THE BIBLICAL ILLUSTRATOR.

HEBREWS.

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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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HEBREWS.

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INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

Authorship of the Epistle.—In spite of the antiquity and authority of the Epistle, no writer of the Western Church in the first, second, or third century quotes it as St. Paul's; the first Latin writer who attributes it to St. Paul is Hilary, late in the fourth century; and in the fifth century both Jerome and Augustin, though loosely quoting it as St. Paul's, had serious misgivings about its direct genuineness. In the Eastern Church, Pantænus and Clement of Alexandria seem to have set the fashion of accepting the Pauline authorship; but on this subject even Origen felt grave doubts. Eusebius wavered about it, and admitted that the Epistle was counted spurious by many, but thought it might perhaps be a translation from an Aramaic original. Even in the Eastern Church it did not meet with unhesitating acceptance as a work of St. Paul. A Jewish rule, which has found unconscious acceptance in all ages, says that "Custom is Law." But if the Epistle to the Hebrews owes its recognition among the Epistles of St. Paul far more to an unthinking custom than to careful argument, how is it that such a custom arose? The answer is simple. It arose mainly in the Eastern Church from the initiative of Pantænus, and it was only accepted in the Western Church, after considerable hesitation, by the force of example. In both Churches it originated, not from trustworthy tradition, but from the superficial acceptance of *prima facie* phenomena. The general theology of the Epistle was Pauline, and the finer differences escaped notice. Many characteristic phrases coincided with those in St. Paul's Epistles, and were current in his school of thought. The allusions at the close of the Epistle led to the careless assumption that they were penned by St. Paul. The observation of similarities is easy to any one; the detection of differences, which, however deep, are yet to some extent latent, is only perceptible to students who do not rely upon authority and tradition except so far as they are elements in the sacred search for truth. Nothing can more decisively prove the incompetence of a mechanical consensus than the fact that millions of readers have failed to perceive, even in the original, the dissimilarity of style, of method, and of theologic thought, which proves that the same pen could not have written, nor the same mind have originated, the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Epistles of St. Paul. Luther showed his usual insight and robust sense when he saw that Heb. ii. 3 could not have been written by the author of Gal. i. 1, 12. Again, though the author does not fall into any demonstrable error in his allusion to the details of Temple worship in chaps. vii. 27, ix. 3, 4, x. 11, yet he goes to the verge of apparent inaccuracies, against which St. Paul, who was familiar with the Temple service, would surely have guarded himself. In reading the Epistle to the Hebrews we are in contact with the mind of a great and original writer of the Apostolic age, whose name escaped discovery till modern times. It is hardly worth while to quote later authorities. They can have no effect but to impose upon the ignorant. They simply float with the stream. They are uncritical, and therefore valueless. When such writers as Clement of Alexandria and Origen in the Eastern Church, and Jerome and Augustin in the Western, had made timid concessions to the

custom of popularly quoting the Epistle as St. Paul's, it was natural that later writers should follow their example. Gradually, by the aid of conciliar decrees, prevalent assumption hardened into ecclesiastical conviction. The result of the evidence may be summed up by saying that, as far as the evidence of antiquity is concerned, loose conjecture tended in one direction and genuine criticism in the other. . . . But among thoughtful writers who really turned their attention to the matter, the old doubts on the subject were by no means extinguished. In the Western Church the Epistle was not publicly read to the same extent or on the same footing as the others, even at the close of the fourth century. The assertion that it was written by St. Paul was sometimes accompanied with modifications, in the fifth century. It had never been commented on by any Latin writer as late as the sixth. In the seventh, Isidore of Seville records that many still attributed it, at least in part, to Barnabas or Clement "because of the discrepancy of style." Even in the ninth it is entirely omitted by the Codex Boernerianus, and only appears in a Latin translation in the celebrated F, the Codex Augiensis. But long before the ninth century, and for centuries afterwards, the science of criticism was forgotten. St. Thomas of Aquinum, in the thirteenth century, repeats the old objections in order to refute them by the old arguments; but all doubt on the subject was lulled to sleep by the spell of ecclesiastical infallibility. Then came the reviving dawn of the sixteenth century, when "Greece rose from the dead with the New Testament in her hand." Erasmus, while confessing his willingness to accept any definition of the Church on the subject, yet quotes some of the Fathers to show the absurdity of the pseudo-orthodoxy which condemned a man as "plusquam heretical" if he doubted about the authorship of this Epistle. His own opinion was that St. Paul did not write it. Luther calls attention to its style, and quotes various passages to show that it could not have been written by St. Paul or by any apostle. While speaking of it with admiration as "strong, mighty, and lofty Epistle," he considers that its Scriptural method indicates the authorship of Apollos, and says that at any rate it is the work of "an excellent apostolic man." Calvin, again—while, like some of the Fathers, he *popularly* quotes it as "the Apostle's"—says that he cannot be induced to recognise it as St. Paul's because it differs from him in its style and method of teaching, and because the writer speaks of himself as a pupil of the apostles, a thing very alien from St. Paul's custom. Melancthon never quotes it as St. Paul's. The Magdeburg Centuriators denied that it was his. Grotius and Limborch and Le Clerc supposed it to have been written by St. Luke, Apollos, or some companion of St. Paul. Then for a time the tyranny of indolent custom began once more to reassert itself. During the seventeenth century, and long afterwards, especially in England, no one, without incurring dislike or suspicion, could hint, even apologetically, at any doubt as to whether the translators of the English Bible were in the right when they headed the Epistle, "The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews." But since the time of Semler (1763) many eminent writers have practically set the question at rest by furnishing the results of that close examination which prove, not only that St. Paul was not the actual writer—a fact which had been patent even in the days of Origen—but that it is not even indirectly due to his authorship. The phraseology has been passed through a fresh mint, and the thoughts have been subjected to the crucible of another individuality. It will, therefore, serve no purpose to heap up words and phrases which are common to the author and to St. Paul. Many, indeed, of those which have been adduced belong to the current coin of Christian theology. Those that are distinctively Pauline only prove a point which every one is ready to concede, that the writer had adopted much of the apostle's teaching, and had been deeply influenced by his companionship. It is this very fact which throws into relief the positive dissimilarities. Again, it is vain to talk about difference of subject or difference of aim as furnishing any explanation of these dissimilarities. We have writings of St. Paul on all kinds of topics, and at all ages of his mature life; and though the style of a writer may vary in different moods, as the style of St. Paul in the Epistle to the Ephesians differs from that in the Pastoral Epistles, yet every style retains a certain stamp of individuality. Now, the differences between the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Epistles of St. Paul are differences which go down to the root of the being. That the same pen should have been engaged on both is a psychological impossibility. The Greek is far better than the Greek of St. Paul. St. Paul is often stately and often rhetorical, and sometimes writes more in the style of a treatise than of a letter; but the stateliness and rhetoric and systematic treatment of the Epistle to the Hebrews in

no way resemble his. The form and rhythm of its sentences are wholly different. Paul is often impassioned and often argumentative, and so is the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews; but the passion and the dialectics of the latter furnish the most striking contrast to those of the former. The writer cites differently from St. Paul; he writes differently; he argues differently; he thinks differently; he declaims differently; he constructs and connects his sentences differently; he builds up his paragraphs on a wholly different model. His style is the style of a man of genius who thinks as well as writes in Greek: whereas St. Paul wrote in Greek, and thought in Syriac. The notion that the Epistle is a translation may be set aside. A translation may be very able, but it can never bear upon its surface such marks of originality as we find in this Epistle. Its eloquence belongs to the language in which it is composed. The movement of this author is that of an Oriental sheikh with his robes of honour wrapped around him; the movement of St. Paul is that of an athlete girded for the race. The rhetoric of this writer, even when it is at its most majestic volume, is like the smooth flow of a river amid green fields; the rhetoric of St. Paul is like the rush of a mountain torrent amid opposing rocks. (*Archdeacon Farrar.*) Tertullian's hypothesis that Barnabas was the author had no basis in tradition. His anxiety to bring the Epistle into esteem led him to confound it with the Epistle of St. Barnabas, which perhaps he had heard of, but not seen. The Western Church, had they really believed the Epistle to be even the composition of Barnabas, would not so easily have set it aside. The Oriental tradition, on the other hand, persistently declared it to be Pauline, and the private opinions which made a Luke or a Clement to have had a hand in its production rested, at any rate, on grounds of reason and criticism. St. Clement's connection with it was made to rest on the *grandis similitudo* between it and the style of his Epistles to the Corinthians. But this *grandis similitudo* is after all illusory—the result of direct plagiarisms from our Epistle. The difference is immeasurable between the originality, profundity, and nervous strength of the Epistle to the Hebrews and the simply reproductive, diffuse, and sermonising character of the Epistles to the Corinthians. The other conjecture therefore remains, that the Epistle to the Hebrews is a work of St. Paul which owes its present form to the intervention of St. Luke. And this happens to be the first view of its origin which is presented to us in Christian antiquity. We cannot indeed assert positively that Clemens Alexandrinus, who gives this view in his *Hypotyposes*, himself derived it from those before him. But one thing is noteworthy—he first states as a fact that St. Luke translated and published the Epistle for the Greeks, and then by this fact explains the similarity between its diction and that of the Acts of the Apostles. He does not, as would be natural in the case of a mere conjecture, derive the fact from the observed similarity, but accounts for the similarity after stating the fact. His testimony therefore remains the only one well-founded statement which Christian antiquity has handed down to us concerning the origin of the Epistle. (*F. Delitzsch, D.D.*) The happy suggestion of Luther, that Apollos might be the author of the epistle has commended itself to many since his time. The author was certainly such a man as Apollos—a certain Jew . . . an Alexandrian by race, a learned man . . . mighty in the Scriptures . . . instructed in the way of the Lord . . . fervent in spirit . . . and one that powerfully confuted the Jews, showing by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ (Acts xviii. 24–28). More felicitous words could not be found to describe a writer whose thinking moves on the lines of the primitive Jewish Christianity, who is possessed of Alexandrian culture, and who wields with such skill and fervour the weapon of the Alexandrian exegesis. (*A. B. Davidson, LL.D.*) Even in minor matters we have the same congruence between Apollos and the writer of this Epistle. We are told that he was originally acquainted only with the baptism of John, and this writer places the "doctrine of baptisms" among the rudiments of Christian teaching. We are told that "he began to speak with confident boldness in the synagogue," and this writer has a high estimate of confident boldness as a virtue which the Christian should always retain. Lastly, we see in Apollos the rare combination of a dislike of prominence with a remarkable power of oratory. This is exemplified in his refusal of the invitation of the Corinthians, some of whom so greatly admired his culture and oratory that they preferred his teaching even to that of St. Paul. In that generous refusal he displayed the very feeling which would have induced him to suppress all personal references, even when his readers were perfectly well acquainted with the name and antecedents of him who was addressing them. It is stated as an insuperable

objection to this theory that the Church of Alexandria retained no tradition that this Epistle was written by their brilliant fellow-countryman. But although Apollos was an Alexandrian by birth and training, it does not follow that he had lived in his native city, and as he had left the city before he became a Christian, he might have been a stranger to the Alexandrian Christians. We do not hear a word about the Epistle in that Church until a century after it was written. At any rate, this difficulty is not so great as that which arises from the supposition that the Epistle was the work of St. Paul, and yet was not recognised as such for some centuries by the Western Church, and only partially and hesitatingly by the Eastern. For there would be every temptation to attribute the work to the apostle, and none to associate it with the name of Apollos, which, except in one or two Churches, seems to have been but little known. It is not a decisive objection to the Apollonian authorship that no one is known to have suggested it before Luther. In the early centuries the Epistle was only assigned to this or that author by a process of tentative guesswork. Those who saw that St. Paul could not have been the actual author often adopted one of the arbitrary hypotheses, that it is a translation, or that the sentiments and the language were supplied by different persons. The self-suppression of Apollos resulted in the comparative obscurity of his work, and the Fathers, having nothing but conjecture to deal with, fixed upon names every one of which was more generally familiar than that of the eloquent Alexandrian. And if it be strange that the name of Apollos should not have been preserved by the Church to which the letter was despatched, we may account for this by the absence of superscription, and by the fact that it was only addressed to the Jewish section of that Church. This much may be said with certainty, that if it were not written by Apollos, at any rate the evidence which points to him as its author is more various and more conclusive than that which can be adduced to support the claims of any one else. (*Archdeacon Farrar.*) May we not say that this Epistle resembles, in these respects, the great Melchisedec of sacred story, of whom its central portion treats? Like him, it marches forth in lonely, royal, and sacerdotal dignity, and like him is without genealogy. We know not whence it cometh nor whither it goeth. (*F. Delitzsch, D.D.*) Whoever is the author of this Epistle, its value and authority remain the same. "We may compare it," says Thiersch, "to a painting of perfect beauty, which had been regarded as a work of Raphael. If it should be proved that it was not painted by Raphael, we have thereby not lost a classical piece of art, but gained another master of first rank."

To whom the Epistle was Written.—1. The heading "To the Hebrews" is the proper heading of the Epistle, and is found from the time that the Epistle is historically mentioned in connection with other New Testament books. This inscription does not come from the hand of the original writer of the Epistle. It originated, no doubt, in the course of transcription, and whether it rests on tradition, or was suggested by the contents of the Epistle, cannot be ascertained. Any one reading the Epistle now would stamp it with the same title, apart from all tradition respecting its origin or destination. The term "Hebrews" is used in a wider and in a narrower sense. In a wider sense, it describes all who were descendants of Abraham, wherever they resided, and whatever language they spoke (2 Cor. xi. 22; Phil. iii. 5). In its narrower sense, it describes Jews living in Palestine and using the native language of that country (Acts vi. 1, ix. 27). There is nothing to determine in which of these senses the term is used in the superscription to the Epistle. The phrase "To the Hebrews" might mean of itself that the Epistle was addressed to all Christians of Jewish extraction; but the local colour of the Epistle is very distinct, and the allusions are of such a kind as to make it certain that the Epistle was addressed to "Hebrews" in a particular locality. No allusion is made in the Epistle to Gentile believers, and this seems to imply that it was written to a community consisting exclusively of Jewish Christians, or one at least in which the Hebrew element very greatly predominated. 2. The Hebrews to whom the Epistle was addressed had not been themselves hearers of the Lord, but had received the gospel from those who heard Him (chap. ii. 3), and who worked many wonders in attestation of their preaching (chap. ii. 4). The Church had not apparently been founded by mere believers from Palestine congregating in numbers in the locality, but by some apostolic missionaries, themselves direct hearers of the Lord (chap. ii. 3, xiii. 7; comp. x. 32, where their enlightenment is referred to as a distinct historical event). Their conversion to the faith of Christ was a thing that, when

the Epistle was written, had long taken place; for, on account of the time, they ought themselves to have been teachers (chap. v. 12); those who brought the gospel to them were already dead (chap. xiii. 7); and their history had been one of varied vicissitudes, for on the back of their first faith they had been subjected to sharp persecutions (chap. x. 32), though presumably their later history, until recently (chap. xii. 4, 11–13), had been more peaceful. In the early days of their faith they had shown much enthusiasm and public spirit, taking joyfully the spoiling of their goods, and voluntarily sharing the reproaches and sympathising with the bonds of those who suffered in the Christian cause (chap. x. 33, 34); and this spirit of sympathy and love to their suffering brethren, which had been their characteristic always, continued to distinguish them when this apostle addressed them. Nevertheless, in these later days, a change for the worse had come over them. External circumstances were perhaps beginning again to press heavily upon them, and their condition of mind was not, as it had been in former times, such as to enable them to bear up successfully against them. The reproach which they suffered was one no doubt common to the people of God in all ages (chap. xi. 25, 26), but it was something more specific, it was the reproach of Christ, and borne at the hands of their own countrymen (chap. xiii. 13). The apostle tells them they have need of patience (chap. x. 36); he admits that their Christian course is a hard race (chap. xii. 1); their afflictions are severe, and he endeavours to set them in such a light as will more than reconcile them to them—they are not accidents, they are the chastisements of a Father, and proof of their true sonship, common to them with all sons, and indeed with the Son Himself (chap. xii. 7–10, xii. 2); he sets before them the example of the great worthies of former days, Abraham (chap. vi. 15) and the cloud of witnesses, who patiently endured and are now made perfect (chap. xi.); and, above all, he reminds them that they have a great High Priest, Jesus the Son of God, who can be touched with the feeling of their infirmities, and exhorts them to come with confidence to the throne of grace, to obtain help in time of need (chap. iv. 14–16, v. 1–5, xii. 2–4). These severe trials their condition of mind unhappily made them ill fitted to meet. Though they had been so long enlightened that they ought to have been themselves teachers, they had again need that some one should teach them the first elements of Christian truth (chap. v. 12); they had become children in intelligence, having need of milk, and were incapable of receiving such solid food as this apostle desired to offer them when he wished to bring the Melchisedec priesthood of the Son before them; they were growing sluggish, and no more imitators of the faith and patience of those who inherit the promises (chap. vi. 12). This want of interest was leading them to cease to frequent the Christian meetings for mutual confirmation and edifying (chap. x. 25). They were casting away their joyful confidence (chap. x. 35). And besides this general coldness that was creeping over them, there were perhaps some symptoms showing themselves of a mistrust of their teachers, and suspicion of their teaching, possibly owing to influences from without (chap. xiii. 17, 18)—to which influences may also have been due a tendency to busy themselves with meats, and to be carried aside by strange teachings, forgetful of the teaching of those who first spoke to them the Word of God (chap. xiii. 7–9).

3. Beyond the reference in the words, "they of Italy salute you" (chap. xiii. 24), no allusion is made to any locality by name. "They of Italy" means those belonging to Italy, and the words might be said of such persons whether they were, when spoken of, in Italy or out of it. The mention of them of Italy, however, seems to imply one of two things: either the author of the Epistle wrote from Italy, and added to his own the salutations of the Christians there, or he wrote to some locality in Italy, and sent the salutations of some Italian brethren, who were beside him, to the Church of their native country. No other reason for such a special reference to them of Italy suggests itself naturally. The Epistle seems to have been written from or to Italy. (1) An opinion widely received has been, that the Epistle was written from Italy to the Church of Jerusalem. It is difficult to reconcile this opinion, in regard to the destination of the Epistle, with many things said in it. In chap. ii. 3, it is said that the Hebrews owed their knowledge of the great salvation not to the Lord Himself, but to them who heard Him. At whatever date the Epistle was written, there must have been many persons living in the Church at Jerusalem who had heard Christ Himself; and, besides, the Church seems everywhere treated as having throughout its history a personal identity. Elsewhere (chap. x. 32), the "enlightenment" of the Hebrews is spoken of as a distinct historical event, and in a manner scarcely applicable to the ministry of our Lord. Again, the low condition of Christian knowledge in the community (chap. v. 11) can scarcely be supposed

that of the original Church at Jerusalem, and the reproach, that for the time they ought to have been teachers, sounds very strangely if said of a community from which teachers had gone out to all the world. It is difficult to suggest any period in the history of the Jerusalem Church during which a liberal-minded Hellenist like the author, who was probably ignorant of Hebrew, and who could in an off-hand way dispose of the whole Old Testament ritual as "standing on meats and drinks and divers washings" (chap. ix. 10), and "useless" (chap. vii. 18), could have stood in such relations to this Church, or at which his restoration to it along with Timothy, the devoted attendant of St. Paul, could be looked forward to as an event (chap. xiii. 19, 23). (2) Failing Jerusalem, it has been thought that Rome answered the conditions of the problem better than any other locality, and the Epistle is considered by many to have been addressed to the Jewish portion of the Roman Church, or to the Roman Church in general, which was probably largely composed of Hebrews. (*a*) In this way the salutation of "them of Italy" is satisfactorily explained—they were Italians present with the writer in some place out of Italy. (*b*) The Epistle was very early known at Rome, being largely made use of by Clement of Rome before the end of the first century. (*c*) The interest of the Church in Timothy is readily understood. (*d*) The author's presumed familiarity with the Epistle to the Romans is easily explained. (*e*) The allusion to meats (chap. xiii. 7) indicates an ascetic tendency such as is exposed in Rom. xiv., and the divers and strange teachings (chap. xiii. 9) are such as were to be expected in a city which was the intellectual centre of the world, and, naturally, a hotbed of speculations and heresies, and from which in fact proceeded many strange opinions which distracted the early Church, and fill some of the most interesting pages of her history. (*f*) It is known that at an early period, about the year 50, the Jews, that is, probably the Christian Jews, were expelled from Rome by the Emperor Claudius, a fact which might explain the allusion to loss of goods and the like (chap. x. 32). Some of these considerations are not without weight; others have very little force. Even if the reference in chap. xiii. 7, &c., were to ascetic tendencies, which is far from certain, the Epistle to the Colossians, and the whole history of the age, show that such moral developments were to be found in many places. The most that can be said is, that they were found in Rome also. On the other hand, there are difficulties not easy to surmount in the way of the Roman theory. The Church at Rome was probably founded, not by the preaching of any apostolic man, but by the congregating there of believers from Palestine and other parts of the world (Acts ii. 10). The Hebrews, on the contrary, were evangelised by hearers of the Lord, amidst many signs and wonders and gifts of the Holy Ghost (chap. ii. 3, 4; comp. Acts viii. 6, xiv. 3). Elsewhere (chap. x. 32) their enlightenment is referred to as a distinct historical event; and these two things together naturally suggest that the Hebrews received the gospel from some apostolic men in the course of a special missionary tour. Further, the Epistle must have been written some time, and it is usually thought only a very few years, after the Neronic persecution (A.D. 64 and after). Close upon their enlightenment the Hebrews sustained a great conflict of sufferings (chap. x. 32). These are referred to in the Epistle distantly as the "former days." The reference can scarcely be to the persecutions of Nero. On the other hand, if Roman Christians are addressed, it is impossible that all reference to these persecutions should be awanting. We can find a way out of this difficulty only by desperate shifts. We must suppose that the afflictions alluded to in chap. x. 32 are the Neronic persecutions; then, that the author assumed that these followed close upon the conversion of the Roman Church, which he must have regarded as a definite historical occurrence, and due to the preaching of the Apostle Paul and perhaps Peter; and finally, that the Epistle was not written for a very considerable number of years after this period. The date of the Epistle is no doubt uncertain. But if the author made the above assumptions, he must have read history in a strange way; and if, as is supposed, he was familiar with St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, he must have perused the work of his master with very little attention, especially that part of it where he mentions members of the Roman Church who were of note among the apostles, and in Christ before him (chap. xvi. 7). Neither are the terms of chap. x. 32 adequate to describe the ferocious cruelties of the Neronic persecution; and, as has been said, the passage chap. xiii. 7 does not imply death by violent means. Again, it is difficult to find in history a time at which the Roman Church, the most lively and vigorous of the Churches, could be described in the terms employed in chap. v. 11. Once more, the Roman Judaism, as we know it from the Epistle to the Romans, was of the usual Pharisaic type. It

is possible indeed that St. Paul the Pharisee found Pharisaic Judaism everywhere, as he conceived it under that aspect, and that this author, the Hellenist, contemplated Judaism under another aspect, a Judaism with an allegorical tendency, which resolved the "customs" into ideas and principles, and was not bound fast to external practice. But while there may be truth in this, it is plain that the author assumes that his readers will go along with him in most of his opinions, and that the type of Judaism exhibited in the Epistle is real. (3) Others have thought of Alexandria. Naturally, Alexandria, as the centre of Hellenistic Judaism, offers what answers to the conditions of the problem in general. But no particular trait in the Epistle seems to point to Alexandria. Though the Epistle was early known and highly valued among the Alexandrians, no trace of the opinion appears that they were the recipients of it. On the contrary, the prevailing tradition in Alexandria, connected with the belief of its Pauline authorship, was that the Epistle was addressed to the Hebrews of Palestine. Upon the whole, while nothing approaching to certainty can be reached, some community of the Dispersion in the East—not, however, Jerusalem, nor any Church in its immediate neighbourhood—with a Hellenistic type of Judaism, best suits the circumstances of the case. The imprisonment of Timothy (chap. xiii. 23) would probably be in Rome, or somewhere in Italy, and the letter was probably addressed from that country, whither the author had gone, either on a missionary enterprise or on some other call, and where he was waiting to be joined by Timothy when he wrote it. This might account for the letter being so early known in Rome, and for the consistent denial there of its Pauline authorship. (*A. B. Davidson, LL.D.*)

WHERE AND WHEN THE EPISTLE WAS WRITTEN.—The entire current of the Epistle throughout chap. v. 1–6, and chaps. vii.–x. inclusive, assumes that the temple was then standing, and that the priesthood and the whole sacrificial system were then in their normal operation. But the passage chap. viii. 13 shows that they were then "waxing old and ready to vanish away"—*i.e.*, the destruction of the temple, and the consequent cessation of the Mosaic sacrifices was very near at hand. Moreover, the love of those long-cherished institutions was still in its strength in the souls of Jewish converts, and hence was a grave temptation to relapse back from Christ into Judaism. The Epistle labours to withstand this special temptation. Yet, again; the Epistle was certainly written from Italy—probably written and sent, not from Rome itself, but from some point not far distant. If from Rome, some definite salutation would probably have indicated it. The Epistle alludes to Timothy's recent release from imprisonment. Have we any other intimation of this fact, and of the date of his release? Some critics have assumed such indications in Phil. ii. 19, 23, 24—an assumption strengthened by Paul's using the same language of Timothy as of himself: "I trust in the Lord to send Timothy shortly unto you"; "I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly"; but weakened by the doubt whether Timothy was detained by his own imprisonment or by Paul's, inasmuch as Paul says—"I hope to send him so soon as I shall see how it will go *with me*." It is not safe, therefore, on this authority, to date Timothy's imprisonment and release from the writing of this Epistle to Philippi (A.D. 62), though it *may* have occurred then. It is generally conceded that it occurred either in A.D. 62 or 64. If Timothy was imprisoned and released but once, it would carry with it the precise date of our Epistle to the Hebrews. With high probability we may fix its date not later than A.D. 64. Judaism and its temple were then nearing their final fall, as this Epistle assumes. (*H. Cowles, D.D.*) About five years after the date of this Epistle the Temple was burnt, and the Levitical service "vanished away." How inestimably precious a treasure would this Epistle then become to the scattered Hebrew Christians! (*W. Kay, D.D.*)

OCCASION OF THE EPISTLE.—If, as is usually supposed, the danger which the apostle sought to avert was a relapse of the Hebrews into Judaism, whether this was a Judaism that still held fast to the hope of Israel, though not according to knowledge, a thing with which St. Paul was able to sympathise (Rom. x. 2; Acts xxiii. 6–9), or rather a Judaism like that of the Sadducean high priest who crucified the Son of God (John xix. 15; Heb. vi. 6, x. 29), perhaps no special occurrence or circumstance calling forth the Epistle need be sought. The depressed condition of the Hebrew Christians in general, the overbearing attitude of their countrymen, the imposing memories of the national religion, the long delay of Christ's coming, and the imperfect understanding on the part of the Hebrews of the meaning of the

Christian atonement—these were all constant forces which circumstances of no great importance in themselves might at any moment aggravate so as to render the situation perilous. On the other hand, the free views of this apostle are not views which he has been led now only to form, or which he expresses now for the first time. And yet in some sense he belonged to the community of the Hebrews, and they sympathised in general with his teaching. It is, therefore, not impossible that in the passage chap. xiii. 7-10, so important and yet so difficult to estimate, we have a hint of the occasion that called forth the Epistle, though everywhere else the immediate motive of it is kept in the background. Chap. xiii. indicates throughout a certain strain in the relations of the Hebrews to their teachers and to the writer. And this may have been due to external influences (chap. xiii. 9). These influences, however, were but a single force among many, all bearing in the same direction; and this may account for the somewhat oblique manner in which they are referred to. Others have sought a more definite occasion in the fall of Jerusalem and the Temple. Though not actually engaged in the practice of the Temple worship, the Hebrews may still have regarded this as the bond of their national unity, and the symbol of their continued covenant relation to the God of their fathers, a relation within which their Christian faith itself was professed. The overthrow of the Temple services shattered this bond, and threatened to shake the foundations of their faith in general. And the object of the Epistle is supposed to be to meet this despair, by showing that this dissolution of the national service had been predicted and prepared for in the Old Testament, as history had now accomplished it, and that their Christian faith, instead of being involved in its fall, rose to its true place above its ruins. This view suits much that is said in the Epistle equally well with the other view, though it sets the whole in a different light. Any positive grounds for such a theory, however, are difficult to find. Such a despair ought to have seized all Hebrews alike, whether Christians or not; but there is no historical evidence of such a thing. The danger threatened in such a case would be utter irreligion, akin to heathenism. But the author, instead of warning his Hebrews against this, exhorts them to sever their connection wholly with their countrymen still adhering to the ancient faith (chap. xiii. 13). And such expressions as, "Fall away from the living God" (chap. iii. 12), "Ye have need again that some one teach you the rudiments of the oracles of God" (chap. v. 12), which have been appealed to as proof that the Hebrews were in danger of falling away from more than what was distinctively Christian, do not support such a conclusion. (*A. B. Davidson, LL.D.*)

NATURE AND METHOD OF THE EPISTLE.—Wherever the nature of the book is defined by early writers it is called an "Epistle." The description is substantially correct, though the construction of the writing is irregular. It opens without any address or salutation (comp. 1 John i. 1), but it closes with salutations (chap. xiii. 24 f). There are indeed personal references throughout, and in the course of the book there is a gradual transition from the form of an "essay" to that of a "letter": chaps. ii. 1, iii. 1, 12, iv. 1, 14, v. 11, vi. 9, x. 19, xiii. 7, 22 ff. The writer himself characterises his composition as λόγος παρακλήσεως (chap. xiii. 22); and the verb which he used of his communication (ἐπέστειλα), while it does not necessarily describe a letter, yet presupposes a direct personal address. (*Bp. Westcott.*) Originally, doubtless, it was not written as an actual Epistle, although in its present form such designation cannot be denied it. It divides itself, that is to say, into two easily distinguishable parts: a rhetorical essay on the theme of superiority of Christianity to Judaism, and an epistolary postscript, which has no further connection with the preceding, and perhaps was not in the original plan of the author. At every step a twofold parallel is drawn between the Old Covenant and the New: first with regard to their respective mediators, the angels and Moses on the one side, and the Son on the other; then with regard to their contents, promises, and results, wherein the unsatisfying, material, external, ever-repeated and ever ineffective character of the old temple, priest, and offering, is set in vivid contrast with the eternally enduring, valid, and efficacious one which the new revelation has brought to light. Impressive warnings are interspersed through the whole Epistle, and close it, showing that in this case also the building up of the Church was the aim of the work, not the desire to make an exhibition of acuteness. The method of the book, when compared with that of the other apostolic books, is one peculiar to the author, although by no means invented by him. It is based essentially upon the allegorical-typical interpretation of the Old Testament. This

had long been used in the philosophy of the Alexandrian Jewish schools. But since Christianity stood in much closer connection with the sacred writings of Israel than did the Greek philosophy, Christian writers may and must have early applied them with great felicity to the purposes of the gospel preaching. Only what had before been done rather occasionally and in single points appears here as the perfect model of the class, and at the same time as a successful attempt, by means of this particular way of looking at theological truth, to free the Jewish Christians from their confining attachment to their ancestral forms. There is, moreover, something very interesting in the peculiar form in which the fundamental ideas of this theology are expressed; hence it has in all ages called out a great number of imitators, most of them worthless. With great spiritual mastery the author raises his readers, bound down within the narrow limits of inherited Judaism, up to the free heights of the Pauline position, without causing them to recoil by too loud a shout of victory. Without giving countenance to any error, the well-known figures and familiar hopes are still found, and honour is still given to Moses in his house. The ancient period, with its memories and customs, is transformed into the living picture of a new age, revealed to faith; the Sabbath rest on this side the Jordan, never fully won, symbolises to the people of God the heights of a new mount of covenant, the Zion of the heavenly Jerusalem, where the High Priest is even now bringing an everlasting offering into the sanctuary. Perhaps at the very time when the master hand of the unknown author was delineating and adorning this new and imperishable sanctuary the thunder cloud was already gathering which was to lay the old earthly one upon Moriah in ashes. (*Prof. Reuss.*)

STYLE OF THE EPISTLE.—We are attracted and riveted by the majestic and sabbatic style of this Epistle. Nowhere in the New Testament writings do we meet language of such euphony and rhythm. A peculiar solemnity and anticipation of eternity breathe in these pages. The glow and flow of language, the stateliness and fulness of diction, are but an external manifestation of the marvellous depth and glory of spiritual truth, into which the apostolic author is eager to lead his brethren. The Epistle reminds us in this respect of the latter portion of the prophet Isaiah, in which, out of the abundance of an enraptured heart, flows such a mighty and beautiful stream of consoling revelations. In both Scriptures we behold the glory which dwelleth in Immanuel's land; we breathe the Sabbatic air of Messiah's perfect peace. Both possess the same massiveness; both describe things which are real and substantial, the beauty and strength of which is eternal; in both is the same intensity of love, and the same comprehensiveness of vision. In all his argument, in every doctrine, in every illustration, the central aim of the Epistle is kept prominent—the exhortation to steadfastness. Surrounded by temptations of a peculiarly sifting character, tested by persecution and reproach most fitted to shake their faith and their loyalty to the Messiah, rejected by the nation, the apostle speaks to them, in language of intense and piercing earnestness, of the fearful danger of apostasy, and points out to them that it was a mark of the true Israel, and a necessary sign of the follower of Jesus, to be despised and persecuted. It is worthy of notice and thought, that when the Hebrews were in such a dangerous condition of mind, the method which he adopts in his Epistle is to enter into the depth of Christian truth, to unfold before them all the glory of the eternal High Priest and the heavenly sanctuary, to leave behind the elementary doctrine, and to launch forth into the deep ocean of New Testament mysteries. As in the Epistle which the exalted Saviour sends unto the Church of Laodicea, there is the most glorious description of the person of Jesus, and of His overflowing and tender love, as in all His seven Epistles the self-revelation of Jesus is the basis and source of exhortation, thus in every age of the Church the renewal of strength, the rekindling of love, the deliverance from languor and inertness, bordering on death and destruction, can only proceed from a fuller and deeper knowledge of the Lord and His truth, from a renewed beholding of His countenance and of His glory. When the love of the majority shall wax cold, when iniquity shall abound, and the last struggle prepare, then let the Church go on unto perfection, and behold with open face the glory of Christ; and, gazing on His brightness, she will be strong and courageous, and remain steadfast unto the end. (*A. Saphir.*) No other book of the New Testament is distinguished by such brilliant eloquence and euphonious rhythm; and this rhetorical form is not superinduced on the subject, but is its true expression, as setting forth the special glories of the new covenant and of a new and Christ-transfigured world. Old and New Testaments are set the

one over against the other, the moonlight of the Old Testament paling once and again before the sunrise of the New Testament, and the heavenly prospect thus illumined. The language is more oratorical than dialectic, not so excited and lively as in the Epistle to the Galatians, not pressing forward with such quick triumphant step as in the Epistle to the Romans, not so unrestrained and superabundant as in that to the Ephesians, but characterised throughout by conscious repose, dignified solemnity, and majestic quietude. (*F. Delitzsch, D.D.*)

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE OF THE EPISTLE.—1. The earliest direct notice of the Epistle, quoted by Eusebius from Clement of Alexandria, states that it was written (by Paul) to Hebrews in the Hebrew (Aramaic) language, and translated (into Greek) by Luke. This statement was repeated from Eusebius (and Jerome who depended on him), as it appears, and not from Clement himself, by a series of later writers, but there is not the least trace of any independent evidence in favour of the tradition, nor is it said that any one had ever seen the original Hebrew document. 2. Internal evidence appears to establish absolutely beyond question that the Greek text is original, and not a translation from any form of Aramaic. The vocabulary, the style, the rhetorical characteristics of the work all lead to the same conclusion. 3. A still more decisive proof that the Greek text is original lies in the fact that the quotations from the Old Testament (except x. 30; Deut. xxxii. 35), taken from the LXX., even when the LXX. differs from the Hebrew (*e.g.*, ii. 7, x. 38, xii. 5 f.). And arguments are based on peculiarities of the LXX., so that the quotations cannot have been first introduced in the translation from Aramaic to Greek (*e.g.*, x. 5, xii. 26 f.). 4. It may also be added that the passages in which difficulties in the Greek text are supposed to be removed by the hypothesis of a false rendering of the original offer no solid support to the theory. Scholars who allege them show little agreement as to the difficulties or as to the solutions of them. (*Bp. Westcott.*)

PRESENT VALUE OF THE EPISTLE.—It deals in a peculiar degree with the thoughts and trials of our own time. The situation of Jewish converts on the eve of the destruction of Jerusalem was necessarily marked by the sorest distress. They had looked with unhesitating confidence for the redemption of Israel and for the restoration of the kingdom to the people of God; and in proportion as their hope had been bright, their disappointment was overwhelming when these expectations, as they had fashioned them, were finally dispelled. They were deprived of the consolations of their ancestral ritual; they were excluded from the fellowship of their countrymen; the letter of Scripture had failed them; the Christ remained outwardly unvindicated from the judgment of high priests and scribes; and a storm was gathering round the Holy City, which to calm eyes boded utter destruction without any prospect of relief. The writer of the Epistle enters with the tenderest sympathy into every cause of the grief and dejection which troubled his countrymen, and transfigures each sorrow into an occasion for a larger hope through a new revelation of the glory of Christ. So it will be still, I cannot doubt, in this day of our own visitation if we look, as he directs us, to the ascended Lord. The difficulties which come to us through physical facts and theories, through criticism, through wider views of human history, correspond with those which came to Jewish Christians at the close of the apostolic age, and they will find their solution also in fuller views of the person and work of Christ. The promise of the Lord awaits fulfilment in this present day, as it found fulfilment for them: "In your patience ye shall win your souls." (*Bp. Westcott.*)

ON THE REFERENCES IN THE EPISTLE TO THE GOSPEL HISTORY.—The direct references in the Epistle to the facts of the gospel history are not very numerous, but

it can be seen that the record, such as it has been handed down to us in the (Synoptic) Gospels, was constantly present to the mind of the writers. The Incarnation, as described in the Synoptic Gospels, and summarily presented by St. John, is implied in ii. 14 compared with i. 2, 5; and it is definitely said that the Lord sprang "out of the tribe Judah." Nothing is said in detail of the Lord's life of silent preparation. On the other hand, the general account of the completeness of His experience, as corresponding to that of man "in all things, sin apart" (iv. 15), necessarily involves the recognition of His perfect growth from stage to stage, and this truth of a complete human development is made clear by the conception of His τελείωσις (ii. 10). The Epistle contains no certain reference to the Baptism; but the form in which the quotation from Psa. ii. 7 is given in v. 5 suggests the thought that the writer may have had in mind the Divine voice at that time. The emphatic assertion of the fact that the Lord was tempted and suffered (ii. 18, iv. 15) probably presupposes a knowledge of the critical Temptation before His public ministry. The proclamation of the gospel "through the Lord in whom God spake" (i. 2) is specially noticed (ii. 3), but nothing is said of His works. There can be no doubt that the description of the "prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears" (v. 7) includes a reference to the Agony, though it may point also to other moments of peculiar trial. The reality (ii. 14) and the voluntariness (ix. 14) of the Lord's death are marked. He endured a Cross (xii. 2; comp. vi. 6). He suffered "without the gate" (xiii. 12; comp. John xix. 17); and perhaps from among the details of the Passion there is an allusion to the rending of the veil of the Temple in x. 20. Afterwards God "brought Him back from the dead" (xiii. 20); and He has ascended (vi. 20; comp. ix. 12, 24), and passed through the heavens (iv. 14; comp. vi. 20), and taken His seat on the right hand of God (i. 3, iv. 14, viii. 1, x. 12); and now believers look for His Return (ix. 28; comp. i. 6). The mention of "the Spirit of grace" after the "Blood of the Covenant" in x. 29 may point to the gift at Pentecost. From first to last, through every vicissitude of life, the Lord remained absolutely faithful to God in the administration of the Divine economy (iii. 2 ff.) and sinless (vii. 26). (*Bp. Westcott.*)

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THE BIBLICAL ILLUSTRATOR.

HEBREWS.

CHAPTER I.

VERS. 1–3. **God . . . hath . . . spoken . . . by His Son.**—*Personal reserve:*—The Epistle opens abruptly, like 1 John, without either greeting from the author, address to the church, or words of introduction. This omission distinguishes these two from every other epistle in the New Testament, and creates of itself a strong presumption that St. Paul was not the author. It is obviously not due to any attempt at concealment; for the tone of personal authority occasionally assumed, and the personal allusions towards the close, show that the author was well known to his readers, and affected no disguise. The character of the Epistle supplies an obvious explanation: the dignity of an oratorical address demanded some personal reserve; and this dignity is especially conspicuous in the measured rhythm and elaborate antitheses of the opening period. (*F. Rendall, M.A.*) *Apostolic tact:*—The wisdom of the apostle is strikingly displayed in the manner of commencing this letter. He is writing to Jews for the purpose of removing their misconceptions and allaying their prejudices; and the line of argument which he intends to pursue, requires him first of all to treat of the native and essential dignity of Jesus Christ. But he so constructs the opening sentence of his letter, that on the very fore-front of it there stands a spontaneous acknowledgment of the heavenly origin of the system which they so much admired. The Jews were apt to imagine that Christians undervalued the ancient institutions. Paul does not wait to state his views afterwards in the shape of a concession; but the very first words that flow from his pen do homage to Moses and the prophets. In dealing with an adversary, if it is your wish to persuade him, if you are not merely actuated by the empty desire of gaining a triumph over him, by all means frankly and at once acknowledge whatever you believe to be good and sound in his views. The same acknowledgment, afterwards made and viewed as a concession, will not produce the same effect. The Scriptures display a profound knowledge of human nature. (*W. Lindsay, D.D.*) *Christ and the prophets:*—This long, sonorous sentence forms the introduction to the whole Epistle, is, as it were, the portico of an august temple, its many weighty clauses being as rows of stately ornamental pillars supporting the roof. This temple front has a most imposing aspect! It fills the mind with awe, and disposes one to enter the sacred edifice in religious silence, rather than to indulge in critical remarks. In these opening verses the writer announces at once the theme of his discourse, and introduces the leading thoughts on which he intends to expatiate. The first point to be noticed in the proem is the contrast drawn, in antithetic terms, between the Old and the New Testament revelations. By "the prophets" may be meant those strictly so called, but more probably the phrase is meant to cover the whole Old Testament revelation, including the law-giving; the recognition of the angels as the agents by whom the law was given being rather a concession to Jewish opinion than the expression of the writer's own view. To be noted is the use of the phrase "the fathers" absolutely, as the recipients of the ancient revelation. It implies that the Epistle is meant solely for Jewish readers. Very remarkable are the terms employed to describe the character of the Old Testament revelation. It is characterised as a piecemeal multiform revelation. For what purpose are these epithets employed? Hardly for

the purpose of mere literary description, to suggest, for example, the picturesque nature of the Hebrew literature; still less for the purpose of pointing out its spiritual excellences. Rather, to indicate the inferiority of the earlier revelation, that the Hebrew Christians might not cling to it as something final. This end these epithets are well fitted to serve. The first of the two points to a fact with which the first readers of the Epistle were perfectly familiar. They knew that the Divine communications to Israel came bit by bit: the promise by Abraham; the law by Moses; the song of the sanctuary by David and other poets; the wisdom of life by Solomon and the other sages of Israel; and by the prophets commonly so called, to relieve the gloom of the present, successive rays of light concerning Messiah and the Messianic kingdom. And of course they understood that no one of these partial, fragmentary revelations could be regarded as complete or final. Each successive piece of revelation proved the incompleteness of all that went before. But might not all the pieces taken together, when the last had been given, and the Hebrew canon was complete, amount to a full, adequate revelation, possessing the character of finality? The presumption was the other way. The likelihood was that the prophets collectively, including under that category all the men by whom the Hebrew books were written, were but luminaries of the night—street lamps set in a row to show travellers their way through the gloom; stars set in the spiritual firmament to mitigate the darkness till the sun should arise, bringing in the day. This presumption is converted into certainty by the second epithet, which greatly strengthens the argument against finality suggested by the first. It gives us to understand that the ancient revelation was communicated, not only in many parts, but in many modes. The general idea intended is plain. It is that the revelation made to each prophet was relative—relative to his temperament, circumstances, and historical position. This relativity or subjectivity of the ancient revelation makes it impossible to add together the separate pieces of revelation, and so bring out the whole final revelation. For the pieces are not homogeneous fragments of one whole. They are heterogeneous wholes, often incapable of combination. This is most clearly seen in the Messianic prophecies uttered by successive prophets, which are not separate fragments of one picture of the future capable of being combined into a harmonious whole, but independent pictures, each exhibiting the future from its own point of view. Of Him by whom the much-needed new revelation was made the writer next proceeds to speak. "God hath, in the end of these days, spoken unto us in (His) Son." The revelation made in the Son is not qualified by descriptive epithets, as in the case of the earlier revelation, the reason being that such epithets in this case are not needed. The finality of the revelation made through the Son is expressly taught by the phrase "in the end of these days." The writer expresses himself in accordance with the Jewish mode of viewing the history of the world as divided into two great periods, the present age, and the age to come. He conceives of Christ as the divider and maker of the ages (as of the worlds), coming at the end of the old time and inaugurating the new. Having made mention of the Son, the writer proceeds to invest Him with all due honours, Divine and mediatorial, to win for His word fitting attention. The elaborate encomium which follows presents a very high view of the Person of Christ. It ascribes to Him (by implication) pre-existence, an essential and therefore eternal relation to God, universal heirship, participation in the Divine functions of making and upholding the world. (*A. B. Bruce, D.D.*) *God's revelation of Himself*:—I. The revelation of the will of God, as to all things which concern His worship and our faith and obedience, IS PECULIARLY AND IN A WAY OF EMINENCE FROM THE FATHER. 1. The whole mystery of His will antecedently to the revelation of it, is said to be hid in God, that is, the Father (Eph. iii. 9), it lay wrapt up from the eyes of men and angels, in His eternal wisdom and counsel (Col. i. 26, 27). 2. The revelation of the mystery of the will of God, so hidden in the counsel of His will from eternity, was always made and given out in the pursuit, and for the accomplishment of the purpose of the Father; or of that eternal purpose of the will of God, which is by the way of eminence ascribed unto the Father (Eph. i. 8, 9). 3. This purpose of God being communicated with, and unto the Lord Christ, or the Son, became the counsel of peace between them both (Zech. vi. 13). The Son, rejoicing to do the work that was incumbent on Him for the accomplishment of it (Prov. viii. 30–32; Psa. xl. 7, 8), it became peculiarly the care and work of the Father to see that the inheritance promised Him upon His undertaking (Isa. liii. 10–12) should be given unto Him. This is done by the revelation of the will of God unto men, concerning their obedience and salvation, whereby they are

made the lot, the seed, the portion and inheritance of Christ. 4. The whole revelation and dispensation of the will of God in and by the Word, is, as was said, eminently appropriated unto the Father. "Eternal life (the counsel, the purpose, ways, means, and procurer of it) was with the Father, and was manifested to us by the Word of truth" (1 John i. 1, 2). And it is the Father, that is, His will, mind, purpose, grace, love, that the Son declares (John i. 18); in which work He speaks nothing but what He heard from, and was taught by the Father (John viii. 28). And thence He says, "the doctrine is not Mine," that is, principally and originally, "but His that sent Me" (John vii. 16). And the gospel is called, the "gospel of the glory of the blessed God" (1 Tim. i. 11), which is a periphrasis of the person of the Father, who is the "Father of glory" (Eph. i. 17). And from the appropriating of this work originally and principally to the Father, there are three things that are particularly intimated unto us. 1. The authority that is to be considered in it; the Father is the original of all power and authority; of Him the whole family in heaven and earth is named (Eph. iii. 15). 2. There is also love. It was out of infinite love, mercy, and compassion, that God would at all reveal His mind and will unto sinners. This mixture of authority and love, which is the spring of the revelation of the will of God unto us, requires all readiness, willingness, and cheerfulness in the receipt of it, and submission unto it. 3. There is care eminently seen in it. The great care of the Church is in, and on the Father. He is the husbandman that takes care of the vine and vineyard (John xv. 1, 2). What directions from these considerations may be taken for the use both of them that dispense the word, and of those whose duty it is to attend unto the dispensation of it, shall only be marked in our passage. For the dispensers of the Word, let them—1. Take heed of pursuing that work negligently, which hath its spring in the authority, love, and care of God (see 1 Tim. iv. 13–16). 2. Know to whom to look for support, help, ability, and encouragement in their work (Eph. vi. 19, 20). 3. Not to be discouraged, whatever opposition they meet with in the discharge of their duty, considering whose work they have in hand (2 Cor. iv. 15, 16). 4. Know how they ought to dispense the Word, so as to answer the spring from whence it comes; namely, with authority, love to, and care for the souls of men. 5. Consider to whom they are to give an account of the work they are called to the discharge of, and entrusted with (Heb. xiii. 7). And for them to whom the Word is preached, let them consider—1. With what reverence and godly fear they ought to attend to the dispensation of it, seeing it is a proper effect and issue of the authority of God (Heb. xii. 25). 2. How they will escape if they neglect so great salvation declared unto them from the love and care of God (Heb. ii. 3). 3. With what holiness and spiritual subjection of soul unto God, they ought to be conversant in and with all the ordinances of worship, that are appointed by Him (Heb. xii. 28, 29). II. THE AUTHORITY OF GOD SPEAKING IN AND BY THE PENMEN OF THE SCRIPTURES, IS THE SOLE BOTTOM AND FOUNDATION OF OUR ASSENTING TO THEM, and what is contained in them, with faith divine and supernatural. He spake in them: He then continues to speak by them, and therefore is their word received (2 Pet. i. 20, 21). III. GOD'S GRADUAL REVELATION OF HIMSELF, His mind and will unto the Church, was a fruit of infinite wisdom and care towards His elect. 1. He over-filled not their vessels; He gave them out light as they were able to bear. 2. He kept them in a continual dependence upon Himself, and waiting for their rule and direction from Him, which, as it tended to His glory, so it was exceedingly suited to their safety, in keeping them in an humble waiting frame. 3. He so gave out the light and knowledge of Himself, as that the great work which He had to accomplish, that lay in the stores of His infinitely wise will, as the end and issue of all revelations, namely the bringing forth of Christ into the world, in the way wherein He was to come, and for the ends which He was to bring about, might not be obviated. 4. He did this work so that the pre-eminence fully and ultimately to reveal Him, might be reserved for Him, in whom all things were to be gathered unto a head. All privileges were to be kept for, and unto Him, which was principally done by this gradual revelation of the mind of God. 5. And there was tender care conjoined with this infinite wisdom. None of His elect in any age were left without that light and instruction which were needful for them in their seasons and generations. And this so given out unto them, as that they might have fresh consolation and support as their occasions did require. IV. We may see hence the absolute perfection of the revelation of the will of God by Christ and His apostles, as to every end and purpose whatever, for which God ever did, or ever will in this world reveal Himself, or His mind and will. For as this was the last way and means that God ever designed for the discovery of Himself, as

to the worship and obedience which He requires, so the person by whom He accomplished this work, makes it indispensably necessary that it be also absolutely perfect: from which nothing can be taken, to which nothing must be added under the penalty of the extermination threatened to him that will not attend to the voice of that prophet. (*John Owen, D.D.*) *The method of the Divine Teacher:*—I. THE DIVINE METHOD AS TO TIME. 1. As the ages passed on, first one and then another truth was revealed; first one and then another aspect of a truth was made known, until, in the fulness of time, the glory of God shone in the face of Jesus Christ. There is in the East an anticipatory dawn, a sort of premature twilight, which always disappears before the true dawn commences. So in the history of the world, especially in the history of Israel, have there been many dawnings of light, to be followed perhaps by periods of obscurity, yet graciously illumining the successive ages, and heralding the coming of the Light of the world. 2. Is there not even fuller light for the individual, even fuller light for the Church, until we come to that city where the glory of God shall shine forth with unclouded splendour? God always gives light as we are able to (1) Bear, (2) Use it. II. THE DIVINE METHOD AS TO MODE. 1. God presents the truth to the individual in such a form as may best secure his obedience. The Spirit of God shows the things of Christ in an intellectual, ethical, imaginative, emotional light, according to the genius of those to whom He may appeal. 2. God influences the preacher, that in the selection and presentment of his themes he may best win his congregation. 3. God knows the special truths for the times; or the particular aspect in which the truth needs to be recognised. III. THE DIVINE METHOD AS TO ORGAN. Not any men, but certain men, of spiritual susceptibility and force were selected to be the organs in which God would "speak to the fathers"; and the same rule of selection obtains still, for Christ makes Himself known to the world through certain spiritual agents and holy ministries. Lessons: 1. Let unconverted men learn the greatness of their responsibility. 2. Let the Church take encouragement touching the salvation of the world. 3. Let the Church be more faithful, that she may increase in the knowledge of Christ. 4. Let the Church be more pure, that she may the better make Christ known. (*The Metropolitan Pulpit.*) *God's revelation of Himself:*—I. THE KNOWLEDGE WE POSSESS OF GOD WAS SUPERNATURALLY COMMUNICATED. Language—the words we use to utter our thoughts and feelings—must have been a supernatural gift in the first instance. If the casket came from heaven, much more the jewel. The mind of man was created as much to receive the thoughts of God, as the eye was to receive the light of the sun, and to behold the many beauties of creation. All the truest and best thoughts of our mind are heaven-inspired. II. THE KNOWLEDGE WE POSSESS OF GOD WAS GRADUALLY AND VARIOUSLY REVEALED. There was, first of all, the morning star, then the soft grey dawn, which spread itself by degrees over the horizon, until, in these latter days, the whole world was overtaken by the fuller light of the meridian sun. III. IN CHRIST WE HAVE A FULL AND FINAL REVELATION OF GOD'S TRUTH. We sometimes find the light in our houses small and feeble, not because there is an insufficient quantity of the means of lighting manufactured, but because a large portion of it is shut up in the meter; only a small quantity is allowed to run into our dwellings, consequently the light is faint, and only illuminates a very small space; but when it is turned on in full force, the light is abundant, lighting up every nook and corner of the apartments in which it is kindled. When men depended on the amount of light which was in the prophets, they could not see far; only a small quantity of Heaven's light was allowed to flow, or could flow, into them, and therefore they could only emit a faint glimmer upon those who looked to them for illumination; they only saw through "a glass darkly" themselves, and so their power to impart light could not be great. But of Christ it was said, "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." Between the measure of light that came by the first prophets and that which came by Christ there is no comparison, but a perfect contrast. Just as there is no comparison between the degree of the light of a star and the sun; the star has just enough light to show the darkness, but the sun chases the night away and makes it day. It is our inestimable privilege to live in the meridian light of Him who said, "I am the Light of the world." (*D. Rhys Jenkins.*) *The manner of revelation:*—I. TIME. Centuries were required to complete the scheme. Man was to be taken at a low and infantile point, and raised up to the fulness of the stature of a perfect manhood; from "a living soul" to "a quickening spirit." By no one sudden blow could the benevolent design of giving man the true knowledge of God, and his own duty and destiny, be executed. The laws of

progress, gradation, and periodicity must be observed in regard to our higher nature. One age was to witness one attainment, and another, another. It was much to establish the unity of the Deity; it was more to develop the idea of the Father. II. AGENTS AND EXAMPLES. Again, the manner of revelation is not abstract, but concrete. The ordinary as well as supernatural agencies are employed. If angels are sent, so are men; if the special messenger raised up, sanctified, and commissioned be the Son of God by excellence, yet a long line of the good and the great bear up the ark of God; and patriarch, king, and priest, and prophet, and apostle, are seen at different intervals along the majestic procession. In selecting men to act so distinguished a part in the designs of God towards His children, we perceive a part of the same system which we witness in business, art, science, government, and literature. For if "History be philosophy teaching by example," then is revelation religion teaching by example. In this feature of the mode of communication we see the wise adaptation of means to ends, the use of causes to produce effects, such as we should anticipate from so great a Designer. III. LANGUAGES AND BOOKS. In two principal languages, Hebrew and Greek, with a few passages in the Chaldee—in sixty-six books, written by at least thirty-nine authors—the Jewish and Christian Scriptures present that fertility of human genius, as well as of sacred truth, that fitly entitles it to be called the Bible—The Book. Here are flowers of every hue and fragrance, fruits of every taste and nutriment. The sinner cannot read far without meeting with his warning, nor the saint without hearing his beatitude, nor the sad without alighting upon his consolation, nor the weak without touching the wand of spiritual strength, nor the poor without opening the mine of heavenly treasures, nor the rich without being reminded that they brought nothing into this world, and that they can carry nothing out. IV. MIRACLES. Most of us are so earthly-minded that some extraneous means to arouse us from indifference are needed. We want a bell rung to call us to the temple of the Lord to receive His gracious message. Miracles are that bell. They prove nothing by their solitary selves. It would be hard to defend miracles in general, but not the Christian miracles; for they subserve a great and good end, worthy of the interposing finger of God. All along, too, in speaking of His signs and wonders, Jesus very remarkably and clearly points out their office. It was that men might believe on Him, and believing, have life. They added no weight to the truth as truth, but they did add weight to truth, as received by the ignorant, the degraded, and the inattentive. V. INSTITUTIONS AND ORDINANCES. The institutions of Moses, however puerile they may seem to a Christian, were yet admirably adapted to raise up a low and barbarous people, and give a race of idolaters the knowledge and worship of the One True and Living God. But if we turn to the Christian revelation, the institutions are more simple, as becomes a more perfect faith and spirituality. Forms are not absolute, but relative; not essential, but important; they have a place, but it is not the first place. They are a species of gigantic language, whose letters are facts and whose sentences are customs. They are to be observed, not for their own sake, but for the spiritual purport they imply and convey. (*J. A. Livermore.*) *The various classes of prophetical announcement:*—I. DREAMS were a frequent mode by which the future was opened up to the minds of the prophets. There is something peculiarly solemn in the thought of these revelations of the future made to the mind, whilst the body is in a state of repose and temporary insensibility. They illustrate the capabilities and susceptibilities of the human mind, independent of the corporeal frame: the power of the Most High and His grace and condescension in thus communicating to man His counsels and purposes. They prove the fact of God's interest in what concerns the human race, and His constant intercourse with a family of His intelligent creatures, perhaps the most unworthy of His notice. The state of the body, too, when these revelations were made, may be regarded as a type of the respective conditions of the mind and body, when death has severed the bond that unites them. The body asleep in the grave, the mind conversant with the plans of the Almighty, and blessed with the vision of His glory. The body at rest—the cares of life, its scenes, its passions all hushed—its conflicts and struggles succeeded by repose; the mind released from its attention to what was immediate and temporary; but in that solemn hour of release, God, its Creator, appears; the future is unveiled, and truth revealed leaves its right and unqualified impression. II. The second class of prophetical announcements may be ranged under the head of VISIONS. Dreams and visions are not always distinguished in sacred scripture. Sometimes the same revelation is said to be made by a dream and a vision. Thus Nebuchadnezzar's dream is called the visions of

his head (Dan. ii. 28). A vision, then, may be defined as a representation of things made to the mind of the prophet while he was awake. The eyes rest on the object, the impression is not only as distinct and vivid as if the object were present to the senses in an ordinary way, but more so, from the extraordinary manner of its appearance. The most terrible elements of nature—the most beautiful of its inanimate objects—all that is magnificent and costly in art, all that is dignified in personal form, formed scenes surpassing in splendour the conceptions of the most brilliant fancy. They were fitted and intended to produce a due measure of impression on minds like ours, necessarily more affected by what is thus clothed and presented to the eye and the imagination in vivid forms, in order to its awakening attention, and giving a just conception of the importance of the events thus represented. Our responsibility is great, and our gratitude ought to be intense. III. Another method in which these announcements were made, and to which we must advert, is AN AUDIBLE VOICE. Moses at bush. Giving of law. Elijah in cave. IV. But although it pleased the Lord to communicate His will to men, and the knowledge of His purposes, by such direct addresses to the senses, or to the imagination, yet a great part of the sacred Scriptures was written under A MORE DIRECT INSPIRATION OF THE HOLY GHOST, communicating immediately to the mind, the doctrines and facts to be recorded. 1. From them all we learn that the communications thus made, various as they were—sometimes judgments, and at others most signal mercies—all furnish striking illustrations of the providence and government of God. 2. The condescension of God. 3. Our responsibilities. 4. The unbroken continuity of the Divine government, and unity of God's purposes. (*J. Robinson.*) *A revelation from God to man both probable and necessary:*—I. The infidel meets us with this PRELIMINARY OBJECTION—A REVELATION FROM GOD IS CONTRARY TO ALL THE EXPERIENCE AND ANALOGIES OF OUR COMMON HISTORY. Now I maintain, in the first place, that a revelation is not contrary even to fact. For how was Adam instructed? Where got he language? God must have taught him. And now we proceed, further, to maintain that a revelation is not contrary to our experience or to the analogies of nature. We allege that there is every probability that God would give a revelation of His will. Can we believe that the God of nature is benevolent, yet leaves millions of the family He fashioned to grope in "darkness that may be felt"? I say, the surprise should not be that God has given a revelation; the matter of surprise would be if He had not. Observe that such a revelation of God's will is not contrary to the analogies of nature. For, observe how we are taught. You find the child is taught by its father; the scholar is taught by his tutor; the inexperienced taught by the experienced. Now what is a revelation but just the extension of this plan, just the addition of another link? If the young be taught by the aged, the stripling by the patriarch, the inexperienced by the experienced, you have only to add another link to the chain, and you come to the inference that the world may be taught by its Creator, the human family by its Almighty Father. Let me ask, in the next place, what is the nature of the instruction that we derive one from another. Is it not of an experimental and a moral kind? In other words, when you see the patriarch or the aged teaching the group that is around him, what is the nature of his teaching? He is teaching them all the dangers and the difficulties through which he has come; he is telling them how to withstand this peril, how to overcome that trial, how to meet this emergency, how to unravel that perplexity. Now what else is God doing in revelation? Just teaching us how we are to meet the difficulties, to overcome the trials, to vanquish the foes, and to inherit the glory and the happiness which lie before us. II. I observe, in the second place, that a revelation is not only probable, but THAT IT WAS ABSOLUTELY DEMANDED BY THE EXISTING STATE OF THE WORLD. Here I might show you that there are wants in man's heart, which all the philosophy of a Plato cannot satisfy; that there are feelings and perplexities in man's moral constitution, which all the writings of all the moralists in the world cannot meet. I might show you that there is a consciousness of sin and a dread of punishment, which cannot be stilled unless by the pages of the oracles of God. But I forbear from that, and I take facts; and I will show you, first, from the admitted state of the ancient heathen; secondly, of the modern heathen; and, lastly, of infidels themselves, that a revelation from God was a desideratum, for which all creation groaned, and for which all mankind earnestly (though unintentionally) prayed. (*J. Cumming, D.D.*) *The reasonableness of a Divine revelation:*—The question before us is, whether the great Author of truth, the inexhaustible source of pure celestial light, can—and if He can, whether it be

probable that He would—and if it be probable that He would, whether He has—rolled back the veil that hangs between Himself and us; whether it be true that "He giveth wisdom to the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding," and whether "He revealeth the deep and secret things." I. In entertaining this grave inquiry, it will be proper, in the first place, to ascertain WHETHER IT BE POSSIBLE FOR THE SUPREME MIND TO REVEAL HIMSELF TO MEN. Two things must be proved. First, that there is a Supreme Being, the Maker and Preserver of all being. And, secondly, that we are rational creatures, capable of entertaining the question at present in debate. It is then admitted that we all are the offspring of God. Such is the testimony of reason, or rather of the common sense of mankind. But surely it will not be denied that He who made us can influence and inform our understandings—can, in one word, operate upon our souls, in any manner that shall be suitable to its faculties. II. Presuming that we are agreed on the possibility, let us advance another step in the argument. Let us carefully inquire whether there are not considerations, THAT RENDER IT HIGHLY PROBABLE THAT THE SUPREME INTELLIGENCE WOULD FAVOUR MAN WITH A REVELATION. The question is this: whether, taking into our consideration the character of the Supreme Being, our necessary connection with Him, the peculiar capacities with which we are endowed, and the deplorable condition in which we find the human family, it be not most probable that this infinitely benevolent Being would make important communications to mankind. 1. It cannot be rationally denied, that the human spirit is capable of enjoying intercourse with "the Father of our spirits." Minds correspond with fellow-minds, and hearts sympathise with kindred hearts. But who will say that that noble spirit, with which the Almighty has distinguished us, is not formed for communion with Him who is a pure spirit, and who has been sublimely defined as Light and Love. Now if it cannot reasonably be denied that man is formed for such lofty communion, then it is highly irrational to deny that God would impart such instructions to him as would lay the foundation for this communion. 2. But if it be rational to suppose that the chief end of our being is to know, and love, and obey our Maker, to glorify God, is it not equally rational to suppose that God would make such communications to His creature as should enable him at once to fulfil the end of his being? Can it be rationally believed that God would create the first man, or the first men, capable of religion, and designed for its obligations and its exercises, and then abandon him to gather up the necessary information as best he might? 3. We must not, however, overlook the real condition of mankind. Indeed, who can deny that man is the subject of moral derangement—the child of misery? Ask yourself whether it be, or be not, an improbable thing that his compassionate Creator should mercifully make some discoveries that should enlighten and relieve him in relation to his condition, the means of his restoration to happiness, and his final destiny? III. I would ascend another step in the argument, and endeavour to show THAT SUCH A REVELATION IS NECESSARY. 1. It has been the practice amongst a certain portion of the community, to speak of those who are believers in a Divine revelation as being, on that account, weak and irrational persons, seduced by prejudice, and overreached by designing and self-interested men. Now it may be as well to remind those who thus judge of their fellow-countrymen, that men of all ages and all creeds—Heathens, Jews, Christians, and disbelievers in Christianity—have not thought it a proof of an irrational weakness to believe that our Creator has made some revelations to us, His creatures. Nay, many in each of these classes of persons have entertained the conviction that a revelation is even necessary to teach men language. Even Hobbes gives it as his decided opinion, that God taught Adam this useful invention. 2. But I am to show that God has given to men something more than the faculty of receiving knowledge, and reasoning upon such knowledge. I contend that He has actually unveiled to our race His own character and His law. The constitution of our nature renders the knowledge of these great things absolutely necessary. But was it possible that this knowledge could have been originally acquired otherwise than by revelation? 3. But the necessity of such revelation is most fully sustained by facts. Read history, and learn what man has been; look around you, and see what man is; and turn your eyes within, and analyse yourself; and then candidly say whether such a process has not induced the conviction that revelation is necessary. IV. In conclusion, I would DIRECT ATTENTION TO THE BIBLE, WHICH PROFESSES TO BE GIVEN BY INSPIRATION OF GOD. 1. I remark that the disclosures which the Bible makes, relating to the character of the Supreme Being, are such as commend themselves to right reason. Let not those who live in a country where the revelations of the

