to whip you to Christ (Gal. iii. 24). 3. Was the law thus unable to do for the sinner what was necessary to be done? then never look for righteousness and life from and by the law. It highly concerns every man in the world to make sure of righteousness and life; but these are only to be had in Christ in the way of believing, not in the law in the way of doing. 4. See here the admirable love of God, and be greatly affected with it. The law was weak; and now the merciful God finds out another way; He sent His own Son in the likeness, &c. (*T. Jacomb, D.D.*) *The impotence of the law*:—I. WHAT IS IT THAT THE LAW COULD NOT DO? It could not fulfil in us its own righteousness. It could not cause us to exemplify that which itself had enacted. As to any efficiency upon us, it was a dead letter, and did as little for the morality of the world as if struck with impotency itself, and bereft of all the means or the right of vindication. 1. The apostle introduces a caution, that he might not appear to derogate from the law. The law was not weak in itself, but through the flesh. There is a native efficiency, in all its lessons and enforcements, which is admirably fitted to work out a righteousness on the character of those to whom it is addressed. It is no reflection on the penmanship of a beautiful writer that he can give no adequate specimen of his art, on the coarse or absorbent paper which will take on no fair impression. Nor is it any reflection on the power of an accomplished artist that he can raise no monument thereof from the stone which crumbles at every touch. And so it is because of the groundwork, and not of the law, that the attempt has failed. 2. And it is to be observed that the fulfilment of the righteousness of the law in us was a thing to be desired—not merely that the universe might become richer in virtue, but that the law might in us achieve the vindication of its honour. It could not do the first, through the weakness of the flesh. And as little can it do the second, excepting in those on whom it wreaks the vengeance of its insulted authority. (1) It does not work in the persons of the impenitent the virtues which it enjoins, nor fulfil in this sense its own righteousness upon them. But it wreaks upon these persons the vengeance which it threatens, and in this sense may be said to make fulfilment of its righteousness. (2) In the persons who walk after the Spirit—how can the law, in reference to them, acquit itself of its juridical honours? for they too have offended. Let us see—II. HOW THE GOSPEL ADJUSTS THIS DEFICIENCY. There was something more than a Spirit necessary to work in us a righteousness—even a sacrifice to make

atonement for our guilt. 1. The first step was to make ample reparation for the injuries sustained by the law, and so, by satisfying its rights, making a full vindication of its righteousness. That law which was written on tables of stone had to be appeased for its violated honour ere it was transferred into the fleshly tablets of our heart. The blood of remission had to be shed ere the water of regeneration could be poured forth; and so the Son of God came in the likeness of sinful flesh, and became a sin-offering, and sustained the whole weight of sin's condemnation, and, after ascending from the grave, had that Holy Ghost committed unto Him under whose power all who put their trust in Him are enabled to walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Thus, historically, the atonement took place before the more abundant ministration of the Spirit. 2. And so also, personally, a belief in that atonement has the precedency to a sanctifying operation over the sinner's heart. Not till we accept Jesus Christ as the Lord our righteousness shall we experience Him to be the Lord our strength. Conclusion: 1. In order that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, it is not enough that we walk as spiritual men. The more spiritual in fact that you are, the greater will your sensibility be to the remaining deficiencies of your heart and temper and conversation. So that to the last half-hour even of a most triumphant course in sanctification, you must never lose sight of Him on whom has been laid the condemnation of all your offences, and count for your justification before God on nothing else than on Jesus Christ and on Him crucified. 2. However zealously the righteousness of Christ must be contended for as the alone plea of a sinner's acceptance, yet that the benefit thereof rests upon none save those who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. (*T. Chalmers, D.D.*) *The law's failure and fulfilment*:—The law of God is perfect. You cannot add anything to it, nor take anything from it, without spoiling it. There is nothing wrong but the law condemns it, and there is nothing right but the law approves it. The soul of it is contained in one word, "love"; but it comprehends every form of duty which springs out of our relationship to God or man. I. WHAT THE LAW CAN AND CANNOT DO. It cannot save a lost soul. The law, as originally given to Adam, would have produced in him a perfect life. But we have fallen, and this has made the law weak for the accomplishment of God's purpose of justification. The law of England protects honest men, and deters many from committing crime; but it is practically powerless in the case of some habitual criminals. The defect is not in the law, but in the person with whom it has to deal. 1. It sets before us a straight path. Up the mountain side I see the way to the summit. But I have fallen into an abyss, and cannot stir. Now that path, like the law, cannot help me to follow it. Still, it is useful to know the way. 2. It shows us our deflections and stains. It is like the looking-glass, which cannot take away a single spot, but can only show where it is. 3. It upbraids us for our sin, but it cannot forgive. 4. It gives no inclination to do the right, but often creates the contrary inclination (chap. vii.). There are some things men would not think of doing if they were not forbidden. 5. It does not lend us any aid towards the fulfilment of its commands. 6. When we have broken the law it brings no remedy. Of mercy the law knows nothing. On one occasion some workmen were quarrying some rocks; and having made all ready for a blast—drilled the holes, filled them with gun-cotton, and connected the fuzes—they warned every one away from the place of danger. Then the fuzes were lighted, and the workmen withdrew; but, to their horror, they saw a little boy, attracted by the lights, running towards them. Those strong men shouted to the boy, "Go back! go back!" But of course the boy, having the same nature as the rest of us, only went the more quickly into the danger. Still the men cried, "Go back! go back!" They were like the law, powerless; not because their voices were weak, but because of the material with which they had to deal. But the mother of the boy heard the call, and seeing his fearful peril, dropped on one knee, opened her arms wide, and called, "Come to mother! come to mother!" The boy stopped, hesitated a moment, then ran to her embrace, and so escaped the danger. What all the shouts of the strong men could not do, the gentle voice of the mother accomplished. Their voices were like the law, which says, "Go back! go back!" Her voice was like the sweet sound of the gospel, "Come to Jesus! come to Jesus!" Note—II. GOD'S GLORIOUS METHOD. 1. He sends. He does not wait for us to come to Him. 2. He sends His Son. He had but one, His Only-begotten; but that He might "bring many sons unto glory," He sent that one. 3. He sends Him in the flesh. "Verily He took not on Him the nature of angels." There He is, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. 4. He sends Him in the likeness of sinful flesh. His flesh

was like sinful flesh, but it was not sinful flesh. 5. He sends Him on account of sin. 6. He sends Him to be a sacrifice for sin. Our sin was laid on Him; and when God came to visit sin He found it laid on Christ, and He smote it there. "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust." 7. He thus condemns sin in the flesh. Christ's death condemned sin. You may find strong words with which to censure sin, and no words can be too strong. But sin was never so condemned as when Jesus died. This blot must put out, not the candles and the moon and the stars, but the sun himself. This poison is so virulent that the immortal must die. Now is sin condemned as the vilest thing in the universe. It has forced the hand of Divine justice to smite down even Christ Himself instead of guilty men. III. GOD'S GLORIOUS ACHIEVEMENT. 1. In Christ the righteousness of the law is fulfilled. It is vindicated. I, guilty by God's law, am condemned to punishment. But I am one with Christ. He stands for me. He takes the sin as though He had committed it, and suffers what I ought to have suffered; and so God's law is vindicated. Thus the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in every believer, because his accepted Substitute and Surety has borne the punishment. "Then there is an end of the law," says one. Stay, if a man disobeys, and is punished, he does not thereby escape from the duty of obedience. The law is always our creditor for a perfect obedience. Now, there could not have been such obedience rendered to the law even by sinless Adam as the Christ rendered to it. I take, to day, the perfect obedience of my Lord, and appropriating it by faith, I call Him, "The Lord my righteousness." 2. The righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the Christian by the grace of God. When we believe in Christ we not only receive pardon, but also renewal. I speak for all who love Christ. You do long to obey Him. Ay, and you do obey Him. You have laid aside the works of the flesh. You love God, and you love your neighbour. And though not perfectly, yet in a large measure, the law is fulfilled in you. I would try to live as if my salvation depended upon my works alone; and yet I do so knowing all the while that I am justified by faith, and not by the works of the law. Thus present obedience is actually rendered. 3. This righteousness is fulfilled through Christ. The obedience to the law is fulfilled in us out of gratitude to Christ. (1) What the law could not do, the dying Christ has done. His sacrifice makes us hate evil. Naming the name of Christ, we "depart from iniquity"; for we realise that it was not Roman soldiers and rabble Jews alone who nailed Him to the tree, but it was our sins that did it. (2) Gratitude to Christ also incites us to the good. Shall He do all this for me, and I do nothing for Him? If He gave His life for me, then I will give my life to Him. He has bought it; He deserves it; and He shall have it. I will no longer live to the flesh, since in the flesh Christ condemned my sin. Thus the holy law is cheerfully fulfilled. 4. This righteousness is fulfilled in the energy of the Spirit; "in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." God not only works for us, but He also works in us "both to will and to do of His good pleasure." The Spirit applies the work of Christ to the soul. Why should not every one receive, by the Spirit, this new life at this moment? Then it will grow, for we "walk after the Spirit"; we do not stand still. As we obey the law of God, we shall receive more and more of His power; for it is written, that He is "given to them that obey Him." He first teaches us to obey, and then, when we obey, He dwells with us in greater fulness; and then "the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The impotency of the law through the flesh*:—The voice of Sinai was powerless to save, because our flesh was too weak to throw off the bondage of sin. Just so a rope is powerless to save the drowning man who has not strength to grasp it. Whereas even such might be saved by the living arms of a strong man. If the flesh could do what the mind approves, the law would be able, by revealing the badness of the rule of sin, to dethrone it, and thus save us. But the flesh cannot drive out its dread inhabitant. Consequently the law, which cannot breathe new strength into the flesh, but only knowledge into the mind, is too weak to save us. (*Prof. Beet.*) *The weakness of the law*:—Now in this verse we have—first, a defect implied; and secondly, a defect supplied. The defect supplied in these, "God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin," &c. I. THE DEFECT IMPLIED—"What the law could not do, in that it was," &c. First, to speak of the defect itself, "What the law could not do." What could not the law do? Why it could not justify us, or free us from sin and condemnation. It could not make us perfectly holy and righteous in the sight of God. This is likewise held forth to us in divers other places besides (Acts xviii. 38, 39; Gal. iii. 21; Heb. vii. 18). Now this imper-

fection and insufficiency which is in it will further appear unto us in these regards: first, because the law does not offer to us any pardon or forgiveness of those things which are done against the law. The law it hath in it an accusing power, but it hath not in it an absolving power; it threatens the curse, but it does not tender the promise. It is the ministration of condemnation, but it is not the ministration of life. And accordingly we meet with divers expressions in Scripture to that effect (Gal. iii. 10; James ii. 10; 2 Cor. iii. 6, &c.). Secondly, the law, as it does not tender forgiveness, so neither does it give faith whereby to apprehend and lay hold upon forgiveness which is tendered. Now this the law doth not do, but only the gospel; the law does neither reveal faith to us nor work it in us. Thirdly, the law does not give us any power neither, whereby to keep the commandments of God, but leaves us in this point altogether feeble. Why, but if the law be not able to justify us, "wherefore, then, serveth the law?" as the apostle makes the expostulation (Gal. iii. 19). To this we answer as the apostle there answers himself, that it serves in regard of transgressions, and so is useful to these following purposes: first, as a looking-glass, wherein to see our own ugliness and deformity. When we reflect upon our own lives and ways and then compare them with the law of God, then we see how short they are, and how far from true perfection. Secondly, it serves as a schoolmaster to lead us and drive us to Christ; while it discovers to us our own imperfection it carries us to seek for protection in another, that is, in Him. As the stings of the fiery serpents drave the Israelites to look up to the brazen serpent, so the stings of the law they drive us to look up to Christ; and as the needle makes way for the thread, so does the law make way for the gospel. Thirdly, it serves as a rule of life and new obedience which we are to conform ourselves unto. The second is the occasion of this defect whence the law was thus unable, and that is here expressed to be "by the flesh." It was a thing never yet done that any one which was a mere man did fulfil the law. And this (to give you some account of it) may be thus demonstrated to us as coming thus to pass. First, from the inbred concupiscence which all men are infected withal: those which have in them a principle which does continually oppose and fight against the law, they are not able to fulfil the law. Now this have all men in this world, even the best that are; therefore they are not able to fulfil it. That this principle it is very much battered and mortified, and in a great measure subdued, but yet it is not wholly removed. The second may be taken from that actual sin which flows from original, as there is in us a corrupt nature which does indispose us to the keeping of the law, so there are also in us many daily transgressions which do plainly take us off from keeping of it. Thirdly, it may be also demonstrated from the weakness and imperfection of grace. Fourthly, it may be likewise shown from the nature of the law itself, and that is that it is spiritual. The law requires more than the outward action, also the inward affection; and not only some imperfect endeavour, but also the perfectest degree of obedience which can be performed. Lastly, it is from hence clear that none can here in this present life fulfil the law from that necessity which lies upon every one to pray for the forgiveness of sins. Our inability which we have voluntarily brought upon ourselves does not hinder God from exacting that which is His own. The use of this point may be to humble us in the sight of our own insufficiency and misery which is upon us, especially when we shall consider that we have brought it upon ourselves. All evils are at any time so much the more tedious as we ourselves have any hand in procuring them and bringing them about. II. The second is THE DEFECT SUPPLIED —"God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh," &c. There are three main particulars here observable of us: first, the Author of our deliverance, and that is God. Secondly, the means of our deliverance, and that is Christ. Thirdly, the effect of our deliverance, and that is the condemnation of sin: "God sending forth His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin," &c. We begin with the first, the Author or principal Efficient, and that is here signified to be God. And when we speak of this there are three things here further considerable. First, the goodness of God. And secondly, the wisdom of God. And thirdly, the power of God. All these in this dispensation. First, here was the exceeding goodness and mercy of God, that when He saw and observed into what a condition we had brought ourselves did not now leave us in this condition, but sought out, and found out a way for the delivery of us. This was the exceeding riches of mercy which is here to be taken notice of by us. And this it may be further amplified from divers considerations. First, from the state in which we stood to Himself, and that is of enmity and hatred (ver. 10). Secondly, from the state in which He

stood to us. It was God that was first wronged, and yet it was God that first began to think of the means of reconciliation. Thirdly, His independency upon us: He stood in no need of us, He could have done well enough without us. Fourthly, His preterition and passing by of other creatures who by their creation were more glorious than ourselves. What does all this serve for but to enlarge our hearts more in thankfulness to God who has done so graciously for us and with us? The second is the wisdom of God; God in His wisdom. And that especially in observing this order and method. First, He would suffer us to be miserable before He would make us absolutely and eternally happy. The law must first be "weak through the flesh" before God sends His Son. Thirdly, here was also His power. And whilst here in this text our salvation is reduced to God as the principal Author and Efficient of it, it is hereby made to be strong salvation, especially if we consider in what a case we were before He undertook it. Though the law were unable to save us, yet God for all that is not unable. Hence it is that the Scripture still represents our salvation to us under this notion. "I am the Lord thy God and thy Saviour" (Isa. xliii. 3, 12, &c.). "The mighty God," &c. (Isa. ix. 6). If it were in any hands besides His we might jointly fear the miscarriage of it. The second particular branch considerable in the second general of the text is the means of deliverance, and that is here expressed to be the sending of Christ, in these words, "God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin." In which passage we have three things more considerable of us: first, the person sent, and that is the Son of God, God's own Son. Secondly, the manner of sending Him, and that is "in the likeness of sinful flesh." Thirdly, the end for which, and that is "for sin." We begin with the first of these, viz., the person sent, God's "own Son." And there are no less than three main articles of our Christian faith, all at once, which are here exhibited unto us. First, here is the Godhead and Divinity of Christ. Secondly, here is the manhood and incarnation of Christ. And thirdly, here is the union of the two natures of Christ in one person. The second is the manner of sending Him, "In the likeness of sinful flesh." This we may take notice of to this purpose, namely, to show unto us how requisite it is for ourselves, in whatever business we undertake, especially of great consequence, to have our call and mission from God, that He sends us and appoints us thereunto. When He calls us, and designs us, and sets us apart, as He did Christ, we may expect help from Him. Secondly, in order to God's acceptance and approbation. It will from hence be more pleasing to God what we do, and well taken by Him. Thirdly, in order likewise to success. There is likelihood of some good to follow upon that performance which is undertaken by designation from God. The third thing here considerable is the end, and that is expressed to be "for sin." For sin, that is, to be an offering for sin (2 Cor. v. 21). Now God had herein a regard to a double consideration: first, His own glory, as sin was opposite to that. And secondly, our good, as sin was opposite to this likewise. What does all this teach us? First, from hence to take notice of the grievous and fearful nature of sin. That which could not be holpen but by the sending of the Son of God into the world, that was certainly no small grievance, nor to be reckoned so by us. Secondly, let us not set up that which Christ came to take away, lest we thereby make His coming of no effect unto us. The third and last is the effect or accomplishment of it: Christ's obtaining of the end for which He came, and God's obtaining of the end for which He sent Him, in these words—He condemned sin in the flesh. There are two things here considerable of us: first, that which Christ did. And secondly, the state or condition which He did it in. That which He did was the condemnation of sin. The state which He did it in was in the flesh, as it is here expressed unto us. In this dispensation of God, for the condemning of sin by Christ, there were divers things at once remarkable, and so considerable of us: first, God's infinite justice, in that He would not let sin go unpunished. Secondly, God's infinite mercy, in that He would punish sin in the surety, and not in the proper person himself that had offended. Thirdly, God's infinite wisdom, in contriving of a way for the uniting and reconciling of these two attributes together, His justice and His mercy. Perfect justice satisfied, and perfect mercy enlarged. Fourthly, God's infinite power, in that He could do that which none other could do besides. Let us take heed of speaking and pleading for sin which is thus condemned by God Himself; seeing He has passed sentence upon it, let us not open our mouths for it. *(Thomas Horton, D.D.)* *The weakness of the law and the power of the gospel:*—I. THE WEAKNESS OF THE LAW. It could not—1. Give peace to the conscience. 2. Renew the affections. 3. Sanctify the life. Corrupt flesh too rebellious and mighty to be controlled by it. II. THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL.

1. The atonement of Christ gives peace to the conscience. 2. The grace of God renews the heart. 3. The Holy Spirit by His indwelling consecrates the life. (*J. J. S. Bird, M.A.*) *The believer's deliverance*:—I. WHAT GOD HAS DONE FOR US. 1. He has done what the law could not do. This moral law is the great code of holy requirement, enjoined by God upon all His intelligent creatures for the double purpose of forming their characters and regulating their lives. Now the law is found totally unable to accomplish this object by reason of our weakness and depravity. It is the flesh which is too weak to bear the pressure of the law, just as there are pebbles too friable to bear the friction of polishing, or just as there are mirrors too distorted and dingy to reflect any light. 2. "God has sent His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh." (1) We thus see that what the law could not do no creature in the universe could do. To bring any pure created nature into contact with man's depravity would tend not to remove that depravity, but only to jeopardise the higher nature. Thus, with two streams, the one clear and the other turbid, when they mingle, it is not the clear stream which purifies the turbid one, but the reverse. Only God Himself could be trusted to mingle intimately with mankind, and lay hold upon the seed of Adam to raise it up from defilement and misery. (2) He has sent that Son "in the likeness of sinful flesh." The Saviour shared in our infirmities, but yet He was without sin. Though "born of a woman," He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." 3. This was "for sin." If this be taken in the general sense of "on account of sin," or "with reference to sin," still we must think principally of His great atoning death. It was on the Cross that the Lamb of God took away the sin of the world (1 Pet. ii. 24). 4. God thus "condemned sin in the flesh," *i.e.*, Christ on the Cross condemned sin to lose its hold upon mankind, and despoiled it of its tyrannous control; or else condemned to destruction the sin which is in our flesh. Here we see how Jesus saves His people from their sins. This word "condemned" suggests a comparison with ver. 1. The condemnation which should have come upon us has come upon our sins instead. And thus, while we are forgiven, we are also delivered from the thraldom of sin, that henceforth we should serve it no more. II. WHAT GOD HAS WROUGHT IN US. 1. Nothing is more clear than that Christ intends His people to be actually holy (Titus ii. 11, and iii. 3–6). Here, then, we see the double glory of the gospel over the law. It can do what the law cannot do, in that it can confer on us a full and sufficient pardon, and also save us from the continued dominion of sin, and cause us to walk in newness of life. If a man hate God and his neighbour, it can make him love them; if he be a drunkard, it can make him sober; if an idolater, it can turn him from his idols; if a liar, it will make him truthful, &c. 2. Let us, then, see how it is that God works this mighty change within us. (1) Our hearts are won to holiness and the love of God by the incarnation and sufferings of His Son. (2) They are set free to a life of holiness by the removal of our guilt and condemnation by the sacrifice of Jesus. (3) They are directly strengthened and vivified for a career of holy living by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, the purchase of Jesus' death, and the gift of His exaltation. (*T. G. Horton.*) *The Christian plan*:—I. THE OCCASION OF ITS INTRODUCTION. The inefficiency of the law. 1. What could not the law do? That which man as a sinner required for his salvation. It could neither regenerate nor justify. Man wanted both the nature for and the title to heaven, and the law could give neither. 2. Why the law could not do this? (1) Not because there is anything in it essentially inimical to happiness: law is essentially good. "It was weak through the flesh," *i.e.*, in consequence of man's depravity. It cannot make man happy, because man is corrupt. (2) This weakness of law is its glory. It is the glory of law that it cannot stoop to human imperfections; were it to do so the order of the moral universe would be destroyed. II. THE HISTORY OF ITS DEVELOPMENT. "God sending His own Son," &c. Observe —1. The mission of Jesus. "God sent" Him to do what the law could not do—regenerate and justify. Sovereign love is the primal spring. 2. The incarnation of Jesus. "In the likeness of sinful flesh." Only the likeness. His humanity was necessary as an example and as an atonement. 3. The sacrifice of Jesus. For a "sin-offering," &c. III. THE DESIGN OF ITS OPERATION. He did not come to abrogate, relax, or supersede law, but to fulfil it, that "its righteousness might be fulfilled" in the sinner. The Christian plan does this by presenting law—1. In its most attractive forms. In the life of Jesus. 2. In connection with the greatest motives to obedience. In Christ you see God's infinite respect for law as well as His love for sinners. 3. In connection with the greatest helper—the Holy Spirit. "It is expedient for you that I go away," &c. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The state of*

Christianity to-day:—1. The text is a distinct statement that Judaism had come to the end of its influence. It had educated them to a point where, while men had need of more, it had nothing more to give. 2. We hear men speak of the Christian religion like Paul spoke of the Jewish. It is patronisingly said, It has done a good work; but men are so far educated by it now that it is no longer able to meet the want of our times; but from some source we are to expect a latter-day glory, which will be to Christianity what Christianity was to Judaism. I. WHAT ARE THE EVIDENCES THAT CHRISTIANITY IS BEGINNING TO WANE? 1. It is said that Churchism is wearing out. (1) But, even if that were true, the Church is no more religion than the masonry of the aqueduct is the water that flows in it. Schools are a very different thing from intelligence, though intelligence uses them as instruments. Churches may change without changing in one single iota the substance of religion. (2) But besides this, the spirit of man, in religion, intermits. There has never been a steady growth in anything—neither in science nor government. If, then, there is now a decadence of interest in religion, it might show simply that we are in one of these stages of temporary inactivity. 2. It may be said that the thinking men, particularly in the direction of science, are less and less believers in revelation. And the statement has some truth in it. But in the history of the race we find that one element usually takes precedence of every other, and absorbs everything, cheating the other elements. In some ages it is the religious element; in others it is cold, hard thought; then this has given way to periods of enthusiastic and even superstitious devotion. Just now we are in a period of mere material investigations. But we shall certainly come to another period ere long. If now the spiritual elements are cheated, the time will soon come when these things will begin to balance themselves. So soon as that growth which seems to unsettle the old faith has adjusted itself, the religious wants of the soul reassert themselves, and ere long the old statements are overlaid with new religious developments, and with religious truth in new forms. II. WHAT ARE THE EVIDENCES THAT CHRISTIANITY IS NOT ON THE WANE? 1. Is faith giving place to indifference? On the contrary, probably never was there an age in which there was so deep a religious faith as now. What men call a want of faith is oftentimes only unwillingness to accept so little as hitherto has been included in the articles of faith. It is the reaching out of the soul in new aspirations. It is asking for more, not for less. 2. Is the devotional spirit decayed? It is changing and ought to change. As progress in intelligence raises men into a better conception of God, and their own place in creation, there will be a new mode of reverence, a new method of devotion. The element of love has greatly increased, so that there is now far more of the filial spirit. The devotional spirit, though far less ascetic than it was, is more prevalent; and in the community there is far more respect for religion than formerly. 3. Never was there such a spirit of propagation as now. Never were so much pains taken to rear men for teaching the faith. Never was there so large a demand for, and supply of its instruments, in the form of religious books and papers: and, above all, never was there such a spirit of building churches, and supplying them in waste and destitute places. 4. Is the family to-day less or more under the influence of a true spiritual Christianity than it formerly was? There never was a period when there were so many high-toned and pure Christian families as to-day. 5. Has the Christian religion shown any signs of failing as a reforming power in its application to the morals of the day? Is there less conscience, less hope, less desire to purify the individual and the community? Religion dying? What, then, mean the execrations of wicked men? The Church losing its power? Why, then, are men so complaining of its intrusion, telling us to stay at home and preach the gospel, and not to meddle with things that do not concern us? It is the light which streams from the gospel which wakes the owls and the bats. 6. Has the Christian spirit lost its power over government and public affairs? I think the conscience of our community never was so high as it is to-day. Everywhere is the gospel leavening public administrations, and raising up an intelligent Christian public sentiment which is itself as powerful upon governments as winds are upon the sails of ships. If these things be so, are we quite ready yet to assume the condition of mourning? On the contrary, of all periods of the world this would be the last that I should have chosen to lift up my hands in despair and say, Religion is dying out, and must yield to a new dispensation. Conclusion: 1. We may expect some changes, but none other than to deepen religious life and faith in religious truth. There will be a better understanding of the human heart, and better modes of reaching it with religious truth. But no amount of change in these external instrumentalities will affect in the slightest degree the power of the

religious element. 2. The instrumentalities of religion hereafter, we may believe, will be more various. Laws, and customs, and instruments, being filled with a religious spirit, will become means of grace to a degree that hitherto they have never done. 3. Many think that preaching is worn out: a great deal of preaching is worn out. Many think churches useless: a great many churches are useless. But would you judge the family in the same way? Would you say that fatherhood is worn out because there are a great many poor husbands and fathers? 4. There never was a time, young men, when you had so little occasion to be ashamed of Christ or of religion. If men all around you, with all manner of books and paper, are telling you glozing tales of the decadence of religion, say to them, "Let the dead bury their dead," but follow thou Christ. It is a falsehood. The glory of religion never was so great. Its need was never more urgent. Its fruits were never more ample. Its ministers were never more inspired by God's ministering angels than now. (*H. Ward Beecher.*) **God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin.**—*God's own Son:*—Emphatic to mark—1. The greatness of His love. 2. The adequacy of the means for the salvation of men. (*T. Robinson, D.D.*) *Of Christ's being the natural and eternal Son of God:*—1. Christ was God's Son. Notice the several attestations of this great truth. That of John Baptist (John i. 34); of Nathaniel (John i. 49); Peter (Matt. xvi. 16); the Centurion (Matt. xxvii. 54); the Eunuch (Acts viii. 37); Martha (John xi. 27); the devils themselves (Matt. viii. 29; Mark iii. 11). Christ often asserted His Sonship; and the Father in a most solemn and open manner attested it (Matt. iii. 17, xvii. 5). 2. But Christ is here said to be God's "own Son." In the original it is "the Son of Himself," or His "proper Son" (as ver. 32). God is Christ's proper Father (John v. 18). He is not barely a son, but a son in a peculiar manner. Consider Him—I. COMPARATIVELY. And so He is thus styled to distinguish Him from all other sons. For God hath sons—1. By creation, as *e.g.*, the angels (Job i. 6, xxxviii. 7), and Adam (Luke iii. 38). 2. By the grace of regeneration and adoption (John i. 12, 13; James i. 18; Gal. iv. 3; Eph. i. 5). 3. By nature; one that is a son of another rank and order. In this respect God hath but one, namely, Christ. Upon which account He sometimes appropriates the paternal relation in God unto Himself (Luke x. 22; John xiv. 2). And elsewhere He distinguishes betwixt God as being His Father and being the Father of believers (John xx. 17). II. ABSOLUTELY, and abstractedly from all other sons, so He is God's own proper Son. The expression points to His being eternally begotten, and to His being begotten in the Divine essence. As to the latter, the Son was begotten in that essence rather than out of it. And some tell us that here we are not to consider Christ essentially as He is God, but personally as the Divine essence subsists in Him as the second person. In the first consideration as He was God He had the Divine essence in and of Himself, and so He could not be begotten to it, for He was God "from Himself." In the second notion, as He was God personally considered, or as He was the second person and the Son, so He was of the Father and not of Himself; for though He was God of Himself, yet He was not Son of Himself (see John vii. 29; Psa. ii. 7; Prov. vii. 22–30; Micah v. 2; John i. 14, 18, iii. 16, 18; 1 John iv. 9). There are three properties belonging to Christ in His Sonship which are incommunicable to any other. 1. He is a Son co-equal with His Father (John v. 18; Phil. ii. 6). 2. He is a Son co-essential with the Father (John x. 30; Col. i. 15; Heb. i. 3). 3. He is the co-eternal Son of God the Father (Rev. i. 8, ii. 8; Heb. i. 5, 8). Application: 1. Is Christ thus God's own Son? I infer then—(1) That He is God. Not a God by office only, not a made God, but God truly, properly, essentially (1 John v. 20). Generation is always the production of another in the same nature; like ever begets like; as it is said of Adam he begat a son in his own likeness after his image (Gen. v. 3), and must it not be so here in the Father's begetting of Christ? (2) That He is a very great and glorious person. Though Christ's dignity and pre-eminence is not the ground of His Sonship, yet His Sonship is the ground of His dignity and pre-eminence. (3) That the work of redemption was a very great work, for God sent His own Son about it. The greater the person who is employed in a work the greater is that work. 2. Was Christ God's own Son? Let me from hence urge a few things upon you. (1) Study Christ much in this relation, that you may know Him as the proper, natural, essential Son of God (1 Cor. ii. 2; Phil. iii. 8). But—(*a*) In all your inquiries be sure you keep within the bounds of sobriety (1 Cor. iv. 6). Do not pry too far into those secrets which God hath locked up from you; content yourselves with what He hath revealed in His Word and stay there. (*b*) Join study and prayer together. He studies this mystery best who studies it most upon His knees. This is not

savingly to be known without special and supernatural illumination from Christ through the Spirit (Matt. xvi. 16, 17; John i. 18; 1 John v. 28). (2) Believe Him to be such, and believe on Him as such. The first we call dogmatical, the second justifying and saving faith. (3) How, then, should all honour and adore Him? Certainly upon this Sonship the highest, yea, even Divine adoration itself is due to Him (John v. 23). Give Him—(*a*) The honour of worship (Heb. i. 6). (*b*) The honour of obedience (Matt. xvii. 5). (4) Admire and wonder at the greatness of God's love in His sending of Him. (*T. Jacomb, D.D.*) *Christ's mission*:—Before close handling this subject note—1. This sending of Christ strongly implies His pre-existence. That which is not cannot be sent. And one would think the Scriptures are so clear in this that there should not be the least controversy about it. For they tell us that Christ was in Jacob's time (Gen. xlviii. 16); in Job's time (Job xix. 25); in the prophets' time (1 Peter i. 11); in Abraham's time, yea, long before it (John viii. 56, &c.); in the Israelites' time (1 Cor. x. 9); Isaiah's time (John xii. 41). How fully and plainly is His pre-existence asserted in John i. 1–3; Eph. iii. 9; Col. i. 16, 17; Heb. i. 2; John xvii. 5; Phil. ii. 6. 2. His personality, by which I mean He existed before He took flesh, not as a thing, quality, dispensation, or manifestation, but as a proper, personal subsistence. And He must be so, or else He could not be the subject of this sending. For He is sent to take the likeness of sinful flesh upon Him. 3. The distinction that is betwixt the Father and Christ. One sends and the other is sent. The Father and the Son are one in nature and essence, yet they are distinct persons. The apostle had spoken of the Spirit in the former verse; in this He speaks of the Father and of the Son, thus teaching the Trinity. I will endeavour now:—I. To CLEAR UP THE NATURE OF THE ACT. 1. Negatively. This sending of Christ was—(1) Not His ineffable and eternal generation, or sonship grounded upon that. He was sent who was the Son of God, but He was not the Son of God as He was sent; His Sonship was the result of His generation, not of His mission. (2) Not any local secession from His Father, or any local motion from the place where He was, to some other place where He was not. The Father sent Him to this lower world, yet here He was before; the Father sent Him from heaven, yet, as to His Godhead, He remained in heaven still (1 John iii. 13). So when He ascended, He went from earth, and yet He was on earth still as to His spiritual presence (Matt. xxviii. 20). Man He went from us, but as God He is as much with us as ever. 2. Affirmatively, this sending of Christ lies—(1) In God's choosing, appointing, ordaining Him from everlasting to the office and work of the Mediator (1 Peter i. 20). (2) In God's qualifying and fitting of Him for His great work. God never puts a person upon any special service but first He qualifies him for that service. Christ must have a body to fit Him for dying and suffering, that God provided for Him (Heb. x. 5). And whereas He must also have the Spirit, that too the Father doth furnish Him with (Isa. xlii. 1; John iii. 34). (3) In God's authorising and commissioning Him to what He was to be and to do. Christ had a commission from God under hand and seal (John vi. 27). As princes when they send abroad their ambassadors or appoint their officers, they give them their commissions sealed to be their warrant for what they shall do; so God the Father did with Christ. (4) In the Father's authoritative willing of Him to take man's nature upon Him, and in that nature so to do, and so to suffer (Heb. x. 7; John x. 18; Phil. ii. 8). (5) In God's trusting of Him with His great designs. When we send a person about our affairs, we repose a trust in him, that he will be faithful in the management of our concerns. II. To ANSWER AN OBJECTION, AND REMOVE A DIFFICULTY. That which hath been spoken seems to derogate from the greatness and glory of Christ's person: for if God sent Him, then, argue some, He is inferior to the Father. But—1. Sending doth not always imply inferiority or inequality; for persons who are equal upon mutual consent may send each the other. And thus it was between God the Father and Christ. When the master sends the servant, he goes because he must; but when the Father sends the Son He goes readily, because His will falls in with His Father's will (John x. 36, *cf.* xvii. 19; Rom. viii. 32, *cf.* Gal. ii. 20). 2. We must distinguish of a twofold inferiority, one in respect of nature, and one in respect of office, condition, or dispensation. As to the first, Christ neither was nor is in the least inferior to the Father. In respect of this He thought it not robbery to be equal with God. As to the second, Christ being considered as Mediator, it may be said of Him that He was inferior to the Father (Phil. ii. 7, 8; John xiv. 28). III. To INQUIRE INTO THE GROUNDS AND REASONS OF CHRIST'S MISSION. In the general, some must be sent. Since neither the law, nor anything else, could operate to any purpose towards the advancing of