Bible are known forget the manifold information which, whether they think so or not, they cannot but have derived from this source. 2. Again, the disclosures which the Bible makes to us, relating to the Divine Law, are such as commend themselves to right reason. That law, which this book records as coming from God, will be found to accord with the characters which it ascribes to God. There is no discrepancy between the Lawgiver and His enactments. This law is well deserving the description of "holy, just, and good." It has, moreover, the high advantage of being spiritual; insinuating itself into the soul—reaching the heart—and convincing the understanding. It is further possessed of the character of universal adaptation. It suits men in all conditions, ages, and circumstances. And then it ought to be particularly remarked of it, that it possesses two points of excellence which every other code must be acknowledged to want—it exhibits a fixed standard, and adequate motives. 3. Once more; I argue, that the things which the Bible reveals, relating to the system of reconciliation, commend themselves to right reason. We are accustomed to trace out the fitness of things in the works of nature. The soil of the earth is made for its vegetable productions, and those vegetables are fitted to the soil in which they grow—the fish is made for the waters, and the waters for the fish; the eye is made for the light, and the light for the eye; and the lungs are made for the air, and the air is adapted to the lungs. Now if we are accustomed to trace these contrivances of the material and visible world to an all-wise Contriver, can we refuse to allow that a system, which, like nature, is adapted to the end it seeks to accomplish, is likewise from God? A few instances may be sufficient to bring out this fitness of Christianity to the wants of man. Are we not ignorant? And does not this revelation impart all necessary knowledge? What is there necessary to be known about the Supreme Being—our relation to Him—our own nature and responsibilities—our immortality—our death—the final judgment and our ultimate destiny—which this book does not unfold? Jesus Christ is the light of the world; and he that believeth in Him shall not walk in darkness. Have we not broken the Divine Law? In other words, are we not guilty? Do not our consciences accuse us of guilt? And does not the doctrine of Christ's substitution meet our case? Yet again; are we not conscious of being in a state of moral pollution? Must not all agree that our minds are darkened, and our hearts depraved? Can anything, then, be more rational than the doctrine of a spiritual influence—the influence of God the Spirit renewing us in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, after the image of Him that created us? This the scheme of redemption provides. (*H. Christmas, M.A.*) *God's revelation to man*:—I. HE HAS ACTUALLY MADE A REVELATION OF HIMSELF TO MAN. 1. Man has a capacity to appreciate, to some extent, God's thoughts. 2. Man stands in need of God's thoughts. 3. Man is bound to study God's thoughts. II. HE HAS REVEALED HIMSELF TO MAN THROUGH MAN. 1. To increase the intelligibility of God's thoughts. 2. To increase the attraction of God's thoughts. III. HE HAS REVEALED HIMSELF TO MAN IN A VARIETY OF WAYS. 1. The necessity of modesty in pronouncing concerning the methods of Divine influence. 2. The importance of keeping the soul ever in a waiting attitude. IV. HE HAS MADE CHRIST THE FINAL REVELATION OF HIMSELF. Christ, as the final organ of Divine revelation to man, transcends all preceding organs—1. In His relation to the universe. (1) He is the inheritor of the creation. "Appointed heir of all things." (2) He is the creator of the universe. "By whom also He made the worlds." (3) He is the sustainer of the universe. "Upholding all things," &c. (4) He is the Sovereign of the universe. "On the right hand of the Majesty on high." 2. In the completeness of His Divine manifestations. Represents Him more accurately than the impression on the wax represents the seal that produced it. 3. In the moral service He has rendered to humanity. 4. In His superiority to all angelic intelligences. (1) In His position. (2) In His reputation. (*Homilist.*) *Revealed truth*:—I. THE SUPERNATURALISM OF THE TRUTH. It is impossible for nature to reveal—1. The spiritual Deity. 2. The special truths needed for fallen man. II. THE IMMORTALITY OF THE TRUTH. It is truth about—1. The unchangeable God. 2. The immutable law. 3. The eternal universe. III. THE UNITY OF THE TRUTH. The Divine revelation is a plant of life and healing in which the different parts are not essentially different, but variously developed according to the will of God, and the differing conditions of the human race in successive generations. IV. THE FULNESS OF THE TRUTH. In Christ we have the truth—1. Fully. 2. Finally. (*W. L. Watkinson.*) *The superiority of the Christian revelation over the prophetic*:—I. ITS SUPERIORITY IN THE EXCELLENCY AND EXTENT OF THE DISCOVERIES MADE. 1. In reference to the

perfections of God. His existence, unity, holiness, goodness, love, &c. 2. In reference to the doctrine of providence. 3. In reference to a future life. 4. In reference to the method of salvation. II. ITS SUPERIORITY IN THE MODE OF MAKING THESE DISCOVERIES. 1. The authority of the medium. 2. The finish and perfection stamped upon it. 3. The simplicity, clearness, mildness, and benignity which characterise it. 4. The superior energy and influence with which it is accompanied. (*Jas. Bromley.*) *The old and new covenants one in Christ*:—The great object of the Epistle is to describe the contrast between the old and the new covenant. But this contrast is based upon their unity. The new covenant is contrasted with the old covenant, not in the way in which the light of the knowledge of God is contrasted with the darkness and ignorance of heathenism, for the old covenant also is of God, and is therefore possessed of Divine glory. Great is the glory of the old covenant; yet greater is the glory of the new dispensation, when in the fulness of time God sent forth His own Son and gave unto us the substance of those things of which in the old times He had shown types and prophecy. "God hath spoken unto the fathers"; and by that expression "unto the fathers" the apostle reminds us that without a church, without a union of believers, without a manifestation of God in grace, historically, among a people whom He had set apart for His service, there would have been no Scripture; and that there was a congregation of the Most High from the very beginning of the world. "Unto the fathers" whom He had chosen that they might have fellowship with Him, God spake in old times, even as in the last times unto the Church—unto those who are called both from among Jews and Gentiles—He has made fully known His purpose in Christ Jesus. This, then, is the great resemblance. The Father is the author of revelation in both. The Messiah is the substance and centre of the revelation in both. The glory of God's name in a people brought nigh unto Him, to love and to worship Him, is the end of the revelation in both. The two are one. Martin Luther has quaintly compared it to the two men who brought the branch with the cluster of grapes from the promised land. They were both bearing the same fragrant fruit; but one of them saw it not, yet he knew what he was carrying. The other saw both the fruit and the man who was helping him. Thus is it that the prophets who came before Jesus testified of Him, although they did not yet behold Him; and we who live in the fulness of times see both the Christ of whom they testified and themselves who were sent by God to witness of Him. But let us consider the marvellous unity of the two covenants. "God hath spoken." This is the first point. Oh, how little do we think of the grandeur and majesty and all-importance of this simple declaration, "God hath spoken." A living God and a loving God must needs speak. The god of the philosophers is a silent god, for he hath neither life nor affection; but our God, who created the heavens and the earth, who is and who loves, must speak. Even in the creation, which is an act of the condescension of God, He utters His thoughts; and when He created man as the consummation of the world, it was for this purpose, that man should hear Him and love Him, and should rejoice in His light and in His life. When sin enters into the world silence ensues. Man dreads God, and the melody of praise and prayer ceases; but the need of a revelation remains continually the same. When man forsakes the fountain of living water he cannot get rid of the thirst, and he cannot divest himself of the nature with which God has endowed him; so that there is still within man the same absolute necessity for a revelation of God from on high. And God does speak. Often we read the words and do not realise what marvel of condescending love they reveal, what great and central mystery they unfold. Unless God speaks we do not know the thoughts of God. But notice, secondly, man having by his own sin fallen away from God, and silence reigning now, it is only the infinite compassion and love of God that induces Him to speak. If there was no redemption, there would be no revelation. The love of the Father, and the blood of Jesus Christ, and the inspiration of the Holy Ghost; behold, these are the three necessary foundations upon which the Scripture rests. God, the Triune Covenant God, hath spoken. God hath spoken: in old times unto the fathers by the prophets; fully and perfectly unto us by His Son. In both dispensations the same God, on account of the same sacrifice, impelled by the same love, and for the same sublime and gracious purpose. Both Old and New Testaments are of God; the New Testament, as the Church-father Augustine said, is *en*folded in the Old, and the Old Testament is *un*folded in the New. Nor can we, who live in the times of fulfilment, dispense with the record of the preceding dispensation. As an old author writes: "As the brilliancy of the sun appears far greater when contrasted with the darkness of the shade, so this

epistle compares the light of the gospel with the shadows and types of the Old Testament, and by this means displays the glory of the gospel in full relief; for as shadows are images of bodies, so the ancient shadows are images of Jesus Christ, of His power and of His graces, and assist us to recognise more and more the substance and the truth; but from hence we derive also this additional advantage, that although the shadows of other bodies serve only to obscure them, the shadows of the Old Testament are so many reflectors, contributing light to the gospel." But now let us consider the contrast. Jesus Christ was not born till four thousand years after the creation of the world. "At sundry times and in divers manners" did God speak unto the fathers by the prophets. These three things constitute a prophet: direct commission from God Himself, gift of the Holy Ghost, and being entrusted with the very thoughts and words of the Most High. It is not merely *by* the prophets that God spake. They were chosen not merely as the channels of separate and isolated revelation. God spake *in* them. They were the personal bearers of the message, the representatives and exponents of Divine truth. Their words and typical actions were inspired, and in them the word of the Lord came unto Israel. Yet let us consider what were the imperfections of these messengers. The first imperfection was this—that they were numerous; they were many. One succeeded another. They lived in different periods. Another imperfection was, that it was "in divers manners," in dreams, in similitudes, in visions, in symbols. Each prophet had his peculiar gift and character. Their stature and capacity varied. They were men of different temperament and tone of mind. The manner in which the revelation of God was given to them varied; even in the case of the same prophet the One Spirit appeared in various manifestations. Another imperfection was that they were sinful men. Another imperfection was that they did not possess the Spirit constantly. Of a sudden, after a long pause, the Spirit of God came upon them. God spake unto them, and gave unto them His message. But it was not like a continuous river. The word came to them from time to time; they did not *possess* the word. Another imperfection was this, that of that message that was entrusted to them they did not understand the heights and the depths. They themselves had to search diligently, and to inquire what the Spirit that was in them did signify of the sufferings and glory that should come. Another imperfection was that, as they did not understand adequately that portion of the message that was given unto them, they could still less comprehend and contain the whole message. They saw only one aspect of it, only one portion of it in connection with the peculiar history and the peculiar trials of the people at the period to which they were sent. Another imperfection was, that they all testified, like John the Baptist, "I am not the light. I am only sent to witness of the light." They were only finger-posts directing the pilgrim, as he was in pursuit of the heavenly city, to go on further, until he would come to the pearly gates of the new Jerusalem. We notice the imperfect and fragmentary character of the old dispensation, when we consider not merely the words, but the types, which are living prophecies. There was not a single one which could stand by itself, it had always to be supplemented. Wherever we go we find it is in fragments. There is an altar; there is a sacrifice. There is a fourfold sacrifice, a sin-offering, a burnt-offering, a peace-offering, a meat-offering. There is a high priest; there is a tabernacle; there is a holy of holies; there is a candlestick; there is a shewbread; there is a veil. Everything a fragment; everything in itself showing unto us some aspect of truth, some portion of the treasure, without which we would be poor; but we must combine them all to see the full and blessed truth. But now the time of fragmentary, imperfect, and temporary revelation is past. God speaks to us now in another and more glorious manner. Look now at the contrast. The whole contrast is in one word—in our language in one syllable—"by the *Son*." The prophets were many: the Son is one. The prophets were servants: the Son is the Lord. The prophets were temporary: the Son abideth for ever. The prophets were imperfect: the Son is perfect, even as the Father is perfect. The prophets were guilty: the Son is not merely pure, but able to purify those that are full of sin and pollution. The prophets point to the future: the Son points to Himself, and says, "Here am *I*." God has spoken to us "by His Son." He is the true and faithful witness; whose testimony is co-extensive, if I may so say, with the counsel and the things of God: the Prophet whose mind is adequate to understand the mind of the Father. He is not merely the true and faithful witness because He is from everlasting, He is also the beloved of God. Notice this in the word "Son." "The only begotten," says John, "who was in the bosom of the Father," who is His treasure and delight, the

infinite object of His love, in whom from all eternity was His rejoicing, who shares with Him all His counsels. This beloved one of God—oh, surely He is the true messenger who will reveal all the secrets of the Father's heart, and who will tell unto us all the fulness of His counsel, and all the purposes of His grace! God hath spoken to us by His Son. Let me remind you how in the Son all the message of God is contained. You who know the Scripture, and you especially who have come through the law unto the gospel, will understand me when I say that if the sinner knew nothing else but this, "God has sent a messenger, and this messenger is His own Son," he might discover in this the whole gospel; for, in order to send unto us condemnation, in order to give unto us the knowledge of our sin and of our desert, His own Son is not needed. Any angel would suffice for this work; any servant could proclaim this message. When God sends His own Son into the world, when God makes the stupendous sacrifice of allowing His only begotten to take upon Him our flesh and blood, there can be only one meaning in it—salvation. It can only have one purpose—our redemption. It can only have one motive—the overwhelming love of God. God has spoken to us by His Son, and therefore we know that He has spoken peace to us. But notice, secondly, as the Sonship is the beginning of the gospel, so it is also the end and purpose of God's message. God, speaking to us by His Son, shows unto us that we also are to become the sons of God. In the Incarnate Son the Father has brought many sons unto glory. The only begotten of the Father has, after His death on the cross, become the firstborn among many brethren. The Holy Ghost, coming through the glorified humanity of Jesus, unites us to Him, who is the beloved Son, and in whom the eternal and infinite love of the Father rests upon all His believing people. In the Son we know and have the Father; in the Son we also are the children of God. Lastly, remember this is the ultimate revelation. There can be nothing higher; there can be nothing further. If Christ is our life, then, when the Son of God shall appear, we also who are the sons of God—now in weakness, suffering, temptation—shall be made manifest with Him in glory. (*A. Saphir.*) *The prophetic revelation contrasted with the filial revelation made by Jesus Christ:*—I. First let us note and consider well, touching this doctrine which we are taught by Christ—THE CERTAINTY OF IT, WHICH IS FIRST IN THE AUTHOR, WHO IS GOD HIMSELF, EVEN THE SAME GOD OF OUR FATHERS, which so many times and ways spake ever by His prophets; even He, in assured truth, hath also spoken by His Son. Thus giving the authority of the word of Christ to God the Father, that it might be confessed true, and to take away all vain quarrelling of contentious men, who under pretence of the name of God, would easily have disputed against our Saviour Christ, and said: We know God is true, and He spake to Moses, He spake to the prophets; but this man speaketh of Himself, and we will not hear Him. II. Now, as our Saviour Christ is our certain teacher of undoubted truth, SO HOW FAR THIS TRUTH IS TAUGHT BY HIM APPEARETH ALSO IN THE WORDS, "many times," "many ways," "by many prophets," "of old," "to our forefathers." Of all these we must set the contrariety in our Saviour Christ, that God spake by Him, not many times, revealing His will by measure, now some, then more; but once He has sent Him, filled with all treasure of wisdom and understanding. And before God spake many ways, either by angels, or by the cloud, or between the cherubims, or by Urim, or by visions, or by dreams; but now He hath spoken one way, even by Christ made our brother, with the voice of a man, in the midst of the congregation, plain and evident in all men's hearing, and all variety shall cease for evermore. Likewise before God spake by many prophets; now He doth not so, but hath sent His Son alone instead of all, that all His people should hear him. Likewise those times they are old and past; but the time of Christ's teaching passeth not, but is for ever. And that was to the fathers, men of divers calling, but this is to us all of one condition. 1. Now let us see the difference here spoken of between our Saviour Christ and all other prophets, what we may learn of them was at divers times revealed, but that which Christ teacheth is revealed but once. And this is twice after expressly noted by the apostle (chaps. ix. 26, xxii. 26.) And this it is which St. Jude saith of the Christian faith, "that once it was given to the saints"; which once doth mean the time of Christ in earth; for so he saith, it was by His Son. 2. The second difference, that the doctrine of Christ is taught after one sort. For though first were miracles, and now none; first apostles, now none: these were but means to confirm the preaching, the Word only was the power of salvation, which is the same it was then. Which because it is but one, therefore it is perfect. 3. The third difference here is, that that was old, and therefore abolished; for it cannot be but that which waxeth older and older must at

last vanish. But the testament of Christ, it is still new, yea, though it were from the beginning, yet it is still the same, and the day passeth not in which it was given, but it endureth with the age of man. 4. The fourth difference is in the fathers with whom the first covenant was made, who, though they were all called in Jesus Christ, yet was there a difference of their honour, and every one more exalted, as God approached more near unto them. So Abraham and his posterity were a more honourable people than the others before him. So the Israelites that had received the law, and dwelt in the land of promise, had greater blessing than their fathers in Egypt. So John Baptist more than all Israel. But now they that are called of Jesus Christ by His own voice, and in Him crucified before their eyes, have attained a singular honour, and the least of them touching their calling are greater than all patriarchs and prophets. And these all in like precious faith, like spirit, like promises, like covenants, like accepted of God, every man in his own measure of grace. 5. The fifth difference is, that God then spake by His prophets, now by His Son: by prophets, meaning the continual succession of prophets in all ages. For as they were men taken away by death, so it was necessary for others to come in their places: and because no prophet was able to give his grace to other, or of his fulness make other learned in the mysteries of God, but they were all taught of the Lord; therefore they had the credit of their word every one in himself, and none judged by another's gifts. But so it is not with the Son of God; for both He liveth to appoint us teachers still, and of His fulness He giveth all other their continual increase of grace; for which cause now the warrant of all dependeth upon Him alone; and the greatest apostle that ever was hath no other glory but only to be His servant and messenger; for He is that Redeemer whose word must be in the mouth of His seed, and in the mouth of His seed's seed after Him for evermore. (*E. Deering, B.D.*) *Divine revelation under the law, and under the gospel:*—I. THE MATTER OF THE DOCTRINE. It was given them by piecemeal, now a part, then a part. They had one part of it in Adam's time, another in Noah's; one in Abraham's, another in Moses' time; one in David's time, another in Jeremiah's, Isaiah's, and the rest of the prophets. It was parcelled out to them as the capacity of the people in sundry times did require; but we have the doctrine of salvation at one lump propounded to us, in one whole and entire sum. Thus God hath dealt more graciously and bountifully with us. They had one flower now and another anon; we have all the flowers in God's garden sweetly smelling all at once in our nostrils. They had now a loaf and then a loaf; now a draught and then a draught of the Lord's wine; the whole magazine of God Almighty is open to us. Then how thankful ought we to be to God above them! And how careful should we be to enrich ourselves with these heavenly wares, that may freely enter the whole storehouse of the Lord of Hosts! II. THE MANNER. God delivered His will to them after divers manners: to Abraham by angels in the shape of men; to Moses in a bush and a cloud; to Samuel in a dream; to Ezekiel in visions; by the oracles and answers of the priests, in soft wind, &c. To us He hath delivered His will in one manner, by the sweet, comfortable, powerful voice of His own Son. This one manner far surpasses all the manners whereby God spake to them. Those were dark and obscure, this plain; many of those were terrible to the hearers, this was a most mild and amiable manner. III. THE TIME. He spake to them of old time, in the first and oldest age of the world; He speaks to us in a new time, wherein all things are made green, fresh, and flourishing by our Saviour Christ. IV. THE PERSONS by whom and in whom it was delivered. They were men; Christ, by whom God speaks to us, is God and man; they were wise, could foretell things to come, aptly and pithily interpret the Word of God, yet all their wisdom and knowledge was borrowed; Christ was wise of Himself, clad with His own feathers; they mortal, dust and ashes; Christ never saw corruption, but abideth for ever and ever; they were servants in the House of God; Christ is the Son, yea, the Lord and owner of the house. Therefore wonderfully hath God honoured us in the time of the gospel above them in the time of the law. If a king should speak to us by one of his privy council, it is much; but if he speak to us by his son and heir apparent to the crown, it is a greater dignity. Many (prophets and kings) have desired to see these things which we see, and have not seen them. God give us grace to use our happiness to His glory and the salvation of us all. (*W. Jones, D.D.*) *The progressiveness of revelation:*—In these few words are set forth the relation in which the two dispensations stand to one another, the light in which the revelation as a whole is to be regarded. No words can more strongly lay down a principle which was for long regarded with suspicion. That revelation was given by degrees.

This truth is necessary in order to prove the necessity or even the allowableness of Christianity; the incompleteness of the first covenant must be admitted ere the reason for the existence of the second could be perceived. God had undoubtedly spoken, but how had He spoken? He had spoken at sundry times and in divers manners. 1. At sundry times, or rather, by divers portions. It was by degrees—fragmentarily—one truth at one time, another at another. And the degree in which God was known, in which He had been manifested to successive generations, was clearly not the same in all. There might be faith, there might be obedience in all ages to Him who was invisible; but unquestionably, though the men of one generation might not be better than the men of another—though, unfortunately, in all sin and unbelief had prevailed, yet who could not see that, as time went on, there were new truths insisted on, new discoveries made as to His holiness and His spirituality; that while it was the same eternal One whom men served or dishonoured, the way in which His will revealed itself varied from age to age; that the knowledge of David or of Jeremiah was different from the knowledge of Noah or of Abraham? This difference—this evolution, we might almost call it—lies upon the surface of the Old Testament. The history which is recorded there is, as has frequently been pointed out, like the biography of an individual life. It narrates so palpably the childhood, the youth, the manhood of a race; the education in Divine things, the development of spiritual truth. There were times when there were no Scriptures and no solemn ceremonies; there were times when men observed the complicated ritual of the law; there were times when men worshipped amid the splendours of the Temple; there were days when in exile they could not sing the Lord's song in a strange land. Thus gradually, thus at different times, as they were able to bear it, they heard God speaking. 2. And varied as were the times in which He had spoken to men, equally varied were the modes which He had employed to make them listen. How diversified was that volume in which they thought they had eternal life. By what different means were its lessons conveyed: by commandments and by promises, by similitudes and by symbols, by prophecy and by visions. History, psalms, proverbs, poetry, philosophy, all were in turn employed; the heart, the mind, the imagination were in turn appealed to. How different also from one another were those to whom the Word of the Lord came. But amid all the variety there was unity, amid all the diversity of means there was oneness of end and aim. There was progress, there was order. The whole revelation pointed onward, confessed itself imperfect and shadowy, placed its completion and glory in the future, could not be realised until what it showed forth in figure and under a veil should be fully manifested. "Consciously or unconsciously," as has been said by Dean Stanley, "the character and writings of the rest of the Bible fall into their relative places around the gospel history, as surely as in that history itself the soldiers, priests, disciples, Jews, and Romans derive their interest and significance from being grouped round the central figure, and round the Cross on Calvary." 3. God hath spoken in His Son, the brightness, the effulgence, the shining-forth of His glory, the express image of His Person, the impress of His substance, the essence of the Divine Being, the revelation of the very heart of God. In Him has been seen the embodiment of the Eternal Power by which the worlds were made. In Him has been unveiled the Eternal Love by which all things are preserved and sustained. In His sacrifice has been seen that offering of Himself through the Eternal Spirit without spot, to God, which alone can purify and reconcile a guilty world. In His exaltation to the right hand of God is seen the completion of the Divine purpose, the final triumph of the kingdom of heaven, our own deliverance from sin and faultless appearance before the throne, the gathering together in one of all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth. (*P. M. Muir.*) *The Old and the New Testament dispensations compared with respect to the different ways in which the will of God was revealed in each*:—I. THE MANNER IN WHICH GOD COMMUNICATED HIS WILL IN OLD TESTAMENT TIMES. This He is said in the text to have done "at sundry times, and in divers manners." The sundry times here spoken of may perhaps refer to the three great eras of the Old Testament history—the patriarchal, the Mosaic, and the prophetical ages of the Church. But as this view of the subject, however warrantable in itself, would conduce but little to the elucidation of the subject, namely, the manner in which the will of God was revealed, we shall consider the sundry times here spoken of as referring simply to the gradual and successive intimations of God's will, which were given to the fathers, or Old Testament saints, from the time of Adam to the time of Christ. During the whole of that period, though the manners in which He

spake were divers, yet there is one common property which belonged to the mode of all His communications, namely, that they were made "by the prophets." 1. Let us, then, briefly glance at the means by which, when the prophets had ascertained the will of God for themselves, they communicated it to the people. The two great means by which the prophets communicated God's will to the people were words and representative acts. 2. But before it could be communicated by the prophets to the people, it required first of all to be announced to the prophets themselves. And this also God accomplished not only at sundry times, but in divers manners. Sometimes it was effected by an impulse or inspiration of the Spirit upon the mind —"holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost"—and sometimes by an audible voice, as it was to Elijah when he stood upon the mount before the Lord (1 Kings xix. 11–13). But there was yet another mode of communication between God and His prophets more striking and wonderful. We find frequent instances in the Old Testament history of the appearance of a mysterious visitor from heaven, who talks with His servants face to face. This is to be understood of Christ, our own Immanuel, the great Prophet of the Church. It was the eternal "Word," though not then "made flesh," whose voice was heard by the first guilty pair in Eden, in the cool of the day, who appeared to Abraham, and wrestled with Jacob. It was our identical Saviour who, having heard the groaning of His people in Egypt, came down to deliver them, and gave Moses his commission from the midst of the bush. In short, it was He by whom the scheme of salvation has been administered from its commencement, and shall continue to be administered till its close. What a glorious consistency is thus stamped upon the whole scheme of grace! II. THE MODE IN WHICH GOD IS NOW ADDRESSING US UNDER THE NEW TESTAMENT DISPENSATION. God "hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son." The use of the word "spoken" is here striking and peculiar. It is not said that God hath sent us a message, but that He hath spoken to us, by or in His Son. It seems to contain an allusion to one of Christ's titles—"The Word." Just as a word spoken or written is an audible or visible representation of invisible thought, so is Christ "the visible image of the invisible God." "No man hath seen God at any time, the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." Now, as we have already seen that there were two ways in which the prophets addressed the people, namely, by words and by representative acts, so there are two ways in which the Son of God addresses us. He speaks to us both by His preaching and by His patience, by what He said and by what He suffered. Is there not a speaking power in the humbleness of His birth, and the stedfastness of His obedience—in His fasting, and watching, and temptation—in His tears, and His agonies, and His cries. As He hung upon the Cross, a spectacle to angels and to men, His latest words, "It is finished," tell of His completed obedience, and the full purchase of eternal salvation to as many as believe. And even after His body has ceased to breathe, and His heart has ceased to beat, what mean those outstretched arms—those bleeding hands? Do they not tell of the efficacy of His Mediatorship for reconciling sinners to the Holy One? III. Let us now COMPARE THESE TWO MODES IN WHICH GOD HAS REVEALED HIS WILL BY NOTICING A FEW POINTS OF RESEMBLANCE AND CONTRAST BETWEEN THEM. 1. Now it is obvious to remark that the revelation contained in the Old Testament and that contained in the New have the same author. Both are from God. Nor is there any difference in regard to their substance. Christ is set forth as the object of saving faith in both. 2. Let us now consider wherein they differ. (1) First, then, there is this obvious difference between them, that the way of salvation is more clearly revealed to us than it was to the fathers. The Old and the New Testament revelations thus resemble the lesser and the greater lights which were made, the one "to rule the night," the other "to rule the day." (2) But, again, the will of God is now revealed more extensively than it was under the ancient economy. Under that economy the written revelation of God's will was confined to the Jews. (3) Once more, the revelation made to us in the gospel is final, and therefore more enduring than that contained in the Old Testament Scriptures. The revelations which those Scriptures contained, and the economy with which they were more immediately connected, were not intended to be final. (4) But, finally, the most important distinction of all remains to be noticed. In times past, God spake to the fathers by the prophets, but He hath in these last days spoken to us by His Son. Not that we are to suppose that in former times God spake to the prophets directly and immediately without the intervention or mediatorship of the Son. We have already seen that it has always been the office of Christ to reveal as well as to purchase salvation for His

people. But the grand distinctive difference consists in this—that while formerly the Son of God, in His Divine person, revealed the will of God to the prophets; in these last times, Jesus Christ, Incarnate, hath revealed the will of God to the Church. In conclusion, are there any who, while gratefully alive to the importance of all these distinctions, and joyfully appreciating the pre-eminent privileges now possessed, yet feel as if all these advantages were counterbalanced by the fact that the Jewish people lived under a theocracy, and that prophets were raised up to address them from time to time, according to the ever-varying exigencies of their condition, while Christ is now gone "to His Father and our Father," and we have no farther revelation to expect, however our circumstances may vary? Now it is most true that the Shekinah is no longer visible, resting upon the mercy-seat, and that He whom the Shekinah represented no longer tabernacles among men. "The heavens have received Him until the time of the restitution of all things." Yet He has not left His people comfortless. Among His latest words we find the promise recorded, "Lo! I am with you alway, even to the end of the world." But the objection keeps out of view the important truth that Christ still "walks among the seven golden candlesticks"—that He sends forth His Spirit to enlighten His people's eyes, and to comfort His people's hearts. Indeed, the objection seems to be anticipated and answered by the very form of expression in the text. "God hath spoken to us by His Son"; as if He had said, You are not dependent merely upon a dead book for counsel and consolation; you have a living teacher, an ever-present guide! (*A. Grierson, M.A.*) *The heavenly voice:*—God has now ceased to speak in sundry times and in divers manners; therefore, if you dream, you are not to put a construction on your dream as if God inspired it. And hence, if God has ceased thus to speak, we may expect now that the Bible, beginning with Genesis and closing with the Apocalypse, is the completed volume of all God's will and God's ways; and that we are not to expect any additional revelation in the course of this present dispensation; for God has now, says the apostle, in this passage, spoken to us by His Son. Man left to his own fancy falls into all sorts of idolatries and delusions; and it is only when God speaks that man responds rationally, and justly, and purely, and worships Him who is a Spirit in spirit and in truth. We must notice here what is very remarkable: God speaks to us by His Son. You must have heard sometimes those who object to the Bible as the only rule of faith argue that they want a speaking judge; they want a living high-priest, or prelate, or pope, who will speak audibly as well as infallibly to them. We answer, though they may feel the want of it, yet if such an officer be not given, it is presumptuous evidence that it is not necessary. But the fact asserted here, that God speaks in the Bible, is evidence that we actually have a speaking tribunal. The Bible is spoken every day; there is a freshness in every chapter of the Bible that makes us feel that we are reading something higher than man's writing, and are in contact with God speaking to us in these last days by His Son. I might argue, in the next place, the great necessity of such a revelation. If this earth were as it once was before sin corrupted it, it would be a lesson-book that any one might adduce as quite sufficient to teach us all we ought to know. But if there were placed in your hands a book with a great many precious lessons in it, but all stained and blotted with ink, and so stained and blotted that whole pages are illegible, that fragments of other passages only are legible, and those fragments broken sentences, that you cannot fully understand, some of which at times convey meaning positively opposite to that which they originally were designed to convey, you would be very anxious to have some book clearer, distincter, and more intelligible. This world of ours is that blotted book, stained by sin; and what it revealed when it was made in Paradise as the grand and the illuminated lesson-book, it has lost and is now unable to reveal. And if we appeal to the inner page of conscience for an estimate of God, there is in the conscience of the holiest upon earth so much sin, that if we look at God through the misty and broken atmosphere of our own consciences, our sins will instantly suggest the notion of an angry and an offended God. If, again, we look into the law; if we stand with the Israelites at the bottom of the burning mount, and see the lightning and hear the thunder, and listen to God's voice as He proclaims, "Thou shalt, and thou shalt not," we, like Moses, must quake; and like the children of Israel, we, too, should beg that God would be silent, and not speak any more to us. God in nature is above us, and inscrutable by our investigation to a very great extent; God in the law is against us; but God in Christ is God with us, our Father and our Guide. And, therefore, we rejoice now to hear the apostle say in this passage that God, who spake at sundry times and in divers manners

in times past, has now spoken to us by His Son. But what has He spoken? Words of truth, words of life, words of peace, and happiness, and hope, and joy. The Bible was not written to teach me anything but religion. If the geologist come and consult it for lessons in geology, the oracle is dumb; if the astronomer come and ask for explanations about the stars, it is dumb; if the philosopher ask it for explanations about metaphysical subjects, the oracle is also dumb. But if the humblest peasant or the poorest mechanic inquire of it the way to heaven, it will tell him in a thousand places, by a thousand different similitudes, so plainly, so intelligibly, that the wayfaring man need not err therein. Now, what He has said in this blessed book by His Son, and what He still speaks in it, is a word for all; it is an encyclical, addressed from heaven to all that God has made, from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same; so much so, that if you are not acquainted with the Bible, it is not because the Bible was not sent to you, but because you have not studied it. Let us be thankful that God has thus spoken to us; let us study this precious book; let us pray that the Spirit would lead us unto all truth; and especially plead that promise that He will take of whatsoever Christ has said, that is, whatsoever God has spoken by His Son, and will show it unto us. (*J. Cumming, D.D.*) *The variety of prophetic revelation*:—Some men ask, If the prophets spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, why did they not all speak in the same manner? why these varieties of style? I will answer that by asking you another question: Why do not all the pipes of that organ give one and the same sound? What awakens all the sounds, but one and the same blast from the wind-chest? If there be a mono-blast, why is there not a mono-tone? Because the pipes are of different shapes and different sizes: the awakening breath is one, the intonation varies with the shape and size of the pipe. The inspiration was one, but the style and manner varied with the disposition and character of the individual employed. (*H. M'Neile.*) *Progressive revelation*:—It is impossible rightly to comprehend Scripture if we read it as we read the Koran, as though it were in all its parts of equal authority, all composed at one time, and all addressed to persons similarly situated. (*Thos. Arnold, D.D.*) *Judaism and Christianity*:—Canon Stubbs says in his "History of England" that "the roots of the present lie deep in the past, and that nothing in the past is dead to the man who would learn how the present comes to be what it is. The political forces which are operating now are the result of forces which have been operating ever since English history began. What they are cannot be understood except on condition of understanding whence they come. On the same condition only can it be foreseen whither they tend." Now, as it is with politics, so is it with religion. The present is the outgrowth of the past. The roots of the tree of Christianity lie deep in the soil of Judaism. The New Testament comes from the Old. (*J. Fleming, D.D.*) **These last days.**—*The last days*:—It hath pleased God that these last days should be many, that the world might the longer enjoy the bright light of the gospel, and that all that are ordained to life might in their due time be called. Why are they called the last days (as here), the last time (1 John ii. 18), the ends of the world (1 Cor. x. 11), and why in the beginning of this time was the coming of the Lord said to draw nigh (James v. 8), and the end of all things to be at hand? (1 Pet. iv. 7). 1. By the exhibition of Christ the prophecies and promises that in former times were made of Christ were accomplished, therefore as the days wherein these promises and prophecies were first made known were counted the first days, so these wherein they were accomplished the last. 2. The new covenant of grace is in these last days fully revealed by the gospel, and ratified by the death of Christ; so as no clearer revelation, nor former ratification can be expected, and in this respect also they are fitly styled the last days. 3. No alteration of the state and order of God's Church is to be expected after Christ exhibited, but a final end of all by Christ's second coming unto judgment; therefore these days may be accounted the ends of the world, and the end of all things to be at hand. 4. As God at first made all things in six days, and rested the seventh, so He continueth to govern the world in six distinct times, which may be accounted as six days of the great week of the world, and eternity following an everlasting Sabbath. The first of these days was from Adam to Noah; in it the covenant of grace was first made to man. The second was from Noah to Abraham; in it that covenant was renewed. The third was from Abraham to David; in it that covenant was appropriated to Abraham and his seed. The fourth was from David to the captivity of Israel; in it that covenant was established in a royal line. The fifth was from their captivity to Christ's coming in the flesh; in it as the brightness of that covenant was eclipsed by the

captivity; so it was revived by Israel's return out of the captivity and re-edifying the Temple. The sixth was and still is and shall be from Christ's first coming in the flesh to His second coming in glory; even to the end of the world. In it that covenant most clearly and fully laid open, was most firmly and inviolably ratified. Now when the sixth day, which is the last day, is come, then the end of the week may well be said to be at hand; and the coming of the Lord, following thereupon, to draw nigh. (*W. Gouge.*) *Our condition under the gospel*:—1. In those that were the first days some new doctrine was daily to be expected, but in these last days God hath opened to us His whole counsel, there is no mint of any new doctrine to be looked for. If an angel from heaven preach any other doctrine than that which we have received in these last days let him be accursed. 2. In the last days there is greatest abundance of knowledge. "In the last days I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh." God then was sparing of His Spirit, He sent it down by drops, but now He pours it out upon the Church. They had the moonlight, we have the sunlight. Therefore if we be ignorant our condemnation shall be the greater. The preaching of the Word is a well of water, but we will not come with our buckets to fetch water at this well, or if we do we come with riven buckets, the water runs out by and by. 3. These last days wherein we live are the most dangerous; sin overfloweth with a full stream. In the last days perilous times shall come. Never did sin show herself with such a brazen face as it doth now. Men now stick not to set themselves against the Word of God itself, to call the authority of the Scripture in question, whether all things be true in it or not. 4. Seeing they be the last days, let us not be so much in love with them. Will any be bestowing great cost on his house the last day, when he is to go out of it? In the first days, when they entered first into the farm of the world, they might be merry; we live in the last days, when we cannot have long to tarry in it, therefore let us not be wedded to it; let us use this world as if we used it not, for the fashion of this world fadeth away in these last days; let us so live that whensoever Christ comes to judgment we may meet Him joyfully in the air and be translated with Him into His kingdom of glory. (*W. Jones, D.D.*) **By His Son.**—*Christ the Son*:—Two critical remarks. 1. "Sundry times"—more literally, sundry portions—sections, not of time, but of the matter of the revelation. God gave His revelation in parts, piecemeal, as you teach a child to spell a word—letter by letter, syllable by syllable—adding all at last together. God had a word to spell—His own Name. By degrees He did it. At last it came entire. The Word was made flesh. 2. "His Son," more correctly, "a Son"—for this is the very argument. Not that God now spoke by Christ, but that whereas once He spoke by prophets, now He spoke by a Son. The filial dispensation was the last. I am to show, then, that the manifestation of God through a Son was implied, not realised, in the earlier dispensation. "Sundry portions" of this truth are instanced in the Epistle. The mediatorial dispensation of Moses—the gift of Canaan—the Sabbath, &c. At present I select these: 1. The preparatory dispensation. 2. The filial and final dispensation. I. IT WAS IMPLIED, NOT FULFILLED, IN THE KINGLY OFFICE. Three Psalms are quoted, all referring to kingship. In Psalm ii. it was plain that the true idea of a king was only fulfilled in One who was a Son of God. In the 110th Psalm a new idea is added. The true king must be a priest. "Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek." Further still. The Epistle extends this idea to man. The psalm had ascribed (Psa. viii. 6) kingly qualities and rule to manhood—rule over the creation. Thus the idea of a king belonged properly to humanity; to the Jewish king as the representative of humanity. In Jesus of Nazareth alone all these fragments, these sundry portions of the revealed idea of royalty met. II. CHRISTIANITY WAS IMPLIED IN THE RACE OF PROPHETS. The second class of quotations refer to the prophets' life and history (chap. ii. 11–14; Psa. xxii. 22, xviii. 2; Isa. xii. 2, viii. 18). Remember what the prophets were. They were not merely predictors of the future. Nothing destroys the true conception of the prophets' office more than those popular books in which their mission is certified by curious coincidences. But in truth, the first office of the prophet was with the present. He read eternal principles beneath the present and the transitory, and in doing this of course he prophesied the future; for a principle true to-day is true for ever. But this was, so to speak, an accident of his office: not its essential feature. A philosopher saying in the present tense the law by which comets move, predicts all possible cometary movements. Now the prophet's life almost more than his words was predictive. The writer of this Epistle lays down a great principle respecting the prophet, "Both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one." It was the very condition of his

inspiration that he should be one with the people. He burned with their thoughts, and expressed them. He was obliged by the very sensitiveness of his humanity to have a more entire dependence and a more perfect sympathy than other men. The sanctifying prophet was one with those whom he sanctified. Hence he uses those expressions quoted from Isaiah and the Psalms above. He was more man, just because more Divine—more a son of man, because more a son of God. He was peculiarly the suffering Israelite: His countenance marred more than the sons of men. III. THE PRIESTHOOD CONTINUED THIS IDEA LATENT. 1. The Jewish priest represented the holiness of the nation; he went into the holy of holies, showing it. But this great idea was only implied, not fulfilled in the Jewish priest. He was only by a fiction the representative of holiness. Holy he was not. He only entered into a fictitious holy of holies. If the idea were to be ever real, it must be in One who should be actually what the Jewish priest was by a figment, and who should carry our humanity into the real holy of holies—the presence of God; thus becoming our invisible and eternal Priest. 2. Next it was implied that his call must be Divine. But in the 110th Psalm a higher call is intimated than that Divine call which was made to the Aaronic priesthood by a regular succession, or as it is called in the Epistle, "the law of a carnal commandment." Melchizedek's call is spoken of. The king is called a priest after his order. Not a derived or hereditary priesthood: not one transmissible, beginning and ending in himself (chap. vii. 1–3), but a priesthood in other words, of character, of inward right: a call internal, hence more Divine: or, as the writer calls it, a priest "after the power of an endless life." This was the idea for which the Jewish psalms themselves ought to have prepared the Jew. 3. Again the priests offered gifts and sacrifices. Only Christ's all-perfect sacrifice of Himself can avail in the sight of God. He is the only High Priest of the universe. (*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*) *God hath spoken by His Son:*—I. The first truth which God has made known to us, the important conclusion resulting from His message by Christ, is the infinite VALUE OF THE SOUL, and the misery to which it is reduced by sin: that is, by a thoughtless neglect of God, or a practical disobedience to His will. II. The second truth which is declared to us in the gospel relates to THE WAY OF SALVATION; the way in which this fearful interest of the soul may be secured. III. The third truth which I mention at present as brought to light by the gospel, is THE NEED OF THE RENEWAL OF THE SOUL IN RIGHTEOUSNESS, through the power of the Holy Spirit. (*Archbp. Sumner.*) *God revealed by Christ:*—Imagine a painter who loved his art, and who had a son he loved so well that he would not do a bad piece of art. By and by the painter dies, and one day the son enters a gallery and stands and hears all the empty talk and idle judgment of the crowd, as they stand before his father's great masterpiece and fail to understand it. How would that son say to himself, "These do not know thee; but I know thee, and my knowledge shall vanquish their ignorance." What is here imagined has happened. When this generation was young the greatest painter of the day was unknown. Turner awaited an audience; but Ruskin arose, saw and interpreted him, and the world suddenly found itself enriched not simply by the works of a great painter, but also of a great writer and thinker as well. So let us mark that if we are to reach God as Christ knew Him it must be through the Christ who knew. (*A. M. Fairbairn, D.D.*) *The final revelation: its helpfulness:*—Fathers, mothers, when you set your little ones some task, and they come and ask you how it is to be done, very likely you have repeated instructions over and over again; but still they do not understand. And then you have taken it in your hands and worked it out before their eyes, and shown the principles that you could not explain or define embodied in actual form; and they had then to study the realised product, to see how to copy it, and work it out again in their own way. God has asked from His earthly children the task of the true life, truly lived; they have asked of Him its principles and the method of their application; and by the mouth of lawgiver, and prophet, and priest, He has explained and defined. But the mind of man could not comprehend. There remained one way, and only one. It was that God Himself should take in hand the task of life, and live it out before the world. It was that He should work out its principles, and make them actual in flesh and blood, and leave to men the will of God embodied for all time in the exemplary and redemptive work of Jesus Christ. He is the end and crown of revelation. From the study of that life it is possible to derive all guidance in all difficulty. It is the law of every nature. It is the commandment of God for us; and it is the inspiration and potency of all our effort, and the reward of all our life. For us, then, Jesus Christ and our knowledge of Him is at once our matchless

inspiration, and the measure of our shortcoming and our sin. It would be possible for us to keep the Ten Commandments and yet to live lives of very low morality. The standard is raised; the standard is rising. The influence of the Spirit of God, in unfolding the holiness of Christ, is beginning to condemn many things that past generations were content to condone. "God is not dumb that He should speak no more." The holiness of Christ is dawning on the world. There is the world's hope. (*C. S. Horne, M.A.*) *Revelation by Jesus; its certainty*:—It is four hundred years since the heroic Columbus sailed over the Atlantic, and unveiled to the world a new continent. The poets had sung of the lost island Atlantis. Geographers had tried to guess the secrets of the great ocean. Many theories had floated about, but there was no certainty. But when the brave Genoese landed in Spain with his trophies and his wonderful story of the new land, his words were not as other men's. He had seen a new world, and men crowded to hear his tale. There was not such another man in Europe. He had uncovered or discovered a new world, and his achievement made him a unique man. Even so our Lord discovered to us the great spiritual world—the Eldorado of the soul—the world of God, of perfect life, of freedom from sin, and sickness, and death. He came from that world, and revealed to us what was there. He was not as other men; He had unique experiences, and so was empowered to tell us what none other could. He gave us not waifs from an unknown world. He was not like Isaac Newton, a learner on the shore of an unexplored ocean of truth. He had explored that ocean, and mastered its secrets, and His story is a statement of facts. (*Archibald Hadden.*) *If Christianity is Divine, why was it so long in being given to the world?*—A teacher dare not plunge a child all at once *in medias res*. He begins with the alphabet and brings him on little by little. The Hebrews, not less than the heathens, were unprepared in the primitive ages for the full blaze of gospel day. They would not have been prepared to understand either the grandeur of Christ's teaching, or the grandeur of His life, or the grandeur of His death. Let the boy be taught his letters and his grammar, and then put Milton before him. And, in like manner, God's plan seems to have been to give the world a few centuries of typical teaching and training among the hills of Judah, and then present them with the wondrous Logos, the Word by whom all things were made. Besides, it seems to have been the purpose of the Most High to let the heathen nations find out the vanity of their false systems of religion and philosophy. Then, when the mind of man was in a state of disquietude and unrest, Jesus came to whisper His heavenly "Peace, be still." Paganism's lords many and gods many were being laughed at by all sensible men. Even in the hands of Plato philosophy had declared herself to be only a tiny lamp; whereas surely a Sun would be sent to illumine our darkness. At length the fulness of time arrived, the clock struck twelve on the great horologe of the world, and lo! "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." (*Evangelical Repository.*) *Difficulties in the Old Testament do not warrant the rejection of Christianity*:—It is a logical mistake to abandon faith in the Lord Jesus because of difficulties, insoluble perhaps to us, which occur in the books of the Old Testament. Look at the block of marble which has only just begun to feel the formative hand of the sculptor, and you may be uncertain whether or no the great master has really had anything to do with the rough hewing of the still unshapely mass; but because of this you will not hesitate when the idea of the artist is perfected, when the marble has been inspired with beauty, majesty, and strength, and seems to have caught an immortal life from the imagination of genius. And so, whatever difficulty any of you may have for a time—and I believe it will only be for a time—in discovering the presence of God in His primitive revelations to the human race, this should be no reason for regarding with diminished faith the full revelation He has made of Himself in His Son. (*R. W. Dale, LL.D.*) *Jesus the manifestation of God*:—The devout heart yearns after a personal God. It craves for something more than the works of God, however replete with proofs of His power and glory; it wants to get near Himself. Its instinctive desire is after a Father and a Friend—a loving ear into which its sorrows may be poured—a loving heart on which its weariness may rest. But Omnipresence, Omnipotence, Being without form or place, Existence without beginning or end, Eternal Rest without change or motion; these, in their very sublimity, constitute a notion which tends to repel rather than to attract, to overwhelm and crush rather than gently to raise and foster our human sympathies and desires. Our mortal feebleness shrinks from it in trembling awe. The heart cannot feed on sublimities. We cannot make a home of this cold magnificence; we cannot take Immensity by the hand. The soul lost in such con-

temptations, like a trembling child wandering on some mountain solitudes, longs, amidst all this vastness and grandeur, for the sound of some familiar voice to break the stillness, or the sight of some sheltered spot in which it may nestle with the sense of friendliness and security. Now that which is thus the deep-felt want of our natures is most fully and adequately met in the Person of Jesus Christ. For here is One whom, while we may reverence and adore as God, we can think of as clearly, and love as simply, trustingly, tenderly, as the best known and loved of our earthly friends. Here is a point which our shadowy conceptions may condense, a focus towards which our aimless aspirations may tend. Here we have set before us the Boundless, limited in form; the Eternal, dwelling in time; the Invisible and Spiritual God revealed in that Word of Life which human eyes have seen, and human hands have handled. (*J. Caird, D.D.*) *Revelation of God:*—When a prince, affianced to the heiress of some distant kingdom, has sent his portrait to her by the hand of his vicegerent, and the casket comes, it is so glowing with diamonds and with sapphires rare that it seems itself to be priceless; and yet, on being opened, so royal is the face within, and so does it blaze with superior diamonds, that the casket becomes forgotten. So God is revealed as a world-builder and material worker, as a physical governor, as grand past human language; but when you open the casket and behold Jesus Christ, and hear His voice as revealing what God is in His interior disposition and mother soul, you forget the other. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Heathen anticipations of the Messiah:*—From the remotest ages prophetic utterances, announcing better times and a coming deliverance, had pervaded the ancient world. Such mutilated and ancient prophecies are found amongst the most widely differing nations. It was the hope of the Persians that a time would come, a Messianic time, in which Ahriman would be annihilated, the world renewed, and delivered from all evil; in which all mankind would be converted to a state of obedience to law, and the happy condition of former times restored. The Indians expected, at the end of the present age of sin, the tenth Avatar, that is, incarnation. That of Buddha was the ninth, and this would be an incarnation of Vishnu, who would appear under the name Kalki, overthrow all evil, and restore the happy times which had prevailed at the beginning of the world. Even the Chinese were not without such Messianic hopes. The advent of a great and Holy One in the West is frequently announced in their sacred books—One who was not only to lay down the way of perfection, but also to destroy the ancient idols. Nor were similar expectations less familiar to other Oriental nations. Among the Greeks they were profoundly expressed in the legend of Prometheus. Prometheus chained to the rock, in daily torment, utters the oracle, known to himself alone, that the dominion of the false god Zeus will one day be terminated by a Son of God, who will be mightier than Zeus, while he himself beholds Hercules as his deliverer in the distant future. But this deliverance—as Hermes announces to him—is not to take place without vicarious suffering:—

> "And of that anguish, look not for the end
> Before some god shall come to bear thy woes:
> And will to pass to Hades' sunless realm
> And the dark, cloudy depths of Tartarus."

And this is done by Chiron, the most just and wise of the Centaurs, the son of Chronos, sacrificing himself for him, while Hercules kills the eagle at his breast, and so delivers him from his torments. Æschylus made this significant legend the subject of a dramatic trilogy, of which, indeed, only a fragment, the "Prometheus Bound," remains. Enough has, however, been preserved to show us how the deep ideas of the Greek world concerning guilt, atonement, and the redemption of mankind are poetically reflected therein. This poetic legend is indeed almost a prediction of the true Redeemer. (*Prof. Luthardt.*) *The gospel of the Son:*—1. As the Son is above the servants, so is Christ above the prophets. And no reason, that the Jews should think so much of Moses, and the prophets, as for them to mis-regard Christ's doctrine and stick to the Levitical service under pretence of estimation of the prophets. 2. The glory of the gospel is greater than the glory of the law. 3. The glory of the ministerial calling of preachers of the gospel is by so much the greater, as it hath the Son of God first man in the roll thereof; as first preacher, and prince of preachers. 4. Christ's sermons are all of them directed unto us: and so much the more highly should the doctrine of the gospel be esteemed of by us. (*D. Dickson, M.A.*) *Christ explains past revelations:*—A singer will sometimes

sit down to an instrument and strike a few mysterious chords, or pick out a few bars of melody, which excite only vague thoughts and vaguer emotions within us; but soon the rich sweet voice steals in, uttering articulate words, and then our vague thoughts and emotions take definite forms, and we comprehend what it was that touched and moved us in the prelude. Not till God uttered His voice in Christ could men understand the preluding notes which the prophets were constrained to sound, or put clear, definite, authentic meaning into these yearning, mysterious tones. (*S. Cox, D.D.*)

Whom He hath appointed heir of all things.—*Christ appointed heir:*—God is said to appoint His Son—1. By ordaining in His eternal counsel that His Son should be heir. As Christ was delivered by the determinate counsel of God to be slain (Acts ii. 23) so was He appointed to be heir (1 Pet. i. 20). 2. By sending Him into the world, or by giving Him to be incarnate for that very end (Phil. ii. 7–9). 3. By raising Him from the dead, and setting Him at His right hand in heaven. On these grounds St. Peter thus saith, "God hath made Him both Lord and Christ" (Acts ii. 36). This word "appointed" showeth the right that Christ hath to His supreme dignity. That which is said of Christ's being Priest (chap. v. 5) may be applied to this dignity—"Christ glorified not Himself to be an heir; but He that said to Him, Thou art My Son, to-day have I begotten Thee," appointed Him heir. (*W. Gouge.*) *Jesus heir of all things:*—Be married to this heir, and have all. (*J. Trapp.*) *The heir of all things:*—God has appointed Christ heir of all things. What, then, is the preparation being made for the inheritance? The history of the earth is carrying the preparation. How slowly this history unfolds itself, as if it were some long procession. And as we think of that, people following Jesus, the key to the whole situation in the world's history is connected with their combination and their prospect. The history of the world is preparing the inheritance for Jesus Christ. Now take a glimpse of the inheritance itself. This we shall gain if we can look forward with the eye of faith to the consummation of all things. If we can pass away from the tumult, the conflict, the iniquity, the disappointment, the woe, all belonging to us, and go forward to that place where Christ shall stand when He gathers His ransomed to Himself, not one wanting, and receives the inheritance from the Father, we shall have a glimpse of that which He is providing that His Son may be glorified. And towards that distant yet glorious time we may turn with something of the feeling of those who, after they have been battling on the billows for long months, strain the eye to see the first outline of the native land to which they are returning; with something of a gladness like that we may contemplate the coming glory of our Redeemer when He shall receive the inheritance provided for Him. But it must often be with us as with a master of a ship when the clouds have shut out from him the light of the sun, and there has been no visible token by which reckoning could be made for days. What can there be in such a case but uncertainty? And yet the course is fixed. When the clouds break up and pass away, and the clear sun shines once more, reckonings will be simple, adjustments will be prompt, and the haven will be secure. So it must be with us. It is an idle expectation which we cherish in our hearts when we anticipate that all our difficulties are thus to be cleared at once from our path. There is no progress made by us, not a single step which we do not claim as an achievement for ever. So that our progress must be onward and upward until we stand on the level where Christ is. And how much we are now turning our backs upon that will tell us how steadily things are moving; how we are advancing along the way towards coming glory! For what are these things left behind? They belong to the scene of conflict, and as such they must vanish away. The time for ploughing the fields, and for reaping the harvest will come to a close; we shall see the end of conflict, and of all the weariness it brings; we shall see a close of sin, and all that terrific sorrow which has kept trailing along the path on account of our transgression. These are the things which we are leaving behind. The progress of the world means perfect righteousness. For this is the teaching of the Bible, that even worlds wear out and pass away, as a scroll which has been burnt up, and we look for a new heaven and a new earth; not a place tarnished by iniquity, not a place blurred by sorrows, not a place so often the scene of temptation, where wickedness has had dominion—we look for a new heaven and a new earth. This inheritance, then, shall include all the good as it is coming towards perfection. Christ's inheritance is the consummation of all things. If this be so, then He is teaching us that man is destined for an eternal service. And this is the faith that moves in the soul of the human race; this is the faith which has taken possession of it, the faith which dominates it, for the human race will not believe that its life

is mere bone and muscle. Man will not believe it, and ought not to; if he has a conscience he cannot. He will rather believe, as the Bible teaches, that he is "a little lower than the angels." For Jesus Christ has His inheritance in the souls of men made perfect in the fellowship of saints and angels. In drawing our meditation to a close, let me ask you to remember that as we think of progress we must also place alongside of it the lesson concerning deterioration. Progress is a thing of life; eternal progress, that which belongs to a life which can never die; yet we hear of a second death. (*H. Calderwood, LL.D.*) *The superiority of Christianity as shown in the glory of its supreme Head as Son of God*:—I. CHRIST AS THE SON OF GOD THE PROPHET OF CHRISTIANITY. 1. Notice the Divine authority of the Old Testament Scriptures. 2. Notice God's gracious adaptations in qualifying His messengers to meet the demands of each age. 3. Notice the transcendent glory of Christianity. II. CHRIST, AS SON OF GOD, UNIVERSAL PROPRIETOR. 1. His heirship is absolutely universal. 2. Christ's universal ownership is used by Him for the highest moral and spiritual purposes. 3. This investment of Christ with all power is the all-sufficient encouragement of the Church. III. CHRIST, AS SON OF GOD, SUPREME HEAD OF ALL DISPENSATIONS. 1. Christ has been the leader in every dispensation of the past. 2. Christ will be the leader of future dispensations (chaps. ii. 5, vii. 24, 28). IV. CHRIST, AS SON OF GOD, THE REVEALER OF THE ETERNAL FATHER. 1. Christ reveals the supreme excellence of the Divine character in its totality. 2. Christ reveals the infinite perfections of the Divine nature in their individuality. V. CHRIST, AS SON OF GOD, IS THE ALMIGHTY SUSTAINER OF THE WHOLE UNIVERSE. 1. The absoluteness of His omnipotence is here set forth. 2. The ultimate triumph of Christianity is thus assured by virtue of the power of its glorious Head. VI. CHRIST, AS SON OF GOD, THE WORLD'S REDEEMER. 1. Notice the personal suffering of Christ by which redemption was wrought. 2. The perfect character of the work. 3. The glorious reward received. VII. CHRIST, AS SON OF GOD, INFINITELY SUPERIOR TO THE ANGELS. 1. By virtue of His Sonship (vers. 4-7). 2. By virtue of His Kingship (vers. 8, 9). 3. By virtue of His Creatorship (vers. 10-12). 4. By virtue of His ultimate Mastership over all His enemies (vers. 13, 14). Lessons: 1. The unspeakable glory of Christianity. (1) As seen in its being God's last masterpiece. (2) As seen in the glory of its Prophet, Priest, and King. (3) As seen in its ultimate object in bringing this fallen race into practical relations with God. 2. The unspeakable obligation the world is under to Christ through Christianity. (1) In giving us the only true conception of God. (2) In giving us the only true conception of the value of the soul. (3) In giving us the only true conception of true manhood in its means and nature. 3. The unspeakable deadness to all that constitutes true moral excellence, seen in indifference to Christ, to Christianity, and to the privileges it offers. (*D. C. Hughes, M.A.*) *The supreme glory of Christ*:—I. THAT CHRIST IS GOD. 1. The Lordship of Christ. 2. The Creatorship of Christ. 3. The Governorship of Christ. II. THAT GOD IS MADE KNOWN IN CHRIST. 1. God is unknown out of Christ. 2. God is revealed in Christ. (1) We can only know God in Christ. (2) In Christ we know God as He is. Not indeed fully, but really, truly, blessedly. III. THAT GOD IS MADE KNOWN IN CHRIST AS THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD. (*The Metropolitan Pulpit.*) *Of the Kingdom or Lordship of Christ*:—The grant of dominion in general unto the Messiah, is intimated in the first promise of Him (Gen. iii. 15). His victory over Satan was to be attended with rule, power, and dominion (Psa. lxviii. 18; Isa. liii. 12; Eph. iv. 8, 9; Col. ii. 15), and confirmed in the renewal of that promise to Abraham (Gen. xxii. 17, 18). For in Him it was that Abraham was to be heir of the world (Rom. iv. 13). His kingdom was fully revealed unto David, and is expressed by him (Psa. ii., xlv. 3-8, lxxxix. 19-24, &c., lxxii. 6-9, &c., cx. 1-3). As also in all the following prophets: see Isa. xi. 1, 2, ix. 6, 7, liii. 12, lxiii. 1-3; Jer. xxiii. 5, 6; Dan. vii. 13, 14, &c. As this was foretold in the Old Testament, so the accomplishment of it is expressly asserted in the New. Upon His birth, He is proclaimed to be Christ the Lord (Luke ii. 11). And the first inquiry after Him is, "Where is He that is born King?" (Matt. ii. 2, 6). And this testimony doth He give concerning Himself, namely, that all judgment was His, and therefore all honour was due unto Him (John v. 22, 23). And that all things were delivered unto Him, or given into His hand (Matt. xi. 25), yea, all power in heaven and earth (Matt. xxviii. 18), the thing pleaded for. Him who was crucified did God make both Lord and Christ (Acts ii. 35, 36), exalting Him at His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour (Acts v. 31). He is highly exalted, having a name given Him above every name (Phil. ii. 9-11), being set at the right hand of God in heavenly places, far above, &c. (Eph. i. 20-22), where He reigns for ever

(1 Cor. xv. 25), being the King of kings, and Lord of lords (Rev. v. 12–14), for He is Lord of quick and dead (Rom. xiv. 7–9). Thus is the Son made heir of all in general; we shall further consider His dominion in a distribution of the chief parts of it, and manifest His power severally in and over them all. He is Lord or Heir, *παντων*, that is, of all persons and of all things. Persons, or rational subsistences here intended, are either angels or men; for it is evident that "He is exempted, who hath subjected all things unto Him" (1 Cor. xv. 27). Angels are of two sorts: 1. Such as abide doing the will of God, retaining that name by way of eminence. 2. Such as by sin have lost their first habitation, usually called evil angels, or devils. The Lord Jesus hath dominion over all of both sorts of them. Men may be cast under one common distribution, which is comprehensive of all distinctions, either elect or reprobates. And the Lord Jesus hath rule and dominion over them all. Things that are subject unto the Lord Jesus, may be referred unto four heads: for they are either—1. Spiritual; or, 2. Ecclesiastical; or, 3. Political; or, 4. Natural. Again, Spiritual are either—(1) Temporal, as Grace, Gifts; or, (2) Eternal, as Glory. Ecclesiastical, or Church things, are either—1. Judaical, or Old Testament things; or, 2. Christian, or things of the New Testament. Political and civil things may be considered as they are managed—1. By His friends; 2. His enemies. Of natural things, we shall speak in a production of some particular instances to prove the general assertion. Those in the first place assigned as part of the inheritance of Christ are the angels, and the good angels in especial. 1. His pre-eminence above them is asserted by the apostle in ver. 4. He is made better, more excellent than the angels. 2. As He is exalted above them, so by the authority of God the Father they are made subject unto Him (1 Pet. iii. 22). 3. They adore and worship Him; the highest act of obedience, and most absolute subjection. This they have in command (Heb. i. 6). 4. They always attend His throne (Isa. vi. 1, 2). Thus His lordship over angels is universal and absolute, and their subjection unto Him answerable thereunto. The manner of the grant of this excellence, power, and dignity unto Him, must be further cleared in the opening of these words of the apostle (ver. 4), "being made better than the angels"; the original right and equity of this grant, with the ends of it, are now only to be intimated. 1. The radical fundamental equity of this grant lies in His Divine nature; and in His creation of angels; over whom, as Mediator, He is made Lord. 2. It is founded in that establishment in the condition in which they were created, which they received by His interposition to recover what was lost by sin, and to preserve from ruin the untainted part of the creation. And as this act of God in appointing Christ Lord of angels hath these equitable foundations, so it hath also sundry glorious ends. 1. It was as an addition unto that glory that was set before Him, in His undertaking to redeem sinners. 2. God hereby gathers up His whole family, at first distinguished by the law of their creation into two especial kinds, and then differenced and set at variance by sin, into one body under one head, reducing them that originally were twain, into one entire family (Eph. i. 10). 3. The Church of mankind militant on the earth, whose conduct unto eternal glory is committed unto Christ, stands in need of the ministry of angels. II. There is another sort of angels, those who "by sin left their primitive station," and fell off from God, of whom, and of their sin, fall, malice, business, craft in evil, and final judgment, the Scripture treateth at large. These belong not indeed to the possession of Christ, as He is the heir, but they belong unto His dominion as He is Lord. Though He be not a King and Head unto them, yet He is a Judge and Ruler over them. 1. As before, this right is founded in His Divine nature, by virtue whereof He is *ικανος*, fit for this dominion. He made these angels also, and therefore, as God, hath an absolute dominion over them. 2. The immediate and peculiar foundation of His right unto rule over fallen angels rendering the special grant of it equal and righteous, is lawful conquest. This gives a special right (Gen. xlviii. 22). Now that Christ should conquer fallen angels was promised from the foundation of the world (Gen. iii. 15). The ends of this lordship of Christ are various, as—(1) His own glory (Psa. cx. 1). (2) The safety of the Church (Matt. xvi. 18; Rev. xii. 7–9). (3) Exercise for their good—(*a*) By temptation (1 Pet. v. 8–10). (*b*) Persecution (Rev. ii. 10, xii. 10); both which He directs and regulates to their eternal advantage. (4) The exercising of His vengeance on His stubborn enemies, whom these slaves to His righteous power seduce, blind, harden, provoke, ruin, and destroy (Rev. xii. 15, xvi. 13, 14; Psa. cvi.). III. All mankind (the second sort of intellectual creatures or rational subsistences) belong to the lordship and dominion of Christ. 1. He is Lord over all flesh (John xvii. 2), both living and dead (Rom. xiv. 9; Phil. ii. 9, 10). 2. Particularly He is Lord over all the

elect. 1. They were given to Him from eternity in design and by compact, that they should be His peculiar portion, and He their Saviour (John xvii. 2). 2. His grant is strengthened by redemption, purchase, and acquisition. This was the condition of the former grant (Isa. liii. 10–12), and this condition was made good by Him; so that His lordship is frequently asserted on this very account (1 Cor. vi. 20; 1 Pet. i. 18, 19; 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6; John x. 15, xi. 52; Eph. v. 25–27; Rev. v. 9). 3. Those thus given Him of the Father and redeemed by Him are of two sorts. (1) Such as are actually called to faith in Him, and union with Him. These are further become His, upon many other especial accounts. They are His, in all relations of subjection, His children, servants, brethren, disciples, subjects, His house, His spouse. (2) Some of them are always uncalled, and shall be so, until the whole number of them be completed and filled. But even before they are called they belong, on the former accounts, to His lot, care, and rule (John x. 6). 2. His lordship and dominion extends to the other sort of men also, namely, reprobates, and men finally impenitent. They are not exempted from that "all flesh" which He hath power over (John xvii. 2), nor from those "quick and dead" over whom He is Lord (Rom. xiv. 9), nor from that "world" which He shall judge (Acts xvii. 31). And there are two special grounds that are peculiar to them of this grant, and power, and authority over them. (1) His interposition upon the entrance of sin against the immediate execution of the curse due to it, as befell the angels. This fixed the world under a dispensation of—(*a*) Forbearance and patience (Rom. ii. 4, 5; Acts xvii. 30; Rom. ix. 22; Psa. lxxv. 3). (*b*) Goodness and mercy (Acts xiv. 16, 17). (2) He makes a conquest over them. It was promised that He should do so (Gen. iii. 15), and though the work itself prove long and irksome, though the ways of accomplishing it be to us obscure and oftentimes invisible, yet He hath undertaken it, and will not give it over, until they are every one brought to be His footstool (Psa. cx. 1; 1 Cor. xv. 25). And the dominion granted Him on these grounds is—(*a*) Sovereign and absolute: His enemies are His footstool (Psa. cx. 2; Matt. xxii. 44; Mark xii. 36; Luke xx. 42; Acts ii. 34; 1 Cor. xv. 25; Heb. i. 13). (*b*) Judiciary (John v. 22, 23). As He hath power over their persons, so He hath regard unto their sins (Rom. xiv. 9; Acts xvii. 3; Matt. xxv. 31). And this power He variously exerciseth over them, even in this world, before He gloriously exerts it in their eternal ruin. He exerciseth rule and dominion over them in providential dispensations (Isa. lxiii. 1–4; Rev. vi. 15, 16, xix. 13). By all which He makes way for the glory of His final judgment of them (Acts xvii. 3; Matt. xxv. 31; Rev. xix. 20, xx. 10–15). And all this will He do to the ends (i.) Of His own glory. (ii.) The good exercise and safety of the church. II. The second part of the heirship and dominion of Christ consisteth in His lordship over all things besides, which, added to the former, comprises the whole creation of God. In the distribution of these premised, the first that occur are spiritual things, which also are of two sorts—1. Temporal, or such as in this life we are made partakers of; and—2. Eternal, the things that are reserved for them that believe in the state of glory. The former may be reduced to two heads, for they are all of them either grace or gifts, and Christ is Lord of them all. I. All that which comes under the name of grace in Scripture, which, flowing from the free and special love of God tends directly to the spiritual and eternal good of them on whom it is bestowed, may be referred to four heads. Now these are—1. Pardon of sin, and the free acceptance of the persons of sinners, in a way of mercy. This is grace (Eph. ii. 8; Tit. iii. 5, 7). And a saving effect and fruit of the covenant (Jer. xxxi. 31–34; Heb. viii. 12). 2. The regenerating of the person of a dead sinner, with the purifying and sanctifying of his nature in a way of spiritual power. This also is grace, and is promised in the covenant, and there are three parts of it—(1) The infusion of a quickening principle into the soul of a dead sinner (Rom. viii. 2; Tit. iii. 5; John iii. 6; Eph. ii. 1–6). (2) The habitual furnishing of a spiritually quickened soul, with abiding radical principles of light, love, and power, fitting it for spiritual obedience (Gal. v. 17). (3) Actual assistance in a communication of supplies of strength for every duty and work (Phil. i. 13; John xv. 3). 3. Preservation in a condition of acceptance with God, and holy obedience to Him to the end, is also of especial grace. It is the grace of perseverance, and eminently included in the covenant. 4. Adoption as a privilege, with all the privileges that flow from it, is also grace (Eph. i. 5, 6). All these, with all those inexpressible mercies that they branch themselves into, giving deliverance to sinners from evil, temporal and eternal; raising them to communion with God here, and to the enjoyment of Him for ever hereafter, are called grace; and do belong to the lordship of Christ, as He is Heir, Lord, and Possessor of them all. All the stores of this grace and mercy that are in

heaven for sinners, are given into His hand, and resigned up to His sovereign disposal, as we shall intimate in general and particular. 1. In general (Col. i. 19). There is a fourfold fulness in Christ—(1) Of the Deity in His Divine nature (Rom. ix. 5). (2) Of union in His person (Col. ii. 9). (3) Of grace in His human nature (John i. 14, iii. 34; Luke ii. 52, iv. 1). (4) An authoritative fulness to communicate of it unto others; that is the fulness here intended. 2. In particular—(1) All pardoning grace for the acceptance of our persons, and forgiveness of our sins, is His: He is the Lord of it (Acts v. 31). (2) All regenerating, quickening, sanctifying, assisting grace is His (John v. 21). (3) The grace of our preservation in a state of acceptance with God, and obedience unto Him, is solely His (John x. 28). And so also (4) Are all the gracious privileges whereof we are made partakers in our adoption (John i. 12; Heb. iii. 6). He is so Lord over the whole house and family of God, as to have the whole inheritance in His power, and the absolute disposal of all the good things belonging unto it. II. All gifts that are bestowed on any of the sons of men, whereby they are differenced from others, or made useful unto others, belong also to the inheritance and kingdom of Christ. Gifts bestowed on men are either natural or spiritual. Natural gifts are special endowments of the persons or minds of men, in relation to things appertaining to this life; as wisdom, learning, skill and cunning in arts and sciences. I design only to show that even they also belong (though more remotely) to the lordship of Jesus Christ, which they do on two accounts—1. In that the very use of men's reason, and their natural faculties, as to any good end or purpose, is continued to them upon the account of His interposition, bringing the world thereby under a dispensation of patience and forbearance, as was declared (John i. 9). 2. He is endued with power and authority to use them in whose hand soever they lie, whether of His friends or enemies, to the special ends of His glory, in doing good to His Church. III. Spiritual gifts, which principally come under that denomination, are of two sorts—extraordinary and ordinary. The first are immediate endowments of the minds of men with abilities exceeding the whole system of nature, in the exercise whereof they are mere instruments of Him who bestows those gifts upon them. Such of old were the gifts of miracles, tongues, healing, prediction, and infallible inspiration, given out by the Lord Christ, unto such as He was pleased to use in His gospel service in an extraordinary manner. The ordinary gifts are the furniture of the minds of men, enabling them to comprehend spiritual things, and to manage them for spiritual ends and purposes. The end also why all these gifts are given into His power and disposal is evident. 1. The propagation of His gospel, and consequently the setting up of His kingdom in the world, depends upon them. 2. By these is His Church edified; and to that end doth He continue to bestow them on men, and will do so to the end of the world (1 Cor. xii. 7–14; Eph. iv. 8–13; Rom. xii. 6–8; 1 Pet. iii. 10, 11; Col. ii. 19). 3. And by these means and ways is God glorified in Him and by Him, which is the great end of His lordship over all the gifts of the Spirit. IV. To close our consideration of this part of the lordship of Christ, there remains only that we show Him to be the Lord of all spiritual and eternal things, which in one word we call glory. He is Himself the Lord of glory (2 Cor. ii. 4) and the Judge of all (John v. 25). In the discharge of which office He gives out glory as a reward unto His followers (Matt. xxv. 32; Rom. xiv. 10). Glory is the reward that is with Him, which He will give out at the last day, as a crown (2 Tim. iv. 8; John xvii. 2). And to this end that He might be Lord of it, He hath—1. Purchased it (Heb. ii. 10, ix. 12; Eph. i. 14). 2. Taken actual possession of it in His own person (Luke xxiv. 25; John xvii. 5, 22, 24). And that—3. As the forerunner on whom He will bestow it (Heb. ix. 20). And this is a short view of the lordship of Christ as to things spiritual. V. Ecclesiastical things, or things that concern Church institutions, rule, and power, belong also unto His rule and dominion. He is the only Head, Lord, Ruler, and Lawgiver of His Church. 1. He was the Lord of the Old Testament Church-state, and He exercised His power and lordship towards it in four ways. (1) In, and by its institution and erection; He made, framed, set up, and appointed that Church-state, and all the worship of God therein observed. (2) As its lawgiver, by prescribing to it when erected, a complete rule and form of worship and obedience, to which nothing might be added (Deut. vii. 4, 12, 32). (3) By way of reformation, when it was collapsed and decayed (Zech. ii. 8; Mal. iii. 13). (4) By way of amotion, or taking down what He Himself had set up, because it was so framed and ordered as to continue only for a season (Heb. ix. 10; Deut. xviii. 16–18; Hag. ii. 6, 7; Isa. lxv. 17, 18; 2 Pet. iii. 13). 2. Of the New Testament evangelical Church-state also, He is the only Lord and Ruler; yea, this is His proper kingdom, on which all other

parts of His dominion do depend: for He is given to be "Head over all things unto the Church" (Eph. i. 22). (1) He is the foundation of this Church-state (1 Cor. iii. 11), the whole design and platform of it being laid in Him, and built upon Him. (2) He erects this Church-state upon Himself (Matt. xvi. 18). (3) He gives laws and rules of worship and obedience unto it, when so built by Himself and upon Himself (Matt. xxviii. 18; Acts i. 2; Heb. iii. 2-6). (4) Is the everlasting, constant, abiding Head, Ruler, King, and Governor of it (Eph. i. 22; Col. ii. 19; Heb. iii. 6; Rev. ii. 3). VI. He is Lord also of political things. All the governments of the world that are set up and exercised therein for the good of mankind, and the preservation of society according to rules of equity and righteousness; over all these, and those who in and by them exercise rule and authority amongst men, is He Lord and King. He alone is the absolute potentate; the highest on the earth are in a subordination unto Him. That—1. He was designed unto (Psa. lxxxix. 27). And accordingly He is—2. Made Lord of lords and King of kings (Rev. xvii. 14, xix. 16; 1 Tim. vi. 15). And—3. He exerciseth dominion answerable unto His title (Rev. vi. 16, xvii. 14, xviii. 16-20; Psa. ii. 8, 9; Isa. lx.; Mic. v. 7-9). And—4. Hath hence right to send His gospel into all nations in the world, attended with the worship by Him prescribed (Matt. xxviii. 18; Psa. ii. 9-12), which none of the rulers or governors of the world have any right to refuse or oppose, nor can so do, but upon their utmost peril. And—5. All kingdoms shall at length be brought into a professed subjection to Him and His gospel, and have all their rule disposed of unto the interest of His Church and saints (Dan. vii. 27; Isa. lx. 12; Rev. xix. 16–19). VII. The last branch of this dominion of Christ consists in the residue of the creation of God; heaven and earth, sea and land, wind, trees, and fruits of the earth, and the creatures of sense, as they are all put under His feet (Psa. viii. 7, 8; Eph. i. 22; 1 Cor. xv. 27), so the exercise of His power severally over them is known from the story of the gospel. (*John Owen, D.D.*) *Heir of all:*—I. THE HIGHEST POSSIBLE POSITION. II. MADE BY THE HIGHEST POSSIBLE AUTHORITY. III. A TREMENDOUS CONTRAST WITH CHRIST'S EARTHLY CONDITION. IV. THE POSSIBLE EXALTATION OF HUMAN NATURE. V. THE ULTIMATE TRIUMPH OF RIGHTEOUSNESS. (*Homilist.*) *Of Christ the heir:*—The apostle here sets out the dignity of Christ under this title heir rather than Lord, as Acts ii. 36. 1. To give proof of that relation which he noted before that Christ was truly and properly a Son, for He was the heir. 2. To show the perpetuity thereof; for the heir ever abideth in the house (Gen. xxi. 10; John viii. 35). 3. To manifest the right that we have to be adopted sons and heirs (John viii. 36). "If the Son shall make you free ye shall be free indeed." In this respect we are styled "Joint-heirs with Christ." This dignity of Christ to be heir is further amplified by the extent thereof in these words, "of all things." (*W. Gouge.*) *Heir of all things:*—Christ is this moment Lord of all the laws that govern material things; and is cognisant of the most elaborate as well as the most simple movements in the world of matter. His comprehensive vision surveys the whole, from the migrations of an atom to the swift revolutions of the most magnificent celestial planets. And He is Lord of all the principles that govern men and all rational beings; therefore He is heir to all the thoughts of men and angels. He has already received a grand return, in the form of the best thoughts and imaginations of the noblest and most illustrious intellects of the past and the present; and as the influence of the fine and ennobling thoughts of past ages grows and spreads amongst men, there will be an increase in the measure of fruit which Christ, as "heir of all things," will receive from that source. He is heir to the affections of all men. There is not a heart beating at this instant in any human breast but should be setting its affections on Christ as its greatest, truest, and best friend. And, undoubtedly, the day is known to Him when all rational beings will be actuated by pure gospel principles; when all the thoughts and affections of humanity will be fixed upon Himself as the true heir to them all. The spring is heir to all the wealth of foliage in park, grove, and forest, when "all the trees on the hills open their thousand leaves." How charming is the product of spring; its fresh inimitable green, so soothing to the eye and refreshing to the senses generally, after the darkness and barrenness of winter. Summer is heir to all the blossoms of the valleys, hills, meadows, and gardens of the world. What riches in bewitching colours, in forms of exquisite beauty, in floating fragrance, belong to the summer; its riches are verily unsearchable, suggestive of inexhaustible wealth in the Giver of them all, and certainly of infinite wisdom. The treasures of the floral world, how extensive they are! Autumn is heir to the vast wealth of fruit that is found in every part of the earth; its splendid thankoffering for the sunshine, rain, and dew which have so un-

stintingly been given to it during the year; and a noble offering it is. How very poor is the richest of men if compared with a rich autumn. Peter says that when God raised Christ from the dead, He made Him "both Lord and Christ"; and that "He is Lord of all." He is "heir of all things"; we understand "all things" to include all persons and things in the most unlimited sense (John iii. 35; Matt. xxviii. 18). All the angels of God are subject to Him, and are come to worship Him: the saints whom He hath redeemed are His special heritage—His peculiar people. He is the heir and the dispenser of all spiritual blessings. (*D. Rhys Jenkins.*) *Heir of all things:*—A great king once said to a favourite, "Ask what thou wilt, and I will give it thee." He thought, "If I ask to be made general of all the army, I shall get it; if for great riches of half the kingdom, I will gain it; but I will ask for what will give me all these." So he said to the king, "Give me thy daughter to wife." This made him heir to all the wealth and honours of the kingdom. So he who chooses Christ becomes an heir to all the wealth and glory of the Father's kingdom. **By whom also He made the worlds.**—*The creation of the ages:*—"Created the ages"—not the "worlds," which gives a false impression of the author's meaning; for this clause does not describe an original creation of the material world of space (Cosmos), but the Divine exercise of a creative energy in the successive worlds of time (Æons). The term "ages" includes the idea of time and of the action that takes place in time; and the power by which God through the Son has shaped the course of life and action in the successive ages of man's existence is regarded as a creation. For the Scriptural conception of creation did not consist in bringing matter into existence out of nothing, but in the infusion of life and motion by the moving of the Spirit of God on the face of the waters into matter which had previously existed as a waste void. (*F. Rendall, M.A.*) *The agency of the Divine Father and Son:*—The Father is said to do this and that by the Son for these reasons—1. To give proof of the distinction of Persons. 2. To set out the order of the Persons—the Father first, the Son second. 3. To declare their manner of working—the Father by the Son, and the Son from the Father (Gen. xix. 24). 4. To show the consent of the distinct Persons, Father and Son. 5. To demonstrate the identity of the essence of Father and Son; that both are one Divine nature and essence, in that the same Divine work is attributed to both. This consequence is inferred upon a like ground (John v. 17, 18). As the Father is here said to make the worlds by His Son, so of God in reference to the Son indefinitely it is said, "By whom are all things" (chap. ii. 10). The Son therefore is here declared to be true God. (*W. Gouge*). *The glory of the Son:*—And who may be this Son, who in the last days it is declared hath brought us speech of God? Read the Scripture in immediate connection (Heb. i. 1, 3). Possession—has He anything? Achievement—has He done anything? Character—is He anything? Position—is He where He can do anything?—these are the four great and universal tests of worth and power. To this Son, by whom, in these last days, God hath spoken to us, our Scripture applies these searching and settling tests of possession, achievement. I. Behold the glory of this Son in the light of His POSSESSION. "Whom He hath appointed heir of all things." I spent a very interesting day in rambling through the vast naval station at Portsmouth, England. There were huge ironclads floating in the harbour, of enormous force of engines, and armament of thunderous guns; there were huge skeletons of iron ships upon the stocks in process of construction; there were almost miles of streets of anchors so strong and great it looked as though the nethermost rocks must give before their mighty flukes would break; there were circling piles of iron cables, every link of which seemed massive enough to hold against the stoutest storm; there were pyramids of balls and shells, and long, high armouries bursting with weapons; there were machine shops almost innumerable, and multitudinous piles of cordage, and immensities of things of every sort needed for a naval station of a world-including empire. And on every iron plank, and ball, and tool, and gate-post even, was stamped the broad arrow; and twisted into every bit of cordage there was the red line, marking and betokening the ownership of the sovereign. Everything was hers, and the sign of the sovereign's ownership was written upon everything. It may not be so plainly seen; it may look dimmed sometimes even to the clearest vision of our faith, but, more really, deeply, indestructibly there is stamped upon the "all things" which go to make up this universe the sign of their possession by the Son of God. God hath appointed Him heir of all things. 1. All the moneyed wealth of the world is the Son's. In a real way Jesus Christ is possessor of the money of the world. 2. Of the mighty enterprises of the world Jesus Christ is possessor. They are all seen to hold most real

relation to the advance of His kingdom—the invention of printing. 3. To the great natural forces of the world, already discovered and to be discovered, Jesus Christ has title—*e.g.*, railroads, telegraphs, swift communications between continents—all these are being laid hold of for the widening of Christ's kingdom. 4. And on the thinking of the world the grasp of the Son's possession is also placed. After all, the thought which gets its inspiration from the Bible is the thought that leads. 5. Even upon the wickedness and infidelity of the world Jesus Christ has grasp. Somehow He will compel these to lend ministry to His purpose. 6. And of all the unknown forces in farthest suns, stars, planets, the Son is in possession. God hath appointed Him of all things the heir. II. Behold the glory of this Son in the light of His ACHIEVEMENT. Three things, the Scripture here declares, this Son, by whom in these last days God hath spoken unto us, has achieved—1. Creation. 2. Upholding. "And upholding all things by the word of His power." "In Him all things consist"—stand together. 3. Redemption. "When He had by Himself purged our sins." III. Behold the glory of this Son in the light of His CHARACTER. "Who, being the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His person." IV. Behold the glory of this Son in the light of His POSITION. "Sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on High." In view of the glory of this Son, see—1. The folly of expecting a further revelation. He is the Father's utmost revelation. 2. The folly of the thought of any other way of salvation than this Son's way. 3. The wonder that Christians should not more appreciate the honour of confession and service of this Son. 4. The certainty of this Son's triumph. He who by faith and self-surrender allies himself with this Son is on the winning side of things. *The world moderately admired as God's workmanship*:—1. The world is of God's making, therefore it is to be highly esteemed of us. The Tabernacle was of Bezaleel's making, that was furnished with all skill and wisdom, therefore the more regarded by the Israelites; the Temple was of Solomon's making, the wisest man that ever was, therefore in that respect more honoured by the Jews. A picture of Apelles' making would be in great request. The world is the glorious workmanship of God Almighty, therefore to be admired of us all. If a stranger be in a boat on the Thames he cannot but wonder at the brave buildings that be situate on it. Shall we pass through this famous frame, and super-excellent building of this world set up by God Himself, and not wonder at the wisdom, power, and goodness of God that made it? We see what a goodly coat the earth hath; Solomon in all his royalty was not so clothed as it. We see the sun in the firmament, the moon, the stars—God Almighty's candles—birds of the air, beasts of the field, fishes of the sea, the admirable work of our own bodies, yet they do not make us almost to think of God. The Gentiles had no book but this to look upon, yet it left them without excuse. Let us all behold God, even in the creation of the world. 2. Though the world be a worthy work, and that of God's making, yet let us not admire it too much; as there was a time when it was set up, so there is a time when it shall be pulled down. The disciples stood gazing on the Temple, wondering at the workmanship of it; but Christ told them that one stone should not be left upon another. This world is but an inn, wherein we take up a night's lodging. If thou comest to an inn, be it never so fair, wilt thou always continue there? Nay, thou wilt leave the inn, and make haste to thy house, though it be nothing so beautiful as the inn. Remember that this world is but an inn, be it never so goodly a piece of work. Hasten to that house that is made without hands, eternal in the heavens. (*W. Jones, D.D.*) **The brightness of His glory.** —*Deity and atonement of Christ*:—I. Consider what is said of the person of Christ, PREVIOUS TO HIS BECOMING OUR SAVIOUR. He is "the brightness of the Father's glory, the express image of His person, and He upholds all things by the word of His power." If this be not descriptive of His being truly God, it is not in the power of language to convey such an idea. The antecedent glory of Christ is a subject on which the Scriptures delight to dwell, as may be seen in various passages (Mic. v. 2; John i. 1–3; 1 John i. 1, 2). 1. Christ is here called the brightness of the Father's glory. Christ is not the Father, yet there is such an equality that He is emphatically "the brightness of His glory." It is also through Him that the glory of the Divine nature is revealed and made manifest. God made the world by Him, and by Him He saved it; the Lord Jesus is therefore the shining forth of all this glory. 2. He is the express image of His person, the image of the invisible God (Col. i. 15). There is not an attribute or a feature in the character of the Father but what is also in the Son. Here is likewise a personal distinction consisting with a oneness of nature, and without any other subordination than that

which is relative, as between a Father and a Son. 3. Christ upholdeth all things by the word of His power. Nothing can be more expressive of His Godhead, for this is claimed as the special prerogative of God alone (Psa. lxxv. 3). II. Observe what is said of HIS WORK IN UNDERTAKING THE OFFICE OF A PRIEST. "He by Himself purged our sins." 1. The efficacy of His sacrifice—"He purged our sins." The term alludes to the ceremonial cleansings under the law, which were effected by sacrificial blood (chap. ix. 22). Hence David prayed (Psa. li. 7). Our being cleansed by the blood of Christ is the substance of all these typical purifications (1 John i. 7, 9). By His death He removed the penal effects of sin, and through the application of it by faith, the conscience is purified. The gospel therefore connects repentance and remission of sins, and proclaims forgiveness amongst all nations (Luke xxiv. 47). 2. The ground or reason of this efficacy—"He by Himself purged our sins." When the Scriptures speak of Christ's miracles, they usually ascribe them to the authority of the Father, rather than the divinity of the Son. So also in His sufferings He was succoured by the ministry of angels, and upheld by the power of God, seeing He had taken upon Him the form of a servant, which required that He should act in subordination to Him that sent Him (Isa. xlii. 1; xlix. 8). But the Scriptures as uniformly ascribe the efficacy of His sacrifice to the divinity of His person, as giving value and virtue to His sufferings (1 John i. 7). III. THE EXALTATION WHICH FOLLOWED UPON HIS OFFERING HIMSELF AS A SACRIFICE FOR US. "He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." 1. By "right hand of God" is meant the first place in His favour. In all things He is to have the pre-eminence, for He is before all things, and by Him all things consist (Col. i. 17, 18). 2. This is mentioned as an honour which became Him. Conscious that He had done the will of God, and finished the work which He had given Him to do, the Lord Jesus took the place which belonged to Him. He sat down on the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him (1 Peter iii. 22). While all in heaven cry, Thou art worthy to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing (Rev. v. 12). IMPROVEMENT. 1. Seeing that God hath provided for us an all-sufficient Saviour, let us learn to trust Him, and to call upon His holy name, remembering that there is salvation in no other (John iii. 35; Acts ii. 21; iv. 12). 2. We see the way in which our sins are to be expiated and removed; not by tears or sufferings of our own, but by the precious blood of Christ, and that alone. Nevertheless sin must be confessed, or it cannot be forgiven (1 John i. 9). 3. The exaltation of Christ, as the reward of His humiliation, is to us a source of great encouragement. He is exalted as a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and the remission of sins; and is able to save all that come unto God by Him. 4. The conduct of Christ in doing and suffering the will of God, and then entering into His glory, is given as an example for our imitation (Heb. xii. 2). (*Theological Sketch-Book.*) *Christ the brightness of God's glory:*—No resemblance taken from any other creature can more fully set out the mutual relation between the Father and the Son. For—1. The brightness issuing from the sun is of the same nature that the sun is. 2. It is of as long continuance as the sun; never was the sun without the brightness of it. 3. This brightness cannot be separated from the sun; the sun may as well be made no sun as have the brightness thereof severed from it. 4. This brightness is from the sun, not the sun from it. 5. This brightness cometh naturally and necessarily from the sun, not voluntarily and at pleasure. 6. The sun and the brightness are distinct each from other, the one is not the other. 7. All the glory of the sun is in this brightness. 8. The light which the sun giveth to the world is by this brightness. How distinctly doth this metaphor set out the great mysteries of our Christian faith concerning God the Father and Son. For they are—1. Of one and the same essence (John x. 30). 2. Co-eternal (John i. 1). 3. Inseparable (Prov. viii. 30). 4. The Son is from the Father; God of God, light of light, very God of very God. 5. The Son is begotten of the Father, by nature, not by will, favour, or good pleasure (Rom. viii. 7, 32). 6. The person of the one is distinct from the other; for the Father is not the Son, nor the Son the Father (John v. 17). 7. The incomprehensible glory of the Father most brightly shineth forth in the Son (John xvii. 5). 8. All that the Father doth in relation to creatures He doth by the Son. As in these respects Christ is fitly and justly styled brightness, so in regard of His surpassing excellency He is said to be the brightness of glory. Of the Hebrew and Greek words translated glory. Glory attributed to a thing in the Hebrew dialect importeth the surpassing excellency thereof; as a crown of glory (Prov. xvi. 31), a throne of glory (Jer. xvii. 12), a name of glory (Isa.

lxiii. 14), a most excellent and glorious crown, throne, and name. Thus to set out the surpassing excellency, and most glorious majesty of God, He is styled the God of glory (Acts vii. 2), the Father of glory (Eph. i. 17). And His Son, the Lord of glory, the King of glory (1 Cor. ii. 8; Psa. xxiv. 7). Never was any brightness like to the brightness here mentioned; well therefore might it, in regard of the excellency of it, be styled brightness of glory. (*W. Gouge.*) *The glory of Christ:*— The apostle hath taught that our Saviour Christ, the Son of God, hath been once sent unto us, an eternal Prophet, to teach us all things which God hath done for our salvation, and through the preaching of the gospel to sanctify us all unto Him; that Him alone we should acknowledge to be our leader unto eternal life. Now the apostle beginneth to prove this singular glory to belong only to Christ, which He doth by setting out a full description of Him, in which, as I said, He proveth Him to be eternal God. 1. By His rule over all creatures (ver. 2). 2. By the glory of His own person. 3. By His great power. 4. By His benefit bestowed upon us. 5. By His glory purchased to Himself (ver. 3). 6. By comparison with angels (ver. 4). The rule of Christ over all creatures He showeth in this: that He is heir of all, and created all. By heir of all, meaning how in the person of a mediator He hath restored all, as in the person of the Son He was the wisdom of God to make all. And therefore called the heir, because He restored not the world, but by redeeming it, and purchasing it unto Himself, according as God the Father had given it to be a recompense unto His work; in which respect it is said that God appointed Him heir of all things. This our Saviour taught us (Matt. xxviii. 28; John xvi. 15). The apostle addeth the second note of this authority. That by Him the world was made; by the world meaning all things in heaven, earth, and under the earth. For so St. John addeth to this testimony, "And without Him nothing was made, whatsoever was made." Then if all creatures were made by Him, Himself was uncreate, and only Creator of all that is, that we might boldly give Him the glory of the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. 2. The second thing wherein Christ is here exalted is the glory of His person. (1) That He is the brightness of His Father's glory, which title is absolutely given Him, as essential unto the Son of God, not only before us, but even before His Father; that as all the properties of the Godhead have their being in the person of the Father, so the brightness and beauty of them is in the person of the Son, and so this name was proper to Him before the world was made; noting that eternally He was of the Father. In which sense St. John calleth Him the word, not according to the time in which creatures have been, but an essential word before all creatures. (2) The second thing here attributed to Him is, that He is the ingraven form of the person of His Father; noting hereby the unity of substance, as in whom the fulness of the Godhead dwelt bodily. Even as St. Paul doth also call Him the image of God, distinguishing Him by this name from all shadows and figures, like as this apostle useth the word in the tenth chapter. And here expressly he addeth ingraven, above all the figures in the law, the ephod, the Urim, or the ark itself, showing the excellency that is in Christ. 3. The third title of honour here given unto Christ is of the greatness of His power, and that is that He beareth up all things with His mighty word. In this also it is assured that He is very God, the stay and strength of the world, without whose hand all things would fall into confusion. 4. He extolleth the person of Christ by the greatness of His benefits bestowed upon man, in these words, "By Himself having purged our sins," put in here as a parenthesis, because it showeth the way how Christ purchased that excellent dignity to sit at the right hand of His Father, whereof after he speaketh. In that he saith purged our sins expressly he warranteth His Godhead, for what creature could have done so excellent a work? 5. The thing wherein Christ is here extolled is the high dignity which He hath gotten, in these words, He sitteth on the right hand of high majesty; noting hereby that God the Father hath taken Him up into His glory, so that He sitteth in power and majesty equal with His Father; and this is plain, in that He calleth it, the right hand of highest majesty. And the Scripture showeth this end of it, till I make Thine enemies Thy footstool; showing that this is the power of God in Him, to sit at the right hand of God. Now a little further we will examine the words and apply them more particularly to our instruction. In that it is said first, God made Him heir of all, so that we see how these words of the apostle have every way their weight, to prove that Christ is the Son of God, the King of His people, God and man, mediator between God and us. We must learn of ourselves we have nothing, but being ingrafted in Him we are owners of all things. I may have from man my warrant here in earth that my house is mine,

and my land is mine, and he is a thief and a robber that taketh it from me. But all the men in the world cannot give me my possession before the living God, but only His Son Christ, who is heir of all; and I am a thief and a robber if before God I claim any other right in it. Then, that our lands may be our own, our goods our own, our servants, our wives, our children ours, let us be Christ's, that in Him we may have the good assurance of all our substance. And where it is further said, All things were made by Christ, we may boldly conclude that no man hath power over His creatures, but they must serve their Creator. What have I to do with another man's work? God hath appointed His creatures a use; in it they are holy. If thou wilt set them another law thou profanest thyself in them. Further, in that it is said, that Christ is the brightness of glory, and ingraven form of the substance of His Father. Let us mark well why the apostle thus magnifieth the person of Christ. For no other cause but to warrant unto us the truth of His word, that He is our prophet and we must believe Him. Again it is said, He beareth up all things with His mighty word. Where, we must mark, he attributeth to God's mighty power the governance of all things in our sight, either great or small, that we should learn not to measure the power of God by our weak senses. It is His mighty power that upholdeth the earth, that stretcheth out the heavens, that sendeth forth the winds, that raiseth on high the great waves of the sea, and these things we confess are great and mighty; but as it is here, so everywhere the mighty power of God maketh the feather to move, and His strong arm leadeth the fly in her way, and the same force which now shaketh a leaf, if He had sent it against a mountain it would have turned it up from the foundations; and the same strength that bloweth up the dust, if it came against the earth, it would shake the bottoms of it. And this should make us fear before Him, that whatsoever He hath done, whether it seem great or little, we should confess His handiwork, and according to His greatness so we should honour Him, that whatsoever He hath commanded, whether it seem weighty or light, all our obedience should be straight unto it. It followeth, by Himself He hath purged our sins. I do not doubt but you know how Christ hath purged our sins, and the more you know it I am sure you are the more glad to hear it. And because He saith by Himself He purged our sins, in this we see a clear discharge given to the tabernacle, and all the sacrifices at the door of it, not one of them purged sin. Now where it followeth in the apostle's words, "That He sitteth at the right hand of high majesty," we must first mark the change of words. Where it is usually said, He sitteth on the right hand of God; here he saith on the right hand of the highest majesty, which is, as it were, an interpretation of the right hand of God, signifying nothing else but the power and glory of God, given unto the person of the Mediator, according to that saying of Paul, "God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name above all names." (*E. Deering, B.D.*) *The glory of Christ:*—It is of the incarnate Son of God that the apostle speaks; and showing unto us His glory, he leads us, in the first place, to the end of all history. 1. He is appointed the heir of all things. 2. To the beginning of all history, in Him God made the ages. 3. Before all history, He is the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His being. 4. Throughout all history He upholdeth all things by the word of His power. 1. The end of all history. The Father has appointed the Lord Jesus Christ, His Son, the heir of all things. Him, the Son of Abraham and the Son of David, the theocratic Son, the Messiah; not in His abstract Deity, but as the Son who became man; as the Word made flesh; as the Son who became the servant to fulfil all Jehovah's good pleasure. "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hands." According to His deity there is no necessity for any gift, reward, or transfer. According to His deity incarnate, the Messiah, in the everlasting covenant, is appointed heir, and all things are given into His hand. What are these "all things"? It is clear that there is nothing excepted that is not given unto Him. So said the risen Saviour—"All power is given unto Me in heaven and on earth." In His intercessory prayer before His sufferings He had said, "Thou hast given Him power over all flesh." This is the first thing. The whole human race is given unto Him. And out of this whole human race, which belongs unto Him by eternal right, and by the right of His perfect and holy humanity, by the right of His unspeakable love, and of His death, God has chosen in Him a people, that the Son should give eternal life to "as many as Thou hast given Him." And this Church Jesus Christ has obtained as the first and central part of His inheritance. As the material sun is placed in the firmament to be a source of light and heat and joy unto the rest of the creation of God, so God appoints the Church to be the first-

fruits of His creatures—the body of Christ, wherewith He influences and blesses, whereby He guides and controls all things. And the material creation which God hath made in Jesus Christ He hath also given unto His Son, that Jesus, through the glorified Church, and by the angels in heavenly places, as well as through Israel and the nations dwelling on earth, should be glorified in the whole realm, which is His portion and His inheritance. How rich is our adorable Jesus! 2. All things are His. And this is so natural; because, in the second place, God has made "all ages," or "all worlds," by Him. It is natural that He who is the Alpha should also be the Omega. He is before all things (not merely as before and above time, but) as the idea and cause of all things. He is that eternal wisdom of which we read in the book of Proverbs, which was with God before the foundations of the world were laid. God has made all things by Christ according to Christ, and for Christ. What more natural, then, that He by whom and in whom all things were made should be also the inheritor of all things? 3. But the apostle goes still further. Before all history He is "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His being." Wherever he looks he sees Christ, the light. Without Christ there is darkness. Think of the end of history, and you are lost in amazement; think of the beginning of the world, and you are lost in ignorance; think of before the beginning, and you are altogether lost in an element transcendent and incomprehensible, because it is not for our finite minds to contemplate such wondrous heights until the heavenly, Divine light of revelation comes to our aid. And who is the light? Christ is the light. The eternal, infinite God reveals Himself in Christ. The Son is the light, which maketh manifest; God is manifest in Him. Christ is "the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His being." In Jesus we behold infinite power, wisdom, goodness, holiness, compassion, truth. All things that are in the Father are in the Son. It is as the Son that the eternal life, which was with the Father, was manifested unto us. He who declares unto us God, whom none hath seen, the Word, is God (John i.), He is truth, substance; and the beloved disciple testifies of Him: He is the true God and eternal life. 4. And as the Lord Jesus is the heir, the end and consummation of all things and the beginning of all things, and the eternal Word before all things, the apostle tells us that throughout the course of history, in providence, He beareth all things with the word of His power. He is the inherent energy, truth and beauty of all things. He is as it were the spirit, the symmetry, the logic and substance of all that exists. By Him princes rule and senators decree justice. In Him every truth is rooted. By Him everything that is firm stands. By Him all things are continued; for He is the Word of God—the expression of the eternal thoughts and truths of the Most High. Christ is Lord of all. The whole universe centres in Him. There shall be again wonders and signs in the heavens when the Son of man shall come in power. And both science and revelation teach us to look forward to a new earth. It is the Lord Jesus who shall make all things new. And all developments are borne up and moved by the word of His power. Now, when the apostle has given us this idea of the wonderful glory of the Lord Jesus, he continues by stating something still more marvellous. Why has this glorious being, in whom all things are summed up, and who is before all things the Father's delight and the Father's glory, come down to our poor earth? For what purpose? To shine? To show forth the splendour of His majesty? To teach heavenly wisdom? To rule by His just and holy might? No! He came to purge our sins. What height of glory! what depth of abasement! What a glorious Lord! And what an awful sacrifice of unspeakable love, to purge our sins by Himself! The manner and power of this purification form the subject of this whole Epistle. But in this short expression, "By Himself He purged our sins," all is summed up. By Himself: the Son of God, the eternal Word in humanity. Himself: the priest who is sacrifice, yea, altar, and everything that is needed for full and real expiation and reconciliation. (*A. Saphir.*) *Christ the sunbeam of the Father's glory*:—The sun is presented to us here as the emblem of the Father; the radiation proceeding from it, the emblem of Jesus Christ. Now this is well adapted to meet many a cavil which unbelief may call up against the absolute Godhead of Christ. It is asked, for instance, does not the relationship of Father and Son imply that the Father existed before the Son; and if so, is the Son eternal? Again: was the existence of the Son at all dependent upon the will of the Father? and if so, where is the self-existence, the "I am," which is a property of Godhead? Now, St. Paul's words in the text teach us, first, that the expressions, Father and Son, are employed, in consideration of our infirmities, to give us some idea of the relation-

ship between two persons in the Trinity, but that we are to lay aside everything that is gross or earthly in contemplating this heavenly connection, retaining only the idea of the one being identical in existence and proceeding from the other. They then put before us an image, calculated to enlarge and purify our view of this simple truth. There is the sun in the firmament, no unfitting type of God the Father; the sun of the great system that He has called into being, the author of light and life, both physical and spiritual! But in what way does the sun communicate with the different parts and provinces of his subject system? by his rays—the *ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης*—the brightness of his glory, the radiation proceeding from the central and substantial mass of light, that travels far and wide into the realms of space, and floods our universe with beauty and brilliance. And what are the rays? Now mark how the particular truths of Christ's Godhead are all shut up in this emblem. The rays of the sun are of the very same substance with the sun; thus representing to us the perfect unity of substance between Christ and His Father. The rays are generated by the sun, and yet they are coeval with the sun: the first moment of the sun's existence saw him scattering his rays into space around him. So Christ was the only-begotten of the Father, and yet co-eternal with the Father; the everlasting past, that has never been without the presence of the Father, having never likewise been without the radiated effulgence of Christ. But we have not yet exhausted our emblem. It has helped us to gather at least an idea of the pre-existent relationship of Christ to His heavenly Father. Now we shall see how it holds good in reference to, and illustration of, His present relationship to ourselves. The sun communicates, by its rays, with various other worlds besides our own; but in the case of ours alone, so far as we know, does it experience anything like difficulty or obstruction. Thus God communicates, by His Son, with the different provinces of His intellectual dominions; and everywhere He meets with a welcome worthy of the character He bears and the blessings He bestows. But when He sought to make His way to this earth of ours, there was a cloud to be penetrated, a dark and dense mass of noxious vapour exhaled from the moral corruption below. Yet not for that was the sunbeam of the Divine glory to be thwarted in its course. It had undertaken a mission to earth; it had undertaken to burst through the barrier, make the homes of men bright with a visitation from an hitherto offended and enclouded God. And those among us who have, on some doubtful day, watched the battle between sunshine and storm for the mastery, will surely grant that it affords no unapt emblem of the great spiritual conflict which decided whether our day of gloom were to deepen into everlasting night, or be followed by a morning of "clear shining after rain." The hosts of darkness marshalled all their strength, and the solitary sunbeam seemed to be struggling, not for power, but for existence among them; nay, for a little season they closed over it, and it was hidden from the view of man, and, to all appearance, obliterated and extinguished. But again it bursts brightly forth; it manifests its indestructible nature; it manifests its prevailing power. And what is the consequence and the result to earth? Is there nothing more than the shedding down of light, thus revealing more clearly the barrenness of the moral landscape? Oh no! The sunbeam of the Father's glory has a fertilising, as well as an enlightening power. "The wilderness and the solitary place are glad for it; and the desert rejoices and blossoms as the rose." Yet, observe, He has not altogether chased the clouds from our sky. He might have done it; but in our peculiar condition, He knew them to be necessary for the fulfilment of His gracious designs. Sunshine and rain, in due proportions, bring to maturity the natural productions of the soil. And some tears, ay, and some temptations, alternating, with bright intervals of spiritual joy and consolation, give sweetness and ripeness to all those fruits of righteousness, which are, by Jesus Christ, to the praise and glory of God. Again, observe how strikingly the relative condition and office of God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ is represented by this emblem. The Father's place, like that of the celestial luminary, is in the highest heavens. Nothing that takes place below affects His condition. He sits in supreme majesty, in the midst of His own uncreated brightness. But it is by Jesus Christ, the ray proceeding from the central glory, that He visits us. Once more. The rays are the only means whereby we obtain an idea of the existence, the form, or the nature of the sun. No man ever saw the sun. We see a picture of the sun, wrought by the rays upon the retina of the eye. Just in the same manner, "no man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." It is only in His light that we can see light. The infinitude of God's power, the purity of His holiness,

the inflexibility of His justice, the excellence of His wisdom, the height, and length, and breadth, and depth of His love,—what should we have known of all, or any, of these attributes, but from beholding them embodied and illustrated in the person and character of Christ? And, observe, this knowledge is not purely speculative; for as the ray throws upon the human eye the very image of the sun, so we, "beholding as in a glass (*i.e.*, through the medium of Christ's humanity) the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory." (*T. E. Hankinson, M.A.*) *The outflashing glory of the Son of God*:—The original word is formed from a word which signifies "to flash out." It may be interpreted accordingly as an "outflashing." The glory of God is as light, and the Son is as its flash forth into view. You will get the idea if you conceive an intense light enclosed in a dark lantern, which is suddenly opened so that the rays dart out into the surrounding blackness. The flash is not something different from the light, but the light let out of limits and acting on the darkness. The Son of God is not represented as uncovering the glory of the Father. He is not the mere hand which draws the slide of the lantern so that the light breaks through. He is the light. It is not said of Him, "who" disclosing or showing, but "who being the brightness of His glory." Expanding the idea, the ancient creed declared Him "light of light," "very God of very God." (*J. T. Duryea, D.D.*) *God as light*:—1. God is often called Light, because this bodily and visible light is glorious, and in several respects resembles that eternal glorious essence of God. 2. Here God is said to have light or glory, not that glory or light is an accident in God, but because He is said to have that which He is. 3. The similitude here used is taken not from accidental but substantial light, as the same is said to be a light. Purity, beauty, delectability in light teach us something of Him. (*G. Lawson.*) *The dignity of Christ*:—I. THE DIGNITY OF HIS NATURE. 1. "The brightness of His glory." The figure that comes to our minds immediately—the sun in firmament. Flood of light that pours down from it. All the dazzling glory of the Father pours down to us in the Son. In Him you may find all that is adorable in the Divine nature. 2. "Express image of His person." Here we come to a deeper mystery. Just as I know something of light of sun, but nothing of hidden nucleus. So I may know something of the glory of God. But what do I know of God Himself?—substance, essence, being. And this is what the apostle means by the word translated "person." Substance—essence—being would better convey his idea. Take the words if you will, "The express image of God's substance." The apostle teaches—You have that in Christ. Just as when you take your seal, and press it carefully on yielding wax. There on the wax you shall find the express image of your seal. No line, however deep or however faint or graceful, but see its likeness there. So in Christ you have the express image—counterpart of God. No attribute of the Father which does not belong to the Son. None that does not belong to Him in equal measure. His power not less mighty, wisdom not less keen, love not less tender. II. DIGNITY OF HIS OFFICES. 1. The great Sustainer. "Upholding all things." Son of God! Thou art the Sustainer! With Thy hand; nay, with Thy breath. Just as at the beginning Thou didst say, "Let light be . . . and light was." Just as earth and sea, sun and moon, firmament and stars, appeared at Thy command. So at Thy command they are! Aye, and all the living things upon them. All breathing lungs and beating hearts and burning souls. "Thou upholdest all things." 2. The great Sacrifice. What! The great Sustainer the great Sacrifice. The transition is so sudden! Contrast so immense! Then I feel nothing more is needed—the work is done! it is finished. "By Himself He has purged our sins." III. DIGNITY OF HIS REWARD. "Sat down on right hand of Majesty on high." 1. What a place for Christ! For Him who sat down a weary traveller on well's side. Who knelt in anguish under olives of Gethsemane. Who stood a criminal at the bar of Pilate. For Him who hung in blood upon cross, and lay a corpse in sepulchre. 2. What a power for Christ! "At the right hand of the King." What influence He will have on the royal counsels. How able to befriend the cause of all He loves. And to promote all holy and gracious purposes. 3. How fitting a reward like this! As a Divine Being there was glory He had with the Father before world was. How meet that as Incarnate Deity exalted to equal glory. The work He did on earth was done in obedience to His Father. How meet that the Father should thus show His entire approval. Yet more than all, His work is not yet done. He was here a sacrifice for sin, now High Priest within vail. Here He poured out His soul unto death, there pours forth heart in prayer. (*F. Tucker, B.A.*) *The dignity of Christ*:—I. IN HIS RELATION TO THE FATHER. "Brightness in express image." 1. He is essentially Divine. 2. He is a revela-

tion of the Divine. II. In His relation to the universe. He sustains and governs all things. III. In His relation to man. 1. He has accomplished an effectual atonement for human guilt. 2. By self-sacrifice. IV. In His relation to eternity. "Sat down," &c. 1. The completion of His work. 2. The acceptance of His work. 3. The recompense of His work. (*T. Hughes.*) *The brightness of His glory*:—In these remarkable words there are two ideas presented to us, which we will consider in order. 1. The first is that of a luminous body. As a sample of such bodies, let us take the sun. Now the sun, a vast luminous mass, at a great distance from our earth, is made visible to us by the rays of light which stream incessantly from its surface. The rays by which the sun becomes visible are not the sun itself. The two things are distinct; they have, if we may so express it, a distinct personality; but in point of fact they cannot be separated from one another. You cannot have the sun without the rays, and you cannot have the rays without the sun; they are contemporaneous; and if one should happen to be eternal, the other, of necessity, would be eternal also. This imagery then represents, as far as such imagery can do, the relation between the first and second persons of the ever-blessed Trinity. The Father and the Son are co-existent and co-eternal. As with the luminous body, and the rays that flow from it, although the Father and the Son are not the same Being, although there is a distinctness of personality, so that they may be conceived of and spoken of apart, yet they cannot be actually sundered, they must have existed together from all eternity. And yet again—2. As it is the ray which makes the luminous body visible, so it is the Lord Jesus Christ, in His pre-incarnate state, who is the expression of the Father, and brings God within the reach of the finite mind. Scripture tells us that "no one hath seen God at any time"; and it is probably intended that we should understand by the statement, that God in His essence, in His innermost Being, is so withdrawn from the comprehension of a finite mind, that, apart from the Son of God, it would have been impossible for the highest archangel to have understood the character and nature of Deity. It was Jesus in His pre-existent state who enabled the great created intelligences to grasp the conception of the Divine Being; just as it is Jesus, in His incarnate state, who makes God known to us. Thus, as we understand, the Son, in His pre-existent and pre-incarnate condition, is "the brightness of God's glory." But He is also, we read, the "express image of His substance." Now the "express image" seems to be the stamp or impression produced by a die. The impression thus produced is, of course, the exact counterpart of the implement that produced it. You stamp your seal upon the melted wax, and the result is a reproduction of every feature and lineament of the seal; nay, of every crack and flaw that may happen to be found in it. The two things exactly correspond. Here, then, is part of the idea. But what is the "substance of God"? The substance of a thing is that which lies under all appearances, and makes the thing to be what it really is. For instance: among many men, taken at random, you will find very great difference and variety. Some are tall, some short; some rich, others poor; some clever, others dull. There will be much diversity, too, of character and disposition. But underneath all these outward appearances there is to be found that which makes each of these a man; and this is their "substance." Perhaps you may prefer to call it "nature," or "essence," or "inner being." It matters little. It is that which makes the person to be what he really is. And so the "substance of God" is the nature or inner being of the great Jehovah. Now we are told in the passage that the Lord Jesus Christ, in His pre-incarnate state, is "the express image," the exact counterpart of the substance of God; that is to say, not of the external attributes of God (if such things there be), but of His very inmost essence,—*of that which makes Him to be God.* What language can be imagined that would describe a closer relationship, or a more complete identity of nature? Whatever constitutes the nature of God, we must attribute to the pre-existent Son. (*G. Calthrop, M.A.*) *A royal Mediator*:—Sometimes there were more kings than one at Sparta, who governed by joint authority. A king was occasionally sent to some neighbouring state in character of a Spartan ambassador. Did he, when so sent, cease to be a king of Sparta, because he was also an ambassador? No, he did not divest himself of his royal dignity, but only added to it that of public deputation. So Christ, in becoming man, did not cease to be God; but though He ever was, and still continued to be, King of the whole creation, acted as the voluntary Servant and Messenger of the Father. (*Illustrations of Truth.*) *The Saviour is God*:—It is sometimes idly said that our belief in our Lord's divinity rests solely on the teaching of St. John. Centuries ago, Julian, the apostate emperor, exclaimed, "It is John, who with his remark, 'And the Word became

flesh,' has done all the mischief." I fear that in these days some at least of the critical attempts to disprove the genuineness of St. John's Gospel are suggested and stimulated by the desire to overthrow our belief in the divinity of Christ. But should the writings of St. John, to our infinite loss, be obliterated altogether from the canon, there is yet not a single book in the New Testament in which the revelation of God in Christ is not directly asserted, or absolutely implied. Set aside St. John altogether and still on almost every page of revelation the truth stands out that Christ was the only begotten Son of the Father, the effulgence of His glory, the express image of His substance, God of God, Light of light, very God of very God. And in whatever way we hold, or explain, or imagine that we explain the blessed mystery of the atonement, this is certain, that its entire efficacy, as revealed to us in Scripture—in the Old Testament, where alone it is foreshadowed, or by the New Testament, where alone it is fully set forth—rests upon the truth that our Lord Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. No man can redeem his brother, or make atonement unto God for him. It cost more to redeem our souls, therefore he must let that alone for ever. (*F. W. Farrar, D.D.*) **Express image of His person.**—*Express image*:—For the phrase "express image" there is a single word in the original, a word transferred and familiar in our own language, viz., character. It is formed from a word signifying to sharpen, then to scratch or furrow with a sharp instrument, to write, to engrave. Our term, therefore, means a writing or engraving, and in this sense we often use it. So, also, as a form is engraven on a seal, and then stamped upon wax, the word indicates a figure enstamped upon wax or soft metal. The figure impressed is precisely like the graving which determines it. The word accordingly signifies likeness. Then, from the notion of likeness, it extends to that of sameness, so that we say of one's combined qualities, they constitute his character, and more emphatically the character is the man. It is the man revealed and known. The Son of God is, then, the revelation of the person of God. And to this term person, in the language of the New Testament, we do not attach the later metaphysical notion. It is simply equivalent to "self." We have now the whole thought in this pregnant phrase: Jesus Christ is God's very Self revealed and known. He could say of Himself truly, as He said, "He that seeth Me seeth Him that sent Me." (*J. T. Duryea, D.D.*) *Christ the revelation of God*:—To make religion possible, we must have a revelation from God. There is a science called stellar chemistry, the romance and mystery of science. We are able to estimate the ponderosity of the stars and the elements that compose them. How have we discovered these things? Not by crossing the separating spaces, but because the stars have sent their revelation to us. A beam of light plays on the spectrum, and reveals the contents of these mysterious bodies. So with religion. We could not cross the illimitable space and find out God for ourselves, but in His Son we have the light that reveals Him. (*W. Pierce.*) *Definition of God*:—The god of M. Comte was what he defined as "the continuous resolutant of all the forces capable of voluntarily concurring in the universal perfectioning of the world." That is not my God. I do not know him. I don't want to know him. My God is Jesus Christ, who came to pardon and to save a world. (*Joseph Cook.*) *Charles Kingsley's view of Christ*:—Charles Kingsley is writing to Thomas Cooper, a man sometime Christian, in the stirring time of that agitation Chartist, then captured by the Strauss mythical theory and wandering in the dreary wastes of unbelief, then coming back—and largely through the influence of Charles Kingsley—to the most hearty and joyful acceptance of Jesus as incarnate God and Lord and only Saviour. Charles Kingsley is writing to this Thomas Cooper, and thus he writes: "But my heart, Cooper, demands the Trinity, as much as my reason. I want to be sure that God cares for us, that God is our Father, that God has interfered, stooped, sacrificed Himself for us. I do not merely want to love Christ—a Christ, some creation or emanation of God's—whose will and character for aught I know may be different from God's. I want to love and honour the absolute, abysmal God Himself, and none other will satisfy me—and in the doctrine of Christ being co-equal and co-eternal, sent by, sacrificed by, His Father, that He might do His Father's will, I find it—and no puzzling texts, like those you quote, shall rob me of that rest for my heart, that Christ is the exact counterpart of Him in whom we live, and move, and have our being. I say boldly, if the doctrine be not in the Bible, it ought to be, for the whole spiritual nature of man cries out for it." There has arisen a new branch of the science of astronomy called sidereal photography. Until lately only collodion plates could be used in photography. But such plates must be used wet. They could suffer only short exposure. They must be immediately developed. And so when exposed

heavenward but a momentary flash from the stars could be caught and kept on their sensitive surfaces. But recently gelatine plates have been introduced. These are capable of long exposure. These can lie beneath the stars for hours. And lying thus, the shyest traits of the most distant stars can fasten themselves in pictures accurate, and gazing into them, fresh wonders are disclosing and a new door is opened into heaven's depths. Like the gelatine plates, Charles Kingsley held his soul in such steady and long openness towards the incarnate Christ that in unusual measure the Christ revealed Himself to him, was seen by him to be the pre-eminent and luminous focus of the Divine revealing, became for him the object of the most passionate personal love. (*Wayland Hoyt, D.D.*) **Upholding all things by the word of His power.**—*Christ the universal Upholder:*—The poets write much of one Atlas that bore up the heavens with his shoulders; but our Saviour Christ is the true Atlas that beareth up heaven and earth. As He made the world, so He bears up the world, and keepeth it up from falling. If it were not for Him, the sun, moon, stars, and all the host of heaven would fall to the ground; if it were not for Him, the birds of the air, the fishes of the sea, the beasts of the field would drop away in a moment; the earth would sink down under our feet, the sea would overflow its banks and drown us all. Our Saviour Christ bears up all; in regard of their nature He beareth up the devils themselves, and all his instruments in the world; He does not bear them out in their wickedness, but He beareth up their essence. In Him all live, breathe and have their being. But more particularly, in love and mercy He beareth up His children, and the members of Christ; as a father beareth his son and taketh him up into his arms, so doth He those whom He hath adopted in Christ. This may be a singular comfort to us all wheresoever we be, on the water or on the land, in the day or night, though we be among the thickest of our enemies, nay, among devils; yet the Lord Jesus beareth us in His hands, and none can take us out of His hands. This should cause us all to stand in awe of Him, to be afraid to displease Him. Will any be so mad as to make holes in the ship that beareth them? Will any hew down the pillars that bear up the house? Shall a child scratch out the eyes of the nurse that beareth him? Our Saviour Christ bears us up all: therefore let us not like rebels fight against Him by our sins; let us please Him all that we can, by whom we are borne up. They of Tyre and Sidon sought Herod's favour because their land was nourished by him; all men throughout the wide compass of the world are nourished by our Saviour Christ. The breath would quickly be out of the nostrils of us all if it were not for Him. Kings, princes, noblemen, gentlemen, merchants, clothiers, rich and poor depend upon Him; if He take away His hand we are all gone. Therefore let us serve Him with all our might that beareth us up with His mighty word. (*W. Jones, D.D.*) *The world's sustainer:*—The "word of His power" is the word that expresses and conveys His power. He "upholds all things," *i.e.*, sustains the organic body of the universe in all its applications, as one who made the world (ver. 2). In Col. i. 17 the idea is slightly different; there the Son is the element in which the universe holds together, here He consciously sustains it. (*A. B. Davidson, LL.D.*) *Christ upholding the worlds:*—The other day, on one of the London streets, I saw a contrivance to judge a man's strength by the power of his breath. You breathe into the machine, and by the weight you lift will be accurately estimated the power of your lungs. And Jesus Christ keeps the stars floating by the power of His breath just as children keep bubbles on a summer eve; He breathes and the planets swim as feathers in a breeze. (*J. C. Jones, D.D.*) *The word of power:*—I. THE UNIVERSAL REQUIREMENT. The nature and character of all created things is their inability to sustain themselves. 1. Material things. All are governed by law, and each has its own laws, by which all its actions and purposes are governed. 2. Animal life. "The eyes of all wait upon Thee," &c. 3. Human existence. Not a breath is drawn but is given by God. Not a thought passes through the mind, nor a throb animates the heart without His Divine direction and supervision. II. THE ALMIGHTY INSTRUMENT. 1. The Divine power. It is not susceptible of failure. Consider its vastness, different developments, continuity. 2. The method of manifesting this power. No exertion. No manual labour. (*Homilist.*) **Purged our sins.**—*Expiation in order to reconciliation:*—The purification here specified is not the sanctification of the sinner's soul; for the work is said to have been realised before Christ ascended into heaven. Atonement, or propitiation—an end attributed in so many other texts to the death of Christ (Isa. liii. 5, 6, 10, 11; Matt. xx. 28; Rom. iii. 24–26; 1 Cor. xv. 3; 1 Tim. ii. 6; 1 Pet. ii. 24; Rev. i. 5; &c.)—is certainly what is meant. The language by which the idea is here denoted probably refers to the purification

by sacrifice under the Levitical economy, as set forth in Lev. xiv., xvi. The work of expiation is here associated with human "sins"; atonement having an essential reference to sin as what requires expiation to be made in order to reconciliation between God and man. Christ is represented as having made the expiation "by Himself"—a view which both indicates the greatness of His condescending mercy in the matter, and accounts for the fact that, by His one sacrifice, such a mighty multitude of sins are pardoned, and such a mighty multitude of sinners are saved. It is strange, indeed, that "the brightness of God's glory, the express image of God's person"—that One who is Himself so glorious and so pure, and against whom the sins of men are acts of foul rebellion—should have stooped so low, and suffered so much, and that for the very purpose of securing pardon and salvation for His foes. But the fact that He actually did so—here, and in so many other passages declared—evolves and exhibits magnificent and animating views alike of the transcendent mercy of His heart, and of the transcendent virtue of His work. (*A. S. Patterson.*)

Sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.—*The justly awarded remuneration*:—I. THE MANNER IN WHICH THE PERSON SPOKEN OF IN THE TEXT IS DESCRIBED. 1. As "the brightness of the Father's glory"—the manifestation of all that is essentially excellent in the Divinity. 2. As "the express image of His person." Not that we are to infer that there either is, or can be, in the universe any image of the Divinity such as there may be of an object that is material; for the Divinity, in His essential character being absolutely invisible, because absolutely spiritual, cannot be materialised; and therefore, to think of Christ the Son of God as being the image of the Divinity in the same way in which one material object may be the image of another, were to degrade Him. But though in this respect He is not "the image" of the Divinity, yet not more exactly does an impression correspond with the seal, or a coin with the die, than Christ the Son of God corresponds with the Divinity. Of Him He is the image, and not merely the image, but the express image;—a resemblance, a likeness in entire conformity to its archetype; a clearly expressed, a complete likeness of the person, of the substance, of the essence of the Divinity;—such a likeness, such a resemblance, as comports with personal distinction; yet such as can originate only in sameness of existence or mode of existence,—as can originate only in perfect identity of nature. II. THE WORK WHICH HE IS REPRESENTED AS HAVING PERFORMED. "Purged our sins." That to which reference is here made, evidently proceeds on the principle that the circumstances of universal man by nature, were circumstances of moral degradation; and not only of moral degradation, but of moral danger—the sad consequence of the apostasy of the great earthly progenitor of man. Nay, more: it evidently proceeds on the principle that it lay not within the sphere of human ability to make reparation for the evil, and thus to remedy the one, and rescue him from the other. No agency was adequate but the agency of One who was Divine. For what, according to Scripture, is the expression "purged," but another phrase for atonement by sacrifice? And what is this but what was required, that the work of "purging our sins" might be performed? But whilst, in order to this, an atonement by sacrifice was required, it was not an atonement by sacrifice of any description, but an atonement by sacrifice, in point of efficiency, unassailable, unquestionable. And is not this what Christ's sacrificial atonement was, being as it was, (1) superlative in its value, (2) vicarous in its nature, and (3) propitiatory in its result? III. THE STATE TO WHICH, BY WAY OF REWARD, HE HAS BEEN EXALTED. It is more than probable, from the lessons taught us in this Epistle, that the primary idea intended to be conveyed is the official greatness of Christ as a priest, when contrasted with the priests under the law. Even the high priest, the chief of those priests, when he entered within the veil with the blood of the typical sacrifice which he had offered for the sins of the people, never sat down in the Holy Place, but, having stood for some time before the mercy-seat making intercession, he retired to offer a new sacrifice, that he might return anew to make intercession; and thus never, so to speak, accomplishing or completing the design of his office, he continued to go the round of his sacred duties. And as it was with the high priest, so it was, according to their order, with the other priests who were subordinate to him. "Every priest," says our apostle, "standeth daily ministering, and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But this man," even Christ, "after He had offered one sacrifice for sins," to intimate the completion of His work, "for ever sat down on the right hand of God." Although, however, this idea may have been the primary, yet other ideas, doubtless, are conveyed by the expression. 1. It conveys the idea of honour; and if of honour, of glory and felicity. "Nothing was accounted

too costly, of an earthly kind, to render the Jewish temple of old in some degree a befitting audience-chamber for Him whose immensity pervades all space; and is there aught, the scope of infinite wisdom to devise, or of infinite power to effect, which we may not imagine to be brought into full operation in elevating, as the reward of His humiliation, the body of Christ—the most holy shrine of the Divinity—to the highest perfection of which that which is material is capable?" But Christ's having sat down at the right hand of God conveys not merely the idea of honour, and glory, and felicity, but also—2. The idea of power; and if of power, of authority and dominion. (*Alex. Jack, D.D.*) *The mediatorial work, glory, and claims of Christ*:—I. THE LORD JESUS HAS PERFORMED A MOMENTOUS MEDIATORIAL WORK. With regard to the intrinsic nature of the work, it arose, as is suggested, by the expression of our text, from the condition of the human race, as being sinners against God, rebels against His authority, and therefore condemned by His law. And this state of sinfulness must be assumed as characterising them without exception and universally. The manner in which He accomplished the office was by descending from the altitude of His primeval dignity to the assumption of human nature by miraculous incarnation, and in that nature which had sinned, though Himself unsullied, and holy, enduring agony and death as a sacrifice to the Divine justice on behalf of the guilty. The sufficiency of His expiation is frequently brought before us in Scripture contrasted with the insufficiency of the Jewish offerings, which were typical of this. No matter how aggravated and complicated sin may be, it at once becomes blotted from the records of condemnation; and the transgressors are made inheritors of full acceptance and everlasting joy. You must recognise its sufficiency also in relation to time. It is permanent and inexhaustible. But then, while we remind you of the sufficiency of the Saviour's sacrifice we must also remind you of its exclusiveness. For the purpose of expiatory redemption the sacrifice of Christ remains exclusive and alone. II. THE LORD JESUS IS EXALTED TO A SPLENDID MEDIATORIAL GLORY. 1. Observe the station which He holds—"On the right hand of the Majesty on high." This expression is intended to denote the revelation of God the Father as He displays the brightest manifestations of His glorious magnificence in heaven. The right hand of the sovereign is always esteemed among men as the place of peculiar honour; and the highest honour is offered to our Lord as the incarnate Mediator. 2. You will also observe, along with the station He holds, the posture He assumes. It is said, "He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high"—a statement of attitude by no means insignificant. (1) He had a season of calm dignity after the tremendous struggles He sustained against the direct adversaries of God and man. He sits at the right hand of the Father, as denoting His rest. (2) Here also is denoted His authority. The ruler sits while those around him stand in token of inferiority and of reverence. The Saviour, we know, possesses authority and sovereignty with the Father, as being one with Him, and all power is given to Him in heaven and in earth. In the emphatic expression of the inspired writer—"He sits and rules upon His throne," as the sign and token of His authority. (3) Again, here also is denoted His discontinuance. The attitude before us is the sign of permanence. In heaven, whither the Saviour has gone, is His permanent abode, His home. 3. Observe also the operations He conducts. And here it is delightful to remember that, while in heaven the Lord is glorified and while in heaven He reposes from the toils and labours of His state of humiliation, He still is employed in avocations of incessant and earnest activity in order to secure the application of His sacrifice and to accomplish the results for which it was designed. "At the right hand of the Majesty on high" He intercedes—He is there still as the Priest of His people. There He presents, in some mode we cannot conjecture, the memorials of the sacrifice which once He perfected on the Cross of Calvary, and pleads that blessings may descend upon men, that they may be renewed, that they may be perfected, that through the power of the gracious Spirit which has been secured by His sacrifice they may be made meet for the inheritance of the saints. "He is gone," and what a world of poetry as well as sublime truth is in the expression—"He is gone to appear in the presence of God for us." "He ever liveth to make intercession for us." 4. "At the right hand of the Majesty on high" He governs. The administration of the universe is committed to His hand. According to the expression of the earlier part of the verse, He "upholds all things by the word of His power." There is not a distant star but is sustained and guided by Him; there is not an intelligent being in all its faculties and passions but is controlled by Him; there is not a material thing vast or minute but is wielded by Him. He has all power. The universe

from its utmost limits is His own. In relation to the world in which we live, while the operations of Providence are at His bidding, He works in a special mode. It is His right and He will redeem it to Himself. He employs therefore His gospel, the truth which discloses and explains His attributes and functions, rendering effectual the announcements of truth by the power of the Spirit secured by His death and intercession, and thus accomplishing the recovery and conversion of individual men, overturning the vast combination of evils which have existed for so long a succession of ages and crushed millions in degradation and ruin, and finally accomplishing the triumph of His own dominion of peace, righteousness, purity, and happiness until all things shall be subdued unto Himself; for He shall have dominion and glory and the kingdom, the people of all nations and languages shall serve Him. III. THE LORD JESUS POSSESSES IMPERATIVE MEDIATORIAL CLAIMS. The announcement in the text is for the purpose of vindicating and enforcing His claims; and men should do homage to His dignity; they should trust to His merits and devote themselves to His cause. (*J. Parsons.*) *The greatness and glory of the Redeemer:*—I. EXCELLENCY OF HIS DIVINE MAJESTY: THE OUTBEAMING OF HIS FATHER'S GLORY. By Him, as a medium, it becomes visible, and is brought within the range of our comprehension. 1. He is the Creator of all things: and, therefore, the glory of God, displayed in the creation, is through Him. 2. Displayed in His character as Mediator and Redeemer. 3. In Him the Divine glory essentially resides, and has been manifested by His various appearances since the foundation of the world. It is said of man, indeed, that he was made in the image of God, but Jesus Christ only is the express image of the substance of God, the exact representation of that in which the Divine nature differs from all other being. II. THE ENERGY OF HIS ALL-CONTROLLING POWER. "He upholds all things by the word of His power." All things—whole universe—things visible and invisible, small and great. "Upholds," sustains, preserves, and regulates. "Word of His power," powerful word! "He speaks, and it is done." III. "BY HIMSELF PURGED OUR SINS." This refers to the Jewish ceremonies. "By Himself": not by offering the greatest among men or angels. Such would not have been adequate to the occasion. To purge our sins He shed His blood. IV. "SAT DOWN," &c. This expresses His exaltation. 1. To the exceeding power of God. 2. To the highest dignity and honour. 3. By means of the right hand gifts are dispensed. Gifts are the source of happiness. Therefore, the right hand of God is the place of celestial felicity. (*Thomas Galland, M.A.*) *Christ sitting in heaven:*—1. If Christ sitteth above in the highest places, then He beholdeth all things here below. A man that is upon the top of some high tower may see far: and Christ being in the high steeple and tower of heaven, can see all things on the earth. He that is upon the top of an high tower, may see men, but he cannot discern who they be: Christ sees them, and discerns them too. If the wicked be laying of plots and snares against His children, Christ being in heaven sees them, and in due time will overthrow them: and He that sitteth in heaven laugheth them to scorn. This is a singular comfort, that our Head, King, and Defender is in heaven, and hath equal power, glory, and majesty with God. If thou hast a friend in the court that sits daily by the king, and is in favour with him, wilt thou care for any in England? We have a friend that sitteth on the right hand of God, and hath all power in heaven and earth; therefore let us fear nothing; He will keep us, none shall do us any harm, but it shall all turn to our good in the end. 2. As Christ sitteth in the heavens, so we shall one day sit there with Him. Let this comfort us against all the calamities of this life: here the children of God are oftentimes made the wicked's footstools, they sit on them, and tread on them: no reckoning is made of a godly man. A rich man that is a common drunkard and whoremaster shall be more esteemed of by many than a godly poor man. Here they sit weeping and wailing for their sins, for their children, for crosses in goods, in bodies, in good name; the wicked deriding them, jesting at them: but let this comfort us against them all; how contemptible soever we sit here, we shall sit with Christ Jesus, though not in that degree of glory, yet in the same kingdom of glory with Him for ever. (*W. Jones, D.D.*)

Vers. 4–14. **Being made so much better than the angels.**—*The superiority of Christ to the angels:*—I. THE SUPERIORITY OF HIS NATURE. II. THE SUPERIORITY OF HIS PREROGATIVE. III. THE SUPERIORITY OF HIS OFFICE. IV. THE SUPERIORITY OF HIS UNCHANGING EXISTENCE. Learn: 1. The error of those who would confound Christ with the angels. 2. The error of those who would bide Christ by the angels. 3. The error of those who would expect the success of Christianity from the inter-

vention of the angels. 4. The error of those who think the Christian Church weak because it lacks angelic phenomena. We have the Cross; we have Pentecost; we need not seraphs or archangels. (*W. L. Watkinson.*) *Christ's excellences above angels*:—1. Christ's Divine nature is infinitely more excellent then an angelical spirit; yea, His human nature, by the hypostatical union of it with the Divine, hath likewise a dignity infinitely surpassing an angel's nature. 2. Christ is the express image of the person of His Father, which is more than to be created, as angels were, after God's image. 3. Christ is the brightness of God's glory: therefore more glorious than the most glorious angels. 4. Christ is in heaven at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty: therefore in place of residency higher than angels. Christ's function, to be a Mediator between God and man, is greater than any of the functions of angels. 6. Therefore Christ is more excellent than angels in their greatest excellences. Yet there is a greater excellency, wherein Christ doth further excel angels, comprised under this phrase, "a more excellent name." This is that name which is above every name, at which every knee should bow (Phil. ii. 9, 10). By virtue of this name He became a fit Mediator between God and man, and fit Saviour and Redeemer of man, a fit King, Priest, and Prophet of His Church; yea, and by virtue of this name, absolute dominion over all creatures, infinite majesty, Divine dignity, and all honour and glory is His; all worship, service, subjection, and duty is due unto Him. This name therefore must needs be beyond all comparison a most excellent name: and in this respect Christ may well be said to have a more excellent name than angels, because there is no comparison between them. The comparative epithet, translated "more excellent," is derived from a compound verb that signifieth to "differ in excellency, or to excel" (1 Cor. xv. 41). It is translated "to be better" (Matt. vi. 26), or "to be of more value" (Matt. x. 31). The positive of this comparative, signifieth divers or different (Rom. xii. 6). This word of comparison "more excellent," is not to be taken of an exceeding in the same nature and kind, as one man is more excellent than another, but in different natures and kinds for Christ, as the Son of God, is of a Divine nature, even the Creator of all, and preferred before all created spirits; which though they be the most excellent of created substances, yet not to be compared with the Son of God. His name is infinitely more excellent then theirs; for by reason of this name He is the Lord of angels. 1. As He is the true, proper, only begotten Son, by eternal generation. For the Father in communicating His essence to Him, communicated also this excellent name here intended. 2. As His human nature was hypostatically united to His Divine nature. For though according to the flesh He was not born of God the Father (in that respect He was, without Father, born of a Virgin), yet that flesh being personally united to the only begotten Son of God, He was born the Son of God (Luke i. 35). He was not then by grace and favour of no Son made the Son of God; but as God, and as God-man, He was the true begotten Son of God; and in both these respects the name here spoken of, by right of inheritance belonged to Him. (*W. Gouge.*) *The angels*:—Scripture speaks often of the angels. Let me remind you of some of the doctrines which the Bible contains concerning them. In the first place, human beings know nothing about angels except what God pleases to tell them. Hence all that human poets have imagined about them is of no value, unless it agrees with the Scripture. With regard to the angels, I may notice three tendencies to error. The first tendency to error we see in the Epistle to the Colossians, and we may call it "the Gnostic error," when men, following their own speculative reason, endeavour to penetrate mysteries which are not revealed, and form erroneous views of the angels as to their nature, and their relation to God and to Christ. Secoudly, the Romish error, according to which the angels are placed in a false mediatory position, and are invoked, when men rely upon their intercession, or call upon their aid. And the third tendency is what I may call the Protestant one—to think too rarely and in too isolated a manner about them, and not to remember vividly that they are constantly with us, that we and they are members of one great family. 1. Notice the multitude of angels: "We have come to an innumerable company of angels." 2. This innumerable multitude is a polity, a state. There are gradations in it, groups, orders, legions of angels. There is a kingdom with gradations, with order. This kingdom is intimately connected with the kingdom of grace. When a sinner is converted, the angels rejoice; and when Jesus comes again, the angels will come with Him. They will last for ever, though they are not yet seen by us; and when all that is unreal and shadowy shall disappear, then they shall be made visible at the appearing of our great God and Saviour. Whenever there is a crisis in the history of