God's honour and the promoting of the sinner's good, it was necessary that God Himself should interpose in some extraordinary way; which thereupon He accordingly did in the sending of Christ. But more particularly, suppose a necessity of sending, yet why did God pitch upon His Son? Might not some other person have been sent, or might not some other way have been found? I answer, No; Christ the Son must be the very person whom God will send. And Him He pitched upon because—1. He was the person with whom the Father had covenanted about this very thing. 2. God saw that was the very best way which could be taken. He had great designs to carry on, as, *e.g.*, to let the world see what an evil thing sin was, how impartial His justice was, what an ocean of love He had in His heart, and to lay a sure foundation for the righteousness and salvation of believers. Now there was no way for the accomplishing of these comparable to this of God's sending His Son. 3. As this was the best and the fittest way, so He was the best and the fittest person to be employed. This appears from, and was grounded upon—(1) His two natures, the hypostatical union of both in His person. He was God (John i. 1; Phil. ii. 6; 1 John v. 20; Rom. ix. 5; Isa. ix. 6; Tit. ii. 13). He was also man (1 Tim. ii. 5); then, too, He was God-man in one person (Col. ii. 19). Now who could be so fit to bring God and man together as He who was Himself both God and man? (2) His glorious attributes; His power, wisdom, mercy, goodness, faithfulness, holiness, &c. (3) His Sonship and near relation to God. Who so fit to make others the adopted sons of God as He who was Himself the natural Son of God? (4) The glory and dignity of His person as the image of God (Col. i. 15; Heb. i. 3). Now who so fit to restore man to God's image as that man who was the essential image of God? 4. He was the only person that could be sent, for none but He could accomplish man's redemption. (1) There were evils to be endured, which were above the strength of any mere creature to endure. (2) There were evils to be removed—the wrath of God, the guilt of sin, the curse of the law—which no mere creature was able to remove. (3) There were also blessings to be procured, as reconciliation with God, justification, adoption, eternal salvation, which no such creature possibly could procure. Practical improvement: 1. Was Christ sent? and did God thus send Him? What doth this great act of God call for from us? (1) To admire God. Here is the greatest thing that ever God did, or ever will do; it was much that He should make a world, but what is the making of a world to the sending of a Son? (2) To admire the love of God the Father, and alway to entertain good thoughts of Him (Eph. i. 3–5). Some gracious persons lie under the temptation that they can with more comfort think of the Son than of the Father. But surely God is love, and this very sending of His Son represents Him as full of mercy, goodness, and grace. (3) To love Christ greatly. God sent Him, but how willing was He to be sent upon the errand of your salvation! (4) To imitate Christ with respect of His being sent. Thus, never go till you be sent, then go readily. (5) To take heed that you do not rest with the external sending of Christ. There is a twofold sending of Him—(*a*) To be man. (*b*) Into man. He that would hope for salvation by Christ must have the latter as well as the former sending. (6) To believe in Him (1 John iii. 33, xvii. 3). 2. It affords abundant matter of comfort to all sincere Christians. Did God send Christ? (1) Surely, then, great was His good will towards you (Luke ii. 14). (2) Then He is in good earnest in the matters of salvation. (3) Then you need not fear but that the work of redemption is completed. When such a person sends, and such a person is sent, the thing shall be done effectually and thoroughly. (4) Know to your comfort He hath not yet done. As to His own satisfaction He hath no more to do, but as to your glory and happiness He will yet do more. His first-sending was to make the purchase, His second shall be to put you into possession. (5) Set this against all. (*a*) Against the weakness of the law. That which the law could not do, Christ did. (*b*) Against the guilt of sin. Upon Christ's sending presently you read of the condemning of sin. (*Ibid.*) *Christ contemplated* in His relation—I. To GOD. 1. He is God's own Son. 2. Sent by God. II. To THE LAW. 1. He sustains. 2. Magnifies. 3. Fulfils it. III. To MAN. 1. He visits him. 2. Assumes his nature. 3. Dies for him. IV. To SIN. 1. He atones for it. 2. Condemns it. 3. Destroys it. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) **Condemned sin in the flesh.**—*How God condemned sin*:—1. Ever since man has fallen, two things have been desirable. The one, that he should be forgiven; the other, that he should be led to hate the sin into which he has fallen, and love the holiness from which he has become alienated. It were impossible to make a man happy unless both be equally realised. If his sins were forgiven, and yet he loved sin, his prospects were dark. If he ceased to love sin,

and yet were lying under the guilt of it, his conscience would be tortured with remorse. By what process can man be both justified and sanctified? 2. Human reason suggests that a law should be given to man which he should keep. This has been tried, and the law which was given was the best law that could be framed. If, therefore, that law should fail to make men what they should be, the fault will not be in the law, but in the man. As the text says, it was "weak through the flesh." It could not do what God never intended it should do. The law cannot forgive sin, nor create a love of righteousness. It can execute the sentence, but it can do no more. Now, in the text we are told how God interposed to do by His grace what His law could not do. I. WHAT GOD DID. He sent His Son. II. WHAT WAS THE IMMEDIATE RESULT OF THIS? God "condemned sin." 1. The very fact that God was under necessity, if He would save men and yet not violate His justice, to send His Son, condemned sin. 2. The life of our Lord Jesus Christ on earth condemned sin. You can often condemn an evil best by putting side by side with it the palpable contrast. There was a condemnation of sin in Christ's very look. The Pharisees and all sorts of men felt it. They could not fail to see through His life what crooked lives their own were. 3. God condemned sin by allowing it to condemn itself. Most men deny that their particular transgressions are at all heinous. But God seemed to say, "I will let sin do what it can; and men shall see henceforth what sin is from that sample." And what did sin do? Sin murdered the perfect man, and thus convicted itself. 4. God condemned sin by suffering Christ to be put to death on account of sin. Its heinousness demanded no lesser expiation. "But why did not God exercise the sovereign prerogative of mercy, and at once forgive sin?" How, then, could God have condemned sin? "But if the righteous law be really so spiritual, and carnal man so weak, why not alter the law and adapt it to the exigency?" I reply again, because such a procedure would not condemn the sin. On the contrary, it would condemn the law. III. HOW THIS DOES WHAT THE LAW COULD NOT DO. There were two desirable things, you will remember, that I started with. 1. That the offender should be pardoned. You can clearly see how that is done. If Jesus did suffer in my stead, henceforth it becomes not only mercy that absolves me, but justice that seals my acquittal. 2. But how does this tend to make men pure and haters of sin? When the Holy Spirit comes with power into a man's heart, and renews his nature, forthwith the impure are made chaste, the dishonest are made honest, and the ungodly are made to love God. And by the same means there comes into the heart an enmity against the sin which caused the suffering of Christ. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Sin condemned in the flesh:—"The law" here means that law of constraint, acting from without as precept and motive, which came to a head, in the dispensation of Moses. It is singular that this law—called "the ministration of condemnation"—could not condemn sin in the flesh, or secure the fulfilment of its own righteousness. This unfitted it to become an instrument of salvation. It could give us no help to get free from that very evil to which it was itself most opposed. I. THE GREAT REQUIREMENT. Condemnation of sin in the flesh signifies—1. That the condemnation should pass from a mere threatening to an actual punishment in human nature. Condemnation can exist as a threatening, and if so, sin may be condemned in the law; but when sin is condemned in the flesh, there must be the actual infliction of punishment. 2. Such a condemnation as shall issue in the accomplishment of the righteousness of the law. The great problem is how to condemn sin effectually, and yet save the sinner. II. THE INSUFFICIENT PROVISION. The law was unable to do this. It could not condemn sin in the flesh through the weakness of the flesh. If terror could frighten man out of sin, the law has terror. If the relation of duty could secure the performance of duty, the law reveals duty. If the exhibition of holiness could allure to the law of holiness, the law exhibits that picture. But the corruption of the flesh is too strong for the law to conquer. III. THE PERFECT ACCOMPLISHMENT. The gospel condemns sin in the flesh. 1. By the incarnation of Jesus. Sin cannot be adequately condemned (*i.e.*, punished) as an abstraction, but only in human nature, *i.e.*, in the same nature in which it was committed, otherwise the threatening remains a dead letter. 2. By the sacrifice of Christ. "For sin" means "an offering for sin." God laid on Christ the condemnation of the law. But how could Christ more effectively bear the punishment of the law than any other man? (1) By virtue of His headship of His people. If the head suffers, the whole body being identified with that head, suffers also. A nation makes peace or war by the minister who is in power. So Christ bare our sins in His own body. (2) By virtue of His innocence. He had no sins of His own to atone for. Thus He

could be accepted instead of sinners. (3) By reason of His divinity. The blow of justice must have destroyed any merely human being, but it could not destroy Christ. He was able to exhaust the penalty, and yet to survive. (*P. Strutt.*) *The condemnation of sin in the flesh*:—How did God condemn sin in the flesh, *i.e.*, in human nature generally? 1. By exhibiting in the person of His Incarnate Son the same flesh in substance but free from sin, He proved that sin was in the flesh only as an unnatural and usurping tyrant. Thus the manifestation of Christ in sinless humanity at once condemned sin in principle. For this sense of condemnation by contrast see Matt. xii. 41, 42; Heb. xi. 7. But—2. God condemned sin practically and effectually by destroying its power and casting it out; and this is the sense especially required by the context. The law could condemn sin only in word, and could not make its condemnation effectual. Christ coming "for sin" not only made atonement for it by His death, but uniting man to Himself "in newness of life" (chap. vi. 4) gave actual effect to the condemnation of sin by destroying its dominion "in the flesh" through the life-giving, sanctifying power of His Spirit. (*Archdeacon Gifford.*) *Christ's holy life a living condemnation of sin*:—The flesh in Him was like a door constantly open to the temptations of pleasure and pain; and yet He constantly refused sin any entrance into His will and action. By this persevering and absolute exclusion He declared it evil and unworthy of existing in humanity. This was what the law, "because of the flesh," which naturally sways the human will, could not realise in any man. The law could undoubtedly condemn sin on paper, but Christ condemned it in a real living human nature. Hence the reason why He must appear in flesh. For it was the very fortress where sin had established its seat that it behoved it to be attacked and conquered. Like the hero spoken of in the fable, He required Himself to descend into the infected place which He was commissioned to cleanse. Thus from the perfectly holy life of Jesus there proceeds a conspicuous condemnation of sin; and it is this moral fact, the greatest of the miracles that distinguished this life, which the Holy Ghost goes on reproducing in the life of every believer, and propagating throughout the entire race. This will be the victory gained over the law of sin (ver. 2). Thus we understand the connection between the "condemned" of ver. 3 and the "no condemnation" of ver. 1. In His life He condemned that sin, while by remaining master of ours, would have brought it into condemnation. The condemnation of sin in Christ's life is the means appointed by God to effect its destruction in ours. (*Prof. Godet.*)

Ver. 4. **That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us.**—*Righteousness fulfilled*:—I. THE DESIGN OF GOD IN THUS, BY CHRIST, CONDEMNING SIN IN THE FLESH. The penalty of the law is fulfilled in us when, as members of Christ's body by spiritual union, we are freed from condemnation; but it is in sanctification that the righteousness of the law is fulfilled—*i.e.* when we have the law written in our heart, and obedience, flowing without constraint, is the inward instinct and law of life. Bear in mind that "Love is the fulfilling of the law." In this respect the law and the gospel are one. But as two dispensations or modes of treatment they differ in *toto*. The action of the law is by precept and constraint—it seeks to guide from without—urging its minute details upon a reluctant heart. The gospel frees us from this bondage of verbal precepts and details, and by the manifestation of God's love awakens love, thus beginning where the law left off, with love, which was the end of the commandment. There is nothing in the way of obedience that we cannot by love accomplish. Note—1. That the gospel does not destroy the law. "Do we make void the law through faith?—nay, we establish the law." We are free from the law only that we may be under the law to Christ. 2. That the salvation of the gospel is not only a salvation from wrath, but from sin. 3. That however imperfectly this salvation is realised by us it may be fully accomplished—a righteousness fulfilled. II. THE PERSONS IN WHOM THIS DESIGN IS ACCOMPLISHED—"In us who walk," &c. 1. Only in proportion as the spirit works within can we take full possession of our privilege as believers in Christ, as free from the bondage of the law. Hence it is that character becomes the test of our Christian state. 2. Character is determined by the prevailing principle (or law) which governs the life. Two such principles divide all mankind—the flesh and the spirit. 3. Christian experience is a practical realisation of the spiritual life. It is not thinking or feeling, but walking after the spirit. They who sit down in spiritual sloth are not walking after the spirit, and therefore we have no evidence of their acceptance with God. Examine yourselves. Is your life Christ-like, or worldly? (*P. Strutt.*) *The righteousness of the law fulfilled*:—In this verse the apostle lays

down the end of God's sending His Son in the flesh for the condemnation of sin, and that is, "that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us." There are two general parts which are here observable of us. First, the benefit itself which is conveyed by Christ, and that is, a fulfilling of the righteousness of the law in us. Secondly, the qualification of the persons who have particular interest in this benefit, and those are they "who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit." I. We begin with the first, viz., THE BENEFIT ITSELF. "That the righteousness of the law," &c. Where first we are to explain the words, and then to come to the doctrine observable from them. That whatsoever the law could demand and require of us, the same is fully satisfied and fulfilled by Christ. He hath fulfilled the righteousness of the law in our behalf. For the opening of this present point unto us, we must know that the righteousness of the law may be taken two manner of ways. There is a double right which the law of God does challenge in us—a preceptive or commanding right, and a vindicative or avenging right. Now both these rights has Christ satisfied and discharged for us. First, He hath satisfied the right of obedience, in that He hath fulfilled the whole law of God in our stead. Secondly, He hath satisfied the right of punishment, in that He hath endured all the wrath which was due unto us for our transgression of this law. Thirdly, Christ's satisfaction of the law, as concerning obedience unto it, is accounted as ours; insomuch as the righteousness of the law is said to be fulfilled in us. Fulfilled in us; how is that? Not in our persons, but in our Surety. In regard of the intention and purpose of God Himself, who does bestow Christ upon us to this end; Christ was given by God for righteousness, and for righteousness in this explication, namely, of full and perfect observation of the whole law. The use and improvement of this point to ourselves in a way of application comes to this—1. As a word of singular comfort to all the true servants of God which groan under the burden of their own failings and omissions. 2. We may hence also take notice of the infinite wisdom and goodness of God which hath made such a happy repair of that righteousness which we lost in Adam; and that upon two considerations it is more full and complete. (1) It is more full and complete. For Adam's obedience to the law, it could at the most have been no more than just answerable and adequate to the law. Yea, but now Christ's obedience, through the excellency and infiniteness of the person, is transcendent and far above the law. As for a King's Son to pay our debt for us is a more transcendent and meritorious act than our own payment of it would be, from the dignity and transcendency of the person; even so is it here. (2) As this righteousness of Christ is more full and complete, so it is also more certain and sure. The second follows, that whatever could be required of us for punishment is discharged likewise. This must needs be so upon this account—First, God's acceptation of Christ for a full and sufficient redemption. Secondly, Christ's suffering itself, which was of the whole anger and wrath of God, expressed in all particulars. Thirdly, the infiniteness of the person. II. Now the second is THE QUALIFICATION OF THE PERSONS. "Who walk not," &c. From hence observe, first in general, that all men indifferently have not a share in the comforts of the gospel. Therefore let none too rashly and over-hastily apply them to themselves. Secondly, in particular observe this, that justification and sanctification must go together; they only who walk after the spirit have Christ's righteousness imputed to them, and have the law fulfilled in them. Secondly, because Christ came by water as well as by blood; there is His spirit as well as His merit. Thirdly, because God is exact and complete in His works in us; and so as He justifies, so also will He sanctify. It shows the vanity of those who hope to be saved by Christ, while they live in all manner of sin. Those that walk in the spirit, they have here an evidence of their justification from their sanctification. We see here that it is not enough to abstain from evil, but we must also do good. (*Thomas Horton, D.D.*) *The righteousness of the law accomplished in the believer*:—I. THE EXALTED CHARACTER OF THE LAW. 1. Emanating from a Being infinitely perfect, it follows—(1) That the law, designed to be a transcript of God, must be in every respect perfect. "The law of the Lord is perfect." (2) That the law being perfectly holy, all its requirements must be equally so. It cannot compromise, nor soften down a single enactment. 2. In requiring this, the creature shall have no ground for impeaching the Divine goodness. As if fearful of perplexing the mind with a multitude of enactments, our Lord has presented one precept, the perfect keeping of which involves a virtual fulfilment of all (Matt. xxii. 37). What an unfolding of the wisdom of God is here! In securing to Himself the supreme love of His creatures, He wins a willing obedience to every precept of His law. II. IN WHAT SENSE IS THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE LAW ACCOMPLISHED IN THE BELIEVER? 1.

Not in our own persons. Where, then, would be the weakness of the law? The law has never yet received a complete fulfilment in any fallen creature. Where is the creature who can assert his plea of perfect love to God? 2. The Lord Jesus fulfilled the righteousness of the law in the behalf of His people. He only could do so who was Himself "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." The first step in this wondrous achievement was His being made under the law. Having made Himself amenable to the law, He then proceeds to its fulfilment. Trace the outline of His obedience. Is the grand moving spring of the law, love? Where was ever seen such love to God as our Surety displayed? And did not that affection constrain Him to a supreme consecration to His Father's glory? In addition to supreme love, was there not the most perfect sanctity of life? Accompany Him to the baptismal waters, and hear Him exclaim, "Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." Then follow Him to Calvary, and behold His obedience unto death—was there ever such a law-fulfiller as the Son of God? III. IN WHAT WAY ARE WE TO RECONCILE THE HONOURING OF THE LAW BY CHRIST, AND THE FULFILMENT OF ITS RIGHTEOUSNESS IN US? The difficulty is solved by a reference to the federal union of Christ and His Church. Standing to His people in the relation of a covenant Head, the law being fulfilled by Him in a legal sense, it was virtually a fulfilment of the law by us, His obedience being accepted in lieu of ours (2 Cor. v. 21; Rom. v. 19). Thus every humble sinner who, feeling the plague of his own heart, breaking away from his dependence upon a covenant of works, and reposing in simple faith beneath the righteousness of the Incarnate God, shall never come into condemnation. IV. THE RIGHTFUL CLAIMANTS OF THIS PRIVILEGED STATE ARE DESCRIBED AS THOSE WHO WALK, &c. A Christian may be ensnared and stumble, but he walks not after the flesh. "A just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again." An unrighteous man falls, but where he falls he lies. "He that is unrighteous is unrighteous still." But those in whom the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in their Surety, and in whom a gospel righteousness, an evangelical obedience, is performed by themselves, "walk after the Spirit." Conclusion: 1. Behold, what an open door does this subject set before the humble, convinced sinner. The law, now honoured as it never was—think you that the Lord will reject the application of a single sinner who humbly asks to be saved? 2. Saints of God, keep the eye of your faith immovably fixed upon Christ, your sole pattern. Our Lord did not keep that law that His people might be lawless. The "righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us" when we "walk after the Spirit," in conformity to Christ's example. (*O. Winslow, D.D.*)

Vers. 5, 6. **For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh.**—*Description of regenerate and unregenerate*:—The word "flesh" is here to be taken not in the natural sense, but in the moral; and the word "Spirit" is here to be taken for the Spirit of grace and regeneration. First, the universality of these two states and conditions of men; and secondly, the contrariety. First, to take notice of the universality of these two states and conditions, as they do divide and make up the whole world; for so they do. All men living are one of these two. Therefore let us every one search and examine ourselves in this particular, and observe how the case is here with us; whether we are such as are after the flesh, or which are after the Spirit. As there is not a middle place betwixt heaven and hell, so there is not a middle state neither betwixt sin and grace. This it may be much discovered by us according to the principles that prevail in us; by what we most delight in and give ourselves to. The second is in reference to the contrariety, in that they are opposed here one to the other (Gal. v. 17). The contrariety of these two sorts of persons one to the other is considerable in sundry particulars; as, first, the contrariety of their principles which they are carried by, and that is, of flesh and of Spirit (Gal. v. 17). There is a different law and rule and principle, which does act and move the servants of God than does other persons. Secondly, the contrariety of their aims and projects and designs. Those who have different and contrary ends which they do set down and propound to themselves, they must needs be contrary to one another. Thirdly, the contrariety of their courses and actions and conversations. This is another thing which makes up this contrariety to us as observable in them. The consideration of this point is thus far useful to us. First, as it gives an account of that enmity which is in the one to the other (Gal. v. 29; John xv. 19). Secondly, we see here also how unsuitable it is for those who are good to have intimate society and familiarity with those who are evil. Thirdly, we have from hence a discovery likewise of the excellency of

the kingdom of Christ, and of the efficacy and power of the gospel, which makes such an admirable change and alteration as we may observe it to do. This is the nature of conversion, to deliver us from the power of darkness, and to translate us into the kingdom of Christ, as the apostle expresses it to us there in that place in Col. ii. 13. The second is the difference of properties as belonging to these persons, and that is, that the former do mind the things of the flesh, the latter the things of the Spirit. First, to speak of the former, which is the property of all carnal and unregenerate persons, such as are yet abiding and continuing in the state of nature, and here expressed to be after the flesh. This is that which is here declared of them, as proper to them, that they do mind the things of the flesh. When it is said here that carnal persons do mind carnal things, and they that are after the flesh the things of the flesh, this minding it may admit of a various explication to us. First, they mind them in a way of apprehension, that is, they understand them, and know what belongs unto them; they are well skilled and expert in them. This is one property of carnal and worldly persons, that they are best seen and knowing in such things as these are. Worldly men are best able to judge of worldly matters; as for the things of the Spirit, matters of grace and holiness, here they are plainly ignorant and unlearned. Every one is still most capable and apprehensive of such kind of matters as he hath a proper genius for and inclination to; now this have carnal persons to worldly things. Secondly, in a way of affection. They mind them, that is, they favour them and relish them and take delight in them. Worldly persons, their hearts are set upon the world, and it is the most delightful thing to them of anything else. Thirdly, in a way of contemplation. They mind them, that is, they think upon them; such things as these are the chiefest study and meditation, and which their thoughts are most exercised about. Fourthly, in a way of activity and contrivance. They mind the things of the flesh, that is, they lay out chiefly for it. They bend their chiefest study and endeavour to promote such things as these are. They seek opportunities for the flesh, and they seek how to accomplish and to improve these opportunities. Now, the ground of all this is twofold. First, that inward principle which does act in them and prevail in them. This is a sure rule, that everything doth after its kind. Nature it is a most certain principle wherever it is. Secondly, there is Satan also who has a further stroke and influence hereupon. He is the spirit that works in the children of disobedience (Eph. ii. 2). He makes it his business to promote these things in them, by his suggestions and instigations and concurrences and assistances of them. The consideration of this point may be thus far useful to us. First, as a sad discovery to us of the state and condition of the generality of people in the world. Secondly, we may learn from hence the necessity of regeneration and the work of the new creature, in order to a holy life to be led by us, and the freeing of us from the power and dominion of sin in us, because so long as men are carnal they will be sure to do carnal things. The second is the property of those who are spiritual and regenerate, and that is, that such as these they do mind the things of the Spirit; that is, heaven and heavenly things, grace and holiness. First, spiritual persons, they have their minds enlightened to discern of spiritual things. The reason why most kinds of people do so little regard the things of the Spirit, is indeed because they do so little know the things of the Spirit, nor understand that excellency which is in them. That which men do not know, they do not desire. Secondly, as spiritual persons have an enlightening of their understanding to discern these things; so they have a touch also upon their hearts to suit with them, and to correspond unto them. Thirdly, they have, moreover, the Spirit of God Himself dwelling and abiding in them, who is a faithful monitor to them and exciter of them to that which is good. The use of this point to ourselves may be drawn forth into sundry particulars. First, as it calls us to search and examination of our estate in this respect, and to see how it is indeed with us. There is nothing more necessary for Christians, and those that profess religion, than to be able to make it out to themselves that they are such as are truly regenerate and after the Spirit. So again, as for the affection to these things; let us examine that. Men are then said to mind those things indeed when they savour them, and have some relish of them. Now, how is it to this? Alas! there are a great many people that do it not at all. The Word and the sacraments and prayer and the communion of saints, it may be they are present at them, and in a formal and customary manner partakers of them, but they relish no sweetness in them at all. And so likewise for contemplation. What are the things which we chiefly meditate and think upon in our greatest retirements, when we are solitary and alone by

ourselves? Is it these things of the Spirit; yea, or no? "O how I love Thy law!" says David, "it is my meditation all the day" (Psa. cxix. 97). Again, for counsel and contrivance and design. How is it here? What is the business which we do most of all study, and endeavour and beat our brains about? Is it the great things of the world, how to improve ourselves and enlarge ourselves here; or is it to get grace into our hearts? (*Thomas Horton, D.D.*) *The things of the flesh and the things of the Spirit*:—I. "THE THINGS OF THE FLESH" are the bodily appetites, sympathies, and propensions. These are its great forces moving its members and organs. These are—1. Good when subordinated to the interests of the soul. When they are controlled by a holy intelligence they are blessed handmaids to the Spirit. 2. Bad when they are allowed to hold empire over the soul. This they do in all unrenewed natures; the curse of humanity is when the body rules the intellect and conscience too. "What shall we eat; what shall we drink?" &c. II. THE THINGS OF THE SPIRIT are its moral intuitions, rational dictates, intuitive longings, and varied powers of thought and sentiment. These are—1. Good when they control the things of the flesh, when they hold the body in absolute subjection—use it as an instrument. 2. Bad when they are devoted to the things of the flesh. They are often thus devoted; souls are everywhere prostituted to animalism. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The opposition between the things of the flesh and the things of the Spirit*:—I. AS HUMAN TO DIVINE (Matt. xvi. 23). II. AS EARTHLY TO HEAVENLY (Phil. iii. 19; Col. iii. 2). III. AS SIN TO HOLINESS (Gal. v. 19–23). (*Archdeacon Gifford.*) *Minding the things of the flesh*:—It is not necessary that you mind all the things of the flesh in order to constitute you a carnal man. It is enough to fasten this character upon you, that you have given yourself over to the indulgence or the pursuit even so far as one of these things. A sinner may not be a debauchee, and neither the one nor the other may be an aspiring politician. But whatever the reigning passion may be, if it have the effect of attaching you to some one object that is in the world, and which with the world will terminate and perish—then still your mind is in subjection to an idol, and the death of the carnally minded is your inheritance and your doom. Be not deceived, then, ye men, who, engrossed with the cares, and observant of all the sobrieties of business, are not addicted to the influences of dissipation; nor ye, who, heedless of wealth s accumulations, can mix an occasional generosity with the squanderings of intemperance and riot; nor ye, who, alike exempted from sordid avarice or debasing sensuality, have yet, in pursuit of an ascendency over the mind and the measures of your fellow men, made power the reigning felicity of your existence; nor yet even ye, who, without any settled aim after one or the other of these gratifications, fluctuate in giddy concern from one of the world's frivolities to another. None of you mind all the things of the flesh; yet each of you mind one or the other of these things, and that to the entire practical exclusion of the things of the Spirit from the preference of your habitual regards. We do not charge you with a devotion of heart to all these things in the world which are opposite to the love of the Father, any more than we charge you with idolatrously falling in obeisance to all the divinities of a heathen polytheism. But still, if only one of these divinities be your God, there were enough to constitute you an idolater, and to convict you of a sacrilegious disvowal of the King who is eternal and immutable. And so, your one earthly appetite, though free from the tyranny of all the others; your habit of ungodliness, though it be the only one that breaks out into visible expression in the history of your life—of itself renders you a carnal man; of itself drives you from the spiritual territory; of itself proves that you are still one of the children of this world; and that you have not passed from death unto life. (*T. Chalmers, D.D.*) *The carnal and spiritual mind*:—I. THE MARKS OF THE CARNALLY MINDED. 1. They "mind the things of the flesh." The "flesh" is the body, man's animal nature, the seat of sensual appetite and passion. It is through the organs and the senses of the flesh that we engage in the activities of the world, and participate in its enjoyments or sorrows. "The things of the flesh," therefore, are all the things of this present life, apart from any connection with that which is unseen and eternal. These are summed up in chap. i. as "the creature," which is worshipped and served rather than the Creator. They are spoken of by John as "all that is in the world" (1 John ii. 15, 16). This "all" is further defined as "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life"—covetousness, sensuality, and ambition. To "mind" these things is to think a great deal about them, to set our affections upon them, and to satisfy our souls with their possession (Luke xii. 16–20). (1) The things of the flesh may be