God's kingdom the angels appear, as at the giving of the law, and at the incarnation of the Son of God. When He comes again multitudes of angels shall come with Him and separate the evil from the good; before the angels Jesus shall confess His people. Angels are connected not merely with salvation and with the spiritual kingdom of God, but with all the kingdom of God; with all physical phenomena. God does not move and rule the world merely by laws and principles, by unconscious and inanimate powers, but by living beings full of light and love. His angels are like flames of fire; they have charge over the winds, and the earth, and the trees, and the sea. Through the angels He carries on the government of the world. Now, glorious as the angels are, they are in subjection to Jesus as man; for in His human nature God has enthroned Him above all things. Their relation to Jesus fixes also their relation to us. We know they love us; for they rejoice when a sinner turns from ungodliness and takes hold of salvation as it is in Jesus. They watch us in our dangers, in our difficulties. And after having ministered unto God's people to the end of this age, they shall rejoice when they hear His voice saying unto the children, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." For Jesus' sake, "are they not all ministering spirits?" Oh, how great is Jesus! How great is the covenant of grace! How great is the glory of the Son, and how wonderful is our position as children of the Father! (*A. Saphir.*) **Thou art My Son.**—*The eternal Sonship of Christ:*—In the Divine generation these distinct points following are observable—1. God as a Father, even the first Person in Trinity, begetteth. In this respect the Son of God is called the begotten of the Father (John i. 14). 2. God the Father begat the Son of His very substance, very God of very God. The title God properly taken and frequently applied to this Son, gives proof hereto (John i. 1; Rom. ix. 5), and especially the title Jehovah, which is given to none but the true God (Gen. xix. 24; Josh. v. 14). 3. God the Father communicateth His whole essence to the Son. He begat another self of Himself, even that which He Himself is. In which respect this Son of God saith, "I and My Father are one. The Father is in Me, and I in Him" (John x. 30, 38). 4. God the Father's begetting His Son is truly and properly eternal. It was before all time, it continueth throughout all times, it shall never have any date, or end. In relation hereunto saith this Son of God, "I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth: before the hills was I brought forth," &c. (Prov. viii. 23–25). In this sense] He was called the firstborn (Col. i. 15). Firstborn, because He was begotten before all things; and only-begotten, because He alone was properly begotten of God. 5. God the Father's begetting His Son, manifesteth an equality of Father and Son. For if the nature of both be inquired after, it will hereby be found to be God, and not one greater than another. This also did the Son receive of the Father. He did not beget Him equal, and then add to Him, when He was begotten, equality, but in begetting Him He made Him equal. For being in the form of God, to be equal with God was no robbery (Phil. ii. 6), but nature: because He obtained it by being begotten, He did not usurp it by a proud advancing of Himself. Where equality is, there is the same nature, and one substance. (*W. Gouge.*) **This day have I begotten Thee.**—*Sonship in the resurrection:*—I. THE SENSE IN WHICH WE ARE TO UNDERSTAND THE DIVINE AFFIRMATION. "I have begotten Thee." Says Meyer: "I think that neither His eternal generation alone, as He is God, nor His temporary generation, as He is man, is here meant, but both. I have begotten Thee from eternity, in respect of Thy Divinity, and in time, as set forth by the term 'this day.' I have, by the overshadowing of My Spirit, begotten Thee of the Virgin Mary, according to Thy humanity, so as it may appear to all the world that Thou art both God and man, and so My most noble Son and the Prince of heaven; this being made evident sundry ways, but especially by Thy rising again from death to life." That is, the resurrection was the day in which God made manifest that He had begotten the Lord Jesus as His Son; not that He was that particular day begotten, but the fact was then made patent, and proclaimed as the grand evidence of that article of faith which teaches us to say, "I believe in the resurrection of the dead." Thus the act of our Lord's resurrection presents the proof alike of His natural and eternal Sonship, being both divinely begotten. It sheds an equal lustre upon His eternal Deity and glorified humanity; and while the power which effected His resurrection exhibits Him as truly God, His condescension to the flesh, and death which preceded it, discovers Him as really Man; for who but man could die? and who but God could rise again? Death was the peculiar, and for aught I know, the exclusive sentence

which was passed on man; life which could triumph over death, which is God's ordinance, is the sole prerogative of God. II. WHY WE THINK THE TERM "THIS DAY" EXCLUSIVELY DISTINGUISHES THE DAY OF HIS RESURRECTION. 1. Our first reason is, the position which the words occupy in the second Psalm, and the seventh verse, from which they are quoted. It is after "the heathen had raged, and the people had imagined a vain thing,' namely, that they could annihilate the pretensions of Jesus by His death; it is after the conspiring of the kings of the earth and their rulers that the decree is uttered, "Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee." That is, the resurrection which succeeded the crucifixion manifested in the most signal manner, that notwithstanding the enmity, apparent success, and short-lived triumph of the Jews, "Truly," after all, as the centurion confessed, "this man was the Son of God." 2. Our second reason for considering this day the resurrection, is because the assembled apostles so applied the Psalm in the fourth chapter of Acts, the twenty-fifth and following verses, where, having pointed out the accomplishment of the former verses of the second Psalm, in the conspiracy of the rulers and people against Christ, it is added in the thirty-third verse, "And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection." 3. A third reason we find in the Epistle to the Romans, the first chapter and the fourth verse, where St. Paul draws the distinction between Christ's "being made of the seed of David, according to the flesh, but declared (not made) to be the Son of God, according to the Spirit of holiness, by His resurrection from the dead." The word "declared," in this place, is of the same force as the Hebrew word which is translated "begotten," and which also means "exhibited, or manifested"; or as Paul saith "declared." "Thou art My Son; this day have I declared Thee"—that is, this day of Thy resurrection, I have owned Thee, manifested Thee, as the Son of God. 4. If there be any remaining doubt as to the application of this passage, I refer you fourthly, to the thirteenth chapter of Acts, and the thirty-third verse, where, after speaking of the promises of God made to the fathers, Paul adds, "God hath fulfilled the same unto us, their children, in that He hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second Psalm—Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee"; that is, the raising up of Jesus was the evidence of His Sonship, and His Sonship is the pledge for the fulfilment of the promises. 5. Once more: in the fifth chapter of Hebrews, and the fifth verse, where it is asserted that Aaron, the first high priest under the legal dispensation, and Christ the first High Priest of the gospel, took not this office upon *Himself till He was called*, the calling of Christ is referred to the same event and in the same terms as in the text are employed to prove the superiority of His *nature* over that of the angels. Then the day of His resurrection was the day of His ordination to the high priesthood. III. WHAT WAS THE OFFICE AND COMMISSION CONFERRED UPON THE LORD JESUS BY THE DIVINE TESTIMONY? "Thou art My Son." Angels needed not this attestation. They had often heard the grand acknowledgment in heaven. The eternal Sonship of the Christ was no secret there. But as Jesus said of the answer which mysteriously reached Him from the clouds at the raising of Lazarus, so might He have said of the testimony which accompanied His own resurrection —"Because of the people who stand by I said it, that they may believe that Thou hast sent Me"; that is, God condescended visibly and audibly to acknowledge His Son on earth, that man might believe that He was sent from heaven. 1. The title of the Son of God imports dignity. Hence the apostle's argument in the text—"Unto which of the angels said He at any time, Thou art My Son?" 2. The title of the Son of God imports office. It implies, in connection with His other title, "the Son of man"—which is applied to Christ about eighty times by the evangelists—a mediatorial office; that the Son of man, equally as the Son of God, is the connecting link between God and man, both natures being reconciled by His office as the two are united in His person. 3. Again: as the Son of God, Christ is our Prince and Judge. Henceforth, said He, "the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son"; and Peter adds, "He is exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel, and forgiveness of sins." This is His present office; His sovereignty is now wholly exercised in grace. It now deals in love, mercy, and forbearance. Now He pleads *at* the throne—hereafter He will sentence *from* the throne. 4. Once more: as the Son of God, Christ is "the Firstborn among many brethren." The term "firstborn" does not necessarily infer that the person to whom the epithet is applied is a creature; it often imports no more than excellency, or supremacy, or peculiar favour. Thus Job speaks of "the firstborn of death"—that is, the chief strength of death; so Christ

is called in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Colossians, and the fifteenth verse, "the Firstborn of every creature," "the Firstborn from the dead"—that is, the chief and supreme of all the creatures, as the Rabbins themselves spoke of Jehovah as "the Firstborn of the creation," or at the head of the universe. It is also a term of endearment and special favour. Thus the Lord said in the thirty-first chapter of Jeremiah, and the ninth verse—"Ephraim is My firstborn"; in other words, that His people were very dear to Him. In all these senses Christ is to us the Firstborn of God. He is our Strength and Excellency, our "Firstfruits from the dead"; and "because He lives, we shall live also"; for we are said to be "begotten again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." And further, "He is Head over all things to His Church"; and as there is a name given unto Him which is above every name, so that name is ours. Christ's people are called Christians. "I will write upon you," said He, "My new name"; and that is "the everlasting name which shall not be cut off." (*J. B. Owen, M.A.*) **The First-begotten.**—*Christ the First-begotten:*—I. We understand by this title, THE ETERNAL GENERATION AND SONSHIP OF OUR LORD; His possession of a seed and family made like unto Him here in holiness and hereafter in glory; His rule and pre-eminence in the house and family of God; His character, as head over all things to the Church. II. We understand by the bringing in of the First-begotten into the world—THE MANIFESTATION OF THE ETERNAL SON OF GOD IN OUR FLESH—His birth, according to the prophet, of the Virgin Mary. Great indeed is this mystery: let us adore it reverentially! The joy which should pervade our hearts must be a holy joy; the feelings that should possess our minds should be of lively gratitude and ready obedience. III. But let us notice WHAT IS TO BE INFERRED FROM THE ADORATION ENJOINED UPON THE ANGELS: this adoration we find rendered at the birth of this wondrous personage; at His agony in the garden they waited on Him; at His resurrection and ascension they were in attendance upon His Majesty; and still they worship and adore. What can we conclude from the adoration of angels, but that He whom angels adore is God and Lord? Again, may we not conclude that the work of our redemption has been undertaken by One who is altogether equal to the task? May we not thus far be of good courage, and place our entire confidence in the virtue of His redemption? Lessons: 1. The unspeakable humiliation of our Lord. How low has He stooped to do us service! Are we filled with the opinion of our own importance? Let us turn to the manger and the stable; let us dwell upon the matchless humility of the Lord of life and glory; let us learn from it to be lowly in our own eyes. 2. Though we cannot copy the act, yet we can copy the motive, the spirit which brought the First-begotten into the world. By love we must serve one another. 3. Again, we are instructed hereby to deny self. (*H. J. Hastings, M.A.*) *Christ the First-begotten:*—That which the apostle here intendeth under this title "first-begotten," is to set forth the excellency of the person of Christ, as God-man, and that—1. In His priority, which is eternity, as He is God (Prov. viii. 24, 25). 2. In His dignity, being the most excellent of all (Gen. xlix. 3). 3. In regard of His dominion over all (Psa. ii. 6, 7). 4. In regard of the largeness of His inheritance (Psa. ii. 8). (*W. Gouge.*) **And let all the angels of God worship Him.**—These words are an exact quotation from Deut. xxxii. 43, as it stands in the LXX. version, but are not found in the original. The use of that passage as a Jewish liturgy of praise probably led to its expansion into a fuller song of triumph by additions borrowed from other parts of Scripture; and these words may have been taken from Psa. xcvii. 7, as it stands in LXX. version—"Worship Him all ye His angels." In the farewell song of Moses, the verse is introduced on occasion of a majestic prophecy of the Lord's appearance to judge the enemy and avenge His people. All such prophecies were interpreted in a Messianic sense; therefore the Epistle makes the reappearance of the firstborn the occasion for that angelic worship. In Deuteronomy the adoration is rendered to Jehovah; in the Epistle it is not clear whether it is rendered to Him or to the firstborn; it is therefore right to follow the Old Testament meaning. The passage is quoted by way of exhibiting the subordinate position of angels as mere worshippers. (*F. Rendall, M.A.*) *Christ the object of angelic worship:*—I. IF ANGELS WORSHIP CHRIST, HIS CLAIMS TO WORSHIP ARE UNDOUBTED. There are only two conceivable causes for the worshipping of false gods: 1. The want of intelligence. 2. The want of right sympathies. II. IF ANGELS WORSHIP CHRIST, THEN THE OBLIGATIONS OF MEN TO DO SO MUST BE IMMENSE. Besides being the brightness of His Father's glory, He is the expiator of human sin, &c. III. IF ANGELS WORSHIP CHRIST, THEN A PRESIDING SYMPATHY WITH HIM IS THE NECESSARY MEETNESS FOR HEAVEN. It is even con-

nected with two things: 1. An appreciative knowledge of Him. 2. An unreserved concurrence with Him. (*Homilist.*) *Christ worshipped by angels*:—I. THE FIRST THING WHICH THE TEXT TEACHES IS THAT CHRIST IS A PROPER OBJECT OF DIVINE WORSHIP. We know who has said, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve" (Matt. iv. 10), and we know also, from St. John's description in the Apocalypse, of the worship of heaven, that the Church universal, saints and angels, will pay Divine honours to Him who appeared upon earth as the gentle Babe of Bethlehem (Rev. v. 13). Thus speaks the High and Holy One who inhabiteth eternity (Isa. xlii. 8). If Christ Jesus be not God, how can the Almighty Father contradict Himself, and say even to the bright intelligences that minister about His throne, "Let all the angels of God worship Him?" If Christ be not a proper object of Divine adoration, how is it that we hear the meek and lowly Son of Mary declare, without hesitation or reserve, that "All men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father"? (John v. 23). If Christ Jesus be not one with the Father and the Blessed Spirit, in the glory of the Eternal Trinity, why did the disciples who met Him after the resurrection bow themselves down and worship Him? (Matt. xxviii. 9; Luke xxiv. 52). II. The text suggests another point—THAT THE INCARNATION AFFORDS A SPECIAL CALL UPON ALL IN EARTH AND HEAVEN TO ASCRIBE UNTO HIM THE HONOUR WHICH IS DUE UNTO HIS NAME. During the reign of Theodosius the Great, in the fourth century, the Arians put forth their strongest efforts to undermine that all-important doctrine of the divinity of our blessed Lord. The interesting event of making his son Arcadius the sharer with him of his throne was happily overruled to his discovering the fearful error which was thus sapping the foundations of the faith. Among the bishops who came to congratulate Theodosius on the occasion was Amphilochus, Bishop of Iconium, a man most highly esteemed. Approaching the emperor, the bishop addressed him in fitting words, and was about to withdraw from the presence-chamber, when the angry father exclaimed, "Do you take no notice of my son? Have you not heard that I have made him a partner with me in the empire." The good old bishop gave no direct answer, but going up to Arcadius, a lad of sixteen, he laid his hands upon his head, saying, "The Lord bless thee, my son!" and once more turned to depart. Even this did not satisfy the emperor, who inquired, in a tone of surprise and displeasure, "Is this all the respect you pay to a prince that I have made of equal dignity with myself?" The bishop indignantly answered, "Do you so highly resent my apparent neglect of your son, because I do not treat him with equal honour with yourself? What, then, must the eternal God think of you, who have allowed His co-equal and co-eternal Son to be degraded from His proper divinity in every part of your empire?" Theodosius felt that the withering rebuke was well deserved, and he ceased from that moment to show the least indulgence to such as ventured to cast dishonour upon the Son of God. It is not only our duty, but our precious privilege, to worship our Divine Saviour. (*J. N. Norton, D.D.*) *Worship due to Christ from all*:—If the angels worship Christ, shall not we men that be dust and ashes worship Him? If the lords of the privy council stand bare to the king, shall not we silly men of the country do it? The angels that dwell in the court of heaven with God worship Christ; and shall not we on earth do it? Let us worship Him, and Him alone; let us not worship our gold and silver as covetous men do, and come within compass of idolatry; let us not worship our pleasures as epicures do, but let us worship Christ as the angels do. We worship Christ with our lips, we have His name in our mouth, but we worship Him not with our hearts and lives. A great number of Christians are like the soldiers that set a crown of thorns on Christ's head, put a reed instead of a sceptre into His hand, clothed Him with a purple garment, and in the end did nothing but mock Him. So we talk gloriously of Christ and of His kingdom; in words we profess Him to be our King; but we do not worship Him in truth and sincerity, and serve Him in holiness and righteousness as we ought to do. (*W. Jones, D.D.*) **Who maketh His angels spirits.**—*Angelic life and its lessons*:—It is true there are many who deny the existence of any spiritual beings save God and man. The wide universe is to them a solitary land without inhabitants. There is but one oasis filled with living creatures. There is something pitiable in this impertinence. It is a drop of dew in the lonely cup of a gentian, which imagines itself to be all the water in the universe. It is the summer midge which has never left its forest pool, dreaming that it and its companions are the only living creatures in earth or air. There is no proof of the existence of other beings than ourselves, but there is also no proof of the contrary. Apart from revelation, we can think about the subject as

we please. But it does seem incredible that we alone should represent in the universe the image of God; and if in one solitary star another race of beings dwell, if we concede the existence of a single spirit other than ourselves, we have allowed the principle; the angelic world of which the Bible speaks is possible to faith. Our life with nature has lost its beauty, its joy, its religion. It was different with the ancient Jew and with the apostles and their followers. They lived in a world peopled with spiritual beings. They believed in invisible assistants, who were doing God's pleasure and sympathising with His children. The hosts of heaven moved in myriads in the sky. The messengers of God went to and fro working His righteous will. The sons of God shouted for joy when the creation leaped to light. In every work of nature, in the summer rain and the winter frost, in the lifting of the billow on the sea and the growth of the flower on the plain, there were holy ones concerned who sang the hymn of continued creation to the Eternal Love. The very winds themselves were angels, and the flaming fires ministers of God. I. Take first, THE RELATION OF GOD TO ANGELIC LIFE. 1. The first thing we understand of the angels is that in distant eternities God created them. God gave of His own life to others, and filled His silence with living souls. Here we have the principle of the social life of God. He listened with pleasure to the song of joy which filled His universe, and received and gave back in ceaseless reciprocation the offered love of the spirits He had made. And in that thought all social life on earth should be hallowed by being made like to that of God; we should be as gods and angels one to another, interchanging ever love and service. Is that the ideal which in society you strive to reach? Again—2. The angelic creation reveals to us the very principle of God's proper life. He would not have a life which began and ended in Himself. His life was life in others. In giving of His life He lived. II. I pass on to THE RELATION OF THE ANGELIC LIFE OF GOD. It is described as a life of exalted praise. The angels are pictured as employed in ceaseless adoration. The nearer that you live to God here, the nearer you will approach the angelic life. Our state of imperfection is characterised by prayer, the state of perfection is characterised by praise; and it is curious to mark in the history of some of the noblest of God's saints, how, as they drew near the close of life and entered more into communion with the heavenly existence, prayer seems to be replaced by a sacred awe, and a deeper knowledge of holiness breaks forth into continual praise. So far for angelic life in connection with God. III. We pass on to consider, AS IT IS DESCRIBED IN THE BIBLE, ANGELIC LIFE IN CONNECTION WITH NATURE. The Hebrew religious feeling always retained some traces of its connection through Abraham with Chaldæa. The old pastoral faith which was born on the wide plains of the East, with a magnificent arch of sky above, in which the sun and moon and stars walked cloudless with what seemed the stately step of gods, was always breaking through the pure monotheism which God revealed to the patriarchs. And not only the ordering of the stars, but all manifestations of the forces of nature were, in the poetry of the Hebrews, directed by the angels. Certain masters in science will smile at all this, and ask if that be philosophy? And I answer, No, not philosophy, but something higher—poetry; and as such, not disclosing the relations of phenomena, but revealing, through symbolic phrase, a principle. It matters very little whether the angels be the directing powers of the elements and their combinations or not; but it does much matter to us as spiritual beings with what eyes we look upon the universe—as a living whole informed and supported by a living will, or as dead matter drifting on in obedience to dead laws. So do we grasp the truth of these old Hebrew sayings of the angels—that nature in essence, or rather, in that actual world of which it is the witness, is not inanimate, but living. Then the universe becomes clothed in a more glorious form. "The dead heavy mass which did but block up space is vanished, and in its place there flows forward, with the music of eternal waters, a stream of life and power and action" which issues from the source of all life—the living will of God. Then it happens that to us the whole course of nature, and each separate thing within it, give up to us the secrets they half conceal and half express. They speak not to intellect only or to feeling only, but to the entirety of our being. All God's living spirits are doing within the sphere of His life a portion of this redeeming work. The angels do it perchance as He performs it, finding a perfect joy in sacrifice; we are doing it in agony, finding every sacrifice a pain, and yet learning through the very pain to realise the sacrifice as joy; giving up our life with strong crying and with tears, but strangely discovering that we have been led into life: till at last the secret smites upon our heart in an ineffable light which transfigures all our being, and looking up to where, upon the cross of Calvary, all humanity was

sacrificed and all life given away in infinite love that the life of the world might be, we know at last in Him the mystery of the universe. We see the very Life itself in the love which, in giving His Son, gave Himself. (*Stopford A. Brooke, M.A.*) *Angels and their alliance with nature*:—His angels spirits; better, His angels winds. The quotation is from Psa. civ. 4, according to the Greek translation. Two things are expressed: first, the service of the angels; and second, their alliance in this service to the material elements; under God's transforming hand they suffer a change into winds and a flame of fire. This idea is not to be pressed so far as to imply that the angelic essence undergoes a transformation into material substance, but only that the angels are clothed with this material form, and in their service assume this shape to men. Illustrations of the idea from the Rabbinical writers are not wanting. "The angel said unto Manoah, I know not after what image I am made, for God changes us every hour; why, therefore, dost thou ask after my name? Sometimes He makes us fire, at other times wind; sometimes men, at other times again angels." God is named God of hosts because He does with His angels as He pleases; He makes them sometimes sitting (Judg. vi. 11), sometimes standing (Isa. vi. 2), sometimes to resemble women (Zech. v. 9), sometimes men (Gen. xviii. 2), &c. "When His angels are sent forth as messengers they are made winds (Psa. civ. 4), when they minister before the throne of His glory they are flames of fire" (*cf.* Exod. iii. 2). (*A. B. Davidson, LL.D.*) **A flame of fire.**—*Angels likened to fire.* 1. Fire is lightsome and strikes a terror into men, so do the angels when they appear. 2. Fire is of a subtle and piercing nature: so are the angels, they are quickly here and there. 3. Fire consumes and burns up; so do they the wicked, our enemies. This is the greatest honour of the angels to be God's ministers and messengers; so must we count it the greatest dignity of all men on the face of the earth. Though thou beest a rich tradesman, a wealthy merchant, a gentlemen of great revenues, a knight, a lord, or a king; yet the most magnificent style thou canst have is this, to be God's minister and servant, to be His messenger and to go on His errands. (*W. Jones, D.D.*) **Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.**—*Christ's throne and sceptre*:—I. THE THRONE. 1. It is a mercy throne. 2. It is a rich throne. 3. It is a throne of plenty. II. THE SCEPTRE. 1. Righteously acquired. 2. Christ makes war in righteousness. 3. Christ maintains the rights of heaven. (*James Wells.*) *Messianic regalia*:—I. THE THRONE OF MESSIAH. The power of Christ is—1. Divine. 2. Supreme. (1) Moral, not secular. (2) Personal, not derived. (3) Universal, not local. 3. Everlasting. II. THE SCEPTRE OF MESSIAH. The righteousness of His—1. Character. 2. Gospel. 3. Reign. III. THE CROWN OF MESSIAH. (*W. L. Watkinson.*) *Divinity of Christ*:—So thoroughly intermingled with the whole texture of New Testament Scripture is the Godhead of the Saviour, that no criticism which does not destroy the book can altogether extinguish its testimony. We have seen a copy of the Gospels and Epistles which was warranted free from all trace of the Trinity, but it was not the Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We beheld it, and we received instruction. It did not want beauty; for the Parables and the Sermon on the Mount, and many a touching passage, still were there. But neither would a garden want beauty if the grass plats and green bushes still remained, though you had carefully culled out every blossoming flower. The humanity of Jesus still is beautiful, even when the Godhead is forgotten or denied. Or rather it looked like a coronation tapestry, with all the golden threads torn out; or an exquisite mosaic from which some unscrupulous finger had abstracted the gems and only left the common stones: you not only missed the glory of the whole, but in the fractures of the piece and the coarse plaster with which the gaps were supplied, you saw how rude was the process by which its jewels had been wrenched away. It was a casket without the pearl. It was a shrine without the Shekinah. And yet, after all, it was not sufficiently expurgated; for, after reading it, the thought would recur—how much easier to fabricate a Gnostic Testament exempt from all trace of our Lord's humanity, than a Unitarian Testament ignoring His divinity! (*Jas. Hamilton, D.D.*) *Christ is God*:—Think of all that is represented by that great word "God"; who can fathom it? "Nothing is easier than to say the word "universe," and yet it would take us millions of millions of years to bestow one hasty glance upon the surface of that small portion of it which lies within the range of our glasses. But what are all suns, comets, earths, moons, atmospheres, seas, rivers, mountains, valleys, plains, woods, cattle, wild beasts, fish, fowl, grasses, plants, shrubs, minerals, and metals, compared with the meaning of the one name God!" (*C. Stanford, D.D.*) *The dominion of Jesus Christ*:—I. The conferring and COMPARING OF SCRIPTURES IS

AN EXCELLENT MEANS OF COMING TO AN ACQUAINTANCE WITH THE MIND AND WILL OF GOD IN THEM. Thus dealeth the apostle in this place; he compareth what is spoken of angels in one place, and what of the Son in another, and from thence manifesteth what is the mind of God concerning them. II. IT IS THE DUTY OF ALL BELIEVERS TO REJOICE IN THE GLORY, HONOUR, AND DOMINION OF JESUS CHRIST. 1. Herein God is glorified. The kingdom of Christ is the glory of God; thereby is His name and praise exalted in the world; and therefore upon the erection and setting of it up are all His people so earnestly invited to rejoice and triumph therein (Psa. xcv. 1–3, xcvi. 1–4, xcvii. 1, 2). 2. Herein doth the honour and glory of Christ as Mediator consist, which is a matter of great rejoicing unto all that love Him in sincerity. 3. Our own concern, safety, present and future happiness, lie herein: our *all* depends upon the kingdom and throne of Christ. He is our King, if we are believers; our King to rule, protect, and save us; to uphold us against opposition, to supply us with strength, to guide us with counsel, to subdue our enemies, to give us our inheritance and reward, and therefore our principal interest lies in His throne, and in the glory and stability thereof. While He reigneth, we are safe, and in our way to glory. 4. The whole world, all the creation of God, are concerned in this kingdom of Christ. Except His enemies in hell, the whole creation is benefited by His dominion; for as some men are made partakers of saving grace thereby, so the residue of that race, by and with them, do receive unspeakable advantages in the forbearance of God; and the very creature itself is raised, as it were, into a hope thereby of deliverance from that state of vanity whereunto now it is subjected (Rom. viii. 20, 21). III. IT IS THE DIVINE NATURE OF THE LORD CHRIST THAT GIVES ETERNITY, STABILITY, AND UNCHANGEABLENESS TO HIS THRONE AND KINGDOM. IV. ALL THE LAWS, AND THE WHOLE ADMINISTRATION OF THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST BY HIS WORD AND SPIRIT, ARE ALL EQUAL, RIGHTEOUS, AND HOLY. "His sceptre is the sceptre of righteousness." The world indeed likes them not; all things in its rule seem to it weak and foolish (1 Cor. i. 20–23), but they are otherwise, the Holy Ghost being Judge, and such they appear unto them that do believe; yea, whatever is requisite to make laws and administrations righteous, it doth all concur in those of the Lord Jesus Christ. 1. Christ is vested with sufficient authority for the enacting of laws and rules of administration in His kingdom. 2. Christ is abundantly furnished with wisdom for this purpose. He is the foundation-stone of the Church, that hath seven eyes upon Him (Zech. iii. 9). A perfection of wisdom and understanding in all affairs of it; being anointed with the Spirit unto that purpose (Isa. xi. 3, 4). Yea, in Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col. ii. 3), it having pleased the Father that in Him all fulness should dwell (Col. i. 19), so that there can be no defect in His laws and administrations on this account. 3. They are righteous, because they are easy, gentle, and not burdensome. (1) His commands are all of them reasonable, and suited unto the principles of that natural obedience we owe to God; and so not grievous unto anything in us, but that principle of sin and darkness which is to be destroyed. (2) His commands are easy, because all of them are suited to that principle of the new nature, or new creature, which He worketh in the hearts of all His disciples. (3) His commands are easy, because He continually gives out supplies of His Spirit, to make His subjects to yield obedience to them. (4) This rule and administration of Christ's kingdom is righteous, because useful and profitable to His subjects. They make them holy, righteous, such as please God and are useful to mankind. (5) Their end manifests them to be righteous. The worth and equity of laws are taken off when low and unworthy ends are proposed to induce men to observe them. But these of the Lord Christ direct unto the highest end, propose and promise the most glorious rewards. V. THE RIGHTEOUS ADMINISTRATIONS OF THE LORD CHRIST IN HIS GOVERNMENT PROCEED ALL FROM HIS OWN HABITUAL RIGHTEOUSNESS AND LOVE THEREUNTO (see Isa. xi. 1–7). VI. GOD IS A GOD IN ESPECIAL COVENANT WITH THE LORD CHRIST, AS HE IS MEDIATOR, GOD THY GOD. VII. THE COLLATION OF THE SPIRIT ON THE LORD CHRIST, AND HIS GLORIOUS EXALTATION, ARE THE PECULIAR WORKS OF GOD THE FATHER. "God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee." VIII. THE LORD JESUS CHRIST IS SINGULARLY IN THIS UNCTION. This is that which the apostle proves in sundry instances, and by comparing Him with others who in the most eminent manner were partakers of it. IX. ALL THAT SERVE GOD IN THE WORK OF BUILDING THE CHURCH, ACCORDING TO HIS APPOINTMENT, ARE ANOINTED BY HIS SPIRIT, AND SHALL BE REWARDED BY HIS POWER (Dan. xii. 3). X. THE DISCIPLES OF CHRIST, ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO SERVE HIM IN HIS CHURCH FAITHFULLY, ARE HIS COMPANIONS IN ALL HIS GRACE AND GLORY. (*John Owen, D.D.*) *Christ's kingdom*:—Christ is an eternal

King, so is no angel, therefore is to be honoured above them. Thus having made mention of His kingdom, then He describeth it more at large, that though we could imagine easily that angels in honour deserved the name of kings, yet such a kingdom no angel could ever have; an everlasting throne, a righteous sceptre, exalting truth, beating down iniquity: in worthiness whereof God hath anointed this king with gladness above all other, and hath called Him by the name of God Himself. In this Scripture there are four special things spoken. First, He is called God alone, and without additions, even as the prophet Isaiah (Isa. ix. 7) also calleth Him the mighty God. By which warrant of the prophets being a most sure word, the apostles are bold to give to our Saviour Christ the name and power of the living God (John i. 2, xx.; 1 John v. 20; Rom. ix. 4; Col. ii. 6). The second thing here attributed to Christ is, that His kingdom is everlasting, So the prophet Isaiah had said (Isa. ix. 7). The same testimony the angel gave of His kingdom when he came to the Virgin Mary (Luke i. 33). And how can this be possibly applied unto Solomon so directly against the Scripture, that the sceptre should be taken once away, not only from the house of Solomon, but from all the tribe of Judah? And how could they not see with their eyes the ruin of that kingdom and the throne of Solomon quite forgotten. The third thing attributed here to Christ is, that the sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of His kingdom, according as David saith (Psa. xcvii. 2). And the meaning of these words is after expressly added—"Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity." This is the sceptre of righteousness which He speaketh of, that is, that His government shall be without all respect of persons, a ministry of justice, and true judgment, even according to the will of God His Father, with whom there is no acceptation of the person of a man. And how can they attribute this to Solomon? They know how Solomon did fall away so far from righteousness, and hated iniquity so little ere he died, that he became a notable idolater. And how was his government in such justice when the whole people came after to Rehoboam his son, and said: "Thy father did make our yoke grievous, now therefore make thou the grievous servitude of thy father lighter, and we will serve thee" (1 Kings xii. 4). The fourth thing here spoken of our Saviour Christ is, that for this cause God hath anointed Him with the oil of gladness above His fellows. For this cause, saith the Scripture, because Thou lovedst so much justice, what mean they still to think here upon Solomon, and of such reward of his righteous rule, except they would have the Scriptures false that bear witness of Him. "He had turned [as the prophet saith] judgment into wormwood." And how standeth it that he was anointed with the oil of gladness? that is, with gifts of the Holy Ghost above his fellows, when many kings of Judah have greater praise of God than he? and scarce any did fall from God so grievously as he. Now one refuge behind, which they think they have, is nothing at all. They will say that all this was spoken in respect of his beginning, in which he was famous, with this oil of gladness above his fellows, and above all the world. True it is in respect of his government at the first; but are not the words plain that they are not meant of any that should begin well and then fall back? For saith not the text, that this sceptre of justice shall be in His kingdom for ever? Now, where Christ is set out thus a King for ever, we are taught not by days and times to measure His commandments, but to hold them without change as the government for ever of His eternal kingdom, for it is too gross folly for us to say He is still our King if we dare abrogate His laws, for He is our Ruler for ever, and yet without Him we will make laws continually? Was it ever heard among earthly kings that subjects could either repeal or change their prince's laws? or make laws without them in their own kingdom? or can there be greater treason than to conspire for such a lewd liberty? And now to the end we may the more willingly do this, both we and our kings whom God hath set over us, let us mark this further which the apostle addeth of our Saviour Christ, that "His sceptre is a sceptre of righteousness"; meaning (as I said) that His government is all in truth and righteousness. And here let us also mark how the apostle setteth out this righteousness of Christ. "Thou hast [saith he] loved righteousness, and hated iniquity." This is general in all duty which we do unto God, to love the obedience with all our heart and soul, and to hate all the transgression and sin. So the prophet David saith: "I hate vain inventions, but Thy law I love." And again, "Thy law I love, but I hate falsehood and abhor it" (Psa. cxix. 113, 163). Even so must we hate iniquity if we love righteousness, and abhor falsehood if we love the truth. And this is that eternal law which God gave from the beginning. I will, saith He, set enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed. It followeth in the end of this seventh verse, "Thy

God hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows." In this we may learn another notable cause why we should acknowledge Christ our only King and Lawgiver. Because He is thus anointed, that is, in Him dwelleth all fulness of grace, and the treasures of all wisdom and knowledge are hid in Him; so that leave Him, leave His laws, leave His sceptre, we leave instruction, we leave righteousness, we leave eternal life. And here note that the oil of gladness is the gift of the Spirit of God; gladness to ourselves, because it filleth us with joy in the Lord, and gladness to others because it poureth grace into our lips, to comfort the weak-hearted, and to make us a sweet savour of life unto life, to all that hearken unto us. (*E. Decring, B.D.*) *The Messiah's throne*:—I. A THRONE suggests many a sad and yet many a brilliant contrast. When one thinks of thrones, one cannot but compare how frail have been the noblest thrones that emperors and kings have sat on, but how enduring that throne on which the Lamb is enthroned for ever and ever. Alexander's throne is a mere word in history; the throne of Cæsar has passed into the hands of a miserable superstitious priest. Thrones that once awed the world by their majesty, and from which voices came that shook the nations, are relics stored in museums, or studied by inquisitive antiquaries. The occupant of this throne, we read in this passage, is God. If Deity were not the occupant, if Omnipotence were not its foundation, the past history of this throne would be a prophecy of its everlasting duration. Sin rushed against it at the Fall; Satan predicted its overthrow; one would have thought it could scarcely withstand the force of an element that had thrust itself into the world in spite apparently of God. Infidelity has assailed it with all its might. "He must reign," it is truly said, "till he has made all His enemies His footstool." II. But, in the second place, let me notice a great element in this throne—ITS RIGHTEOUSNESS. "A sceptre of righteousness." We are told in Scripture that all the laws that come from it are righteous laws; that its mercy is righteous, that its blessings are righteous, that its whole economy is righteous. And all thrones on earth partake of the strength of this just in the ratio in which they reflect its glorious character. What a great truth, that just in proportion as true religion saturates the masses of Great Britain, in the same proportion does it become strong, united, lasting! Let us now see where and over whom Christ reigns. 1. He reigns in the world; His throne is in the midst of the nations. Over the world He does not yet reign, for it is not yet universally reclaimed. In the world He does reign, or the world would go absolutely to ruin. Things that are wrong He restrains; things that He permits He overrules to His own glory. Depend upon it, Christ is in history; Christ is in its every chapter, His presence in its every winding, His power giving direction to its every movement; and the explanation of all that is inexplicable now, He tells us that we shall know hereafter. 2. But Christ's throne, or His reigning or governing presence, is not only in the world, it is also in the Church. What is good in it He inspires; what is evil in it He overrules. Again, every open door for the spread of the gospel in the visible Church results from the influence of the throne. The free course that is given to the Scripture is also the creation of Him who watches over the destinies of His own, and provides for the spread of the everlasting gospel. Because Christ's throne is in that Church, we expect the increase of that Church. The darkness that now broods over the magnificent lands of the East shall one day be dissipated, and the rays of a rising sun of Righteousness shall be reflected from mosque and minaret, over the length and breadth of Eastern Christendom. The deadly superstition that now broods over the Western nations of the earth is soon to be scattered. 3. Let me ask now, in conclusion, is this throne, so precious in the world and in the Church—that makes us see all things adverse or friendly, co-operating or contributing only to its greater grandeur and magnificence—in your hearts? Is Christ your Prophet that teaches you, your Priest that pleads for you, your King that rules over you? Do you see Him in all that betides you as individuals, present in the tiniest rivulet of private life as truly as in the great cataracts of national history; in the individual Christian's heart a presence as precious as in the government of the world; in the development of the Church, in the spread of His kingdom and the glory among all nations? Do you find your afflictions sanctified to you? do you feel your losses and your crosses weaning you from earth and winning you to God? (*J. Cumming, D.D.*). **Hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness.**—*Christ's holiness and unction*:—Jesus as mediator is advanced by God, not only above all men, but also above all angels. In handling of this point—1. I shall speak of the holiness of Christ; His unction, which is the consequent and fruit of it. I. THE HOLINESS OF CHRIST, BOTH AS TO HIS PERSON AND OFFICE. 1. As to His person. There we must consider the original

holiness of His natures, Divine and human. Divine; He is called "A just God and a Saviour" (Isa. xlv. 21). Human; He was wholly free from that original contagion wherewith others that come of Adam are defiled (Luke i. 35). Now add to this His perfect actual obedience to God both in heart and life, and this either to the common law of duty that lieth upon all mankind, for it "became Him to fulfil all righteousness" (Matt. iii. 15), or that particular law of mediation which was proper to Himself (chap. v. 8), "Though He were a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things He suffered"; by which He answered the end of the law which we have broken, and was also the meritorious cause of the covenant of grace, by which all blessings are conveyed to us (2 Cor. v. 21). Well, then, His personal holiness did make Him acceptable to God, and should make Him amiable to us. 2. Now let us see how He showeth this love to holiness and hatred to iniquity in His office as well as in His person. The general term whereby this office is expressed is mediator. The three particular functions are those of prophet, priest, and king. (1) As to the general term mediator, whose work it is to make peace between God and man, all that He did therein was out of His love to righteousness and hatred of iniquity. So much we are told (Dan. ix. 24). Now, because His heart was so much set upon this, God "anointed Him with the oil of gladness above His fellows." (2) Come we to those three particular functions wherein this office is exercised, those of prophet, priest, and king. (*a*) As a Prophet, by His doctrine He showeth that He loveth righteousness and hateth iniquity, for the whole frame of it discovereth and breatheth out nothing else but a hatred against sin and a love to holiness (John xvii. 17; Psa. cxix. 140). All the histories, mysteries, precepts, promises, threatenings, aim at this one business, that sin may be subdued in us, and brought into disrepute in the world. (*b*) His priestly office consists in His oblation and intercession, as the High Priest under the law did both offer sacrifice and intercede for the people. Now what was the intent of Christ's sacrifice but to put away sin? (chap. ix. 26). (3) The next thing is a King. He is one whose heart was so set upon the love of righteousness, and the hatred of all iniquity, that He would come as a prophet Himself to teach the lost world how to become holy again. And as a priest to die for the guilty world to reconcile them to God. Surely He was fit also to rule the world. There are two parts of government—laws and actual administration. His laws are all good and equal, the same with His doctrine. As He giveth notice of these things as a Prophet, so He giveth charge about them as a King. Now in the righteous ordering the affairs of His kingdom He showeth Himself to be one that loveth righteousness and hateth iniquity. As the laws are good and equal, so the administration is right and just. Well, then, we must neither rebel against His government nor distrust His defence; for Christ administereth justice in His kingdom, defending the good, and destroying the wicked, and He will in time earnestly espouse the cause of all holiness and righteousness. II. THE UNCTION OF CHRIST, which is the consequent fruit of the former. 1. The author of this unction—"God, even Thy God." Is this spoken to Him as God or man? It may be true in both senses. But especially is this spoken of Him as Mediator, so Christ is one of God's confederates. The redemption of sinners is not a work of yesterday, nor a business of chance, but well advised, and in infinite wisdom contrived. There was a preparatory agreement to that great work before it was gone about, and therefore it should not be slighted by us, nor lightly passed over. 2. The privilege itself; to be anointed with the oil of gladness. It noteth His solemn exaltation and admission to the exercise of His office. By oil all agree is meant the Spirit, by which Christ was anointed. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me because He hath anointed Me" (Luke iv. 18). (1) Christ was anointed at His conception in His mother's womb, when He was sanctified by the Holy Spirit. (2) Again, Christ may be said to be anointed at His baptism, which was the visible consecration to His office, when the Holy Ghost descended upon Him "in the form of a dove" (Matt. iii. 16. 17, John i. 33). (3) He may be said to be anointed at His ascension, when He received of the Father the promise of the Spirit to pour Him forth upon His disciples (Acts ii. 33). This I take to be the sense here, His glorious exaltation at the right hand of God, where, being possessed of all power, He joyfully expecteth and accomplisheth the fruits of His redemption. I am the more confirmed in this—(*a*) Because the exaltation of Christ is as it were His welcome to heaven after all the sorrows of His humiliation. (*b*) The term, "the oil of gladness," implieth it; for that was the entertainment of honourable guests invited to a feast. 3. The persons anointed. (1) One singular in this unction, the Lord Jesus Christ. There are two sorts of privileges—(*a*) Some things only given to Christ, not to us; as the name above all

names to be adored (Phil. ii. 9); to be the Head of the renewed State (Eph. i. 21), the Saviour of the body (Eph. v. 23); to have power to dispense the Spirit, to administer providences, &c. All this is proper to Christ; neither men nor angels share with Him in these honours. (*b*) There are other things given to Christ and His people; as the sanctifying and comforting Spirit, the heavenly inheritance, victory over our spiritual enemies, the devil, the world, and the flesh; these are given to us and Him; only God doth grace His Son above His fellows. "That He might be the firstborn among many brethren" (Rom. viii. 29). (2) Others are admitted to be partakers of this grace in a lower degree, called "His fellows." They are also dignified and graced by God above the rest of the world, but not as Christ was. Two things I will observe here—(*a*) They must be His consorts and fellows. Sometimes they are called "His brethren" (chap. ii. 11); sometimes members of His mystical body) Eph. i. 22, 23), sometimes joint-heirs with Christ" (Rom. viii. 17); meaning thereby all believers, who are companions with Him both in grace and glory. (*b*) That all these may have somewhat of this unction according to their measure and part which they sustain in the body (1 John ii. 20). I shall exhort you to two things. 1. To holiness. If there were no more than that it is pleasing to Christ, and visibly exemplified in His own person, this should induce us. It was love to holiness and hatred of sin that brought Him out of heaven, and put Him on the work of our redemption. Nothing doth more urge us to do a thing than love, or to forbear it than hatred. These were Christ's motives to undertake the redemption of sinners. Now we should love what He loveth, and hate what He hateth. 2. To look after more of this unction. He is Christ the anointed of God; we must be Christians. "The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch" (Acts xi. 26); anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power, that we may understand the mind of God, consecrate ourselves to Him, work His work, and engage in His warfare, fighting against the devil, the world, and the flesh, till we triumph with Christ in heaven. All must be anointed. (1) This is the fruit of Christ's exaltation, to send and shed abroad the Spirit. (2) Consider the necessity of this grace. Our love to righteousness and hatred of iniquity is the fruit of this unction, for affections follow the nature. (3) Consider the utility and profit. It is for our comfort. The Spirit is called "the oil of gladness," because the benefits whereof we are partakers are matters of great joy (Acts xiii. 52). (*T. Manton, D.D.*) *Christ's superiority to all created beings:*—I. THE CHARACTER OF CHRIST. 1. He loved righteousness. He loved it so as to be a perfect model of all righteousness. 2. But not only did Christ love righteousness, He hated iniquity. A man may admire excellency of character, and yet not follow in the steps in which it walks; he has not the moral courage to forsake his evil courses; and there is in the very best of men at seasons not that perfect hatred of sin which is proper. Not so our Emmanuel. He hated iniquity with as much force as He loved righteousness; not only sometimes, but always. II. CHRIST'S CONSEQUENT EXALTATION. 1. The apostle wishes to show the Hebrews the fact of Christ's unequalled superiority to every created being in the universe. He therefore commences by showing Christ's superiority to men, to the greatest of men that have ever lived—such as the patriarchs and prophets of the Old Testament dispensation. They were indeed vastly superior to the men of the age in which they lived—superior in point of gifts and endowments from heaven, superior in respect of the close intercourse they held with God. But they were infinitely inferior to the Son, as Christ is here called by way of pre-eminence, by whom God has spoken to us in these latter days. 2. But not only does Paul here prove Christ's superiority to men, he proves the superiority of Christ to angels also. What does the term "angel" mean? It signifies messenger. The Son is greater than a messenger. III. CHRIST'S RELATIONSHIP TO US. We are Christ's "fellows." This singular expression is supposed by some to refer to the angels; but at once that supposition is rebutted by the fact that Christ took not on Him the nature of angels; He assumed the nature of man, and assuming the same nature seems to be the meaning of the expression. Man has a fellowship of nature with Christ; all men have this fellowship; but the redeemed—namely, all those that are sanctified by Christ's Spirit—are Christ's fellows in the highest and closest sense. (*R. Jones, B.A.*) *Oil of gladness:*—This Hebraism here intendeth two things—1. The excellency of this gladness. No external joy is to be compared to it. 2. The quantity of that joy. It far surpasseth all the joy that ever was or can be, which is manifested in this phrase following—"above Thy fellows." This epithet "gladness" is attributed to this oil in relation to Christ the head, and to all believers His members. It hath

relation to Christ in two respects. (1) As it quickened Him up and made Him joyful in all His undertakings for our redemption, Christ, being by His Father deputed to His function, most willingly and joyfully undertook and managed it. "As a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, He rejoiced as a strong man to run His race" (Psa. xix. 5). When He cometh into the world, He saith, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God" (Psa. xl. 8). When He was in the world, He said, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work" (John iv. 34). (2) Gladness hath relation to Christ by reason of the fruit that sprouted out from thence. His coming into the world, and doing and enduring what He did, was matter of rejoicing to others, in which respect the prophet exhorteth the daughter of Zion to shout, and to be glad and rejoice with all the heart (Zeph. iii. 14; Zech. ix. 9). And the angels that brought the first news of Christ's birth do thus proclaim it: "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people" (Luke ii. 10). This epithet "gladness" hath relation to the members of Christ in two respects. (1) As the things whereof in Christ they are made partakers are matters of great joy; for so many and so great are the benefits which believers receive from Christ by virtue of that anointing, as they very much rejoice their hearts. Many of these benefits are expressly set down (Isa. lxi. 1-3). Other benefits are in other places distinctly noted—as redemption from sin, reconciliation with God, justification in His sight, adoption, regeneration, sanctification, and the end of all, eternal salvation. If any things in the world cause true joy and gladness, surely these effects which flow from the anointing of Christ will do it. (2) As the members of Christ are quickened up by that Spirit which cometh from Him, do and endure readily, willingly, cheerfully, joyfully what the Lord calls them unto (Psa. cxxii. 1; 1 Chron. xxix. 9, 17). It is said of those on whom the Spirit rested, that "they received the Word gladly," and mutually communicated together "with gladness." On a like ground the eunuch whom Philip baptized, and Paul's jailor, are said to rejoice (Acts viii. 39; xvi. 34). This fruit of joy gives evidence of a believer's union with Christ, and of the abode of Christ's Spirit in him; for the Spirit is as oil, of a diffusing nature. Hereby we may gain assurance to our own souls, and give evidence to others of the Spirit that is in us. So did the Jews of old (1 Chron. xxix. 9), and Christ's disciples (Luke x. 17), and Christians in the primitive Church (Heb. x. 34; Phil. ii. 17, 18). (*W. Gouge.*) *The gladsomeness of Jesus*:—If a lighted candle be brought into a room, we know that light streams from it. Lilies bring perfume, and spices exhale odours, from their very nature. The whole character of Jesus, when closely examined, is one that must have filled any dwelling where He came with gladness and comfort. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Righteousness and gladness*:—Happiness is the light which flashes from the glittering armour of righteousness. If holiness be the priest, let happiness be the ephod of blue, and scarlet, and fine-twined linen, hung with bells and pomegranates, which he wears for glory and for beauty. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) **Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation.**—*Christian cosmogony*:—I. THE UNIVERSE HAD AN ORIGIN, AND IS DESTINED TO HAVE A DISSOLUTION. II. BOTH THE ORIGINATION AND THE DISSOLUTION OF THE UNIVERSE ARE ATTRIBUTABLE TO CHRIST. This fact serves—1. As an argument for His Godhood. 2. To present nature in new aspects of attraction. III. CHRIST REMAINS UNALTERABLE, FROM THE ORIGIN, THROUGH ALL THE DISSOLUTIONS, OF THE UNIVERSE. No change in His—1. Being. 2. Thoughts. 3. Heart. (*Homilist*) *Messiah and Nature*:—I. CHRIST BEFORE THE CREATION. 1. The material universe is not eternal. 2. The universe was created. 3. The universe had many beginnings. Earth, sun, stars, &c. Christ was before all beginnings. II. CHRIST AT THE CREATION. He was the Creator, from the lowest to the highest; from the least to the greatest; from the first to the last. The Redeemer was the Creator; therefore—1. There are no contradictions between Nature and Christianity. 2. There are striking correspondences between Nature and Christianity. III. CHRIST WITHIN THE CREATION. The stars are the jewels on His brow; the sky His flowing train; the flowering landscapes, the shining seas, the gorgeous clouds—the fine needlework and wrought gold of His imperial raiment. IV. CHRIST AFTER THE CREATION. The raiment waxes old, and is folded up, giving place to robes more glorious still; but He who is the fulness of the Godhead bodily is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Lessons: 1. Remember that in the gospel we come nearer to Christ than we do in nature. 2. Let us build on Christ. (*W. L. Watkinson.*) *Jesus Christ the cause and the consummator of all things*:—I. THE SUBSTANCE OF THE ASCRIPTION. We are transported to a distant period, ere time had, in its strictest sense, begun, or the

mechanism of its notations had received shape or being. The revolutions of this firmament had not commenced, nor was there a sign for seasons. Nothing is necessary but God. All else is but an effect of His pleasure and power. He composed matter, He gave life, He communicated spirit. Some of the stages in this formative process may be traced. He "laid the foundations of the earth," a figure which signifies His stability. That stability rests on certain laws which He has ordained. "The heavens are the works of His hands." He garnished them with all their exquisite furniture, drew their orbits, studded their stars. His "fingers" wove that splendid web. And "when we consider His heavens," with what admiration are we overwhelmed! Magnitudes, distances, systems, parallelisms, still rise upon us. Did He "lay the foundations of the earth"? "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not." But this ascription not only predicates His creative greatness, and how He produced the entire universe—it proclaims that all these effects are now at His disposal and under His control. 1. Observe His independence of them. They are not built for eternity. They shall "perish." Their perdition and change shake not His throne nor obscure His glory. 2. Mark His identity among them. They are the subjects of incessant revolution and variation. There is a constant disturbance in the natural system; things take new forms and circumstances; and though principles are unaltered, the dispositions under them are often the most strange and unexpected. The very elements around us "wax old as doth a garment." Only Deity can say, "I change not." "This is the true God, and eternal life"—essential and exhaustless, "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever!" 3. Trace His power over them. Nothing, once dependent and derived, can exist in defiance of His will. And what is there, or can there be, which this category does not include? Thus is the Lord Jesus exhibited to us! He "lays the foundations of the earth"; "the heavens are the works of His hands": amidst their change and portended ruin He "remains"—He is "the same"; with Him awaits the dissolution of all things. He must be greater than those operations which He commands. He must be apprised of the final causes of those operations which proceed from His unaided skill, and the more so, as, otherwise, he might close the great consummation with their imperfect fulfilment. Who, then, is this? "God over all." II. THE VALUE OF THE ARGUMENT. We must, at this point of the projected proof, look into our mind. There we behold a law, or a certainty of mental condition, which conducts us back from any result to a causative power. 1. Every effect of Divine power must be inferior to that power—that is, must be finite. It can create no rival being. 2. Upon the creative claim God has always been pleased to found His challenge of supremacy and exaction of worship. Then, whoever is Jesus Christ, since the heavens are works of His hands, He is supreme, is entitled to worship, is authorised to require our service, is gloriously independent, and will pronounce the sentence of our endless destiny! 3. The works of creation are designed to be monumental of their immediate Author. When we investigate them, they speak a splendid panegyric to His fame. "The heavens declare the glory of God, the firmament showeth His handywork." They are the signals of His might, and skill, and love. III. THE ENFORCEMENT OF THE CONCLUSION. The truth of the theme being once allowed, its influence will be instantaneous. Not for a moment can it remain an indifferent sentiment. Let it be believed, and all the doctrines of the gospel follow in a necessary order, as very corollaries. 1. It is supposed by the Incarnation; but what illustrations does that marvel derive from the descriptions of the text! "He laid the foundations of the earth," where He hath not a place to lay His head. "The heavens are the works of His hands," though they beat on Him with their tempests and chill Him with their dews; though their stars hold watch over Him when His soul is sorrowful unto death. He formed the instruments of all the suffering He endured. He caused the thorns to grow which were knotted round His brow; He prepared the worm that spun the flaunting attire which mocked His person; He sent down into the ground the fibres of the tree which gave the wood that was fashioned for His cross; He veined the mine whose ore was converted into nail and spear-head to transfix His flesh; He withdrew the restraints from our fallen nature, and let loose all its enmities on Himself! 2. The character of that expiation, which is the first quality and intention of His death, will be greatly determined by a representation such as this. The merit of an atoning act will altogether depend on the disposition and worthiness of the party who presents it. Nor can the mediation of every party be allowed. High attributes of worthiness must inhere in him who takes up the quarrel and offers the vindica-

tion of it. Who shall interpose between God and man, between the dishonoured law and the offender? That Surety must have a perfect knowledge of the tremendous dilemma. And did not He, who "laid the foundations of the earth," understand the moral order which He then established, the holy law which He gave, the system of good which He instituted? Who could be equally cognisant of its excellence? Who could be equally intent upon its restoration? 3. He who has done all this achievement of power and goodness in creating the universe, designed our redemption to be the great object and glory of it. Shall a sphere, in those "heavens which are the works of His hands," refuse its music to the Saviour, or withhold to swell the triumph of His salvation over the earth whose "foundations He has laid"? Again—and far sweeter and more majestic than that natal peal which floated above our new created world—let the morning stars sing together, and the sons of God shout for joy! 4. This Creator-Saviour must have the direction of all mundane affairs. He knoweth the way that we take. He telleth our wanderings. He seeth of what we have need. He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. He is able to succour us when we are tempted. Neither in life nor death can we stray out of His dominion or beyond His care. To the verge of that earth whose foundations he has laid; to the bend of those heavens which are the works of His hands—how safe are His disciples! This is your triple security, ye who put your trust in this great God your Saviour! All things are for your sakes! All things work together for your good! 5. An immutability most tender and amiable is opposed by this subject to all our fluctuating circumstances. Who has never found occasion of complaint against human fickleness? Who has never known a mortifying coldness where his heart had lavished all its store of love? Oh, then, to take these words with us, and looking up to Him who loves unto the end, what a relief our wrung soul finds as it cries, "Thou art the same!" Bereavement is one of the heaviest portions of our lot. What sepulchres lie along our path! Oh, then, to speak this assurance, and in it to feel that nothing is lost while this is left, "Thou remainest!" Age brings with it decay and infirmity, misgiving and irresoluteness, slight and inattention, physical depressions and mournful reviews. Sense has failed in its varied gratifications, and the heart is smitten with a desolateness. Oh, then, to turn from all beside, to clasp our feeble hands, to raise our dimming eyes, and with our tremulous accents to exclaim, "Thy years shall not fail!" How sweet are these supports! What a Saviour is ours! (*R. W. Hamilton, D.D.*) *Christ's glory in creation*:—Where it is said further, "God laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the works of His hands." We must consider the creation of the world is thus attributed to God, not only because all things were made by Him, but because He hath so made them that they carry a mark imprinted in them of the power and Godhead of the Creator. When I see the heavens I must see His greatness, who was able to set such a covering over the earth. When I behold the earth, I must behold His providence, who hath ordained such a place of nourishment for all creatures. When I look upon the unchangeable course in which all things are established, I must look upon His constant wisdom and goodness, who in a steadfast purpose hath extended His mercies over all His works. In the least of all the creatures of God, when I see wisdom, power, glory, more than all the world can reach their hands unto, let me humble myself under His high majesty, before whom no king, no prince, no power of the world hath any account; but all nations before Him are as nothing, and they are accounted unto Him less than nothing, and lighter than vanity itself. Another thing here we have to consider, that the apostle teacheth the excellency of Christ in respect of His continuance, before whom the heaven and earth are but a moment; for so in this comparison he speaketh of their age as a thing of nothing—"They shall perish, they shall wax old as a garment, they shall be folded up as a vesture"—making all the continuance of the heaven to be vanity, and of none account; for although it may seem he might have made his comparison with things of a more expressed show of vanity than a garment, as to have compared them with smoke, with the shadow of smoke, with the dream of a shadow, or such like; yet in comparing the time of the heavens, which are so many ages, with a garment which is scarce a year, it is as clear a testimony all is nothing as if all were not a minute of an hour. Besides this, the cause of this comparison with a garment was the similitude in which God hath set the heavens, who hath spread them like a curtain, and made them as a covering to all His creatures; it was not to make the comparison less in show of their vanity. Then here let us be wise-hearted as the prophet was, as oft as our hope is before our eyes, to see our Saviour Christ living for ever; let us not

only confess that our own age is nothing in respect of Him, but let us boldly continue even the continuance of the heavens, and account all things nothing that hath an end; for let the days be never so many, which you can call into account, and multiply years into the longest continuance which your thoughts can comprehend, that thousand thousands be before you, and ten thousand thousands are in your mind, with one word you shall confute them all, and with the breath of your mouth you may blow them away, and, as the prophet saith, make them all as a garment that is rent and worn; for reckon up all thy thousands that thou canst, and put this word "past" unto them, and where are they now become? A thousand thousand thousand years past, what are they? And if time be such a tyrant, to break the delight of the long age of the very heavens, that the wise heart of a man doth say even they are vanity, and wax old as doth a garment, what foolishness hath wrapped up all our understanding? and what blindness is in our hearts, that we see not our own life what it is? And shall yet this life, so short, so troublesome, so without pleasure, so fast hold us bound with blind desire, that we neither long for nor look after Jesus Christ, who liveth ever, and hast cast forth of His presence all sin, and sorrow, and death itself? (*E. Deering, B.D.*) **They shall perish; but Thou remainest.**—*The world as a garment:*—As Christ had no beginning, so He shall have no ending. The heavens shall decay, but not He. He is immutable. They are young and old; so is not Christ: He remains always in the same estate and condition. All garments in the world in the end wax old (Deut. xxix. 5). So the whole fabric of the world: there is not that clearness of light in the sun and moon that there was, not that force and strength in the stars, the earth is not so lusty and lively. Old things are not wont to be had in any price or estimation: who cares for an old pair of shoes that be not worth the taking up? Who regards an old coat that hath no strength in it, but is ready to be torn in pieces? Who will give much for an old house, the timber whereof is rotten, and it is ready to fall on his head? Now is the last age of the world, it hath continued many thousand years, it is now as an old house, an old garment that cannot last long: therefore let us not be too much in love with it. There was some reason why in former times, when this building was new and strong, when the coat and garment of the world was fresh, fair, and of good durance, that men should set their affections on it: but now when the beauty and strength of it is gone, why should we be enamoured with it? Let us use it as if we used it not, and let us long for that day when both the heavens and the earth and we ourselves likewise shall be changed and be translated with Christ into the kingdom of glory: the heavens are most fitly resembled to a garment. Observe the similitude and dissimilitude. 1. A garment covers a man: so do the heavens. 2. The substance of a garment must be before, as silk, velvet, cloth, else you can make no garment: but Christ made the heavens of nothing. 3. A garment must have a form or fashion: so has this an excellent one. 4. A garment stands in need of mending: we need be at no cost nor labour in mending of this garment; but Christ by the power of His providence upholds it. (*W. Jones, D.D.*) *Christ the Creator:*—We live in a world of change. The earth is not the same to-day as it was ages ago, and shall be ages on. The sun is radiating off its heat. The moon, no longer as of yore, burns and glows, and is but an immense opaque cinder, reflecting the sunlight from its disc. Stars have burnt out, and will. The universe is waxing old, as garments which from perpetual use become threadbare. But the dilapidation of the garment is no proof of the waning strength or slackening energy of the wearer. Nay, when garments wear out quickest, it is generally the time of robustest youth or mankind. You wrap up and lay aside your clothes when they have served their purpose, but you are the same in the new suit as in the old. Creation is the vesture of Christ. He wraps Himself about in its ample folds. Its decay affects Him not. And, when He shall have laid it all aside, and replaced it by the new heavens and the new earth, He will be the same for evermore. With what new interest may we not now turn to the archaic record, which tells how God created the heavens and the earth. Those sublime syllables, "Light be," were spoken by the voice that trembled in dying anguish on the cross. Rolling rivers, swelling seas, waving woods, bursting flowers, carolling birds, innumerable beasts, stars sparkling like diamonds on the pavilion of night, all newly made; all throbbing with God's own life; and all very good; but, mainly and gloriously all the work of those hands which were nailed helplessly to the cross, which itself, as well as the iron that pierced Him, was the result of His creative will. (*F. B. Meyer, B.A.*) *God ever the same:*—On every Mohammedan tombstone the

inscription begins with the words, "He remains." This applies to God, and gives sweet comfort to the bereaved. Friends may die, fortune fly away, but God endures—He remains. (*Perrine.*) *Christ is everlasting and unchangeable*:—We may learn the dignity of our Lord from all the intermediate changes of the world between its creation and destruction. 1. First, then, we may observe that our Lord is everlasting. "They all shall wax old as doth a garment," but "Thy years shall not fail." What garments are to a man, the universe, with all its most glorious objects and elements, is to the Lord. These His glorious garments, then, in time shall wax old; but He who hath life in Himself, even as His Father hath life in Himself, shall continue still glorious as He was in His own glory, before He formed them and put them on. 2. And He is not only everlasting, but unchangeable. "As a vesture shalt Thou fold them up, and they shall be changed; but Thou art the same." He may indeed lay aside His vesture. But as a sovereign, when after the pomp of a public ceremonial he unrobes, when his crown and sceptre are deposited in their caskets, and his garments of state are folded and put away, is a sovereign still, so our Lord, when He puts off the earth and heavens like a vesture, shall be "still the same." "There are differences of administrations, but the same Lord." "Thou art the same": or, if we closely follow the original, "Thou art He"—He, the ancient of days, who speaks also by the mouth of Isaiah, "even to your old age, I am He": "yea, before the day was, I am He." "The world passeth away, and the lust thereof." Time's hurrying tide bears swift along our hopes, our joys, our vanities; ourselves, prone and struggling upon its waters. As we drive down upon the face of that gloomy stream, all our efforts seem vain, nothing is firm around, on whatever we lay hold, the same current is carrying it away, by which we ourselves are hurried on; till imminent danger forces from our souls the drowning cry, "Save, Lord, we perish." The Lord extends His hand, and sets our feet upon a rock. He is Himself that Rock. He makes us, perishable creatures as we are, partakers of His stability. The various objects are carried rapidly by us, but we are now upon solid ground. "The world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." (*T. Boys.*) *Destructive agencies at work in the world*:—Even now agencies are at work in God's material works tending towards the dissolution of certain of them. Water, frost, and fire are all eating away portions of the world. But to these will be added, at the last, some swift and sudden convulsion, telling that her end is nigh at hand. Probably no particle of matter will ever be annihilated; and out of the ruins of the world it seems, from 2 Pet. iii. 13, as if "new heavens and a new earth" were to emerge. But still, the present world is to be utterly destroyed. The green earth and the azure heavens are to pass away. Both shall be consumed, and hurried into wreck and ruin, by the devastating fire that shall usher in "the great day of the Lord." But even at this stage of the passage there is a direct testimony to the surpassing power and majesty of Christ. "Thou," it is said of the Son—"Thou shalt fold them up." Christ, who, "in the beginning," was the Maker, will, in the end, be the Destroyer, of the world. (*A. S. Patterson.*) *The solar system perishing*:—Change is necessarily going on in earth, sun, moon, and stars. It cannot possibly be avoided where there is motion. Day by day the alteration progresses. Millennium after millennium it advances. The earth is not now what it was millenniums ago. It will not be to-morrow what it was yesterday, or what it is to-day. The sun is radiating itself off, and must by-and-by cease to burn. "It is simply," says Sir William Thomson, "an incandescent mass cooling." Stars have already burnt out, or will. The moon no longer, as of yore, burns and glows. It is now an immense opaque cinder, only reflecting the sunlight that is thrown from afar upon its disc. (*J. Morison, D.D.*) **Thou art the same.**—*The immutability of Christ*:—I. WHAT CHRIST IS IN HIMSELF. 1. As to His person, He is the eternal Son of God, who existed from everlasting (John i. 1). 2. As to His office. He is Mediator between God and man, fitted for it by assuming our nature into a personal union with the Divine, that as God and man in one person He might transact with both. II. WHAT BELIEVERS HAVE FOUND HIM TO BE UNTO THEM. 1. It was Christ who awakened them to a sense of their lost, miserable state (Eph. ii. 1). 2. Who received them upon their applying to Him for mercy and salvation, and believing on Him, He pardoned all their sins (Col. i. 14). 3. Who adopted them into His family, and gave them the earnest of their inheritance (Rom. viii. 15, 16). 4. Thus passing into the number of His children, He continues to bless them, by subduing their corruptions, &c. 5. At death He receives their departing spirits. III. AS TO ALL THIS,

THE TEXT IS APPLICABLE TO CHRIST. "Thou art the same," &c. 1. He is the same in Himself, as to His person and offices. 2. As to His interest in His Father, and acceptance with Him: the Beloved, in whom He is always well pleased (Matt. iii. 17). 3. And with regard to us, the same as to His ability and willingness to save (chap. vii. 25). 4. The merit of His death is the same it ever was (Rev. v. 6). 5. And He is the same, to pardon, justify, sanctify, and glorify. Application: 1. If He is the same, let every Christless sinner seek an interest in Christ with the same diligence that ever any did; such have the same necessity, and the same encouragement. 2. Despair, under the gospel, is most unreasonable; seeing Christ came to save sinners, assures of His having saved the chief of sinners, and represents Himself as, after all, the same. 3. Let believers rejoice in Christ as unchangeable. (*J. Hannam.*) *Of Christ's immutability:*—Though all these three phrases in general intend one and the same thing, namely, immutability, yet to show that there is no vain repetition, they may be distinguished one from another. 1. "Thou remainest," pointeth at Christ's eternity before all times; for it implieth His being before, in which He still abides. 2. "Thou art the same," declares Christ's constancy. There is no variableness with Him; thus therefore He saith of Himself, "I am the Lord, I change not" (Mal. iii. 6). 3. "Thy years shall not fail," intendeth Christ's everlastingness; that He who was before all times, and continueth in all ages, will beyond all times so continue. Thus these three phrases do distinctly prove the three branches of this description of Christ, "which is, and which was, and which is to come" (Rev. i. 4). This name that Christ assumeth to Himself, "I AM," and this, "I AM THAT I AM" (Exod. iii. 14), and this also, "JEHOVAH" (Exod. vi. 3), do demonstrate a perpetual continuing to be the same. In this respect He thus saith, "I the Lord, the first, and with the last, I am He" (Isa. xli. 4). This immutable constancy of the Lord is confirmed by this testimony, "with whom is no variableness nor shadow of turning" (James iii. 17), no show or appearance of alteration. This may be exemplified in all the things that are Christ's. 1. His essence and being. This is especially here intended. So also Exod. iii. 14. 2. His counsel. Immutability is expressly attributed thereunto (chap. vi. 17). "It shall stand" (Psa. xxxiii. 11; Prov. xix. 21; Isa. xlviii. 10). It shall stand immutably, inviolably. 3. His attributes. Sundry attributes for teaching sake, by way of resemblance, are ascribed to the Lord. In this respect it is said, "His compassions fail not" (Lam. iii. 22). "His mercy endureth for ever" (Psa. cxviii. 1). "His love is everlasting" (Jer. xxxi. 3). "His righteousness endureth for ever" (Psa. cxi. 3). So His "truth" (Psa. cxvii. 2). So His "judgments" (Psa. cxix. 160). 4. His "Word" endureth for ever (1 Pet. i. 25). This is manifested in the Law, whereof "not one tittle shall fail" (Luke xvi. 17), and in the gospel, which is an everlasting gospel. 5. His "bonds" whereby He binds Himself to us are unalterable as "promises" and "oaths." These are the two immutable things intended (chap. vi. 18), and His covenant also (Jer. xxxiii. 20, 21). (*W. Gouge.*) *Of the uses of Christ's immutability:*—1. It demonstrateth Christ to be true God (Mal. iii. 6). 2. It distinguisheth Him from all creatures, from idols especially (Isa. xli. 4; xliv. 6). 3. It strengtheneth our faith in all His Divine properties, promises, and former works (Psa. xliv. 1, 2, xc. 1, 2; Gen. xxxii. 10–12; Heb. xiii. 5, 6). 4. It instructeth us in an especial use of God's former dealings with men; which is in like good courses to expect like blessings, and in like evil courses to expect like judgments: for the Lord is ever the same, and ever of the same mind; what in former times was right in His eyes and acceptable unto Him, is so still (Rom. iv. 23, 24). What formerly offended Him and provoked His wrath, still so doth (1 Cor. x. 5, 6, &c.). 5. It assureth us of His continual and perpetual care of His Church (Matt. xxviii. 20), yea, and of the Church's perpetual continuance (Matt. xvi. 18). 6. It encourageth us against all attempts of enemies present and to come (Psa. cx. 1; Rev. ii. 10). 7. It teacheth us to do what in us lieth for perpetuating His praise; and for this end both to set forth His praise ourselves all our days (Psa. civ. 33), and also to teach our posterity so to do (Psa. lxxviii. 5, 6). 8. It directeth us how to be like to Christ, namely, in constancy and unchangeableness in our lawful promises, oaths, vows, and covenants (Neh. v. 12, 13; Psa. xv. 4; Eccles. v. 4; Jer. xxxiv. 10, 18), and in our warrantable enterprises (1 Cor. xv. 58). 9. It admonisheth us to submit ourselves to the Lord's ordering providence; all our strivings against the same cannot alter this purpose (1 Sam. iii. 18). 10. It establisheth such as have evidence of their election and calling against all Satan's assaults and fears arising from our weak flesh (2 Pet. i. 10). (*Ibid.*)

The unchangeableness of Christ :—I. Let us consider, WHAT CHRIST IS IN HIMSELF, AND THIS AS TO HIS PERSON AND OFFICE. 1. As to His person, He is the eternal Son of God—the second Person in the glorious Trinity—who had a being, and a very glorious one, before He appeared in our world, even from everlasting. 2. As to His office. Though He was not incarnate till the fulness of time, the office of Mediator was what He was early appointed to, and consented to undertake; and so He speaks of Himself as "set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was" (PROV. viii. 23). II. Let us see WHAT HIS PEOPLE HAVE FOUND HIM TO BE UNTO THEM. III. THAT WITH RESPECT TO BOTH THESE, IT MAY BE SAID OF HIM, "THOU ART THE SAME, AND THY YEARS SHALL NOT FAIL." 1. He is the same in Himself, as to His person and office, God in our nature, the great Immanuel, and so the only Mediator between God and man. 2. The same as to His interest in His Father, and acceptance with Him: the Beloved in whom He is always well pleased. 3. And with respect to us, the same as to His ability and willingness to save. APPLICATION: 1. May it be said of Christ, that "He is the same, and His years fail not"? Let this put every Christless sinner upon looking out after an interest in Him. And this for these two plain reasons. (1) You have the same need of Christ and interest in Him with any that are gone before. (2) You have the same encouragement to come to Christ, under the assurance that He is the same as to His person and office, His fitness for His work, and delight in it. 2. Despair is most unreasonable in such as sit under the sound of the gospel, which tells us of Christ's coming to save sinners, assures us of His having saved the chief of sinners, and represents Him as after all the same. 3. Let believers rejoice in Christ as unchangeable. (*D. Wilcox.*) *Christ immutable*:—I. AN EXALTED VIEW OF JESUS CHRIST. The text certainly implies—1. The Divinity of His nature. To be "the same," is to be unchangeable; but immutability is an attribute of Deity. 2. The immutability of His perfectious. Such are the amazing greatness and vast variety of the works of creation, that their Author must be God. 3. The perpetuity of His offices. When we speak of the offices of Christ, we have respect always to His character as Mediator, and His great undertaking as the Saviour of sinners. (1) He assumed the office of a Prophet. In this character He went about teaching "the words of eternal life." And He teaches now by His written Word, by the ministry of His gospel, and by His Spirit given to men. (2) He bore the office of a Priest. In this view He offered Himself a Sacrifice of atonement to God the Father, for the sins of all that believe. And He wears His priesthood still. Jesus, the Son of God, who is passed into the heavens, is our "great High Priest": as such, He is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities"; He knows the trial of severe temptation; He bears us on His heart; He pleads for us above: "He ever liveth to make intercession." (3) He sustained the office of a King. In His regal capacity, all power in heaven and in earth is given to Him. He is constituted Supreme Ruler. He presides the Head of the Church, and Head over all things to the Church. He now reigns, and He must reign, till the tranquillity of all His friends be effectually secured, and till all His enemies be subdued under His feet. II. The subject furnishes various REFLECTIONS, by way of IMPROVEMENT. Is the nature of Christ Divine? Are His perfections immutable, and His offices perpetual? Is He uniformly "the same," and shall His years "not fail"? Then—1. All is well respecting the government of the world. Its government is assuredly wise, perfectly and invariably right; for it is committed to Him who ever lives, and who lives for ever "the same"! 2. We may rest assured of the safety of the Church. Whatever becomes of the kingdoms of the earth, the Church is safe. For the Church the world stands; and all events are doubtless under the direction and control of Him who is "King of nations," and "King of saints." 3. We are greatly encouraged as sinners to apply to Christ for salvation. Behold the glorious ability and fitness of the Son of God. What could you wish to find in a Saviour which you find not in Him? 4. Believers are hereby relieved under the pressure of their trials. You are in a wilderness, among briars and thorns; on an ocean, tossed with waves and tempests. You are subject to painful anxieties from various quarters. All around is full of change; and there is nothing beneath the sun on which you can depend with confidence for an hour. Be it so; there is One who is invariably "the same"; a Rock that never moves; a Refuge that never fails; and this Rock, this Refuge, is Christ. (*T. Kidd.*)

Sit on My right hand.—*The exaltation of Christ*:—I. THE AUTHORITY OF GOD THE FATHER IN THE EXALTATION OF JESUS CHRIST AS THE HEAD AND MEDIATOR OF THE CHURCH, IS GREATLY TO BE REGARDED BY BELIEVERS. He says unto Him, "Sit

Thou at My right hand." Much of the consolation and security of the Church depends on this consideration. II. THE EXALTATION OF CHRIST IS THE GREAT PLEDGE OF THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE WORK OF MEDIATION PERFORMED IN THE BEHALF OF THE CHURCH. Now, saith God, "Sit Thou at My right hand"; the work is done wherein My soul is well pleased. III. CHRIST HATH MANY ENEMIES UNTO HIS KINGDOM. Saith God, "I will deal with all of them." IV. THE KINGDOM AND RULE OF CHRIST IS PERPETUAL AND ABIDING, NOTWITHSTANDING ALL THE OPPOSITION THAT IS MADE AGAINST IT. His enemies rage, indeed, as though they would pull Him out of His throne; but it is altogether in vain. He hath the faithfulness and power, the word and right hand of God, for the security of His kingdom. V. THE END WHEREUNTO THE LORD JESUS CHRIST WILL ASSUREDLY BRING ALL HIS ENEMIES, let them bluster while they please, shall be unto them miserable and shameful, to the saints joyful, to Himself victorious and triumphant. 1. God hath promised unto the Lord Christ from the foundation of the world that so it should be. And it cannot be that this word of God should be of none effect. 2. The Lord Christ expects this issue and event of all things, and shall not be frustrated in His expectation. Having received the engagement of His Father, He rests in the foresight of its accomplishment. And thence it is that He bears all the opposition that is made unto Him, and to His kingdom, with patience and forbearance. 3. He is Himself furnished with authority and power for the accomplishment of this work when and as He pleaseth. And He will not fail to put forth His power in the appointed season. He "will bruise them all with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." 4. His glory and honour require that it should be so. This is a thing that He is very tender in. God hath raised Him up, and given Him glory and honour, and care must be taken that it be not lost or impaired. Now, if His enemies should go free, if they could by any means subduct themselves from under His power, or be delivered from His wrath, where would be His glory, where His honour? 5. His saints pray that it may be so, and that both upon His account and their own. Upon His, that His glory, which is dearer to them than their lives, may be vindicated and exalted. Upon their own account, that their miseries may be ended, that the blood of their fellow-servants may be revenged, that the whole Church may be delivered, and all their promises fulfilled. Now He will not disappoint their prayers, nor frustrate their expectations in anything, much less in those that are of so great importance. 6. His enemies deserve it unto the utmost; so that as well His justice as His glory, and interest, and people, are concerned in their destruction. In the most of them, their outrage against Him is notorious, and visible in the eyes of men and angels. In all of them there is a cruel, old, lasting enmity and hatred, which He will lay open and discover at the last day, that all shall see the righteousness of His judgments against them. (*John Owen, D.D.*) *God's setting Christ on His right hand*:—God was pleased thus highly to exalt His Son in sundry respects. 1. In regard of that entire love which as a Father He did bear to a Son (John iii. 35; v. 20). 2. In regard of the low degree of Christ's humiliation (Phil. ii. 8, 9; Eph. iv. 9, 10). 3. In regard of that charge which Christ undertook to provide for His Church, and to protect it. Hereunto is He the better enabled by that high advancement (Mat. xxviii. 18–20; John xvii. 2). 4. In regard of the saints who are Christ's members, that they might with stronger confidence depend on Him (Psa. lxxx. 17, 18; 2 Tim. i. 12). 5. In regard of His enemies, that He might be the greater terror unto them, and be more able to subdue them (Psa. cx. 2). (*W. Gouge.*) **Thine enemies Thy footstool.**—*The Church's enemies*:—Tell me, which of us having a long journey, by many thieves and wild beasts, or passing the rocky seas in great and violent storms, though he escape a place or two where no thief is, nor any beast hath molested him, yet at every place of danger his fear is still renewed. And though he have passed many high surges, and deep gulfs of water, yet at every wave he is still afraid, not careless, because he hath passed far, but still careful, because there is more behind; and this wisdom we use because we know we may as well fall toward our journey's end and as well be drowned before the haven's mouth as when we first began our dangerous voyage. Even so with the Church of Christ, in which this day we confess ourselves to have our portion, from the first day of her peregrination in earth till her last entrance into glory, there is a perpetual hatred between the serpent and her Head and between the seed of the serpent and her children, in which strife every one of us particularly have our fight, so that from our mother's womb till we lie down in the grave our life is a warfare upon earth. No age, no condition of life, no day, no light, but brings his enemy with him, and

the same enemy armed with sin and death, as well against the man of an hundred years old as against the child that is newborn, and as well we may fall into condemnation through apostasy of old and crooked age as through concupiscence and pride of youth. And as the peril is great so we have heard the enemies are strong, and such as before whom we are very cowards; for be we otherwise never so valiant to endure pain, to quarrel, to fight, to despise any danger, as it is the manner of a great many ruffians, indeed, but men of good courage they would be called. Bring me one of them in battle against these enemies; we have to strive against pride, against concupiscence, against idle games, against all sin, and thou shalt see no boy, no woman, no sick man so very a coward. He hath not the heart to strike one blow, but yieldeth himself like a slave, and is led away as an ox to the slaughter-house. Let us therefore watch, let us pray; for in this dangerous battle, in which these strong men are very cowards, what can we do? Even let us deny ourselves, and trust unto Him that sitteth on the right hand of His Father, and He shall make all our enemies our footstool. (*E. Deering, B.D.*) **Are not they all ministering spirits?**—*The Church and the angels.* I. In the light of an ADMONITION. 1. Whilst Christ is one, the angels are many. 2. Whilst the individuality of Christ is powerfully brought out in the Scriptures, the angels flit past us in vaguest form. 3. Whilst Christ is supreme, the angels are ministrant. II. In the light of a PATTERN. 1. The universality of their action. None idle. 2. The characteristics of their service. (1) Unselfish. (2) Unobtrusive. (3) Condescending. 3. The aim of their mission. They help the saints to make their calling and election sure. III. In the light of CONSOLATION. Think of their number, strength, swiftness, love. (*W. L. Watkinson.*) *Ministering spirits:*—I. THEY ARE SPIRITS. 1. The features in which they differ from man. Greater vitality, power, knowledge. 2. Some of the features which distinguish them from each other. They differ in the amount of faculty, in the form of talent, in the date of their existence, in the sphere of their agency. II. THEY ARE MINISTERING SPIRITS. This implies—1. Activity. 2. Activity for others. III. THEY ARE MINISTERING SPIRITS DIVINELY COMMISSIONED. How great must He be who directs the movements of these countless hosts, at whose throne the loftiest of their number bow in humblest homage, and whose behests each counts it his highest honour and blessedness to obey. IV. THEY ARE MINISTERING SPIRITS DIVINELY COMMISSIONED TO HELP A CLASS OF MANKIND. 1. Their ministry to man implies that there is some method by which they can help us. 2. It implies that man's salvation is of paramount importance. 3. It implies that service to the lowest is consonant with the highest greatness. 4. It argues the obligation of man to seek the spiritual good of his fellows. (*Homilist.*) *Ministering spirits:*—I. THE BEINGS INTRODUCED TO OUR NOTICE. 1. They are purely spiritual in their nature. 2. They are pure and holy in their character. II. THE SERVICE THEY PERFORM. 1. They are called ministering spirits to indicate their employment in God's service, and they are said to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation—to point out the service and assistance they render to the saints. 2. Angels serve the saints for Christ's sake. 3. They sustain in time of depression. They avert danger in the path of duty. 4. They deliver from evils in a way which displays the omnipotence of Him whom they serve, and His love to His people. 5. They attend the departing scene of the believer. If a Lazarus die, angels bear his spirit to the abodes of the blessed. As Christ's servants, they delight to wait upon those whom He loves, and to conduct them to His presence. 6. And they shall at last gather together the elect from the wicked and reprobate at the last day. (*The Evangelical Preacher.*) *Angels—ministers:*—1. Here we may see that the name of a minister is an honourable name. The magistrate is a minister, the angels are ministers, Christ Himself was a minister when He lived on the earth. We that be the ministers are servants to Christ the King of kings; therefore, think highly of us because of our office. Is it a grace to the angels to be called ministers, and shall it be a disgrace to us? Nay, we will glory in it, and shame shall light on them that contemn the ministers of Christ. 2. Whose ministers are the angels? They be our ministers, they minister for our sakes, and what be we in comparison of the angels? They are spirits, we flesh and blood; they holy, we unholy; they immortal, we mortal; they in heaven, we on earth; yet they be our ministers. They minister to Christ as to their Lord and Master; to us as to their fellow-servants. But what an honour is this to wretched and sinful man! As if the King should command an honourable Lord of his privy council to wait on a poor man in the country, to conduct him from the court to his own house. The angels are of God's

Court in heaven, and see His face continually. We are silly worms on earth, yet the Lord hath appointed them to attend on us, to be our nurses, to carry us in their arms, that we dash not our foot against a stone. Let us praise and magnify God, that hath provided such keepers for us. 3. What an unspeakable comfort is this for us! What a tower of defence against Satan and his angels! As there be bad angels to hurt us, so there be good angels to defend us. 4. Since the angels are ever present with us, let us beware of grieving them by sin. (*W. Jones, D.D.*)

Angels—ministering spirits :—Angels are spirits which serve the Lord for His Church's safety. If yet we will be vain still, and think; yea, but what are archangels, principalities, powers, rules, thrones, dominions? What are Cherubim and Seraphim? All these, howsoever they be called in divers respects diversely, they are all angels in condition and nature, as they are here so defined. For if any archangel, throne, or dominion, or any other name that is named, were any way greater than an angel, all this disputation of the apostle were nothing worth; for how could it prove the excellency of Christ above all creatures, because He is greater than angels, if Cherubim or Seraphim or any archangel were also greater than an angel? And, therefore, that the reason of the apostle may be, as it is, strong and unanswerable, we must confess, all blessed spirits whatsoever they be, they be all this, and this is their glory, that they be God's ministers for the safety of His children. This doctrine the prophet David teacheth also very plainly (Psa. xxxiv. 8; xci. 11). And according as this is God's word and His promise, so we have many examples how He hath at all times justified His faith in the performance of it, that we might not stagger in this doctrine of angels. The patriarchs, the people of Israel, the prophets, the apostles, the saints of the New Testament, our Saviour Christ Himself; we have seen how the angels have been with them in dangerons times, and ministered the help of God unto them. Now, touching the manner how the angels of God execute this ministry, even as it is not hard unto the Lord in the battles of men to save with many or with few, so God sendeth out His angels, more or less, even as He will, that it might be known the power is the Lord's. When Jacob feared before his brother Esau, God sendeth to him a host of angels to comfort him. When Elisha was beset with the great host of the King of Syria, and his servant was now exceedingly afraid, Elisha prayed to have his eyes opened, that he might see the help of God which was present with them, and he saw immediately the mountain full of horses and chariots round about Elisha, which were God's angels sent for the prophet's safeguard. When our Saviour Christ is in distress and anguish, God sendeth many angels which do minister unto Him. And so He testifieth of the usual work of God common to all His saints, and applieth it particularly unto Himself in reproving Peter, who would needs draw his sword to maintain His cause. "Thinkest thou," saith He, "that I cannot now pray unto My Father and He will give Me more than twelve legions of angels?" And as thus God sendeth out a great multitude for the safety of one, so contrariwise sometimes He appointeth but one for the safety of many. So God sent an angel to deliver Israel out of Egypt, and to guide them through the terrible wilderness; and ever after in all their troubles, when they called upon Him, "the angel of His presence," as the prophet Isaiah saith, "was their Deliverer"; and when they should enter the land of promise, God sent an angel to drive out the Canaanites before them. When the army of the King of Ashur came and besieged Jerusalem, God sent an angel who delivered the city, and in one night slew 185,000 of the Assyrians. When David numbered the people and procured the wrath of God, God sent an angel into Jerusalem, who slew with the pestilence 70,000 of the people. So we have many examples, where, upon occasion, to one man God sendeth one angel; even as it is said of one that He came to comfort our Saviour Christ in the garden. To Lot God sent two angels, so to the women that came to the grave of our Saviour Christ two angels appeared, and told them He was risen again. When the apostles looked after our Saviour Christ at His ascension into heaven, two angels appeared unto them, to teach them what they had to do. When God would destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, He sent three angels to Abraham to tell him of it. In the vision that Ezekiel had of the destruction of the city, God sendeth out six angels to execute that judgment. And why is all this diversity? To the end, no doubt, we should not be curious, but rest in the doctrine which the Lord taught us, that the angels are His ministers, for their safety who shall inherit His kingdom. The angels, of whom so much we have spoken, and whose honour is such, that seeing our Saviour Christ exceedeth them, the apostle here proveth He is the God of glory. In that, I say, these

angels serve for our safety, how great is our safety, and what shall we render unto God for this salvation? It were exceeding love to give to any man a guard of men about him. It were more to give him a guard of princes; but what are men, what are princes, what are kings in respect of angels, which God hath made to pitch above us? How can we envy earthly blessings, of houses, lands, servants, to abound unto our brethren, except we be ignorant what God hath done for us? And why should we now fear to be shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, and go boldly, whither truth, faith, holiness, duty calleth us? What if the world break with hatred, or men swell in malice against us, are the angels driven back with vain threatenings? Or, what if we do fall before the enemy, and he prevail against us, as it happened to our Saviour Christ Himself, is this a want in angels that watch over us? or is it not rather the good will of God that we should die with Christ the sooner to reign with Him? Last of all, let us know how this glory is given us, not of ourselves, but as we are members of Christ; for to Him it doth properly belong, who is our Head. He is the ladder which Jacob saw in a dream, reaching from heaven to earth, and the angels ascending and descending by it. So that this honour is ours, as we be Christ's; to Him it appertaineth, and to us it is given, as we be made members of His body by faith. (*E. Deering, B.D.*) *Ministry of angels*:—I. SOME GENERAL REMARKS CONCERNING ANGELS. 1. They possess high natural perfections. (1) Extensive knowledge. Said to be full of eyes. Doubtless have distinguished capacities for knowledge and wisdom. Dwell in the clear, cloudless region of celestial light. (2) Amazing power. Said to "excel in strength." Scripture presents several striking proofs. The immense slaughter of the firstborn in Egypt, and the destruction of the 185,000 of the Assyrian army were effected by an angel. The various judgments described in the revelations are to be executed by angels. (3) Astonishing activity. Doubtless they can move swifter than light; perhaps as rapidly as thought (Dan. ix. 3; xx. 23). 2. They possess great moral perfections. (1) Spotless purity. Often called holy angels. Compared to light, morning stars, Sons of God, &c. (Rev. xiv. 10). (2) Exalted goodness. They love God, and they have displayed the greatest interest in the affairs of men. (3) They are all perfectly obedient. They rest not, but serve God incessantly. They do His work perfectly. 3. Let us notice some general things connected with angels. (1) They dwell in God's holy presence. The highest and most gracious station occupied by created intelligences. (2) They are evidently diversified in rank and order. Hence we read of angels, archangels, seraphims, cherubims, thrones, powers, &c. (3) They are exceedingly numerous (Dan. vii. 10; Psa. lxviii. 17; Heb. xii. 22.) (4) They are all glorious and happy. Possessed of perfect harmony of powers, of moral goodness, and of resplendent beams of the favour of God's favour. II. THE OBJECTS AND CHARACTER OF THEIR MINISTRY. 1. Their ministry is by Divine appointment. "Sent forth." They stand in God's presence, ready to obey His commands. They go at His bidding, and are entirely subjected to His wise and benevolent appointments. 2. The objects of their ministry. "Heirs of salvation." The children of God, "who are heirs of God," &c. (Rom. viii. 17; 1 Pet. i. 2). 3. The character of their ministry. To minister is to serve. Hence they wait upon and communicate to these heirs according to the Divine will and pleasure. They have sometimes—1. Been instructors (Gen. xvi. 7, xviii. 2; 2 Kings i. 16; Luke i. 10; Matt. i. 20; Acts viii. 16, x. 3). (2) As deliverers (Gen. xxii. 12, xix. 29; Dan. vi. 22; Acts v. 19, 20, xii. 7). (3) As comforters (Dan. x. 19; Acts xxvii. 24). (4) They rejoice at the conversion of sinners (Luke xv. 10). (5) They bear the souls of the pious to glory (Luke xiv. 22). (6) Angels will assist at the saints' coronation, and be their companions for ever (Rev. v. 9–13). Application.—1. How dignified and happy are believers. 2. Let us be circumspect, on account of the presence of angels. 3. Let us try to imitate them as far as possible; be as wise, holy, good, and humble as angels. 4. Bless God for the service of angels. 5. Not trust in them, or pray to them, but in Jesus and in God only. (*J. Burns, D.D.*) *The worship of God and the service of man*:—What the text affirms is that the angels are at once the worshippers of God and the servants of men. Our Lord sets forth the same idea when He says that the angels of the children behold the face of the Father in heaven. This combination of worship and service is of the deepest interest, not only because it exists in the angel life, of which we know so little, but because it is what we ought to aim at—the rule for all God's servants on earth as well as in heaven. I. IN RENDERING SERVICE TO MANKIND THEY OBEY A DIVINE COMMAND. They are sent forth. The particulars of the command we don't know.

Their service, as far as we are concerned, is secret service. It might give rise to superstition, and encourage false hopes, if we knew all the ways in which they render aid to men. It is enough to know that their errand originates in a word from the throne. In this respect their case does not differ from our own. There is a word from the throne for us to obey. When God's worshippers on earth draw near to Him, they are met by commands which point out the duty they owe to their fellow-men. II. THE MINISTRY OF ANGELS TO MEN IS INSPIRED AND DIRECTED BY A DIVINE EXAMPLE. The Being they adore is the Infinite Goodness, the Infinite Love. In watching the course of human history they have seen, perhaps, more clearly than we can, in what wonderful ways God has carried out His merciful designs towards our race. It is said that our Lord was "seen of angels," as though to imply that in a very special sense their regard was fixed upon Him. His service was a pattern for theirs. Even if they had no special regard for the children before, they must have learnt it in watching their King. When Marshal McMahon entered Milan, after the battle of Solferino, a little peasant girl, with a few flowers in her hand, stepped out of the crowd and offered them to him. Immediately he reined up his charger, had the little one lifted on to his saddle-bow, and rode into the city with her in front of him. The child was at once the idol of the army and the populace. When the King of Angels was here they saw Him take little children up in His arms, put His hands upon them, and bless them. Is it any wonder that they are content to watch over the little ones? What can be too much to be done for those whom the King delighted to honour? Is it surprising that angels should rejoice when sinners repent when they know how He loved them? But the motive which operates with them should operate with us. Their King is our King. To us His love has been revealed in bright and beautiful manifestations. Indeed, "we a nearer interest claim." It is a most flagrant inconsistency that a man should profess to worship a loving God, a self-denying Saviour, yet keep a selfish heart towards his fellow-men—careless of the sins and sorrows of the world, whilst he wraps himself round with religious privileges, and dreams away his life in the luxuries of spiritual self-indulgence. He may call that indulgence worship, but it is unworthy of the name. III. THE WORSHIP OF THE ANGELS PREPARES THEM FOR THE SERVICE OF MEN. They "excel in strength," yet their strength is not inherent. They derive their might from the Mighty One. He endows them with the energies they employ for the benefit of mankind. The sight of Him keeps fresh in them every gracious and loving impulse towards the children of men. So with those who serve on earth. They can only maintain their capacity for service by communion with their Lord. (*B. Bird.*)

Ministration of angels:—I. WHAT MAY BE LEARNED OF THIS SUBJECT FROM SCRIPTURE. 1. To minister for our good, is a part of the ordinary employment to which they are appointed. 2. This is not the work of one angel only, but "they are all sent forth to minister" (Psa. xxxiv. 7; Heb. i. 14). 3. They have had distinct employments assigned them on different occasions, as the honour of God and necessities of His Church required (Luke i. 13; Acts x. 3, 7; xii. 7–11; Dan. iii. 28). 4. In this office they are servants of Jesus Christ, as the great Head of the Church. 5. Much of their work is to oppose the malice of evil spirits, who seek our hurt: and to defend us from their rage and subtlety (Rev. xii. 7, 9; Matt. iv. 11; 1 Thess. ii. 18). 6. God by them suggests good motions to the minds of His saints. If it be asked, how these good motions from angels may be distinguished from the motions of the Holy Ghost, and His influence on the minds of believers? it is answered—(1) Angelic motions are from without, but the Spirit of our Father dwelleth in us. (2) They consist in occasional impressions; and are made by advantages taken from outward objects, and the present dispositions of the soul; whereas the Holy Spirit, by His operations, engages all the faculties of the soul, really and immediately citing them to generous actions, according to their nature and qualities. (3) Angels in their suggestions communicate no strength to perform good actions; they only stir us up to use the strength we have already in possession; but the Holy Ghost strengthens us with all might by His glorious power in our inner man, and effectually works every good work in us. (4) Angelical impressions are transient; but the gracious influences of the Holy Ghost are continual (John iv. 13, 14). 7. They are appointed in their ministry to be witnesses of our obedience, sufferings, &c. (1 Cor. iv. 9; 1 Tim. v. 21; 1 Cor. xi. 10). 8. They will attend Christ at His coming to judgment, to deliver His friends from every danger, and to execute the vengeance written upon all His obstinate enemies (1 Thess. iv. 16; Matt. xiii. 30, 41, 49). II. WHY GOD

USES THE MINISTRATION OF ANGELS IN BRINGING HOME THE HEIRS OF SALVATION? Doubtless the principal reason is, "Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight"; yet the Scriptures assign several others, such as—1. It employs and manifests the obedience of the angels, that in them the Church militant may have a fair example. 2. Hereby a blessed intercourse and fellowship is maintained between the several parts of the family of God; consisting of saints on earth and angels in heaven (Heb. xii. 22). 3. To reproach, awe, and restrain the devil. It is inconceivable what mischief might be done by this arch enemy, were it not for the constant vigilance of these holy watchers (Rev. ii. 10). 4. That the saints may see the greatness and glory of redemption, which even the angels desire to look into. Inferences: 1. We should be very careful to use great sobriety in all our meditations on the subject, and never pretend "to be wise above what is written." 2. Danger should not deter us from duty. We have the sacred word for our guide; let us abide by that, and we are safe; whether we treat of angels, who are still preserved holy and happy, or of such as have dreadfully fallen into sin and misery. 3. There is no sufficient reason to believe that every Christian has a particular guardian angel appointed to take care of him. It cannot increase our consolation, but has a dangerous tendency to superstition. 4. Such is the love and care of God towards His saints in their present state of trial, that He sends the glorious attendants on His throne to minister to them; He who gave His only Son to die for them, will certainly send His holy angels to bring them safe home to the purchased possession. 5. Let us always remember, that in all our approaches to God as humble worshippers, we join with the holy angels, and bear our part in the heavenly concert. (*J. Hannam.*) *Nature and employment of angels*:—I. NATURE OF ANGELS. 1. That they are the highest order of created beings that we have any account of. They are represented, in respect to their existence, as prior and superior to men. 2. Angels are beings of superior power and wisdom. They are called "mighty angels." They are said to excel in strength. 3. Angels are fixed in a state of permanent and superior holiness. They were once in a state of probation; but what was the test of their obedience we are nowhere expressly informed. It is, however, very probable that what proved the occasion of Satan's falling, was the occasion of their establishment in holiness. They are called the elect angels. 4. Angels are not encumbered with such gross bodies as we have. The apostle calls them "ministering spirits," and God says, He makes "His angels spirits, and His ministers a flaming fire." 5. That there are various grades or ranks of angels. Whether the distinction in the orders of angels arises from any disparity in their powers, or from any distinct offices which they discharge, it is not easy to determine. It is, however, most agreeable to that beautiful variety which is everywhere to be seen in the works of God, to suppose there is a real diversity in the intellectual powers of individual angels. And they may be appointed to different offices, according to the difference in their mental powers and capacities. II. THEIR EMPLOYMENTS. 1. Angels have been employed in bearing the messages of God to the Church. This was probably one of their first employments after the fall of man. And from this employment it seems they took their name. 2. It was the business of angels to attend upon Christ, from the time He came into the world to the time He went out of it. They were devoted to His service, and He could, as He intimated, at any time call more than twelve legions of them to His aid. 3. Angels are employed as executioners of God's wrath, against His enemies and the enemies of the Church. 4. It is the employment of angels to take particular care of good men. "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" We may not pretend to point out all that angels do for particular saints; but yet the Scripture clearly mentions some important services which they perform for the heirs of salvation. (1) They often protect them from danger. Lot, Jacob, Peter in prison. (2) They assist good men in their duties and devotions. They are represented as present in the assemblies of the saints. Two large cherubim were carved in the temple. "And within the oracle," we read, "were made two cherubim of olive tree, each ten cubits high." These emblems signified the presence of angels in the temple. Now if angels are present with good men in duty, they may have the power of assisting them in their devotions. (3) There is reason to believe that angels minister to saints in their dying moments. Improvement: 1. Since angels were created an order of beings superior to mankind, we have peculiar reason to admire the great and discriminating grace of God in providing salvation for fallen men, while He suffered fallen angels to perish without remedy. 2. Since all the

angels are employed in promoting the work of redemption, it must be an immensely great and important work. 3. Since God employs all the angels to minister for the benefit of saints, we may justly conclude that they are very precious in His sight. They are His children, His heirs, His jewels, and the richest treasure He has on earth. 4. Since God employs all His angels to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation, there is no good ground to believe that the departed spirits of good men are ever present in this world, to take care of the pious friends whom they have left behind. 5. Since angels are ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation, we may justly conclude that there is a great change in the circumstances of sinners, as well as in their character, when they become saints. 6. Since angels are ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who are heirs of salvation, they must be fully acquainted with this world, and with the circumstances, characters and conduct of mankind in general. 7. Are all the angels ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation? Then Christians have no ground to fear in appearing on the Lord's side, and in performing every duty He has enjoined upon them. Those that are for them are more and mightier than those that be against them. 8. Since angels are such great and amiable beings as they have been represented, saints have a bright prospect, not only through life, but through death and through a boundless eternity. 9. This subject shows the sinful and miserable state of all incorrigible sinners, both in time and eternity. They have no holy angels to guide and guard them in this world; but they are under the power and influence of the god of this world, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience. They are constantly growing in sin and guilt, by all the light they have, and by all the mercies they enjoy, and by all the evils they suffer. The same evil spirits that attend them in life, will attend them at death, and drag their unwilling souls down to the chambers of eternal death. (*N. Emmons, D.D.*) *Angelic life in connection with man*:—Angelic beings do not appear now to our eyes, and yet I do not doubt that God speaks to us now as much as He did to Abraham, and saves men now from ruin as He saved Lot. And the Bible itself confirms this view. As we pass on from the early history of the Jewish nation to the later, the physical appearance of angels is succeeded by the visionary appearance of angels, the conversation at the tent-door by the vision of Isaiah and Ezekiel. It is the tendency of men in early times, when feeling is master of intellect, to represent spiritual impressions as sensuous impressions; indeed they feel so strongly that they see, and it is without the slightest want of truth that a patriarch would say that he heard God's voice speaking to him when in fact he had only received a vivid spiritual impression. The whole account of Abraham's intercession with the Lord is probably a poetic account of a real spiritual struggle in Abraham's soul, the embodiment in words of the questions and replies of a passionate prayer. 1. The first principle, then, contained in the stories is that God speaks directly to man. We look upon these stories as isolated and preternatural. In this way we take all the comfort and reality out of the Bible. That book does not relate what God did once for men, but what God is always doing. If, in the wilderness, Hagar, in the hour of her bitterest desolation found that the Omnipresent was beside her; we know now and for ever that wherever a mother bends in misery over her dying child, there is then with her God's never-failing Love. The child may die, but He is there waiting to take it to His fatherhood, and keep it for her coming. Oh! take these Old Testament stories to your hearts. Realise a living God, who penetrates with His presence and His action every moment of your being. In whatever light we view these accounts of angels, this they suggest at least. There is not a struggle of your soul which is not known to Him, not a crisis in your life which your Father does not hang over with intensest eagerness, waiting for the fitting moment to speak. 2. And if this be true of our individual, so it is also true of our domestic, social, and national life. When the angel came to Monoah's altar, the truth was revealed that God takes interest in each man's home; that it should be pure and happy, a sacred altar of love, a school for sympathy and forbearance; a centre from which an impulse for wider work may spring, and whence self-sacrifice in daily trifles may swell into the self-sacrifice of a life for universal objects: a place where warriors may be trained for the army of Christ against the evil, a place where the heavenly life may be imaged forth by each living in the life of all. 3. Nor is the related interference of angelic powers with social and national movements without a meaning to us now. If it tells us in the form of certain stories that God was watching over and guiding Jewish society and Jewish national life, it tells us that God is watching over and

directing English society and the English nation, every society and every nation. And God knows that we want here in England some belief of that sort to protect us from despair and the sloth and indifference which are born of despair. And when God has thus brought by strange ways the body of English society into a more active life of self-sacrifice, a higher morality, and a wider love of the race, then I cannot but think that men will turn with new eyes contemplate the life of Christ and see in Him the true King of the new society. And now, to sweep back for a moment to our first subject, we have found a ground for the hope that the future society will be constituted as a host warring against evil, under the leadership of Christ. If that be so, we shall not be devoid of the sympathy, nor apart from the communion, of the other spiritual beings who may inhabit God's universe. Their life is no lazy dream, no indolent enjoyment. The spirit of the battle against evil is the spirit of there life. For "there was war in heaven; Michael and his angels fought against the dragon." When we read that stanza in the symbolical poem of Apocalypse, our soul kindles. We have brother warriors, purer than we, who are waging the same great contest, and who watch us with faithful and sympathising eyes. The hosts of earth and heaven are bound together by the comrade spirit, by a common indignation, by a common devotion to the same Leader. (*Stopford A. Brooke, M.A.*) *The ministry of angels*:—I. SOME OF THE OBJECTS FOR WHICH SUCH MINISTRATIONS ARE EMPLOYED. 1. In imparting direction under circumstances of doubt and perplexity. 2. In affording consolation and support in seasons of distress and trial. 3. To defend and preserve in the hour of danger or peril. 4. As connected with the introduction of the believer to his final blessedness. 5. It seems further questionable whether angels may not have some special charge over the mortal remains of the believer (Deut. xxxiv. 5, 6). 6. There is one peculiarly striking circumstance noticed in the text, viz., that believers are represented as having been the subjects of this angelic attention prior to their actual possession of "a good hope through grace":—they are "sent forth to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation." And how interesting might it often prove for the believer to review that part of his life in which he lived estranged from God, with the remembrance of this fact. Perhaps, Christian, you have been once and again held back, you knew not how, when upon the very brink of ruin. It was the restraining grace of God that held you, but of that grace perhaps an angel was the friendly minister. II. SOME REASONS FOR WHICH ANGELIC MINISTRATION MAY PROBABLY BE EMPLOYED. 1. To display the superior honour and glory of the Divine Redeemer. 2. To afford to angels themselves opportunity of contemplating the most illustrious display of the Divine perfections. 3. To illustrate the Divine tenderness and care over His Church and people. III. THE PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS THE SUBJECT SEEMS NATURALLY TO SUGGEST. 1. Let an apprehension of their presence make us watchful over the correctness and propriety of our external deportment. 2. Let the dispositions which in such conduct they evince, be studied as a model to which our own should be conformed. 3. Let the believer rejoice in the prospect of intimate and endeared association with these ministering spirits. (*Essex Congregational Remembrancer.*) *The nature, office, and employment of good angels*:—I. First, FOR THEIR NATURE, THEY ARE SPIRITS. This is universally agreed by all that acknowledge such an order of beings; but whether they are pure spirits, divested of matter, and all kind of corporeal vehicle (as the philosophers term it), hath been a great controversy, but I think of no great consequence. Not only the ancient philosophers, but some of the ancient Christian fathers, did believe angels to be clothed with some kind of bodies, consisting of the purest and finest material; which they call ethereal. And this opinion seems to be grounded upon a pious belief, that it is the peculiar excellency and prerogative of the Divine nature, to be a pure and simple spirit, wholly separate from matter; but the more current opinion of the Christian Church (especially of latter times) hath been, that angels are mere and pure spirits, without anything that is corporeal belonging to them; but yet so, that they have power to assume thin and airy bodies, and can, when they please, appear in human shape, as they are frequently in Scripture said to have done. II. Secondly, We have here THEIR GENERAL OFFICE AND EMPLOYMENT; they are "ministering spirits"; they are (as I may say) domestic servants, and constant attendants upon that great and glorious King, whose throne is in the heavens, and whose kingdom ruleth over all; they stand continually before Him, to behold His face, expecting His commands, and in a constant readiness to do His will; for though the Omnipotence of God be such, that He can do all things immediately by Himself, "whatever He pleaseth in heaven and in earth"; can govern the world, and steer the affairs of it, without

any instruments or ministers; yet His wisdom and goodness has thought fit to honour His creatures, especially this higher and more perfect rank of beings, with His commands; and to make them, according to their several degrees and capacities, the ordinary ministers of His affairs, in the rule and government of this inferior world; and this not for His own ease, but for their happiness; and He therefore employs them in His service, that they may be capable of His favour and rewards. III. THE SPECIAL OFFICE AND EMPLOYMENT OF GOOD ANGELS IN REGARD TO GOOD MEN; and for this the apostle expressly tells us that "they are sent forth to minister for them (that is, in their behalf and for their benefit) who shall be heirs of salvation." In which words there are three things very considerable for our instruction and comfort. 1. Their particular designation and appointment for this employment, expressed in these words, "sent forth," as if they were particularly commissioned and appointed by God for this very end. God Himself doth superintend all affairs, and by His particular designation, the angels execute the pleasure of His goodwill towards us. Hence it is so frequently said in Scripture that God sent His angel to such and such a person for such and such purposes. 2. You have here the general end of their employment—for good men; they are sent forth on our behalf, and for our benefit; to take care of us and protect us, to succour and comfort, to direct and assist, to rescue and deliver us. 3. Here is the more special end of their employment, in regard to good men, intended in those words, "for them who shall be heirs of salvation"; hereby signifying, that the angels are employed about good men, with regard more particularly to their eternal happiness, and for the conducting and furthering of the great affair of their everlasting salvation. This certainly is our greatest concernment; and therefore they have a more particular charge and care of us in regard to this. It has been a general and, I think, not ill-grounded opinion, both of the Jews and heathens, that good angels are more especially present with us, and observant of us, and assistant to us, in the performance of all acts of religion; that they are particularly present at our prayers; and therefore the Jews speak of a particular angel for this purpose, whom they call "the angel of prayer"; that they observe our vows, and our breach or performance of them. So Solomon seems to intimate (Eccles. v. 4, 6). But the angels are yet more particularly present in the places, and at the times, of God's public worship. The placing of the cherubims in "the holy of holies," seems to signify the presence of the angels in our most religious addresses to God. And Plutarch says that "the angels are the overseers of Divine service." And therefore we ought to behave ourselves with all modesty, reverence, and decency in the worship of God, out of regard to the angels who are there present, and observe our carriage and behaviour (1 Cor. xi. 13). Nay, that the angels have some charge and care of the bodies of good men after death, may not improbably be gathered from the passage in St. Jude (ver. 9). But to proceed: this we are sure of, that the angels shall be the great ministers and instruments of the resurrection of our bodies, and the reunion of them to our souls: for so our blessed Saviour has told us (Matt. xxiv. 30, 31). All that now remains is to draw some inferences from this discourse, and so I shall conclude. 1. What hath been said upon this argument, and so abundantly proved from Scripture, may serve to establish us in the belief of this truth, and to awaken us to a due consideration of it. 2. We should with great thankfulness acknowledge the great goodness of God to us, who takes such care of us, and that, not only some inferior spirits, but the chief ministers of this great King, those that "stand in His presence, and behold His face"; and not a few of these, but the whole order of them are employed about us. 3. If the angels have the particular charge of good men, we should take heed how we despise, or be any way injurious to them; for how despicable soever they may appear to us, they are certainly very dear to God; since He deems them so considerable as to employ His chief ministers about them, and to commit the charge of them to those who, by their office, do more immediately attend upon Himself. 4. If God appointed angels to be ministering spirits on our behalf: we may thence very reasonably conclude that God did not intend that we should worship them. 5. We should imitate the holy angels by endeavouring to serve God as they do, in ministering to the good of others. 6. And we should learn also of them to condescend to the meanest services for the good of others. (*Archbishop Tillotson.*)

The practical side of the doctrine of angels:—1. The existence of angels extends and enlarges our views regarding the city of God. 2. Their number is fitted to encourage us, when we are cast down by the spectacle of general unbelief. 3. The lively part, the tender interest which the Holy Scripture assures us that they take

in the triumph of the Church in general, and in the progress of each believer in particular, ought to be a precious consolation to us. 4. The hope of being one day associated with these glorious inhabitants of heaven presents to us one of the most ravishing prospects. 5. We may find in the love which they have to God and in the zeal with which these perfectly holy beings serve Him, a very effectual stimulant to lead us to diligence and activity in the service of the Lord. (*Dr. Grandpierre.*) *The angelic hierarchy* :—Casting even a fugitive look on material nature, a prodigious diversity is perceived among the creatures which God has called into existence. None of them resemble one another; all differ either in their essence, or form, or structure, or organisation, or capacities; and although the Supreme Author of everything that we see has marked all of them with that stamp of unity which causes us to recognise the Divine Architect, it seems nevertheless that, to reveal His inexhaustible wisdom, He has been pleased to scatter with profusion variety among the works of His hands. We have a striking illustration in the world of matter, which, in its present constitution, is destined one day to perish. Now, can we believe that God, who has shown Himself so productive and so rich in creative energy in the world of bodies, has not employed the same liberality in the world of spirits? That that God who has fashioned matter with so much intelligence and care, has not taken an equal pleasure in creating an innumerable multitude of spiritual intelligences? Can we admit that, in the midst of those creatures which He commands as master, man is found the only one of his kind that has not above him creatures proportionally greater than himself, that he is himself greater than the nature of which he is chief priest? Therefore, when Scripture affirms that beyond the bounds of this world there exist spirits superior to man in light, in strength, in dignity, and that they are called thrones, dominions, principalities, powers, angels and archangels, seraphim and cherubim, celestial armies of the Most High, does it teach us anything so unreasonable, so difficult to receive and to comprehend? This is a first consideration; here is a second, which is closely connected with the first, and which flows immediately from it. Not only does the material creation present to us a great variety of objects, but it shows them to us in an uninterrupted series, and causes us to see them appointed, so to speak, according to the laws of one vast and magnificent hierarchy. From the stone to the plant, from the plant to the animal, from the animal to man, an immortal spirit, everything is in succession, everything is united, everything is tied by wonderful knots, by the most regular transitions. You have here the first extremity of a chain, of which all links are united one to the other, without leaving between them any interval. Having arrived at man, would you abruptly break that chain, so well knit together, and because your eyes of flesh do not see it prolong and extend itself in the invisible world up to the highest degrees of celestial hierarchies, would you pretend that it does not pass beyond this earth, and that the most beautiful works of God are shut up within the limits of the globe which we inhabit? Just as well might the insect which creeps under the herb, and has but some inches of horizon, deny the existence of all the beings which people the vast extent of the earth, because with its short view it cannot perceive them. Assuredly it would not be more insensate than the rash man who, under the pretext that he had never seen angels, affirms that there cannot be in other worlds than ours intelligences superior to his own. (*Ibid.*) *Twofold aspect of angelic ministration* :—The original Greek here expresses to separate aspects of that angelic service now going on in the Church. The angels are the ministers of God, giving to Him always their constant adoration and worship, and they are therefore sent forth by Him on behalf of those who are about to inherit salvation. In other words, because of the Incarnation which has made us one with God, and of our incorporation into the Body of Christ, they both worship with us and work for us. In the first place, then, their ministry in heaven, where stands the one Priest, presenting before the Father that sacrifice which was offered once for all on earth, their celebration with Him of the Eucharist on high, is one and the same with ours when we present to the same Lord and heavenly Father the memorial His Son hath commanded us to make. And so, though our souls are stained with sin, while they are spotless; though we are fallen and weak, while they have been kept upright and strong by the constant help of the Holy Ghost, nevertheless ours is the blessed though solemn privilege—an honour to which our adoption in Christ has raised us—of joining with them in their worship of Him who sitteth upon the throne. The angels have their work also. They are ever being "sent forth." Yes, into the ways, the dangerous ways, by which even the children of the kingdom must go, they are sent to minister in their behalf.

No doubt they joy in ministering thus unto us, in guarding us amid dangers, and protecting even when we think we are safe, but are not. And they joy most of all because we bear the likeness of Him to whom they came in His hours of temptation. (*E. E. Johnson, M.A.*) *Angel aid*:—One cannot fail to take a hint of spirit ministry in material nature and in mortal life. By arbitrary habit of tradition we are given to conceive of lofty spirits, as absorbed in sacred exercises, and hold them to have no other function than that of teacher. We recognise no uses of their hands, if hands they have, or other members. They have been esteemed as the clergymen of heaven, the seers and sages of a spirit land, leading in worship and dealing only with the souls of men, and the moral interests of beings. Theologians have set them thus apart, as theologians like themselves, to abstractions and speculations of a grander grade. And in so setting them apart, have set them over upon the outer edges of the material realm, even as in a lower way they would set off and set apart the earthly ministries of men, to a sainthood that broaches not nor touches their secular affairs. It may surprise us, however, to discover that there is no warrant for this notion on the page of inspiration. Angels are there considered to be messengers, that often carry sublime and stately truths. But they are neither unskilled nor unemployed in natural processes. It might not be too much to say that they are its artisans and artists. The creative acts themselves are spoken of as commands. At the Christ coming, they were eager and alert. In the Christ consummation they are neither to march in spectacle of mere parade, nor stand inactive as observers of the scene. Meantime, in every ransomed and resuscitated life they are intrusted with material ministries. One period of human extremity, one pass of human flight there is at which no earthly means avail, even as means. All the same, God works by means, and everywhere employs instruments at hand. There is no life which is not replenished and refreshed by some other to a certain point—no human creature is left utterly alone in helplessness. Up to a certain pass of destiny it can scarcely be that any human being is left utterly alone, or goes unprovided with a means, a ministry which, if it may not deliver and must not restore, at least shall soothe and serve. But every human career arrives at a pitch when all this ceases, when it is not only rendered futile, but imperceptible and unreal. To one who has been tenderly cherished, and from infancy enclosed by assiduous care and delicate attention, not less than to one who has known hard times in his rugged self-support, or his lonely isolation—not less, but rather more. Not less to one who has been beset by services, or encrowned with honour, reverence, and love, than to one who has led an Arab life of estrangement from all others. Not less, but rather more, to one who has been waited on and greeted, and decorated, and endeared, and jealously guarded from the elements, the world of chance and change. Not less, but more to such an one it comes to be at last, when human helpers falter and fall back, and all appliances alike are powerless. Then will the all-gracious Author of this workmanship leave His creature to be the prey of nature? You might as well allege that He will leave the globe itself to be the prey of its own forces, and explode in the concussion and convulsion of its own collisions, the dissolution of its subsistence, and the disintegration of its substance. You might as well imply that the mother of a child will desert it coldly because it has lost its way, and lost its footing, and has fallen. But what aid can interpose? Instrumentally, what is the recourse? What agency can be employed? Who shall bear a message? Who shall breathe a whisper to the retreating spirit? The only touch that can be felt is the touch of kindred on the spirit, the voice of soul to soul. Consciousness opens on the gaze of eyes that are not made of flesh and blood. In that supreme experience there must hover round about the couch some band of those who shall be found as qualified as they are willing. God sends guards to welcome their brethren within His glory; to soothe the while the parting pangs. The hour of earth's failure is the hour of heaven's support. Let the nurse come in the room, Lord; let the nurse come in; let the nurse come now, before the undertaker. Thou who didst give us in the charge of Thy servants, upon the earth in infancy, give us in nobler trust to loftier care; and when the flesh faints and fails let us find the spirit welcome at the gate. (*H. S. Carpenter.*) *The liturgy of angelic service*:—This liturgy of service is a literal fact. When struggling against overwhelming difficulties; when walking the dark, wild mountain-pass alone; when in peril or urgent need; we are surrounded by invisible forms, like those which accompanied the path of Jesus, ministering to Him in the desert, strengthening Him in the garden, hovering around His cross, watching His grave, and accompanying Him to His home. They keep pace with

the swiftest trains in which we travel. They come unsoiled through the murkiest air. They smooth away the heaviest difficulties. They garrison with light the darkest sepulchres. They bear us up in their hands, lest we should strike our foot against a stone. Many an escape from imminent peril, many an unexpected assistance, many a bright and holy thought whispered in the ear, we know not whence or how, is due to those bright and loving spirits. "The good Lord forgive me," says Bishop Hall, "for that, amongst my other offences, I have suffered myself so much to forget the presence of His holy angels." But valuable as their office is, it is not to be mentioned in the same breath as Christ's. (*F. B. Meyer, B.A.*) *Ministry of angels*:—I went once to see a dying girl whom the world had roughly treated. She never had a father, she never knew her mother. Her home had been the poorhouse, her couch a hospital cot, and yet as she had staggered in her weakness there, she had picked up a little of the alphabet, enough to spell out the New Testament, and she had touched the hem of the Master's garment, and had learned the new song. And I never trembled in the presence of such majesty as I did in the majesty of her presence as she came near the crossing. "Oh, sir!" she said, "God sends His angels. I have read in His Word, 'Are they not ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation?' And when I am learning in my cot they stand about me on this floor; and when the heavy darkness comes, and this poor side aches so severely, He comes, for He says, 'Lo, I am with you,' and He slips His soft hand under my aching side, and I sleep, I rest." (*Dr. Fowler.*) *Ministry of angels*:—The only child of a poor woman one day fell into the fire by accident, and was so badly burned that he died after a few hours' suffering. The clergyman, as soon as he knew, went to see the mother, who was known to be dotingly fond of the child. To his great surprise he found her calm, patient, and resigned. After a little conversation she told him how she had been weeping bitterly as she knelt beside her child's cot, when suddenly he exclaimed, "Mother, don't you see the beautiful man who is standing there, and waiting for me?" Again and again the child persisted in saying that, "the beautiful man" was waiting for him, and seemed ready and even anxious to go to him. And as a natural consequence, the mother's heart was strangely cheered. **Heirs of salvation.**—*The time and certainty of inheriting salvation*:—Though the possession of this inheritance be to come, while the heirs thereof here live, yet is it sure and certain. What title so sure among men as an inheritance? Much more sure is this inheritance of salvation than any earthly inheritance can be. For—1. It is prepared for us from the foundation of the world (Matt. xxv. 34). 2. It is purchased by the greatest price that can be, the precious blood of the Son of God (Eph. i. 14; 1 Pet. i. 19). 3. It is ratified by the greatest assurance that can be, the death of Him that gives it (Heb. ix. 14). 4. It is sealed up unto us by that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance (Eph. i. 13, 14). 5. God's promise is engaged for it, therefore they who possess it are said to inherit the promises (Heb. vi. 12). 6. The faith of believers addeth another seal thereto (John iii. 33). 7. It is reserved in heaven for us (1 Pet. i. 4). In heaven "neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, nor thieves do break through nor steal" (Matt. vi. 20). (*W. Gouge.*) *Instructions and directions arising from the inheritance of salvation*:—Such an inheritance as salvation made sure to us, affords sundry instructions and directions. Instructions are such as these: 1. It commends God's philanthropy, His peculiar love to men, who by nature are children of wrath and heirs of hell; yet made to be partakers of the inheritance of salvation (Eph. ii. 2, 3; Col. i. 12; Tit. iii. 3–5). 2. It takes away all conceit of merit by man's works. For an inheritance is the free gift of a Father. 3. It is enough to uphold our spirits against penury, ignominy, and all manner of misery in this world. An heir, that as long as he is a child, differeth nothing a servant, but is under tutors and governors; yet, because he is lord of all, will not be dejected; but will support himself with this, that he hath a fair inheritance belonging to him. 4. It is a great encouragement against all things that may threaten death; yea, and against death itself; in that death brings us to the possession of this excellent inheritance. Directions are such as these:—(1) Subject thyself to thy Father's will, and to that government under which He sets thee, because thou art His heir (Gal. iv. 2). (2) Raise up thy affections to the place of thine inheritance, and set thy heart thereon (Col. iii. 1; Matt. vi. 21). (3) Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world (1 John ii. 15). Salvation is not there to be had. (4) Moderate thy care about earthly things; thou hast a heavenly inheritance to care for. (5) Suffer with joy all things for thy profession sake, knowing that thou hast an heavenly

inheritance (Heb. x. 54). (6) Search thine evidences about this inheritance. There is great reason that in a matter of so great consequence thou shouldst be sure of thy evidence for thy right hereto (2 Pet. i. 10). (7) Expect with patience the time appointed for the enjoying this inheritance. Through faith and patience the promises are inherited (Heb. vi. 12). (8) Walk worthy of this high calling (Eph. iv. 1), and of God who hath called thee to His kingdom and glory (1 Thess. ii. 12). (9) Be ever thankful for this privilege especially (Col. i. 12; 1 Pet. i. 3, 4). (10) Despise not any of these heirs because they are here poor and mean (James ii. 5). Ishmael was cast out because he mocked the heir (Gen. xxi. 9, 10). (*Ibid.*) *Being somebody* :—"What is the use of being in the world unless you are somebody?" said a boy to his friend. "Sure enough, and I mean to be," answered the other. "I began this very day. I mean to be somebody." Ashton looked George in the face. "Began to-day! how? What do you mean to be?" "A Christian boy, and so grow up to be a Christian man," said George. "I believe that is the greatest somebody for us to be." George is right. There is no higher manhood than Christian manhood; and it is in the power of every boy to reach that. Every boy cannot be rich; every boy cannot be President; every boy cannot be judge: but God asks you all to a Christian manhood—to be His sons, and so, with His Son Jesus Christ to be heirs of heaven.

CHAPTER II.

VERS. 1–4. **Give the more earnest heed.**—This exhortation reveals the purpose of the foregoing comparison between Christ and the angels. It is to establish Christ's superior claim to be heard when He speaks in God's name to men. Law and gospel might have been compared on their own merits, as is done by Paul in 2 Corinthians iii. 6 in a series of contrasts. But the power of appreciating the gospel being defective in the Hebrew Christians, it is the merit of the speakers that is insisted on, though the incomparable worth of the gospel is implicitly asserted in the phrase, "so great salvation." Respecting as we do the word of angels, let us respect more His word. Why should there be any difficulty in acting on such reasonable counsel? Because the word of Christ is new, and the word of angels is old, and has the force of venerable custom on its side. This difference is hinted at in the words "lest at any time (or haply) we drift away." The figure is a very significant one. It warns the Hebrews to beware lest they be carried away from the salvation preached by Christ, the blessings of the kingdom of God, as a boat is carried past the landing-place by the strong current of a river. The current by which the Hebrews were in danger of being carried headlong was that of established religious custom, which in transition times is specially perilous. By this current they were in danger of being carried away from the gospel and Christ and the eternal hope connected with faith in Him down to the Dead Sea of Judaism, and so of being involved in the calamities which were soon to overwhelm in ruin the unbelieving Jewish nation. The exhortation to give heed to Christ's teaching is enforced by three reasons: It is the teaching of the Lord; the penalty of neglect is great; the teaching is well attested. The word of the great salvation began to be spoken "by the Lord." The word spoken through angels may appear a very solemn matter. Yet after all it was a word at second-hand. The law was given by God to angels, then by angels to Moses, who in turn gave it to Israel. The gospel came from God immediately, for Jesus was God incarnate speaking to men in human form. The penalty of neglecting this last word of God is great. "How shall we escape?" The penalty is enhanced by the nature of the word. It is a word of grace, of salvation. The old word was a word of duty. But it is far more culpable to sin against love than against law, to despise God's mercy than to break His commandments. If breaches of the law had penalties attached, what must be the consequence of despising the gospel? For those who scorn arguments drawn from fear of consequences a more genial inducement is added. The teaching of Christ is well attested. The writer means to say that he and those to whom he writes, though not enjoying the advantage of having heard Jesus Himself speak the words of salvation, are put practically by

this attestation in the same position as those who did hear Him. It is obvious that the claim thus made to be virtually in the position of personal hearers of Jesus implies a knowledge of His teaching such as we possess by means of the Synoptical Gospels. The impression created by a perusal of the Epistle bears out this view. The image of Christ presented therein rests on a solid basis of fact. The writer knows of the temptations of Jesus, of His life of faith, and the scope that His experience afforded for the exercise of faith, of His agony in the garden, of the contradictions He endured at the hands of ignorant, evil-minded men; of His compassionate bearing towards the erring; of the fact that He occupied Himself in preaching the gospel of the kingdom; and also of the fact that He was surrounded by a circle of friends and disciples, whose connection with Him was so close that they could be trusted to give a reliable account of His public ministry. Of course the man who knew so much had the means of knowing much more. (*A. B. Bruce, D.D.*) *Watchfulness*:—Every one who has made the least endeavour to live for God, will know by experience how many are the temptations which hinder his progress—temptations to acquiesce in some secondary end, to relax the strenuousness of labour, to follow the promptings of his own will to look earthwards. He will know, therefore, that the spirit of the Christian towards himself must be watchfulness—the most open-eyed and the most far-seeing. I. HE WILL BE WATCHFUL OVER HIS AIM. There is, indeed, one aim for all men—to grow into the likeness of God; but this general aim becomes individualised for every man. The complete likeness, so to speak, belongs to humanity, and each man contributes his peculiar part to the whole. His resemblance to others lies in the completeness of his consecration; and his difference from others follows directly from it. Something he has, however insignificant it may seem, which belongs to himself alone; and this he brings to Christ in sure trust that it represents the fulfilment of his special office. Few temptations are more subtle and perilous than that which leads us to a restless search for some task which is more fruitful, as we think, or more conspicuous, or more attractive than that which lies ready before us; and it may happen that a self-chosen path will bring us renown and gratitude. But no splendid labours in other fields can supply the defect which must henceforth remain for ever through our faithlessness, if we leave undone just that little thing which God has prepared for us to do. II. THE CHRISTIAN WILL BE WATCHFUL ALSO OVER HIS EFFORTS. It is as true that God gives nothing, as it is that He gives all. He accords to man the privilege of making his own that which He bestows freely, and He requires man to use the privilege. Nothing avails us which we have not actually appropriated. Life, indeed, brings to us the rudiments of spiritual teaching; but these need to be carefully studied, and, above all, to be brought into the light of our faith, not once only or twice, but as often as we are called to act or to judge; for though every attainment which is conformed to our ideal partakes of its eternal nobility, no solution of yesterday can be used directly to-day. Life, with all its questions, is new every morning. At the same time, the solution of yesterday leaves us in a favourable position to deal with the novel data. The Christian, then, will ask himself again and again whether his work costs him serious exertion; whether it exercises the fulness of his powers; whether he faces fresh duties as they arise with more and more strenuous endeavour because he uses the experience of the past to assist his thought, and not to supersede it; whether at every point he has gained the highest within his reach, or has at least refused to rest on a lower level; and whether he has taken to heart day by day the words of the psalm which from time immemorial has given the keynote of public worship: "To-day, if ye will hear His voice"; for that Voice is not, as we are too ready to believe, a tradition only, a sweet memorial enshrined in sacred books, but a living voice sounding in our ears with messages of truth, which earlier generations could not hear, and calls to action which we first are able to obey. (*Bp. Westcott*). *The true attitude of the soul toward Christ*:—I. THE DUTY ON WHICH THE APOSTLE INSISTS. An attitude of indifference is not the true attitude of the soul to Christ; nor of mere curiosity; nor of a cold professionalism. It is only by earnest thought that we can understand, realise, and retain the gospel of Christ. II. THE ARGUMENT BY WHICH THE EXHORTATION IS ENFORCED. The exhortation is based upon a twofold comparison; *i.e.*, between the heralds of the two covenants, and the natures of the two covenants. III. THE WARNING BY WHICH THE APOSTLE SEEKS TO AROUSE ATTENTION TO HIS EXHORTATION. 1. The possibility of losing our hold. 2. The occasions of losing our hold. 3. The manner of losing our hold. The idea is not of a sudden and total renunciation of Christian doctrine—we are not in much danger of that; but

of an unconscious giving up of that doctrine. (*W. L. Watkinson.*) *Diligent attention to the gospel*:—I. Diligent attention unto the word of the gospel IS INDISPENSABLY NECESSARY UNTO PERSEVERANCE IN THE PROFESSION OF IT. Such a profession I mean as is acceptable unto God, or will be useful unto our own souls. 1. A due valuation of the grace tendered in it, and of the word itself on that account. 2. Diligent study of it, and searching into the mind of God in it, that so we may grow wise in the mysteries thereof. 3. Mixing the word with faith (see chap. iv. 2). As good not hear as not believe. 4. Labouring to express the word received in a conformity of heart and life unto it. 5. Watchfulness against all opposition that is made either against the truth or power of the word in us. II. THERE ARE SUNDRY TIMES AND SEASONS WHEREIN, AND SEVERAL WAYS AND MEANS WHEREBY, MEN ARE IN DANGER TO LOSE THE WORD THAT THEY HAVE HEARD, IF THEY ATTEND NOT DILIGENTLY UNTO ITS PRESERVATION. 1. Some lose it in a time of peace and prosperity. That is a season which slays the foolish. Jeshurun waxes fat and kicks. According to men's pastures they are filled, and forget the Lord. They feed their lusts high, until they loathe the word. 2. Some lose it in a time of persecution. "When persecution ariseth," saith our Saviour, "they fall away." Many go on apace in profession until they come to see the cross; this sight puts them to a stand, and then turns them quite out of the way. 3. Some lose it in a time of trial by temptation. The means also whereby this wretched effect is produced are innumerable: some of them only I shall mention. As (1) Love of this present world. This made Demas a leaking vessel (2 Tim. iv. 10), and chokes one-fourth part of the seed in the parable (Matt. xiii.). (2) Love of sin. A secret lust cherished in the heart will make it "full of chinks," that it will never retain the showers of the word; and it will assuredly open them as fast as convictions stop them. (3) False doctrines, errors, false worship, superstition, and idolatries will do the same. III. The word heard IS NOT LOST WITHOUT THE GREAT SIN AS WELL AS THE INEVITABLE RUIN OF THE SOULS OF MEN. The word of its own nature is apt to abide, and to take root: but we pour it forth from us. And they have a woeful account to make on whose soul the guilt thereof shall be found at the last day. IV. It is in the nature of the word of the gospel TO WATER BARREN HEARTS, AND TO MAKE THEM FRUITFUL UNTO GOD. Hence it is compared to water, dews, and rain. Where this word comes, it makes the "parched ground a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water" (Isa. xxxv. 7). These are the waters of the sanctuary, that "heal the barren places of the earth," and make them fruitful (Ezek. xlvii.). The river that "makes glad the city of God" (Psa. xlvi. 7). With the dew thereof doth God "water His Church every moment" (Isa. xxvii. 3). And then doth it "grow as a lily, and cast forth its roots as Lebanon" (Hos. xiv. 5–7). V. The consideration of the revelation of the gospel by the Son of God IS A POWERFUL MOTIVE UNTO THAT DILIGENT ATTENDANCE UNTO IT. 1. And this is most reasonable upon many accounts. 1. Because of the authority wherewith He spake the word. 2. Because of the love that is in it. There is in it the love of the Father in sending the Son, for the revealing of Himself and His mind unto the children of men. There is also in it the love of the Son Himself, condescending to instruct the sons of men, who by their own fault were cast into error and darkness. 3. The fulness of the revelation itself by Him made unto us is of the same importance. He came not to declare a parcel, but the whole will of God, all that we are to know, to do, to believe: "In Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. ii. 3). 4. Because it is final. No farther revelation of God is to be expected in this world but what is made by Jesus Christ. To this we must attend, or we are lost for ever. VI. THE TRUE AND ONLY WAY OF HONOURING THE LORD CHRIST AS THE SON OF GOD IS BY DILIGENT ATTENDANCE AND OBEDIENCE UNTO HIS WORD. (*J. Owen, D.D.*) *Taking heed*:—In this exhortation, first the apostle setteth down his doctrine: then his reason by which he will persuade us unto it: his doctrine is this. I. THAT IT BEHOVETH US NOW MORE CAREFULLY TO HEARKEN TO THE WORDS OF CHRIST, THAN AFORETIME IT BEHOVED OUR FOREFATHERS TO HEARKEN TO THE LAW OF MOSES. And here we must consider why we ought to be more careful than they; not that they might omit any care to add nothing, to take away nothing, to change nothing, not to depart neither to the right hand nor yet to the left, but day and night, at home and abroad, to do always this, to study it continually, as appeareth in Deut. iv. 6, v. 32, vi. 6, xi. 18, xii. 32, xxviii. 14; Josh. i. 8, xxxiii. 6, &c. Nor is it said that we be more bound than they, as though the authority of God were changed; but because now Christ hath spoken by Himself, then by angels; now plainly, then in figures: therefore we ought more carefully to hearken, but because our punishment shall be more than theirs, even as

we be despisers of the greatest grace. II. After this, the apostle added HIS REASON TO PERSUADE US TO THIS ESPECIAL CAREFULNESS ABOVE ALL OTHER PEOPLE, to hearken to the voice of Christ; and that is, of the peril that ensueth, lest, saith he, we run out. The apostle useth a metaphor, taken of old tubs, which run out at the joints, and can hold no liquor. (*E. Deering, B.D.*) *The gospel requires the more earnest attention* :—The duty here intended is a serious and fixed setting of the mind upon that which we hear: a bending of the will to yield unto it: an applying of the heart to it, a placing of the affections upon it, and bringing the whole man into a holy conformity thereunto. Thus it compriseth knowledge of the Word, faith therein, obedience thereto, and all other due respect that may any way concern it (2 Tim. ii. 7; Matt. xv. 10, xiii. 23; Acts iv. 4, xvi. 14). The comparative degree addeth much emphasis, and intendeth a greater care and endeavour about the matter in hand, than in any other thing; as if he had said, More heed is to be given to the gospel than to the law; more to the Son than to any servant; for he speaks of the gospel preached by Christ. It may be here put for the superlative degree, and imply the greatest heed that may possibly be given; and the best care and diligence that can be used. Thus it is said of the Scriptures, "We have a more sure word"; that is, a most sure word (2 Pet. ii. 19); thus this very word in my text is often put for the superlative degree. As where Paul saith of himself, "In labours more abundant, in prisons more frequent," that is, most abundant, most frequent (2 Cor. ii. 23). Hereby as he doth incite them for the future, to make the best use that possibly they can of the gospel that had been preached unto them, so he gives a secret and mild check to their former negligence, implying that they had not given formerly such heed, as they should have done, to so precious a word as had been preached unto them, but had been too careless thereabouts, which he would have them redress for the future. (*W. Gouge.*) *Earnest attention to salvation* :—To "give earnest heed to the things which we have heard," comprehends several particulars. 1. There is the earnestness itself—that state of mind which is so graphically described (Prov. ii. 3, 4). Such earnestness, from the nature of the case, has much to do with the attainment of the object; and the importance of that object requires such earnestness. 2. There must be the decided and vigorous application of the mind to the things propounded. They must be understood, if they are to be cordially embraced and practically applied. It is needful, accordingly, that the thinking powers should be attentively directed towards them. 3. By being believed and applied, they must be turned to practical account. Without this they will miss their end. Subservient to the attainment of this threefold object, might be reckoned such rules and principles as these: 1. That the "new heart," the "Divine nature," which beats in sympathy with Christian truth, should be sought. 2. That men should watch against inward tendencies and outward influences, which are in danger of withholding them from earnest attention to the things of salvation. 3. That they should seriously ponder the relations of Divine truth to God, to their own souls, and to the destinies of the world to come. 4. That they should implore the Father-Spirit to teach and incline them to "give earnest heed" to these momentous truths, and to these high concerns. (*J. S. Patterson.*) *Fastening the impression* :—Physiologists say that the retina of the eye has a wash which, like the chemical used by the photographer, prepares the retina to receive the image and impress it for a moment, and then the image is gone. The mind must catch it instantly. So we must photograph the Word, and have our souls aroused to fasten the impression for ever. How many retain no impression, and let go their hold upon eternal things! (*J. B. Thomas, D.D.*) **To the things which we have heard.**—*For the evening of the Lord's Day* :—I. THE CAUSES OF FORGETFULNESS. 1. The indifferent manner in which we too often resort to the House of God. 2. The indifference which precedes is often carried into the House of God itself. II. THE PRINCIPAL REASONS WHY THE GOSPEL ABOVE EVERYTHING SHOULD BE ATTENTIVELY REMEMBERED. 1. It is the message of heaven to mankind, and therefore well deserves a place in the memory. 2. The peculiar character of the gospel. "The things" are of no common import, no temporary consequence, but of the highest possible moment. 3. The advantages which flow from this duty. Who enjoy the consolations of the gospel, and whose conduct is regulated by its influence? They, undoubtedly, who pay the greatest attention to it, and whose minds retain its instructions. 4. If we slight the message of truth, it will bear testimony against us, and aggravate our final condemnation. (*Homilist.*) *Inattentive hearers:*—It is said of Demosthenes that, speaking to the Athenians on a very serious subject, and finding them to be inattentive, he paused, and told them

that he had something of special importance to relate, which he was anxious that they should all hear. Silence being thus obtained, and every eye fixed upon him, he said that two men, having bargained for the hire of an ass, were travelling from Athens to Megara on a very hot day and both of them striving to enjoy the shadow of the ass, one of them said that he hired the ass and the shadow too; the other said that he hired the ass only and not the shadow. Having made this grave statement, Demosthenes retired; when the people pressed him with great eagerness to return and finish his tale. "O ye Athenians," said he, "will ye attend to me when speaking about the shadow of an ass; and will ye not attend to me when I address you on the most important affairs?" This reproof does not apply exclusively to the "men of Athens." English people are deeply concerned in it; and the ministers of Christ who are accustomed to discourse upon subjects immensely more important than any that called forth the eloquence of the Athenian orator, have reason to urge the same complaint. Many persons have an ear for vanity, but none for the truth; they will listen to folly, but not to the words of wisdom. To the things of this world they will pay a fixed attention, but to Christ and His salvation they are criminally indifferent. (*J. Thornton.*) *Redemptive truths*:—I. They are things COMMUNICATED. "We have heard" them from parents, teachers, ministers. II. They are things TO BE RETAINED. Should be held, not merely in memory as facts, but in heart as forces. III. They are things the retainment of which requires MOST DETERMINED EFFORT. 1. The loss of them would be the greatest calamity. 2. A possible calamity. Many things tend to relax the soul's hold upon them—remaining depravity within, seductive influences without. (*Homilist.*) *The gospel demands attention*:—I. By "the things which we have heard," may be fairly presumed are meant, THE GRAND DOCTRINES AND PRINCIPLES OF THE GOSPEL. II. From the text we may fairly conclude that it is the clear duty of all who have the dispensation of the gospel to give A SERIOUS AND FIXED ATTENTION to it. III. From the text we may fairly conclude that THE CONSEQUENCES OF CONTINUING TO NEGLECT THE WORD OF GOD will be distressing and awful. (*Essex Congregational Remembrancer.*) *An attentive hearing to be given to the gospel of Christ*:—Especially now in the time of the gospel: what attention is there in the Star Chamber when the Lords of the Privy Council speak? But if either the prince or the king himself make an oration, then there is wonderful attention. In the time of the Law the prophets spake, which indeed were of God's counsel, by whom God revealed His will to the people: but now the Prince of peace, the Everlasting Counsellor, the King's own Son, that lay in His own bosom, in whom all the treasures of wisdom are hid, speaketh to us. Therefore let us listen with all diligence to the things which He speaketh. And how doth Christ now speak? Not daily from heaven, as He did to Saul, but by the mouth of His ambassadors. "He that heareth you heareth Me." Will ye have an experience of Christ that speaketh in me? Christ spake in Paul when he preached; and He speaks in us when we preach. The pearl is precious though it be an earthen vessel that brings it to you: therefore receive it with all reverence. (*W. Jones, D.D.*) **Lest at any time we should let them slip.**—*Letting the truth slip*:—I. THE GREAT THINGS WE HAVE HEARD. There are no words of so profound moment as the truths of the gospel. They warn of hell, they welcome to heaven; they take from eternity its terror, and use it to measure their benefit. II. THE EASY PERIL OF THEIR LOSS. No better word for easy getting away than "slip." "He gave the officers the slip." "His foot slipped, and he sustained a fatal fall." "The whole company of travellers suddenly slipped into the deceptive, snow-filled precipice." "The hour slipped away so rapidly in easy conversation, that I missed my train and lost the opportunity of a lifetime." "While shipwrecked on a desert island, we saw a vessel. Supposing it was coming directly to us we went away after our treasure, and quickly returning, found it had slipped away far past the hearing of our wild outcries." We read every day sentences like the above. How easily are the most valuable things in this world's life lost by reason of neglect! III. THE INTENSE ATTENTION DEMANDED. It is wonderful that we can see every day the utmost pains taken to keep earth's valuables from slipping away, and can yet treat the pearl of great price so recklessly! We see the careful cooper tightening his casks; the miner watching his ores as they pass the smelting furnace; the farmer in his cultivation; the vigilant policeman; the anxious physician; the scholar strengthening his memory so as to keep knowledge from slipping away. And yet we "cram" for the great "examination" of eternity. (*C. M. Jones.*) *Drifting from Christ*:—I. MOORED TO JESUS CHRIST. It is a long while now since men began to represent their life as a running stream. It was

inevitable the figure should suggest itself to them as soon as they began to think—we all feel its appropriateness as often as we reflect upon the ceaseless vicissitude that laps our own lives round, and that is bearing us so quickly away. How remorseless the current is that flows beneath us, sometimes so noiseless, sometimes rippling in laughter against the sides of our bark, sometimes rising in foam and wrath and threatening our destruction, yet always bearing us onward upon its bosom, steadily onward to the unknown! And, when we consider it, not only how remorseless but also how rapid the movement is! How many scenes we pass through on our way! How many new reaches of experience we discover, then leave behind! How many faces flit and fade around us! How fast we all live! Of course, it would be sinful to think of this ceaseless movement in which we are all involved as if it were a mere brute fate to which we must perforce submit. This constant change to which we are all committed is, for one thing, the condition of progress. Without it life would not become the deeper, broader, larger thing which somehow it does become as our years go on. And, besides, how flat and stale it would otherwise be! And yet every one must feel that were there only ceaseless change in our earthly lot—no anchor sure and steadfast for us anywhere—life would be terrible indeed. It is only children that seek perpetual novelty—children, and those who, though they have become men, have not laid aside childish things. Wiser men begin to perceive ere long that life is not a pleasure sail after all, that the currents are stronger than they think, and may carry them away. Only Christ abides! Christ—the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever! Christ—who outlives the seeming changeless heavens themselves. Christ the True, the Unalterable Love, the Immovable Friend. II. DRIFTING FROM CHRIST. 1. A storm may have broken out in your life, and driven you away from Christ. (1) It may have been a storm of doubt. There are always some minds for whom it is peculiarly difficult to hold on to Jesus Christ. They find it hard to accept implicitly those half-revealed truths, like the Incarnation, and the Cross, and the working of God's Spirit in the heart of man, much harder than others find it. They cannot help themselves. Their mind works speculatively. They must peer over the edge of the known truth into the unknown abysses beneath, and there they stand amazed, affrighted. Also, perhaps, in our own time it is more difficult than ever for such persons to believe. A vast number of new ideas have been thrown lately into the general mind which there has hardly been time as yet to estimate and assign to their proper place; and then, perhaps, men, becoming acquainted with these ideas, as they must, are at a loss to know how exactly to adjust the old view of things to them. (2) Or the storm may have been a storm of trouble. Sometimes, I know, a storm of this kind may drive men to Christ rather than away from Him. But sometimes, too, it happens that the tempest that sends one man to Jesus Christ drives another away. He cannot see the meaning of a visitation so sore, or the righteousness of it, or any light upon it at all. Existence darkens round the man, and everything he once was sure of slips away from him—everything, including Christ. 2. Or, again, it may be an influence less obvious that does it. I question very much whether we make as much allowance as we should for what you may call the ebb and flow of the tide of life in us all. Perhaps it is because we understand so little about it. The fact appears to be that it is with man as with Nature. We know how the heart of Nature beats time to a mysterious mighty rhythm, and how regularly recurring are those deep respirations of her life which we name summer and winter, and night and day. But we forget how our own tiny being seems to share in this hidden law. Our very body is attuned to it; there are periods in our life at which our vitality is greater; others at which it is less; nay, in every twenty-four hours a wave of life-force rises within us, then falls again—so that a doctor will tell you beforehand at what hour the sufferer's strength will flicker up most brightly, when it will be spent and die. Now, on this physical basis I believe more of the moral phenomena of our lives depend than we are aware. Our temptations mix themselves up strangely with this ebb and flow that ceaselessly goes on within. Our animalism takes advantage of the flowing tide of lustihood in youth to come in upon us like a flood. With the ebb of manhood's early vigour enthusiasm and the capacity of an ardent faith and love are apt to ebb also. And even at intervals much more frequent the same sort of thing occurs. If you will watch your temptations—especially the more notable of them—carefully you will find they almost obey a law of periodicity. As hunger and thirst assert themselves (roughly speaking) at regularly recurring intervals, so do our temptations. Our sins, like ourselves, if they slumber for a time, awake with renewed energy. 3. If it has been neither of

these, then it may have been something more slow and subtle and secret still. You have seen a vessel, owing to no storm or the rise of any tide, but simply through the restlessness of the element in which it floats, gradually loosen from its moorings, and little by little be borne out to sea. And even when no more powerful currents are passing around us there is this infinite restlessness in all our lives which may of itself be fatal. Repose is an impossibility here. A thousand varying cares and moods and occupations agitate the surface of our lives. And with this there comes a chafing which may by slow degrees wear out the strands of loyalty that bind us to our Lord. Indeed, when Christians drift from Christ it is probably, in the vast majority of cases, due to this very cause. III. REGAINING ONE'S MOORINGS. You will observe that the counsel the writer gives is with a view rather to prevent so sad a lapsing. It is the same prescription that applies here, whether the case be one of prevention or of cure. And certainly no prescription could well be simpler. It is by no violent efforts, no beating up against the adverse forces of his life, that any man will regain his old attachment to Jesus Christ, but just by giving "earnest heed —the more earnest heed to things he has heard about Him." It is contemplation of the truth that brings him back again, and contemplation, not so much of any new discoveries he may make concerning Jesus Christ, but just of those familiar aspects of His person and His work that first won his trust. There is that in Jesus Christ which, if He is pondered humbly, has the power to draw the heart as with the force of gravity to centre and stay itself once more on Him. It is a great thing to keep near the old familiar truths—to keep near the old familiar Christ! The stable Christian is always the simple Christian. Think of the staunchest believer you know, the least moved by any storms; how, you ask, has this steadfastness come to him? Infallibly thus: through going much apart with God to muse and pray; through often saying within his heart, "Jesus, my Friend, is God"; through kneeling at the cross till the conviction has begun to stir within him, "He loved me, He gave Himself for me"; through pondering the vastness of forgiveness; through much looking in the Spirit towards that crown of righteousness which is laid up for him against that day. Such a believer has many an anchor to hold him. Neither things present nor things to come will separate him from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (*Alex. Martin, M.A.*) *Soul drifting*:—I. WHAT IS THIS DRIFT? It is the dying out of impression, the decay of faith, the gradual loss of force. The writer is not contemplating a change of attitude towards the gospel brought about by a previous intellectual movement to which the man himself had been a party, but one which very slowly, but very certainly, reflects the silent action of unseen and unrecognised forces which are at work within and around him, and the ultimate effect of which may be an utter loss of all which once he most valued, and an abandonment to influences which once he regarded with mingled hatred and dread. 1. There is here clearly an anticipation of drift both in doctrine and practice. The two are regarded as so united that the one cannot suffer and the other be uninjured. The truth which holds a man rules his life, and the only way of getting rid of the effect is to remove the cause. 2. The survival of Christian life after the loss of Christian faith is a contingency the sacred writer does not contemplate. The drift is a drift of the entire man—affections, aims, motives, as well as principles. 3. Drift is always to evil. It is by struggle that we advance heavenward; but there are countless influences inclining us to a retrograde course. Without a strong force within, and without constant communications of Divine grace to maintain and strengthen it, we shall infallibly go back. II. MARK THE SOURCES OF THIS EVIL. 1. It is not easy—if it be not impossible—for a Christian to live in the world without being exposed to influences unfriendly to his faith and loyalty. 2. It is in the tendencies of the age—tendencies which may have much in them that is beautiful and admirable—that this peril lies. They assail us on the side where we least expect danger, and they have so fair and winning an aspect that it is hard to meet them with stern resistance. 3. These tendencies often, in their more exaggerated form, shape public sentiment, and the fear is lest we yield to the influence which they unconsciously exercise without sufficient discrimination between the good and the evil which may be in them. The spirit of the age is against severity, whether in doctrine or practice; is easily moved by an appeal for Christian charity, and, with equal readiness, is excited to a righteous indignation against bigotry, and if it can itself be guilty of any approach to intolerance, is intolerant only of intolerance. The drift is to change; to greater breadth of thought, sympathy, and action; to creeds less elaborate and minute; to laws of conduct less exacting and severe, to enlarged freedom everywhere. III. Is it