guiltily minded, even when the objects of our pursuit are such as may be lawfully desired. Who can complain of our addicting ourselves honestly to the toils of business, or enjoying in moderation the pleasures of the table and the home? To the Christian man they are blessings and means of holiness; to the carnally minded they are curses and snares. (2) It is not necessary to mind all the things of the flesh in order to be carnally minded. There may be pursuits and pleasures which you hate; but if there be others in which you immerse yourself, it is enough to stamp you as a carnal man. You need not sail on every sea to be a voyager on the water; and so you need not follow after every wickedness to be a child of the devil. (3) Carnally mindedness refers not to occasional impulses or feelings, but to the habitual bent and disposition of the soul. The carnal man may be, at times, the subject of good desires, and may form good resolutions; while the spiritual man may often have to struggle with the lusts of the flesh, and be for a moment cast down by them. Our real character may be determined by—(*a*) Our secret meditations (Prov. xxiii. 7). (*b*) The crises of our history. There are times which compel us to show whether we love God or the world most. (*c*) The practical outgrowth of our principles and disposition. We are known by our fruits (1 John iii. 7, 10). 2. "To be carnally minded is death." (1) Their present state is one of death. The soul is devoid of those affections, experiences, joys, in which the true life of a spirit consists. (2) Hence their doom in the future is to be banished from God for ever. They sow to the flesh, and of the flesh reap corruption. This is the "second death." 3. "The carnal mind is enmity against God." True, there may be no full consciousness of this, but still it is there ready to be brought out when occasion arises. A man may hate his neighbour and yet not discover his resentment for years; but at length that neighbour may confront him in some such form as shall instantly bring it out. 4. "It is not subject to His law, neither indeed can it be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God." And why? Because they are still unforgiven as to past offences; and because also, in all seeming goodness, there is the total lack of a true and acceptable purpose. II. THE MARKS OF THE SPIRITUALLY MINDED. 1. They mind the things of the Spirit. (1) The things which He has revealed, or the spiritual gifts which He has imparted—all that concerns us spiritually and in relation to eternity, in contradistinction from all that concerns us only materially and temporally (1 Cor. ii. 9–16). (2) All the joys, states, and experiences of our spiritual nature which are produced within us by the realising contemplation of those sublime and enduring realities. Justification, forgiveness, the sense of that forgiveness, sanctification, advancement in the knowledge of God, the peculiar privileges of Divine sonship, together with all the gladdening prospects of ultimate glory. 2. He who minds the things of the Spirit shows it by making constant efforts to acquire them. He takes pleasure in meditating upon them, in conversing about them, and in listening when others describe them. Then he must needs read about them in the Word of God, and must be frequently found in closest communion with God. "To be spiritually minded is life and peace." (1) It is "life," inasmuch as it quickens the soul in its nobles attributes, awakens it to its highest functions, and fills it with its purest pleasures. Not to be spiritually minded leaves the mind of man but partially developed, and shuts up its most Godlike faculties in darkness, torpor, and neglect. (2) Must not such a state be one of "peace"? The carnal mind can have no peace. It is troubled from both within and without. (*T. G. Horton.*) *The carnal and spiritual mind:*—I. THE TEXT DIVIDES MEN INTO TWO CLASSES, AND ONLY TWO. The test of these two classes is the bent and inclination of their minds towards carnal or spiritual things. It is important to determine to which we belong. We cannot do so by any conventional test. II. THE TEST IS CARRIED INTO THE INNER MAN. 1. It is "minding" the things of the flesh or spirit that determines character; what a man *is* rather than what he does. God looks at the heart, and no outward act can deceive Him. 2. "Minding the things," &c., includes the exercise of the affections. III. MAN REALLY IS WHAT HIS NATURE IS. The prevailing instincts of the heart determine the external habits of life. Character is determined from within, not from without. A man may live in a church all his life. This will not make him a saint. You may sow wheat and barley and flax in the same soil and under the same conditions, softened by the same shower, warmed by the same sun; but these influences only lead to the development of the different species according to their own intrinsic natures. Circumstances may repress the outward manifestation of character as a man may avoid worldly amusements from a sense of impropriety, &c.; but such

abstinence does not prove him to be a spiritual man. IV. THE PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF THIS PRINCIPLE. In regard to—1. Prayer. 2. Reading the Bible. 3. Christ. 4. The world and the things of the world. 5. The unseen world. (*P. Strutt.*) *Carnal and spiritual mindedness:*—I. THE ANTITHESIS OF CARNAL AND SPIRITUAL MINDEDNESS (ver. 5). 1. The contrasted classes. (1) They that are after the flesh. "The flesh" means the body (Job iv. 15, xxi. 6); the present life (Phil. i. 24); all that in religion is outward (chap. iv. 1; Gal. iii. 4); corrupt, vitiated human nature with all its sinful habits (John iii. 6; Rom. vii. 18). This last is its signification here. To be after the flesh—(*a*) We need not live in profligacy. Passions may be dormant, while not provoked. Dynamite is harmless till fired. The particles of clay may temporarily subside from muddy water till the liquid is agitated again: then fresh discolorations arise. (*b*) Nor indulge in every form of evil. In the mountain range of a man's iniquity certain peaks may start sheer above the general level of the chain. (*c*) Nor flagrantly wicked in any one thing. If only the mind be steeped in frivolities, forgetful of anything but self-gratification, we are in the flesh. (*d*) We may even experience longings after nobler soul-attainments (Matt. xix. 16–22). Just as there are manifold depths of complete submersion, at six or sixty fathoms, so there are souls not far from the kingdom of heaven (Mark xii. 34), others as whited sepulchres (Matt. xxiii. 27), others "of your father the devil" (John viii. 44). (2) They that are after the Spirit. (*a*) Such are renewed in heart. The change they have experienced is deeper than reformation. They are not like irised minerals whose surface is made gleam with all rainbow colours while the centre is lustreless, opaque. (*b*) They desire unreserved consecration to God's service. (*c*) Their portrait is drawn in the Beatitudes. 2. Their different conduct. (1) Those after the flesh mind worldly advantages, honours, pleasures. Deeds often beautiful adorn them. The soldier dies, leading a forlorn hope for his country. A daughter withstands temptation, and toils herself into a premature grave that her aged parents may have a roof and bread. But no nature can transcend the principles of its own life. Water cannot rise naturally above its own level. (2) Those after the Spirit mind what is holy, despite many impulses of disposition and training. Like the sunflowers, which turn after the light, they try to keep looking to Jesus (Heb. xii. 2). Note—(*a*) We may know our spiritual position by observing what things we mind. A bar of steel, by what it "minds," will show whether it is magnetised or not. Our conduct, like the hands of our watches, tells out the unseen movements within. (*b*) The old nature cannot be sanctified, it must be crucified (Gal. v. 24). II. THE DIFFERENT RESULTS OF SUCH ANTITHETIC POSITIONS (vers. 6–8). 1. The consequences are—(1) That to be carnally minded is death. This is—(*a*) Alienation from all godliness and spiritual movements, as physical death is separation from activities of bodily existence. The heart-chords of the carnally minded never respond to the Spirit's touch, as no plays of thought or feeling flit over the pallid face of a corpse though touched by the friendliest hand. Yet the spiritually dead are neither incapacitated for, nor insensible to, sensual pleasures (Phil. iii. 9; 2 Pet. ii. 13). (*b*) Not so much negation of spiritual comforts as positive hunger of unsatisfied desires, desolations consequent on indulged passions. Cain (Gen. iv. 13), Esau (Gen. xxvii. 34), Judas (Matt. xxvii. 3), felt it to be so. (*c*) Always takes hold on eternal perdition. The tap-root of the sin-tree strikes into the inmost recesses of human nature (chap. vi. 23). Present soul-death is prophetic of future. (2) To be spiritually minded. (*a*) Life, the complete opposite of death (Ezek. xxxvii. 1–7), including delight in God, power for good, conformity to Christ's character, holy activity, and eternal felicity. At present this life is subject to many fluctuations, dishealths, languors; but as given of the Spirit and hid with Christ in God (Col. iii. 3) it is deathless (chap. v. 17; John xiv. 19). (*b*) Peace. This is not exemption from all disquietudes, but in spite of them; like a river flowing amid dark cliffs with its curves lit up, and its ripples glancing in the sunlight, the peace of the believer, luminous in the shining of God's reconciled countenance, courses on, diffusing comforts, serenities, joys. In contrast with the wild tumult of fleshly lusts this peace signifies the harmony grace establishes between the sinner and his God, his fellow-men, and the several parts of his own being. It counterworks the soul's anxieties on the chief grounds whence they arise. It is a peace the world knows not of (Isa. lix. 8), and cannot take away (John xiv. 27). It is a distinct fruit of the Spirit (Gal. v. 22). It passeth all understanding (Phil. iv. 7). 2. Why the consequences are so. (1) Carnal mindedness is death, "because the carnal heart is enmity against God." The hatred quiescent for a time may be very intense, as Saul's against David (1 Sam. xxvi. 4). The flame lies latent in flint

till the applied steel evokes it. Vesuvius is not always in active eruption. The strength of this enmity is evidenced from the fact that the only time when man got an opportunity of striking at God he struck at Him in the person of Jesus Christ (Acts ii. 23). The carnal heart "is not subject to the law of God." From the very necessity of its nature it "cannot be" (chap. vii. 14), and such enmity against the God of all life can mean nothing else than death. (2) Since they that have their habitat within the sphere of fleshly influences as fishes have theirs within the waters—*cannot* please God. Neither in their more manifestly sinful ways, nor the common transactions of daily life (Prov. xxi. 4), nor their most solemn services (Psa. xv. 6; Isa. i. 13–15; lxvi. 3; Gen. iv. 5). What can the Divine displeasure mean but death? Note—(*a*) The primary cause of man's indifference to gospel truth and ordinances. The dead are deaf. Scientists love to hear of inventions, social reformers of philanthropies, merchants of commerce, because they are alive to these things. (*b*) Heaven would be no felicity for any unregenerate soul. Its sorest misery is in meeting with God in the glory of His holiness (Rev. vi. 16). (*c*) The believer's peace will be proportionate to his minding the things of the Spirit. The growing stream floats more and larger burdens on its bosom. (*d*) The unmitigated dogmatism of ver. 8 should lead us to repentance. Better that a man should not be born than not please his God (Matt. xxvi. 24). (*e*) The measure of our pleasing God is the measure of our Christianity (Heb. xi. 5; John viii. 29; 1 John iii. 22). (*James Gage, B.D.*) *The carnal and the spiritual*:—I. THE DIFFERENT STATES OF MIND DESCRIBED BY THE APOSTLE. 1. To be "carnally-minded," to "walk after the flesh," to "live after the flesh," to "mind the things of the flesh," are plainly convertible terms, all meaning, not a proper care for the welfare of the body, but the practical exhibition of that evil principle of fallen man which in the following verse is said to be enmity against God—not to be subject to His law; nay, to be necessarily hostile to it. Carnal-mindedness, therefore, consists in the presiding love and pursuit of those sinful objects of time and sense which alienate the heart from God, subdue it to the powers of death, and deliver it into the snare of the enemy of mankind, to be led captive at his will. 2. But "they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts." Spiritual-mindedness is a principle decidedly opposed to that which I have described—to pass through things temporal as not to lose the things eternal—to walk by faith, not by sight—to slight and scorn the pleasures of sin, animated by that sanctified ambition which seeks, through undeserved mercy, the recompense of an eternal reward—this is spiritual-mindedness. II. Such is the great contrast between the characters I have described; and vast as is the difference of these states of heart will also be that of THE ENDS TO WHICH THEY INFALLIBLY LEAD. 1. To be carnally-minded is death. To live after the flesh is a present death—a moral incapacity for the pursuits and duties of a heavenly and immortal life; it is to be dead in trespasses and sins. One thus minded is an alien from the commonwealth of the true Israel, a stranger to the covenant of evangelical promise, having no Scriptural hope, and without God in the world. He may be a living treasury of knowledge, capable of many impressions from religious objects, capable of performing many external duties: he may have a form of godliness, a name to live; but holy and spiritual things, in their predominant importance, strike not his mind nor possess his heart. 2. But to be spiritually-minded is life and peace. Carnal passions are subdued and mortified, and the Spirit is life, because of righteousness; it is capable of a spiritual existence. "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made the spiritually-minded man free from the law of sin and death. Like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so he is enabled to walk in newness of life." He is sensible of all the privileges and delights of a spiritual life. He is passed from the death of sin to the life of grace; and the death of the body shall be but the gate and entrance of endless being, both to body and to soul. Conclusion: 1. Learn we then from this Scripture the necessity of an entire renewal of the heart. To be carnally-minded is present death; and as well might the lifeless corpse gift itself with the powers of being and motion, as unassisted man restore himself to spiritual existence, and live by the exertion of his own energies to God and goodness. 2. Learn, also, how ill they judge, and how idly they dream of happiness, who prefer living after the flesh to living after the spirit. (*R. P. Buddicom, M.A.*) *The contrasted characters; or, the carnally and spiritually minded*:—We have here depicted—I. THOSE TO WHOM THE CHRISTIAN LIBERTY HAS NOT COME. 1. Their moral state and character. They are in the flesh. Hence they "mind the things of the flesh."

The flesh has bound down the mind to its sole service (Phil. iii. 19; Col. iii. 2; Rom. xiii. 14). Under the dominion of this law they walk (Eph. ii. 2). What, then, is this strangely fascinating power? The term (σάρξ) properly denotes the fleshy part of living animal bodies. It is also sometimes used for the whole human person. And it is clearly used here and elsewhere for fallen and sinful human nature (John iii. 6, 7; Rom. vii. 18; Gal. v. 17-21). But why? (1) Not because our Lord or His apostles held our physical nature to be in itself sinful. In Adam the flesh was as spotless as the spirit, and Christ, "who was made flesh," was nevertheless sinless (chap. i. 3; John i. 14; 1 John iv. 2, 3; Heb. vii. 26). (2) Not because sin was supposed to affect the physical constitution only. For it is obvious that the physical part of man, by itself, is altogether incapable of sin. A mere animal cannot transgress a moral law. Sin properly pertains, not to the body, but to the soul (Mic. vi. 7). (3) But because—(*a*) Sin first found its access to the human will through the medium of bodily sense. (*b*) By means of this it still maintains its dominion within the soul. (*c*) Man suffers his spiritual faculties, by which the animal nature ought to be governed and transformed, to be delivered over in servitude to the flesh. 2. To be in this sinful condition "is death" (chap. vii. 9; Luke xv. 24; 1 John v. 12; John v. 40, vi. 53; Eph. ii. 1-5; Rom. vi. 1-23; Col. iii. 1-4; Rom. vii. 9-13, 24). Man's true life is not animal, but spiritual. If he attains not to this, or by transgression forfeits it, he does not really live. And so long as he is content with earthly good, he is perpetually sinking down into the "second death." 3. This state, with its consequent course of life, is death because it is "enmity against God"—is directly subversive of His appointment and order. The true life of intelligent beings must consist in conformity to the Creator's purpose and arrangements. The carnal mind being of necessity the very antithesis of God's order, it is not, it never can be, subject to God's law. II. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THOSE TO WHOM THE CHRISTIAN LIBERTY HAS COME. 1. Their whole course of life is determined and regulated by the Spirit. The new Spirit of life, imparted to them in Christ, has set them "free from the law of sin and death." They are, indeed, still in the body, but the flesh is but a tabernacle and organ of the spirit. For they now live in the Spirit—"mind" the things of the Spirit, and "walk" according to the Spirit. Not, indeed, that they neglect the body, or despise all earthly good, but even while occupied with mundane things they learn to make them helpful to their true spiritual interests. 2. To be thus spiritually minded—(1) Is life. It not only tends to, but springs from, and promotes life. (2) Peace. The carnal mind is at war with God—with all the Divine plans, purposes, and arrangements—and is therefore evermore fruitful of discord and misery. But the "spiritual" mind brings man into harmony with God, and with nature, physical, intellectual, and moral. Then, too, the things with which the spiritual mind is preoccupied, are so serenely steadfast and sure, as to communicate something of their own placid character to the soul of him who thus lives in familiar fellowship with them. Conclusion: Observe—1. That there is no hope of securing the salvation of any man while he continues contented with "the things of the flesh." The first thing needful is to work in him a living conviction that his present course of life is vain, foolish, and wicked. 2. That the new life in the Spirit can be sustained only by continued attention to its interests. "They that are after the Spirit" do mind "the things of the Spirit," and such "minding" is "life and peace." (*W. Tyson.*) *The contrast between the carnally minded and the spiritually minded*:—I. EXTERNAL. Two classes of character evident. 1. The one busied about earthly things, and governed by their corrupt inclinations. 2. The other caring for heavenly things, and therefore denying themselves that they may please God. II. INTERNAL. This difference is essential; in the heart. 1. The one is spiritually dead. 2. The other is alive unto God, and enjoys His unspeakable peace. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The contrast between the unconverted and the regenerate* appears—I. IN THEIR CHARACTER. 1. The one is sensual. 2. The other spiritual. II. IN THEIR EXPERIENCE. 1. The one experiences death and misery. 2. The other life and peace. III. IN THEIR RELATION TO GOD. 1. The one is an enemy, and cannot please God. 2. The other a friend, and enjoys communion with God. IV. IN THEIR PROSPECTS. 1. The one must perish, for he is none of Christ's. 2. The other shall live for ever, for he shall be quickened from the grave. (*Ibid.*) *Nature and spirit*:—Whatever these words may mean one thing is clear—the apostle does teach a radical difference between the physical and the spiritual natures of man. Some philosophers teach that there is no difference between matter and mind; that the operations which we call mental or spiritual, and those which we recognise as physical, are all produced by the same

forces. This denial of the distinction between the physical and the spiritual realms, which makes thought only a chemical function, and conscience nothing but a hereditary affection of the nervous system, Paul does not justify. Which is nearer right? Let us hear what a philosopher (Mr. W. T. Harris, of Concord) says about—I. THE LAW OF NATURAL THINGS. "The world of nature, to which man is enslaved by his bodily wants and necessities, is a world of selfishness and cruelty. The means of gratification for one body are obtained and used at the expense of another." Is not that true? 1. Every natural thing grows at the expense of something else. The sand of the beach is worn from the rocks of the shore by the action of the waves. But what the beach gains the cliffs lose. The corn grows out of the earth, but only at the expense of the soil in which it grows, and of other plants, that stand stunted under its shadow. Just so the body of the animal lives and grows at the expense of other living things. 2. The law of natural growth is the law of all movement or manifestation of physical power. Every force that is expended is borrowed. If I drive one croquet ball against another, the force imparted to the second one is lost by the first one. The fire burns, but it is only as the wood gives up the heat that was latent in it. The oxygen of the air and the carbon of the wood unite to produce the flame; and whatever force is in the flame existed before the fire was kindled. 3. The great physical law which the philosophers call the law of the correlation of forces, or the conservation of energy, governs all these changes. Every steam-engine is an example of the conversion of heat into motion; every hot axle is an instance of the conversion of motion into heat; every machine belt from which the spark flies to the knuckle shows heat converted into electricity; every building set on fire by lightning shows electricity converted into heat. What is lost by one form is gained by another. II. THE LAW OF SPIRITUAL THINGS. "The law of spirit is harmony, and not mere contention. All spiritual struggle must have reconciliation for its object. The equal shall look in the face of equal, and through mutual recognition each shall reinforce the other. Thus each is doubly strong; strong in himself and strong in his friend. Combination is the great principle of spirit, and its forms are numerous in the practical and in the theoretical world." This statement will also be verified by your experience. 1. You and I sit down hungry to a scanty meal. There is barely enough for one. If my needs are satisfied you get nothing; if you are filled I must go hungry. But you and I sit down with eager minds to talk about some moral or spiritual truth. It is a truth known to me, but unknown to you, and in our conversation you gain from me this truth. Have I deprived myself of anything in imparting to you this truth? On the contrary, I have gained by giving. (1) I have a stronger hold upon the truth than I had. If I give a man my coat I have one coat the less; but if I give a man my thought it is less likely now that I shall part with it. I have not only a stronger hold upon it, but a greater joy in it. Two faggots burn more freely than one; and my enthusiasm, in the pursuit and possession of this truth, is rekindled when you take fire. (2) Truth grows in the mind itself by communicating it. Not only do the mental, like the bodily powers, gain strength by exercising them; there is a kind of increase here to which the body affords no analogy. The most productive mind is the most prolific mind. Production fertilises the intellect. It is when the mind is paying out its wealth most lavishly that its revenues are largest. 2. Other spiritual gifts besides knowledge follow in their growth the same law. (1) Hope is increased by imparting it. If I have strong confidence in the success of any enterprise, and if I succeed in inspiring others with my confidence, it is not at any expense to my own expectation. The same thing is true of—(2) Courage. A brave man inspires others to heroism, but his own courage is not diminished when it enters into other souls; it is stimulated and invigorated. (3) The one central element of the spiritual life, love—the love that is the fulfilling of the law. 3. We say sometimes in our prayers that God is not impoverished by giving nor enriched by withholding. That is true of Him because He is a Spirit, and because the law of His nature and of His action is a spiritual law. But man is a spirit also; and the saying is therefore true of man. By giving man is not impoverished—by giving spiritual gifts. A man's temporal possessions may sometimes be diminished by bestowing them, but the man's true self is enlarged by every bounty that it dispenses. III. Have we not verified the doctrine taught by the Concord philosopher? And in doing SO HAVE WE NOT FOUND THE STRONGEST REASON FOR BELIEVING WITH PAUL THAT THERE IS A RADICAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE PHYSICAL AND THE SPIRITUAL WORLD? Do not the body and the spirit belong to different kingdoms? Is there not a higher nature in man which is not subject to the law of the conservation of energy, and

of which physical science knows absolutely nothing? And is there not, therefore, reason for believing that the death of the body, which is under physical law, is not the death of the higher nature, which is not under physical law; that the spirit of man may continue to exist after the body has ceased to exist? 1. Man is not wholly mortal, but neither is he wholly immortal. He is flesh as well as spirit. In which of these realms does he chiefly live? Is his ruling love given to the things of the flesh or to the things of the Spirit? If the former is true of him, then the law of his nature is the law of the lower realm. The things on which his heart is chiefly set are things which he can only have by depriving his fellows. The very condition of his life is warfare, and the warfare into which his ruling choice enlists him is fierce and fatal; sooner or later the devourers themselves must be devoured. The minding of the flesh is death. 2. It is a sad and bitter life that any man leads who sets his chief affections on the possessions and goods of the material world. Because he is a spiritual being his ruling choice ought to take a higher range. The gains that are most precious to him are those that fall to him while he is enriching others. 3. It is quite possible for man to carry this spiritual force down into the lower realm, there to subjugate the devourers. It is possible to substitute the principle of communion and combination for the principle of competition in the getting and the using of material things. That, indeed, is the very law of progress in civilisation. And the thousand wars of old will never cease, and the thousand years of peace will never come, till men stop putting their trust in the methods of competition and begin to build the fabric of their industrial and social life on the principle of co-operation—till they walk no longer after the flesh, but after the Spirit. That day will not be hastened by disputing or fighting or legislating, any more than the growing of the grass will be hastened by firing cannon over your lawn, or marching troops across it, or making speeches to it. But you and I, in our time, can have something of the light and glory of it in our homes and in our lives if we will only treasure the truth we have found to-day. (*W. Gladden.*) *Spiritual affinity*:—He that delights in God doth not much delight in anything else. The world appears in an eclipse. The astronomer saith, if it were possible for a man to be lifted up as high as the moon, the earth would seem to him as a little point. If we could be lifted to heaven in our affections, all earthly delights would seem as nothing. When the woman of Samaria had met with Christ, down goes the pitcher; she leaves that behind. He who delights in God, as having tasted the sweetness in Him, doth not much mind the pitcher—he leaves the world behind.

Ver. 6. **For to be carnally minded is death.**—*The carnal and the spiritual mind*:—I. THE CARNAL MIND. 1. The disposition. (1) The expression is an abstract one. The apostle touches a principle which he finds at work, and laying hold of it says, "I wish you to look at it so that you may see its nature and tendency," just as a physician might describe the symptoms of a disease. (2) This disease is named the mind of the flesh. This "minding" is like other verbs in which the organ gives the name to the act. When we put our hand to a thing we handle it, the eye, to eye it, the affections, to affect it. "Minding the flesh" is not gross vice, but simply worldly mindedness. 2. The consequence. To be carnally minded is—(1) Death. (*a*) It is the forerunner of eternal death. For such a disposition could never find a home in heaven. (*b*) A sign of present spiritual death—a deadness to spiritual things. (2) Enmity against God—a condition which men do not realise. Only conscious of indifference or ignorance, they resent the charge of enmity. But the apostle describes a tendency, ready at any moment, at any pressure of God's demands, to break out in hostility. (3) Is not subject to the law of God. "Law" here is equivalent to "will." The law which worldly mindedness follows is what it and not what God likes. It must be taken away. (4) Cannot please God. II. THE SPIRITUAL MIND. 1. How it is produced. "If so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you." No man is spiritually minded by nature. Respecting this Holy Spirit, note—(1) His importance. The dispensation under which we live is called the "dispensation of the Spirit." While Christ is our only hope, upon the Holy Spirit depends our entire success. (2) His mystery (John iii. 8). (3) His position. It is safer to honour Him too much than too little when we know that the sin of neglecting Him will never be forgiven either in this world or in the world to come. (4) The privileges He introduces—regeneration, help, comfort, sanctification. 2. Its characteristics. (1) Life. Material life is union of body and soul. True life in the mind is contact with the objects which draw out all its susceptibilities. On becoming spiritually minded we enter on a new world of

spiritual realities. As experienced here, it is spiritual life; as experienced hereafter, it will be eternal life. All other life is death because it is in union with perishing things and all its elements are dying. (2) Peace. Life in sunshine. In proportion as we become spiritually minded is our peace secured. And that peace rests not upon a foundation which may be disturbed by conscience, poverty, or bereavement. "Nothing can separate us," &c. 3. The privilege of which this mind is the seal—Christ's Spirit. A man may have much that bears the semblance of piety—a head stored with knowledge, a mouth full of argument, a life full of work. "But if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." As a matter, then, of fact, every man may test his condition and state by this proof. (*P. Strutt.*) *Carnal and spiritual mindedness and their effects*:—I. THE DEATH HERE SPOKEN OF is something more than penal death. 1. It is not future, but present, and arises from the obtuseness or the extinction of certain feelings and faculties which, if awake to their corresponding objects, would uphold a life of thoughts and sensations and regards, altogether different from the life of unregenerate men. Just figure an affectionate father to have all the domestic feelings paralysed. Then would you say of him that he had become dead to the joys and the interests of home. And the death of the carnally minded is a death to all that is spiritual—a hopeless apathy in all that regards our love to God and righteousness. 2. And such a death is not merely a thing of negation, but of positive wretchedness. For with the want of all that is spiritual about him, there is still a remainder of feeling which makes him sensible of his want, and a remorse and a terror about invisible things, even amid the busy appliance of this world's opiates. And there are other miseries which spring up from the pride that is met with incessant mortification—from the selfishness that comes into collision with selfishness—from the moral agonies which essentially adhere to malice and hatred, and from the shame that is annexed to the pursuits of licentiousness. All these give to the sinner his foretaste of hell on this side of death. II. From what we have said of the death of those who are carnally, you will be at no loss to understand what is meant by THE LIFE OF THOSE WHO ARE SPIRITUALLY MINDED. We read of those who are alienated from the life of God, and to this it is that they find readmittance. The blood of Christ hath consecrated for them a way of access; and the fruit of that access is delight in God—the charm of confidence, of a new moral gladness in the contemplation of God's character, an assimilation of their own character to His, and so a taste for charity and truth and holiness; and a joy, both in the cultivation of all these virtues and in the possession of a heart at growing unison with the mind and will of God. These are the ingredients of a present life, which is the token and the foretaste of life everlasting. III. THE PEACE OF THOSE WHO ARE SPIRITUALLY MINDED. There are two great causes of disturbance to which the heart is exposed. 1. A brooding anxiety lest we shall be bereft or disappointed of some object on which our desires are set. The man who is spiritually minded rises above this, for there is an object paramount to all which engrosses the care of a worldly man; and so what to others are overwhelming mortifications, to him are but the passing annoyances of a journey. To him there is an open vista through which he may descry a harbour and a home, on the other side of the stormy passage that leads to it; and this he finds enough to bear him up under all that vexes and dispirits other men. 2. There is nought in the character of the spiritually minded that exempts them from the hostility of other men; but there is the sense of a present God in the feeling of whose love there is a sunshine which the world knoweth not; and there is the prospect of a future heaven in whose sheltering bosom it is known that the turbulence of this weary pilgrimage will soon be over; and there is even a charity that mellows our present sensation of painfulness, and makes the revolt that is awakened by the coarse and vulgar exhibition of human asperity to be somewhat more tolerable. (*T. Chalmers, D.D.*) **To be spiritually minded is life and peace.**—*Spiritual mindedness*:—I. ITS NATURE. Note—1. The objects which a spiritually minded man regards. There is a spiritual as well as a material, an intellectual, and a moral world—a world the existence and contents of which are not ascertained by the exercise of the senses, nor by the mere exercise of intellectual energy; "for eye hath not seen," &c. They are, however, graciously revealed to us by the Spirit in the Scriptures; they comprehend the existence, character, and government of God; the responsibility, guilt, and depravity of man; the person, character, and mediatorial work of the Redeemer; the instructions and influences of the Holy Spirit; the graces which adorn the Christian character; and the glory to which

the believer is graciously destined. 2. The manner in which a spiritually-minded man regards these objects. He has a spiritual discernment, in the exercise of which he regards spiritual things in a totally different way than he did before. The things themselves remain the same, but he is changed. He regards them now —(1) Devoutly. He meditates on them not as matters of mere speculation, but as the means of holiness and of eternal life. You may think of religion in all its aspects and yet be as far from all spiritual contact with religion itself as the astronomer is from the star he contemplates. But if you think of them devoutly, your thoughts will be accompanied with such feelings as correspond with their character and importance. (2) Supremely. Not that he disregards those which are secular and temporal, but to him their importance is secondary; "he seeks first the kingdom of God and His righteousness." (3) Habitually. It is no uncommon thing for a worldly-minded man, under the influence of strong excitement, to direct his attention to spiritual things, and with some degree of anxiety. But his regard is as transitory as the excitement by which it was occasioned. But spirituality is the law of the mind of a spiritually-minded man, and it displays itself both by its resistance to evil and by its pursuit of good. (4) Practically. Its internal influence on the heart is indeed invisible, but this is always connected with visible effects, like the sap which secretly circulates through the tree, and then exhibits its existence by the fruit. "By their fruits ye shall know them." 3. The general principles by which a spiritually-minded man's regard to these objects is regulated. (1) A firm belief in the existence of spiritual things. (2) A solemn conviction of the Divine presence. (3) An obedient regard to Divine authority. (4) A holy love to the Divine character. (5) A penitential conviction of guilt. (6) The prospect of standing before the judgment-seat of Christ. II. THE LIFE AND PEACE WITH WHICH SPIRITUAL MINDEDNESS IS CONNECTED. 1. To be spiritually minded is life. This life is—(1) Real. A speculative knowledge of the gospel is not life; nor is a performance of the ceremonies of religion; nor a visible union with the Church. These things may adorn the worldly-minded professor, as fragrant flowers adorn the lifeless corpse. There is no life, unless you live by the faith of the Son of God. (2) Is of the highest and noblest character. The lowest degree of life is vegetable life; the next is animal; the next is intellectual. But beyond all these is spiritual life, which assimilates its possessor to its Divine source. 2. To be spiritually minded is peace. This peace arises from—(1) Pardon, for, "being justified by faith we have peace with God." (2) Confidence in God; "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee." (3) The smile of God, when we walk in the light of His countenance. (4) Peace in affliction; for "in the world ye shall have tribulation, but in Me ye shall have peace." (5) Peace in death; for "mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace." III. THE MEANS BY WHICH SPIRITUAL MINDEDNESS MAY BE PRODUCED AND PROMOTED. 1. Carefully avoid everything which is opposed to spirituality of mind. 2. Contemplate the Word of God in the exercise of faith. 3. Pray without ceasing. (*J. Alexander.*) *Spiritual mindedness*:—I. WHEREIN THIS STATE OF MIND CONSISTS. In—1. Renewal of the mind by the Spirit (John iii. 6, 7). 2. Abstraction of the mind from the world. 3. Exercise of the mind on spiritual objects. II. WITH WHAT THIS STATE OF MIND IS IDENTIFIED. "To be spiritually minded," according to "the wise men after the flesh," is to be mad; according to the votaries of sensual pleasure, is to be melancholy; according to the Word of God, "life and peace." Spirituality of mind is—1. The evidence of spiritual life. It is not natural to nor acquired by man. No cause is adequate to the production of it but the Holy Ghost. He, therefore, who is "spiritually minded" has the witness of the Spirit that he is "born of God." In the feelings of life experienced, and the functions of life performed, there is the evidence of life. 2. The element of a happy life. "To be spiritually minded is life and peace." It yields pure and permanent enjoyment when all other sources fail, and in every variety and change of circumstance, and is productive of perfect felicity in heaven. 3. The earnest of eternal life—both as a pledge that it shall be given, and as a part already given (vers. 29, 30; John iv. 14). III. HOW THIS STATE OF MIND MAY BE ORIGINATED AND PROMOTED. By—1. Dependence on the Spirit of God. 2. Attendance on the means of grace. The Spirit ordinarily works by means, the chief of which are the study of the Scriptures, private devotion, and public worship. 3. Seclusion from the world. Not that lawful occupation is incompatible, but there is in the world much that has a tendency to sensualise the mind; and the further we remove from the sphere of its attraction, the better for the cultivation of this grace. 4. Christian converse. When