necessary to point out THE POSSIBLE AND EVEN PROBABLE CONSEQUENCES. A little vessel which has been torn from its moorings, and is being carried far out to sea by the strong currents which are bearing it whithersoever they will, may be engulfed in some hidden quicksand, dashed to pieces on some rugged rock, carried thousands of miles away and stranded on a distant shore. The possibilities of evil are limitless to the ship which has lost helm and rudder, or has no one capable of using them wisely, and is at the mercy of wild winds and waves. There need be no truer picture of a soul that is drifting. It has escaped from the truths which once held it with a certain degree of force, which was a restraint from evil and a stimulus to good. Day by day they are receding into the distance, and becoming more dim and uncertain, while the soul, acted upon by all varieties of influence, is borne hither and thither, uncertain in its aims, unstable in its course, unconscious of the fate to which it may be hastening. One thing only is sure about it—it is every day being carried further and further from all which once it loved and valued. Rocks of barren unbelief, or whirlpools of seductive pleasure and indulgence, may be in the path on which it is advancing, but there seems no power to arrest its course. The man has left himself to be the sport and plaything of outside circumstances or influences harmonising only too well with inclinations within, and now he is drifting before them to a miserable shipwreck of faith and of a good conscience. (*J. G. Rogers, B.A.*) *Drifting from Christ*:—I. THIS REPRESENTS A STATE WHICH IS FEARFULLY POSSIBLE (Hosea vi. 4; 1 Tim. v. 15). 1. This is so in part because we are not always moored to Christ when we are brought to Him. A ship may be skilfully guided into the harbour, her crew may be able to leap ashore, and there she will remain till the tide turns; but then, unless her cables are thrown out and she is fastened there, she will drift to sea again. So we may be brought to Christ, a number of influences may lead us to Him, we may be so affected by religious emotion and reverence for Him, and even a belief in our personal salvation as to be ready to endure "reproaches and afflictions," and we may seem to be Christians, yet we may not have joined ourselves to the Redeemer by an act of living faith. Whilst the tide runs that way (and that may be for years) our safety is unsuspected even by ourselves; but let a change come, and slowly we slip away, and at length on some distant coast others come across the fragment of a wreck that bears our name. We may be close to Christ for long without the cable of faith binding us to Him, and thus the soul may drift away even from Him and be lost. 2. Besides which there are powerful adverse currents which tend to carry us from the Saviour. Difficulties occur, the fear of man begins to tell, the winds of temptation blow, the current of worldly custom runs strong, the unseen force of old habits and depraved inclination increases, and then! well, however strong the cable, it will creak and strain, and every fibre of it be needed to hold the ship. But what if there be no cable—no vital faith? Why, then the soul will inevitably part company with Christ. 3. And this drifting away is more likely, because our departure from Christ may be for some time imperceptible. How many Christians there are whose religion once a delightful reality has become poor, who think distressingly, "Oh, that I were as in days that are past!" who can see how far they have drifted, but did not know they were drifting at the time, and who scourge themselves because of it! II. TO DRIFT AWAY FROM CHRIST IS TO DRIFT TO RUIN. 1. To drift away from Christ is to forsake the only refuge for sinful men. The blessings we so sorely need are there alone, away from Him is but the wintry shoreless sea of doom. 2. To drift away from Christ is to disregard the supreme claims of Christ. For there is another aspect of drifting away from the Saviour; it is not simply how it affects us, but how it affects Him. Oh, could we have but a glimpse of Him and of His authority, great horror would seize us at the thought of departing from Him. But when we further see this glorious One for us men pour out His soul in the anguish of the cross, and still cleave to us notwithstanding our worthlessness and sin, we are self-condemned to the lowest perdition if we suffer anything to let us drift away from Him, and may well ask in awe, "How shall we escape?" 3. To drift away from Christ is to resist the grace that has brought us close to Him. III. THIS, THEN, IS A LOUD CALL TO EARNEST HEED LEST WE DRIFT AWAY. 1. If we are moored to Christ our blessedness consists in the maintenance of close fellowship with Him. 2. Though we are close to Christ, we are in great peril till we are anchored there. 3. If we are drifting away from Christ, everything depends on our returning before we get further off. (*C. New.*) *Drifting*:—I prefer the rendering given by the revisers: "lest we should drift away from them"; it is a more exact translation of the Greek term, and brings into prominence a truth which is almost entirely concealed by the

common version. The writer is anxious to warn his readers of something which might happen to them before they were aware. On my first tour through Switzerland I visited the quaint old city of Thun, along with three intimate friends. We stayed at a hotel built on the side of the lake, just at the place where the Aar runs rapidly out of it, and we went to amuse ourselves for a season by rowing about in a little boat. After awhile a difference of opinion sprang up among us as to the direction we should take. One said, "Let us go yonder"; another answered, "No; let us rather make for that other point"; a third had another suggestion, and we ceased rowing until we should make up our minds; but meanwhile the current was settling the question for us, and unless we had speedily bent to the oars with all our might, we should have been hurried along into a dangerous place, out of which we could only have been rescued, if rescued at all, by the assistance of others. The influences, therefore, against which we are warned by the text are those of currents which are flowing just where we are, and which may operate so insidiously that we may not know of their effect until perhaps it is too late to resist their power. I. Take then, first, that which I may call THE AGE-CURRENT, or what a recent English essayist, borrowing from the German, has called the "Time-spirit." A physical science which has taken up with the doctrine of development, and has insisted that what is at best an ingenious hypothesis shall be accepted as a demonstrated fact, has prepared the way for an agnostic philosophy which refuses to believe that anything can be known save that which can be perceived by the bodily senses, aided by the scalpel and the microscope, and that, in its turn, has given birth to a rank atheism, which has adopted as its creed the terrible negation, No God. If it be true that the standard of piety and morality is lower among Christians than it was formerly; if it be the case that the Church is less of an aggressive force in our large centres of population than it was a generation ago; if the numbers of those enrolling themselves in its ranks are smaller than they have been in other days, may it not be owing to the fact that we have not been taking heed to guard against this age-drift which has been flowing beneath us? Let us get back to Christ, and anchor fast on Him. II. The second current to which I would refer is that of THE PLACE IN WHICH WE DWELL. Every city has its own peculiar influence. We must guard against the slightest backsliding; and to succeed in that we must constantly test ourselves by the things which we have heard from Jesus. The navigator is saved from danger from unknown currents by his daily observations. The tides of ocean do not affect the heavenly bodies; and by testing himself by these he knows precisely where he is. So the principles of the gospel are not shifted by the tendencies of any place; and when we measure ourselves by them, we may discover how it is with us. Let us not take it for granted that because we are making some effort in the right direction, therefore we must be going forward. For these efforts may not be enough to resist the force of the current, and we may be drifting backward after all. You remember the case of Sir Edward Parry's crew in the Arctic regions. They set out one day to draw a boat over the ice, expecting thereby to get farther northward and in the open water, but after they had journeyed thus far, if I remember rightly, a day and a half or two days, they took an observation, which revealed to their surprise that they were farther south than they had been when they set out, because while they had been going toward the pole, the ice on which they were had been carried by the drift of an under-current in the opposite direction. I fear that in this great business mart, where we are so exclusively occupied in buying and selling, and getting gain, many Christians among us are like these northern voyagers: they make exertions, and they seem, too, to be making progress; but, alas! the drift that carries the whole place has carried them with it, and in reality they are not so far advanced as they were, it may be, years ago. III. A third current, to the influence of which we are exposed, I would call THE PERSONAL DRIFT, the drift in each of us individually. In making astronomical observations, one operator is never precisely the same as another. Some are quick, others are slow; some are exceedingly precise, and others not so perfectly exact; and these differences, of course, affect the results at which they arrive. Therefore, to neutralise, as far as possible, any error which may be thereby occasioned, there is what is known as a "personal equation" for each, and by that his conclusions are rectified before they are sent forth for general acceptance. Now, in a similar way, spiritually, each man has his individual tendencies, which easily carry him in one direction or another. This personal drift, as I have named it, is the same thing as the writer of the Epistle from which my text is taken calls in another place the "sin that doth most easily beset us," and by

yielding to that many are carried at last into perdition. How easy it is to acquire an evil habit! (*W. M. Taylor, D.D.*) *How to keep the Word from slipping from us*:—We must let the Word slip at no time, though we have never such weighty business: one thing is necessary. This one thing necessary is to be preferred before all others: never let a sermon slip from you without some profit. But how shall we keep them from slipping away? There be four things to hold the Word from slipping from us—1. A meditation in that which we have heard: blessed is the man that meditateth in the law of God. When thou hast heard a sermon, take some time to meditate on it, that thou mayest imprint it on thy memory. This is a common fault among us. The Word of God preached to us passeth away. When we are once out of the Church, we never think on it again, therefore no marvel though it slip away from us. 2. Conference with others. The disciples that travelled to Emmaus conferred together; the Bereans that came from St. Paul's sermon, took their Bibles and conferred together of the sermon. Many eyes see more than one; that which one hath forgotten, another may remember. Therefore let Christians recount the things they have heard, and that repetition will be as a nail to fasten the things they heard. 3. Prayer. 4. A care to practise that which we have heard. This is the digesting of our spiritual meat, and the converting of it into our substance. Many hear, but few care to practise that which they hear; it is never our own truly and indeed, till it be practised; that will make us grow up as perfect men in Christ Jesus. We hear swearing reproved, yet we swear still; drunkenness inveighed against, yet we are drunk still; envy and malice controlled, yet malicious still, yea, against the preachers, that are as God's arm to pull us out of our sins: a manifest argument that we hold not that which we hear, but suffer it without fruit to slip from us. (*W. Jones, D.D.*) *Men ruined by drifting*:—Life's ocean is full of currents, any one of which will sweep us past the harbour mouth even when we seem nearest to it, and carry us far out to sea. It is the drift that ruins men: the drift of the religious world; the drift of old habits and associations; the drift of one's own evil nature; the drift of the pressure of temptation. The young man coming from a pious home does not distinctly and deliberately say, "I renounce my father's God." But he finds himself in a set of business associates who have no care for religion; and, after a brief struggle, he relaxes his efforts and begins to drift, until the coastline of heaven recedes so far into the dim distance that he is doubtful if he ever really saw it. The business man, who now shamelessly follows the lowest maxims of his trade, was once upright and high-minded. But he began by yielding in very trivial points to the strong pressure of competition; and when once he had allowed himself to be caught by the tide, it bore him far beyond his first intention. The professing Christian, who now scarcely pretends to open the Bible or pray, came to so terrible a position, not at a single leap, but by yielding to the pressure of the constant waywardness of the old nature, and thus drifted into an Arctic region, where he is likely to perish, benumbed and frozen, unless rescued, and launched on the warm Gulf Stream of the love of God. It is so easy, and so much pleasanter to drift. Just to lie back, and renounce effort, and let yourself go whither the waters will, as they break musically on the sides of the rocking boat. But, ah, how ineffable the remorse, how disastrous the result! Are you drifting? You can easily tell. Are you conscious of effort, of daily, hourly resistance to the stream around you, and within? Do the things of God and heaven loom more clearly on your vision? Do the waters foam angrily at your prow as you force your way through them? If so, rejoice; but remember that only Divine strength can suffice to maintain the conflict, and keep the boat's head against the stream. If not, you are drifting. Hail the strong Son of God. Ask Him to come on board, and stay you, and bring you into port. (*F. B. Meyer, B.A.*) *The influences that cause men to drift from Christ*:—The forces that with a continuous action tend to move men away from the faith of Christ, and were especially strong in the case of the Hebrews, are—the many influences of life; the feeling of isolation in the world, or, the other side of this, sympathy with national sentiment and thought; the hardships and slights undergone at the hands of those without; and the monotonous uniformity of the world, where all things continue as they were and give no signs of the Lord's coming: while the resistance offered to such forces is but feeble, owing to the sluggishness of the mind which permits it to take but a loose hold of truth, and the weakness of faith which makes it but dimly present to itself the hope of our calling. (*A. B. Davidson, LL.D.*) *Slipping back prevented*:—It would produce a wonderful change if men did all they knew they ought to do. There would then be a new encouragement

to labour. The preaching of the Word would then make steady progress. I have seen the waggons of Pennsylvania armed with a stout, iron-shod stake trailing behind. Whenever in ascending a hill the horses stopped, the stake at once held the waggon fast and prevented it from slipping back. A device worthy of imitation in spiritual things! It is discouraging to press up the hill on the Sabbath-day and then keep slipping back through the week; to make large advance in a time of religious interest, and then slip downward through long succeeding months of deadness in the Church. Cannot this be prevented? Yes, by obedience to the suggestion before us we may hold ourselves firm. If each deed of life is faithfully performed according to our knowledge of duty, then are we going steadily on in spiritual blessing, losing no ground in our advance. We shall at last reach the summit of our hopes and stand in Christ's presence "complete in Him."

Ver. 2. **The Word spoken by angels**:—*The ministry of angels* in the delivery of the law is directly asserted by St. Paul (Gal. iii. 19), and by Stephen (Acts. vii. 53), as well as here. It was an article of faith amongst the later Jews, but the mention of their agency is less distinct in the Pentateuch. The presence of the heavenly host is proclaimed in Deut. xxxiii. 2, and Psa. lxviii. 17, and an important function in the guidance and government of Israel was assigned to the angel of the covenant (Exod. xxiii. 20, 23); but the Divine presence and heavenly voice manifested at Sinai are not identified with angelic agency, as they are by Stephen in the case of the burning bush and of Sinai (Acts vii. 30, 38). The Pentateuch is content to give the voice as an utterance of God, as does also this Epistle in xii. 26, without associating any angel with the utterance. And this mode of speaking agrees with the ordinary language of this Epistle, which attributes the words of the prophets to God speaking in them. But the simple language of Exodus was open to misinterpretation; men inferred from it a visible presence of God, and a strong protest against this idolatrous tendency was pronounced in Deut. iv. 12. Hence the expediency of explaining the material voice that spoke from heaven by the definite introduction of angelic mediators, in whom God made His revelation to man. (*F. Rendall, M.A.*) *The difference between transgression and disobedience*:—The verb from whence the first word in Greek is derived, properly signifieth "to pass over a thing": metaphorically having reference to a law, or any other rule, it signifieth to swerve from that rule, or to violate and break that law (Matt. xv. 3). In this metaphorical sense this word is often used in relation to the law of God, and put for any breach thereof (Rom. iv. 15; Gal. iii. 19). It is put for the first sin of Adam (Rom. v. 14), and for Eve's special sin (1 Tim. ii. 14). The other word according to the notation of it in Greek, intimateth a turning of the ear from that which is spoken; and that with a kind of obstinacy and contumacy, as where Christ saith of an obstinate brother if he neglect to hear (Matt. xviii. 7), or obstinately refuse to hear. I find the word here translated disobedience, twice opposed to a willing and ready obedience, namely, of true saints (2 Cor. x. 6), and of Christ (Rom. v. 19). This opposition importeth a wilful disobedience, or a contumacy as some here translate the word. Others under the former word "transgression," comprise sins of commission, and under the latter word "disobedience," sins of omission. For the verb from whence the latter word is derived signifieth to neglect or refuse to hear (Matt. xviii. 17). There is, beyond question, a difference betwixt these two words, either in the degrees or in the kinds of disobedience, in which respect the universal, or (as it is here used), distributive particle "every" is premised, to show that no transgression, great or mean, in one or other kind passed unpunished. Let not any think, by mincing his sin, to escape punishment. A prophet having reckoned up a catalogue of sins, some greater, some lighter, maketh this inference—"If a man do the like to any one of these things . . . he shall surely die" (Ezek. xviii. 10, 13). Every particular branch of God's law is as a distinct link of a chain; if any one link fail, the whole chain is broken. The will of the Law-maker is disobeyed in every transgression (James ii. 10, 11). Herein lieth a main difference betwixt a faithful servant of God and a formal professor: the former makes conscience of every sin, the latter of such only as are less agreeable to his own corrupt humour, or such as he conceiveth most damageable to himself. (*W. Gouge.*) *God's retributive justice*:—If men trifle with the law of God, the law will not trifle with them; it has taken hold of the sinners of former ages, and will take hold of them in all ages. (*M. Henry.*) *The equity of retribution*:—The severest punishment God ever inflicted upon sinners is no more than what sin deserves; it is "just recompense of reward." Punishments are as just, and as much due to sin as rewards are to

obedience; yea, more due than rewards are to imperfect obedience. (*Ibid.*) *Warnings*:—A very skilful bowman went to the mountains in search of game. All the beasts of the forest fled at his approach. The lion alone challenged him to combat. The bowman immediately let fly an arrow, and said to the lion, "I send thee my messenger, that from him thou mayst learn what I myself shall be when I assail thee." The lion thus wounded rushed away in great fear, and on a fox exhorting him to be of good courage, and not to run away at the first attack: "You counsel me in vain, for if he sends so fearful a messenger, how shall I abide the attack of the man himself?" If the warning admonitions of God's ministers fill the conscience with terror, what must it be to face the Lord Himself? (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Ver. 3. **How shall we escape, if we neglect.**—*The sinfulness and the danger of neglecting the gospel*:—The great salvation of which the apostle testifies is not the salvation which the gospel reveals, but the gospel itself, even the good news of the kingdom, which, by His Son, God in these last days hath spoken unto us (chap. i. 2). The salvation which is in Christ Jesus may, with the most obvious propriety, be denominated great, if we compare it with the deliverance which was wrought for the house of Israel, when the Lord brought them out of the land of Egypt. The former was a temporal deliverance, the latter is a spiritual salvation, including deliverance from sin and wrath—from everlasting destruction; and not only deliverance from all evil, but also the enjoyment of eternal life. What is it to neglect so great salvation? "All things are ready, come unto the marriage," is the intimation which the servants of the King, according to His commandment, gave to those who were bidden to the marriage of His Son. Did they regard this kind, this generous invitation as duty and interest required? No. "They made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise." They who neglect so great salvation, make light of the gospel. They do not regard it as the way of eternal life; they do not give to it that cordial reception to which it is entitled. The great salvation is neglected by all who enjoy the means of religious knowledge, and yet remain ignorant of the faith once delivered to the saints; by all who do not with the heart believe unto righteousness, how much knowledge soever they may have attained; by all who continue in the love and practice of sin, who profess to know God, but in works deny Him—who do not give to the salvation of their souls the preference to every other object of pursuit. I. To NEGLECT SO GREAT SALVATION IS A VERY HEINOUS SIN. 1. The dignity of Him by whom the great salvation has been made known to us, illustrates the wickedness of neglecting it. 2. The wickedness which is included in rejecting the gospel of the blessed God our Saviour, is illustrated by the clear and full revelation which it makes of the way of eternal life. The mystery of salvation by the obedience and the death of the Son of God, which was hid from ages and generations, is clearly revealed, and hath appeared unto all men. The gospel proclaims tidings so good and so interesting, that, on the acknowledged principles of human nature, it seems at first view reasonable to conclude, that to a very faint discovery of them, all whom they concern must give the most earnest heed. How inexcusable, then, must be they who turn away from Him who now speaketh from heaven, proclaiming in the clearest manner, "Peace on earth, and good-will to men!" 3. The wickedness of neglecting so great salvation is illustrated by the infallible proofs of its Divine origin by which it is recommended to our acceptance. That the gospel is indeed the Word of the living God is established by the most abundant evidence. Do you require evidence to convince you that the gospel which the apostles preached, is, indeed, the great salvation which, at the first, began to be spoken by the Lord? What you require, the text supplies in rich abundance. "So, then, after the Lord had spoken unto them, He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God; and they went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the Word by signs following." That the God who cannot lie will not attest what is false, is a self-evident truth. He cannot be deceived, and He will not, He cannot deceive. If, therefore, the God of heaven bears testimony to the doctrine which the apostles published, it must be the great salvation which, at the first, began to be spoken by the Lord. II. THE JUST RECOMPENSE OF REWARD WHICH AWAITS THOSE WHO REJECT THE COUNSEL OF GOD AGAINST THEMSELVES. 1. The righteousness of God renders it necessary that, on them who make light of that mercy which the gospel reveals, judgment shall be executed. 2. The condemnation of those who neglect so great salvation must be dreadful beyond conception. 3. The condemna-

tion of those who neglect so great salvation is most certain. (*W. Kidston, D.D.*) *The inexcusableness of rejecting the gospel*:—1. Here is the intrinsic goodness and excellency of the thing itself, which wicked men reject; intimated as a just ground why they should not escape unpunished. 2. This further consideration, that the gospel is an express and positive revelation of the will of God, is a very high aggravation of the sin of neglecting so great a salvation. 3. The dignity and excellency of the Person, by and through whom this great salvation is proposed to us, is a further aggravation of the sin of rejecting it. 4. The strength and clearness of the evidence, and the number and greatness of the proofs, made use of to assure us of the truth of the gospel, is the highest aggravation of the guilt of those who neglect or disobey it, and that which of all other things renders them the most absolutely inexcusable. (*S. Clarke, D.D.*) *The guilt of the unconverted in neglecting the offered salvation*:—I. THE GREATNESS OF THE SALVATION, which every unconverted person despises. It is a deliverance from the eternal ruin due to our sins; from the dominion of sin and Satan on earth, and from the doom of Satan after death; from present terror and from eternal remorse; from the wrath of an infinite Avenger; from a sorrow, which is near at hand, inevitable, intolerable, eternal; from all that thought shrinks to contemplate, and more than the imagination ever conceived. It is, on the other hand, an admission to blessings as vast. To adoption into the family of God; to all the privileges of His believing people; to be loved by Him, watched over, provided for, cheered, consoled, sustained, and guided to glory. It is an invitation to accept the blessings, given after the greatest provocation—a guilt which is incalculable. It is a salvation offered to those, who by the obduracy of their hearts and the ungodliness of their lives, persevered in through long years, have deserved that the Lord should exclude them from His favour for ever. It is a salvation provided for such rebellious transgressors at the cost of the death of Christ. II. WHAT IS IT TO NEGLECT IT? It might seem that it was impossible to neglect a mercy such as this. The traveller, when he is dying of thirst in the desert, does not reject the gushing spring, which, bubbling at his feet, offers him refreshment and life. The prisoner does not hug his chain, and draw back from the sunshine and liberty offered him, to the damps and darkness of his dungeon. The sick man never scorns health. The poor dejected and homeless wanderer would never refuse proffered wealth. Yet it is not only possible to neglect this salvation, but it is too certain that it is very generally neglected—that while the road to perdition is crowded by multitudes, the road to glory is straight and narrow "and few there be that find it." To neglect this great salvation is, evidently, not to obtain the blessings which it proposes; by whatever mode that neglect is manifested, in whatever way those blessings are lost, to lose them is to neglect this "great salvation." God has offered them to sinners freely; He has set before you plainly the way in which they may be made yours; He has offered them only in that one way; and therefore if either another way of obtaining them is preferred, or if they are not sought in this way, then is such a person chargeable with neglecting this great salvation. III. THE GUILT OF NEGLECTING IT. That guilt is clearly implied in the expression in our text, "How shall we escape" if we neglect it? "How shall we escape?"—it evidently implies, that there is in it such a guilt as must provoke the severest punishment. 1. In the first place, you despise these blessings. Heaven, and the pardon of your sins, and the renewal of your hearts, and the indwelling Spirit, the love of God, a holy and a blameless life, a glorious crown, an immortality of holiness and happiness—all this you despise. But I have a heavier charge to bring against you. 2. It is evil enough to disregard these mercies, but every unconverted person is also guilty of inconceivable ingratitude towards God. (*B. W. Noel, M.A.*) *The danger of neglecting Christ and salvation*:—I. THE GOSPEL SALVATION IS GREAT. 1. The deliverance of Noah from the general destruction brought upon the old world was wonderful; but the deliverance of our souls from the deluge of God's wrath, by the gospel, is greater. The preservation of Lot from the destruction of Sodom was great; but the salvation we obtain by the gospel, from the vengeance of eternal fire, is greater. 2. The Author of this salvation (Isa. ix. 6), God manifest in the flesh (1 Tim. iii. 16; Isa. lix. 16). 3. The means (Rom. viii. 3; Isa. liii. 3; Heb. ix. 22). 4. The salvation itself, or the benefits that accrue to believers through Jesus Christ. (1) We are saved from the guilt of all our sins (Rom. viii. 1; Acts xiii. 39). (2) Believers are saved from the power of sin (Rom. vi. 6, 14). (3) Believers are saved from the contagion of sin (1 John iii. 9; Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 29). (4) They that are delivered from the body of sin and death, are saved, likewise, from fear; from all fear that hath torment (1 John iv. 18; 1 Cor. xv. 55; Isa. xii. 1). (5) Believers are saved from

the power of the grave (1 Cor. xv. 53; Phil. iii. 21). (6) The saints shall be saved from hell and all misery (Rev. vii. 17; Psa. xvi. 11). II. WHO ARE THEY THAT NEGLECT IT? 1. Those who live in any known sin. 2. Those who trust in their own righteousness (Rom. x. 3.) 3. Those who do not seek this salvation more than other objects. III. THOSE WHO PERSIST IN THE NEGLECT OF THIS SALVATION CANNOT ESCAPE PUNISHMENT. 1. In this life conscience condemns them; therefore are they like the troubled sea (Isa. lvii. 20, 21). There is a curse on them, and on whatsoever they do. 2. At judgment justice will seize upon them (Rev. vi. 15, 16; Rom. xiv. 12; Prov. ii. 22). 3. In hell the vengeance of God will still pursue them (Psa. ix. 17, xi. 6; Rev. xxi. 8). Application: 1. How glorious is the gospel-scheme of salvation, how far superior to all those wonderful deliverances which God wrought in old times! Christ is our only refuge (Isa. xxxii. 2). 2. It is easy to see how heinous a thing sin is in the sight of God; how infinite and inconceivable the love of God is towards sinners (John iii. 16; 1 Pet. iii. 18). 3. Consider the great, the glorious salvation, which is offered to you by the gospel. Seek it while it may be found (Isa. lv. 7; Heb. iii. 7, 8; 2 Cor. vi. 2). 4. Remember how it shall happen to all those who forget God (Rom. ii. 8, 9; Psa. l. 22). Speedily give up all for Christ (Phil. iii. 8). 5. Though you may have neglected this great salvation to the present moment, God is willing and ready to pardon. Great salvation for great sinners (1 Tim. i. 15; John vi. 37). 6. Never rest till you rest in Christ. (*J. Hannam.*) *The certainty that punishment in eternity awaits the unconverted*:—I. THE WORD OF GOD EXPRESSLY DECLARES THAT GOD WILL PUNISH SINNERS. II. THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD, HIS REVEALED PERFECTIONS, NO LESS CERTAINLY SECURE THE PUNISHMENT OF THE SINNER HEREAFTER. III. We have another and an independent proof that the impenitent sinner must look for a severe retribution when he comes before the judgment of his Maker, derived from THE PAST JUDGMENTS WHICH HE HAS INFLICTED ON ACCOUNT OF SIN. 1. Often have individuals been made to experience the instant vengeance that God takes upon iniquity. Under the Mosaic law the provisions were exceedingly severe, to mark to that people that God abhors transgression. 2. On many occasions God has manifested His anger against sin, towards multitudes at once. 3. Once again; contemplate a more awful wreck, and a worse disaster yet. Think of those angelic beings, that once were in the presence of God, loving, holy, happy beyond fear, who seemed in their Maker's favour to have a shield that would secure them to eternity. Those angels transgressed the will of God. And "keeping not their first estate" they are now visited by no mercy, reserved to an eternity of horror. What God has done, why, sinner! should He not do again? How can you plead an exemption from the curse that has rested upon so many? IV. But there is another fact, still more awful than all—another argument still more potent than these. If every other proof that God will visit iniquity were lost, if His Word were silent, if we otherwise knew not His attributes, if there were no past judgments to point at, still in THE CROSS OF CHRIST you would read a manifestation of the wrath of God against iniquity, which must reduce to hopelessness every considerate person still living in sin, or must reduce to silence at the last day every sinner that will cling to delusive hope. For why did Christ die? Because God will manifest how He hates iniquity; because He must—because holiness, justice, truth, goodness, and mercy require that He must—show that He hates sin. (*B. W. Noel, M.A.*) *The danger of neglecting the great salvation.* I. THE ONLY WAY OF SALVATION FOR SINNERS IS REVEALED BY THE GOSPEL (2 Tim. i. 10). 1. They must needs be strangers to the great salvation, who slight the gospel that brings the good tidings of it. 2. If the gospel alone brings the tidings of salvation for lost sinners, how thankful should you be to God for this revelation. 3. If the gospel alone brings you the tidings of salvation for lost sinners—a salvation we all needed to hear of and be interested in—then how worthy is it of all acceptation. II. WHAT THE SALVATION IS, WHICH THE GOSPEL ALONE REVEALS. III. WHY THE SALVATION REVEALED BY THE GOSPEL IS CALLED "GREAT." 1. It is great salvation, as it is the product of infinite wisdom and unerring counsel. 2. From the dignity of the Person that wrought it out. 3. It is a fruit of a great price, even of the obedience and death of Jesus Christ. 4. It is applied by almighty power, against all the opposition of Satan, of an evil world, and even of the very soul itself who is made partaker of it. 5. It delivers the soul from everything that is evil. 6. It brings the soul from darkness to light, from death to life, from the power of Satan unto God. 7. It is a fruit of great grace. IV. SOME UNDER THE GOSPEL NEGLECT THE GREAT SALVATION. 1. Notice how the greatest and most dangerous sin under the gospel is described. "Neglect" not the only remedy, the true riches. It is an injury to Father, Son, and Spirit. It is a

high affront offered to the wisdom of God, and to His goodness and grace in Christ. 2. Notice the misery of those that neglect the great salvation. They are condemned already (John iii. 18). 3. Who are they, among all the hearers of the gospel, that neglect the great salvation? (1) Such as satisfy themselves with notions of the gospel, and take no care about the transforming virtue of the Word of God upon their souls (1 Thess. i. 5). (2) Such as have often heard of the danger of sin, yet live in the love and practice of it. (3) Such as hear of the necessity of an interest in Jesus Christ, but take no care to win Christ and be found in Him. (4) Such as know their Master's will, and have no heart to do it. (5) Such as have but a low esteem of the gospel of Christ, and the ordinances of it. (6) Such as never inquire what they shall do to be saved, how they may escape the wrath to come. 4. Whence is it that some, who are placed by kind Providence under the gospel and ministry, neglect the great salvation? (1) From the blindness of their minds, and ignorance of their hearts. They are not sensible of their misery, the guilt, bondage, defilement, and poverty that sin has brought them to. (2) From the atheism of their hearts. (3) From their natural aversion to the Word and ways of God. V. THERE IS NO POSSIBLE WAY FOR THEIR ESCAPING ETERNAL MISERY WHO CONTINUE TO NEGLECT THE GREAT SALVATION. 1. Some impenitent sinners hope to escape the wrath of God, though they neglect the great salvation. 2. Every one under the gospel should exercise their own judgment, reason, and conscience about their present behaviour, under their present trusts, and seriously think what will be the issue of their present carriage. 3. There is no mercy to be shown to impenitent sinners after this life, if they die in their sins. 4. Neglecting the great salvation is the only damning sin. (1) It is a high affront to each of the Persons in the Holy Trinity. (2) It is a slight of the only remedy. 5. The punishment that shall be inflicted, at last, upon impenitent sinners, for their neglect of the great salvation, will be found to be just. (1) God has given them fair warning by His word. (2) They will receive nothing at the great day but the just fruit of their rebellion against the Lord Jesus Christ. (3) They will receive nothing but their own wishes and a retaliation of their own language (Job xxi. 14). Uses: 1. Inferences. (1) Hence we see how wonderfully rich the goodness of God is to poor lost mankind, in providing this great salvation for them. (2) The goodness of God is further displayed in revealing this great salvation to us by the gospel. (3) We learn hence the sin and folly, the danger and misery of such as sit under the gospel and yet neglect the great salvation. (4) Such as neglect the great salvation will be found the greatest losers; a greater loss never was or can be sustained. (5) Those of you who are partakers of this great salvation, you see where your treasure lies, and there your hearts should be also. 2. Examination: Ask your own souls what entertainment the gospel and its salvation have with you. It has been brought to your door; has it been brought to your heart? 3. Exhortations: (1) Give yourselves time, closely and seriously, to consider the state and wants of your own souls. (2) Take care and pains to clear up your interest in the great salvation, by the power of the Word of God upon the heart, and by the esteem of the Word of God upon your souls; by your hatred of sin and love of holiness, and by your hungering and thirsting after God the living God, and hearty concern for the salvation of others. (3) Attend the ministry of the gospel with your affectionate prayers, that God would reveal His arm therewith, and powerfully apply His great salvation to the souls of your poor relations and neighbours. (4) If you can make out to yourselves that you are partakers of the great salvation, then—(*a*) Give God the glory of what He has wrought. (*b*) Take care to live agreeably to this great grace. (*c*) Commend the Lord Jesus Christ and His salvation to others; endeavour to show them the necessity of it. (*d*) Put this great salvation into the balance against all the great afflictions, losses, disappointments, and unkindnesses that you may meet with in the world (2 Cor. iv. 17; Rom. viii. 18). (*W. Notcutt.*) *The danger of neglect:*—I. OUR DANGEROUS CONDITION. 1. The inquiry, "How shall we escape?" implies it: bitten, depraved, dead, lost. 2. We need relief—salvation (Isa. liii. 6; Ezek. xxxvii. 11). 3. We cannot relieve or save ourselves (Job xxxvi. 18, 19; Psa. xlix. 7). 4. Christ brings salvation to us (John iii. 16; Matt. i. 21; Luke ix. 56; 1 Tim. ii. 6). II. IT IS A GREAT SALVATION. 1. God in Christ is its Author. 2. Jesus is its Finisher. 3. It is plenteous and full (Psa. cxxx. 7). 4. It saves from great sins. 5. It saves from greatest dangers. 6. It is free. 7. It is the only salvation. "None other name." 8. It is great in heaven. Infinite honours, eternal crown. "Kings and priests." 9. It is everlasting (Isa. xlv. 17). III. THERE IS DANGER OF LOSING IT. Not great sinfulness alone, but simple neglect will destroy your soul. The man in business has but to

neglect it to be ruined. The sick man neglects the means of recovery, and he dies. The man on Niagara neglects at the proper time to use the oar, and he plunges over the cataract. Ah, ruinous neglect! Let no one infer because he is moral and truthful, is not a drunkard, an adulterer, a murderer, or some red-handed, black-hearted criminal, that he is safe. Why, if your own morality and goodness were enough to save you, then Jesus need not have suffered and died. Salvation is not forced upon us. We must make an effort to secure it. We may neglect to make that effort, and be lost. (*B. F. Whittemore.*) *Neglect of the great salvation*:—I. THE IMPORTANT SUBJECT COUCHED IN THE FEW BUT EXPRESSIVE WORDS, "SO GREAT SALVATION." 1. Its heavenly origin. 2. The extraordinary means by which it is effected. 3. Its boundless fulness and freeness. 4. Its deliverances from evils. 5. Its choice and extensive blessings. II. THE NEGLECT SUPPOSED, AND VIRTUALLY CHARGED UPON US. III. THE AWFUL CONSEQUENCES THAT MUST ENSUE TO ALL FOUND GUILTY OF NEGLECTING SO GREAT SALVATION. (*Essex Congregational Remembrancer.*) *Do not neglect the great salvation*:—I. The word of the gospel which is preached to us, is THE WORD OF SALVATION. 1. It reveals and announces salvation. It tells us of God's method of recovery for lost, guilty, sinful man. The gospel is the only revelation of saving mercy. Reason could never have discovered it. Philosophy never could have descried a scheme like this. Nature could never have given us any just conceptions of this subject. We see much of the goodness of God in the brightness of the sun, and in the descent of the shower; in the flowers which cover the earth; but not one word of salvation; not a syllable which relates to the restoration of man, and his deliverance from the deserved wrath which his apostasy has incurred. 2. Instrumentally it effects salvation. It brings salvation near, both to the understanding and to the heart. 3. It is the ordained means of perfecting and preparing the soul for the enjoyment of consummate bliss. II. This salvation, announced and revealed and brought near in the gospel, is inconceivably GREAT. The apostle does not attempt to describe its greatness; but he wraps up the whole magnificence of his theme in this expression, "*so* great salvation." 1. Think of the stupendous contrivance in which it originated; and it will be found a great salvation. 2. Look at the methods which have been adopted in order to render this salvation sure. Nothing less than the achievements of the eternal Son. 3. Think of the agency employed in securing the application and saving efficacy of this salvation—the Holy Spirit. 4. Think of the all-sufficient credentials and Divine attestations, by which the gospel is recommended to us; and you will easily perceive that it is, in my text, most justly described. 5. Consider the richness and amplitude of its provisions. 6. I only refer, finally, to the ultimate end which it proposes to effect on behalf of all who are interested in its benefits. That end is the resurrection of the body from the dust; the glorification of the entire Church; the subjugation of all evil; an eternity of unimaginable bliss. III. I am to prove to you that THOSE WHO NEGLECT IT have not the remotest prospect of escape from the entire and hopeless ruin which such neglect inevitably involves. 1. Everything in the reason of the case forbids the hope of escape. Because God Himself has devised this method of recovery; He has revealed it; He has offered it; He has told us plainly, "Neither is there salvation in any other" than Christ. They who neglect this salvation, then, must perish, upon every principle of equity, and upon every principle of reason. There is a storm gathering. Divine mercy has provided a shelter. You neglect it; and the thunderbolt strikes you prostrate to the ground. 2. Everything in the character of God forbids the hope of an escape. He is a God of justice; and will never compromise the claims of equity in complaisance to the negligence and unbelief of His creatures. 3. There is, moreover, nothing in the Word of God which affords the slightest ground of expectation that this method of salvation discarded any other will be provided. (Heb. x. 26.) Lessons: 1. Admire and adore the riches of Divine grace in having provided such a salvation for lost man. 2. How full of terror is this subject to you who are neglecting this salvation. 3. How happy are they who have reached the final end and ultimate enjoyment of that salvation of which we have been hearing; who have "believed to the salvation of the soul." (*G. Clayton.*) *The superiority of Christianity as seen in its claims*:—I. THE NATURE OF CHRISTIANITY'S CLAIMS. 1. Their imperativeness. 2. Their personal character. II. THE IRRETRIEVABLE CONSEQUENCES OF NEGLECTING THE CLAIMS OF CHRISTIANITY. 1. These consequences are suggested analogically. 2. These consequences are based on the intrinsic excellence of Christianity. 3. The character of the sin on account of which these consequences will be inevitably inflicted.

4. That such a sin as neglect must inevitably be followed by serious consequences is very obvious from the laws of our nature. (1) That of relation between moral appreciation and moral advantage. (2) That of free agency. 5. That these consequences will follow this sin is seen from the veracity of God. Lessons: 1. We learn that there are two sides to salvation. (1) The Divine side, viz., the providing salvation for a lost world. (2) The human side, viz., the personal acceptance by faith of the salvation thus divinely provided. 2. We learn that, for all practical purposes, the human side is as important as the Divine. 3. We learn that, infinitely great and glorious as salvation is, there is no manifestation of the goodness of God more easily sacrificed. 4. We learn the unspeakable importance of giving practical heed to the voice of God's Spirit as He speaks in His Word. (1) Because neglect is followed by such sad and irretrievable consequences. (2) Because of the law of habit. (*a*) Birds which build their nests in a belfry become habituated to the loudest and longest clangour. (*b*) Those who live in the vicinity of Niagara and cataracts of the Nile become so habituated to the roar of their waters that they do not mind it at all. (*c*) Alas! is not this the explanation of the heedlessness to the gospel of thousands in Christendom—they have become too familiar with its sound. (3) Because of this life being our probationary sphere. (*a*) If we die in a state of unbelief we cannot hope for another opportunity. (*b*) As we are liable to die any hour, to neglect salvation is of all follies the greatest. (*D. C. Hughes, M.A.*) *The sin and danger of neglecting the great salvation of the gospel*:—Whether we look at the source from which salvation originates, or the objects to whom it is extended; at the depth of misery from which it delivers, or at the height of glory to which it exalts; at the long train of prophecies by which it was introduced, or at the stupendous display of miracles by which it was established, we cannot but be deeply impressed with its magnitude and importance. There is one circumstance, however, which wonderfully augments these impressions, the unparalleled excellence and dignity of the Person by whom this salvation was perfected. I. The first argument which I shall adduce results from THE VERY NATURE AND CONSTITUTION OF THINGS. They who neglect the great salvation of the gospel must, from the necessary connection between causes and effects, be involved in everlasting destruction. For what is the salvation of the gospel? It is salvation from sin. Should the drowning man neglect to lay hold of the only hand stretched out to save him; should the sick man neglect to follow the only prescription which can administer a cure: what, in all these several instances, must be the inevitable consequence? Death. Neglecting to improve the only opportunity vouchsafed to them of procuring the removal of their guilt, they must sink down for ever under the curse and burden of unpardoned sin. II. Another argument arises from THE PECULIAR AND AGGRAVATED GUILT OF NEGLECTING SO GREAT SALVATION. The gospel is a remedy which we are constrained by the most powerful obligations to apply: a remedy, the neglect of which argues not only the most daring folly, but the most malignant wickedness, and consequently involves a degree of criminality which exhibits in a still stronger light the impossibility of escaping. To neglect the salvation of the gospel is to violate a positive command of God. It is also to pour contempt on His most glorious perfections. The gospel is the richest display of mercy to fallen man, the consummation of the Divine wisdom and love. (*E. Cooper, M.A.*) *How shall we escape?*—I. "SALVATION" is the grand thought. 1. Consider salvation in its origin. May it not be termed "so great salvation"? God is its Author. It was planned in the councils of eternity; it is the fruit of infinite wisdom. Great, we own, is creation; greater far is redemption. God creates by the word of His power; He redeems by the blood of His Son; new-creates by the power of His Spirit. 2. Salvation is "so great" when we remember its nature. It saves from great sins. Christ is "able to save unto the uttermost." 3. It saves from great dangers. 4. There is salvation from great enemies. But we have given only one side of salvation—deliverance. Positive blessings belong to it. Salvation might be termed "so great," if it were only for the blessedness it brings to the heart now; in this life; Christ's peace, Christ's joy, Christ's wondrous love. But man has a destiny reaching away into the great eternity. When we think of man as he is, what he deserves, what he well may fear, guilty, depraved, condemned—as he shall be, when purified, glorified—is not salvation rightly styled "so great"? II. Think now of the word "NEGLECT." Easy were it to show that such "neglect" is a great calamity, and a great crime. 1. This neglect is common. Alas! how many show their neglect in their lives—by open sin, by contempt of God's Word, God's day, God's house. 2. It is inexcusable. Vain and flimsy as a spider's web are all excuses. The real

reason why men neglect so great salvation is because they love this world more than God; time more than eternity; their sins more than their souls. 3. Neglect is foolish. What should we think of a prisoner who should hug the chains that bind him? 4. Neglect is easy. In one sense, it is hard for sinners to perish. God in mercy sets barriers in the way. In another sense, it is an easy thing. "Neglect!" The man in business does not need to gamble in order to go bankrupt; all he needs is to neglect his business. 5. When we add it is fatal, this brings us to the third word—III. "ESCAPE." "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" (*D. S. Brunton.*) *The vital question:*—I. CONSIDER THE CHARACTER DESCRIBED. The man who, amidst the multitude of other anxieties, sets the invitation to a banquet aside, and altogether neglects it, is just as sure of being found absent as the man who distinctly rejects it. There are many who idle a whole lifetime away in a sort of passive indifference to the gospel, and go down to the grave utter strangers to its saving power. The man who is not diligent in the prosecution of his worldly business is said to neglect it; and so, in like manner, if you do not esteem the salvation of the soul as the one thing needful; if you do not strive to enter in at the straight gate, and give diligence to make your calling and election sure, then know, of a truth, that you are found among those who are guilty of neglecting it. II. CONSIDER THE QUESTION HERE PUT. More evil is done, and more injury sustained, through neglect than from any other cause. Escape is utterly and altogether impossible. 1. From the very nature of the case; for the neglect of salvation is just the rejection of the remedy, and if the remedy be rejected, what but ruin can await us? 2. From the history of the Divine dealings. If God brought in the flood upon the world of the ungodly, so that they escaped not, how shall we escape? Say not that God is too merciful to inflict the penalty He has threatened; for was God not merciful then, and yet He did not permit them to escape? 3. From the very means employed for our deliverance. If sin were trivial, if the law were flexible, if God were changeable, Christ would never have suffered, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us unto God. III. CONSIDER THE GUILT OF NEGLECTING THIS GREAT SALVATION. The mariner who refuses to cast his anchor on the rock deserves to suffer shipwreck. The man who declines to accept the bread that is offered to him deserves to die of famine. God has not provided this great salvation at such a mighty expenditure, and left men to sport and trifle with it at their pleasure. (*Thos. Mair, D.D.*) *Neglect:*—I. THE MISERY ARISING FROM NEGLECT. 1. In the lower or material realm, *e.g.*, industrial, sanitary, commercial. 2. In the higher or mental and moral realm, *e.g.*, education, religion. (1) The signs of neglect. Listlessness and dulness, or profligacy and obduracy. (2) The temptation to neglect. Example, spirit of procrastination, pressure of other claims. II. THE GUILT OF NEGLECT. 1. It is spiritual suicide. 2. It is ruinous in its influence on others. You say, "No danger," when the peril is terrific. 3. It is practical atheism. 4. It is ingratitude to the Redeemer. (*Homilist.*) *The only plan:*—I. GOD HAS MADE ABUNDANT PROVISION FOR THE WELFARE OF THE WORLD. "So"—the descriptive word of a child when failing to set forth in detail an object beyond its ability. 1. Salvation is God's highest achievement. 2. Supplies all the wants of mankind. 3. Is all-powerful in its influence. 4. Is destined to be universal in its success. 5. Is everlasting in its duration. II. GOD'S ABUNDANT PROVISION FOR THE WELFARE OF THE WORLD MAY BE IGNORED. "If we neglect" implies—1. The freedom of the human will. 2. The deluding power of sin. 3. The futility of mere knowledge. 4. The evil of contempt. 5. The power of self-righteousness. 6. The actual prevalence of carelessness. (1) Some are totally indifferent. (2) Some are idly procrastinating. (3) Some by hoping for the best. (4) Some because others do. III. GOD'S ABUNDANT PROVISION FOR THE WELFARE OF THE WORLD, IF IGNORED, LEAVES MAN HOPELESS. "How shall we escape?" 1. Man bears in himself the elements of destruction. Born a sinner. Sin will never destroy itself. Powder train laid. 2. Salvation the only remedy. Ark, Brazen Serpent, Cities of Refuge. "No other name." "Jesus only." 3. Man's effort to appropriate the appointed means is essentially necessary. Wrecked sailor must enter lifeboat; manslayer flee to city of refuge; patient take prescribed medicine. 4. Non-compliance on man's part will result in endless misery. (*B. D. Johns.*) *The regret of lost souls:*—In the palace at Versailles, as if by the irony of fate, is a famous statue of Napoleon in exile. His noble brow is lowered in thought, his mouth is compressed, his chin is resting upon his breast, and his grand eye gazes into space as if fixed on some distant scene. There is something inexpressibly sad in that strong, pale face. It is said that the sculptor represented

Napoleon at St. Helena, just before his death. He is looking back upon the field of Waterloo, and thinking how its fatal issue was the result of three hours' delay. Those three short hours seem ever to write on the walls of his memory—"The summer is ended, the harvest is past!" Years rolled on, but the memory of that neglected opportunity follows the great emperor through his life, and haunts him through midnight hours in his sea-girt home. I have sometimes imagined that I could see on some remote and lonely shore of the Lake Avernus a soul haunted by its memories. The battle of life is long past, centuries have rolled away, but memory lives. Some lost soul wanders from the rest, where the waves of that gulf beat hopelessly on the far-off shore. The absent eye that gazes over the starless deep, is looking with longing unutterable to the precious time when those who are now in glory held up the blood-stained cross and pointed to the joys of heaven, then so near, now so far. And a bitter sigh, and a sob as bitter as despairing love, fills the solitude; but it reaches no ear, touches no sympathy, awakes no echo. Such is the vengeance of neglected opportunity. (*R. S. Barrett.*) *How shall we escape?*—By our wealth? Its currency is condemned at the judgment-seat. By our own good deeds? Those deeds have been weighed in the balance, and found wanting. Then how shall we escape? By concealing ourselves? God's eye penetrates, with its burning glance, all space. Shall we escape in the crowd? Each individual shall be so insulated, as if there were no other creature besides at the judgment-seat. Then how shall we escape? There is but one way, and that escape is incompatible with neglecting the great salvation. Thus he says the gospel is the great salvation. "How shall we escape"—not, mark you, if we *reject* so great salvation, but if we *neglect* so great salvation? The sceptic rejects Christianity; the nominal believer neglects Christianity. Now, I very much question if it be not a greater insult to God to neglect religion than it is to reject it. I can understand that man who says, I have examined all the evidence, and I have come to the conclusion that the Bible is a fable, that Christianity is a romance; eternity, and death, and judgment the visions of a mere baseless dream. I pity him, I deplore his conclusion, but I can understand it; there is consistency about it. But the man that neglects such a religion, if it be true that God has spoken, if it be true that Christ has died for us, if it be true that we must stand at the judgment-seat, if it be true that by His righteousness alone we are justified, is guilty indeed. Such neglect is in the sight of God and man altogether inexcusable. (*J. Cumming, D.D.*) *The danger of neglect:*—During the terrible fire in the Ring Theatre at Vienna, a large crowd striving to reach one of the exits saw a sideway marked "Emergency Door, in case of Fire." This was just what they needed. They turned aside from the main passages, and rushed to use this special way. But the bolts could not be drawn, the locks could not be turned, and the hinges were choked with rust; because the door had never been used, it could not now be suddenly put into requisition when urgently needed. A heap of dead soon lay before that gate. So, lips which never pray on earth will be speechless in the great day; the prayer for mercy will die unuttered, and the excuse which has been framed on earth will never be offered, when the King asks, "How art thou come in hither all unprepared?" *An unanswerable question:*—Many years ago a Welsh minister, a man of God, beginning his sermon, leaned over the pulpit, and said with a solemn air, "Friends, I have a question to ask. *I* cannot answer it. *You* cannot answer it. If an angel from heaven were here *he* could not answer it. If a devil from hell were here *he* could not answer it." Death-like silence reigned. Every eye was fixed on the speaker. He proceeded, "The question is this, How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" *Folly of neglect:*—A certain man had a long journey before him, which must needs be made in one day, for it would be impossible for him to journey a mile in that country after nightfall, neither was there any place wherein he could lodge on the road. He knew right well that this journey was appointed him, and that it was his duty to perform it; and, moreover, he told his best friends that he was fully determined to set out thereon; but he thought the matter was easier than they seemed to imagine. In his stable there was a fine stud of strong and swift horses suitable for the road, and a carriage stood ready for his riding. The traveller did not set out in the early morning, for he said that there was time enough. Meanwhile, by a certain custom of the country, two of his best horses were taken for the king's service, and this caused the traveller to look about him; but he soon quieted down, sat down to his dishes and his cups, and cried, "What's the good of haste?" While thus engaged, more of

his horses were lost, or stolen, or else they strayed, and had he then set out and kept well to his journey, he had scarce the means left to accomplish it. Still he waited with his boon companions till one way or another his horses were gone, and he had nothing left to ride upon but a single wretched jade. Then he made much ado about setting out, and meant to fly along the road at a great rate; only it so happened that while he was resolving the sun went down, and he never reached the place where he would have been rewarded with honour and profit. The explanation of the riddle is easy. A man in his early days, with his best years before him, is so foolish as to put off the concerns of his soul till he is older. Years follow years, and yet he delays—delays even when his last, worn, and feeble age is all that remains to him, and death comes before it is welcome. Alas, that men should think to perform the most important business of all at a time when all their powers and faculties are failing! God's service requires all our abilities in the prime of their strength, and it is wicked as well as foolish to put Him off with our leavings, and endeavour to reach heaven on a worn-out steed at the fag-end of the day. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Neglect*:—A traveller always provided himself with a life-preserver, which he kept in constant readiness for use. On the Mississippi an accident occurred which led him to dream of the advantages of precaution. He dreamed that the vessel was disabled, and rushing upon a lee-shore. The passengers, in different moods, awaited the result. Those who had life-preservers were composed; while those who had none rushed to and fro in terror and dismay. Some cursed themselves because they did not buy them before they started; others did not apprehend danger; others had them laid away in their trunks, but found them useless through long neglect; others found themselves cheated with a counterfeit article; others were uselessly trying to escape by resting on the life-preservers of others, which could barely support their owners. The scene is one only too common in life. When the storms come, and the frail vessel is a wreck, how many have secured the true life-preserver, and wait the result in good confidence? How many are dismayed because unready? (*New Cyclopædia of Illustrations.*) *Opportunity must be grasped*:—Some years ago a large river in America became greatly swollen, and a rapid current was thus produced which was very dangerous to venture on, as a terrible fall was only a few miles distant. A man who had some valuable timber in the stream got into a boat to rescue it. He was, however, soon drawn into the rushing tide. He had not the slightest power to stop or turn the boat, but rapidly it floated down the stream, hurrying him on to a certain destruction. A friend saw his peril, and mounting a fleet horse started for a bridge a few miles below as the only chance to rescue him. Reaching the bridge before the skiff, which came like an arrow towards the arch, he dropped a rope over the surface of the stream and called to the imperilled man to seize it as his only chance of escape. The trembling hand was extended, and with the firmness of a death-grasp clutched the rope as the boat shot by, and soon he was in the arms of his deliverer. This was the arch of mercy to him, which, if once passed, it would have been certain death. *How shall we escape?*—It is an appeal to universal reason, to the consciences of sinners themselves; it is a challenge to all their power and policy, to all their interest and alliances, whether they, or any of them, can find out, or can force out, a way of escape from the vindictive justice and wrath of God. It intimates that the neglecters of this great salvation will be left not only without power, but without plea and excuse at the judgment-day. (*M. Henry.*) *Neglect leads to deterioration*:—Let a certain number of pigeons, of different colours and varieties, be collected and carried to a desert island. Let them fly wild in the woods and found a colony there. After the lapse of many years let the collector return to the island, when he will find the pigeons all of one colour—a black and white dun, or a dark slaty hue. All the beautiful colours will have vanished. Why? Because they have been neglected. The variations and improvements had been the result of care, nurture, and domestication: neglect has simply had the effect of letting them drop into their original state. So with plants—a rose—a strawberry; it is a natural law. So with man. By neglect his body will lapse into a savage state; his mind to imbecility; his conscience to lawlessness and vice; his soul to atrophy, ruin, and decay. "Let him alone," and all the rest will follow. (*Proctor's Gems of Thought.*) *Unconscious of peril*:—As the inhabitants of a little, narrow street in Paris looked out at their doors one morning, they were astonished to see a young woman pacing backward and forward on the top of a six-story house. Their astonishment was changed into alarm when it was discovered that she was

unconscious of her peril, and was walking in her sleep! The young creature seemed to be dreaming of an approaching gala day, and was humming a lively air. Again and again she drew near to the very verge of the parapet, and again and again crossed over to the other side of the roof, always smiling, and unconscious of danger. Suddenly her eye was attracted by a light in the house opposite. She awoke instantly; there was a piercing cry, a heavy fall, and all was over. Alas! that this sad incident should have a counterpart in things spiritual still more appalling. The despisers of God's mercy, who are now dreaming away the brief remaining portion of their existence, will be aroused suddenly from their guilty slumber by the light which bursts in upon them from the other world, but only to discover the fearful precipice on which they have so long been standing, and when escape from ruin will be impossible. (*J. N. Norton, D.D.*) *Neglect—not gathering up*:—Bear in mind the teaching that lies hid in the derivation of the word "neglect." It signifies "not to gather up." It paints to us the blind man walking through a valley of diamonds, and in his ignorance gathering up none. And when, in their ignorance, men do not avail themselves of "the riches of God's grace," placed within their reach, how can they "escape" the results of their folly? *Danger of delay*:—A lady had a very important lawsuit on hand for which she needed the services of an advocate. She was strongly urged to secure the help of a very eminent and well-known lawyer, but she could not make up her mind to entrust her case to any one. Time passed on, and at last she was compelled to take steps to secure an advocate, and called upon the great lawyer who had been mentioned to her. He listened whilst she expressed her wish to engage his help, but in a few minutes he said with a grave face, "Madam, you are too late; had you come to me before, I would gladly have been your advocate, but now I have been called to the bench, and am a judge, and all I can do is to pass judgment upon your case." Now is the day of grace, and the Lord Jesus Christ is our Advocate, ever pleading the merits of His precious blood (1 John ii. 1, 2), but the day will come when He will be the Judge of sinners, and must pass sentence upon them (2 Tim. iv. 1). *Neglect*:—It is the neglected wheel that capsizes the vehicle, and maims for life the passengers. It is the neglected leak that sinks the ship. It is the neglected field that yields briers instead of bread. It is the neglected spark near the magazine whose tremendous explosion sends its hundreds of mangled wretches into eternity. The neglect of an officer to throw up a rocket on a certain night caused the fall of Antwerp, and postponed the deliverance of Holland for twenty or more years. The neglect of a sentinel to give an alarm hindered the fall of Sebastopol, and resulted in the loss of many thousand lives. **So great salvation.**—*Great salvation—an appeal*:—I. AS SINNERS YOU ARE EXPOSED TO IMMENSE DANGER—1. Ever augmenting. 2. Self-created. 3. For ever unavoidable after death. II. TO DELIVER YOU FROM THIS DANGER HEAVEN HAS INTRODUCED A GLORIOUS EXPEDIENT. "Great," because of—1. The great facts it involves. 2. The immense influence it exerts upon the universe. 3. The infinite blessings it secures to those who will accept it. III. THE NEGLECT OF THIS GLORIOUS EXPEDIENT RENDERS SALVATION IMPOSSIBLE. 1. Because it is the only expedient now on earth that can effect your deliverance. 2. Because it is the only expedient that will ever be presented to you by Heaven for the purpose. (*Homilist.*) *The gospel and its rejectors*:—I. THE ABSURDITY OF NEGLECTING THE GOSPEL SALVATION. This appears if we consider—1. Its gratuity. 2. Its greatness. 3. Its endurance. 4. Its relation to us. 5. Its singleness. II. THE IMPOSSIBILITY FOR GOSPEL REJECTORS TO ESCAPE ETERNAL PUNISHMENT. 1. The inseparable connection between sin and punishment. 2. God's veracity. 3. God's almightiness. 4. God's justice. 5. The nature of Heaven. (*Ibid.*) *Great salvation*:—1. It was a great thought in the heart of God. 2. It required a great preparation. 3. It exhibited great condescension. 4. It gives occasion to study a great mystery. 5. It exacted great sufferings. 6. It ensures a revenue of great glory. (*H. T. Miller.*) *The greatness of salvation*:—The word "salvation" occurs in the Bible under a variety of significations. When the children of Israel had just been delivered out of Egypt, and were brought to a stand-still before the Red Sea, Moses said to them—"Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord." Now, in what did that salvation consist? It consisted in this—in a temporary delivering of them out of their trouble, by making a path through the depths of the sea. The Lord delivered them then with a great salvation. Further, you remember that our Lord, on His visit to Zacchæus, seeing how he was escaping from the bonds of that passion for ill-gotten lucre, exclaims, "This day is salvation come unto this house." That was a great salva-

tion—a deliverance from the thraldom of sin, by the introduction of the freedom wherewith Christ makes His people free. And there remains another appropriate use of the term. We are kept by faith unto salvation: to be redeemed and brought into that glorious state, where the white-robed ones stand—that city, in which we shall not only be saved, as we are now, but in a perfect state of salvation. That, also, is meant at times in the Scripture, when the word salvation is employed. Now, it becomes us to inquire which of these three senses are here conveyed by the words of our text. It seems to me that it comprehends all three; that is to say, all that is needed for the first liberation of man from sin; all that is needed of temporal deliverance to keep him from falling, and to enable him to persevere unto the end; and all that is comprehended in the hereafter, and not-to-be-revealed glory that remaineth for the people of God. Each of the three are great salvation, and, combined, they make the so great salvation. "How shall we escape, if we neglect this so great salvation?" Now, I think there are several things which will plainly prove that this is a great salvation. I. First of all—AS A SCHEME, a plan, to work out a Divine purpose—as a Divine scheme and plan, I maintain it is a great salvation. 1. If I examine the wisdom of the scheme—the plan of the scheme—here I come in contact with a wisdom of no finite being: it is the wisdom of the Divine Being Himself; it is infinite wisdom; the mint-mark has Heaven's royal stamp, and the image and superscription are more than Cæsar's; they are those of the King of kings Himself. Now this wisdom is displayed in a threefold manner. (1) First, in grappling with a difficulty in which no man can succeed. We can deal with our fellow-creatures' bodies; we can deal with their minds; but their souls are encased as in triple steel; and whenever man has begun to touch sin, the only thing he has done has been to burn his own fingers, without putting that firebrand out of the world. Sin is everywhere, and man has never been able to cast it out. It stands, and ever will stand, till a Divine power shall come to cast it out. Now God has found out the way of accomplishing this, and He has devised a scheme which, in His hand, shall make this wide world to be covered with His glory, even as the waters cover the deep. That is one thing in which I detect the wisdom of God; He has accomplished that which has ever defied the wisdom of the wisest, and the might of the mightiest. (2) Something further is to be noticed—God has done this with a wisdom so great, that He has foreseen all that He has purposed to do, and everything He has done, and has not left undone anything that He has purposed. (3) Let me observe, again, that the wisdom of this scheme is something so great, that not a single wrong is done to any one. God has restored the false note in the great organ of the universe, without staying its tune, or hindering the harmony of the music of the spheres; and He has done it all with a wisdom so infinite, that we must exclaim, "This is indeed a so great salvation." 2. But now, join that wisdom with love—think of the love, as well as the wisdom, and then you will have further heightened the thought. II. Now, it is a great salvation, not only because of the scheme, but also because of THE AIM IN VIEW, and the objects which it purposes to perform. Christ came, not merely to save man from sin, and from Satan—not merely to save man from going down to the pit without ransom, though that would have been a great salvation. Christ comes, we say, to destroy sin; but how? By bringing in a righteousness that shall far surpass the righteousness of men. He comes to destroy death; but how? By bringing life and immortality to light. He comes to destroy the works of the devil; and how? By doing the works of Him that sent Him, and the great salvation He brings in, has, for its end and aim, not merely the putting of man into the garden of Eden, where he was before the Fall, but to put him in possession of life and immortality itself. III. We exclaim again, "It is a great salvation," from THE MEANS that have been used for the working-out of the scheme, and from the original end and aim proposed. And here I might begin at the beginning, but how can we go back to the countless ages of eternity? and time would certainly fail us, if I were to begin at the creation of the world, for it all has been but the theatre for the working-out of this great salvation. I would come down to the time of the Jews, and would see there all the wonders of the life of Abraham, and of Abraham's descendants. All these things formed part of the working-out of the scheme, for the Jews were like the scaffolding which needed to be erected, that there might be raised, inside of it, a true and living structure, which is to abide for ever. The Jewish race, with its wondrous history, has but served as the pinnacle for the erection and for the display of the cross thereupon. But we must narrow our limits again. Let us now start from Bethlehem; and there, in the stable of a lowly inn, we see a babe;

small it is, but yet great; the Son of Mary, and the Son of the Highest. He whom even the heaven of heavens cannot contain, is there, wrapped in that veil of our inferior clay. As I look upon that deep mystery, and see there that Child of God, I see also and adore "the man my fellow"—Christ in the flesh—God incarnate. I see there a mighty deed that stamps this salvation with a greatness of its own. I pass by all the after-wonders of His life, and come to the closing scene, when He hangs upon the cross. I look at that bleeding man, and I exclaim, "How is it?—it is the blood of God"—for I find the Scripture saying, "The Church of God, which He has purchased with His blood." How it is I cannot tell; but there is a Divine efficacy in the death and blood of Christ. IV. Fourthly, let us look at these facts taken as a whole, and as LYING AT THE FOUNDATION OF OUR RELIGION. Now reason could never discover a religion; I say that reason does tell us this—it is the best religion the world ever has seen, or can see. There are three things that we must find in every religion to make it great. It must reveal a God, worthy of the highest honour; it must give benefits to the worshippers; and it must establish a connection between the two. If it does not reveal a God, it is worthless. If it reveals a God, but He is not worthy of the highest honour, I say it is a weak religion—away with it. Now our religion is this: "Glory unto God in the highest"—glory in the scheme, glory in the working-out, glory in the end proposed. (*J. A. Spurgeon.*) *The great salvation*:—I. THE CHARACTER OF THIS SALVATION. 1. It is worthy of the character given to it, if you consider the method of its contrivance. 2. It is a great salvation in the manner of its execution. Amazing love! 3. It is a great salvation in the blessing it secures. 4. In the manner of its bestowment. It regards us as we really are, "poor and wretched"; and without insulting us in our poverty, it invites us—nay more, it commands us—to "come and take of the water of life freely." Were the smallest good required of you in exchange for this blessing, we might then calculate on your neglecting this great salvation, on the plea that you were destitute of what you were required to give for it. But you are invited to receive it "without money and without price." 5. In the countless multitudes who shall be brought to participate in it. II. CONSIDER ITS REFERENCE TO US. 1. It demands great attention. 2. It should be embraced with great thankfulness. 3. Its rejection will be accompanied with great condemnation. God could devise no method more safe, more honourable, more glorious for a sinner's salvation, than the method exhibited in the gospel. Grace in its richest character, mercy in its brightest form are here displayed. But the greater the grace, the richer the mercy, and the more free and generous the invitation, the greater will be the guilt of him who rejects it. (*Essex Congregational Remembrancer.*) *The great salvation*:—I. SALVATION. Now, suppose that I were on the bank of a river, and were to see some child or some fellow-man struggling in the stream; if I were to use my best endeavour to help that fellow-creature out of the water, and if I were successful in that attempt, it would be a salvation. Or, if I were to find some fellow-man suffering from a dreadful disease for which I had a specific, and I were to come and administer this specific to that man, and he were to recover from that disease, that would be a salvation. I am about to speak to you of a salvation of a different kind—not of a salvation from mere bodily death—not of a salvation from bodily disease—but of a salvation from all the ills which soul, and spirit, and body are heirs to—a salvation from everything that blights and blasts our fallen human nature. 1. The salvation upon which I speak is the deliverance from ignorance of the true God. That ignorance, you know, is just like a dense darkness at a time when a man wants light, and in the place where a man wants light, and under circumstances where the shining of light is essential to a man. The man who is saved knows something of God, of our Father in heaven: he knows enough of God for his present well-being, and for his present well-doing. That is one part of salvation. Now there is another. 2. I do not know how it is, but so it is, as we believe, that every one born into this world is inclined to do wrong. God made such an arrangement when He created our first parents, that if they had done right, right dispositions would have been communicated. You sometimes see a very amiable mother and a very amiable daughter; there is a disposition communicated the one from the other. Now, on account of that arrangement, when our first parents went wrong and they had children, the children received from them a wrong disposition—a disposition to do that which is bad—that which is evil. And it is within us all. Is there anything more common than to hear people say, "I shall do as I like; don't meddle with me, I shall do as I please"? Now that is the very essence of sin. Any creature who begins to say, "I will do as I like," falls

immediately. If the brightest and best of the angels from around God's throne were at this moment to say, "I will do as I like," and were to begin to turn to his own way and to carry out the desired devices of his own heart, he would be immediately a fallen angel, and heaven would be no paradise to that being. What is this salvation? It is a salvation from the "I'll do as I like" principle—from the "I'll do what I please" principle. It is deliverance from that. It is the creation within us of another spirit, and of a new heart in that matter, and the question then is, "Saviour, what shall I do? Saviour, how shall I speak? Saviour, how shall I live? Saviour, what shall I work at? Saviour, where shall I abide? Where shall I travel? What will be my occupation? Saviour, in all things what shall I do?" That also is part of salvation. Some people, you know, especially some people with a profession of religion, think that their consciences always are right. You see such an one doing something that you think is very bad, something that the Bible condemns. You open the Bible and point to a text, and say to him, "There, that passage says you are wrong." But he will probably reply, "I cannot be very wrong, for I did such and such a thing conscientiously." Now, suppose I were in the position of some of you who have places of business, and that I employed errand-boys to assist me in that business, and I required of a lad that he should always be at the shop at six o'clock in the morning; and suppose he had a miserable sort of time-piece that was always two hours behind the time of day. I chide the lad for being two hours behind time, and he brings forth to me his old wretched thing of a watch, and shows me that its hands point to the hour of six, but I tell him that, according to the position of the sun in the skies, it is eight o'clock. He argues with me, "But my watch says it is six!" Then, what I should say to him would be, "Unless you are mocking me I require that you get your watch regulated, and take care that on the face of that watch there is always a correct index of the true time." Just so I say to people who do wrong, and justify their wrong-doing by reference to their conscience. Conscience is a thing amongst mankind which is as often wrong as a bad clock or as a bad watch, and consciences need mending—need rectifying. Now, salvation is to put a man's conscience right, so that it answers to the will of God, and to the pleasure of God, and is an index of what is right and of what is wrong. That is another part of salvation. I need not say to you that we are all hurrying onward to the grave, and that after death comes the judgment. Now, we carry with us, unless we are saved the guilt of the first sin we committed when we began to say "I will" and "I won't," and the guilt of all the sins committed throughout life. If we pass unsaved into the future state, we carry the guilt of all the transgressions with us to the bar of God. Now, you know that God must do one of two things: He must either forgive sin or punish it. He cannot pass it by. Oh, what must be the weight of His arm when it strikes the transgressor to punish! We cannot wonder that in the place of punishment there is "weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth." 3. Now, this salvation is deliverance from such punishment. A man who is saved not only knows God, not only obeys God, but is free from all danger of future misery. God has cast his transgressions into the depths of the sea. They are beyond the arm and beyond the sight of any creature. That is salvation. There are fifty other things that might be said about the salvation if we were professing to speak of it fully, but we only intend to give you two or three illustrations of what it is. Now observe it is great. Why? 1. First, because it comes from a great God; because it comes from that great God's great heart; because it comes from the great grace of the great heart of that great God. That is why it is great. 2. It is brought down to us from that great God's great heart and from His great grace by a great and personal Saviour. 3. It is a great salvation because it compasses all our wants, all our woes, all our trials, all our temptations, all the ills to which we are heir. II. NEGLECT. Suppose we were to-night in an excursion train instead of being here, and suppose a train were just behind us—an express train. And suppose that the man at the last station had forgotten to stop that train, to signal it, or to tell the driver that the excursion train was before him and that he must go gently. Suppose he forgot it—that he was occupied with other matters so entirely as to forget it. What would be the effect of that neglect? Into our train would come dashing the express train. And what would be the consequence? Terrific loss of life. Or say that I am suffering from high fever. My medical attendant sends me medicine which he requires to be taken to me immediately. Say that some person in my house neglects to give me that medicine and I remain being consumed by the fever through the night. That person might not intend to injure

me; it might be very far from his wish; but the neglect does the injury. My fever rages, burns, and consumes, and before morning light, I am upon the very brink of the grave. We see what mischievous consequences may flow from neglect. If a person were to put a bar of iron across the metals of the line upon which we were travelling, and do it with the purpose of upsetting the train, that would involve the most serious consequences. But we have seen that neglect does it without any bad intention. If a person were to administer poison intentionally, that would destroy life; but we have seen that the neglect in not giving the medicine might be the means of terminating life quite as really and effectually as the administering poison itself. Now I want your attention to this, for the text says, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" III. Any day may bring forth such a change in your circumstances, as that you shall see no way of escape. To-day shows you A WAY OF ESCAPE, a place of repentance. To-day exhibits to you the great salvation. To-morrow may see you in such a position as that no way of escape can ever exist for you, and you may say in the agony of despair, "How can I escape, for I have neglected God's great salvation?" (*S. Martin, D.D.*) *Neglectful of salvation:*—I. Those persons may certainly be numbered among this class WHO ARE SLUMBERING OVER THEIR IMMORTAL INTERESTS, and who are satisfied to be indifferent to the claims of the gospel, so long as they can be accused of no outrageous offence against it. On every principle of equity, great benefits deserve great and anxious labours and struggles to possess ourselves of them. The man would be accounted guilty of egregious folly, who, having the opportunity to send forward his goods to their destination on strong and fleet horses, should insist on engaging for the purpose such as were worn out and helpless; but not so foolish as those who are wasting the days of health and vigour in indecision and idleness, and who are expecting to work out their everlasting salvation in the season of sickness and decrepitude. II. The charge of neglecting this "great salvation" must also be brought against those WHO ARE MERELY NEUTRALS in the cause of God. III. All those living in Christian lands may be said to neglect salvation WHO FAIL TO MAKE IT THEIR FIRST AND GREATEST CONCERN. IV. Those persons are neglecting this "great salvation" WHO DO NOT USE GOD'S OWN APPOINTED MEANS FOR SECURING IT. (*J. N. Norton, D.D.*) *The great salvation by Jesus Christ:*—I. WHAT IS MEANT BY "THE WORD SPOKEN BY ANGELS"? 1. The law, unquestionably, as contradistinguished from the gospel. 2. When in this connection we speak of law as contradistinguished from gospel, we mean that rule of moral conduct, of both heart and life, to which God exacts perfect obedience from all His intelligent creatures. 3. The law has not been abrogated by the introduction of the gospel; nor have its claims been alienated, or its sanctions abolished. 4. To perceive the force of the apostle's argument it is necessary to notice the prominence he gives to the penal character of the law. "Every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward." 5. The "just recompense of reward" is this penalty. "A recompense," says Mr. Benson, "proportionable to the crime, according to the judgment of God, which is infinitely just and equal, and implies that they who commit sin 'are worthy of death.'" Death is the penalty of the law: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." II. WHAT IS MEANT BY THE EXPRESSION, "SO GREAT SALVATION"? 1. The whole system of Christianity. 2. The theme of the gospel is salvation by Jesus Christ. It is founded in Him. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." He is "the Author and Finisher of our faith";—"the Author of eternal salvation to all them that obey Him." Of the whole system of the gospel, he is "the Alpha and the Omega." The gospel is a remedial system. It proposes satisfaction to the claims of justice by a propitiatory offering for sin. By this offering we were redeemed, bought back from the bondage of sin and the penal sentence of the law. 3. Eternal life, with all the means and provisions necessary to its attainment, is ascribed to the atonement. 4. To be thus saved, we must come to God through Christ. "Whosoever shall call upon the name," &c. We must receive Him by faith: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," &c. All who slight these requirements, neglect this great salvation. 5. All this, remember, upon which eternal life is offered to sinful man, is through the atonement by Jesus Christ; and is the only remedy God has provided against the penalty of the law. 6. But the text asserts the possibility and danger of failing to receive this gracious gift of God, "everlasting life through Jesus Christ our Lord," by neglecting the gospel. Eternal life is suspended upon terms and conditions set forth in the gospel; and, to insure it, intense application to these is necessary, lest anything essential to that end should be permitted to slip, and the soul be left under the power of eternal

death. How tremendous the motive "to give the more earnest heed"! They neglect this great salvation who are indifferent to its terms and provisions, and slight the offer of pardon it makes to the guilty. Their indifference shows that they are not influenced by that sense of the guilt of sin, without which they cannot be fit subjects for pardon, in any way consistent with the purity and integrity of the moral government of God. III. THE CONCLUSION DEDUCED FROM THE RELATION IN WHICH THE GOSPEL OF THE GRACE OF GOD STANDS TO THE LAW, which is steadfast in its claims of justice, strikes us with all the force of moral demonstration. 1. From what has been said, it is evident that everlasting life, as the gift of God through our Lord Jesus Christ, is the only remedy against eternal death, which is the penalty of the law. 2. "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law." In the terms of both the law and the gospel, God deals with man as a moral agent. (*S. Luckey, D.D.*) *The elements of persuasion in the gospel salvation*:—The apostle does not attempt to tell us just how great salvation is. He probably felt respecting it much as he did in regard to the love of Christ, that it has a breadth and length and depth and height, which passeth knowledge. He could therefore express his views of it no better than by giving utterance to the words—so great salvation. Great it certainly is; so great, that we can conceive of none greater. I wish now to direct attention to some of the elements of impression and persuasion contained in it. 1. The salvation of the gospel commends itself, by the fact that it comes to you as a direct personal concern. You need this salvation, and your immortal all is involved in your acceptance of it in faith and love. 2. The salvation of the gospel embodies great and affecting truths; and this is another element of persuasion which it brings to bear on the mind and heart of man. First of all it unveils the character of God to your view in a new and most affecting light. It calls you to look to Him, not merely in the character of a righteous lawgiver, moral governor, and just judge, but of a kind and merciful father, calling you to His love, and proffering you pardon and everlasting happiness in Christ the Mediator. It holds up to your view the great truth that this Christ, the Son of God, has interposed in your behalf, has been in the world on your account, has by His sufferings and death made atonement for sin, and opened a way whereby God can justify and save you consistently with His holiness, His justice and His truth. And while thus the great salvation reminds you of the everlasting love of God, and of the infinite grace and kindness of the Saviour, it sets before you another truth in the most impressive light—I mean the truth of your own lost and utterly helpless condition as a sinner. In the very fact of offering you mercy it proclaims you condemned, and in seeking to raise you to life and heaven it shows you to be exposed to death and hell. It also presses on your attention another great truth—that of the helping agency of the Holy Spirit, whose office it is to take of the things of Christ and show them unto men; who visits the heart and the conscience with His tender, awakening influence, and mercifully guides to peace and hope all who listen to His voice and yield to the drawings of His love. 3. It is another element of impression and persuasion in the salvation of the gospel that it is perfectly free and gratuitous. If you were confined in hopeless bondage in a strange land, with no hope of self-deliverance, and one unsolicited, a prince of royal blood, should, at a great expense of treasure and toil, procure your release and send you a document to that effect, the transaction would strike you as one of great kindness, and you could not fail, unless you had a heart of stone, to be deeply affected with a sense of indebtedness to so generous a benefactor. Now it is on this wise that the salvation of Christ comes to you. It is an unsolicited favour; it was procured at an infinite price; it offers you deliverance, complete and eternal, from the most terrible form of bondage—the bondage of sin and death—and all as a gratuity. 4. The salvation of the gospel has great power of appeal to the heart and mind of man. 5. Let us notice next the results at which the salvation of the gospel aims. Pardon, peace, joy in believing, reconciliation to God, adoption into His family, &c., in this present life. But who can speak of the results of salvation, as they will be developed in the kingdom of everlasting glory and blessedness? Salvation completed is everlasting happiness; happiness in the presence of God and the Lamb—pure, perfect, all-satisfying; an exceeding and eternal weight of glory; fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore in the presence of the infinite Father, in the society of angels, and of just men made perfect. 6. Another element of impression and persuasion in this salvation lies in the fact that the offer of it is made to you only for a short time; and when withdrawn there is no more hope for eternity. (*J. Hawes, D.D.*) *The greatness of the gospel salvation*:—I. GOD HAS BY THE

GOSPEL MADE SO EFFECTUAL PROVISION FOR OUR HAPPINESS, THAT NOTHING BUT OUR OWN NEGLECT CAN RENDER IT MISERABLE. 1. How great, how glorious a felicity, how adequate to the desires of a reasonable nature, is revealed to our hopes in the gospel. 2. What care and solicitude God has expressed for our attainment of it. 3. Upon how gracious terms of duty it is promised to us. II. SINCE GOD HAS TAKEN SO GREAT CARE FOR OUR SALVATION, IT IS MOST REASONABLE THAT MEN SHOULD BE CAREFUL TO PERFORM THEIR PART OF THIS WORK, AND NOT NEGLECT IT THEMSELVES. III. THEY WHO NEGLECT IT, HAVE NO EXCUSE FOR THE CRIME, BUT MUST EXPECT THE SEVEREST RESENTMENTS OF DIVINE JUSTICE. The direction, then, is sufficently clear, and the duty required by it adjusted to the powers of our nature; neither ignorance, nor inability can be pretended; and what plea can we offer to Divine justice to prevent condemnation? (*J. Rogers, D.D.*) *Of the means of salvation*:—A sinner having heard that sin deserves God's wrath and curse, the question that natively follows is, What way one may escape them? This is answered by the weighty question in the text, How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation? Which we may take up in these two things. (1) There is no escaping for sinners, if they neglect the great salvation; they perish without remedy. (2) They that do not neglect it, shall surely escape. Here let us consider—1. The danger sinners are in by their sin. 2. The way how they may escape; namely, by not neglecting, but falling in with the great salvation. The words intimate—(1) That there is a possibility of escaping; sinners are not shut up hopeless under the curse. (2) The way of escape is not by fleeing from the Judge, and the execution of His sentence: nay, He is omniscient and omnipresent; one cannot outwit Him, or get away from His sight, or out of His reach. Nor is it by resisting, for He is omnipotent, and none can outbrave Him, nor make head against Him. But he may escape by falling in with the means of escape appointed by Himself, and required by Him to be made use of by us. It is neglected by unbelief, impenitency, and not using the means prescribed. On the contrary, then, He requires of us faith and repentance, which are the substance of the gospel (Acts xx. 21); and He requires of us the use of the means by which the salvation held forth in the gospel is obtained (Prov. viii. 34); for surely they neglect and slight the gospel, who do not believe, repent, or use the ordinary means of obtaining the salvation. I. THE NECESSITY OF FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST, in order to escape the wrath and curse of God due for sin. 1. There is no pleasing God without it (Heb. xi. 6). 2. It is the great duty of the gospel, whereby one is made partaker of the remedy provided, and without which neither your persons nor performances can be accepted. 3. It is that which enters one into the covenant of peace; unites him with Christ; and by which he comes to partake of all saving benefits. 4. Salvation and damnation turn upon this very point (Mark xvi. 16). II. THE NECESSITY OF REPENTANCE. 1. The Word of God certifies us, that whosoever does not repent shall perish (Luke xiii. 5). Your souls, then, lie at stake. 2. Heaven's door is bolted against all impenitent sinners; it is not so wide as to let in a sinner with a burden of unrepented-of guilt upon his back (Rev. xxi. 27). 3. Repentance is the other duty of the gospel; thereby signifying that without repentance there is no possibility but we must perish under God's wrath and curse. John Baptist preached repentance, so did Christ Himself, the apostles, &c. How can one think then to escape without it? 4. True faith does always bring along with it true repentance (Zech. xii. 10). III. ARE FAITH AND REPENTANCE IN MEN'S POWER, SINCE GOD REQUIRES THEM OF THEM? They are not. For God's demands of us are the measure of our duty, but not of our strength, which reaches not to these. For—1. They are the gifts of God, and the operations of His special grace (Eph. i. 19; Acts v. 31). 2. Sinners by nature, and in themselves, can do nothing which is good, and therefore cannot believe nor repent (John xv. 5). IV. THE CONNECTION BETWIXT FAITH AND REPENTANCE, AND ESCAPING THE WRATH AND CURSE OF GOD DUE TO US FOR SIN. Those who believe and repent shall certainly escape (John v. 24; Ezek. xviii. 30; Rom. viii. 1). In the moment the sinner comes into Christ, he is no more liable to eternal wrath, nor to the curse; for he is not under the law, but under grace: and the utmost he is liable to, is fatherly chastisements (Psa. lxxxix. 30-33). Thus faith and repentance have the connection of appointed means prescribed by God Himself, which, by His blessing, are rendered subservient to this great end of obtaining salvation. V. THE NECESSITY OF USING ALL THE OUTWARD MEANS WHEREBY CHRIST COMMUNICATETH TO HIS PEOPLE THE BENEFITS OF REDEMPTION. 1. God has peremptorily required this (Luke xiii. 24). 2. We have no ground to expect grace or salvation but in the use of the means (Prov. viii. 34). 3. The neglect of the means is a contempt of the thing. If we would be healed, we would

lie at the pool. If not, we say we care not for cure. And there is required here, not a careless or merely superficial use of the outward means, but a diligent one; that is an embracing of every opportunity that God in His providence gives us for attending upon them, a careful improvement of them, and a looking earnestly to Him for His blessing upon them. (*T. Boston, D.D.*) *God's scheme of salvation as a great harbour*:—After a wild night, we have gone down to the harbour, over whose arms the angry waves have been dashing with boom of thunder and in clouds of spray. Outside the sea has been tossing and churning; cloudwrack driving hurriedly across the sky; the winds howling like the furies of olden fable. But within those glorious walls, the barks which had put in during the night were riding in safety; the sailors resting, or repairing rents in sail and tackle, whilst the waters were unstirred by the storm raging without. Such a refuge or harbour is a fit emblem of salvation, where tempest-driven souls find shelter and peace. 1. It is great in its sweep.—Sufficient to embrace a ruined world. Room in it for whole navies of souls to ride at anchor. Space enough for every ship of Adam's race launched from the shores of time. "He is the propitiation for the whole world." "Whosoever will." Already it is becoming filled. There a vessel, once manned by seven devils, [a pirate ship, but captured by our Emmanuel, and at her stern the name, Mary of Magdala. And here one dismasted, and almost shattered, rescued from the fury of the Maëlstrom at the last hour; on her stern the words, The Dying Thief. And there another, long employed in efforts to sap the very walls of the harbour, and now flying a pennon from the masthead, Chief of Sinners and Least of Saints. 2. It is great in its foundations. The chief requisite in constructing a sea-wall is to get a foundation which can stand unmoved amid the heaviest seas. The shifting sand must be pierced down to the granite rock. But this harbour has foundations mighty enough to inspire strong consolation in those who have fled to it for refuge (Heb. vi. 18). The promise, and as if that were not enough, the oath of God. 3. It was great in its cost. By the tubular bridge on the Menai Straits stands a column, which records the names of those who perished during the construction of that great triumph of engineering skill. Nothing is said of the money spent, only of the lives sacrificed. And so, beside the harbour of our salvation, near to its mouth, so as to be read by every ship entering its enclosure, rises another column, with this as its inscription: "Sacred to the memory of the Son of God, who gave His life a sacrifice for the sin of the world." 4. It has been great in its announcement. The announcement of the law was by angels. The announcement of the gospel was by the Son. If the one were august, what must not the other have been? If the one were made sure by the most tremendous sanctions, what should not be said of the other? Proclaimed by the Lord; confirmed by apostles and eye-witnesses; testified to by the Almighty Himself, in signs and wonders, and gifts of the Holy Ghost. How dare we treat it with contumely or neglect? 5. It will be great in its penalties.—The tendency of our age is to minimise God's righteous judgment on sin. It seems to be prevalently thought that, because our dispensation is one of love and mercy, therefore there is the less need to dread the results of sin. But the inspired writer here argues in precisely a contrary sense. Just because this age is one of such tender mercy, therefore sins against its King are more deadly, and the penalties heavier. In the old days no transgression, positive, and no disobedience, negative, escaped its just recompense of reward; and in these days there is even less likelihood. (*F. B. Meyer, B.A.*) **Confirmed unto us.**—*Of confirming the Word*:—Though Christ's own publishing of the gospel were sufficient to make it worthy of all acceptation, yet it is said to be confirmed. That is confirmed which is further proved, or fulfilled, or made more sure and certain. Thus Christ is said to confirm the word of His apostles with signs (Mark xvi. 20), and God by sending His Son to confirm the promises made to the fathers (Rom. xv. 8). That also which is kept from failing or from being altered, is said to be confirmed. So God doth confirm His unto the end (1 Cor. i. 8), and establish them (1 Cor. i. 21), and we are called upon to be established with grace (chap. xiii. 3). But that which Christ spake needed not in any such respect to be confirmed. He is a faithful and true witness (Rev. iii. 14). He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life (John xiv. 6), that only true way that leadeth unto life. So there was no fear of any uncertainty, or of any failing in His Word. Christ's Word, therefore, was confirmed for these and other like reasons. 1. Because He was not at all times, in all places present with His Church, to urge and press His Word upon them. For this end He sent forth in His life-time disciples to preach (Luke ix. 2, x. 1). And after His ascension He gave apostles and others for the perfecting of the saints (Eph. iv.

11. 12). 2. Because of our weakness, Christ confirmed His Word, to support us, that we might have strong consolations. For this end God confirmed His promise by an oath (chap. vi. 17, 18). 3. Because of the commendable custom of men, who used to confirm their own words by the consent and testimony of others. Thus St. Paul in the inscriptions of his epistles joins with himself Sosthenes (1 Cor. i. 1), Timothy (2 Cor. i. 1), Silvanus and Timothy (1 Thess. i. 1), Timothy with the bishops and deacons (Phil. i. 1), all the brethren which were with him (Gal. i. 2). 4. Because by God's law and man's, at the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established (Deut. xix. 15). Thus Christ's Word was confirmed: (1) In that there were many witnesses of the same truth wherein they all agreed (Luke xxiv. 48; Acts ii. 32). (2) In that such as despised Him in His life-time, after His resurrection and ascension were wrought upon (Acts ii. 37). (3) In that by reason of the power of the Spirit in them, they who preached the gospel of Christ after Him, "were received as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus" (Gal. iv. 14). (4) In that many who never heard Christ themselves, believed that Word which Christ had preached, but was made known to them by others (1 Pet. i. 8). Thus it appears that this confirming of Christ's Word added nothing to the authority thereof. The Church may confirm the sacred Scriptures to be the Word of God: yet confirm nothing to their authority. Divine mysteries may be confirmed by human testimonies: yet no authority brought thereby to those mysteries. God being pleased thus to confirm the gospel to us, it ought to be a steadfast word to us, we ought with all steadfastness of faith to receive it, and to continue steadfastly therein, as the Christians of the primitive Church did in the apostles' doctrine (Acts ii. 42). (*W. Gouge.*) *A confirmed testimony*:—Confirmed is "made steadfast" (ver. 2), as the law was to Israel. The word confirmed does not mean, added their own testimony to the redemptive truth of what they heard and preached. This they no doubt did, and to men the testimony of other men founded on their own experience is very weighty and convincing; and of course we have it, not only in the faith of those around us, but in the unbroken life of the Church up to our time. The point here, however, is rather the accuracy and trustworthiness with which the salvation has been handed on even unto us, by ear-witnesses of the Lord, combined perhaps with a certain authority which belonged to them as His personal hearers, and the accompanying signs attesting their preaching. (*A. B. Davidson, LL.D.*) *Christ historical*:—It is of no use to say that Christ, as exhibited in the Gospels, is not historical. Who among His disciples or among their proselytes was capable of inventing the sayings ascribed to Jesus, or imagining the life and character revealed in the Gospels? Certainly not the fishermen of Galilee; as certainly not St. Paul, whose character and idiosyncrasies were of a totally different sort; still less the early Christian writers, in whom nothing is more evident than that the good which was in them was derived, as they always professed that it was derived, from a higher source. (*J. Stuart Mill.*) *Value of testimony*:—Bishop Young says: "The conviction produced by testimony is capable of being carried much higher than the conviction produced by experience, and the reason is this, because there may be concurrent testimonies to the truth of one individual fact; whereas there can be no concurrent experiments with regard to an individual experiment." (*Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible," Art. "Resurrection."*)

Ver. 4. **With signs and wonders, and with divers miracles.**—*Signs, wonders, and miracles*:—1. Signs, according to the notation of the word, imply such external visible things as signify and declare some memorable matter which otherwise could not be so well discerned, nor would be believed. "We would see a sign from Thee," say the Pharisees to Christ (Matt. xii. 38). And they desired Him that He would "show them a sign" (Matt. xvi. 1). These two words, "see," "show," imply that a sign is of some external visible thing that may be showed and seen. And extraordinary it must be, because it useth to be for confirmation of some secret and Divine matter. Thus the Pharisees would have a sign from heaven (Matt. xvi. 1), which must needs be extraordinary. Thereupon signs and wonders are oft joined together (John iv. 48; Acts ii. 43, iv. 30, vii. 36). 2. The word translated "wonders" is used by all sorts of authors for some strange thing, that may seem to foretell some other thing to come. "I will shew wonders in heaven," saith the Lord (Acts ii. 19). Those strange things which by the ministry of Moses were done in Egypt, in the Red Sea, and in the wilderness, are set out under this word "wonders" (Acts vii. 36). Our English doth fitly translate the Greek word "wonders," by reason of the effect, they cause wonder; and by reason of the strangeness of them, they are

wonderful (Matt. xv. 31; Mark vi. 51; Acts iii. 10). Our English word "miracle," according to the notation of the Latin word, whence it is taken, signifieth a matter of wonder. 3. The Greek word here translated "miracles," properly signifieth powers. It is derived from a verb that signifieth to be able. This word in the singular number is put for a man's ability (Matt. xxv. 15); for his strength (2 Cor. i. 8); and also for strength in the sun (Rev. i. 16); and in sin (1 Cor. xv. 56). It is also put for virtue in one (Mark v. 30); and for the power of man (1 Cor. iv. 19); of a prophet (Luke i. 17); of the Spirit (Eph. iii. 16); of Christ (2 Cor. xii. 9); and of God (Matt. xxii. 29). In the plural number it is put for angels (Rom. viii. 38; 1 Peter iii. 32), which excel in strength (Psa. ciii. 20). And for the firm and stable things in heaven (Matt. xxiv. 29); and for extraordinary works. Hereupon they are styled in our English, "mighty deeds" (2 Cor. xii. 12); "mighty works" (Matt. xi. 20, 21, 23); "wonderful works" (Matt. vii. 21); and frequently, as here in this text "miracles" (Acts ii. 22, xix. 11; 1 Cor. xii. 10, 28, 29). For miracles cannot be wrought but by an extraordinary power, even the power of God Himself. Fitly, therefore, is this word "powers" used to set out miracles, and fitly is it here, and in other places, translated "miracles." (*W. Gouge.*) *Of the miracles wrought in confirmation of Christianity*:—Miracles are a Divine testimony given to a person or doctrine. I. WHAT A MIRACLE IS. The shortest and plainest description I can give of it is this: that it is a supernatural effect, evident and wonderful to sense. 1. That it be a supernatural effect. By a supernatural effect I mean such an effect as either in itself or in its own nature, or in the manner and circumstances of it, exceeds any natural power that we know of to produce it. 2. There is another condition also required to a miracle, that it be an effect evident and wonderful to sense; for if we do not see it, it is to us as if it were not, and can be no testimony or proof of anything, because itself stands in need of another miracle to give testimony to it, and to prove that it was wrought; and neither in Scripture, nor profane authors, nor in common use of speech, is anything called a miracle, but what falls under the notice of our senses; a miracle being nothing else but a thing wonderful to sense; and the very end and design of it is to be a sensible proof and conviction to us of something which we do not see. II. IN WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES, AND WITH WHAT CAUTIONS AND LIMITATIONS, MIRACLES GIVE TESTIMONY TO THE TRUTH AND DIVINITY OF ANY DOCTRINE. 1. The entire proof of the Christian doctrine or religion, consisting of many considerations, when taken together, make up a full demonstration of the truth of it, when perhaps no one of them, taken singly and by itself, is a convincing and undeniable proof. 2. But yet miracles are the principal external proof and confirmation of the divinity of a doctrine. 3. Especially if miracles have all the circumstances of advantage given to them which they are capable of; if they be many and great, public and unquestionable, and universal and of long continuance. 4. It cannot be denied, but that God doth sometimes permit miracles to be wrought for the countenancing of a false doctrine. So our Saviour tells us that the elect, that is, the true and sincere Christians, should not be deceived by the "signs and wonders of the false Christs and false prophets." And therefore He was not afraid of having the credit of His doctrine weakened by foretelling that false prophets should work miracles; because He knew when the devil had done his utmost, the difference would be apparent enough between the confirmation which He had given to the Christian doctrine, and what the devil should be able to give to his instruments. As—(1) Either the doctrine would be absurd in itself, and such as no miracles can confirm. Or—(2) It would be contrary to that doctrine which had already had a far greater and more Divine confirmation. Or—(3) The miracles which false prophets work are presently confuted, and upon the spot. Thus Moses confuted and conquered Pharaoh's magicians, by working miracles which they could not work, which forced them to yield the cause, and acknowledge that it was "the finger of God." And so likewise Simon Magus. Or else—(4) The miracles wrought, or pretended to be wrought, to confirm false doctrines, are such as do, some way or other, confute themselves; or if they be real, are sufficiently detected to be the pranks of the devil, and not the great and glorious works of God. Such were the miracles of the heathen deities, wrought so privately and obscurely, and confessedly mixed with so much of imposture, as to bring a just suspicion upon them, that, when they were real, the devil was the author of them. And such were the miracles which are attributed to Mahomet. 1. What hath been said may satisfy us of the truth and divinity of the Christian doctrine, which had so eminent a testimony given to it from heaven, and did at first so strangely prevail in the world, contrary to all human probability, "not by might, nor by power, but

by the Spirit of the Lord." 2. From hence we may judge how groundless the pretences are, which men nowadays make to inspiration and infallibility, because this is not to be proved and made out any other way but by miracles. For either we must believe every pretence of this kind; and then we are at the mercy of every crafty and confident man, to be led by him into what delusions he pleases; or we must only believe those who give some testimony of their inspiration; but the evidence of inspiration was always miracles. 3. You see what an immediate testimony from heaven God was pleased to give to the first preachers of the Christian doctrine, to qualify them with any probability of success, to contest with violent and almost invincible prejudices of men educated in a contrary religion, and which had the secular authority and laws on its side. For having this Divine seal given to their commission, they did as it were carry the letters-patents of heaven in their hands, and an authority paramount to that of human laws. 4. The consideration of what has been said, doth justly upbraid us, that our religion, which hath such evident marks of divinity upon it, and comes down to us confirmed by so many miracles, should yet have so little efficacy upon the lives of the greatest part of those who call themselves Christians. Secondly, that God gave testimony to the apostles and first publishers of Christianity, in a very eminent manner. 1. At this time the Holy Ghost descended upon the apostles in miraculous powers and gifts; when this new law was "to come forth out of Zion, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem." And among these gifts, the first we find mentioned was the gift of tongues, without which the gospel must of necessity have been very slowly propagated in the world. 2. The next miraculous gift I shall mention after the gift of tongues, is the gift of prophecy, or foretelling things future, which was always looked upon as an evidence of inspiration. 3. The next gift is that of healing all manner of diseases. 4. The power of raising the dead, which hath always been esteemed one of the greatest and most unquestionable miracles of all other. 5. Another miraculous gift was that of discerning spirits, the principal use of which was to try and judge who were true prophets. 6. And, besides these which I have mentioned, there was likewise a power of inflicting corporal punishments and diseases upon scandalous and obstinate Christians, which in Scripture is called, "a delivering men up to Satan, for the destroying or tormenting of their bodies, that their souls might be saved at last." And of this kind were those diseases which befel the Christians for their disorderly and irregular carriage at the sacrament, of which the apostle speaks (1 Cor. xi. 30). 7. There was the power of casting out devils in the name of Christ, which was common to the meanest Christian, and continued in the Church a long time after most of the other gifts were ceased, as Tertullian, Minucius Felix, and Arnobius, do most expressly testify concerning their times. III. THE REASON WHY THESE MIRACLES ARE NOW CEASED IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH, and have been for a long time, so that there have been no footsteps of this miraculous power for many ages. I. THESE MIRACULOUS POWERS AND GIFTS HAVE CEASED IN THE CHURCH FOR SEVERAL AGES. II. THERE IS NOT THE LIKE NECESSITY AND OCCASION FOR THEM THAT THERE WAS BEFORE. They were at first in a great degree necessary to introduce the gospel into the world, which was destitute of all other helps and advantages, to recommend it to the esteem and liking of mankind; to give credit to a new doctrine and religion, so contrary to the inveterate prejudices of men, bred up in another religion very different from this, and so opposite to the lusts and interests of men. III. I come NOW TO ANSWER THAT OBJECTION from the innumerable miracles which have been, and still are pretended to be, wrought in the Church of Rome. And so indeed we find that the Arians and other heretics in former times pretended to miracles, for the confirmation of their errors, a good while after miracles were generally ceased in the Christian Church, which shows that this is no new or strange thing. 1. The most learned and judicious writers of the Roman Church do acknowledge that there is no necessity of miracles now, and that Christianity is sufficiently established by the miracles which were wrought at first to give testimony to it; and therefore, not being necessary, without manifest evidence of fact, it is not necessary to believe that they are continued. 2. The miracles pretended to by the Church of Rome are of very doubtful and suspected credit, even among the wisest persons of their own communion. 3. The miracles of the Church of Rome, supposing several of them to be true, have such marks and characters upon them, as render it very suspicious that they are not operations of God, or good spirits, but the working of Satan. 4. The miracles of the Church of Rome, taking them for true, are very impertinently and unseasonably wrought. When and where there is no need and occasion for

them, they are very rife and frequent; but where there is greatest occasion for them and most reason to expect them, they are either not at all, or very rarely so much as pretended to. 5. He from whom of all persons in that Church we might expect the most and greatest miracles, does not, so far as I can learn, pretend at all to that gift; I mean the head of their church, the Pope. 6. Most of the doctrines in difference between us and the Church of Rome, which they chiefly pretend to confirm by these miracles, are not capable of being confirmed by them. There are three sorts of doctrines, two of which are in their own nature incapable of being confirmed by a miracle, and a third upon supposition of its contrariety to the Christian doctrine, which hath already had an unquestionable Divine confirmation. (1) No doctrine which is contrary to sense, is capable of being confirmed by a miracle, as transubstantiation. (2) No doctrine that does countenance or enjoin idolatry is capable of being confirmed by a miracle. This is evident from Deut. xiii. (3) No doctrine contrary to any part of the Christian doctrine, which hath already received an unquestionable Divine confirmation, is capable of being confirmed by the miracles pretended to in the Church of Rome, if they were real. 7. The chief prophecies of the New Testament, which are concerning false prophets, and concering antichrist, have marked Him out by this character, that He should be a great worker of miracles and magnify Himself upon this pretence (Matt. xxiv. 24). (*Archbp. Tillotson.*) *Miracles not needed now*:—Now that the use of miracles is performed unto us and we do believe the gospel, in token that our faith is accepted of God, now He hath taken signs from us which served us before when we were unbelieving. And surely our faith is never so honourable, nor God so well pleased with us, as when we have said both to heaven and earth, we seek no signs from them: when the Word of God hath such a persuasion in our hearts, that we have now taken hold of all the good promises of God, and said unto miracles, get you hence. The Jews seek a sign, saith St. Paul; surely we that be Christians seek for none; when they were offered of God, He showed His compassion upon our infirmity; now He hath taken them away, He showed greater mercy that He accepteth our faith, and let us hearken to the Word of Christ; by it we shall live; if we believe it not, we would not believe all miracles in the world, no, though dead men should rise to preach unto us. For great miracles have been already done, not only by the apostles, but by Christ Himself, to confirm His word. If we believe not them it is too much childishness to think we would believe other. Signs were when doctrine was more obscure; now it is so clear the signs are gone. The Son of God once revenged the transgression of His law with the earth opening, with waters, with fire, with whirlwinds, that the people might fear. He doth not so now, because His threatenings have been heard of all flesh: Go ye cursed into eternal fire—a voice that pierceth between the marrow and the bones, with greater fear than the rage of earth or water. And Christ once showed loving signs to make His people put their trust in Him, but now He hath spoken in our hearts: Come ye blessed of My Father into everlasting life—a voice that goeth deeper into the soul and spirit than the hearing of all the miracles, by which Israel was led into the land of Canaan. And we shall do injury to our Saviour Christ if now we will ask that to these words He should add miracles, for if we bring faith to that which is spoken, it will fill our hearts with all fulness, and will sell the sight of all the miracles in the world to buy but one grain of a constant faith in Christ; wherein whosoever shall stumble, let him accuse himself if God give him over to his own blindness, that because he had no love to believe the truth, therefore he should be led with lies and deceivable things. (*E. Deering, B.D.*) **Gifts of the Holy Ghost.**—*The gifts of the Holy Ghost*:—Gifts of the Holy Ghost were extraordinary qualities and powers given to such as heard the apostles' doctrine and believed it; as power to heal, to speak in strange languages, to prophecy, to do miracles. They are said to be gifts and effects of the Holy Ghost, because they had them not by nature, or industry, or instruction by man, but from the power of God-Redeemer, and the Spirit of Christ. They are called in the original, "distributions" or "divisions," because they were—1. Communicated to divers persons. 2. Were many of different kinds. 3. Were given in several degrees. They were distributed according to His own will. (1) Freely. (2) To whom He will. (3) What gifts He will. (4) In what measure He will. For there are diversities of gifts (1 Cor. xii. 4). But all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will (ver. 11). The effect of these miracles and gifts was the confirmation of the doctrine of the apostles, which they did confirm by word and deed. For—1. They did most certainly affirm and assert this doctrine, as having heard

it immediately of Christ, and as having received the immediate knowledge thereof from Him. 2. They did these signs, wonders, and mighty deeds, and upon the imposition of their hands, believers received the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, yet they neither did these miracles, nor gave these gifts by their own power or holiness. But the works were done, and the graces given by them as instruments, in the name of Christ as risen and glorified and from God. So that the power of God, the merit of Christ, their ministration, did all concur to the production of these glorious effects. God was the principal cause, therefore is it said, that by these God did bear them witness and attest their doctrine to be true, and from Him; so that this confirmation was a giving credibility to the doctrine of the gospel, so far as it was new, and delivered the positive truths concerning Jesus of Nazareth, dying for our sins, rising again, sitting at the right hand of God, and the dependence of justification before the tribunal of God, and eternal glory upon faith in Him making intercession in heaven. For there was no need thus to confirm the ceremonials of Moses, and the covenant of God with Israel before Mount Sinai to the Jew; for these things He made no doubt of, nor was this confirmation needful for to persuade the Gentile of the equity and justice of the morals of the Scripture, for the natural light of reason did approve them. These miracles and gifts were proofs very strong and powerful, for they were no juggling impostures or delusions, but real demonstrations of the Divine will, and clear to the senses. (*G. Lawson.*) **According to His own will.**—*Of God's will in ordering works and gifts:*—The forementioned diversity of miracles and distribution of gifts, were ordered and disposed according to the will of God. This act of distributing is attributed to God (1 Cor. vii. 17); to His Son (Eph. iv. 7); and to His Spirit (1 Cor. xii. 11). And for kind, number, and measure of gifts, all are ordered by the will of this one God, according to His own will, not another's; the Greek word intends as much. The will of God is that rule whereby all things are ordered that He Himself doth, and whereby all things ought to be ordered that creatures do. Hereupon God's will is distinguished into His secret and revealed will (Deut. xxix. 29). The secret will of God is called His counsel (Isa. xlvi. 10); the counsel of His will (Eph. i. 11); His purpose (Rom viii. 28): His pleasure (Isa. xlvi. 10); His good pleasure (Eph. i. 9); the good pleasure of His will (Eph. i. 5). The other is commonly called God's Word, and that after the manner of men, because the ordinary means whereby men make known their minds is the word of their mouth, therefore the revelation of God's will is called God's Word, whether it be by an audible voice from God Himself (Matt. iii. 17), or by the ministry of angels (ver. 2), or by the ministry of men (Hcs. i. 2). This is also called the good and acceptable and perfect will of God (Rom. xii. 2). This revealed will of God is that which is principally intended in the second petition of the Lord's prayer. Here God's secret will is meant. This is that supreme and absolute will of God, by which all things are, and without which nothing can be (Psa. cxv. 3; Eph. i. 11; Rom. xi. 34). This is God's only rule; He hath nothing else to regulate any purpose or act of His but His own will. As therefore He disposeth all things, so in special the gifts of the Holy Ghost according to His will. The grounds following do demonstrate the equity hereof. 1. God is the fountain whence all gifts flow (James i. 17). All are His; hereupon He thus presseth His right against such as were not contented with that portion which He gave them (Matt. xx. 15). 2. God is the most supreme Sovereign over all. He is the Lord and Master of all; He therefore hath power to order the places and duties and parts of all as He pleaseth, according to His own will (1 Chron. xxviii. 4. 5). 3. God is the wisest of all. He is wise in heart (Job ix. 4); yea, mighty in wisdom (Job. xxxvi. 5); His understanding is infinite (Psa. cxlvii. 5); He is only wise (Rom xvi. 27). He therefore best knoweth what is fittest for every one, and He is fittest to order it according to His will. 4. God's will is the rule of righteousness. Whatsoever is ordered thereby and agreeable thereto is righteous, and whatsoever cometh from it is altogether righteous. The Lord is righteous in all His ways, His ordering therefore of matters must needs be according to right and equity. 5. The Lord fitteth gifts and functions one to another. Such gifts as are needful for such a function and such a function as is fittest for such gifts (Matt. xxv. 15; Exod. xxxi. 2, 3). This teacheth us every one to be content with our own measure which God hath proportioned to us, for we may be assured thereupon that it is the fittest and best for us. Hast thou a small measure? bear it patiently, that measure is fittest for thee. Hast thou a great measure? use it conscionably, that is fittest for thee. We are exhorted earnestly to covet the best

gifts (1 Cor. xii. 31), and to seek to excel (1 Cor. xiv. 12), and to grow up in all things (Eph. iv. 15). None of these, nor any such like exhortations are contrary to Christian contentedness. For—1. Though a man covet a more excellent gift than God hath ordained for him, yet when he seeth that God hath bestowed such and such a gift upon him less than his desire, he may quietly subject himself to God's wise disposition and rest contented therewith. For the will of God being now made known unto him, he may persuade himself that the gift he hath is best for him. 2. Seeking to excel is not ambitiously to strive for the highest places and greatest offices in the Church (as Diotrephes did, 3 John 9), but every one to strive in his one place to do most good in God's Church. This, therefore, is the full exhortation: "Seek that you may excel to the edifying of the Church" (1 Cor. xiv. 12). So as this teacheth us how to make the best use of the place wherein God hath set us, and of the parts which He hath given us. 3. A continual growth in grace is no more opposite to Christian contentedness than the growth of the little finger is to the place wherein it is set. Growth and contentedness may well stand together, yea, they always go together. Growth in grace received showeth our good liking thereof, and that we think it the fittest for us; and are thereupon stirred up to nourish and cherish it, to keep it from decay, and to increase it more and more. (*W. Gouge.*)

Ver. 5. **Put in subjection the world to come.**—*The sovereignty of the future:*—I. IF CHRIST IS THE SOVEREIGN OF THE FUTURE, WE SHOULD HOLD STRONG FAITH IN THE UNIVERSAL TRIUMPHS OF HIS SYSTEM. 1. He has plentitude of power for the accomplishment of His promises. 2. Plenty of time. II. IF CHRIST IS THE SOVEREIGN OF THE FUTURE, WE MAY INFER THAT OUR FUTURE WELL-BEING IS EVER DEPENDENT UPON PRESENT WELL-DOING. Otherwise—1. The good would have no guarantee that present obedience would ensure future well-being. 2. And the evil might hope for approval hereafter. III. IF CHRIST IS THE SOVEREIGN OF THE FUTURE, HIS LOYAL SUBJECTS SHOULD BE RECONCILED TO THE EVENTS OF THE PRESENT, AND CALMLY AWAIT THOSE OF THE FUTURE. IV. IF CHRIST IS THE SOVEREIGN OF THE FUTURE, THE OBVIOUS INTEREST OF EVERY HUMAN BEING IS TO CULTIVATE HIS FRIENDSHIP NOW. 1. Because, without this friendship, His control will run contrary to all the feelings, aspirations, and purposes of the soul. 2. Because, without this friendship, His control in the future will be exercised with positive reference to punishment. (*Homilist.*) *The world to come:*—The greatest difficulty is to know what is meant by "the world to come," which many think refers to the state of glory, and the world which follows the resurrection. Thus Lapide, and some of the ancients. Rivera understands the Church-Christian as opposed to the Church of former times, especially under the law. This is the more probable sense; for the apostle speaks of these last times, wherein God spake unto men by His Son; and it is opposed to the times wherein He spake by His prophets and angels. Yet we must not understand it of the Church exclusively, as though God had not subjected other things, even angels, for the good of the Church. That world and those times whereof the apostle speaks are here meant, but he speaks of the times of the gospel. The proposition is negative. God subjected not the world to come to angels. In former times God had used very much the ministry of angels in ordering the Church, and put much power in their hands to that end. Yet now in this last time He made Christ His Son (who by reason of His suffering was a little lower then the angels) to be the administrator-general of His kingdom, the universal Lord, and subjected the very angels unto Him. The expression seems to be taken from Isa. ix. 6, for whereas there, amongst other titles given to Christ, one is, everlasting Father; the Septuagint turn it, the Father or Governor of the world to come, which seems to be the genuine sense of the Hebrew words. The sum is, that God did not subject the Church in the times of the gospel, nor the world of those times to angels but to Christ. The words thus understood may inform us—1. That Christ is more excellent than the angels. 2. If the law and Word spoken by angels, when neglected and disobeyed, was so severely punished, much more severely shall they who neglect the gospel spoken by Christ be punished. 3. That if it was the duty of the fathers and those who lived in former times to hearken to the Word spoken by angels, which are but servants, then it is much more the duty of us, who live in these last times, to hearken unto the Word of so great salvation spoken by Christ, made Lord of all. From hence we may understand the scope of the words to be the same with that of the former, and that may be considered either as part of the former reason why we should hearken to Christ and not neglect the gospel; or they

may, with the latter words following, contain another distinct reason, and in this manner, that seeing God hath not to the angels subjected the world to come, but to Christ, who, by His suffering and death, was for a little time made lower than the angels, and for that suffering, afterwards made Lord of all, even of angels, then we ought to give the more earnest heed to His doctrine. (*G. Lawson.*) *The world to come*:—The phrase "to come" does not seem here merely to express the antithesis between "this world" and the new order of things introduced through Christ; with this there is at least included the idea that this new order is still future: compare city to come (xiii. 14; vi. 5). Throughout the Epistle the great antithesis is "this world" and the "world to come." The former, visible, material, transient, to which belongs, as part of it, the first covenant; the other, real, heavenly, and eternal, access into which is through the new covenant. The first is subjected to angels, particularly as revealers of the law; but under their rule seems embraced the whole pre-Christian condition of things, embracing man in his earthly and mortal condition. Salvation is escape from this and possession of the heavenly world. In this world to come the angels have no more rule, all things without exception are put in subjection to man (ver 8). From the Old Testament point of view, the world to come is the world from the coming of the Messiah, for the Old Testament drew no lines in the Messianic salvation, the Messianic world was perfect from the moment of Messiah's coming. But in the view of this Christian writer, though powers from the world to come made themselves felt here (ii. 4; vi. 5), and though through hope (vi. 19) and faith believers might be said to be come to it (xii. 22), it was still no more than ready to be revealed. It belonged to a sphere transcending this earth, out of which it would be revealed and descend, and then all that was promised by God's holy prophets would be fulfilled, when the meek should inherit the earth (Psa. xxxvii. 11; Matt. v. 5; Rom. iv. 13), and the dominion under the whole heaven should be given to the people of the saints of the Most High (Dan. vii. 27)—for then earth and heaven would be one. This "world to come" is identical with the "all things" of the Psalm (ver. 8), being "all things" in their final and eternal condition—whereof we speak means, which is the subject of my writing, rather than, which is the theme of hope and converse among us Christians. (*A. B. Davidson, LL.D.*) *Christ the Genius of the future*:—Strauss, in writing of the Emperor Julian's attempt to restore the old paganism, and to put away the new Christianity, says: "Every Julian, *i.e.*, every great and powerful man who would attempt to resuscitate a state of society which has died, will infallibly be vanquished by the Galilean, for the Galilean is nothing less than the genius of the future." To say that "the Galilean is nothing less than the genius of the future," is to say of Him what it would be ridiculous to say of any one else. Strauss felt that the spirit of the Galilean was so great and good, so rich, as to give to the future its noblest inspirations. (*T. Sherwood.*) *The world to come*:—As a man plants his estate, and plants for far-off years, and gives to each tree the soil and situation it requires—so has the Lord planted this earth, and certainly with reference to a time not yet fulfilled. (*Miss S. F. Smiley.*) *The hope of a golden age*:—The hope of a future golden age, when the whole world should be renewed and evil banished, is very plainly expressed in the old German legends of the gods. Baldr, the good, the holy and the wise, the favourite of the gods and of men, is slain through the crafty stratagem of the wicked Loki. The gods and all creatures lament; men and beasts, trees and rocks weep. Evil times afterwards come upon the earth; strife and bloodshed increase; and in the fight between the giants and the gods, Odin and the Æses (the good gods) are subdued, and the world destroyed by fire. But Vidar the victorious will restore the golden age; a new world is to arise, clothed with perpetual spring and plenty; there will no longer be any Loki, and Baldr will return from the dead: while gods and men, recovering from their overthrow, will dwell peacefully together. Kindred traditions are familiar also in Mexico and the South Sea Islands. In short, everywhere in the heathen world, the prediction and the hope are indigenous, that when evil shall have reached its climax, these iron times of sin and misery will come to an end, and even the gods who have ruled during this age of the world will be overthrown. For this purpose a royal hero, of heavenly descent, will appear to crush the head of the demon and to bring back the primitive age of happiness and innocence. (*Prof. C. E. Luthardt.*)

Ver. 6. **What is man?**—*What is man?*—To answer this question with anything like completeness it would be necessary to discourse upon it in much detail. Refer-

ence would have to be made to various sciences—psychology, physiology, anthropology, sociology; and even then the answer would be inadequate, for all the scientists together are unable to take the full measure of man. It is possible, however, to ponder the question with reference to one or two of the more salient points that it suggests, in such a way as to arrive briefly at an answer that may suffice for a moral purpose. Naturally, the question at the outset throws us back on history and the records of the past. What has man been? what was his beginning? It is almost lost in the dimness of remote antiquity. All we can say is, that, like every other living thing, his course has been upward and onward from a lower form, that in strength, in beauty, in intellect, in moral power, he has progressed by a slow development. On any supposition there must have been a period when he first acquired personality, when, to his sensuous and instinctive impulses, there were superadded reason and will, and those higher emotions and faculties which we commonly speak of as pertaining to the soul. There must have been a time when man first knew what right and wrong were, and what sin was; and there must have been a time when man first committed sin and experienced the sense of shame. So that whether chaps. ii. or iii. of Genesis are historical or not, they are spiritually true. They furnish an exact description of what man was, and what he did, in that early stage of his being, when he acquired the power of choosing between good and evil. They narrate that change in the evolution of the race which corresponds to the change in the evolution of the man when he arrives at years of discretion, and can be treated as a moral being, having a sense of moral responsibility. And it does not require the slightest remission of candour, or fancy of interpretation, to read the Biblical description of man's origin in correspondence with the suggestions of science: "And the Lord God formed man of the dust . . . and man became a living soul." Here we have a statement of the lowest possible origin of man, from "the dust of the ground," with the addition that there was infused into him afterwards by the Almighty that quality of his nature which made him like the Almighty, and capable of what the best men have attained. It existed only in the germ at first, this principle of the higher life; but it was a germ having a power of development which was almost inexhaustible—a germ that has gone on working marvellously ever since; so that, from the teaching of experience only, we do not know what limits to set to the possible development of man. There was once a wise king, as Jeremy Taylor tells us, who was raised to the throne from the position of a ploughman, and kept his country shoes always by him to remind him from whence he had sprung. It would be well if we would in like manner often think of what we were, and what, in many respects, we still are, with the traces of our lower birth still about us. We should be less disposed to think that all things exist for man, and that "man is the measure of all things." We should assume an attitude of more reverent and waiting humility towards Him from whom we and all things are sprung. Again, the recollection of our low beginning would tend to produce a salutary effect on our moral conduct. What more common pretext for their mode of life is offered by the sensual and intemperate than that they are following the dictates of their nature? Yes; but which nature? The lower? that which they share with the brute, and have perhaps inherited from the brute? Does ever humanity fall so low as when it makes such an appeal? Remember, then, from whence you have sprung, or at any rate what you have been, and you will not be forward to plead for liberty to do what "your nature" dictates. For man only became man, and deserved to be styled man, when he learnt how to control his appetites. But further, for those even who are cognisant of the higher nature in man, and who are striving to live according to that nature, it is useful to remember the other side of their being. The higher nature has been evolved out of the lower. We are the products of evolution from various ancestors; we have inherited our several dispositions, whether good or bad; we are, to a large extent, the creatures of our circumstances; our higher life is governed by precisely the same laws which control the lives of plants and animals; we are subject in our higher nature to similar conditions of degeneration and mortification. We cannot, then, be what we like to be without regard to the environment in which we are placed. Though we boast of our free-will, we act on the greatest number of occasions simply on the impulse of the strongest motive. And therefore it is absolutely needful for our spiritual well-being that we place ourselves in a favourable environment, that we put ourselves in the way of being actuated by good motives, that we cultivate habits of prayer and watchfulness. Thus we are admonished by the laws of the animal life, which we share with the brutes. And, moreover, the higher nature of man is not only

subject to the laws which govern the animal life, but it is inextricably interwoven with the animal nature in himself. His goodness from day to day depends on what use he makes of his lower nature. Bodily ill-health will weaken his self-control, and curtail his spiritual powers; bodily indulgence will enervate his will, and expose him to special temptations. So that a great part of the activity of the higher nature depends on a proper treatment of the lower. Hence the necessity for exercising self-discipline, in order to keep the lower passions under proper control. It needs no asceticism, no going out into the wilderness to feed on locusts and wild honey to accomplish this. It needs not that the lower feelings should be crushed, but rather that they should be made sublime by becoming the ready instruments of the higher self. And then the man becomes a harmonious, a dignified, a noble being, armed and fully equipped to do God's bidding at all times. Then he can indeed lift up his head above the animal creation, and feel that he is a being of a different mould from them. Then he can find in himself the working of a spirit of life to whose continuance the destruction of the body is no impediment. Then he can even dare to claim kindred with God Himself (Rom. viii. 13, 14). (*W. L. Paige Cox, M.A.*) *What is man?*—The question of all antiquity, and perhaps the question around which for years to come the greatest theological and scientific strife will take place, is this: What is man? The answer that the Christian Church will give will not of course accord in all points with the answer of the scientist who denies the revelation which comes from God. Yet, strange to say, though by different paths, and for every different purposes, we come in one sense to the same conclusion as the scientist: that there are possibilities in man which, if only they be evolved, will raise him to an infinite height, and bestow upon him a power that is possessed by no other creature in the universe. We hold that man is intended by God to be elevated step by step by the power of the gospel, until he becomes a partaker of the very glory of God. The scientist holds—if he denies revelation, I mean—that man is gradually, by a process of evolution, and by the development of the species, to be so elevated that at last all that is called God shall be found in him, and that man thus becomes a God to himself and to creation. But there is little question that the answer will be that "the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof"; that man is but the deputy or vicegerent of his God; and that if man can be elevated to the position to which Almighty God intended him to attain, he shall be one with God in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ; he shall be elevated, step by step, by the gospel power, until he shall attain to the highest glory of God: "The glory that Thou gavest Me I have given them, that they may be one, even as We are one: I in them and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one." I know no motive power that can touch man's nature when it be elevated above the self-consciousness of self-seeking, so much as the inquiry what God meant man to be, what God made man for originally, what He considers him to be now, and what are the possibilities God has put before man in and through the glorious Saviour Jesus Christ our Lord. My purpose, therefore, is to inquire whether, if God's revelation be the power by which mankind can be elevated to its highest possible destiny, we are prepared to carry out that purpose, and to glorify God as our Saviour in all things, by giving up ourselves to His service, to live the devoted life that the Church should live, and to rise above the selfishness of mere personal salvation; remembering that there is a still more glorious aim than merely to be saved, and to enter personally into the glory of God, and it is this—that in her corporate capacity, the Church should see that the individual life and personality is in one sense to be lost, and that when the individual soul forgets even its own personal salvation and its aspirations to everlasting happiness, then, and then only, does it really attain to the highest possible dignity of man; and that when the Church as a whole becomes, as she should be, greatly thoughtful on behalf of the individuals or units that one by one make up the perfection of the body of Christ which is His Church, then only will she fulfil her high destiny upon earth. Now let us proceed to the inquiry, taking our answer from God's own Word. What is man? Can anything more magnificent be conceived than the dignity wherewith God originally endowed him? While step by step God evolved the glories and beauties of creation, one and one only purpose was in the Master-Mind, and that was to prepare the wonderful sphere in which man as the top stone of all should be happy and blessed, and should glorify his Maker. And when that wonderful series of preparations was completed, we find that even the Almighty Maker, the great Creator, has to pause as it were, in order that He may give greater dignity and greater glory to the creation of the creature which is to be possessor of all!—and instead of that mere fiat, "Let there be" and "there was,"

we hear the Triune God saying, "Let Us make man in Our own image and after Our own likeness." And then "God made man," as the apostle Paul says, "the image and glory of God"! Surely from that moment we should expect the sphere of man to be great. But suddenly all the glory is swept away, and the creature for whom God had worked so long ceases to enjoy his original position; for by one act of folly he has severed himself from God, and, sin entering into the world, and death by sin, all the greatness of man would seem to be lost for ever. Nor, from that time forward, as far as physical manifestation goes, has there ever been a recovery of the creature's lost dignity; and if now (however much modern science rejects the doctrine of the fall) the inquiry rings through the vault of heaven "What is man?" the answer would appear to be that man has become a thing of naught. Yea, "verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity." Man is even "like a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." Yet, though this his fallen condition urges one to think with pain of the creature, let me invite you to pause before you condemn humanity after that modern fashion which is at the opposite extreme to that which speaks of man rising upwards and becoming God. Let me ask you to look at the fallen creature and see how, even after the fall, there are magnificent proofs in him of the original power of God, and that he is by no means to be condemned as a hopeless cripple. We gaze upon the ruins of a city and, from these ruins we gather its former magnificence and greatness; and it is by the style of these ruins that we judge of the city. So let me ask you to look at man for a moment, and as you see in this fallen creature powers that never were found in any other, you shall be compelled to give him your admiration, and honour him for the possibilities that lie buried beneath the surface, and which may elevate him into something almost Divine if only he can be delivered from the dominion of sin. Look, for instance, at the power of revenge as inherited in the vilest and worst of men. We find no other creature in the world who, for the mere sake of obtaining vengeance on its own behalf, will determine to sacrifice its own life. Look at the power of covetousness—that ambition and yearning after money and place, which the apostle describes as idolatry; and observe the wondrous powers there are in the creature who, for the mere sake of advancing himself, will slave and toil in order that he may be elevated above his fellows. Look again on that awful power of remorse, which comes over those who have fallen and sunk into despair. Can anything prove more clearly than the workings of remorse the very magnificence of the creature who is capable of such conditions and emotions? It would seem, if we watch a man in the activities of remorse, as if we were able to stand on a height within himself and so contemplate the utter misery of his own ruined, fallen state. Surely there is no other creature in the world such as this. Therefore, as we look at man in his fall, again we are compelled to say, What is man? and to answer back, Man is not merely the wreck of his former self—though that we believe most solemnly—but a wonderful creature, a marvellous being, fitted, if only liberated from his fallen condition, to stand once more in the presence of God. At length, after four thousand years, during which God had from time to time been essaying to reveal Himself unto men, the oracle would seem to have become altogether dumb, when an angel appears to a virgin in Nazareth, and tells that a "holy thing shall be born of her which shall be called the Son of God"; and there bursts from the inspired lips of Zacharias the cry that "God hath visited and redeemed His people," and that "the Dayspring from on high hath visited us"; and the Lord Jesus, as the true "Word made flesh," appears among men. And now, what see we as the result of Jehovah deigning to appear in the flesh? First, the manifestation of what man should be and could be if only the purpose of God was fulfilled; secondly, the manifestation of what God still determined to accomplish in man, because in Christ Jesus He would purchase humanity to Himself; and, thirdly, the manifestation of what may be done by those brought into personal contact and union with Him, being made one with the Son of God, by the faith which He requires us to exercise. We also see that in place of limitation, which had appeared to be working for so many centuries, expansion commenced, and has been wondrously proceeding from the day that the Lord Jesus returned to His Father in heaven. For when about to pass back to the glory of God, and to be hidden from men's eyes for a little while, we hear from His lips the blessed truth that "Ye shall receive power" and "Ye shall be witnesses unto Me," and in ten days from that time a third great series of manifestations commences. No longer do men see the form of the Son of God, but the power of the Holy Ghost in the sons of God. Jehovah-Elohim had appeared unto man; Jehovah Jesus had appeared for man; and now, in the Church of God, and in

the fulness of His power, the Jehovah Spirit would appear in man. From that day forward the work of expansion commences, and for eighteen hundred years the great power of the Lord, the Holy Ghost, has been exhibited in this world working out the complete man (Eph. iv. 13, and v. 25, &c.). The Second Man, who is the Lord from heaven, will not be complete until His Bride be brought unto Him, His glorious Church, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing; and so each sinner that is joined to Jesus Christ by His Spirit is made a member of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones, and we live in Him, we live by Him, and we may now live for Him, in order that hereafter we may live with Him in the manifested glory that awaits God's Son. And now when we see "the Man Christ Jesus" made perfect through suffering, and then lifted up to the throne of God that by His Spirit He may draw men into absolute unity with Himself, say, oh say, "What is man?" What is man, as we see him in the person of God's Son? What is man, as we see him in the purpose of God, which is to be carried out in soul after soul of those that are redeemed and united vitally unto the Lord Jesus Christ? And "what is man" when we consider the triumphs of this gospel? What but this truth, as the truth is in Jesus, has made man such as he has occasionally been seen? What but this could have made a Paul, a Peter, or a John? What but this could have given us an Augustine, a Wycliffe, a Huss, a Savonarola, a Luther? What but this in these latter days could give us those blessed missionaries who have stood before the world as witnesses for the power of Christ? What but this, the purpose of God, to glorify man, the purpose of God that man should have dominion in and through the Lord Jesus Christ, and that all may become workers together with Him, if only they be vitally united to the Man? (*H. W. Webb Peploe, M.A.*) *What is man?*—We need not only a true philosophy of God but a true philosophy of man, in order to right thinking of the gospel. The idolater thinks man inferior to birds and beasts and creeping things, before which he prostrates himself. The materialist reckons him to be the chance product of natural forces which have evolved him, and before which he is therefore likely to pass away. The pseudo-science of the time makes him of one blood with ape and gorilla, and assigns him a common origin with the beasts. See what gigantic systems of error have developed from mistaken conceptions of the true nature and dignity of man! I. MAN AS GOD MADE HIM.—1. The Divine likeness (Gen. i. 27). Our mental and moral nature is made on the same plan as God's: the Divine in miniature. Truth, love, and purity, like the principles of mathematics, are the same in us as in Him. If it were not so, we could not know or understand Him. But since it is so, it has been possible for Him to take on Himself our nature, and that we should be one day transformed to the perfect image of His beauty. 2. Royal supremacy (Gen. i. 28). Man was intended to be God's vicegerent and representative. King in a palace stored with all to please him, monarch and sovereign of all the lower orders of creation. The sun to labour for him as a very Hercules; the moon to light his nights, or lead the waters round the earth in tides, cleansing his coasts; elements of nature to be his slaves and messengers; flowers to scent his path; fruits to please his taste; birds to sing for him; fish to feed him; beasts to toil for him and carry him. Not a cringing slave, but a king, crowned with the glory of rule, and with the honour of universal supremacy. Only a little lower than angels, because they are not, like him, entangled with flesh and blood. This is man as God made him to be. II. MAN AS SIN HAS MADE HIM (Ver. 8).—His crown is rolled in the dust, his honour tarnished. His sovereignty is strongly disputed by the lower orders of creation. If trees nourish him, it is after strenuous care, and they often disappoint. If the earth supplies him with food, it is in tardy response to exhausting toil. If the beasts serve him, it is because they have been laboriously tamed and trained, whilst vast numbers roam the forest glades, setting him at defiance. If he catch the fish of the sea, or the bird of the air, he must wait long in cunning concealment. Some traces of the old lordship are still apparent in the terror which the sound of the human voice and the glance of the eye still inspire into the lower orders, in the feats of lion-tamer or snake-charmer. But for the most part anarchy and rebellion have laid waste his fair realm. So degraded has man become that he has bowed before the objects that he was to command, and has prostrated his royal form in shrines dedicated to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. III. MAN AS CHRIST CAN MAKE HIM (Ver. 9).—"What help is that?" cries an objector; "of course He is crowned with glory and honour, since He is the Son of God." But, notice, the glory and honour mentioned here are altogether different from the glory of Heb. i. 3. That was the incommunicable glory of His Deity. This is the acquired

glory of His humanity. 1. "We behold Him."—Behold Him, Christian. The wreaths of empire are on His brow. The keys of death and Hades swing at His girdle. The mysterious living creatures, representatives of creation, attest that He is worthy. All things in heaven, and earth, and under the earth, and in the seas worship Him; so do the bands of angels, beneath whom He stooped for a little season, on our behalf. 2. And as He is, we too shall be. He is there as the type and representative of redeemed men. We are linked with Him in indissoluble union. Through Him we shall get back our lost empire. We too shall be crowned with glory and honour. The day is not far distant when we shall sit at His side; joint heirs in His empire; comrades in His glory, as we have been comrades in His sorrows; beneath our feet all things visible and invisible, thrones and principalities and powers; whilst above us shall be the unclouded empyrean of our Father's love, for ever and for ever. Oh, destiny of surpassing bliss! Oh, rapture of saintly hearts! Oh, miracle of Divine Omnipotence! (*F. B. Meyer, B.A.*) *God's special care of man*:—1. God's special care of man, and His singular love towards him. 2. The same manifested in a most glorious manner, in the humiliation and exaltation of Christ. 3. The admiration, or rather amazement at such a stupendous manifestation of such stupendous love. All the works of God are in themselves excellent and wonderful, but the work of redemption by Christ is matter of greatest wonder and astonishment even to the angels. (*G. Lawson.*) *What is man?*—He doth not speak of man in his first creation—he retained that estate but a while—therefore he would rather have deplored than admired it. He doth not speak of man as he is after his fall, for in that respect he is most miserable, not glorious; therefore he must needs speak of man as he is ingrafted into Christ, by whom he is advanced to wonderful and unspeakable glory. What is man? Not only considered in his first creation, but even in his renovation, what is the best man that ever was, that God should have any respect to him? By creation indeed he is the workmanship of God, the image of God Almighty; yet for all that, in respect of his original, he was taken out of the ground. He is but a piece of earth; since the Fall he is a mass of sin; though he be regenerate, and by faith ingrafted into Christ, yet still he hath sin in him and must die. Therefore what is this man, that Thou shouldest pour down so many blessings on him? that the sun, moon, and stars, should give him light? that the birds of the air, fishes of the sea, the beasts of the field should be his meat? that he should walk as a king on earth? especially that Thou shouldest send Thy only Son to die for him, make him a member of His body, and provide an everlasting kingdom for him in the life to come? What is vile, wretched, sinful, corrupted man, that Thou shouldest be so far mindful of him? protect him with the shield of Thy favours from all dangers? That Thou shouldest vouchsafe him Thy Word and sacraments? That Thou shouldest give him Thy Holy Spirit to help him to pray, and to comfort him in all miseries? We should not be like the peacock spreading forth our golden feathers, and say within ourselves, What goodly men be we! We ought to think basely of ourselves—what are we that God should regard us? "What am I and my father's house," said that regal prophet, "that Thou hast brought me hitherto?" What are we miserable wretches, that God Almighty should do anything for us? we are less than the least of all His mercies. Yet we are wont to vaunt of ourselves, do ye not know who I am? Dost thou not consider to whom thou speakest? yes, very well. I speak to dust and ashes. Let no high conceit of ourselves enter into our minds, let us think basely of ourselves, What am I, O Lord, that Thou shouldest give me the least thing in the world? A drop of drink, a crust of bread, a hole to hide my head in, especially that Thou shouldest give me Thine only Son, and together with Him all things that be good? What is any man in the world? Art thou a rich man? God can puff away thy riches and make thee poor. Art thou a wise man? God can take away thy senses and make thee a fool. Art thou a beautiful man? God can send the pox and many diseases to take away thy beauty. Art thou a strong man? God can send sickness and make thee weak. Art thou a gentleman, a knight, a lord? yet thy breath is in God's hand. This night He can take away thy soul from thee, and what art thou then? Therefore let us all have an humble opinon of ourselves, let us cast down ourselves at God's feet, and say, What are we, O Lord, that Thou art mindful of us, that Thou so graciously visitest us, especially with Thy everlasting mercies in Christ Jesus. (*W. Jones, D.D.*) *The littleness of man*:—The intense beauty of the Arctic firmament can hardly be imagined. It looked close above our heads, with its stars magnified in glory and the very planets twinkling so much as to baffle the observations of our astronomer. I am afraid to speak of some

of these night-scenes. I have trodden the deck and its floes when the life of earth seemed suspended, its movements, its sounds, its colouring, its companionships; and as I looked on the radiant hemisphere circling above, as if rendering worship to the unseen Centre of light, I have ejaculated in humility of spirit, "Lord, what is man, that Thou art mindful of him?" And then I have thought of the kindly world we had left, with its revolving sunshine and shadow and the other stars that gladden it in their changes, and the hearts that warmed to us there, till I lost myself in memories of those who are not, and they bore me back to the stars again. (*Dr. Kane's Arctic Explorations.*)

Ver. 7. **A little lower than the angels.**—*Humiliation the way to exaltation:*—All the forementioned branches of Christ's advancement, which are here, and Isa. liii. 12; Eph. iv. 10; Phil. ii. 10, and in sundry other places inferred upon His humiliation, afford unto us sundry considerable observations, as—1. That working and suffering are the way to glory and honour. 2. That works of service and suffering were requisite for man's redemption and salvation (ver. 10). 3. That God was mindful of His Son in His meanest and lowest estate, according to that which is written of the Son in relation to His Father, "Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell: neither wilt Thou suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt show Me the path of life," &c. (Psa. xvi. 10, 11). 4. That all the members of Christ's body have good ground to be confident, that after they have done and endured what God shall call them unto, they shall be recompensed with a crown of glory (1 Pet. v. 4). Christ therefore is to be looked on, as well advanced as debased; in His exaltation and in His humiliation; in heaven at His Father's right hand, as well as on the cross, or in the grave; crowned with glory, as well as with thorns (Heb. xii. 1). Thus will our faith be better settled and more strengthened, as Stephen's was, when he "saw the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God" (Acts vii. 56). Thus shall we with much patience, contentedness and cheerfulness, do and endure what God by His providence calleth us unto, knowing that if we suffer with Christ, we shall also reign with Him (2 Tim. ii. 12). (*W. Gouge.*) *Christ for a little time made lower than the angels:*—It is not material, whether we understand by little, a little measure of inferiority, or little time; for both are true. But the principal thing in these words is, wherein He was made lower than the angels; and that was in this, that He was man and mortal. Man is inferior to an angel as man; and much more as mortal, because the angels never die. Now Christ had the body of a man, and a soul separable from His body till the resurrection; and that was the little time here meant, the time of His mortality. Both might be joined in one divine axiom thus. We see, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour, that Jesus who for a little time was made lower than the angels. (*G. Lawson.*) *Dignity of man:*—Science may prove the insignificance of this globe in the scale of creation, but it cannot prove the insignificance of man. (*B. D'Israeli.*) *Descent of man:*—The subject of a conversation at which Carlyle was present, but took no part, was the theory of evolution. At length a pause occurring, Carlyle emphatically and with solemnity observed, "Gentlemen, you are well pleased to trace your descent from a tadpole and an ape, but I would say with David, 'Lord, Thou hast made me but a little lower than the angels.'" (*Leisure Hour.*) *Greatness of man:*—But how is man "little"? He has competent knowledge of the character of God; he is only "a little lower than the angels," and has dominion over all the works of God. He can comprehend the starry heavens; he is Godlike in his original nature; for "in the image of God made He him." The sublime truths which God has revealed to man show what estimate God has of man's capacity and responsibility. A finite creature can insult the majesty of heaven as deliberately and intelligently as the archangel; he can annihilate the authority of God in his own soul, and wherever he has influence; if all finite creatures should do this—and there are no creatures who are not finite—there would be no moral universe, no Divine government. (*N. Adams.*) *Man's greatness:*—I cannot reach the stars with my hands but I pierce beyond them with my thoughts, and if things go on in the illimitable depths of the skies which would shrivel up the imagination like a dead leaf, I am greater than they, for I ask "Why," and look before and after, and draw all things into the tumult of my personal life—the stars in their courses, and the whole past and future of the universe, all things as they move in their eternal paths, even as the tiniest pool reflects the sun and the everlasting hills. (*Arnold Toynbee.*) *Dignity of man:*—Man would not be the most distinguished being upon the earth if he were not too distinguished for it. (*Goethe.*)

Man's superiority :—Too much stress has been laid upon the proud upright position of man, and a great deal has been said and written concerning the sublime aspect of his countenance, and the Godlike dignity of his carriage. A moment's consideration will be sufficient to show that though he looks upwards with ease and facility, he cannot, in this respect, claim any superiority. The eagle, which gazes on the sun with undazzled eye, and makes his pathway among the clouds, yields not in dignity of appearance or power of locomotion to man, who merely walks upon the ground. Can man measure his beauty with the antelope, his speed with the horse, or his strength with the elephant? It is in virtue of his intellect, of his reason, and not of his bodily form, that he ranks above his fellows. It was in mind, not in body, that "God made man in His own image." (*Scientific Illustrations and Symbols.*) *Preparation for man* :—How in the household are garments quilted and wrought, and curiously embroidered, and the softest things laid aside, and the cradle prepared to greet the little pilgrim of love when it comes from distant regions we know not whence! Now, no cradle for an emperor's child was ever prepared with such magnificence as this world has been for man. It is God's cradle for the race, curiously carved and decorated, flower-strewn and star-curtained. (*H. W. Beecher.*) **All things in subjection.**—*The rulership of man* :—I. GOD WAS MINDFUL OF THE LIMITS IN WHICH MAN WOULD EXERCISE DOMINION. All God's inanimate creatures serve Him and us by keeping within the limits prescribed for them. The planets have their orbits, the sea its boundary. The limits in which man was to exercise dominion over nature were love and obedience to God. So long as he could say: "O Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth" and render the service flowing from such a homage, so long could it be said of him: "Thou hast put all things under his feet." II. WHEN MAN STEPPED OUT OF THESE LIMITS, THE WORLD REFUSED TO BE LIMITED BY HIM. Truly, we see not yet, or "not now," all things under him. The physician dies of the disease which he studies to cure; the seaman finds his grave in the ocean he has spent his life in learning to rule. Even the body of the Christian is subject to the laws of death and decay. III. ONE MAN HAS KEPT WITHIN THE LIMITS OF LOVE AND OBEDIENCE TO THE FATHER AND GOD, AND NATURE THEREFORE OWNS HIM AS HER LORD. He could say: "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me," and therefore He could move amongst disease without danger of contamination, navigate the sea as its Master, and suspend old laws, or create new ones, at His will. The grave could not hold Him: but, from dominion over this world, He ascended to the throne of the universe, even the "right hand of the Majesty on high." How true of Him: "Thou hast set Thy glory above the heavens." Lessons:—1. If we would rule, we must be ruled. 2. All may find their way back to their lost limits by the generous love of Christ. "He tasted death for every man." 3. Every Christian, in his glorified condition, will have dominion according to his ability to exercise it for his own good, and that of others (Matt. xxvi. 21). (*W. Harris.*) *Christ the chief Lord of the world* :—This agreeth to all men in general, to the faithful in special, whom God hath made kings and lords over all His creatures by Christ. But principally it is to be understood of our Saviour Christ, who is the chief Lord of the world, the King and the Mediator of the Church; He hath all power in heaven and earth. All things, yea, even the devils themselves, are put in subjection under His feet. God hath given Him a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow (Phil. ii. 9). We also by Him; because we are members of His body and His brethren, we have an interest to all creatures: all things throughout the wide world are ours. The heaven, the earth, the birds, the beasts, the fishes, the trees, the flowers are ours; death is ours; the very devil himself is our slave and subject; God hath put him under our feet. 1. Here we may behold the dignity of Christians; all things by Jesus Christ are under our dominion. Oh, what a bountiful God is this, that hath given us so large a possession! Let us sound forth His praises for it, and use His liberality to His glory. As God said to Peter, "Arise, kill, and eat"; when the sheet full of all kind of creatures was let down to him from heaven; so doth He say to us all, we may freely eat of all creatures whatsoever; but let us not abuse God's creatures to His dishonour and our destruction. Let us use them soberly, religiously, to make us more cheerful in the service of our God. 2. Let us not stand in a slavish scare of any creature; of the stars, the winds, no, not of the devils themselves; for all are put in subjection under our feet by Jesus Christ that loved us, and hath given us a superiority over all; we shall be conquerors over them all; a singular comfort to the faithful! Satan may tempt and assault us, but God will tread him under our feet. 3. For this dominion let us

thank the Lord Jesus Christ. Of ourselves we are worth nothing, stark beggars; in Christ and by Christ we have all that we have. Let us magnify Him for it. (*W. Jones, D.D.*)