Christ talked with two of His disciples by the way, their hearts burned within them. 5. Meditation on death and the world to come. The subject may be viewed and improved—1. As a test of character. 2. As an excitement to joy. (*G. Corney.*) *The spiritual mind:*—I. WHAT IT IS. The mind which the Holy Spirit infuses into the regenerate, and which desires and pursues after spiritual things. In its more advanced and perfect form, it is the enthronement of the Divine will over the human; the voluntary subjection of the whole man to a Divine influence, whereby Christ is formed in us. II. WHENCE HAVE WE IT? 1. Its efficient cause is the Holy Spirit. To awaken conscience from its sleep, to turn the will from its waywardness, to eradicate the seeds of evil, and to fill the heart with love for whatever is holy, is the province of the Holy Spirit, and of Him only: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," &c. 2. The instrumental means is "the Word of God," which by the Spirit, is made "effectual in them that believe." "Sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth," go together. The Spirit uses the truth to obtain influential access to man's soul, in all its parts—to the understanding, that it may be opened; to the judgment, that it may be convinced; to the will, that it may be subdued; to the conscience, that it may be restored to its rightful supremacy; to the affections, that they may be set on God and heaven. III. IN WHAT FORMS DOES IT MANIFEST ITSELF? 1. In the quickened condition of the religious sensibilities; the transformation of "the heart of stone into the heart of flesh." "To be carnally-minded is death." While a man is in this state, he is dead to all the objects and interests of the spiritual world. Of "the beauty of holiness" he has no knowledge. The favour of God has no part in his aspirations, and the eternal and unseen never occasion a serious thought. Hence, awakened sensibility is the first sign of an inner life. We feel spiritually. There is a keen sensitiveness to the presence of evil. The favour of God is life to us. True, it may be "life" without "peace." But life it is, and must be. Spiritual emotions, be they painful or be they joyous, can come only from a spiritual mind. A tear is as good a sign of life as a smile. But remember that this awakened sensibility is a thing of degrees. The mind of the Spirit belongs as truly to "the babe in Christ" as to "the perfect man"; to the awakened sinner, in his first convictions, as to the triumphant saint just entering on his rest. There must be life in us, while we are manifesting any of the functions of life. 2. In the increasing prevalence of religious thoughts and affections. "They that are after the Spirit do mind the things of the Spirit." The thoughts make the man, and the thoughts are the man. He is "carnal," if he gives the first and largest place in his heart to the things of the world; he is "spiritual," if he gives that pre-eminence to the exercises of faith. 3. In the centering of its best affections in a personal Saviour, as the medium through which the soul orders all its intercourse with the heavenly world. IV. ITS FRUITS AND EXPERIENCES. "Life and peace." There is the life and peace of—1. The resting and settled heart. The life of carnal-minded men is one of miserable unrest, which comes of their doing violence to a law of their being. They have taken up with something below that which their souls were made and fitted for. But the spiritual man in the midst of a conflicting, shifting, uncertain, and unstable world, rests in the Lord. 2. The resigned and submissive will, walking confidently after Divine guidance. In the embarrassments of moral choice, in the oppositions of conflicting duties, we look to have the mind of the Spirit. 3. Spiritual liberty. There is a service which may be laborious, exact, and costly, but it is the service of a bondsman—of one who is labouring to obey, before he has been fully brought to believe. But the spiritual mind changes constraint into cheerfulness, and duty into happiness, and the restless activity of a self-devised and legal worship into the calm repose of a commanded and accepted sacrifice. 4. Devotion. For, having the Spirit, we have in ourselves an agency for helping our infirmities. He moulds us into the praying form, suggests to us praying thoughts, forms in us the praying habit. V. THE BEST MEANS OF ATTAINING IT. 1. Prayer for the influences of that Spirit through whom this great gift comes to us. The most eminent effusions of the Spirit were not only afforded to prayer, but appear to have taken place at the very time these sacred exercises were being performed (Ezek. xxxvi. 37; Acts ii. 1). 2. The cultivation of such tempers as are most congruous with His revealed character, and calculated to invite His gracious presence in our souls. "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God." A Spirit of "love," He is grieved at the indulgence of envious and malignant passions. A Spirit of "supplication," He is grieved when we grow remiss in the exercises of devotion. He cannot, as a Spirit of "holiness," remain in a heart to be the companion of unforsaken sin. And as we must not grieve the Author of the spiritual mind, so we

must be careful not to "quench" His sacred influences. The gifts of the Spirit are not bestowed upon us to lie idle. Their fruitfulness depends upon their being kept in constant exercise. 3. All those tendencies which the apostle includes under the name of the "carnal mind," must be brought into subjection. The flesh and the Spirit cannot reign together. Hence we are required to "mortify the deeds of the body." And this we do by denying them indulgence. 4. The observance of stated seasons of religious retirement. 5. Making subservient thereto things which are not spiritual—pressing into a sanctified service every turn in the lot of life. "It is a great art," as Bishop Hall says, "to learn the heavenly use of earthly things." As the raging fire turns everything which is cast into it into its own nature; or as the flower makes common use of the rain and the snow-drift, the sunbeam, and the dew, to minister to the nourishment and support of its own vitality; so, by the power of a Divine affinity, does the spiritual mind assimilate all things to itself. 6. The study of those practical models of Christian character which are given to us in the Holy Scripture. 7. Above all looking to Christ, the great Exemplar, as in all things, so in this. (*D. Moore, M.A.*) *The spiritual mind*:—We often hear it said of one or another individual, "He is a very spiritual person," or "He is very unspiritual." What is meant by these expressions? In the first place, the passage informs us that "to be spiritually-minded" is opposed to being "carnally-minded." The sensual thought, the eyes that rove after, the imagination that shapes, the soul that hankers for, forbidden pleasures, are anti-spiritual. Again, while the spiritual is opposed to the carnal mind, we learn from other passages of Scripture it is more than what we commonly signify by morality. A man may be honest in his worldly affairs, blameless in every earthly relation, without being truly spiritual; for, besides the earthly and human relations in which we stand, we sustain relations heavenly and Divine. A supreme, uncreated excellence must sanctify and draw us on to another citizenship than that we hold amid these clay-built abodes, before the spiritual mind, with its "life and peace," can be unfolded within us. Once more, "to be spiritually-minded," while standing in opposition to what is "carnal," and completing what is "moral," is also the significance of what is "formal." The outward observances and institutions of our religion have no sense but to express and awaken the exercises of our spiritual nature. According as we go through these punctual rites of prayer and praise, communion and consecration, with a worldly or a spiritual mind, they will be a mechanical and unmeaning mockery to us, or the very reflections of the gates of heaven. But the spiritual mind, while opposed to what is carnal, completing what is moral, has of course a position and intrinsic quality of its own, which we must go beyond all terms of negation and comparison to set forth. To be spiritually-minded, then, is to have a sense, a conviction, and inward knowledge of the reality, solidity, and permanent security of spiritual things. It is to believe and see that there is something more in God's universe than outwardly appears; something more than this richly compounded order of material elements, with all its beauty; something beyond the sharply defined glittering objects that crowd the landscape. It is to understand that day and night, seed-time and harvest, summer and winter, are not the only facts possibly subject to the notice of the undying soul. It is to be aware that even the broad streets and mighty pathways which the astronomer descries, laid out from globe to globe, do not embrace the whole or highest survey of God's creation. But beyond, within, or above all, there verily is a scene, a society of lofty, intelligent existence, where are brighter displays of God's nearness and love. The spiritual mind not only sees, as in cold vision, the inner or upper world gloriously triumphing in its stability over the passing kingdom of earth and sense, but enters into relation with it, feels surrounded by it, bows to it, and realises an inspection from the living firmament of its power. Mortal creature, spirit of Almighty inspiration, clothed in flesh! believest thou only in what comes to thee through these five windows of the senses, so advantageously placed to let in the notices of material things; or wilt thou credit that thy Maker also fashioned thy heart to yield for the entrance of Himself and retinue of attending spirits? Breather of earthly air, yet partaker of a heavenly privilege; birth of yesterday, yet heir of immortality; mystery to thyself, definite figure, illimitable being! thy feet do not more surely gravitate to the earth than thy inward nature holds of a loftier sphere. Awake to thy spiritual relations; live up to their solemn dignity. (*C. A. Bartol.*) *True piety peacefully pleasant*:—To be thus minded is life and peace; or the life of true piety is a life of peaceful pleasure. 1. A life of holiness is calculated to fill the mind with the richest enjoyment, and raise it to its highest

state of improvement. The objects of contemplation that lie before the believing mind are dignified and worthy its occupancy. 2. A life of piety furnishes the heart with those affections which give it the highest pleasure, and best promote its improvement. There is no small object in God's kingdom. If He is not the immediate object of the affections of His people, still they have a noble object. If they love His law, His gospel, His government, His Church, or even the humblest individual in His household, there is no one of these affections of which angels would be ashamed. 3. Piety cultivates a better conscience than can be found in the carnally-minded. Other things being equal, he is far the happiest man who has the purest conscience, who most promptly applies for its decision, and most cheerfully obeys its dictates. Still, in every good man, conscience is more or less honoured and cultivated, while in the opposite character it is hated and neglected as Heaven's unwelcome sentinel. 4. A life of piety promotes happiness. To be spiritually-minded is life and peace. This is a point that will generally be conceded. It is said, however, that there are some whom religion has made unhappy. They are cut off from the pleasures of sense, while their hopes of glory and their enjoyment of God are too inoperative to render them happy. That in many cases this appears to be true there is no doubt; but there can be as little doubt that the failure is chargeable, not to religion, but to its absence. 5. There is opened before the believer a vast resource of comfort. He has joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, whom having not seen we love, and in whom though now we see Him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. He has fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. He enjoys the ministry of angels. He is conscious of penitence, and has ordinarily a hope of forgiveness. He is permitted through rich grace to cast an eye forward toward heaven as his everlasting home. 6. The covenant that binds him to his Lord is an everlasting covenant, well ordered in all things and sure. Hence, while he is assured that to live is Christ, he is equally confident that to die would be gain. What he shall be it does not yet appear. (*D. A. Clark.*) *Death and life*:—1. Two of the sublimest words in the language, expressing two of the sublimest facts of our experience; but What is life? What is death? The answers take us far out of our depth. Life presents itself to us in a series of activities, governed by purpose; and, in the case of conscious life, it exhibits the delightful forms of intelligence and feeling. Life, then, as we generally see it, is bright, beautiful, and attractive. But of the inner springs which regulate these activities, of the essential nature of life we are ignorant. So with death. The aspect in which it presents itself to us is dark and repellent. We know it as the cessation of the cheerful activities of life, the dissolution and decay of the fair material form. It appears to us, therefore, as a great enemy. 2. But the way we look at both death and life is partial and illusive. This verse gives us the views of one occupying a point of view different to the one we are accustomed to take. I. DEATH CONSIDERED AS THE MINDING OF THE FLESH. 1. That death is the cessation of activities which befalls the living body, is a natural, but cannot even we see it is a partial way of viewing it? For what we deplore when our friends die is not chiefly the disappearance and decay of their bodies, but the withdrawal of that mind and heart from our society of which the body was but the instrument. 2. The answer which these words give to the question, What is death? speak of what it means to the conscious soul. A soul which finds its aims and expends its energies in catering for the needs and pleasures of its bodily instrument, is virtually dead. And why? First, if the aims of the soul be confined to its perishing tenement, it follows that the soul's occupation and pleasures will be gone when the body dies. And, besides, there is the ignoble procedure of making it the chief employment of the higher powers of our nature to cater for the lower. Now, the Scriptures are very far from countenancing neglect of the body; they exalt it as the instrument of Christian service, the temple of God. And a body in cheerful health is no small aid to the attainment of health of soul. What is called death of the soul here, is not such minding of the body as promotes its efficiency for worthy work, but such minding of it as makes the soul the slave of the body, its chief object to minister to its indulgences and pleasures. 3. That, I need not say, is a very different thing from death as we understand it. Is there any reason why things so different should be called by the same name? What is the death of the body? When the constant changes which go forward in the body nourish and preserve its life, it lives; but when they cease to do that, then it dies. But, observe, a dead body does not cease to be the subject of changes; on the contrary, they go forward; they consist of the repulsive changes of lingering decay and corruption. Now does not that justify the

parallel of the apostle? The death of the soul is not its ceasing to think, to feel, to will, but its thinking, feeling, willing in base unworthy ways, as unlike its proper ways of acting as the odious processes of bodily corruption are unlike the fair processes of life. II. LIFE CONSIDERED AS THE MINDING OF THE SPIRIT. The soul's occupying itself mainly with aims and efforts belonging to its higher nature. It recognises its duties to others and to God, and its endeavours are made to discharge these though at cost of self-denial to the body. To follow Christ is its life-task. To be approved of Christ its reward; to see Christ, and to resemble Him, its eternal happiness. These are the things it "minds," and the body is the servant which aids it in doing so. The ideal, indeed, is not reached here, but the ceaseless and earnest effort after the ideal is the conflict of the Christian life. He who engages in it minds the things of the Spirit. And in proportion as it is attained, and the soul, rising superior to the claims of the flesh, feasts its powers on the things unseen and eternal, and labours at its task here with reference to them, and to Him who dwells there, in that proportion the soul lives; occupies itself in a way which trains it for immortality, and prepares it to see God. (*T. M. Herbert, M.A.*) *To be carnally minded is death*:—First, the subject, the carnal mind. This we may see made good in the several branches of it. As, first of all, take it in the mind and understanding, which is the higher part of the soul, that which should rule all the rest. This is corrupted, and so tending to death (thus chap. i. 22, and Eph. iv. 8). And we may see it in these several distempers, as—First, there is ignorance of the things of God and which concern our own eternal salvation (Jer. iv. 22; 1 Cor. xv. 54). Secondly, as there is ignorance in the mind, so there is also a curiosity and an affectation of the knowledge of such things as belong not to us. Again, darkness of apprehension when we are taught, as the disciples, slow of heart (Luke xxiv. 25; Mark xvi. 14). Thus we see the carnality of our reason and higher part. This may serve to humble us, and lay us low in our own thoughts. That which is best of us, it is by nature tainted in us. This shows us what ill judges of the things of God and the matters of religion such persons are as are merely carnal, and have no more but the light of reason in them, which is so much dimmed and obscured by sin, is as if blind men were to judge of colours, which is very improper and impertinent. Secondly, as there is corruption in the understanding, so likewise in the will and affections. "The flesh lusts against the Spirit" (Gal. v. 17). And (ver. 24) the affections and lusts they are both joined together, as who should say lustful affections. This first of all teaches us how impotent and unable any one is by nature to his own conversion, while we are depraved in every part of us. Secondly, we see here also God's goodness in His powerful and victorious grace, in that He suffers corruption to break out no further sometimes than it does, if not by wholly removing it, yet at least by restraining it. Now further, secondly, here is considerable of us the predicate, what is declared concerning it as to the evil and mischievousness of it, and that is, that it hath the name of death fastened upon it. The Spirit of God makes choice of such an expression as might most of all terrify us, and move all such persons as are yet remaining in their natural condition to labour to come out of it. First, it is in sort and in a certain sense temporal or natural death. This is not always presently, or actually, or in effect, as experience does many times show. First, it is so originally, and as the first occasion of this death. Secondly, it is death also demeritoriously. It is that which does deserve death. Thirdly, this carnal mind is oftentimes also temporal death actually and in the consequence of it. There is many a man who by his sin and wickedness does hasten and procure his own end. "Be not over-much wicked; why should'st thou die before thy time?" says the preacher in Eccles. vii. 17. Secondly, it is death also spiritually, which is somewhat further here intended. It is enmity against God, as it follows in the next verse to the text, and it is a deprivation of the life of God which should be in us. Thirdly, it is also death eternal. And this is that which is principally intended here in this place, as the worst and greatest of all. "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. vi. 23). There are divers persons who have great need to this purpose to be awakened out of this dead condition. First, all worldlings, who savour of nothing but of the earth and of the things of the earth. Secondly, here may likewise be warned and admonished occasionally from this present truth, all such persons as content themselves in a mere abstaining from grosser sins and the outward acts of the flesh. Thirdly, hereby also are admonished all vain-glorious and Pharisaical persons, who have nothing in them but a form of godliness. To set home this further upon us, let us take in these considerations with us. First, that this carnal mind perverts the greatest human excellences and perfections which are consider-

able in any; the wits, and parts, and understandings, and such things as these. A man that has these without grace, he is but a dead man for all that. Secondly, this carnal mind corrupts even the best duties; it makes those performances which being considered in their own nature are good, yet coming from such a person that performs them to be turned to sin unto him, because the principle from which he performs them is not right in him (Prov. xxi. 27). This carnal mind envenoms the greatest comforts, and takes away the profitable use of all the creatures that are for us. Hence it is that it is expressed indefinitely, "to be carnally-minded is death"; namely, whatever condition a man be in, in regard of the world, whether rich, or noble, or powerful, or whatever we can think of. The second is the end of the spiritual, which is expressed in two terms to us, in life and in peace. Each of these is such as is consequent to spiritual-mindedness in those who are the subjects of it. First, spiritual-mindedness is life. That is one thing which is attributed to it as a privilege attending upon it. Secondly, for spiritual life. This spiritual-mindedness is life in sundry regards. First, originally, as proceeding and springing from this life. Those that are spiritually-minded, they are so from the Spirit of life which is in Christ Himself, and communicated to them who are members of Him. Secondly, objectively. Spiritual-mindedness is spiritual life so also. Forasmuch as the matter of it, it is conversant about things of that nature, as grace, and conversion, and regeneration, and such things as these. Thirdly, operatively. Spiritual-mindedness is spiritual life likewise so. Forasmuch as it does very much tend to the preserving, and strengthening, and nourishing, and increasing of this spiritual life in us. The third and last notion of life which is here signified, and that indeed which is mainly intended, is that it is life eternal. The second is peace, which may be taken either in the generical notion or in the specifical. If we take it generically and comprehensively, so it does imply in it all kind of happiness at large, it being usual with the Hebrews to express all kinds of good whatsoever under this name, so as when they wished to any persons peace, they did under that expression pray for their absolute welfare and success. If we take it specifically and restrictively, so it does point out that blessing which is properly and peculiarly so-called, and that in all the several kinds and distributions of it. And thus, indeed, do I rather take it here in this place, the blessing of peace, as it is called, and which God hath promised to bestow on His people (Psa. xxix. 11; cxix. 165; Prov. iii. 17; Rom. ii. 10; Gal. vi. 16), &c. And peace, as I said, in the full extent. First, with God Himself (chap. v. 1), &c. Secondly, with man's own self. Peace of conscience, tranquility of spirit, quietness of mind. Grace it is of a calming and composing nature, it puts all things into a state of quietness. Thirdly, with others (Prov. xvi. 7). The ground of all this is, first, the gift and legacy of Christ. Secondly, the nature of grace itself, and the manner of the working of it; for it composes the passions of the mind, and scatters the distempers of it; and from thence occasions peace unto it. This may serve to show us the great difference betwixt the children of God and other men; betwixt those that are spiritually-minded and those that are carnal. As for this latter, they have no share in peace as belonging unto them (Isa. lvii. 20, 21). (*Thomas Horton, D.D.*)

Vers. 7, 8. **Because the carnal mind is enmity against God.**—*The carnal mind:*—I. ITS ATTITUDE TOWARDS GOD. 1. Enmity. (1) Hating the thought of God. (2) Resisting the grace of God. 2. Insubordination—transgressing the law of God. 3. Utter incompatibility with His nature. II. GOD'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS IT. 1. He can only regard it with displeasure. 2. This is evident from His Word, procedure, and threatenings. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The enmity of the carnal mind:*—I. ITS OBJECT. God who is—1. The kindest of beings; from His—(1) Creative goodness. (2) Sustaining care. 2. The most lovable. 3. The greatest. He is infinite in wisdom, power, &c. II. ITS SUBJECT. 1. The mind—the noblest part of man, because—(1) Rational. (2) Free. 2. The carnal mind—carnal because of its—(1) Descent. (2) Affections. (3) Exercises. III. ITS EVIDENCES. 1. Aversion from communion with God. 2. Wilful disobedience to His known commands. 3. Opposition to Him. 4. Hatred to His followers. Conclusion: This teaches us—1. That all mankind are naturally degenerate. 2. That an entire change of mind is necessary to salvation. 3. That this change should be our serious concern. (*Biblical Treasury.*) *The enmity of the carnal mind:*—I. IN WHAT SENSE ARE WE TO UNDERSTAND THIS ENMITY TO GOD? 1. We are not to suppose that the unregenerate man is at enmity with God according to the character which he usually forms of Him. He commonly thinks of God only as a great, wise, and good Being;

and he feels no sentiment of opposition to the attributes of wisdom, greatness, or goodness. But His supreme authority as the governor of the world, His infinite purity and holiness as hating, and His justice as avenging, sin are kept out of sight; a being is framed in their imagination very much resembling themselves. 2. This enmity is not to be considered as personal, but rather as a dislike of the government which God exercises, and of the laws which restrain us from any course we are desirous to pursue, or require from us what we feel no disposition to perform; and enmity against them may be properly said to be enmity against God, for it resists His authority. Hence the carnal mind "is not subject to the law of God." 3. Again, we are not to understand that the carnal mind is totally destitute of everything that is good. It is sufficient to say that there is in all a natural tendency to approve and do things which it has pleased God to condemn and forbid, and a natural dislike of many duties which He has thought fit to enjoin. II. WHAT PROOFS OF THIS DO WE EXPERIENCE IN OURSELVES OR SEE IN OTHERS? Do we, upon the careful review of our lives, perceive that the love of God has been our first and ruling principle, that our chief desire has been to glorify His name, and to fulfil His commands? And do we find the same disposition in others? Are the sins committed in the world committed through ignorance? Does the sinner repent of them and forsake them as soon as he hears they are contrary to the Divine will? Do our children discover a bias, even from their early infancy, to what is right? Alas! I need not proceed in an inquiry which begins already to assume the air of sarcasm. Let us, however, press the matter home upon our own consciences. Do not we find it a labour to do what is right? Does not even self-interest lose its efficacy? And when our fears of misery, or our desires of happiness, induce us to attempt God's service, how numerous, how powerful are the difficulties which arise to deter us! Conclusion: Let us learn—1. Humiliation. To be at enmity with God is indeed a deplorable state of mind, for it is enmity with perfect truth, justice, goodness, purity. 2. The unspeakable value of an atonement. Great as our vileness may be, there is a way in which we may have access to God, and in which He will receive us graciously. 3. The necessity of Christian vigilance, of self-denial, and earnest supplication for the influence of the Holy Spirit. (*J. Venn, M.A.*) *The enmity of the carnal mind*:—This enmity involves—I. A FEELING ON THE PART OF HIM WHO IS ITS OWNER OF HOSTILITY AGAINST GOD. 1. This necessarily comes out of the very definition of the carnal mind. If the law of God be a law of supreme love toward Himself, how is it possible for that mind to be in subjection to such a law whose affections are wholly set on the things of the world? It not only is not subject to this law, but it cannot be so—else it were no longer carnal. 2. But this is not only logically true, it is also true physically and experimentally. There is no power in the mind by which it can change itself. It can, *e.g.*, constrain the man in whom it resides to eat a sour apple rather than a sweet. But it cannot constrain him to like a sour apple rather than a sweet; and it has just as little power over the affections toward God as it has over the taste. There are a thousand religious-looking things which can be done; but, without such a renewal of the Spirit as the Spirit itself cannot achieve, these things cannot be delighted in. We can compel our feet to the house of God, but we cannot compel our feelings to a sacred pleasure in its exercises. We can bid our hands away from depredation, but we cannot bid away covetousness. 3. And when I charge you with enmity against God you may be ready to answer, that really we are not at all aware of it. On which we have to observe, that your greatest enemy will excite no malevolent feeling so long as you do not think of him. When one is in a deep and dreamless slumber his very resentments are hushed into oblivion. And so of you who are not awake unto God—are you no judges of the recoil that would come upon your spirits did He but stand before you in all His truth, justice, jealousy, and holiness. The manifestation of God as He actually is would call forth of its hiding-place the unappeasable enmity of nature against Him. II. IF WE CANNOT PLEASE GOD WE NECESSARILY DISPLEASE HIM; nor need we to marvel why all they who are in the flesh are the objects of His dissatisfaction. We may do a thousand things that, in the exterior of them, bear a visible conformity to God's will, and yet cannot be pleasing to Him. They may be done from the dread of His power, or to appease the restlessness of an alarmed conscience, or under the influence of a religion that derives all its power from education or custom, and yet not be done with the concurrence of the heart. And however multiplied the offerings may be which we laid on the altar of such a reluctant obedience, they will not and cannot be pleasing to God. Would

any father amongst you be satisfied with such a style of compliance and submission from your own children? So the frown of an offended Lawgiver resteth on every one who lives in habitual violation of His first and greatest commandment. That enmity which now perhaps is a secret to himself will become manifest on the great occasion when the secrets of all hearts shall be laid open, and the justice of God will then be vindicated in dealing with him as an enemy. Conclusion: It is only by taking a deep view of the disease that you can be led adequately to estimate the remedy. There is a way of transition from the carnal to the spiritual; from the enmity to the love of God, and that is through Christ. The trumpet giveth not an uncertain sound, for it declares the remission of sin through the blood of Jesus, and repentance through the Spirit which is of His giving; and your faith in the one will infallibly bring down upon you all the aids and influences of the other. (*T. Chalmers, D.D.*) *The enmity of the carnal mind against God*:—An enemy may be reconciled, a carnal man may become spiritual; but "enmity," in the abstract, cannot be reconciled, and therefore the carnal mind must be crucified and destroyed. Consider—I. THE OBLIGATIONS WHICH RATIONAL CREATURES ARE UNDER TO LOVE GOD. 1. He possesses every perfection, and in Him every perfection is infinite. 2. He stands to us in the important relations of Creator, Preserver, and Benefactor. 3. He has so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son for its salvation. 4. His requirements are reasonable. Can He require anything less than the supreme love of Himself? Is He not worthy of our unlimited confidence? II. THE MANNER IN WHICH THE ENMITY OF THE CARNAL MIND AGAINST GOD DISCOVERS ITSELF. In—1. Disobedience of the commands of God. 2. Neglect of communion with God. 3. Dislike to the image of God, as reflected upon His people. 4. Aversion to the method of salvation which God has revealed in the gospel. 5. Delight in the society of persons who are alienated from God. III. THE LESSONS WHICH THE SUBJECT IS CALCULATED TO AFFORD US. We see—1. How deplorable is the state of man compared with what he was when he came out of the Divine hands. 2. That those persons are much mistaken who, whilst they are severe in condemning all offences which affect society, think little of the evil of such sins as are committed principally against God. 3. The necessity of regeneration. (*Essex Congregational Remembrancer.*) *The enmity of the carnal mind against God*:—I. THE MIND OF MAN IS CARNAL. By the "mind" we are to understand all the powers of the soul, and the affections. It is called carnal, because its desires and delights are fleshly (John iii. 6). 1. The understanding of man, however rational, is carnal (Col. ii. 18). (1) In its conceptions of the Divine Being, of His worship, and of the way of acceptance with Him (chap. i. 23). (2) In its ideas of the holy law of God (chap. vii. 14). (3) In its views of the gospel. Some understand by it nothing but the history of Christ; others only a set of good precepts; others a kind of new law, offering us salvation on easier terms than the old law. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God." Many hear the truths of the gospel plainly preached for years, and never understand them. To many others its great doctrines seem nonsense, and they revile them accordingly. And the apostle says it cannot be otherwise (1 Cor. ii. 14). 2. The will is also carnal. "It is not subject to the law of God." It rejects those things which are truly good and excellent, while it chooses those things which are bad and hurtful (John v. 40). 3. The affections, such as hope, desire, and love, are also carnal (ver. 5). "What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?" These are the inquiries of carnal persons; not, "What shall I do to be saved?" not, How shall I please and glorify God? II. MAN, BEING CARNAL, IS IN A STATE OF ENMITY AGAINST GOD. This is the very essence of sin; the transferring that love, which is due to God, to His creatures, and to sin. It is turning our backs upon Him, as if He whom angels adore were not worthy of our notice. The carnal man—1. Takes no pleasure in the perfections of God. That glorious attribute, holiness, is peculiarly obnoxious to him. 2. Greatly dislikes the spiritual worship of God. That which constitutes the joy of angels and the redeemed, is a burden: and therefore wholly omitted, or very carelessly performed. 3. Is in opposition to the law of God. The law is holy, and just, and good; it requires only that we should love Him supremely, and our neighbour disinterestedly. God certainly has a right to require this; and it is our most reasonable service; but the carnal mind refuses submission. Nor is the enmity of the carnal mind against the gospel less than that against the law. The proud Pharisee disdains to submit to the righteousness of Christ; the carnal worldling, intent upon his land, his oxen, &c., begs to be excused; the vain philosopher, puffed

up with his mental acquirements, cavils at all its humbling doctrines. 4. Contemns or hates God's people. (*G. Burder.*) *The enmity of the carnal mind against God:*—I. ITS MANIFESTATIONS. Enmity against God. 1. In His truth. This is shown (Psa. l. 17; Hos. vii. 12)—(1) In men's unwillingness to believe any Divine truth, or to meditate upon it. Men shun the thoughts of what they do not love. It is hard to believe Divine truths; because they are against the interests of our lusts, and the more Divine, the more unwilling are we to close with them. If the Word lays hold upon a man, he endeavours to shake it off as a man would a serjeant who comes to arrest him (chap. i. 28). Have not men often had secret wishes that some truths were blotted out of the Bible; because they face their consciences, and damp their pleasures? When men cannot shake off a truth, but it sticks fast in them, yet they have no pleasure in the consideration of it, which would be if there were a love to God; for men love to read over the letters which are sent by them to whom they have an affection. (2) In their opposition to it. God's truths cast against a hard heart are like balls thrown against a stone wall, which rebound the further from it. Sin, as a garrison in a city, is up in arms upon any alarm from its adversary (1 Kings xxii. 8; John iii. 19, 20). (3) If men do entertain truth, it is not for truth's sake, but for some other by-end. Judas follows Christ for the bag. (4) If men do entertain truth, it is with unsettled affections, and much mixture. The Jews cry Hosannah to Christ one day, and crucify Him the next. Some were willing to rejoice in John's light, which gave a lustre to their minds, not in his heat, which would have given warmth to their affections. Our hearts are like lute strings, changed with every change of weather, with every temptation. (5) In a carnal improvement of truth. Some endeavour to make truth subservient to lust, as when men hear of God's willingness to pardon they will argue from hence for deferring their repentance (Psa. xciv. 7). Wicked men father their sins upon God's Word. A liar will find a refuge in Rahab's lie for preserving the spies. Some will venture into all kind of wicked company, from Christ's example. As the sea turns fresh water into salt, so a carnal heart turns Divine things to carnal ends. 2. In the duties God doth enjoin. (1) Unwillingness to it. If men do come to God, it is a constrained act, to satisfy conscience. If conscience, like a taskmaster, did not lash them to duty, they would never perform it. If we do come willingly it is for our own ends (Isa. xxvi. 16). This unwillingness is a wrong to His providence, as though we stood not in need of His assistance, and a wrong to His excellency, as though there were no amiableness in Him to make His company desirable. (2) Slightness in the duty. (*a*) In respect of time. As men reserve the dregs of their life, their old age, to offer up their souls to God; so they reserve the dregs of the day, their sleepy times, for the offering their service to God. (*b*) In respect of frame. We think any frame will serve God's turn. In worldly business you may often observe a liveliness in man; but change the scene into a motion towards God, and how suddenly does this vigour shrink. (3) Weariness in it. How tired are we in the performance of spiritual duties, when in the vain triflings of time we have a perpetual motion! How will many force themselves to dance and revel a whole night, when their hearts will flag and jade at the first entrance into a religious service (Mal. i. 13). (4) Neglect of expecting answers to prayer. They care not whether their letters come to God's hands or no, and therefore care not much for any returns from Him; whereas if we have any love for a person we send to, or value of a thing we send for, we should expect an answer every post. If God does not answer us, naturally we cast off the duty, and say with those in Job (chap. xxi. 15). They pray not out of conscience of the command, but merely for the profit; and if God makes them wait for it, they will not wait His leisure, but solicit Him no longer. II. ITS CAUSES AND REMEDIES. 1. Dissimilitude between God and a natural man. As likeness in nature and inclinations is a cause of love, so dissimilitude and unsuitableness is a cause of hatred. God is infinitely holy, man corrupt. Darkness and light, heaven and hell, are directly contrary, so is Christ and Belial. The remedy, then, will be to get a renewed nature, the image of God new-formed in the soul. 2. Guilt. Men fly from God out of shame; they consider the debts they owe God are great, and naturally debtors fly from their creditors. Terror is essential to guilt, and hatred to a perpetual terror. The remedy, then, is to labour for justification by the blood of Christ, which is only able to remove that guilt which engenders our hatred. 3. God's crossing the desires and interests of the flesh. All hatred arises from an opinion of destructiveness in the object hated. And a sinner being possessed that his darling sin is inconsistent with the holiness of God's law, hates God for being of a nature so contrary to that which he loves.

The Jews expecting an earthly grandeur by the Messiah was the cause that they were the more desperate enemies to Christ. The remedy, then, is to have a high esteem of the holiness and wisdom of the law of God, and the advantages He aims at for our good in the enjoining of it (1 John v. 3). 4. Love of sin. The more we love that which hath an essential enmity against God, the more we must hate that which is most contrary to it. Light must be odious when darkness is lovely. The remedy, then, is to endeavour for as great a hatred of sin as thou hast of God; to look upon sin as the greatest evil in itself, the greatest disadvantage to thy happiness. 5. Injury we do to God. Whereas the person injured might rather hate, yet the person injuring hath often the greatest disaffection. Joseph's mistress first wronged him, and then hated him. Saul first injured David, and then persecuted him. The remedy, then, is to endeavour a conformity to God's holy will; to think with thyself every morning, What shall I do this day to please God? 6. Slavish fear of God. Men are apt to fear a just recompense for an injury done to another; and fear is the mother of hatred. A fear of God as an inexorable judge that we have highly wronged will nourish an enmity against Him. Then, be much in communion with God; strangeness is the mother of fear; we dread men sometimes, because we know not their disposition. Consider much the loveliness and amiableness of His nature, His ardent desire that thou wouldst be His friend more than His enemy. 7. Pride. Men lift up the pride of reason against the truth of God, and the pride of heart against the will of God. Then endeavour after humility. 8. Love of the world (1 John ii. 15; James iv. 4). Despise the world, and the devil hath scarce any bait and argument left to move thee to an enmity against God. III. THE IMPROVEMENT. 1. The information to be derived from the subject. (1) How desperate is the atheism in every man's heart by nature! The desperateness of this natural enmity will appear—(*a*) In that it is as bad, and in some respects worse, than atheism. An atheist does not so much affront God as a man who walks as if there were no God. The atheist barely denies God's being, the other mocks Him (Jer. xxxii. 33.) (*b*) In that it is of the same nature with the devil's enmity. Natural men have a diabolical nature (John viii. 44; Matt. xvi. 33), and every natural man is a friend to the devil. There are but two sovereigns in the world, one rightful, and the other usurping. If we are enemies to the right sovereign, we must be friends to the usurper (2 Cor. iv. 4). (2) What an admirable prospect may we take here of God's patience! (Rom. iii. 4). (3) Hence follows the necessity of regeneration. This division between God and His creature will not admit of any union without a change of nature. (4) Hence follows the necessity of applying to Christ. It is Christ only that satisfies God for us, by the shedding of His blood, and removes our enmity by the operation of His Spirit. 2. Exhortation. (1) To sinners. Lay down thy arms against God. Lament this enmity, and be humbled for it. (2) To regenerate persons. (*a*) Possess your hearts with great admirations of the grace of God towards you, in wounding this enmity in your hearts and changing your state (chap. v. 10, 11). (*b*) Inflame your love to God by all the considerations you can possibly muster up. Outdo thy former disaffection by a greater ardency of love. (*c*) Watch against the daily exertings and exercises of this enmity. 3. Motives. (1) Consider the disingenuity of this enmity. (*a*) God hath been good to us. He is love, and we are out of love with love itself (1 John iv. 8). (*b*) God hath been importunate in entreaties of us. (2) This enmity is the greatest folly, because God—(*a*) Is the most lovely object. (*b*) Is the chiefest good, and the fountain of all goodness. (*c*) Cannot possibly do us wrong. (*d*) Cannot be hurt by us. It is a folly among men to show their enmity where they cannot hurt. (*e*) But though thou canst not hurt God, yet thou dost mightily wrong thyself. Thy shot will fall before it reach Him, but His arrows will both reach thy heart and stick in it. (3) Consider the misery of such a state. (*a*) Thou canst not possibly escape vengeance. (*b*) Thou dost even force God to destroy thee. (*S. Charnock, B.D.*)

Man's natural enmity to God:—I. MAN HATES THE CHARACTER OF GOD AS A LAWGIVER. II. MAN HATES THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD. God is the Supreme Being; all things being made by Him and for Him. His right to accomplish His own desires. But what if the plans of a sovereign God require the abandonment of our most beloved objects? Must we then cordially submit? Yes, you must either love, or hate a sovereign God. III. THE CARNAL MIND HATES THE MERCY OF GOD. Here we seem to be in even more glaring inconsistency with consciousness than in any former assertion. If the mercy of God consisted in the mere direct gratification of the wants of men, our position were then false. This vague notion is wonderfully prevalent in the world, but is infinitely removed from the sublime and holy attribute called mercy

in the Scriptures. It was mercy that bowed the listening ear to Abel's prayer; it was grace that inclined him to make the acceptable offering. What was the effect of that display of grace to fallen man? It kindled the passions of hell in the bosom of Cain, and the hatred, which could find no vent toward the God of mercy, fell in murderous stroke upon an innocent brother. At last the Son of God came, the Messenger of mercy. From the cradle to the tomb, He drew forth the rage and malice of men. The relations of life are such, that the religious principles of one person may very greatly interfere with the schemes of profit or pleasure formed by another; and these religious principles are the fruits of God's mercy. But the carnal mind, thwarted and checked, feels a hatred of those principles, and thus of the mercy which caused them. That renovated power of conscience is from the blessed Spirit. But how is it treated? We have reason to fear that the greater part who hear the gospel, dread and detest those very feelings and conditions of the mind. God has no other mercy than a holy mercy; no other merciful treatment of thee than to make thee holy. If this please thee not, it is because thou hast the carnal mind which hates God. Remarks: 1. The supreme love of the creature is a dreadful evil. 2. "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." (*E. N. Kirk, A.M.*) *The carnal mind enmity against God*:—The apostle does not say it is opposed to God merely, but it is positive enmity. It is not black, but blackness; it is not rebellious, it is rebellion; it is evil in the concrete, sin in the essence. It is unnecessary, therefore, to explain that it is "enmity against God." It does not charge manhood with an aversion merely to the dominion, laws, or doctrines of Jehovah; but it strikes a deeper and a surer blow. I. THE TRUTHFULNESS OF THIS GREAT STATEMENT. It needs no proof since it is written in God's Word. But did I need witnesses, I would conjure up—1. The nations of antiquity, and tell you of the awful deeds of mankind. 2. The delusions of the heathen. I would drag their gods before you; I would let you witness their horrid obscenities, the diabolical rites which are to them most sacred things. Then after you have heard what the natural religion of man is, I would ask what must his irreligion be? 3. The best of men who have been always the readiest to confess their depravity. 4. Your conscience. Didst thou never hear the heart say, "I wish there were no God"? Have not all men at times wished that our religion were not true? Now suppose a man wished another dead, would not that show that he hated him? Or has not thine heart ever desired, since there is a God, that He were a little less holy. Has it never said, "Would to God these sins were not forbidden"? II. THE UNIVERSALITY OF THIS EVIL. 1. As to all persons. There is in the carnal mind of an infant, enmity against God; it is not developed, but it lieth there. Young lions when tamed and domesticated still have the wild nature, and were liberty given them, would prey as fiercely as others. So with the child. And if this applies to children, equally does it include every class of men. 2. At all times. "Oh," say some, "it may be true that we are at times opposed to God, but surely we are not always so." Yes, but mark, the wolf may sleep, but it is a wolf still; the sea is the house of storms, even when it is glassy as a lake; and the heart, when we perceive not its ebullitions, is still the same dread volcano. 3. The whole of the mind is enmity against God. Look at—(1) Our memory. We recollect evil things far better than those which savour of piety. (2) The affections. We love a creature, but very seldom the Creator; and when the heart is given to Jesus, it is prone to wander. (3) The imagination. Only give man something that shall well-nigh intoxicate him, and how will his imagination dance with joy! (4) The judgment—how ill it decides. (5) The conscience—how blind it is. I might review all our powers, and write upon the brow of each, "Traitor against God!" III. THE GREAT ENORMITY OF THIS GUILT. 1. What is God to us? He stands to us in the relationship of a Creator; and from that fact He claims to be our King. He is our Legislator, our Law-maker; and then, to make our crime still worse and worse, He is the ruler of providence; for it is He who keeps us from day to day; and I ask, is it not high treason against the Emperor of heaven that we should be at enmity with God? 2. But the crime may be seen to be worse when we think of what God is. God is the God of love. Do you hate God because He loves you? IV. THE DOCTRINES TO BE DEDUCED FROM THIS. Is the carnal mind at enmity against God? 1. Then salvation cannot be by merit, it must be by grace. 2. Then an entire change of our nature is necessary. 3. This change must be worked by a power beyond our own. An enemy may possibly make himself a friend; but enmity cannot. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The natural enmity of the mind against God*:—It is no contradiction to the statement of the text, and no proof of love to God—I. THAT WE DO MANY THINGS THAT

ARE AGREEABLE TO HIS LAW WITH THE WILLING CONSENT OF THE MIND. Propose the question, Would not I do this good thing, or abstain from this evil thing, though God had no will in the matter? If you would, then put not down what is altogether due to other principles to the principle of love to God or a desire of pleasing Him. You may have a very large share of estimable principles: but an enlightened discerner of the heart may look unto you and say, "I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you." For when He puts in for that share of your heart which you give to wealth, or pleasure, or reputation, then is not God a weariness? How would you like the visit of a man whose presence broke up some arrangement that you had set your heart upon? or marred the enjoyment of some favourite scheme that you were going to put into execution? Now, is not God just such a visitor? Yes; and to admit Him, with all His high claims and spiritual requirements into your mind, would be to disturb you in the enjoyment of objects which are better loved and more sought after than He. It is because your heart is occupied with idols that God is shut out of it. There is nothing monstrous in all this to the men of our world; but how must the pure eye of an angel be moved at such a spectacle of worthlessness! That the bosom of a thing formed should feel cold or indifferent to Him who formed it—that not a thought or an image should be so unwelcome to man as that of his Maker—that the creature should thus turn round on its Creator—there is a perversity here, which time may palliate for a season, but which must at length be brought out to its adequate condemnation. II. THAT A GOD DIVESTED OF ALL WHICH CAN MAKE HIM REPULSIVE TO SINNERS SHOULD BE IDOLISED AT TIMES by many a sentimentalist. It would form no deduction from our enmity against the true God that we give an occasional hour to the worship of a graven image; and it is just of as little significancy to the argument that we feel an occasional glow of affection or of reverence towards a fictitious being of our own imagination. If there be truth in the Bible, it is there where God has made an authentic exhibition of His nature; and if God in Christ be an offence to you—if you have no relish for spiritual communion with such a God—then be assured that, amid the painted insignificancy of all your other accomplishments, your heart is not right with God. III. THAT WE DO MANY THINGS WITH THE DIRECT OBJECT OF DOING THAT WHICH IS PLEASING TO GOD. Why, I may both hate and fear the man whom I may find it very convenient to please. I may comply by action; but I may abominate the necessity which constrains me. A sovereign may overrule the humours of a rebellious province by the presence of his resistless military; but you would not say that there was any loyalty in this forced subordination. IV. THAT WE DO WHAT GOD WILLS BECAUSE HE WILLS IT. The terror of His power may constrain you to many acts of obedience. Thieves, and swearers, and Sabbath-breakers may, under the fear of the coming vengeance, give up their respective enormities, and yet their minds be altogether carnal. There may be the obedience of the hand, while there is the gall of bitterness in the heart at the necessity which constrains it. (*T. Chalmers, D.D.*) *The carnal mind is enmity against God*:—This must needs be so, because man hath fallen from God through his first transgression in Adam, and so broken that sweet peace and league which was betwixt God and him. Now, till this be repaired and made up again in Christ, there must needs be enmity following thereupon. "Their iniquities have separated betwixt them and their God." For this purpose we must know thus much: First, that as friendship does properly consist in willing and nilling the same things, so enmity does properly consist in willing and nilling the contrary. But then, again, secondly, carnal men are said to hate God, according to that notion and apprehension which they have of Him, and that is, indeed, very opposite and contrary to themselves. And so now I have done with the first general part of the text, which is the doctrine or proposition itself in these words: "The carnal mind is enmity against God." The second is the proof or confirmation of this doctrine in these words: "For it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." These words may be considered of us two manner of ways: either, first of all, simply and absolutely, as they lie in themselves; or, secondly, respectively and argumentatively, in their inference and textual connection. First, here is the simple pravity and disparagement of the carnal mind. It is not subject to the law of God. Corrupt nature it is a rebel against God's law, as it is enmity against God Himself (Gen. vi. 5; Psa. liii. 1, 23; lviii. 3-5). This is so, and will appear to be so, upon these considerations: First, from the prevalency of another law in such persons in whom this carnal mind is. Secondly, another ground of this point may be taken from the spirituality of the law of God. Thirdly, there is likewise, moreover, observable such

a perverseness in man's heart by nature, as that the law of God it rather makes him worse than makes him better. This point which we are now upon, first, serves to give us an account of so much transgression of the law as there is; namely, from hence, that men's carnal-mindedness does still remain in them. Secondly, we learn from hence also how to come to be conformable to God's law, and to be obedient to the commands of it; and that is, by denying and contradicting our carnal reason. Thirdly, this gives us also an account of that wickedness which is sometimes observable even in persons of great parts, and wits, and natural accomplishments; namely, because they are as yet but carnal. One thing more before I pass this branch; and that is the phrase which is here used for subjection. The word in the Greek signifies such a kind of subjection as is after an orderly manner, as of soldiers in battle to their commander; which, being here denied to the wisdom of the flesh, does intimate thus much to us: that carnality it is an irregular business, and such as is much out of order; from whence it comes not to be so obedient as it should be to the law of God. Where there is nothing but confusion, there cannot be expected subjection, but every evil work. The second is the additional amplification, as it is not, so it cannot be neither. A carnal-minded person, he cannot be subject to the law of God. This is grounded upon those following considerations: First, the blindness which by nature is in man's mind. He that cannot see, cannot practise, because he wants light to direct him. Secondly, the will, that is likewise out of frame; that has a particular perverseness upon it, and is obstinate against that which is good. Thirdly, the affections. They are out of order too in all the kinds of them—love and hatred, and fears and grief, and anger and joy, &c., all out of course. To all these we may add some further considerations besides, as, first of all, custom in sinning. This makes the impotency of doing good to be so much the more, and the impossibility to be so much the greater. Secondly, it cannot likewise from the just judgment of God Himself towards it, while He gives up some persons above the rest to a reprobate mind and to a hard heart, whereby sin is made in some manner and in some sense necessary to them. But if they cannot, why, then, there is no hurt done. This seems to make for their excuse. To this we answer, That this does not excuse, for all that, because it is such an impotency and inability as man hath voluntarily brought upon himself. Now further, secondly, we may take them respectively and argumentatively in the force of their connection; for it is not subject. The Apostle Paul does from hence prove that the carnal mind is an enemy to God, because it keeps not God's law. From whence we may observe thus much: That disobedience to God is a conviction of enmity against Him. The ground whereof is this: because the law of God is that which is most near and dear unto Him. His will is Himself, and His sovereignty is that which He most stands upon of anything else. Secondly, let us hereby also judge and estimate, and take account of ourselves, and see how far we are God's friends, which is not so much by pretences as by obedience. (*Thomas Horton, D.D.*) *The enmity of the human heart against God*:—I. SOME COMMON GROUNDS OF MISTAKE ON THIS SUBJECT. 1. Men may be unconscious of their opposition, and hence infer that it has no existence. Many circumstances may conduce to this unconsciousness. (1) Men generally are without any habitual and strong impression of the reality of the Divine existence; and, therefore, their enmity has little opportunity to exhibit itself. (2) Opposition may also be kept in check by a sense of our own weakness and God's power. But conscious impotence is no indication of a heart friendly to the Most High; for give to the sinner the means of successful opposition, and then his disposition will begin to exert itself, unawed and unrestrained. (3) Mere carelessness may keep the sinner in ignorance of the interior operations of his depravity to the holiness and sovereignty of God. 2. The homage of respect paid by many to religion and its institutions may be alleged as an evidence that they are not enemies to their Maker. But the force of education, the power of conscience, the beneficial influence of Christian institutions, the love of human estimation, the energy of servile fear, are sufficient to account for all the religion of unregenerate men. 3. Nor is the glow of imaginary love to the Divine Being, sometimes felt by unconverted men, any proof that they are not His enemies. They may form erroneous conceptions of His character, contemplating Him as devoid of all those attributes which are terrible to the unholy. The most sordid and malignant beings may conceive of a God to whom their hearts would feel no repugnance. 4. The social sympathies and the decencies of life are regarded by many as proofs of some innate sparks of love to God. The mistake here arises from confounding mere instincts and the refinements of enlightened self-love with

real benevolence, and from overlooking that system of restraints which Divine Providence is pleased to employ as essential to a dispensation of mercy. A sufficient evidence of the radical deficiency of these social virtues is that they often exist in conjunction with manifest indifference or open opposition to any practical acknowledgment of God. Many a polite and even humane man would blush more deeply to be found on his knees in prayer than to be seen at the gaming-table or the race-ground. II. MORE DIRECT PROOFS IN ITS SUPPORT. The native enmity of the human heart against God may be inferred from—1. Its entire selfishness. The popular philosophy maintains that ultimate regard to self is the grand law of our being, and ridicules the notion of disinterested goodness. If it be so, love to God is impossible. For against the Divine requisitions, selfishness arises, exasperated and alarmed. It can love nothing which does not secure the gratifications it covets. In the same proportion as it sees its plans thwarted, itself condemned and exposed to hell, its enmity is roused against God. 2. The erroneous and preposterous views which have been commonly entertained by mankind respecting God's character and government. (1) Look at those destitute of the light of revelation. The religious rites of the great body of mankind have been degrading and impious, as the objects of their religious veneration were impure and cruel. (2) Look at those who sit under the sunshine of the gospel. Do we not observe among nominal Christians a strong tendency to error and practical unbelief? 3. The general conduct of mankind to God. (1) "God is not in all their thoughts." Every trifle can engross the mind; but a place within it can scarcely be found for musings on the adorable attributes of Him by whom it was made. The Scriptures are neglected, or read only as the record of curious facts, and fervent prayer is odious. This general reluctance to spiritual duties is unaccountable, if there be no repugnancy in the human heart to intimate communion with God. (2) Do we not observe everywhere a disregard and resistance of the authority of God? A dislike of the law, in its spirituality and strictness, involves opposition to Him by whom it was given, and of whose moral purity it is a transcript. "The carnal mind is . . . not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Sinners are "enemies to God by wicked works." To please the unholy, He must abandon His sceptre, or rule only for their benefit. (3) How can we account for the treatment which God's messengers have received from an ungodly world, unless there is naturally a strong aversion to pure religion, and consequently enmity against that God from whom it proceeds? Unkindness to an ambassador, who acts simply in accordance with his instructions, is universally accounted an insult to the court from which he derived his commission. (4) How has Christ been treated by sinners? 4. Experience. Every real Christian is ready to charge himself with rebellion. And is this universal consent of such as are most deeply imbued with spiritual Christianity, and have noticed most faithfully the interior actings of their depravity, to be accounted nothing? 5. The Scriptures have settled the question. Deny the native enmity of the heart to God, and its leading doctrines become wholly unintelligible. What will you make of regeneration? Does not reconciliation import a previous state of variance between the parties? Conclusion: This humiliating subject teaches us—1. The importance of those restraints which a wise and benevolent Providence is pleased to employ in the government of mankind. Conceive of all restraints withdrawn from a world like this, full of the enemies of God. No tongue can describe, no fancy can paint, the complicated scenes of guilt and misery which would ensue. 2. The mysterious love of God to our apostate world. (*J. Woodbridge, D.D.*)

Man's enmity against God:—I. IN GENERAL. 1. It is to be understood of nature and not of actions only. Every action of a natural man is an enemy's action, but not an action of enmity. And as waters relish of the mineral vein they run through, so the actions of a wicked man are tinctured with the enmity they spring from. Godly men may do an enemy's action, but they are not in a state of enmity. They may fall into sin as a man into a ditch, but they lie not in it. But a natural man is in a state of universal contrariety. (1) All times. It is called a "root of bitterness," for while it remains a root, it will remain bitter. (2) In every sinful act. Though the interest of particular sins may be contrary to one another, covetousness and prodigality cannot agree, but they are all in league against God. As all virtuous actions partake of the nature of love to God; so all vicious actions are tinctured with inward enmity. (3) Against all the attributes of God. For sin being an opposition to the law of God, is consequently a contrariety to His will, and His understanding, and therefore to all those attributes which flow from His will, as goodness, righteousness, truth; and His understanding, as wisdom, knowledge.

2. This enmity is habitually seated in the mind (Eph. ii. 3; James iii. 15). The mind thus infected is like those eminent persons that spread the contagion of their vices to all their attendants. The other faculties, like common soldiers, fight for the prey and booty; but the mind, the sovereign, fights for the superiority, and orders all the motions of the lower rout. There is—(1) As opposed to desire. Thus man hates God, because he turns from Him. By sin we stand indebted to God, and therefore have an aversion from Him; as debtors hate the sight of their creditors, and are loath to meet them. God's purity is too dazzling for sinful men, and therefore they cannot look upon God, but are like sore eyes that are distempered with the sun. (2) A detestation opposite to love (Col. i. 21). This is—(*a*) Natural, which we call antipathy. Sin being the greatest evil, is naturally most opposite to God, who is the greatest good. So that God can never be reconciled to sin, or sin to God. (*b*) Acquired, which is grounded upon diversity of interests. The interest of a sinner as such consists in gratifying the importunities of his lusts; and the interest of God lies in vindicating the righteousness of His commands. This is either direct (John xv. 24) or implicit. Men love not the things that God loves, and therefore may be said to hate Him. II. IN PARTICULAR—1. Negatively. We hate not God—(1) As God. Which is impossible, because God, absolutely considered, hath all the attractives of love; as a man cannot will sin as sin, because it is purely evil, and therefore cannot be the object of the desire. We never yet met with any so monstrously base as to hate a creature as a creature, or man as man; not a serpent as a creature, but as it is venomous. (2) As Creator and Preserver. Hatred always supposes some injury, or the fear of some; and our hatred doth evaporate when we find our supposed injuries recompensed by benefits. What servant can disdain his master for feeding him? or what child hate his father for begetting and maintaining him? 2. Positively. We hate God—(1) As a Sovereign. Man cannot endure a superior; he would be uncontrollable (Psa. xii. 4; Exod. v. 2). We hate God as a lawgiver, as He prohibits sin (Luke xix. 27). It is impossible that man should do otherwise, because it is as natural to us to abhor those things which are troublesome as to please ourselves in things agreeable. The sea foams most, and casts up most mire, when restrained by some rock, or bounded by the shore. (2) As a Judge. Fear is often the cause of hatred. All men have a fear of God, not of offending Him, but of being punished by Him. Corruption kindles this enmity, but fear, like a bellows, inflames it. This hatred of God is stronger or weaker, according as the fear is, and therefore in hell it is in its meridian and maturity. (3) In His very being. When this fear rises high, or men are under a sense of punishment. All men are actuated by a principle of self-preservation, and when men look upon God as a punisher of their crimes, if they could, by the undeifying of God, rescue themselves from those fears, there is self-love and enmity enough against God in them to quicken them to it. Did none of you ever please yourselves in the thoughts how happy you should be, how free in your lustful pleasures, if there were no God? Now all hatred includes a virtual murder. If he who hates his brother is a murderer, he that hates God is a murderer of God. Man would have God at the greatest distance from him, and there is no greater distance from being than not being (Job xxi. 14; Psa. xiv. 1). (*S. Charnock, B.D.*) *Man's enmity against God as a Sovereign is seen in*:—I. THE BREACH OF GOD'S LAWS. If obedience be a sign of love, disobedience is an argument of hatred (John xv. 14). Then in the breach of it all those attributes are despised. This enmity appears in—1. Unwillingness to know the law of God. Men hate the light, which would both discover their spots and direct their course (Zech. vii. 11; Rom. iii. 10; Isa. xxviii. 12, xxx. 10, 11). And when any motion of the Spirit thrusts itself in to enlighten them, they "exalt themselves against the knowledge of God" (2 Cor. x. 5) and resist the Holy Ghost. Men are more fond of the knowledge of anything than of God's will. 2. Unwillingness to be determined by any law of God. When men cannot escape the convincing knowledge of the law, they set up their carnal resolutions against it (Jer. xliv. 15; Mal. iii. 13; Psa. lxxviii. 10). Men naturally affect an unbounded liberty, and would not be hedged in by any law (Jer. ii. 24). Hence man is said to make void the law of God (Psa. cxix. 126; Matt. xv. 6). 3. The violence man offers to those laws which God doth most strictly enjoin, and which He doth most delight in the performance of. The more spiritual the law, the more averse the heart (chap. vii. 8, 14). Men will grant God the lip and the ear, but deny Him that which He most calls for, viz., the heart. 4. Hatred to conscience, when it puts a man in mind of God's law. This is evidenced by our stifling it when it dictates any practical conclusions from the law.

Now, since men hate their own consciences it is clear that they hate God Himself, because conscience is God's officer in them. 5. Setting up another law in him in opposition to the law of God (chap. vii. 23). This men do when they plead for sins as venial, and below God to notice. 6. In being at greater pains and charge to break God's law than is necessary to keep it. How will men rack their heads to study mischief, wear out their time and strength in contrivances to satisfy some base lust, which leaves behind it but a momentary pleasure, attended at length with inconceivable horror, and cast off that yoke which is easy and that burden which is light, in the keeping whereof there is great reward. 7. In doing that which is just and righteous upon any other consideration rather than of obedience to God's will, *i.e.*, when men will obey Him only so far as may comport with their own ends. 8. In being more observant of the laws of men. The fear of man is a more powerful curb to retain men in their duty than the fear of God. What a contempt of God is this; it is to tell God I will break the Sabbath, swear, revile, revel, were it not for the curb of national laws, for all Thy precepts to the contrary. 9. In man's unwillingness to have God's laws observed by any. Man would not have God have a loyal subject in the world. What is the reason else of the persecution of those who would be the strictest observers of God's injunctions? 10. In the pleasure we take to see His laws broken by others (chap. i. 32). II. IN SETTING UP OTHER SOVEREIGNS IN THE STEAD OF GOD. If we did dethrone God to set up an angel, or some virtuous man, it would be a lighter affront; but to place the basest and filthiest thing in His throne is intolerable. 1. Idols. 2. Self. This is properly the old Adam, the true offspring of the first corrupted man. This is the greatest antichrist, the great antigod in us, which sits in the heart, the temple of God, and would be adored as God; would be the chiefest as the highest end (2 Tim. iii. 2). Sin and self are all one; what is called a living in sin in one place (chap. vi. 2) to self in another (2 Cor. v. 15). 3. The world. When we place this in our heart, God's proper seat and chair, we deprive God of His propriety, and do Him the greatest wrong (Col. iii. 5). The poor Indians made a very natural and rational consequence, that gold was the Spaniards' god, because they hunted so greedily after it. 4. Sensual pleasures (2 Tim. iii. 4). A glutton's belly is said to be his god, because his projects and affections are devoted to the satisfaction of that, and he lays in not for the service of God. 5. Satan. Every sin is an election of the devil to be our lord. As the Spirit dwells in a godly man to guide him, so doth the devil in a natural man, to direct him to evil (Eph. ii. 2, 3). What a monstrous baseness is this, to advance an impure spirit in the place of infinite purity; to effect that destroyer above our preserver and benefactor. III. IN USURPING GOD'S PREROGATIVE, AND EXACTING THOSE OBSERVANCES WHICH BELONG TO GOD. 1. In challenging titles and acts of worship due only to God. 2. In lording over the consciences and reasons of others. Whence else springs the restless desire in some men, to model all consciences according to their own wills and their anger. 3. In prescribing rules of worship which ought only to be appointed by God. 4. In subjecting the truth of God to the trial of reason. 5. In judging future events, as if we had been of God's privy council when He first undertook any great action in the world. 6. In censuring others' state (Luke xii. 14). (*Ibid.*) *Man's enmity against the attributes of God.* Against—I. THE HOLINESS OF GOD. 1. In sinning under a pretence of religion. Many resolve upon some ways of wickedness, and then rake the Scripture to find out at least excuses for, if not a justification of their crimes. Many that have wrung estates from the tears of widows and heart-blood of orphans, think to wipe off all their oppression by some charitable legacies at their death. It is abominable when men sin for God's glory. 2. In charging sin upon God. 3. In prescribing rules of worship, which ought only to be appointed by God (Gen. iii. 12, iv. 9; 2 Sam. xi. 35). If we find a way to lay our sins at God's door, we think then to escape His justice. But it is a foolish consideration; for if we can fancy an unholy God, we have no reason to think Him a righteous God. 3. In hating the image of God's holiness in others. He that hates the picture of a prince hates the prince also. He that hates the stream hates the fountain; he that hates the beams hates the sun. 4. In having debasing notions of the holy nature of God. God made man according to His own image, and we make God according to ours. It is a question which idolatry is the greatest, to worship an image of wood or stone, or to entertain monstrous imaginations of God. It provokes a man when we liken him to a dog or a toad. 5. In our unworthy and perfunctory addresses to God. God is so holy, that were our services as refined and pure as those of the angels, yet we could

not serve Him suitably to His holy nature (Joshua xxiv. 19); therefore we deny this holiness when we come before Him without due preparation. 6. In defacing the image of God in our own souls (Eph. iv. 24). II. THE WISDOM OF GOD. 1. In slighting the laws of God. Since God hath no defect in His understanding, His will must be the best and wisest; therefore they that make alteration in His precepts practically charge Him with folly. 2. In defacing the wise workmanship of God. The soul, the image of God, is ruined and broken by sin. If a man had a curious clock which had cost him many years' pain and the strength of his skill to frame, for a man to break it would argue a contempt of the workman's skill. 3. Censuring His ways (Isa. xlv. 9; Job xl. 2). A reproof argues a superiority in authority, knowledge, or goodness. 4. Prescribing rules and methods to God (Jonah iv. 1; Luke ii. 48). III. THE SUFFICIENCY OF GOD. 1. In secret thoughts of meriting by any religious act. As though God could be indebted to us, and obliged by us. In our prosperity we are apt to have secret thoughts that our enjoyments were the debts God owed us, rather than gifts freely bestowed upon us. Hence it is that men are more unwilling to part with their righteousness than with their sins, and are apt to challenge salvation as a due, rather than beg it as an act of grace. 2. Trying all ways of helping ourselves before we come to God. Having hopes to find that in creatures which is only to be found in an all-sufficient God. 3. In our apostasies from God. When, after fair pretences and devout applications, we grow cold and thrust Him from us, it implies that God hath not that fulness in Him which we expected. 4. In joining something with God to make up our happiness. Though men are willing to have the enjoyment of God, yet they are not content with Him alone, but would have something else to eke Him out; as though God had not in Himself a sufficient blessedness for His creatures, without the additions of anything else. The young man in the gospel went away sorrowful because he could not enjoy God and the world both together (Matt. xix, 21, 22). If we would light up candles in a clear day, what do we imply but that the sun has not light enough in itself to make it day! IV. THE OMNISCIENCE OF GOD. 1. When we commit sin upon the ground of secrecy. 2. When men give liberty to inward sins. God "trieth the heart, and searcheth the reins." Manasseh is blamed for setting up strange altars in the house of God; much more may we for setting up strange imaginations in the heart, which should belong to God. Hypocrisy is a plain denial of His omniscience. Are we not more slight in the performance of private devotions before God than we are in our attendances in public in the sight of men. 3. When men give way to diversions in a duty. It wrongs the majesty of God's presence that when He speaks to us we will not give Him so much respect as to regard Him; and when we speak to Him we do not regard ourselves. What a vain thing is it to be speaking to a scullion when the king is in presence! Every careless diversion to a vain object is a denial of God's presence in the place. V. THE MERCY OF GOD. 1. In the severe and jealous thoughts men have of God. Men are apt to charge God with tyranny, whereby they strip Him of the riches of His glorious mercy. The worship of many men is founded upon this conceit, whereby they are frighted into some actions of adoration, not sweetly drawn. We hate what we fear. 2. Slighting His mercy and robbing Him of the end of it. The wilful breaking of the prince's laws, upon the observance whereof great rewards are promised, is not only a despising his sovereignty, but a slighting his goodness. Often this enmity rises higher; and whereas men should fear him, they rather presume to sin (chap. ii. 4; Eccles. viii. 11). VI. THE JUSTICE OF GOD. 1. In not fearing it, but running under the lash of it. 2. In sinning under the strokes of justice. Men will roar under the stroke, but not submit to the striker. 3. In hoping easily to evade it (Psa. l. 21; Psa. x. 11). (*Ibid.*) *Hatred to God manifested*:—"After all, I do not hate God. No, sir; you will not make me believe that. I am a sinner, I know, and do many wicked things; but, after all, I have a good heart—I don't hate God." Such was the language of a prosperous worldling. He was sincere, but sadly deceived. A few months afterwards that God who had given him so many good things crossed his path in an unexpected manner. A fearful freshet swept down the valley and threatened destruction to this man's large flour-mill. A crowd was watching it, in momentary expectation of seeing it fall; while the owner, standing in the midst of them, was cursing God to His face, and pouring out the most horrid oaths. He no longer doubted that he hated God. But nothing in that hour of trial came out of his mouth which was not previously in his heart. A *traitor suspected and convicted*:—I. TO DISCOVER THIS ENMITY. The carnally minded man is enmity

against God—1. As a servant. 2. As a subject. II. DEPLORE THIS ENMITY. 1. What an injustice it is! 2. What an infamy it is! 3. What an injury is this to yourself! III. SEEK DELIVERANCE FROM IT. 1. It can never be done but by the Holy Ghost. 2. It can only be done by deliverance from the great guilt of not having loved God. Nothing but the love of Jesus can soften your heart and do away with its enmity. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Ver. 8. **So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.**—*Pleasing God:*—Men's happiness is to please them upon whom they depend, and upon whose favour their wellbeing hangs. It is the servant's happiness to please his master, the courtier's to please his prince. Now certainly all creatures depend upon the Creator, "for in Him we live, and move, and have our being." Then of all things it concerns us most how to please Him, and if we do so we shall assuredly be happy, and it will not matter whom else we displease (Psa. xxxi. 19; xxxvi. 7). But, on the other hand, how incomparable is the misery of them who cannot please God, even though they did both please themselves and all others for the present! Now, if you ask who they are that are such, the words speak it: "They that are in the flesh," not they in whom there is flesh, for there are remnants of that in the most spiritual man in this life. The ground of this is chiefly twofold. I. BECAUSE THEY ARE NOT IN JESUS CHRIST, IN WHOM HIS SOUL IS WELL PLEASED (Matt. iii. 17; xvii. 5). Whoever are not in Jesus Christ certainly cannot please God, do what they can, because God hath made Christ the centre, in which He would have the good pleasure of sinners meeting with His good pleasure; and therefore "without faith it is impossible to please God," not so much for the excellency of the act itself as for the well-pleasing object of it, Christ. God's love is well pleased with the excellency of His person, and His justice with the sufficiency and worthiness of His ransom, and without this compass there is neither satisfaction to the one nor to the other. Therefore, if you would please God, be pleased with Christ, and you cannot do Him a greater pleasure than believe in Him (John v. xxiii.). II. SUCH AS ARE IN THE FLESH CANNOT FRAME THEIR SPIRITS, AFFECTIONS, AND WAYS TO GOD'S GOOD PLEASURE, for their very mind is enmity to God, and cannot be subject to His law (Jer. ii. 34). 1. It is not the business you have undertaken to please God, but to please yourselves, or to please men. The very beginning of pleasing God is when a soul falls in displeasure at itself and abhorrence of himself (Isa. lxvi. 2; Psa. li. 17). God never begins to be pleasant to a soul till it begins to fall out of love with itself. Therefore you may conclude this of yourselves, that with many of you God is not well pleased, though you have all Church privileges (1 Cor. x. 2-5), not only because these works of the flesh that are directly opposite to His own known will, such as fornication, murmuring, &c., abound among you, but even those of you that may be free from gross opposition to His holy will, your nature hath the seed of all that enmity, and you act enmity in a more covered way. Certainly, though now you please yourselves, yet the day shall come that you shall be contrary to yourselves, and all to you (1 Thess. ii. 15), and there are some earnests of it in this life. Many wicked persons are set contrary to themselves, and all to them; they are like Esau, their hand against all, and all hands against them; yea, their own consciences continually vexing them; this is a fruit of that enmity between man and God, and if you find it now, you shall find it hereafter. 2. But as for you that are in Jesus Christ, who, being displeased with yourselves, have fled into the well-beloved, in whom the Father is well pleased, to escape God's displeasure, I say unto such, your persons God is well pleased with in Christ, and this shall make way and place for acceptance to your weak and imperfect performances. But I would charge that upon you, that as you by believing are well pleased with Christ, so you would henceforth study to walk worthy of your Lord into all well pleasing (Col. i. 10). If you love Him, you cannot but fashion yourselves so as He may be pleased. (*Hugh Binning.*) *Pleasing God:*—I. THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF A CARNAL MIND PLEASING GOD. This springs from the necessity of the case. 1. As dwelling in a nature, every faculty of which is in hostility to His government and being, it is impossible that it can please Him. 2. There being no personal acceptance of those who are in the flesh, whatever they do cannot be accepted of God. First the person, and then the gift, is God's order (*cf.* Queen Esther's interview with Ahasuerus and Jacob's meeting with Esau). How can you do that which is well pleasing to a holy God while your person is to Him an object of just abhorrence? 3. The absence of faith in the unregenerate must render all the religious doings of the sinner displeasing. "For without faith it is impossible to please

Him." How can he please God whose whole existence is a direct denial of God? "He that believeth not hath made God a liar!" Your unbelief is a practical denial of His existence. And, in your non-subjection to His law, you exclude Him from the government of His own world. 4. And what is the entire absence of love to God but another confirmation of the same truth? The great constraining motive of the sacrifice with which God is pleased is love, and "love is the fulfilling of the law." II. THE CHARACTER OF THOSE WITH WHOM GOD IS PLEASED. They are—1. A spiritual people, and God, who is a Spirit, must delight in that which harmonises with His own nature. 2. They are an accepted people, and therefore their persons are pleasing to Him. The delight of the Father in Christ reveals the secret of His delight in us. "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." 3. But it is a universal pleasing of God which the Scriptures prescribe and enforce (Col. i. 10; 1 Thess. ii. 2; 1 John iii. 22). 4. But what are some of the footprints of this walk? (1) Unreserved obedience. (2) Walking by faith. As unbelief is most dishonouring, so faith is most honouring to the Lord Jesus. (*O. Winslow, D.D.*) *They that are in the flesh cannot please God*:—The designation of the persons that is in these words—"They that are in the flesh." The discovery of their condition in these cannot please God. We begin with the first. The designation of the persons, those that are in the flesh. Now to be in the flesh, according to the language of Scripture, is taken two manner of ways, either in a good or in an indifferent sense, or a bad and unwarrantable sense. First, to be so in a good or in an indifferent sense, and so to be in the flesh is no more than to partake of human nature. Thus, "The life which I now live in the flesh" (Gal. ii. 20). But, secondly, there is also being in the flesh in a bad and corrupt sense, by taking flesh metonymically for sin, as it is oftentimes taken in Scripture. The second is the predicate, in the discovery of the condition belonging to such persons, and that is, that they cannot please God, viz., whilst they so remain and continue. This may be taken by us two ways, either as denoting the state or the life, the condition or the conversation. First, take it in the first sense, "They that are in the flesh cannot please God"—that is, such persons as are yet remaining in a state of nature and unregeneracy; these are loathsome and displeasing to God. Now it remains that we should show what is here declared of such persons, that they cannot please God. First, take it for their persons. They are unpleasing to Him in reference to them (Psa. liv. 5, vii. 11; Hab. i. 13). There is no leprous or contagious person that is more displeasing in the eyes of man than a carnal and unregenerate person is displeasing to the eyes of God. The ground of this unpleasingness may be thus far accounted to us: first, because they are out of Christ, who is the primarily Beloved (Eph. i. 6; Matt. iii. 17). In Him as the termination of His well pleasing, and in Him also as the conveyance; in Him for Himself, and in all others for His sake. All men are so far well pleasing to God as they are in Christ. Now carnal persons are not incorporated into Christ, therefore they cannot he well pleasing to God in such a condition. They are in themselves and in their own nature unlovely. Secondly, unregenerate persons cannot please God, because they want faith. Thirdly, they are altogether unlike God, and so cannot be pleasing to Him in that respect likewise. We know that liking is founded in likeness, and complacency in correspondency. Fourthly, we need go no further for the proof of this point than the text itself, if we look upon it in the coherence of it, and how these carnal persons are therein described as are after the flesh, as do mind the things of the flesh, are in a state of death, in a state of enmity, in a state of impotency, and inability of subjection to the law of God. How is it then possible that such as these should be pleasing to God? The second is in reference to their actions. They cannot please Him so neither. The actions of carnal men are unpleasing to God considered in themselves, because they proceed not from a right principle in them, nor are directed to a right end by them. Sweetness of nature, and ingenuity, and moral accomplishments are very commendable in themselves, and do make men acceptable in their converse one with another, but yet they are not sufficient alone to make men acceptable in the eyes of God. Men are sensible sometimes of their actual sins, and have cause so to be—of their murders, and adulteries, and drunkenness, and thefts, and such courses as these, which now and then do a little astonish them and work some kind of horror in them. But what may they then think of the sin of their nature, which is the occasion of all these to them? For a man to be of a sickly constitution is more than to have a particular distemper or fit of sickness upon him. For this purpose, and to aggravate this so much the more unto us, consider these things further. First, that this corrupt nature, where it remains unchanged in any

person, it does expose him to all kind of sin, considered at large, of what nature or kind soever. There is no sin which a man is secure of who is still remaining in his unregenerate condition, but he is not only capable of it, but inclinable to it. Secondly, where men are yet in the flesh and unchanged in their nature, they are exposed to the return of sin again, after some temporary forbearance of it and abstinence from it. There is nothing which is a principle of mortification but only sanctifying and saving grace. Thirdly, this state of nature does make men to commit sin with more delight and eagerness of prosecution. Those that are in their natural condition, they are in a sad and miserable condition. And they are so especially upon this account which is here expressed in the text, because they cannot please God, which carries a great deal more in it than we are presently sensible of, or do easily apprehend. They do not or cannot please God; their case is very terrible and dangerous. Thus it is, and will appear to be so according to sundry explications. First, as it is an obstruction to prayer and the receiving of that. "We know that God hears not sinners," said the blind man in the gospel (John ix. 31), and "he that regards iniquity in his heart, the Lord will not hear his prayer" (Psa. lxvi. 18). Secondly, it deprives men of blessings and the comfortable influences of God's providence. God will curse his very blessings and turn his comforts into the greatest crosses unto him; as we see it was with the Israelites, when God was offended and displeased with them: He gave them quails and manna in wrath. Thirdly, it exposes to temptations and the assaults of the spiritual enemy. "Whoso pleaseth God shall be kept from many snares," But he that does not so, he shall be given up to them. Lastly, it excludes from heaven and eternal happiness and salvation at last. (*Thomas Horton, D.D.*) *Men in the flesh cannot please God*:—The phrase notes a man drowned in corruption. We say of a man overcome of anger: he is in heat; of a drunkard: he is in beer or wine. So Simon Magus is said to be in the gall of bitterness. They cannot please God. Nor their persons, nor their thoughts, words, or actions, till they be renewed. Snow can never be made hot while it is snow. Fire will dissolve it into water; then it may be made hot. So the carnal man in that estate cannot please God, but change him into a sanctified estate, and then he can. A man may be prudent, learned, liberal, do many beautiful things in nature, and yet not please God. An evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit. Velvet is good matter to make a garment, yet it may be so marred in the cutting that it shall never obtain the name of a good garment. Pieces of timber are good matter for a house, but they must be artificially framed. An unregenerate man gives alms, and in giving sins: not because he gives, but because he gives not in the manner he should. (*Elnathan Parr, B.A.*) *Men in their natural state cannot please God*:—To please God is of infinite importance. Since He is omniscient and omnipresent, we cannot escape His observation: since He is Almighty, He has our life, and all things belonging to us, continually at His disposal, can make us happy or miserable in a thousand different ways. He is, therefore, the most dreadful enemy or the most beneficial friend we can have. Of what infinite consequence, then, to be in His favour. I. WHAT IS MEANT BY BEING "IN THE FLESH." This expression is often used to signify being in the body (Phil. i. 22, 24; 1 Tim. iii. 16; 1 Pet. iv. 1, 2, 6; 1 John iv. 2, 3); but this is not its meaning here, for many in the body have pleased God. Nor is the living merely in sensuality and the sins of the flesh referred to (Gal. v. 16-21), though undoubtedly such cannot please God. But what is intended is the being in our natural state (Gen. vi. 3 compared with viii. 21; Eph. ii. 3). This implies—1. The being unpardoned, or in a state of condemnation in consequence of not being "in Christ" (chap. vii. 4-6; viii. 1). 2. Unregenerated (John iii. 6). 3. Under the power of our animal and corrupt nature, the "law in our members" leading us captive to sin. 4. "Carnally minded"; minding the body rather than the soul; visible and temporal things rather than invisible and eternal; preferring nature to grace, and the creature to the Creator; being governed by carnal maxims; actuated by carnal views; influenced by carnal desires; engaged in carnal pursuits. II. IN WHAT SENSE SUCH "CANNOT PLEASE GOD," AND HOW THIS APPEARS TO BE A FACT. 1. While thus in the flesh, such persons are not in God's favour. (1) They are not humbled and penitent, without which none can be accepted (Isa. lvii. 15; lxvi. 2; 1 Pet. v. 5, 6; James iv. 10). (2) They are not believers; and without faith there is no justification, nor can we please God (Heb. xi. 4-6; John iii. 36; chap. iv. 23-25; v. 1; 2 Cor. xiii. 5). (3) Their carnal mind is not subject to His law. Nay, is enmity against Him. That we should be spiritually minded is for our good; but the carnal mind opposes this good, and "to be carnally minded is

death." 2. Hence it follows that their services are not accepted of God, and that their ways do not please Him. Not being justified, they have not love to God (chap. v. 5), and without love no service is, or can be, pleasing to God. 3. But perhaps it will be objected—(1) "Cannot they pray, hear the Word?" &c. Yes; but not "worship God in spirit and truth," which, while destitute of the Spirit, they cannot do, and not doing, they are incapable of pleasing Him: they do not mix faith with the word that is heard, "receive the truth in love," and obey it from the heart. (2) But "cannot they preserve an unblamable conduct, give alms," &c.? Certainly; but this does not please God, as not being done from a right principle, "faith working by love": to a right end, the glory of God; in a right spirit, humility, purity, benevolence, zeal, &c.; and by a right rule, the will of God, and out of conscience toward Him (Gal. v. 6; 1 Cor. x. 31; Col. iii. 17). III. THE SURE MARK WHEREBY WE MAY KNOW WHETHER WE ARE IN THIS STATE (ver. 9). 1. By receiving the Spirit we pass from a carnal to a spiritual state (John iii. 6). 2. By the Spirit dwelling in us we continue in that state (text; Gal. v. 16–25). Hereby we know that we are in the Spirit (1 John iii. 24). 3. But we must receive and keep this Spirit as a Spirit of—(1) Adoption (vers. 15–16; Gal. iv. 4); (2) Regeneration (Tit. iii. 5; John iii. 4–5); productive of its proper fruits. (*J. Benson.*) *Man's well-being: its condition and obstruction:*—I. The CONDITION of man's well-being. To "please God," which implies—1. That God is a pleasable Being. The Eternal is neither callous nor morose. 2. It is possible for man to please Him. It is wonderful that any creature, however high, should be able to please a Being so infinitely happy in Himself; but it is more wonderful that insignificant, fallen man should have this power. 3. How can man please God? Not by singing eulogistic hymns, or offering complimentary prayers, or observing ceremonial ordinances. "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto Me?" How then? (1) By loving supremely what He loves most. We are pleased with those who love the objects most dear to our hearts. (2) By devotion to those objects which interest Him most. 4. In the pleasing of Him is man's well-being. (1) Is man's happiness in a peaceful conscience? Then the conscience must have a sense of God's approval. The fear of His displeasure terrifies it, the assurance of His approval is its heaven. (2) Is man's happiness in gratified love? The loving heart is in anguish until it hears the "well done" of the loved one. (3) Is man's happiness in full development of his active powers? Then where can these powers have such stimulus and scope as it endeavours to please the Infinite? II. The OBSTRUCTION to man's well-being. Being "in the flesh." What is meant by this? Not merely existing in the flesh: thus we all exist; but having the flesh for our master instead of our menial. The man who thus dwells in the flesh gets—1. Fleshly views of the universe. All above, around, beneath him is materialism. His eyes are too gross to discern the spiritual significance of things; his ear too heavy to catch the spiritual melodies of the world. 2. Truth. "He judges after the flesh." If he has a theology, it is a sensuous thing. 3. Greatness. He has no idea of greatness apart from splendid costumes, magnificent dwellings, and brilliant equipages. 4. Happiness. He associates happiness with whatever pleases the tastes, charms the senses, satisfies the appetites, and gratifies the lusts. 5. God. He makes God such an one as himself, and gives Him human thoughts and passions. Now the soul in such a state has lost the desire and the power to please God. But the gospel comes to enfranchise the soul from the flesh and to restore to it its absolute sovereignty over the body. This deliverance is a new birth. "He that is born of the flesh is flesh," &c. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*)

Ver. 9. **But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit.**—*We are not in the flesh, but alas! the flesh is still in us:*—"A boat has been sailing on the salt ocean, it has come through many a storm, and, half full of briny water, it is now sailing on the fresh water of the river. It is no longer in the salt water, but the salt water is in it. The Christian has got off the Adam-sea for ever. He is in the Christ-sea for ever. Adam is still in him, which he is to mortify and throw out, but he is not in Adam." First, take it simply in itself, "ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit"; where we have signified to us the state and condition of the children of God and the opinion which St. Paul has of them; and that is, not to be "carnal, but spiritual." That is, they are not wholly swayed by their own corruption, but by the Spirit of God in them. This is so far considerable of us as it teaches how to judge both of ourselves and other men. First, for ourselves. It is a point which may be very well improved by the children of God under temptation, when as Satan,

joining with their own misgiving hearts, would go about to persuade them that they have no grace at all in them, because they have it in them mingled with some corruption. They should not hearken or give heed to such suggestions as these are. Again, secondly. This also teaches us how we should look upon other men who are the saints and servants of God, in the midst of those weaknesses and infirmities which they are sometimes compassed withal. There are many malicious persons in the world who, if at any time they do by chance espy anything which is amiss in God's children, they can commonly see nothing else. If they see some flesh in them, they can see nothing of the spirit; and they are apt both to account of them and to call them according to that which is worst in them. Now secondly. We may also look upon it reflexively, as coming from the apostle. He gives this testimony of these believing Romans to whom he wrote for their particular, that they were spiritual. And here two things more. First, his knowledge of their state and condition in grace for the thing itself. While he sees it, he does intimate that he knows it, and discerns it, and takes notice of it, to be so indeed with them, that they were such as were in the state of grace. Now here it may be demanded, How he came to do so? To this we answer: Divers manner of ways. First, by the judgment of charity. Secondly, by a special spirit of discerning which was vouchsafed unto him. Thirdly, the apostle speaks not here to the Romans at large, but only to the believers amongst them: "To all that be at Rome, beloved of God and saints," as it is Rom. i. 7. Now farther, secondly, he signifies this his knowledge and apprehension of them. Why does he so? For two reasons. First, I say, hereby to testify the good opinion which himself had of them. He had in the verse before declared the sad estate of carnal persons. Now, lest they should think that he had mentioned this in reference to them, he now adds this unto it by way of exception. Secondly. For their further encouragement and progress in goodness. It is a good incentive to any to be better when they are commended for what already they are. The second is the proof or argument for the confirmation of it, in these, "If so be the spirit of God dwelleth in you." First, take it absolutely in itself: "The Spirit of God dwells in you." This is spoken not only of the Romans, as belonging to them alone, but as common to all believers, who have likewise a share in it. When it is said both here and in other places, "That the Spirit of God dwells in the children of God" there are three things which are implied in this expression. First, I say, here is implied presence. He dwells in them—that is, He is in them. There is a special and peculiar presence which the Spirit of God doth take up in the children of God. Secondly, when it is said that the Spirit of God dwells in us; hereby is signified not only His presence, but His activity and operation. And this does express itself in sundry performances of His towards us. First, of instructing and teaching us. Secondly, as the Spirit of God dwells in us to teach us what is to be done, so to provoke and stir us up to the doing of it upon all occasions. Thirdly, He dwells in us also to restrain, and mortify, and subdue sin in us. Fourthly, He dwells in us so as to improve and to set home upon us all the ordinances and means of grace. Fifthly, in a way of comfort and special consolation, while he evidences to us our state and condition in grace, and gives us hope of future salvation, which is that which He likewise does for us. Sixthly and lastly, He dwells in us so as to repair us, and to reform us there where we are amiss, and have any decays of grace and goodness in us. The Spirit of God is a good landlord and inhabitant in that soul in which He dwells, who will not suffer it to run to ruin. The consideration of this point, thus explained, may be thus far useful to us—First, as it teaches us accordingly to suffer Him to dwell largely in us, we should give up ourselves to Him, as rooms and lodgings to Him. Secondly, it should teach us to give all respect that may be to Him. Take heed of grieving Him, of resisting Him, of vexing Him, of despising Him, and the like. Thirdly, we should from hence give all respect to the saints and servants of God, upon this consideration amongst the rest. Is it so indeed that the Spirit of God dwells in His children? Then let us take heed of wronging or injuring any such persons as these are, either by word or deed. And that is the second thing implied here in dwelling, to wit, activity and operation. The third and last is abode and continuance. Dwelling it is an act of daily and constant residence. And this is further observable in the Spirit of God in reference to His children. He is in them, not only as in an inn, but as in a mansion house; nor as a lodger only, but as an inhabitant who is resolved not to remove from them (John xiv. 16). This is so upon these grounds. First, the unchangeableness of His nature. Secondly, the love of God towards His children. Thirdly, the power of God. This is conducing here-

unto likewise. There is none who is able to dispossess Him or turn Him out. Now further, secondly, we may look upon it argumentatively, and in connection with the words immediately preceding, "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit; because the Spirit of God dwelleth in you." So that the Spirit's inhabitation, it is an argument and proof of regeneration. (*Thomas Horton, D.D.*) **If so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.**—*The Spirit of God:*—There used in old times to be a controversy respecting the divinity of the Spirit of God. But this has died out. It is, in fact, a question almost without meaning. We might as well deny the humanity of man, or the divinity of God. But more. As the spirit of man is the inmost essence of man, so the Spirit of God is the inmost essence of God—the holy of holies in the Divine nature. There are only two definitions of the Divine essence in the New Testament, and both agree with this—"God is a Spirit," "God is love." I. MANY DIFFICULTIES ARE REMOVED BY DEALING WITH THIS SPIRITUAL ASPECT OF THE DIVINE NATURE. As when, for instance, we ask, "What is man?" The answer is—not his body, but his spirit, his inward affections; as further, when we ask what it is that distinguishes man from the brute? we still answer—his inward affections. So also, when we ask, what God is? whilst we know there is much which we cannot answer, yet when we think of Him as a Spirit, it is then that we can best understand Him. No man hath seen God at any time, but there is a true likeness of God in Christ, because Christ is one with God, through the Spirit of goodness and wisdom. And with that same Spirit bearing witness with our spirits, we also may be, in our humble measure, one both with the Father and with the Son. II. THIS PLACES IN THEIR PROPER LIGHT ALL THOSE WORDS AND PHRASES WHICH ARE USED TO DESCRIBE THE DIVINE NATURE. In proportion as they describe the Divine Being under the form of goodness, truth, and wisdom, as the breath which is the animating life of our souls and of religion, in that proportion they describe Him as He is. In proportion as they describe Him under the form of impressions taken from nature or man, in that proportion they are but parables and figures. Rock, fortress, shield, champion, shepherd, husband, king, and the great name of Father, these are all admirable words, so far as they express the spiritual relations of the Almighty towards us, but they would mislead if they were taken in gross, literal sense. And so, much more it is true of the anthropomorphic expressions, such as fear, jealousy, anger; or the metaphysical expressions, each of which taken separately would lead us away from the spiritual, which is the essential nature of God. III. THIS SAME ASPECT OF THE DIVINE NATURE TELLS US HOW IT IS THAT GOD WILLS THAT THE WORLD SHOULD BE BROUGHT TO HIM, NOT BY COMPULSION, BUT BY THE WILLING ASSENT OF THE SPIRIT OF MAN FINDING ITS COMMUNION WITH THE SPIRIT OF GOD. The world must be converted to Christ by the internal evidence of the spirit of Christianity. IV. IT IS THIS WHICH MAKES THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE VARIOUS OFFENCES AGAINST DIVINE THINGS. Whatever mistakes a man may make concerning the outward form in which the Divine truth is manifested shall be forgiven, even though he blaspheme the Son of Man Himself. For every earthly manifestation must be liable to misunderstanding, and therefore blasphemy against the Son of Man is not against the holy and loving Jesus, but against some false conceptions we have formed of Him in our own minds. For such blasphemies the Son of Man has assured. He has Himself asked the Father to "forgive them, for they know not what they do." But if there be any one who hates goodness because it is goodness, who closes his heart against purity and holiness, because they are pure and holy, such an one has blasphemed not the mere outward form, but the essence of God Himself. For this sin against the Holy Ghost there is no forgiveness. V. IT IS THE ETERNAL SPIRIT OF GOODNESS AND TRUTH WHICH MUST WRITE HIS COMMANDS ON OUR HEARTS. The letter killeth, it is the Spirit that gives life. Signs and ordinances of religion derive all their force from the directness with which they are addressed by the Spirit of God to our intelligence, conscience, and affections. VI. THUS THE SPIRIT IS THE LIFE, THE LIBERTY, AND THE ENERGY OF THE WHOLE HUMAN KIND, of each successive age and each individual soul. VII. IT IS THIS ELEMENT WHICH FORMS THE CONNECTING THREAD OF THOSE ARTICLES AT THE CLOSE OF THE APOSTLES' CREED. 1. The "holy universal Church." The old heathen religions did not tend to raise the thoughts of men to holiness, and therefore they were not holy. The old Jewish religions was confined to a single nation, and therefore it was not truly spiritual. The Christian Church is intended to make men good, and therefore it is holy and the work of a holy God. It is universal, and therefore is the work of a universal Spirit. 2. "The communion of saints." The fellowship and friendship which good men of the most diverse opinions and

characters have or ought to have for one another, is the most powerful means whereby the Spirit of God works, and gives the most decisive proof of the existence of a Holy Spirit. 3. "The forgiveness of sins" is realised by the witness of the Spirit. 4. "The resurrection of the body" is directly attributed to this same Spirit (ver. 11). 5. "The life everlasting" is the undying vitality of those affections and graces which are part of the essence of the Holy Spirit of God. These have their immortality from the same source as the eternal existence of God Himself. (*Dean Stanley.*) *The indwelling Spirit*:—God the Son has graciously vouchsafed to reveal the Father to His creatures from without; God the Holy Ghost, by inward communications. The condescension of the blessed Spirit is as incomprehensible as that of the Son. He has ever been the secret Presence of God within the creation: a source of life amid the chaos, bringing out into form and order what was at first shapeless and void, and the voice of truth in the hearts of all rational beings, tuning them into harmony with the intimations of God's law, which were externally made to them. The Holy Spirit has from the beginning pleaded with man (Gen. vi. 3). Again, when God took to Him a peculiar people, the Holy Spirit was pleased to be especially present with them (Neh. ix. 20; Isa. lxiii. 10). Further, He manifested Himself as the source of various gifts, intellectual and extraordinary, in the prophets and others (Exod. xxxi. 3, 4; Numb. xi. 17–25). These were great mercies; yet are as nothing compared with that surpassing grace with which we Christians are honoured; that great privilege of receiving into our hearts, not the mere gifts of the Spirit, but His very presence, Himself by a real not a figurative indwelling. When our Lord entered upon His ministry, He acted as though He were a mere man, needing grace, and received the consecration of the Holy Spirit for our sakes. He became the Christ, or Anointed, that the Spirit might be seen to come from God, and to pass from Him to us. And therefore the heavenly gift is called the Spirit of Christ, that we might clearly understand that He comes to us from and instead of Christ (Gal. iv. 6; John xx. 22, xvi. 7). Accordingly this "Holy Spirit of promise" is called "the seal and earnest of an Unseen Saviour." He has come, not merely in the way of gifts, or of influences, or of operations, as He came to the prophets, for then Christ's going away would be a loss, and not a gain, and the Spirit's presence would be a mere pledge, not an earnest; but He comes to us as Christ came, by a real and personal visitation (chap. viii. 9, 11; 1 Cor. vi. 19; 2 Cor. vi. 16; Rom. v. 5, viii. 16). Here let us observe, before proceeding, what indirect evidence is afforded us in these texts of the divinity of the Holy Spirit. Who can be personally present at once with every Christian but God Himself? This consideration suggests both the dignity of our Sanctifier and the infinite preciousness of His Office towards us. To proceed: The Holy Ghost dwells in body and soul, as in a temple. Evil spirits indeed have power to possess sinners, but His indwelling is far more perfect; for He is all-knowing and omnipresent, He is able to search into all our thoughts, and penetrate into every motive of the heart. Therefore He pervades us as light pervades a building, or as a sweet perfume the folds of some honourable robe; so that, in Scripture language, we are said to be in Him, and He in us. It is plain that such an inhabitation brings the Christian into a state altogether new and marvellous, far above the possession of mere gifts, exalts him inconceivably in the scale of beings, and gives him a place and an office which he had not before (2 Pet. i. 4; John i. 12; 2 Cor. v. 17; 1 John iv. 4; 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20; 2 Tim. ii. 21). This wonderful change from darkness to light, through the entrance of the Spirit into the soul, is called regeneration, or the new birth. By His coming all guilt and pollution are burned away as by fire, the devil is driven forth, sin, original and actual, is forgiven, and the whole man is consecrated to God. And this is the reason why He is called "the earnest" of that Saviour who died for us, and will one day give us the fulness of His own presence in heaven. Hence, too, He is our "seal unto the day of redemption"; for as the potter moulds the clay, so He impresses the Divine image on us members of the household of God. II. Next, I must speak briefly concerning the manner in which the gift of grace manifests itself in the regenerate soul. 1. The heavenly gift of the Spirit fixes the eyes of our mind upon the Divine Author of our salvation. By nature we are blind and carnal; but the Holy Ghost reveals to us the God of mercies, and bids us recognise and adore Him as our Father with a true heart. He impresses on us our Heavenly Father's image, which we lost when Adam fell, and disposes us to seek His presence by the very instinct of our new nature. He restores for us that broken bond which, proceeding from above, connects together into one blessed family all

that is anywhere holy and eternal, and separates it off from the rebel world which comes to nought. Being then the sons of God, and one with Him, our souls mount up and cry to Him continually (ver. 15). Nor are we left to utter these cries in any vague uncertain way of our own; but Christ left His sacred prayer to be the voice of the Spirit. 2. The indwelling of the Holy Ghost raises the soul, not only to the thought of God, but of Christ also (1 John i. 3; John xiv. 23). The Spirit came especially to "glorify" Christ; and vouchsafes to be a shining light within the Church and the Christian, reflecting the Saviour. First, He inspired the evangelists to record the life of Christ; next, He unfolded their meaning in the Epistles. He had made history to be doctrine; He continued His sacred comment in the formation of the Church, superintending and overruling its human instruments, and bringing out our Saviour's words and works, and the apostles' illustrations of them, into acts of obedience and permanent ordinances, by the ministry of saints and martyrs. Lastly, He completes His gracious work by conveying this system of truth, thus varied and expanded, to the heart of each individual Christian in whom He dwells. Thus He vouchsafes to edify the whole man in faith and holiness (2 Cor. x. 5). St. John adds, after speaking of "our fellowship with the Father and His Son": "These things write we unto you, that your joy may be full." What is fulness of joy but peace? Joy is tumultuous only when it is not full; where He is, "there is liberty" from the tyranny of sin, from the dread of an offended Creator. Doubt, gloom, impatience have been expelled; joy in the gospel has taken their place, the hope of heaven and the harmony of a pure heart, the triumph of self-mastery, sober thoughts, and a contented mind. How can charity towards all men fail to follow? (*J. H. Newman, D.D.*) *The indwelling of the Spirit*:—I. THE FACT. The law of progress obtains in all the dispensations. The old was grandly material, appealing to our sensuous nature, and preparatory, adapted to the childhood of the race. The coming of Christ introduced a better state of things, and substituted realities for symbols. But although He performed mighty works and "spake as man never spake," yet a more glorious dispensation was to succeed (John i. 50, xiv. 12), which is to ultimate in the reign of grace on earth, in heaven itself, and in the finished glory of the saints. But does the Spirit in this His peculiar dispensation dwell in man? Read John xiv. 16, 17; the text; 1 Cor. iii. 16; 2 Tim. i. 14; 1 John iv. 4. II. ITS NATURE AND EXTENT. 1. Is it a real dwelling, or are those Scriptures to be understood in a figurative sense? We believe in the omnipresence of the Spirit (Psa. cxxxix. 7). But omnipresence is an attribute; the indwelling of which we speak is that of a person, a voluntary presence—a presence that may be withdrawn—that is circumscribed and conditioned—that has no affinity with sin, and consequently is never realised in an unbelieving heart. It is a presence that may be grieved, offended, and driven away, and is therefore not an attribute, but a person. 2. Neither is this presence to be regarded simply as a Divine influence. Person is the being who acts; influence is the effect of the action, and the question is, Is it the influence or the person of the Holy Spirit that dwells in the heart of believers? Practically, it is both; for wherever the Spirit in His personal presence is, there will His influence be felt. He does not stand or send His messages; but He enters within, instructing us by His wisdom, making us happy in the consciousness of His fellowship and protection. III. ITS MORAL AND SPIRITUAL EFFECTS. 1. A more accurate and discriminating understanding of the Scriptures. The more practical portions of God's Word are level to the capacity of children. Still there are "some things hard to be understood," things into which even the angels desire to look—the deep things of God. To the unbelieving the Scriptures are a sealed book. It is not learning nor genius that breaks the seal; its Divine Author is its true interpreter, even the Spirit of truth that dwells within us (1 Cor. ii. 11). Could you entertain in your family the most scholarly man of the age, have familiar access to his mind and heart, thus becoming more and more initiated into his style and spirit, such acquaintance would give a quickened impulse to your mind, a keener relish for his writings, and a key to their true exposition. The believer is supposed to entertain One of boundless intelligence, who is continually unfolding the sublimest truths, and arousing his mental energies by new and startling discoveries of the great Christian verities; and it is impossible for him to be under such tuition without greatly enlarged mental capacities for knowing and interpreting the Scriptures, whose author is the Holy Spirit. 2. A greater unity among Christians. Strife and division were among the earliest developed evils in the apostolic Church (1 Cor. iii. 4). This was a most undesirable state of things, marring the beauty and symmetry

of Christianity. But Christ anticipated this evil (John xvii. 21). Unity among Christians is a desirable thing in itself, and nothing so wins the world to a believing reception of the gospel, and nothing so effectually works scepticism as strifes and divisions. And if Christ's prayer is to be answered, there will be a drawing together of Christian hearts—One Lord, one faith, and one Spirit. To hasten a result so devoutly to be wished, we may employ outward and visible means; we may hold "union conventions"; but a real heart union, finding its expression in visible fellowship, in co-operative labours, will be realised, just as the Holy Spirit finds indwelling in believers and in the Church. 3. Purity of life. The Spirit is holy, and will not dwell in a heart that harbours even the thought of sin. But when He does enter He brings every thought, power, and passion into cordial obedience to Christ. His presence is a continual corrective and restraint, an abiding stimulus to a right life. Were you entertaining a highly honoured guest, everything in the domestic arrangement would be ordered to suit his taste. Sinning in a believer is something more than transgression; it is sacrilege. 4. A more attractive Christian life. Persons intimately associated become assimilated; and if the Holy Spirit should assume form or expression, it would be the most attractive conceivable. He is sometimes represented in the form of a dove, because of His grace and beauty. A palace enriched with all works of art, surrounded by all natural beauties, may well symbolise the regenerated human heart where the Spirit dwells, making the life not sad but songful. 5. A more effective Christian life. (*S. B. Burchard, D.D.*) *The indwelling of the Spirit*:—That which gives being to a Christian is the Spirit of Christ dwelling in him. He is to a Christian what the soul is to a man. Consider what a thing the body is without the soul, how defiled and deformed a piece of dust it is. Truly the soul of man by nature is in no better case till this Spirit enter; it hath no light in it, no life in it (Eph. iv. 18). The eye of the mind is put out, and if it be darkness, how great is that darkness! And from this woeful defect flows the alienation of the whole soul from the life of God, that primitive light being eclipsed, the soul is separated from the influence of heaven. Man was once the dwelling-place of princely and Divine graces, the Lord Himself was there; and then how comely and beautiful was the soul! But now it is like the desolate cities, in which the beasts of the desert lay, and their houses are full of doleful creatures, where owls dwell, and satyrs dance, where wild beasts cry, and dragons in the pleasant places (Isa. xiii. 21, 22; Jer. l. 39). The Bethel is become a Beth-aven, the house of God become a house of vanity; by the continual repair of vain thoughts, the house of prayer is turned into a den of thieves and robbers. Now, judge if there be not need of a better guest than these. Now, when the Spirit of Christ enters into this vile, ruinous cottage, He creates a new light within, which makes a man behold the light shining in the gospel; and behold all things are new, himself new, the world new, and God new. And as the Spirit enlightens, so He enlivens; He kindles a holy fire in his affections to consume his corruption. This Spirit makes a Christian soul move willingly toward God; it is an active principle that cannot rest till it rests in its place of eternal rest and delight in God. And then the Spirit reforms this house by casting out all these wild beasts that lodged in it, the savage and unruly affections that domineered in man. There are idols in the heart, and these must be cleansed out. And all this the Spirit will not do alone, but honours you with the fellowship of this work; and therefore you must lay your account, that the reformation of this house, for so glorious a guest, will be laborious. How infinitely is that compensed! When He shall take up house fully in you, it will satisfy you to the full. In the meantime, as He takes the rule and command of your house, so for the present He provides for it, and oh, how sweet and satisfying is it! (chap. xiv. 17). What a noble train doth the Spirit bring along with Him to furnish this house! Many rich and costly ornaments hang over it and adorn it, to make it like the king's wife, all glorious within; such as the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit (1 Pet. iii. 4); the clothing of humility, simple in show, but rich in substance (1 Pet. v. 5). And being lodged within, what sweet fruits is the Spirit daily bringing forth to feed and delight the soul withal! (Gal. v. 22, 23). And He is a Spirit of consolation, and therefore of all the most worthy to be received into our hearts, for He is a bosom comforter (John xiv. 16). (*Hugh Binning.*) *The indwelling of the Spirit*:—As Jerusalem was the glory of the world, because of the temple of God, so are the regenerate of all men most glorious, because they are the temples of the Holy Ghost. In matters of the world, an unregenerate man may be before us; but in this he cannot. He may have gold in his purse, but we have God in our hearts, the right owner of them, which is the top of our happiness.

Tenants make havoc and suffer all things to fall to ruin, but owners are always repairing; when the devil held our hearts all was out of frame; ignorance ruled in our mind, rebellion in the will, disorder in the affections; but the coming of the Holy Spirit enlightens, leads into all truth, certifies of the favour of God, fashioneth to every good work, and enricheth with all spiritual grace, all those in whom He dwelleth. Even as fire makes iron fiery, so the Spirit makes us spiritual. This is that Spirit which is the Comforter, which cheereth and sustaineth the desolate and despairing conscience, and feedeth it with heavenly manna. Surely the conscience of a regenerate man is a very paradise in which God's good Spirit dwelleth not for a short time, but for ever. (*Elnathan Parr, B.A.*) *Actualness of the indwelling of God*:—How often and how simply it is said, "The Holy Ghost dwelleth in you" (ver. 11; 1 Cor. iii. 16, vi. 9). This is the normal Christian state. 1. The Holy Spirit lifts us out of and above ourselves; the very flesh is not like the flesh of those who are its slaves. Physically it is the same, but it is more spiritual, less clamorous in its appetites; as iron, glowing with the fire wherewith it is penetrated, has other qualities, and is flexible as it was not before. In the case where long-lived sensualism has done its work, you see in the bloated countenance that the flesh has changed for the worse. Where the spiritual life has long transformed the soul, you see, as in some pictures of great saints, the flesh spiritualised. 2. We speak of having talents, attainments, possessions, as things which, more or less, men dispose of as they will. St. Paul speaks of another possession. God the Holy Ghost so puts Himself at the command of His creatures that we may have Him for our own, or, alas! alienate, grieve Him away, quench His light. Nay, so does He will to put Himself at the disposal of God's redeemed that His holy inspirations await their invitations. His Divine thoughts inform their human thoughts, so that they can hardly or not at all tell what are their thoughts what His; only they know that all which is good is His; they are but the harp whose strings vibrate as His breath passes over them, and yield what harmony He wills. 3. He acts from within. They are not merely the motions of grace, as they fell on Saul, or now, too, touch every heathen heart which will respond to His touch. It is not only a voice like that to Socrates, withholding him from what God in His providence willed him not to do. It does not merely strengthen man's natural generous feelings, such as made Scipio a greater conqueror when he gave back to her betrothed the captive virgin of intense beauty than when his earthly glories were crowned at the field of Zama; for, by the unknown grace of God, he had conquered himself. Nor is it only like that overpowering grace to which the long-resisting soul at length yields and ends its weary rebellions, and casting itself at its Father's feet, is again enfolded in His arms; "the dead is again alive, the lost is found." The office which God the Holy Ghost vouchsafes to take towards Christians is indwelling. 4. To communicate Himself is the being of God. Inseparable is the Trinity. Where one person is there is the whole. For the Son dwells in the Father and the Father in the Son, and the Holy Ghost reposes and habitates in the Father and the Son. And so our Lord expresses the loving communication of the Father and the Son to those who do His commandments and love Him (John xiv. 23). Yet in some special way it is God the Holy Ghost who dwelleth in us. His presence within us is the pledge of our resurrection to life eternal (ver. 11), and is our bond of union with Christ. If He dwelleth in us our prayers are not our prayers only, but His prayers in us. God, informing our thoughts, suggesting our longings, pleads with God (ver. 15; 1 John iv. 16). 5. What the soul is to the body that God is to the soul. The life of the body is the soul, the life of the soul is God. We know not where the soul is, but through it we live, we think, we love. So through God indwelling the soul we have our spiritual, eternal life begun in us; we think all the good thoughts we have. Our good is not chiefly or primarily ours, but His who, dwelling in us, worketh in us to will and to do, and rejoiceth in His works in us. 6. What an existence, awful for the very greatness of the love of God! What a tingling closeness of God! (Col. i. 27). Holy is this church, because consecrated to God, because where His own are gathered in His name there is He. Holy to us is any picture of our Redeemer, because it images to us, as man can conceive, His countenance of tender love. But all these are material things; you are the living image of God; you are the living temples of God. As then you would not defile this temple, as you would not tread and trample under foot a likeness of your Redeemer, reverence yourselves. Bring not defiling thoughts into your souls; it is to bring them into the very presence of God. Utter not polluting words with the tongue, wherewith God the

Holy Ghost enableth you to call God your Father, Jesus your Lord. And, what follows from this, defile not those living temples wherein He dwells. When Satan tempts you, remember what a greatness God has given you, to have in the hostelry of your souls God as your guest, to abide there, if you will, for ever. Give yourselves anew this day to Him who gave Himself to you. He alone knows what an intolerable loss it is to lose Him, our God, for ever! (*E. B. Pusey, D.D.*) **Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.**—*A fatal deficiency*:—Note—I. THE REMARKABLE TITLE HERE GIVEN TO THE HOLY SPIRIT—"the Spirit of Christ." He is so called because—1. He especially rested upon Christ. The manhood of Christ was begotten of the Spirit of God. When our Lord was baptized the Spirit descended upon Him like a dove, and then was "led of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil." Then He returned into Galilee in the power of the Spirit. When He began to preach His first words were, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me." His ministry stood in the power of the Spirit. All through His life the Spirit of God rested upon Him in fulness of power, for God "giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him." 2. He is given to us by Christ. "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." Jesus spake of giving to men living water, and this spake He of the Spirit. After His resurrection He breathed on His disciples, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," and having procured Him by His ascension poured Him out at Pentecost. 3. Christ lived peculiarly in the Spirit. "Spirit" in the text is in opposition to the "flesh." Never did the flesh rule Christ. Nay, He even forgot to eat bread, finding meat to eat which even His disciples knew not of. Never was He moved by any sensuous passion, or by a motive of fleshly tendency. Some have high ambitions, but not He. The flesh that lusteth for vengeance had no rule in Him, but the Spirit of holiness and love. The objects He aimed at were all spiritual. 4. He quickens the entire mystical body of Christ. All the members of that body are distinguished by this—that they are spiritual men, and seek after spiritual things. The true Church being in herself a spiritual body, acts in a spiritual manner, and strives after spiritual objects. True religion consists not in outward forms, peculiar garbs, or modes of speech, or anything that is ritualistic and external. "The kingdom of God is . . . righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." II. THE NECESSITY OF POSSESSING THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST. 1. This is needful in every case. "If any man." It may be urged that some have an especially amiable disposition. True, but the fairest flowers, as surely as the foulest weeds, are none of Christ's if they are not of the Spirit's own planting. This one lack is fatal to the noblest character, and Christ disowns utterly every man who has not His Spirit in him. This must be said concerning the ministers and officers of churches. 2. This is put in opposition to everything less than itself. For instance, there are some who glory in the name of Christians, as if the name were some great thing. It is not wearing the name of Christ, but having the Spirit of Christ, which will prove us to be accepted. 3. But the text is expressly in opposition to "the flesh." We are either in the flesh or in the Spirit. He who is in the flesh—(1) Is ruled by the flesh, but the man who is in the Spirit labours to keep it under. (2) Trusts to the flesh. He looks to his own works for salvation; but the man who has the Spirit of Christ counts all his good works to be dross, and trusts in Jesus. (3) Worships in the flesh, but the man who has the Spirit desires not to see but to believe, not to smell but to think. The sound of truth is better to the spiritual man than tinkling bells and the noise of pipes and bellows. III. THE EVIDENCES OF HAVING THE SPIRIT. If you have the Spirit—1. He has led you to Christ. 2. You will honour Christ, for the Spirit delights to glorify Christ by taking of the things of Christ and showing them to us. 3. He will make you like Christ, who lived for God, who was in constant communion with the Father, was always spiritual, always true, and always ready to do good to all. 4. He will show Himself by His open actions in the heart, making us hate everything that is evil, making brave for God and truth, and joyful and hopeful in God. IV. THE SAD CONSEQUENCES OF NOT HAVING THE SPIRIT. He is none of Christ's. Ah, if I am none of His whose am I? The devil's. And where are you if you are not Christ's? On the way to judgment and eternal condemnation. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Having the Spirit of Christ*:—The antecedent is in these words, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ." The consequent in these, "He is none of His." We begin with the first general, viz., the antecedent, "If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ," where there are divers points observable. And first of all, for the Spirit of Christ, to speak to that, what we are to understand by this. The second is in reference to Christ as He is

Mediator, God and man. The Holy Ghost is called the Spirit of Christ in this respect also, and that for two reasons more. First, He is called the Spirit of Christ, as He is in a special manner bestowed upon Him and received by Him (John iii. 34; Luke iv. 1; John i. 14; Col. i. 19). Second, He is called the Spirit of Christ not only as bestowed upon Him, but as bestowed by Him. And of His fulness we do all receive grace for grace. The consideration of this point may be thus far useful to us, as it may teach us a special ground for the honouring and extolling of Christ. A second term which we may take notice of in this first part of the text is the having of the Spirit of Christ, which is here implied to be such as Christians are indeed capable of. Now this it relates especially to the work of grace and holiness in their hearts. This having of the Spirit of Christ is considerable in two particulars. Firstly, take it as to matter of conversion, and the working of grace in them at first. Those who are true believers, they have the Spirit of Christ in them thus, as they are changed in the spirit of their minds. Every man by nature has an evil spirit in him. This Spirit of Christ has gracious and holy desires and inclinations which do belong unto it; a spiritual favour and a spiritual delight, and an affecting of spiritual things above all other things besides. Where this Spirit of Christ comes it brings every thought into captivity unto the obedience of Christ. Secondly, take it as to matter of communion. A third thing which we may here observe from this present passage before us is the word of uncertainty or ambiguity, "If any man hath not," &c., as implying that there are some that have not, and that even also of those sometimes who pretend to have. And so now I have done with the first general part of the text, viz., the antecedent, "If any man have not," &c. The second is the consequent, in these words, "He is none of His"—none of His; that is, belongs not to Him, has no interest in Him, is no member of Him. This is the state and condition of all those who want the Spirit of Christ. But it may be illustrated to us from sundry considerations, as first, because they have nothing whereby to knit them and unite them to Christ. Whosoever they be that are Christ's they must be knit and united to Him, and made one with Him. By His Spirit Christ dwells in our hearts and makes us also to dwell in Him, which accordingly those persons that want do not belong unto Him, nor are any of His. Secondly, those which have not the Spirit of Christ they are none of Christ's, because they have not faith whereby to apprehend and lay hold upon Him. Thirdly, those who have not the Spirit of Christ they are none of His, because they have not a principle of spiritual life in them whereby to bring forth fruits unto Him. Fourthly, those who have not the Spirit of Christ they are none of His, because they are altogether unlike Him and different from Him, yea, indeed contrary to Him. While it is said here that if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His, this is to be taken by us as exclusive of anything else which might be conceived to make up this defect. We will instance some few particulars which do sometimes deceive many people in this regard. First, strength of parts, or common and ordinary illumination in spiritual and Divine truths. Secondly, sweetness of nature and temper and constitution; it is not this which will suffice neither. Thirdly, common morality and civil righteousness. It is not this which will serve neither without the Spirit of Christ. Fourthly, the outward badge of religion, and the privileges of the visible Church. It is not this neither which does entitle to Christ without His Spirit. Lastly, it is not Christian alliance, or relation to those who have grace and godliness and goodness in them. The consideration of this point may be drawn forth into this following improvement. To this purpose we may take notice of a threefold spirit in men, which is exclusive of this Spirit of Christ in them, and so separating of them from Him. First, their own spirit. Secondly, the spirit of the world. Thirdly, the spirit of Satan. This exclusion of relation to Christ, and of interest in Him as His members, is very grievous and prejudicial. And that in the consideration of three particulars especially. First, in point of grace; and secondly, in point of comfort; and thirdly, in point of salvation. Whether have we His Spirit or no? Those who have Christ's Spirit do very much relish and favour the truths of Christ. Again, how stand we affected to sin and evil ways, either in ourselves or others? The Spirit of Christ wherever it is is a mortifying Spirit (Gal. v. 24). And so for others, who are the children of God, and are members of Christ, how stand we affected to them likewise? And finally, for our lives and conversations and outward man, this Spirit of Christ, where it is, it will have an influence upon this also. If we live in the Spirit we shall also walk in the Spirit (Gal. v. 25). This Spirit will actuate and regulate us in every performance. Thirdly and lastly, in a way of excitement. Here is that which may stir us all up

to labour for this Spirit of Christ, as being that whereupon depends all our interest in Him and benefit by Him. First, take it more largely, and which seems here principally to be intended in the text, and as we have handled it all this while, that Spirit of Christ which does animate all His members, and does express itself in them. We should be persuaded from hence to endeavour after it, and to labour for it, that we may be able to find it in ourselves. But secondly, take it more emphatically. The Spirit of Christ for that Spirit of His, which did more eminently, and in a special manner, put forth itself in His own person, while He lived here upon earth as a pattern and example to us. We may consider it in sundry particulars. First, it was a Spirit of meekness and humility and lowliness of mind. Secondly, a Spirit of patience in the wrongs and injuries which He endured. Thirdly, a Spirit of pity and compassion and tenderness of heart, especially to the souls of men, and in reference to their eternal salvation. Fourthly, a Spirit of love and condescension, and sweetness of carriage towards all that He conversed withal. And yet fifthly also, a Spirit of zeal. Last of all, a Spirit of fruitfulness and communicativeness and edification. He went about doing good. The sum of all comes to this, that we endeavour for our particulars to have the like in some degree and measure infused into us; and that so much the rather that we may be assured of His owning of us another day. (*Thomas Horton, D.D.*) *The Spirit of Christ*:—To have the Spirit of Christ is to be possessed by the Holy Spirit, who directs and sanctifies the believer in Jesus by the Word of God. I. THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST TOWARDS GOD. This Spirit—1. Begets and forms a Christ-like character. "We are created in Christ unto good works." The Spirit changes the bias of a man. Christianity is Christ in you. 2. Gives a Christlike devotion. This is not a prayerful age. But holy lives ever have been much in communion with God. If Jesus needed prayer, much more do we. 3. Leads to Christlike obedience. Christ's life-motto was, "I come to do Thy will, O God." Obedience to God is the Spirit of Christ, and this obedience Jesus made the test of discipleship. This Spirit puts Christ before creeds, the truth before traditions, principle before policy, faith before feelings. It puts piety into practice, devotion into duty, love into labour, grace into giving, and power into prayer. II. THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST TOWARD MAN. Christ's Spirit—1. Was full of sympathy with man. Sympathy means to suffer with another. As a substitute Jesus suffered with man in his sins; He "Himself bare our sins in His own body on the tree." And if any man have the Spirit of Christ he will have something of that vicarious sympathy for man's redemption. Men of God have felt at times this soul-burden; the Church of God has seasons of agonising for the salvation of sinners. 2. Labours to save men. Labour is the expression of Christ's sympathy for man. The Spirit of Christ is not exclusive, but aggressive. Our devotion to Christ is ever measured by our sacrifice and toil to save men. Christ suffered to provide redemption, and the Christian must suffer to apply it. Thus it is "the Church fills up that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ." (*J. P. Thoms.*) *Every Christian possesses the Spirit of Christ*:—I. WHAT IS IMPLIED IN BEING CHRIST'S. 1. There is a sense in which all men are His, by right of—(1) Creation (John i. 3; Col. i. 16). (2) Preservation (Col. i. 17). (3) Redemption (1 Cor. vi. 20). 2. But Christ's true followers belong to Him, as—(1) Subjects to a prince (Psa. ii. 8; Matt. xxii. 11; Phil. ii. 11). (2) Servants to a master (chap. xiv. 7–9; 2 Cor. v. 14, 15). (3) Friends (John xv. 13–15). (4) Brethren and sisters (Heb. ii. 11, 12). (5) Children to a father (Heb. ii. 13). (6) A spouse to a husband (chap. vii. 4; 2 Cor. xi. 2; Eph. v. 25-32; Rev. xix. 7). (7) Branches to a tree (John xv. 1). (8) Members to the head of the body (1 Cor. xii. 12, 27; Rom. xii. 5; Eph. i. 22, 23). II. WHAT IS MEANT BY THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST. Not, as some think, merely the mind of Christ, but the Spirit of God, is here intended (see context). 1. This is called the Spirit of Christ because—(1) He had it, and has it without measure (John iii. 34; Rev. iii. 1). (2) He has purchased it for His followers by His death. (3) He has received it for them (Psa. lxviii. 18; Acts ii. 33). (4) He has promised it to them. 2. As the Holy Spirit is the promise of the Father, emphatically (Acts i. 4), so also of the Son (Luke xxiv. 49; John xiv., xv., xvi.). He actually confers it (John iv. 10, vii. 38; Acts ii. 38, 39). III. HOW IT APPEARS THAT WE MUST HAVE THIS SPIRIT IN ORDER TO BE CHRIST'S. We cannot be Christ's unless we—1. Know Him (John x. 14, 27), but we cannot know Him without the Spirit of Christ (Matt. xi. 27; Gal. i. 16; John xvi. 14). 2. Love Him (1 Cor. xvi. 22), but we cannot love Him without that Spirit, the fruit of which is love (Gal. v. 22; Rom. v. 5). 3. Obey Him (2 Cor. v. 15; Rom. xiv. 7; John xv. 14, xiv. 21; Heb. v. 9), but we cannot obey Him

without the inspiration and aid of His Spirit (John xv. 5; 2 Cor. iii. 5). 4. Have an interest in Him, and are able to say, "My beloved is mine and I am His," but this interest in Him we cannot have without His Spirit (1 Cor. xii. 13). 5. Are united with Him, members with their head; but this we cannot have without His Spirit. 6. We have His mind in us; but this we cannot have without His Spirit; meekness, long-suffering, goodness, &c., being fruits of the Spirit. 7. Are new creatures (2 Cor. v. 17; Eph. iv. 21-24), and it is impossible we should be so without His Spirit (Titus iii. 5). (*Joseph Benson.*) *Having the Spirit a test of being Christ's*:—Ignatius, the martyr, used to call himself Theophorus, or the God-bearer, "because," said he, "I bear about with me the Holy Ghost." And truly every Christian is a God-bearer. That man is no Christian who is not the subject of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit—he may talk well, he may understand theology—he will be the child of nature finely dressed, but not the living child. He may be a man of so profound an intellect, so gigantic a soul, so comprehensive a mind, and so lofty an imagination, that he may dive into all the secrets of nature, may know the path which the eagle's eye hath not seen, and enter into depths where the ken of mortals reacheth not, but he shall not be a Christian with all his knowledge; he shall not be a son of God with all his researches, unless he understands what it is to have the Holy Ghost dwelling in him and abiding in him, yea, and that for ever. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *A comely disposition*:—Nothing is more desirable than a pleasant disposition. Without it we cannot be happy ourselves nor make others happy. When we have lost our temper we wake up to new appreciation of proper equipoise of nature. But a man says, "I can't help it." You can help it by having His disposition. The Spirit of Christ was a Spirit of—I. GENTLENESS. True, He scathed the hypocrite; but for the most part His words and demeanour were inoffensive. This is remarkable when we bear in mind His omnipotence. Little children, who always avoid a rough man, rushed into His presence. Invalids, who shuddered at any other touch, asked Him to put His hand on their wounds. His footstep would not have woke up the faintest slumber. The calmness of His look shamed boisterous Gennesaret into placidity. How little of that gentleness we have! My sister's arm was put out of joint and the neighbours came and pulled till her anguish was great, but to no purpose. When the surgeon came with one touch it was all right. So we go down to our Christian work with so rough a hand that we miserably fail. The dew of one summer night does more good than ten whirlwinds. II. SELF-SACRIFICE. Suppose by one course of conduct you could win a palace, while by another you might advantage men at the cost of your life, which would you choose? Christ chose the latter. How little of that spirit we have! Two children went out on a cold day; the boy with hardly any garments at all, and the girl in a coat that she had outgrown, and she said, "Johnny, come under my coat." He said, "It is too short." "Oh," she said, "it will stretch." But the coat would not stretch enough, so she took it off, and put it upon the boy. That was self-sacrifice. When the plague was raging in Marseilles, the College of Surgeons decided that there must be a post-mortem examination, in order that they might know how to meet and arrest that awful disease. And there was silence till Dr. Guion rose and said, "I know it is certain death; but somebody must do it. In the name of God and humanity I will." He accomplished the dissection and died in twelve hours. That was self-sacrifice that the world understands. III. HUMILITY. The Lord of heaven and earth in the garb of a rustic. He who poured all the waters of the earth out of His hand begging a drink. Walking in common sandals, seated with publicans and sinners. How little you and I have of a spirit like that! We gather a few more dollars than other people, or get a little higher social position, and how we strut and want people to know their places! IV. PRAYER. You cannot think of Jesus without thinking of prayer. Prayer for little children: "I thank Thee, O Father," &c. Prayer for His friends: "Father, I will that they be with Me where I am." Prayer for His enemies: "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." Prayer for all nations: "Thy kingdom come." How soon our knees get tired! We want more prayer in the house, in the social circle, in the Church, in the legislative hall, among the young, among the old. The moment when the Diet of Nuremberg were signing the edict that gave deliverance to Protestants, Luther was praying in his private room about it. Without any communication between the two Luther rose from his knees, rushed out into the street, and cried, "We have got the victory! The Protestants are free!" That was prayer getting the answer straight from the throne. V. WORK. Christ was always busy.

Hewing in the carpenter's shop. Helping the lame man to walk. Curing the child's fits. From the day on which they found Him "about His Father's business," to the time when He said, "I have finished the work," &c., it was work all the way. We want the work easy if we are to perform it, the religious service short if we are to survive it. Oh for more of that better spirit which determines a man to get to heaven and to take everybody with him. Busy in the private circle, in the Sabbath school, in Church, busy everywhere for God and Christ, and heaven. (*T. De Witt Talmage, D.D.*) *A practical appeal*:—Note—I. THE NECESSITY OF HAVING THE SPIRIT OF GOD DWELLING IN US. (Vers. 9–11.) 1. The Spirit here spoken of is the Holy Ghost. But He is variously described as "the Spirit of God," "the Spirit of Christ," and "the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead." Beside all which, it is intimated that for the Spirit to dwell in us, is the same thing as for "Christ" to be in us. This mode of speaking is quite accordant with Paul's common habit (Eph. iii. 16–19). To be "strengthened with might by the Spirit in the inner man," and for "Christ to dwell in our hearts by faith," and for us to be "filled with all the fulness of God," are descriptions of one and the same experience. So also Eph. ii. 18, 22. Compare our Lord's discourses (John xiv. 10, 11, 15–21, xv. 26, xvi. 7–15). These strange and involved expressions imply how distinct the personality, and how intimate the unity, between Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and how completely all conspire in every part of the redeeming plan. The Holy Ghost, then, may be called the Spirit of God, inasmuch as He cometh forth from God. He is also the Spirit of Christ, inasmuch as He represents Christ, and is sent by Him to do the Saviour's work. Further, to have the Spirit is to have Christ, because it is only through the Spirit that Jesus can take up His residence within. It follows, accordingly, that to have the Spirit of Christ in us, means something more than merely to have a disposition resembling Christ's. It means that we have God Himself to dwell within our breasts. Let us not shrink from the full avowal of this momentous truth (1 Cor. iii. 16, vi. 19; 2 Cor. vi. 16; Isa. lvii. 15). 2. This possessing God's Spirit is essential to our salvation. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ," he may have many virtues and much seeming religion, but he is none of Christ's. The reason of this is evident; for without the Spirit no man can truly repent. Believe in Christ. Love God and keep His commandments. II. How WE MAY KNOW IF WE HAVE THE SPIRIT (see ver. 13). 1. What are "the deeds of the body?" (Col. iii. 5–10; Eph. iv. 22–32; Rom. xiii. 12–14; Gal. v. 19–21; 1 Peter iv. 3). (1) The grosser immoralities of gluttony, drunkenness, revellings, and debauchery. (2) The envious and vindictive passions of our selfish nature. (3) The sins of the tongue. (4) The evil covetings of the heart. 2. What is meant by mortifying them? To mortify the flesh is to wage war against it, and to cross it instead of indulging it. This is the constant battle of the believer's life; and in its full extent it is not the battle of life to any but a Christian. III. THE HAPPINESS OF SUCH. "They shall live." And further, "if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness." Though the conflict be hard and painful, it is not in vain or without an adequate reward (Gal. vi. 8). This "life," which belongs to spiritual-mindedness, is a life of joy, which begins on earth, and then is consummated in heaven. IV. "THEREFORE WE ARE DEBTORS NOT TO THE FLESH, TO LIVE AFTER THE FLESH." 1. We owe it no allegiance, and need no longer be in subjection to its imperious bidding. We are emancipated from its tyranny by the power of the Son of God, who is able to make us "free indeed." 2. On the other hand, you are debtors to the Spirit, to live after the Spirit. You owe your own soul much, both to make up for past neglects and injuries, and to bring it up to that high standard of excellence, in which alone it can find its perfection. And remember that the Spirit of God dwells within you, and if you surrender yourself to Him He will work in you "all the good pleasure of His goodness" (Eph. i. 17–20; Col. i. 9–13; 1 Thess. v. 23, 24, 28). (*T. G. Horton.*) *Christ's moral temper*:—I. IS IDENTICAL WITH THAT OF THE GREAT GOD. "The Spirit of God" and "the Spirit of Christ" are identical. "I and My Father are one." Christ's temper was—1. Essentially benevolent. "He came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them." His severest reproofs were but the bass notes in the harmonies of His loving nature. The blows He struck at the sinner were but to break his chains and set him free. 2. Forgivingly benevolent. Examples are numerous: the woman in Simon's house; the paralytic; His prayer for His enemies. 3. Earnestly benevolent. His benevolence was a burning passion. "Come unto Me all ye that labour," &c., "O Jerusalem," &c. Now all this is identical with the moral temper. Do you want to know how God feels towards

you as a sinner? The biography of Christ will answer. II. Is COMMUNICABLE TO MAN. For—1. Man is pre-eminently adapted to receive it. He is not formed to receive evil; it is repugnant to his conscience. The soul is made to live in love as its vital atmosphere. 2. Man is pre-eminently in want of this. It is the only Spirit that can expel the demon passions of evil that reign within, that can light up his soul with truth and blessedness. 3. Man has pre-eminent helps to this. The Scripture, the life of Christ, the ministry, &c. III. DETERMINES THE CONDITION OF MAN. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." 1. None of His loyal subjects. All who have this disposition delight in His law. All others are miserable vassals. They serve Him, but against their will. 2. None of His docile disciples. Love is essential to Christian knowledge. Without it men may be speculators, cavillers, dogmatists, but not teachable disciples. 3. None of His loving friends. The want of this is enmity to Christ. 4. None of His co-heirs. From this subject we learn that Christianity is—(1) A life, not a creed or form. (2) A Divine life. The true Christian is one with the Infinite. (*Homilist.*)

Ver. 10. **And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.**—*The indwelling of Christ*:—I. FOR THE PRESENT THE INDWELLING OF CHRIST IN BELIEVERS, BY HIS SPIRIT, REMOVES THE POWER OF DEATH FROM THE SPHERE OF THEIR SPIRITUAL NATURE ONLY. 1. From that nature, however, it is removed. For "if Christ be in you, . . . the Spirit is life because of righteousness" (1 John v. 12). But on account of what "righteousness"? Surely not our own, for apart from Christ we have none. Under law, indeed, being alive, we should have continued to live, if we had maintained a perfect righteousness (chap. x. 5). But under the gospel, being found dead, we must first be made to live, in order to become holy. This "righteousness," therefore, is that "righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ" (chap. iii. 22; v. 17, 18). That one thing which of necessity precedes our life in Christ is justification in Christ (2 Cor. v. 21; Rom. iv. 1-13, 22-25), which is hence called a "justification of life" (chap. v. 18). 2. The new life, however, does not as yet extend beyond the spirit. "The body is dead because of sin," and for the furtherance of the great mediatorial purpose. The postponement of the completed "adoption, to wit, the redemption of their body" (ver. 23), is made, not on account of any sin yet remaining in believers (ver. 1), but on account of the *sin of the world*, in so far as the deferring of their redemption from death promotes the world's salvation. And how needful and wise that it should be so! How obviously inconsistent with a state of probation it would have been for believers to be exempted from death! If only these at the end of their probation were translated to heaven, how completely would the free exercise of the human will, in respect to matters of religion and the free development of human character, be fettered or overborne! Not to insist upon the anguish which would come into every stricken household if death were known to be the precursor of hell; nor to think how dark and dreary this world would become if there were in it no cemeteries in which were to be found the treasured remains of those who sweetly sleep in Jesus, awaiting the call to a deathless life. Let any one try to imagine what possible advantage there could accrue from such an arrangement. Therefore Christians must continue to die, that they may "fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ . . . for His body's sake, which is the Church" (Col. i. 24). II. THE REMOVAL OF THE DOMINION OF DEATH FROM THE BODIES OF BELIEVERS IS BUT DELAYED TILL THE SAVIOUR'S SECOND COMING (*cf.* Heb. ix. 28; John vi. 39, 40; Rom. viii. 19-23; 1 Thess. iv. 16; 1 Cor. xv. 42-54). Of this believers have a double earnest. 1. The objective fact that God raised the body of Jesus. So strongly did the apostle feel upon this point as to maintain that the whole fabric of Christianity stands or falls with it (1 Cor. xv. 12-23). 2. The subjective fact of the indwelling of the resurrective Spirit. "If the Spirit of Him who raised up Jesus . . . dwell in you." (1) If we are entitled to that Spirit as the life of our souls, we have an equal title to the same Spirit as the life of our bodies. (2) This assurance is made still stronger by the fact that the indwelling of this Spirit sanctifies and marks out for the Lord these very bodies in which He dwells. The living temple claimed by Him, consecrated by His glorious presence, and made to become, even here and now, the instrument of His purposes, can never be suffered to remain a permanent prey to corruption. This "is the earnest of our inheritance" (Eph. i. 14). Therefore, professed Christians,—1. Abjure the flesh and its debasing service. You are in no sense such debtors to the flesh as to be required to live according to its desires. Either you must slay the sinful flesh,

or it will slay you (ver. 13). 2. Remember that the Spirit of Christ is yours. Say not that you are unequal to the work (Phil. iv. 13). 3. When called to endure suffering and death, shrink not as though they were tokens of God's displeasure, but rather be comforted that herein you are called to share the sufferings of your Lord, and to further His redeeming work (Phil. iii. 10, 11). 4. And bear in mind that the state of suffering on account of sin is but for a time (chap. vi. 5; 2 Tim. 11, 12). (*W. Tyson.*) *Christ in believers, notwithstanding death, is a sure pledge and earnest of eternal life*:—I. THE SUPPOSITION. "If Christ be in you" (2 Cor. xiii. 5; Col. i. 27). 1. Christ is in us—(1) Objectively. As the things we think of and love are in our hearts and minds, so Christ is in us, as He is apprehended and embraced by faith and love (Eph. iii. 17; 1 John iv. 18). (2) Effectively. So Christ is in us by His Spirit and gracious influence. Now, the effects of His Spirit are—(*a*) Life (Gal. ii. 20). (*b*) Likeness or renovation of our natures (Gal. iv. 19; 2 Cor. v. 17). (*c*) Strength by the continued influence of His grace to overcome temptation (1 John iv. 4; Phil. iv. 12; 1 Cor. xv. 10; Heb. xiii. 21). 2. None are Christians but those who have Christ in them. (1) Because we must be partakers of Christ before we can be partakers of any benefit purchased by Him (1 John v. 12). (2) Where Christ once enters, there He takes up His abode, not to depart thence (1 John iii. 24; John xiv. 23, xv. 5). (3) Where Christ is, He rules and reigns (Col. ii. 6). II. THE CONCESSION. "The body is dead because of sin." Because—1. The sentence is passed (Gen. ii. 17; Heb. ix. 27). As we say of a condemned man, he is a dead man. 2. Sin is the cause of death. (1) The meritorious cause. Death is not a natural accident, but a punishment; we die not as the beasts die, or as the plants decay (chap. v. 12; vi. 23). Sin procured it, and the law ratifies it. As regards the faithful, though their sins be forgiven, yet God would leave this mark of His displeasure and teach the world the sure connection between death and sin. (2) Its end and use. (*a*) To finish transgression and make an end of sin. (*b*) To free us from the natural infirmities which render us incapable of that happy life in heaven which is intended for us. (3) Had it not been for sin, we had never had cause to fear dissolution. III. THE ASSERTION OR CORRECTION, "The Spirit is life because of righteousness." In which observe—1. That believers have a life, notwithstanding death (John xi. 25). Though the union between body and soul be dissolved, yet not their union with God. 2. This life is to be understood of body and soul (ver. 11). (1) The soul, being the noblest part, is most happily provided for; being purified from all her imperfections, is brought into the sight and presence of God (Luke xx. 38; Heb. xii. 23). (2) At the resurrection the soul shall assume its body again (Phil. iii. 21; John vi. 40). 3. The grounds are—(1) The Spirit is life. He doth not draw His argument from the immortality of the soul, for that is common to good and bad; but from the new life wrought in us by the Spirit, which is the beginning and earnest of a blessed immortality (1 John iii. 15; 1 Pet. i. 23). (2) The meritorious cause is the righteousness of Christ. When once forgiven, we are out of the reach of the second death (1 Cor. xv. 56; Heb. ii. 14, 15). Conclusion: To enforce the great things of Christianity. 1. To live holily. (1) The comforts of Christianity are not common to all indifferently, but suspended on this condition, "if Christ be in you," by His sanctifying Spirit (Eph. i. 4; 2 Cor. v. 5). (2) From the concession, "the body is dead"; sentence is passed, and in part executed; this awakeneth us to think of another world, and to make serious preparation (chap. vi. 12; Gal. vi. 8). (3) The corrective assertion that there is the life promised for body and soul, breedeth the true spirit of faith (2 Cor. iv. 13, 14), true diligence and godliness (1 Cor. xv. 58), and patience (chap. ii. 7). (4) It is the effect both of the Spirit's renewing, and the righteousness of Christ. 2. To die comfortably. Christianity affordeth the proper comfort against death, as it is a natural and penal evil (Heb. ix. 27). Heathens could only teach them to submit to it out of necessity, or as a debt to nature, or an end of the present miseries; but for us the sting of it is gone (1 Cor. xv. 56) and the property is altered (1 Cor. iii. 22). (*T. Manton, D.D.*) *True life*:—I. ITS EFFICIENT CAUSE—Christ in you. II. ITS DEVELOPMENT. 1. The body dies, through sin, preparatory to life. 2. The spirit lives, through righteousness, as the earnest of a better life. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Christ our life*:—He dwells in us. I. AS THE SOURCE OF LIFE. 1. By faith. 2. In the power of His Word and Spirit. 3. Producing a new birth unto righteousness. II. AS THE SPIRIT OF LIFE. 1. Quickening. 2. Sanctifying. 3. Invigorating the soul. 4. By righteousness. III. AS THE EARNEST OF LIFE. 1. The body is mortal through sin. 2. Shall be raised again in glory. 3. By the same Spirit that now dwelleth in us.

4. By whom also Christ was raised from the dead. (*Ibid.*) *Body and spirit*:—A gifted poet (Rev. W. Calvert) has feigned a most instructive allegory, to illustrate the connection and history of the body and soul, with respect to the Christian believer. He calls the soul Psyche, and the body Sarx, which are the proper terms in the Greek. These two start forth together on the pilgrimage of life. At the outset of their journey both are equally small, infantile, and feeble. Ere long, however, it is seen that Sarx grows faster than his more delicate companion, and begins to exercise an ascendency over her. Alas! if she were abandoned to his tyranny, she would in time be reduced to the most abject slavery, and finally sink with her despotic lord into the abyss of eternal woe. But the discordant pilgrims are met by a radiant stranger, Christ the Lord. To Him Psyche lends a charmed ear, as He tells her of her heavenly parentage and immortal destiny, and bids her take up arms against her coarse and cruel master, nor rest till she has brought him down to his proper position as her slave. It is only by subjecting him that she can either secure her own freedom or fit him for being her equal and honoured companion hereafter. Fired by the Lord's exhortations, and assisted by His prowess, Psyche asserts her liberty, assumes superiority, and attempts the subjugation of the flesh. When symptoms of this change appear, Sarx, like an insolent giant, is first disdainful, then indignant, and finally takes up cudgels against his fair companion. This opposition calls forth all her strength, and, aided by her Saviour, she at length obtains the victory, binds the strong man with cords and fetters, and compels him to follow her footsteps, obedient to her pleasure. Many a treacherous effort doth he make, if Psyche remits her watchfulness and care, to regain his forfeited dominion; but, by the grace of Christ, she maintains her headship, waxing stronger and stronger as the pilgrimage advances, until at its close she seems endowed with the might of an angel, while her vanquished companion has sunk into the imbecility of an infant. Thus, though the "outward man perish," "the inward man is renewed day by day" (2 Cor. iv. 16). A little longer, the day of trial closes, and their pilgrimage comes to an end. Sarx, exhausted, sinks on the cold strand and dies; while Psyche, released and happy, passes on, to cross the silver stream and enter the flowery land beyond. Yet is not her former companion forgotten. The Lord hath marked the spot where he fell, and will return again, at the last day, to bid him rise from the dust, and rejoin the glorified Psyche in the skies. (*T. G. Horton.*) *The body dead because of sin*:—The work of the Spirit in us does not pour the elixir of immortality into the material frame, however much it may strengthen and prepare the imperishable spirit for its immortal well-being. After Christ hath made a temple of our body, there remaineth a virus in the fabric that sooner or later will work its dissolution. Were the body, by some preternatural operation, to be wholly delivered of its corrupt ingredient, we do not understand why death should interpose between our earthly and heavenly state ever. And accordingly, on nature's dissolution, they who remain alive must, to become incorruptible, at least be changed. And the reason why those in whom Christ dwells have still a death to undergo, is that sin still adheres to them—and the wearing down of the body by disease, and the mouldering of it into dust, and then its reascent from the grave—would appear to be the steps of a refining process, whereby the now vile body is changed into a glorious one—the soul's suitable equipment for the delights and the services of eternity. For death, in the case of Christians, cannot surely be because of the judicial sentence on transgression; for those who believe in Christ are delivered from this (ver. 1). It cannot be that by any death of ours we eke out, as it were, the satisfaction which hath been already rendered for sin. A believer's death, then, must be to root out the existence of sin. It is not inflicted upon him as the last discharge of the wrath of God, but is sent as a release from the plague which adheres, it would seem, as long as the body adheres to us. Now this fact that the body is still subjected to death because of sin is the strongest experimental argument for heaven being a place to which sin can find no entry. It is not in the way of penalty that the Christian has to die—for the whole of that penalty has already been sustained. It is not exacted from him as the payment of a debt—for Christ our surety hath paid a full and a satisfying ransom. It is not to help out the justification which is already complete in Him, nor to remove a flaw from that title-deed which we have received perfect from His hand. It stands connected, in short, with the sanctification of the believer. The justice of God would have recoiled from the acceptance of a sinner, and so an expiation had to be made; and the holiness of that place where God dwelleth would have recoiled from the

approaches of one whose character was still tainted with sin, even though its guilt had been expiated; and so it is, that there must be a sanctification as well as an atonement. For the one, Christ had to suffer and to die; for the other, man has also to die, and so to fill up that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ. And it is indeed a most emphatic demonstration of heaven's sacredness, that, to protect its courts from violation, not even the most pure and sainted Christian upon earth, can, in his present earthly garb, find admittance therein. (*T. Chalmers, D.D.*) *The doom and destiny of the body*:—I. THE MORTAL DOOM OF THE FLESH. "The body is dead because of sin." 1. The fact is that Christians die even as others. If Christians were not to die, as other men, what else could be done with them? (1) Imagine the wicked dying at various ages and in the usual way, while the holy lingered on to extreme old age, waiting for the consummation of all things—what then? Why, this detention would be an unutterable disappointment and torture. They wish not to live here always. When they have filled up the ordinary term of human life they have a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better. Better by far, that, having served their generation according to the will of God, they should fall on sleep; that, like a shock of corn fully ripe, they should be gathered into the Master's garner. Besides, so marked a departure from the law of mortality, in favour of believers, would destroy the essential conditions of our present life as a probation for eternity. How could we be said to walk by faith, and not by sight, when we beheld the way in which religion suspended the laws of nature, and placed a most conspicuous difference between the evil and the good? (2) Look, then, at the alternative. Suppose that every believer might expect a miraculous translation like that of Enoch and Elijah; then, plainly, such a translation must be accompanied by a transformation as well, for flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; and such a transformation will take effect on those who are alive at Christ's coming (1 Cor. xv. 51–52). But now such a procedure would be highly impolitic and injurious, for it would constitute a perpetually recurring miracle, and destroy the probationary character of man's career on earth. Belief in Christianity would then be inevitable, and unbelief impossible. 2. The reason is assigned—"because of sin." (1) Our death, like that of other men, is a mark or expression of God's anger at sin; and we are forcibly taught by it how fearful a thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God. It was just in this way that Moses was treated; when, though his sin was forgiven, he was still prevented by it from entering the promised land. (2) Death may possibly stand connected with some special sin. John speaks of a sin unto death; that is, a sin which, though forgiven, demands that our fleshly life should be required of us. (3) We may regard sin as intimately connected with the body; so much so as to render it doubtful whether any believer ever wholly escapes from its virus and contamination so long as he remains in the flesh; and therefore it is better for this tabernacle to be taken down, like an old Hebrew house incurably infected with the leprosy, and destroyed because of sin. II. ITS EVENTUAL RESUSCITATION AND RECOVERY (ver. 11). The doctrine of the resurrection is peculiar to the Bible. The peculiarity to be observed is that here our resurrection is ascribed to the operation of the Holy Ghost, and also to the Father. Jesus Himself claims to be "the resurrection and the life." All that is done by any one of the adorable Trinity may, in some sense, be said to be done by the others as well; for Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are one. But still there is a reason why the resurrection is here ascribed to the Spirit. The Holy Ghost is the giver of life to the soul of the believer; and the same Spirit, who is the author of our holiness, is also to be the resuscitator of our lower nature. Hence, we learn the connection there is between present holiness and future glory. As sin is the defilement of the flesh, and occasions its consignment to decay and corruption, so holiness sanctifies the flesh, and tends to its conservation and incorruption. The body may be temporarily dissolved, but it is not to be lastingly destroyed. Therefore the surest pledge you can have of a joyful resurrection is the conscious possession of the Spirit of holiness now. Conclusion: 1. If the body be dead because of sin, let us keep it in subjection. 2. Yet, if this body is to rise again by virtue of the Spirit dwelling in it, let us not despise it. 3. Let us have patience under bodily affliction and submission in death. 4. Let us, while seeking to live as long as we can, be also willing, at God's behest, to die and lay this body down. (*T. G. Horton.*) *The Christian aspect of death*:—I. ITS PRESENT LIMIT. 1. It is associated with a moral cause as its explanation. The death of the body, apart from the gospel, could be accounted for only by causes such as a physician could furnish. Its great lesson would, however, thus be lost. To the heathen death was a gloomy necessity, and its only lesson was that

men should seize the joys of the passing hour. The gospel associates death with sin, and its removal with the removal of sin. It is intended as a witness for God that sin is an evil thing. 2. Death in the case of believers is limited to the body. There are three classes of death. Spiritual death, which has ceased to exist in the believer. "To be spiritually minded is life." Eternal death, which has been abolished by Christ. "He that believeth on Me shall never die." Bodily death, from which believers are not exempt; but it is limited to the lowest part of our nature. The body is indeed dead, but the spirit is life. 3. Death in this limited dominion is associated with the believer's welfare. Why does Paul say, "because of sin"? Is it that there is some remainder of condemnation for sin which is still to be executed on the believer himself? If so, how can it be said, "There is now no condemnation"? If it be in wrath, why does the apostle say, "All things are yours, whether life or death"? "The body is dead because of sin," in mercy. It shall work good. It shall be a process of refinement, a furnace for gold. Let the captive of sin be redeemed, and the hand of death shall take off his prison dress, and he shall be clothed upon with his house which is from heaven. 4. Death, thus confined to a narrowed dominion, and even then made subservient to our good, is altogether subservient to the higher power which occupies the centre of our being. Death has been forced out of the metropolis of his empire, and now "the spirit is life because of righteousness." (1) As its cause, when righteousness works and produces this life, viz., "the righteousness of faith." "He that believeth in Him hath everlasting life." (2) As its end. "That, being made free from sin, we might have our fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." (*P. Strutt.*) *The blessed experience and hope of a true Christian*:—I. WHAT IS THE RELIGION OF A TRUE CHRISTIAN? 1. It does not chiefly consist—(1) In any opinions which he may embrace, however scriptural and correct. (2) In any modes or forms of piety, however excellent. (3) In preserving an inoffensive and blameless conduct before men. (4) In what are termed good works, whether done to the bodies or souls of men. 2. But in being "in Christ," and having "Christ in him." These two phrases are not quite synonymous, yet they imply each other, and cannot be separated (John xiv. 20). (1) The former is used in chap. viii. 1, xvi. 7; 1 Cor. i. 30; 2 Cor. v. 17; 1 Thess. iv. 14; Rev. xiv. 13. It implies—(*a*) Having an interest in Him, as a woman in her husband (chap. vii. 4). (*b*) Union with Him, as a branch with the tree in which it grows. (*c*) Or a member with the head of the body to which it belongs. (2) The other implies that Christ is in us, as the leaven in the meal, the sap of the root in the branch, as the light of the sun in the air, as the heat of the fire in the coal or the iron. He is in us—(*a*) As our wisdom, enlightening us in the knowledge of God and ourselves, so as to produce repentance; and of Christ, so as to beget confidence (chap. xv. 12; Eph. i. 12, 13), and love. (*b*) As our righteousness, producing justification, peace with God, and a hope of immortality. (*c*) As our sanctification, delivering us from the power, and, at length, from the whole influence of sin, consecrating us to God, and conforming us to His image. (*d*) As our redemption, that having redeemed our whole persons by price, He may rescue all by power. (3) Christ is thus "formed in us." On our part, by faith (John xvii. 20–23; Gal. ii. 20; Eph. iii. 17), and on the part of God by His Spirit (John xiv. 20; 1 John iii. 24; Rom. viii. 8, 9). II. THIS RELIGION, AT PRESENT, PRODUCES NO MATERIAL CHANGE IN THE BODY, WHICH STILL REMAINS "DEAD BECAUSE OF SIN." 1. The body is under sentence to die (Gal. iii. 19; Heb. ix. 27). (1) It is in its own nature mortal, having all the seeds of dissolution, bringing upon us old age and death, even if particular diseases should be escaped. (2) It is encompassed with infirmities and exposed to diseases. (3) It is a constant clog to the soul, impeding its motions and preventing its activity. Hence we "groan, being burdened" (2 Cor. v. 4). 2. All this is because of sin; the sin of our first parents (chap. v. 12), being seminally one with them, or through the derivation of our nature from them, just as Levi paid tithes to Melchisedec in Abraham (Heb. vii. 9, 10); besides which we have committed actual sins, the wages of which are death (chap. vi. 23). 3. Here we have the true reason why "the world knoweth us not" as being the children of God. They only judge by appearance, and hence they conclude that all that is said of Christians as having the Spirit of God, and being new creatures, is mere enthusiasm. For they have no idea of any spiritual change. III. THIS RELIGION PRODUCES A BLESSED CHANGE IN THE INNER MAN. "The Spirit is life because of righteousness," in which clause the opposition to the former is threefold: spirit is opposed to body, life to death, and righteousness to sin. 1. Man consists of a soul as well as a body, which soul will live when the body dies. 2. This

spiritual part is by nature involved in moral death (Eph. ii. 1–5; Col. ii. 13), under wrath (Eph. iv. 18), and "carnally minded" (chap. viii. 6). But by "Christ in it" it is made "alive from this death" (chap. vi. 13). Christians live by Him, through His influence; to Him, in fulfilling His will; like Him, a wise, holy, useful, happy life. 3. This spiritual life they have "because of," or through, "righteousness" (John xs. 31, vi. 53, 57, xi. 25, 26; Gal. ii. 20). Through justifying righteousness they have the favour of God, through sanctifying righteousness they have the image of God; through practical righteousness, or obedience, they walk with God, and obtain more and more of a spiritual mind. Through the same righteousness they have eternal life. Through their justification they are entitled to it; through their sanctification they are fitted for it; through practical obedience they are in the way to it; and through faith (Heb. xi. 1) they have an earnest of it (John vi. 47). Happiness is indeed the result of the whole. Justification, and the favour of God, bring peace, hope, and joy; sanctification brings deliverance from restless and distressing lusts and passions; practical righteousness brings the approbation of God, and the testimony of a good conscience. IV. THIS RELIGION WILL HEREAFTER PRODUCE, OR BE REWARDED WITH, A MOST IMPORTANT CHANGE, EVEN OF THE OUTWARD MAN. For "if the Spirit of Him that raised," &c. Not only is immortality implied, but this mortal body also shall be quickened. The bodies of all, indeed, will rise from their graves (John v. 28, 29), but the righteous only to what is worthy the name of life. For this we have Christ's promise (John vi. 39–44, 54), of which we have pledges in His resurrection (1 Cor. xv. 12–20) and His Spirit's indwelling. The mortal body shall be quickened. 1. That we may be judged in the body for "the deeds done in the body." 2. That the children of the great King, and the brethren and sisters of the Son of God, may not be found naked, but clothed with an external glory, exactly answering to, and perfectly descriptive of, their internal graces and virtues. 3. That we may be conformable to the Lord Jesus, in body as well as soul, and so fit to dwell with Him (1 Cor. xv. 47–49). 4. In honour of the Holy Spirit, whose temples our bodies now are. 5. That our triumph over Satan may be perfectly complete, no part of us being lost. 6. And with respect to all, that we may rise higher from the ruins of the fall than the state we had been in before (1 Cor. xv. 36–38, 42–44). (*J. Benson.*) *Believers not subject to spiritual death:*— For the first, to wit, the evil itself, that is here expressed to be mortality or bodily death, the body is dead. Dead—that is, subject to death. This is the state of the body, and even in the servants of God themselves, in whom Christ Himself dwells by His Spirit, are subject to death as well as others. The bodies of Christians are frail and mortal as well as the bodies of any other men. This is grounded partly upon the general sentence which is passed upon all men (Heb. ix. 27). And partly also upon those frail principles whereof the godly themselves do consist in their natural condition. It is no wonder for dust to return to dust. First, to teach us to be frequently in the thoughts and meditations hereof, we should look upon our bodies as mortal and corruptible, even the best that are here in this world. That they have this treasure in earthen vessels. Secondly, we should hence be persuaded against all inordinate care of the body, pampering of it, and glorying in the excellencies and accomplishments of it; for, alas! it will quickly be dissolved and lie in the dust. Thirdly, let us not from hence be offended at the troubles of the children of God here in this life, that they are in deaths oft. While their bodies are subject to death, it is no marvel that their lives are also subject to affliction. Though Christ be in you, yet the body which you carry about you is dead. And that is the first particular here considerable, which is the evil itself. The second is the occasion of this evil, or the ground whereupon it proceeds, and that is guilt. The body is dead because of sin (chap. v. 12). It is sin which exposes all men, both good and bad, to the stroke of death. First, take it remotely, because of sin; that is, of the first sin and transgression that was in the world. Secondly, because of sin; that is, because of actual sin, and sin considered more immediately and proximately. There is a double influence which sin may be said to have upon death as causal of it. First, it hath sometimes, and in some cases and persons, a physical and productive influence upon it, as immediately and directly effecting it, and bringing it about. There are abundance of persons in the world whose very sins are their death by their luxury, and wantonness, and intemperance—"the body is dead because of sin." But secondly, it is always so in a moral, and considered demeritoriously. So that wherever there is death there is sin antecedent to it. The consideration of this point may be thus far useful to us, as it may serve, first, to convince us of the grievous nature of sin, and to humble us under the guilt and sense of it, as being

that which brings so much evil and mischief with it, as consequent upon it. And if we are not sensible of it as it is an offence and dishonour to God, yet let us at least be sensible of it as it is a grievance and annoyance to ourselves, and occasions the greatest evil to us of anything else. And so let us learn to justify God in His dealings with us, and to condemn ourselves as the causes of our own suffering. The second is the qualification, "But the Spirit is life because of righteousness." Wherein, as in the former, we have two particulars more. First, the benefit itself; and secondly, the ground of this benefit. First, for the benefit itself, "The Spirit is life." This, it is life, or lives (as some translations carry it), namely, the life of grace here, and the life of glory hereafter. This is the meaning of the words. And the point which we learn from them is this—that God's children, although they be mortal, in regard of their bodies, yet they are in a state of immortality in regard of their souls: "The Spirit is life." While we say that God's children do live in regard of their souls, this is not to be taken exclusively, but rather emphatically; not exclusively, as denying the immortality of the souls of other men, but emphatically, as fastening a special immortality upon these. But now when it is said here in the text that the souls of God's children live, we are to take it in a twofold explication. First, for the life of grace. They live such a life as this even when their bodies are in a manner dead, that is, subject or near unto it. "The just shall live by faith" (chap. i. 17). There may be a lively and vigorous soul in a withered and decayed body. Then when the flesh is ready to perish, yet the spirit may flourish (2 Cor. iv. 17). This is so upon this account—first, because they are lives of a several nature and kind. Now thus it is with the flesh and the spirit, with the body and the soul, the life of nature and the life of grace. These are lives of a different kind, and so they do not mutually depend one upon the other. These things which are hurtful to the one, they do not prejudice the other. Secondly, there is this also in it, that the good of one is sometimes so much the more advanced and promoted by the prejudice of the other. Those who are always well and in health, they do for the most part little consider of their latter end, neither are they so careful to provide for a better world; whereas those who are sick, they are often put upon such thoughts as these are. Those tenants who have often warning given them to depart out of their house, they are careful to provide themselves a dwelling somewhere else. The consideration of this point may be thus far useful to us. First, as it may serve for an encouragement to the children of God in the midst of all those bodily infirmities which they are subject to here in this life. What though their bodies decay, yet their souls and spirits may live; and this is that which is chiefly to be looked after by them. There are a good many people in the world whose care is all taken up about their outward man. Secondly, here is that also which calls us to search and self-inquiry. And whether does sickness and weakness and diseases and distempers of body make us better or no in our spirits and inward man? The second is the life of glory. The Spirit is life—that is, it lives such a life as this. This is grounded not only upon the nature of the soul itself, which cannot die, but more especially upon the decree and purpose and promise of God Himself, who hath appointed us to obtain salvation by Jesus Christ, as the apostle elsewhere speaks. The use of this point is very comfortable against the inordinate fear of death. And so as for death in any other way whatsoever, here is that which does serve very much to mollify and mitigate it to them, and the thoughts of it either as to their own particular persons or to their Christian friends dying in the Lord. That though it be a privation of one life, yet it is a promotion of another; and though it separates the soul from the body, and other friends here below in the world, yet it joins it so much the closer to Christ, and makes them partakers of a better estate and condition in a better place. If Christ be in them, though the body be dead, yet the Spirit is life. And that is the first particular which is here observable and considerable of us in this second general, to wit, the benefit itself. The second is the ground of this benefit, and that is expressed in these words, "Because of righteousness." We are to understand two things, either first of all the righteousness of Christ imputed, which gives us a right and title to salvation; or else, secondly, inherent righteousness, as a condition required in that subject which shall indeed be saved: in either sense it is because of righteousness. This shows us, first, what great cause we have, all that may be, to labour to get into Christ, and to endeavour to become members of His body, that so, partaking of His righteousness, we may consequently partake of His salvation and of eternal life itself. Secondly, seeing our souls came to live by virtue of the righteousness of Christ, meriting and procuring at the hands of God this life for us, this, then, shows us how

far we are indeed beholden to Christ, and what cause we have to be thankful to Him, even as much as to one who has redeemed us from death itself and hath bestowed life upon us. And so now, according to this interpretation of the words, we have here in this present verse set forth unto us the admirable effects of the being of Christ in believers, and that in two points especially. First, in point of mortification, there is a killing of sin in them; the body is dead because of sin. Secondly, in point of vivification, grace is alive and active in them. The Spirit is life because of righteousness. The ground hereof is taken, first, from the nature of all life in general, which is to be operative and active. Secondly, from the end of spiritual life in particular, which is especially to serve God. (*Thomas Horton, D.D.*)

Delivered from sin rather than from its natural consequences:—Some of the hardest burdens which men bear are the consequences of their past weaknesses and sins. There is a certain deep and lasting satisfaction in making expiation for one's offences, and in recognising in one's own soul the evidences of a genuine sorrow; but when the sin, instead of retreating into the background, walks with us day by day in its effects and results, there are times when the bravest spirit grows faint and discouraged in such companionship. One feels in such moments as if the sin ought to be blotted out in its material effects as truly as in its spiritual results. But this cannot be. No such promise is anywhere to be found in the revelation of God's purpose to men. We are delivered from our sins, and that is matter for deep and eternal rejoicing; but we are not and cannot be delivered wholly from the consequences of our sins. Those offences have become operative causes in the universal order of things, and we must stand by and see results flow from them, no matter how agonising the spectacle may be. But this experience, though often intensely painful, ought not to be crushing; it is from our sins and not from their effects that we care most to be delivered. That deliverance is for eternity; the effects are for time only. But there is in the immutability of the law which preserves the evil that men do in life a sublime and awful vindication of the steadfastness and eternal justice of Him who forgiveth our iniquities—who has, in fact, borne them. Once forgiven for Christ's sake, these iniquities are washed clean from the soul; but there is constant need that he who has gone through this ordeal shall see clearly the awful crime of offending against the laws of life, and that he shall be accompanied perpetually by the witnesses to this great truth. When the consequences of former weaknesses and sins, accompanying us year after year, become to us, not avenging Furies, but angels of Divine justice, this companionship will not dismay us, but will serve as a new inspiration. One may make, even of the consequences of his sins, sources of strength rather than of weakness. He who accepts these things as the inevitable results of his own action, and recognises in them the working of an immutable and righteous law, will be kept humble by them, will be restrained from other departures from rectitude, and will draw from their companionship a deeper and deeper sense of that misery from which he has escaped, and of the permanent joy and peace into which he has entered.

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