Ver. 9. **But we see Jesus.**—*The coming sovereignty of man*:—I. "WE SEE NOT YET ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION TO MAN." "Not yet"; but we are to see it. It has to come, this sway of man over "things," over all things—over the material forces of the world, the powers that largely affect, if they do not actually make, life and progress. The key of the energies of the universe hangs at his girdle, and he will one day "be so learned in love" as to know how to use it to open all the doors of all the mansions of nature, and make their treasures supplements to, and continuations of, the spiritual creation. It has to come, this rule of the Spirit over sense and sin and Satan, over all that touches the invisible essence that constitutes the true man, and therefore over Satan, who works through "things" to deceive the nations and destroy souls. This supremacy is the final goal of humanity. II. "NOT UNTO ANGELS HAS GOD SUBJECTED THE COMING WORLD." Angels filled and crowded Hebrew thought for a long time, as God's "mighty ones," the swift-winged messengers who delighted to do His will; agents of deliverance, as for the imprisoned Peter, and of punishment, as for Sennacherib. But not to these "men in lighter habit clad" had God subjected the coming world of manhood, the advancing goodness and perfecting character and service of the sons of God. Not to them, but to men like ourselves, who have to do with sheep and oxen and the beasts of the field, with cotton and calicoes, with science and art; whose life is as "fragile as the dewdrop on its perilous way from a tree's summit," and yet so strong that it destroys itself by sin; men "made a little lower than God, and crowned with the glory" of a present participation in His nature, and therefore by and by to be invested with the "honour" of sharing His rule. III. BUT IF TO MAN, TO WHAT MAN IS THIS SCEPTRE OF DOMINION FINALLY GRANTED? To all and sundry, and to them all alike, simply as men, or to particular races or one race of men? To whom is the ultimate leadership of the world to be given? God is no respecter of persons or of nations. Colour of skin is nothing to Him. Geography does not determine His choices. The conquering race is the godly race, of any colour, or country, or time. It is the "new man, which is being renewed unto knowledge after the image of Him that created him; where there cannot be"—it is ruled out for evermore—"where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian," African, Hindoo, Chinaman, Briton; "but Christ is all and in all." It is the manhood of "kind hearts," not of "coronets," of "simple faith," and not of "Norman blood." IV. Though eighteen centuries have elapsed since that forecast of the destiny of man was quoted, endorsed, and explained by the writer to the Hebrews, amid the wreck and overthrow of Judaism, WE HAVE, ALAS! TO ADOPT THE WRITER'S LAMENT, AND SAY, AS WE LOOK ON MAN AND HIS WORLD TO-DAY, "NOT YET DO WE SEE ALL THINGS SUBJECTED UNTO HIM." Indeed, his mastery "of things," though advanced and advancing, is woefully incomplete. He is only slowly learning that he is a spirit, and is for large breadths of his time and in wide areas of his life the slave of "things." The animal is in command. Prometheus is still bound. "The mystery of waste" and suffering and wrong confronts us day and night with its terrible menace, and the self-multiplying and intensifying power of sin drives us to carry our despair into our facts, until there is neither faith nor hope left in us, and, like the Hebrews, "we fall away from the living God," and find it impossible "to hold fast the beginning of our confidence firm unto the end." V. But surely that is not all we see! There is more, much more. On this earth and amongst men—"WE SEE JESUS"; and though, in seeing Him, our first glimpse may only confirm the impression that man has not yet fully entered on his inheritance; yet the deeper look assures us that he is on his way to it, has already been anointed with the oil of joy above his predecessors and contemporaries, and, though suffering, is really ascending by suffering to the throne from which He shall rule for evermore. That sight explains the ages' long delay; the dissolution and disappearance of the ancient and illustrious Jewish religion, and is the indefeasible pledge and guarantee that the sovereignty of man shall yet be realised, and all things be put under His feet. Seeing Jesus, we see these four paths to the sovereignty of the Christian race, and of the Christian religion through that race; the path of history, of Divine revelation, of saintly character, and of self-suppressing enthusiasm for the welfare of the world. 1. The past rules. It is alive; for many people more alive than the present. In Jesus that past is interpreted; its religious yearning and hope, effort

and failure, explained; its programme in law and prophecy filled out; its long and painful discipline vindicated. Now, the case being so, I maintain that the experience the world has had of Christianity forms a piece of logic of irresistible cogency; an argument compact, four-square, fixed deep and for ever in the solid fastnesses of fact, in favour of the success of our present endeavour to save the world by the gospel of Christ; that indeed, as Christ in the conscience is the stronghold of missions, so Christ in the experience of men of like passions and hopes, faiths and fears with ourselves, all through the ages, is an unimpeachable voucher for the triumph of the missionary enterprise; a witness that cannot be denied that the movement is a living, saving, and conquering one, and destined to end in nothing short of the universal establishment of the kingdom of God on the earth. 2. Ideas rule. Thinkers make and mould the ages. Religious revolutions are effected by ideas. In Jesus we see the simplest and highest thought on the highest and most absorbingly vital themes: God and salvation, sin and forgiveness, duty and holiness. Great is the truth as it is in Jesus, and it shall prevail through and over Moses and Isaiah, over Buddha and Mahomet, and make all men free and good. We know the gospel to be the right and conquering message for India and the world. Judging man according to the spiritual necessities of his nature, we are sure this is the only message he can abidingly accept. Treating him, not simply as a keen intellectual thinker, eager to frame a definition of the Divine, and reduce his notions of the Godhead to the cramping boundaries of a four-page catechism—not as a clever and ingenious artist flinging the pictures of his fancy on the canvas, and creating things of perennial beauty and joy—not as a cleverly-constructed money-making machine, but as a man with a fevered restlessness born of sin, and an irrepressible aspiration for righteousness and goodness born of the God that is in him; taking him thus, I declare that no message can soothe him but Christ's, no medicine heal but the great Physician's, no good satisfy but that which makes him a partaker of the Divine nature, and enables him to escape the corruption that is in the world by lust. 3. This is a moral world; and no rule lasts that is not based on holy character. It is not enough to have the right message; we need also the right method, the method that has conquered from the beginning. Jesus Christ wrote no books. He made men, filled them with His Spirit, and trained them in His service, and trusted the founding of His kingdom to them. All the great epochs of revived life and extended power in the history of the Church have been introduced by men of signal goodness, of massive power, of radiant holiness, of unusual faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. When Dr. Judson went amongst the poor and benighted Karens, and passed through their villages and jungles, he was called by the natives "Jesus Christ's man"! That is it. Nothing can resist that power. A Woolwich steam-hammer is not better adapted for making iron-plated ships than Christ in men as a living experience, and at work in the rescue of the perishing, is fitted for the regeneration of the world. 4. The earliest sovereignty we know is that of love. No monarchy is so sure as a mother's, none so inward and lasting. "Love never fails." It is the power that keeps your Christian man fresh, earnest, eager, real, enthusiastic, and hopeful; sustains him at high-pressure in spite of defeat; gives him the power of content, and the victory of joy in his work though, instead of obtaining the common rewards of labour, he suffer the heaped-up scorns and bitter hates of men. David Hume is reported to have said, "Fifty years hence, where will your Christianity be?" Well, where is it? Contrast the dominion of Jesus at this hour, and in the days when the great sceptic spoke. Note our Lord's conquest since that taunt was flung at His chariot! Where has He not gone? Into what province has He not penetrated? What evils has He not attacked? Assuredly our survey of the past warrants the largest hopefulness and the strongest faith. Now, "Fifty years hence," we may ask, "where will Christianity not be?" VI. Disraeli said, "THE YOUNG DO THE REAL WORK OF THE WORLD." Ruskin writes, "The most beautiful works of all art were done in youth." Rome was founded by Romulus before he was twenty. Lord Shaftesbury began his fight with social misery in the freshness of his young manhood. William Lloyd Garrison girt himself with the sword of freedom whilst the hot blood of youth was coursing through his veins. Moffat and Livingstone, Comber and Hannington, and an exceeding great army of missionaries said, like young Isaiah in response to God's summons, "Here am I, send me." The messenger of the Highest, John the Baptist, finished his work as a young man, and the Christ whom he pioneered was six months his junior. Wherefore, seeing that you are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, shirk no task, seize every opportunity of helping the needy, and run

with patience the race of missionary service, "looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of the faith." Hear Carey's wish, and help to realise it. "I hope," said he, in 1793, "the Society will go on and increase, and that the multitudes of heathen in the world may hear the glorious words of truth. Africa is but a little way from India, Madagascar but a little way further; South America, and all the numerous and large islands in the Indian and China Seas, I hope will not be passed over. A large field opens on every side, millions of perishing heathens are pleading . . . with every heart that loves God, and with all the churches of the living God." Heed that prophetic message, and give to the work of saving the world a daily, definite, and large place in the thought and prayer and work of your life! (*J. Clifford, D.D.*) *Manhood crowned in Jesus*:—One of our celebrated astronomers is said to have taught himself the rudiments of his starry science when lying on the hill-side, keeping his father's sheep. Perhaps the grand psalm to which these words refer had a similar origin, and may have come from the early days of the shepherd king, when, like those others of a later day, he abode in the field of Bethlehem, keeping watch over his flock by night. The magnificence of the Eastern heavens, with their "larger constellations burning," filled his soul with two opposite thoughts—man's smallness and man's greatness. I suppose that in a mind apt to pensive reflections, alive to moral truths, and responsive to the impressions of God's great universe, the unscientific contemplation of any of the grander forms of nature produces that double effect. Thus David felt man's littleness. And yet—and yet, bigness is not greatness, and duration is not life, and the creature that knows God is highest. So the consciousness of man's separation from, and superiority to, these silent stars, springs up strong and victorious over the other thought. These great lights are not rulers, but servants; we are more than they, because we have spirits which link us with God. The text, then, brings before us a threefold sight. I. LOOK AT THE SIGHT AROUND US. "We see not yet all things put under man." Where are the men of whom any portion of the Psalmist's words is true? Look at them—are these the men of whom he sings? Visited by God! crowned with glory and honour! having dominion over the works of His hands! Is this irony or fact? Let consciousness speak. Look at ourselves. If that psalm be God's thought of man, the plan that He hangs up for us His workmen to build by, what a wretched thing my copy of it has turned out to be! Is this a picture of me? How seldom I am conscious of the visits of God; how full I am of weaknesses and imperfections—the solemn voice within me tells me at intervals when I listen to its tones. On my brow there gleams no diadem; from my life, alas! there shines at the best but a fitful splendour of purity, all striped with solid masses of blackness. And as for dominion over creatures, how superficial my rule over them, how real their rule over me! I can make machinery, and bid the lightning do my errands, and carry messages, the burden of which is mostly money, or power, or sorrow. But all these, and the whole set of things like them, are not ruling over God's creation. That consists in using all for God, and for our own growth in wisdom, strength, and goodness; and he only is master of all things who is servant of God. If so, what are most of us but servants, not lords, of earth and its goods? And so against all the theories of the desperate school, and against all our own despondent thoughts, we have to oppose the sunny hopes which come from such words as those of our text. Looking around us, we have indeed to acknowledge with plaintive emphasis, "we see not yet all things put under Him"—but, looking up, we have to add with triumphant confidence that we speak of a fact which has a real bearing on our hopes for men—"we see Jesus." II. So, secondly, LOOK UPWARDS TO JESUS. Christ is the power to conform us to Himself, as well as the pattern of what we may be. He and none lower, He and none beside, is the pattern man. Not the great conqueror, nor the great statesman, nor the great thinker, but the great lover, the perfectly good—is the man as God meant him to be. But turn now to the contemplation of Christ in the heavens, "crowned with glory and honour," as the true type of man. What does Scripture teach us to see in the exalted Lord? 1. It sets before us, first, a perpetual manhood. Grasp firmly the essential, perpetual manhood of Jesus Christ, and then to see Him crowned with glory and honour gives the triumphant answer to the despairing question that rises often to the lips of every one who knows the facts of life, "Wherefore hast Thou made all men in vain?" 2. Again, we see in Jesus, exalted in the heavens, a corporeal manhood. Heaven is a place as well as a state; and, however, for the present, the souls that sleep in Jesus may have to "wait for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body," and, being unclothed, may be wrapped about with Him, and rest in His bosom, yet the

perfect men who shall one day stand before the Lord, shall have body, and soul, and spirit—like Him who is a man for ever, and for ever wears a human frame. 3. Further, we see in Jesus transfigured manhood. For Him, as for us, flesh here means weakness and dishonour. For us, though not for Him, flesh means corruption and death. For Him, as for us, that natural body, which was adequate to the needs and adapted to the material constitution of this earth, must be changed into the spiritual body correspondent to the conditions of that kingdom of God which flesh and blood cannot enter. For us, through Him, the body of humiliation shall be changed into likeness of the body of His glory. We see Jesus, and in Him manhood transfigured and perfected. 4. Finally, we see in Jesus sovereign manhood. He directs the history of the world, and presides among the nations. He is the prince of all the kings of the earth. He wields the forces of nature, He directs the march of providence, He is Lord of the unseen worlds, and holds the keys of death and the grave. "The government is upon His shoulders," and upon Him hangs "all the glory of His Father's house." III. Finally, LOOK FORWARD. Christ is the measure of man's capacities. He is the true pattern of human nature. Christ is the prophecy and pledge of man's dominion. It were a poor consolation to point to Christ and say, "Look what man has become, and may become," unless we could also say, "A real and living oneness exists between Him and all who cleave to Him, so that their characters are changed, their natures cleansed, their future altered, their immortal beauty secured." He is more than pattern, He is power; more than specimen, He is source; more than example, He is redeemer. He has been made in the likeness of sinful flesh, that we may be in the likeness of His body of glory. He has been made "sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." The fact we know, the contents of the fact we wait to prove. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." Enough that we shall reign with Him, and that in the kingdom of the heavens dominion means service, and the least is the greatest. Nearness to God, knowledge of His heart and will, likeness to Christ, determine superiority among pure and spiritual beings. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The vision of Jesus in the Church through all ages*:—Did you ever know the power of a picture, the portrait of some beloved friend, over the life and the heart? Did you ever hang the portrait of some cherished darling in the household room—a departed friend, a mother, a wife, a husband, or a child—some friend especially related to your sympathies and affections? And have you not noticed and felt what a character that portrait gives to the room? If the memory is especially prized, how the eye turns to it as it enters the room, and how the eye out of the portrait seems to follow you, not so much spectrally as spiritually, while in the room! That portrait will quiet the heart when it is in its state of fever, heat, and impulse. Mighty over the heart is the portrait of the loved departed friend. But what is that compared with the power of the portrait of Jesus hung up in the human soul? For is not the soul, too, a mighty chamber—a room through which the powers and faculties wander and stray? There are some men whose souls are exchanges, money markets, or shops; but holy souls hang up within, the charmed and charming portrait of Jesus, and then the spirit of the portrait turns the chamber into a palace—say rather into a dear household room. "We see Jesus." I. THE WHOLE OF THIS EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS IS A TRIBUTE OF HOMAGE TO THE DIVINISED HUMANITY OF OUR LORD. How richly it abounds in "strong consolations" to believing souls, founded on the sympathy of His nature and character! How it meets our human necessities! For, while it is true that we could not do without the strength of the eternal Divinity of our Lord, we feel it to be no less true that we could not do without the tenderness of His humanity; and this is the relation which, throughout the whole of this Epistle, is put by the apostle with such forcible beauty—"Seeing then that we have a great High Priest" (chap. iv. 14–16; again, chap. vii. 24–26; again, in that magnificent peroration to the whole, chap. xii. 1–3). II. AND THIS CONSOLATION PRESSED OUT OF THE SIGHT OF JESUS ARISES FROM THE VARIETIES OF HIS POWER. It is very beautiful to divide His character in His relation to us as it has been divided by Scripture, and by the experience of Christians of all ages into Jesus the Prophet, Jesus the Priest, and Jesus the King. And we receive Him in this order. We see Jesus the Prophet in all the actions of His life as He went about doing good. "Rabbi, I know Thou art a teacher sent from God." "We see Jesus." He is our Priest—"Harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." At once Priest and Sacrifice. "On Him is laid the iniquity of us all." I see Him standing vested in the beauties of His own holiness—nor have I any desire to own a righteousness which is not His;

it is not less happy than safe to hide in the foldings of His robe, and to feel that in His purity there is power—power to make "the scarlet crime whiter than snow." "We see Jesus" as our King. It is our privilege and pride to see Him moving among and over the affairs of the world, "walking in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks." and proclaiming, "I am He that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." Thus everywhere, and in all ages, Jesus is power. Oh! what a chronicle is that, the history of things and deeds wrought in "the name of Jesus." All beings know Jesus. "Jesus we know, and Paul we know, but who are ye?" There is power in the name of Jesus. There is power in the vision of Jesus. The value of all Christian service is there. The value of all worship rendered is in this: "We see Jesus." III. THE EVER-PRESENT POSSESSIVENESS OF THE TEXT, "WE SEE JESUS"—"JESUS CHRIST, THE SAME YESTERDAY, TO-DAY, AND FOR EVER." "We see Jesus," says Paul, perhaps, in prison at Rome. There is something very striking in the contempt expressed by Festus on the trial of Paul: "*one* Jesus"! said he. Ah, how little a person to poor Festus seemed "one Jesus"; but this "one Festus" has quite passed away from the world's knowledge, and his name would not be known, his shadow would not be seen if it were not for this "one Jesus" saving it from utter obscurity. Names are the signs of things, and the name of Jesus has survived all shocks; it has passed almost unchanged into all languages. All else seems to perish, it never; like a conservative element it leavens all languages without losing its own identity. (*E. Paxton Hood.*) *Seeing Jesus*:—I. WHY FAITH IS COMPARED TO THE SIGHT. Is not sight, in many respects, the noblest of all the senses? To be deprived of any of our senses is a great loss, but perhaps the greatest deprivation of all is the loss of sight. They who lose sight lose the noblest of human faculties. 1. For observe that sight is marvellously quick. How wondrously fast and far it travels! We know not where heaven may be, but faith takes us there in contemplation in a single moment. We cannot tell when the Lord may come; it may not be for centuries yet, but faith steps over the distance in a moment, and sees Him coming in the clouds of heaven, and hears the trump of resurrection. It would be very difficult, indeed it would be impossible for us to travel backward in any other chariot than that of faith, for it is faith which helps us to see the creation of the world, when the morning stars sang together, and the sons of God shouted for joy. Faith takes us to Calvary's summit, and we stand and see our Saviour as plainly as did His mother when she stood sorrowfully at the cross-foot. 2. Is not faith like sight, too, for its largeness? What a faculty faith has for grasping everything, for it layeth hold upon the past, the present, and the future. It pierceth through most intricate things, and seeth God producing good out of all the tortuous circumstances of providence. And what is more, faith does what the eye cannot do—it sees the infinite; it beholds the invisible; it looks upon that which eye hath not seen, which ear hath not heard. 3. Is not faith wondrously like sight from its power to affect the mind and enable a man to realise a thing? If it is real faith, it makes the Christian man in dealing with God feel towards God as though he saw Him; it gives him the same awe, and yet the same joyous confidence which he would have if he were capable of actually beholding the Lord. Faith, when it takes a stand at the foot of the cross, makes us hate sin and love the Saviour just as much as though we had seen our sins placed to Christ's account, and had seen the nails driven through His hands and feet, and seen the bloody scourges as they made the sacred drops of blood to fall. II. FAITH, THE SIGHT OF THE SOUL, IS HERE SPOKEN OF AS A CONTINUOUS THING. "We see Jesus." It does not say, "We can see Jesus"—that is true enough: the spiritual eye can see the Saviour; nor does it say, "We have seen Him"; that also is a delightful fact, we have seen the Lord, and we have rejoiced in seeing Him; nor does the text say, "We shall see Him," though this is our pride and our hope, that "when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is"; but the text says, "We see Jesus"; we do see Him now and continually. This is the common habit of the Christian; it is the element of his spiritual life; it is his most delightful occupation; it is his constant practice. "We see Jesus." I am afraid some of us forget this. 1. For instance, we see Jesus Christ as our Saviour, we being sinners still. And is it not a delightful thing always to feel one's self a sinner, and always to stand looking to Christ as one's Saviour, thus beholding Him evermore? 2. Should not this, also, be the mode of our life in another respect? We are now disciples. Being saved from our former conversation, we are now become the disciples of the Lord Jesus;

and ought we not, as disciples, to be constantly with our Master? Ought not this to be the motto of our life, "We see Jesus"? Let us carry Christ on our heart, still thinking of Jesus, seeing Him at all times. 3. Would it not also be very much for our comfort if we were to see Jesus always as our Friend in our sojourn here? We should never be alone if we could see Jesus; or at least, if we were it would be a blessed solitude. We should never feel deserted if we could see Jesus; we should have the best of helpers. I know not if we should feel weak if we always saw Him, for He would be our strength and our song, He would become our salvation. 4. Would it not be much better for us if we were to see Jesus as our Forerunner? If our faith could see Jesus as making our bed in our sickness, and then standing by our side in the last solemn article, to conduct us safely through the iron gates, should we not then look upon death in a very different light? 5. If we see Jesus, being always with us, from morn till eve, in life and in death, what noble Christians it will make us! Now we shall not get angry with each other so quickly. We shall see Jesus; and we cannot be angry when that dear loving face is in view. And when we have been affronted, we shall be very ready to forgive when we see Jesus. Who can hate his brother when he sees that face, that tender face, more marred than that of any man? When we see Jesus, do you think we shall get worldly? III. SOMETIMES OUR FAITH, LIKE OUR SIGHT, IS NOT QUITE CLEAR. Everything that has life has variations. A block of wood is not affected by the weather, but a living man is. You may drive a stake into the ground, and it will feel no influence of spring, summer, autumn, or winter; but if the stake be alive, and you drive it into the soil where there is moisture, it will soon begin to sprout, and you will be able to tell when spring and winter are coming by the changes that take place in the living tree. Life is full of these changes; do not wonder, then, if you experience them. IV. FAITH, LIKE SIGHT, HAS GREAT GROWTH. Our children, in a certain sense, see as truly when they are a day old as when they are grown up to be twenty years old; but we must not suppose that they see as accurately, for they do not. I think observations would teach us that little children see all things as on a level surface, and that distant objects seem to them to be near, for they have not yet received experience enough to judge of the relative position of things. That is an acquired knowledge, and no doubt very early acquired, but still it is learned as a matter of mental experience. And let me say, though you may not have noticed it, all our measures of distance by the eye are matters which have to be gained by habit and observation. When I first went to Switzerland, with a friend, from Lucerne we saw a mountain in the distance which we were going to climb. I pointed out a place where we should stop half-way up, and I said, "We shall be there in about four hours and a half." "Four hours and a half!" my friend said, "I'd undertake to walk it in ten minutes." "No, not you." "Well, but half an hour!" He looked again and said, "Anybody could get there in half an hour!" It seemed no distance at all. And yet when we came to toil up, the four hours and a half turned into five or six before we reached the place. Our eyes were not accustomed to mountains, and we were not able to measure them; and it is only by considerable experience that you get to understand what a mountain is, and how a long distance appears. You are altogether deceived, and do not know the position of things till you become wiser. And it is just so with faith. Faith in the Christian when he first gets it, is true and saving; but it is not in proportion. Let us ask, then, of the Lord, that He will increase our faith till the mental eye shall become clear and bright, and we shall be made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, to be with Christ, and to see Him as He is. If you have but little faith, remember that that will save you. The little diamond is as much a diamond as the Koh-i-noor. So little faith is as truly the faith of God's elect as the greatest faith. If you do but see Jesus, though it be but by the corner of your eye, yet if you see Him, you shall be saved; and though you may not see as much of Christ as advanced saints do, yet if you see enough of Him to trust Him, to rely on Him entirely, your sins which are many are forgiven, and you shall yet receive grace for grace, until you shall see Him in His glory. V. IT IS AT ALL TIMES A VERY SIMPLE THING TO LOOK. If there be life in a look, glory be to God for such a provision, because it is available for each one of us! Sinner, if thou wouldst be saved, there is nothing for thee to think upon but Christ. Do thy sins trouble thee? Go to Him, and trust in Him, and the moment thou lookest to Him thou art saved. "Oh," says one, "but I cannot do that; my faith is so weak." Well, when I walk about and see a beautiful sight, very seldom do I think about my own sight; my mind is occupied with the sight, and so let it be with you.

Never mind that eye; think more about the vision to be seen. Think of Christ. It would be a pitiful thing if, when there were some great procession in the streets, all you thought about was your own eye; you would see but very little. Think less about your faith, and more about Jesus. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The best of all sights*:—I. Regard the glorious sight of Jesus as a COMPENSATION. We do not yet see Him acknowledged as King of kings by all mankind, and this causes us great sorrow. "But," saith the apostle, "we see Jesus," and this sight compensates for all others, for we see Him now, no longer made a little lower than the angels, and tasting the bitterness of death, but "crowned with glory and honour." We see Him no more after the flesh, in shame and anguish; far more ravishing is the sight, for we see His work accomplished, His victory complete, His empire secure. He sits as a priest upon the throne at the right hand of God, from henceforth expecting till His enemies are made His footstool. 1. This is a Divine compensation for the tarrying of His visible kingdom, because it is the major part of it. The main battle is won. 2. The compensation is all the greater because our Lord's enthronement is the pledge of all the rest. The putting of all things under Him, which as yet we see not, is guaranteed to us by what we do see. This is the antidote to all depression of spirit, the stimulus to hopeful perseverance, the assurance of joy unspeakable. II. Nor is this sight a mere compensation for others which as yet are denied us, it is in itself the cause of present EXULTATION. This is true in so many ways that time would fail us to attempt to enumerate them. 1. "We see Jesus," and in Him we see our former unhappy condition for ever ended. We were fallen in Adam, but we see in Jesus our ruin retrieved by the second Adam. We weep as we confess our transgressions, but we see Jesus, and sing for joy of heart, since He hath finished transgression, made an end of sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness. 2. The same is sweetly true of the present, for we see our present condition to be thrice blessed by virtue of our union with Him. 3. We see self, and blush and are ashamed and dismayed; "but we see Jesus," and His joy is in us, and our joy is full. What a vision is this for you, when you see Jesus, and see yourself complete in Him, perfect in Christ Jesus! 4. Such a sight effectually clears our earthly future of all apprehension. It is true we may yet be sorely tempted, and the battle may go hard with us, but we see Jesus triumphant, and by this sign we grasp the victory. III. "We see Jesus" with gladdest EXPECTATION. 1. His glorious person is to us the picture and the pledge of what we shall be; for "it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." 2. Nor may we alone derive comfort as to our future from His person, we may also be made glad by a hope as to His place. Where we see Jesus to be, there shall we also be. His heaven is our heaven. His prayer secures that we shall be with Him, where He is, that we may behold His glory. 3. The glory of Jesus strikes the eye at once, and thus we are made to exult in His position, for it, too, is ours. He will give to us to sit upon His throne, even as He sits upon the Father's throne. He hath made us kings and priests unto God, and we shall reign for ever and ever. (*Ibid.*) *Of the title Jesus*:—The apostle had before called Christ the Son of God, the first begotten, God, Lord, which are titles proper to His Divine nature. But here he speaketh of His excellency as man, and thereupon giveth Him that title which setteth out the distinct reason why, being God, He assumed man's nature: namely, that He might be a fit and able Saviour of man. Fit, as He was man; able, as He was God. Well may this title Jesus, in regard of the signification of it, be given unto Christ. For—1. He was a true Saviour (chap. viii. 2), not a typical Saviour, as Joshua and other like saviours (Neh. ix. 27). 2. He was a most free Saviour. According to His mercy He saved us (Titus iii. 5). Not for price (1 Pet. i. 18). 3. He was an all-sufficient Saviour. He satisfieth Divine justice, endured the infinite curse of the law, overcame death, hell, and him that had the power of them (ver. 14; Rev. i. 18). 4. He was an universal Saviour. The Saviour of all that are or shall be saved (1 Tim. iv. 10). 5. He was a total Saviour. He saveth soul and body (1 Cor. vi. 20). 6. He was an everlasting Saviour. He brings all that believe in Him to everlasting life. As He is, so He was from the beginning, and ever will continue so (chap. xiii. 8; Rev. xiii. 8; chap. vii. 24). 7. He was a perfect Saviour (chap. vii. 25). He leaves nothing simply in the case of salvation for any other to do. 8. He is the only Saviour (Acts iv. 12; Isa. lxiii. 5). On these grounds it becomes us—1. To consider the need that we have of a Saviour. This will make us inquire how we may be saved (Acts xvi. 30). 2. To fly to Christ for salvation. He invites all so to do (John vii.

37). He casts away none that come unto Him (John vi. 37). 3. To trust on Him (Acts xvi. 31; 1 Tim. iv. 10). 4. To rejoice in Him (Luke i. 47). 5. To bless God for Him (Luke i. 68). 6. To serve Him who saveth us (Luke i. 74, 75). 7. To do all in His name (Col. iii. 17). (*W. Gouge.*) *Christ's condescension:*—In the history of Moravian missions we read of a missionary who undertook to make known the unsearchable riches of Christ to the suffering, despised, and down-trodden slaves of the West Indies. So cruelly were they treated, so hard were they worked, so mercilessly were they flogged, that their spirits rankled with bitterest hostility to the more favoured race which doomed them to this hopeless condition. Under these unhappy circumstances the missionary could not get a hearing. It was a grave problem how to reach their hearts, win their sympathies, and thus fulfil the purposes of his mission. At last he saw a way to overcome the difficulty. How? By selling himself into servitude. He became a slave, he shared the same fare, and endured the same privations as his dusky brethren. Thus he won his way to their hearts. Even so, it was needful that God should show sympathy by stooping to our low estate, and making Himself one with us. So Christ the Eternal Word was born in helplessness like us, He hungered and thirsted like us, He toiled and suffered like us, He was tempted and tried like us, He wept and prayed like us. (*F. Marrs.*) *Christ's condescension:*—That He might be in a condition to suffer death, this Sun of Righteousness went ten degrees backward, not only below His Father (John xiv. 28), but below the angels; for man (as man) is inferior to the angels. (*J. Trapp.*) **For the suffering of death crowned.**—*Jesus crowned for death:*—It is Jesus, Son of Mary, Child of man, whose appearance we hail; not now, as in chap. i., the Son of God, resplendent in His Father's glory with His holy angels, sustaining creation by His word. The writer is approaching the Redeemer's person from the opposite side, and adopting quite a different line of reflection from that with which the Epistle commenced. He will afterwards unite both conceptions in his definition of "our great High Priest, Jesus the Son of God." We must allow him to work out his argument in his own way. Here is a Man, then, in whom humanity is lifted from the dust, and once more grows conscious of its primal dignity. The advent of Jesus raises immeasurably our conception of the possibilities of human nature, and supplies a new and magnificent answer to the old question, "What is man?" Prophecy is outdone by what we see in Jesus of man's greatness as the object of the Divine regard. And this Leader of our salvation is "forerunner" of His brethren's exaltation, both in earth and heaven. On every ground we find ourselves compelled to refer the predicate "crowned with glory and honour," to the earthly life and human relationship of our Saviour. Surely it is in this environment that we see Jesus. We to-day "see Jesus" in the story of the Four, as the readers of this letter saw Him in the living words of His eye-witnesses and ministers. And "we see Him for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour." No words could more fitly express the strange blending of glory and suffering visible throughout the earthly course of Jesus,—glory ever leading on to suffering, and finding in death its climax and hidden purpose. If man's ideal greatness is the starting-point of the writer's thought, the death of the cross is always its centre. The former, for sinful (chap. i. 3) and death-bound man, can only win its realisation through the latter. Jesus is crowned for death. Willingly would Israel have given Him in life the Messiah's crown. They could not understand why One so high in the grace of God, so rich in kingly qualities and powers, did not take the last remaining step and mount to David's throne. Their fury against Him at the last was, in the breasts of many who cried, "Away with Him!" the rage of a bitter disappointment. They did not see that the higher He was raised in favour with God and men, the nearer and the more needful became His death. It is enough to refer to the scene of the transfiguration, and of the royal entry into Jerusalem, to show the profound connection which existed alike in the mind of Jesus, in the purpose of God, and in the sequence of history between Christ's human glorification and His sacrificial death. (*G. G. Findlay.*) *Exaltation in humiliation:*—The plain meaning of the text seems to be that Jesus was crowned with glory and honour with reference to the suffering of death, in order that by the grace or favour of God He might taste death for men. This rendering makes the crowning antecedent to death, a fact occurring in the earthly life of Jesus, an exaltation in the humiliation, a higher even in the lower, a glory consummated in heaven but begun even on earth. If I am met with the sceptical question, With what glory and honour can the man Jesus be said to have been crowned on earth? I reply, With just such glory and honour as are spoken of in

the third and fifth chapters of this same Epistle: with the glory of a Moses and the honour of an Aaron; the glory of being the leader of the people out of Egypt into the promised land, that is, of being the "Captain of Salvation"; the honour of being the High Priest of men, procuring for them, through the sacrifice of Himself, life and blessedness. The glory and honour spoken of as conferred by Jesus may thus quite well be those connected with His appointment to the honourable and glorious office of Apostle and High Priest of our profession. This, accordingly, is the thought I find in this text: Jesus, "crowned for death," by being appointed to an office whereby His death, instead of being a mere personal experience of the common lot, became a death for others, and a humiliation, was transmuted into a signal mark of Divine favour. This crowning had a twofold aspect and relation; a subjective and an objective side, a relation to the will of Christ and a relation to the will of God. It would not have been complete unless there had been both an act of self-devotion on the part of Christ and an act of sovereign appointment on the part of God. The subjective aspect is in abeyance here, though it is not forgotten in the Epistle; it receives full recognition in those places where it is taught that Christ's priestly offering was Himself. Here it is the objective Godward aspect that is emphasised, as appears from the remarkable expression, "by the grace of God," and from the line of thought contained in the following verse, to be hereafter considered. There was a subjective grace in Christ which made Him willing to sacrifice His individual life for the good of the whole, but there was also conferred on Him by His Father the signal favour that His life, freely given in self-sacrifice, had universal significance and value. Kindred to this famous text, understood as explained, is Christ's beatitude pronouncing the persecuted for righteousness happy; Paul's statement to the Philippian Church, "Unto you it is given as a favour (ἐχαρίσθη) in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake"; and Peter's declaration to the strangers scattered abroad, "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye, for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth on you." Kindred also in import are all the texts in which Christ speaks of His approaching passion as His glorification, a mode of viewing the Passion very common in the Johannine report of our Lord's sayings. I only add to these citations a mere reference to the voices from heaven pronouncing Jesus God's beloved Son when He manifested at the Jordan and on the Mount of Transfiguration His willingness to endure suffering in connection with His Messianic vocation, and in connection therewith to the reflection occurring in the Second Epistle of Peter relating to the latter event, "He 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." With these Divine voices stand in contrast the voices from hell uttered by Satan in the temptation. The God-sent voices say in effect, "Thou art My beloved Son because Thou devotest Thyself to the arduous career of a Saviour, and I show My favour unto Thee by solemnly setting Thee apart to Thy high and holy office." The Satanic voices say, "Thou art the Son of God, it seems; use Thy privilege, then, for Thine own advantage." God shows His grace unto His Son by appointing Him to an office in which He will have an opportunity of doing a signal service to men at a great cost of suffering to Himself. Satan cannot conceive of Jesus being the Son of God at all unless sonship carry along with it exemption from all arduous tasks and irksome hardships, privations, and pains. God puts a stamp of Divinity on self-sacrifice, Satan associates Divinity with selfishness. There can be no doubt, therefore, that the crowning, as I conceive it, is an idea familiar to the New Testament writers. The only question that may legitimately be asked is, whether the thought I find in the text is relevant to the connection of thought in the passage, and serviceable to the purpose of the Epistle, that of instructing in Christian truth readers who needed to be again taught the merest elements of the Christian faith. To this question I can have little hesitation in giving an affirmative answer. Was it not desirable to show to men who stumbled at the humiliating circumstances of Christ's earthly lot, that there was not merely a glory coming after the humiliation, compensating for it, but a glory in the humiliation itself? This ethical instruction was much more urgently needed than a merely theological instruction as to the purpose and effect of Christ's exaltation to heaven, viz., that it made His death already endured have universal significance and value. The exaltation needed no apology, it spoke for itself; what was needed was to remove the stigma from the state of humiliation, and such, I cannot but think, is one of the leading aims of the Epistle. The blinded Jew said, "How dishonourable and shameful

that death of Jesus; how hard to believe that He who endured it could be Messiah and God's well-beloved Son!" The writer replies, "Not disgrace, but grace, favour, honour, and glory do I see there; this career of suffering is one which it was honourable for Christ to pass through, and to which it well became the sovereign Lord to subject His Son. For while to taste death in itself was a humiliation to the Son of God, to taste it for others was indeed most glorious." It is a recommendation of the interpretation here advocated, that under it the crowning is not subsequent to the being made lower than angels, but, as in the Psalm, contemporaneous with it. It scarcely requires to be added that the glory in the humiliation is not exclusive of the glory after it. The full thesis of the Epistle on this theme is: "First lower, then higher; nay, a higher in the lower." (*A. B. Bruce, D.D.*) **Crowned with glory and honour.**—*On the ascension of Christ:*—Who is it that, "for the suffering of death, is crowned with glory and honour"? Undoubtedly the Being in whom existed the wonderful union of the human and the Divine natures. It was not solely the Divinity of the Son returning to its pristine abode. That was never "made lower than the angels." That being incapable of passion, never tasted "the suffering of death." Of the place and state, to which our Redeemer is exalted, we can form no adequate conceptions. Here let us pause and reflect; what glory to the fallen nature of man, that the Eternal Son should assume it, even to dwell in it on earth, and say of its humble offspring, "My brethren are these"! How immeasurably great, then, its honour and advancement when He is exalted in it to the right hand of the Father; "angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him"! While we perceive that it was in our nature our Saviour passed into His glory, our advancement hereby will be more impressive if we consider that in entering upon His joy He "opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers." What surer pledge of our inheritance in heaven can we have than the exaltation of Him, in our nature, to the possession of "all power in heaven and in earth"? But of this interesting and stupendous event of the Ascension, where are the evidences? How shall we believe that this great thing hath been done for us; this thing so wonderful, and of such amazing consequences? 1. Behold, I bring to you the types which "at sundry times, and in divers manners," God vouchsafed to give of what He would accomplish in the great Redeemer. See Enoch translated to heaven under the Patriarchal dispensation, and Elijah under the Mosaic. See the leaders of Israel, after the sojourning of the people in the wilderness, conducting them through the flood of Jordan to the Canaan of rest and felicity. See the high priest passing through the vail into the holy of holies, after having made the great expiation with the blood of the sacrifice, there to appear in the presence of God in behalf of the people. 2. Again: I bring to you that venerable evidence which the Almighty hath so often employed in the service of truth—prophecy (see Dan. vii. 13, 14; Psa. xxiv. 7, lxviii. 18). What is this but prophecy on one side of the event, as history on the other, giving evidence to times past, present, and future, of the ascension of men's Saviour into heaven? 3. This brings me to observe that we have the historical evidence of those who were eye-witnesses of the fact. These were not a few men; they were the whole company of the apostles; these were men worthy of all credit, for they were eminently honest, consistent, scrupulous, explicit, and unvarying. (1) Our first emotion upon contemplating the ascension of our Lord is amazement. The lustre of His virtue in life, and His sublime equanimity in death, transport us with the perfectibility of our nature. (2) But from amazement at this precious part of the Christian dispensation let us rouse ourselves to consider our obligations to respect a nature which God has so highly exalted and destined for such noble felicity. Are we members of a body of which the Son of God is the head, and shall we not fear to pollute so illustrious a fellowship? Have we a representative in the inmost presence chamber of heaven, and shall we sink into a mean commerce with vice, or debase, by folly and wickedness, the nature He has exalted? (3) We may further observe the wisdom and propriety of raising our affections, and directing our pursuits, to the great realities of the future existence. (*Bp. Dehon.*) *The coronation of our King:*—It was long ago predicted that the Lord Jesus should reign in Zion. Of the greatness of His power, of the glory of His majesty, of the extension of His kingdom, of the perpetuity of His government, prophets spake and poets sang. They saw the days of the exalted Messiah afar off, and were glad. I. THE REGAL CHARACTER OF OUR EXALTED LORD. Much of the happiness of a nation, especially if the authority of a monarch be absolute and his will is the law, depends upon his intellectual and moral character. Let this sentiment be applied with all

reverence and humility to our exalted Redeemer, and we shall instantly exclaim, "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord of the people, whom He hath chosen for His own inheritance." To sway the sceptre of universal dominion, the King of Zion possesses every perfection in an eminent degree. 1. "In Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." At one comprehensive glance He beholds every creature and every event, past, present, and to come, and can either permit or prevent, excite or restrain, according to the counsel of His unerring will. 2. He is also the Lord of all power and might, whose kingdom cannot be moved, and whose dominions are the unlimited expanse of universal nature. 3. His goodness is equal to His greatness, and forms a material part of it. How unnumbered are its manifestations, how numerous and various its recipients. "The Lord is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works." 4. And what shall we say of His grace and love? What king has ever been so ill-requited by his ungrateful subjects? And yet, instead of laying righteousness to the line, and truth to the plummet, instead of exerting His authority, and putting forth the thunder of His power in the execution of His justice, and the fulfilment of His threatenings, He laid down His life for us. 5. Nor can we forget His mercy. What crimes it has pardoned, what insults it has endured. 6. And is He not the faithful, compassionate, and unchangeable friend of His people? How near are they to His heart! How tenderly does He pity their afflictions, and sympathise with their sorrows! 7. And who has not been impressed with the Lord's condescension? Although He is "the high and lofty one that inhabiteth eternity," He is nigh unto all that call upon Him in truth. "He dwells with the humble." II. THE KINGDOM OVER WHICH HE PRESIDES. In one sense the entire universe is His vast domain, comprehending the numerous worlds which shine in yonder firmament. But we speak now not of His essential government, but rather of His mediatorial authority, as our Redeemer and Saviour, who, having purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. This is a spiritual, not a temporal, jurisdiction, unless it be so far as the latter is subservient to the former. It is a religious dominion in the soul and among the society of good men, which our Lord came from heaven to establish, and which appears when the enmity of the carnal mind is subdued, and when "grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life" in the conversion of sinners, and in the establishment of the saints upon their holy faith. In this spiritual and restricted sense the regal authority of our Lord includes the church on earth, composed of all His devoted followers of every period of time, of every part of the world, of every name and denomination, of every age and condition—and the church in heaven, constituted of "the spirits of just men made perfect." To govern this spiritual empire "our Lord hath established His throne in the heavens, and His kingdom ruleth over all." Upon that throne He sits, receiving the homage of angels, archangels, and glorified spirits, accepting the prayers and praises of His saints on earth; supplying all our wants, guarding, guiding, and governing His people, both in their individual, domestic, and religious capacity; extending and upholding His cause in the world by the agency of His Spirit, His providence, and His servants; and overruling all the movements of nature, all the revolutions of nations, all the occurrences of individuals, families, and churches, for His own glory, for the welfare of the soul, for the success of His gospel, for the subjugation of sin and Satan, and for the accomplishment of His purposes which are all in verity and faithfulness. III. HIS CORONATION. 1. The period selected for Jesus to be "crowned with glory and honour" was the termination of His Messiahship upon earth and His ascension to heaven. 2. But how shall we describe the diadem which He wears? It is not a wreath of laurels, it is not a garland of flowers which encircled the brow of the heroes of antiquity; nor does it resemble the crowns worn by the monarchs of modern times. These, though costly and splendid, are but corruptible and fading, composed only of burnished metal and polished stones extracted from the recesses of the earth which we tread beneath our feet, whereas the Redeemer's crown is a beautiful circle of celestial light, a concentration of luminous beams above the brightness of the sun, a crown of glory which fadeth not away. 3. A part of the ceremony of coronation consists of anointing the monarch with holy oil. In concert with this ancient usage, we read prophetically of Jesus being "anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows"; in allusion to His mediatorial superiority, and to the unmeasured unction of the Holy Ghost, which descended upon Him, for "God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him." 4. How exalted is His throne: the seat of happiness and glory (see Isa. vi. 1–3; Rev. iv. 2–4). 5. How untarnished is His sceptre, emphatically called "a right sceptre,"

rightly obtained and rightly employed, the rod of universal authority, the staff of mercy surmounted by the dove, and held forth to encourage our approach. 6. Much has been said of the attire of kings at their coronation, but Christ's are not formed of the frail and lowly produce of the ermine and the silkworm, nor adorned with glittering stars of burnished metal; nor made by human art, nor assailable by the moth or the rust, nor likely to survive the wearer; no, Christ's robes are vestments of unsullied purity and uncreated light. 7. The last particular to be noticed is the attendants—the spectators of His glory. They are described as a number that no man can enumerate. In improving this subject—1. Let us join the hallelujahs of the heavenly host, and hail the exaltation and coronation of our Lord. 2. Let us recollect the peculiar privileges of His subjects. They are "fellow citizens of the saints and of the household of God." As such they have a share in their Lord's affection, they have constant access to His throne, to His house, to His table; He protects them, He communes with them, supplies their wants, and will make them happy. 3. Let us not forget the duty of His people. It is incumbent on us, if we sustain this honourable appellation, to be very observant of His commands, to be very zealous for His honour, and for the extension of His kingdom upon the earth, and to be very devoted to His fear. 4. What shall we say of the enemies of our Lord the King? What! has He enemies? Is it possible that the Son of God can have a foe? Can He be opposed who laid down His life for us? Yes, there are thousands of adversaries averse to the peaceful and holy reign of the Redeemer. Who are they? I see them, not merely in the ranks of avowed infidels and scoffers, but in the character of drunkards, sabbath-breakers, swearers, liars, the lewd, lovers of pleasure more than of God, self-righteous Pharisees, and the like. Oh, throw aside the weapons of your rebellion, come as penitents to His footstool. (*W. B. Leach.*) *Crowned with glory of saving life*:—This crown of Jesus is no glittering gilt rim; this glory is no glare and splendour of a palace, and the honour is no mere courtliness of courtiers and subordinates and pomp of a heavenly state. The great break into cries of praise to Him because He is greater; the grand, because He had done more grandly than they all. Now come with me and let us understand what is Divine glory and honour. Come with me to a great hall in London. It is the anniversary of Homes and Refuges for Boys. Sweeping circles of seats rise on the platform one above another, all full of boys. Before the platform is the hall crossed by multitudes of seats, all filled, crowded with people. In the centre of the great circles of the boys yonder, and right in the front of the platform, is a little table, behind the table is a chair, and in it sits a peer of the realm. My story begins at the moment when the prizes are given. Now fancy the scene. The earl rises. The table is piled up with articles, and certain boys approach one by one. First comes the winner of the prize for punctuality. Then comes the prize for writing. Its winner advances to the front and receives it. Next came the thrift prize for the boy who had spent the least of his pocket money, and saved the most in his box. His thrift might have been the act of self-denial, but I fear it had in it some element of meanness, for the cheers lost a little of their swing. Others came, and as each carried off his prize hands and voices fell to clapping and shouting, and hearts seemed to bound and sing. Then the next boy came. Suddenly all the joy went out of the place as light goes when the gas is put out. And there was a dead silence. To everybody it seemed as if something was going to happen. What was the matter? What we saw was a little figure standing at one end of the table, evidently timid, and screwing up his courage, for he was very pale, and had put out his fingers on to the edge of the table, as it would seem to steady himself. The earl said, "I have now the honour——" and he paused, and drew himself up, as if making room for a great swell of feeling, at the same time lifting something up from the table almost reverently (it was a little box). He opened it, and took into his hand a small round medal. The earl continued in a subdued tone, "This boy has saved life!" That boy? A something went right through the place. The audience could restrain itself no longer, and broke out in tumultuous cheers again and again, hands and feet and voice. Handkerchiefs were waved, and hundreds of strong men were in tears. Meanwhile the earl was pinning a medal on the child's jacket, and the child himself was lifting the hand he had put out to the table, and drawing the back of it across his eyes. He could save life, it seemed, but he could not stand praise, and he quietly sidled away. But his comrades behind the chair would not allow that. They gave great cries of "hurrahs," which quivered with feelings that had been in no shouts before, standing on the seats, and looking over one another's heads. And the boys who had

won the writing-desks and accordions, as he went by, put them down and clapped him on the back. He had undoubtedly done better than they all. Now those lads felt something of the grand sacred feeling with which all heaven casts down its crowns, and shouts the supreme triumphant glory of Jesus; for that boy had in him some of the glory sacred with the sanctity of God, and which all creatures were made to do homage to, the glory which is the especial glory of the Saviour of the world. (*B. Waugh.*) *Crowning Jesus*:—The ancient story runs that when Roman ambassadors paid a visit of ceremony to Ptolemy, king of Egypt, he presented each of his visitors with a crown of gold. But on the morrow the crowns were found on the heads of the various statues of the king which adorned the royal city. The ambassadors thus at once refused personal reward and did honour to the monarch. The dearest joy we have is to put the crown of our ministry on the head of Jesus. The best event that can befall heaven's promised crown will be that it be accepted of Him. (*W. B. Haynes.*) **Taste death for every man.**—*Christ tasted death for all*:—I. Let us consider that the Lord TASTED death. A man may die in a moment, and then he does not taste death. Men may die in a moment of excitement, and, as extremes meet, almost in unconsciousness, or with calmness and intrepidity, with lion-like courage, as many a warrior; but that is not tasting death. The death of our Lord Jesus Christ was a slow and painful death; He was "roasted with fire," as was prefigured by the Paschal Lamb. Moreover He came, as no other finite creature can come, into contact with death. He tasted death; all that was in death was concentrated in that cup which the Lord Jesus Christ emptied on the Cross. During His lifetime He felt a burden, sorrow, grief; He saw the sins and sorrows of the people; He had compassion, and wept. There is no substitution and expiation in the garden—the anticipation of the substitution was the cause of His agony; but on the Cross He paid the penalty for the sins of men in His own death. But what was it that He tasted in death? Death is the curse which sin brings, the penalty of the broken law, the manifestation of the power of the devil, the expression of the wrath of God; and in all these aspects the Lord Jesus Christ came into contact with death, and tasted it to the very last. II. And notice, He tasted death by the grace of God FOR EVERY ONE. We speak abont the pardon of sins. We are pardoned, but all our sins have been punished. All our sins were laid upon Jesus, every one was punished. "God condemned sin in the flesh." He executed judgment upon all our sins, for every one of us, for all the children of God. For each of them Jesus tasted death. Here there is not merely the forgiveness of sin, but there is the actual putting away of all our sins; and the apostle explains to us that this great and marvellous mystery of the death of Jesus as our substitute, bearing our sins, bearing our curse, enduring the penalty of our sins, and overcoming all our enemies (that is the law, and Satan, and death), that this is in order to manifest unto us the fulness of the perfection of God. (*A. Saphir.*) *The humiliation and subsequent glory of Christ*:—I. THE HUMILIATION OF JESUS CHRIST.—1. Presupposes that, in one respect, He was higher than the angels. He is so, as the Son of God (chap. i. 5, 6). 2. He was made a little lower than the angels as to His condition: a man, a servant (Isa. xlii. 1); possessed a true body and a reasonable soul: was the child born (Isa. ix. 6; John i. 14; Gal. iv. 4); and but for a little while, living thirty-three years in the form of a servant; and was three days subject to the power of the grave. 3. And this "for the suffering of death." The Godhead could not suffer, hence "made lower than the angels"; made man, in both parts, body and soul, that He might suffer in both for man. This He has done, and His sufferings were great; for—(1) His sufferings were universal, affecting every part of His frame; all His members and senses. (2) They were continual; every moment on the rack till He died. (3) They were without help, without comfort. And as He suffered in His body, so He suffered in His soul. He suffered—(*a*) The wrath of God, which was awfully impressed on His soul. (*b*) It was pure wrath, not any contrary mixture to allay it: no comfort from heaven or earth. "He spared Him not" (Rom. viii. 32; Isa. lxiii. 3). (3) It was the whole of His wrath. It was poured out upon Him to the last drop (Rev. xix. 15). And He suffered to "death"; "tasted death," that is, actually died. His death was—(i.) Violent, not natural, through old age, but in the prime of life. He was "cut off" (Isa. liii. 8). He is said to "suffer death," and to be "put to death" (1 Pet. iii. 18). (ii.) Painful. It was many deaths contrived in one. The Cross was a rack as well as a gibbet. He was "poured out as water, and His bones were out of joint" (Psa. xxii. 14-18). (iii.) Shameful. Inflicted only on the basest and vilest of men; upon slaves; and thus He was numbered with transgressors (Isa.

liii. 12). (iv.) Cursed. Hence He is said to be a curse for us; "cursed is every one," &c. (Gal. iii. 13, referring to Deut. xxi. 23). (v.) Lingering. Not despatched at once, or after a few minutes' suffering; but endured hours of the most excruciating agony all the time He hung upon the Cross (Luke xxiii. 33). (vi.) And all this suffering for "every man"; He being the propitiation for the sins of the whole world (1 John ii. 1). II. THE REWARD OF HIS MERIT AS IT RESPECTS HIMSELF. "Crowned," &c. 1. This was done in His resurrection from the dead, in which He was declared to be the Son of God, &c. (Rom. i. 3, 4). 2. In His ascension: this was glorious and honourable (Psa xlvii. 5, 6; Eph. iv. 8). 3. In His being set down on the right hand of the Majesty on high (Heb. i. 3); has obtained a name above every name (Phil. ii. 9); all power in heaven and earth is committed to Him (Matt. xxviii. 18; Isa. ix. 6; John v. 22, 23). III. THE GRAND SOURCE AND SPRING OF THE WHOLE; the "grace of God." Our salvation is wholly owing to the free mercy and grace of God in Christ Jesus; not to any deserving of ours. It is altogether the effect of Divine love (John iii. 16; 1 John iv. 9, 10). It is in the way of mere grace and favour—1. That Jesus humbled Himself to death for us (2 Cor. viii. 9). 2. That we are called to repentance, faith, holiness, and usefulness in the world, and in the Church (Gal. i. 15). 3. That we are enabled to believe, in order to our salvation (Acts xviii. 27). 4. That we are pardoned and justified according to the "riches of His grace" (Rom. iii. 24; Eph. i. 7). 5. That we are finally saved, and put into possession of the heavenly inheritance (Eph. ii. 5; Zech. iv. 7). To conclude: 1. Let us cherish humbling and contrite views of ourselves, on account of our sins, which led Jesus to endure such dreadful sufferings on our account (Zech. xii. 10). 2. While we entertain the most adoring thoughts of His love to us, let us yield to Him the most entire obedience and love (1 John iv. 19). (*J. Hannam.*) *Our franchise:*—God, in Christ, forgives sin, and restores the prodigal. In our country at the present time, it is the lot of a favoured few to possess the franchise, or in other words, the freedom of being recognised citizens of our empire: but Jesus Christ tasted death to give the franchise of heaven's freedom to every man. He tasted death to make every man a citizen of the Heavenly Jerusalem. 1. Jesus Christ tasted death to give every man THE FRANCHISE OF PARDON. It is the pardon of all sin—full pardon. A young man in an office stole his master's money, and injured his business very considerably; and the youth, being convicted, was brought before his employer, when he said, "Oh, sir, do forgive me!" The master replied, "Well, I will forgive you as much as I can." But our good Father has no need to say He forgives us as much as He can. He has power of love to forgive us fully, and blots out our sin from His memory as if it had never happened. II. Jesus Christ by the grace of God tasted death to extend to every man THE FRANCHISE OF NOBILITY. We say of the ancient aristocracy of our land that they possess the blue blood of nobility. The blood of Christ, when spoken of in the New Testament, often means the life-power of our Saviour. He tasted death that every man might receive His life-force. What a splendid position, what a glorious inheritance! And "for every man"! You, perhaps, may say, "It is impossible for every man to become noble!" An ignorant person may tell a gardener that it is impossible to make a red rose grow on that white rose bush; but in two years afterwards, when the gardener has grafted a slip into it, the red rose appears. People may say that it is impossible to make a red rose grow upon a white rose bush. The gardener replies, "Impossible! It is done; it is there!" If you wish to prove whether Christ's words be true or not, try them by the test of yourself. Believe, and do, what Christ tells you; and if you do not become noble, if you do not possess the spirit of godliness, then believe, but not till then, that true nobility is impossible. III. Jesus also tasted death to give every man THE FRANCHISE OF PRIESTHOOD. Jesus has given every man the right of a free access unto God. Jesus Christ has tasted death in order that the sun of our Father's love might shine direct upon the heart of every man. IV. Jesus Christ has tasted death to give us THE FRANCHISE OF ROYALTY. We are joint-heirs with Christ of the Kingdom of God. It is a common saying when we see anybody very cheerful, "He is as happy as a king." Jesus has tasted death that every man might be happy as only kings unto God can be. He has given us all that is necessary for our enjoyment. Christ has given us power to act kingly. (*W. Birch.*) *Tasting death for every man:*—Have you ever remarked how the greatest efforts of the world's genius seem to have been called out by the recognition of this tasting death for every man? Shall I speak of poetry? There are times—I do not know whether it is an improper thing to say—but there are times, it seems to me, that the exquisite

music of Milton touches the deeper springs of my spiritual life. I turn to "Paradise Regained" again and again. It puts me into a meditative mood as I see the features of the life of the Redeemer steadily unfolding; they seem, too, by their exquisite simplicity of utterance, to put me to a quiet and calm mood. True, the poet does not hold the views that I hold about Jesus. True, he seems to mar much that he has to say by his Unitarian conception. Nevertheless, as I come under the spell of his words it seems to me that the very noblest and best that was ever called forth even from Milton was called forth as he stands before this Cross of the Redeemer. I would turn to the one that might be called the German Milton, I mean Klopstock As I have read his "Messias" I have seen how the best he could write has been invoked from him as he comes face to face with the Cross where Jesus is tasting death for every man. He represents for us those three crosses on the hillside. We see the soldier as he rises forth with his spear to pierce the side; we hear the clank of the armour as the soldiers go away after their deed is done; our eyes fall upon the circle of the weeping women, and then for a season one is left alone with the three crosses; and then as I read these words of Klopstock's again, there is in them the highest poetry; and I am perfectly sure of this, that the highest and best thing that Klopstock did, he did as his eye fell upon this Cross of the Redeemer. And of painting is not the same thing true? Will not great picture after great picture rise before your minds? Perhaps some of you may have heard that touching story in the plains of Lombardy. You step a little out of the ordinary track to a common monastery by the roadside, and there you find it has its little portion of history. You turn within, and you are shown a somewhat faded picture of the crucifixion, and its story is more interesting than the picture. A monk, towards the close of his life, had come to feel that he had a gift of painting, and an order comes to him from his Superior, that after having embellished cell after cell of his brethren, he should paint a crucifixion for the altar. "No," he says, "it is beyond my faculty." However, the order is supreme, and he obeys. He feels it impossible to get the sort of face that he requires, and he finishes the altar-picture—finishes it in unusual form, leaving the face out. In the interval the man becomes seized with epilepsy; so terrible is the thought upon him that one night he was found in the chapel with the picture unfinished, and in the morning he lay dead, and the face looks out there from the canvas. Do you not see how, by the very presence of this great thought of the death of Jesus, man is laid under a tremendous spell? Should I speak of music? You know Bach's Passion music, decidedly the grandest thing that Bach himself ever wrote. I shall never forget hearing Handel's "Messiah" for the first time. And to-day is not the same fact true that the one thing that exercises a spell over humanity in connection with our preaching is this tasting death for every man? For a little season it may be that the great truth of the Atonement has been receding from public view. But I am perfectly sure that in the heart of men there is nothing that it finds so effective about this gospel as this truth of tasting death for every man. It must come to the front, we shall see a further coronation of Jesus as the world recognises that He tasted death for every man. The ground of His kingship is His tasting of death. (*A. Cave, D.D.*) *Christ tasting death*:—Thus the tasting of death was no dishonour, but an honour to Christ. By it He brought many to eternal life: for all that He is above the angels and all other creatures whatsoever. Christ hath tasted of death before us, therefore let not us that be Christians be too much afraid of death. There is a potion brought to a sick patient which the eye loathes and the mouth distastes. The poor sick man is loath to drink of it, the physician takes it into his hand, tastes of it before his eyes; by that he is encouraged to receive it; so is it with us, death is a sour cup which nature abhorreth; we are all unwilling naturally to drink of it; but for so much as Christ our loving and heavenly Physician hath tasted of it beforehand, let us not be afraid of it. The godliest men in the world cannot but in some measure fear death; Christ feared it: yet let this be as sugar to sweeten this bitter cup to us; Christ tasted of it and overcame it, so shall we do by His virtue and power. Oh, the wonderful and unspeakable love of Christ! as if a company of traitors were going to the scaffold to be executed; the king's son should step forth to die for them; what an admirable thing were that! We, by nature, are enemies to God, traitors to His majesty: the Son of the King of kings comes from heaven and dies for us. Is not this to be admired of us all? scarce will any die for a righteous man; we were unholy, unrighteous, defiled with the scab of sin in soul and body, yet the Lord Jesus died for us. Life is sweet: who will die for his friend; but will any die for his enemy? (*W. Jones, D.D.*)

Christ died for every man :—1. It is said, He tasted of death; we need not play the critic in the explication of the word "taste"; for the plain meaning is, that He suffered death; and by this is signified all His sufferings, which were many and bitter; the principal and consummation whereof was death, wherein they all ended, and without which there had been no expiation. 2. He suffered death for every man; not that every man should absolutely enjoy the ultimate benefit thereof, for every one doth not: yet every man, as a sinner, hath some benefit by it, because the immediate effect of this death was, that every man's sin in respect of this death is remissable, and every man savable, because Christ by it made God propitious and placable, in that He had punished man's sin in Him, and laid on Him the iniquities of us all. And the reason why every man is not actually justified and saved, is not for want of sufficient propitiation, but upon another account. 3. That which moved God to transfer the punishment due to our sins upon Christ, His only begotten Son, was His grace and free love. The end, therefore, why Christ was made lower than the angels was, that He being man and mortal, yet holy and innocent without sin, might suffer death, that our sins might be expiated, Divine justice satisfied, and a way made for mercy to save us. (*G. Lawson.*) *The Saviour tasting death for sinners* :—Tasting death! A bitter draught indeed! When Socrates, the wise and good, dwelling amidst the immoralities of Athens, was cruelly condemned to death, he conversed cheerfully with his weeping friends, during the gray and misty hours of morn, concerning the glorious hopes which even he, a poor benighted pagan, had of the soul's long life, and of coming bliss; and then, with untrembling hand, he took the cup of poisonous hemlock, and drank, and died. The figurative language of the text is borrowed from this common mode of execution in ancient times. But we read of another who "tasted death," in comparison with whose simple grandeur, Socrates, and all the philosophers and sages who have ever lived, must hide their diminished heads—the incarnate Son of God, who, out of pity and compassion for our condemned and suffering race, of His own free-will and goodness, "tasted death for every man." How can any sinner remain unmoved at the contemplation of such a spectacle? "Who tasted death for every man!" Will all, then, be saved? A benevolent individual builds a large and comfortable abode for the poor, and the sick, and the helpless, and freely invites everybody who needs to go in at the open gate. The offer of assistance is quite as extensive as the wants of the suffering. But, suppose that some should be too proud to accept of this free mercy, and others should express a doubt whether the physician in the hospital could do any more than might be accomplished by their own silly quackeries at home, will the benefits of the good man's liberality be enjoyed by the proud and the unbelieving? No more will those be saved who do not go to Christ, even though He has died for all. We must love Him for His goodness, and gladly obey His commandments, if we hope for a share in the blessings purchased by His precious death. (*J. N. Norton, D.D.*) *Christ's title to kingship* :—The supreme thought in these chapters is the superiority of Jesus Christ. Jesus the Mediator is greater than any angel of the old covenant who had acted as mediator. The angels serve, and serve Jesus. They worship, and worship Jesus. Jesus is the King of the new age; the angels are only ministering servants in the age. I. WHAT IS MEANT BY THE WORDS "HE TASTED DEATH FOR EVERY MAN"? The more we think of the Atonement, the more we see its greatness. We are only spelling out the A B C of its meaning. But the thinking man finds out, in every region besides that of religion, his incapacity of thought. Yet incapacity is no plea or reason for giving up thinking. Though the ocean be infinite in depth, yet I will dredge. One thought of Christ stands out prominently in this generation: that He is to us a new life. There may be a danger of accentuating this thought to the exclusion of the "tasting of death." 1. Death is the penalty of human sin. 2. The penalty of death is pronounced by the pre-existent Christ. The whole Trinity assure us that death is the penalty of sin. 3. Death is more than decease—more than shuffling off this mortal coil. The Biblical idea of death is an evolution of penalty. It begins when the soul turns away from God; it intensifies as the tragic life unfolds, till we come to decease; then it follows on where we cannot interpret—face to face with the second death. 4. The real cause of the penalty—the centre of it—is the withdrawal from man of the Spirit of God. Man chooses to sin, and He whose ermine must not be sullied removes far from him. This eternal withdrawal of God is the second death. In the light of this truth think of Jesus' death. He tasted to the full the bitterness of the penalty—withdrawal of His Father's face. For a time there is a

chasm between God the Father and God the Son: "Why hast Thou forsaken Me?" II. THIS TASTING OF DEATH HAS BECOME CHRIST'S TITLE TO KINGSHIP. "Crowned with glory and honour." The coronation of Jesus is a royal progress—not a clime nor a century but brings its tribute to Him whose claim is that He tasted death for every man. Literature, music, painting, all crown Him. It is a march of victory. If we would see His coming in power before He comes in glory, this truth must be brought to the front—that He tasted death—and thus we shall see Him crowned with glory and honour. In these days we see the coronation of Jesus going on apace. I rejoice in the spirit of the times. What if we lose our hold on a creed here and there, we need neither star nor moon when the Sun is up. Better anything than stagnation; and on all sides this question raises itself: "What think ye of Christ?" Let us rejoice that God is calling out from this age a new reverence for Jesus, and by and by we shall hear from it the verdict, "I find no fault in this man," until it advances to "My Lord and my God." (*Principal Cave.*) *Extent of the Atonement:*—It is not like a banquet, accommodated to the tastes and wants of so many and no more. Like a masterpiece of music, its virtues are independent of numbers. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Human thought contracted:*—We are limited by our creeds; like a beetle crawling on a cabbage leaf and thinking it is the whole world. (*Proctor's Gems of Thought.*) *Extent of the Atonement:*—The apostles understood their commissions to be general and indiscriminate for "every creature": so they received it from Him who laid the foundation of such an extensive ministration by tasting death for every man. Accordingly, they went forth on their commission, to preach the gospel to "all the world." They did not square their message by any human system of theology, nor measure their language to the lines of Procrustean creeds. They employed a dialect that traverses the length and breadth of the world. They did not tremble for such an unreserved exhibition of the ark and the mercy-seat. They could not bring themselves to stint the remedy which was prepared and intended to restore a dying world; nor would they cramp the bow which God had lighted up in the storm that threatened all mankind. (*Dr. T. W. Jenkyn.*) *God's abundant grace:*—So 1 Tim. i. 14: The grace of God not simply abundant, but "exceedingly abundant." If sin flowed like a bottomless pit, an abyss never satisfied, then grace—a stronger and a fuller current, exceeding it in measure—prevailing like the waters of the Flood until the very tops of the highest mountains were covered; it fills a greater sea than the sea of iniquity; more than enough to pardon the sins of the world or of other worlds. This is the salvation which God's free grace hath brought unto all men. (*Proctor's Gems of Thought.*) *The sufferings of Christ should inspire Christians with fortitude:*—He "endured the Cross," it is written, "despising the shame"; and can we do less? Nay, can we complain in the midst of our troubles? When Guatimozin, the Mexican emperor, was tortured by the Spaniards, he bore the torment with more than human fortitude. One of his fellow-sufferers of weaker constitution turned his eyes upon the prince and uttered a cry of anguish. "Thinkest thou," said Guatimozin, "that I am laid upon a bed of roses?" "Silenced by this reproof," says the historian, "the sufferer stifled his complaints, and expired in an act of obedience to his sovereign." *The universality of the Atonement:*—"He tasted death for every man." "He gave Himself a ransom for all." "He is a propitiation for the sins of the whole world." That all are not saved is no objection. It is suggested by a popular expositor that in material nature much goodness seems wasted. Rain and dew descend upon flinty rocks and sterile sands; floods of genial light come tiding down every morning from the sun on scenes where no human foot has trod; flowers bloom in beauty and emit their fragrance, trees rise in majesty and throw away their clustering fruit, on spots where as yet there has never been a man. Wealth sufficient to enrich whole nations is buried beneath the mountains and the seas, while millions are in want. Medicine for half the ills of life is shut up in minerals and plants, while generations die without knowing of the remedy which nature has provided. It is no objection, therefore, to the universality of the Atonement, that all are not benefited by it. Its benefits one day will be universally enjoyed. There are men coming after us who shall live in those solitary wastes, enjoy the beauty and the light which now seem wasted, appropriate the fruits, the wealth, and the medicine, which for ages have been of no avail. It will be even so with the death of Christ. There are men coming after us that shall participate of the blessings of that Atonement, which generations have either ignorantly rejected or wickedly despised. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*)

Ver. 10. **For it became Him.**—*The scheme of redemption by a suffering Saviour,*

worthy of God:—I. IT IS PROPOSED TO ILLUSTRATE THE CHARACTER OF JESUS CHRIST AS THE CAPTAIN OF SALVATION. This word in the sacred language signifies Prince, Captain, or Chief Leader, and is highly expressive of that distinguishing character which our Redeemer sustains, and of His gracious and powerful agency in the scheme of salvation. 1. He was chosen and appointed to be the Captain of salvation, and to be the head and chief conductor of this glorious scheme. 2. As the Captain of salvation, He purchased salvation for His people, and overcame their spiritual enemies. 3. Christ is the Captain of salvation, as He heads His people in the spiritual warfare, and conducts them to victory and triumph. He possesses infinite skill to devise the most advantageous plans, to discern all the strategems of His enemies, and infinite power to defeat them, and make them recoil with redoubled vengeance upon their heads. He knows the weakness and timidity of those who fight under his banner and conduct, and will afford them strength and courage. He knows their doubts, and can dispel them. He knows their dangers, and can deliver from them, and can enable them to resist the attacks of an host of adversaries. He furnishes them with the various pieces of the spiritual armour—the shield of faith, the helmet of hope, the breast-plate of righteousness, prayer, watchfulness, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. When thus clad in the whole armour of God, He enables them to manage it with spiritual dexterity, so as most effectually to wound their enemies, and defend themselves from their attacks. II. THAT THE CAPTAIN OF SALVATION WAS MADE PERFECT THROUGH SUFFERINGS. In treating this part of the subject it will be proper first to speak a little concerning the sufferings of Christ, and then show how He was made perfect through His sufferings. 1. Concerning His sufferings, the following observations may be useful. (1) He suffered, as the surety of His spiritual seed, the proper punishment of their sins. (2) Though Jesus Christ endured the proper punishment of His people's sins, the mode of this punishment, and the duration of it, belonged to God the righteous Judge. (3) The Redeemer suffered an awful suspension of the light of the Father's countenance, and of the former sweet and endearing sense of His love. (4) Besides being forsaken by God, and the extreme sufferings of His outward man, He was, in another respect, brought into deep waters, where there was no standing. He endured much positive punishment, arising from the awful views which He had of the sins of His people, and of the wrath which they deserved, and felt all those inward and painful sensations which such views communicated. In these things, more especially, the sufferings of His soul consisted, and they far exceeded His bodily agonies on the Cross, though these also, from the nature of His death, must have been very great. 2. We shall now show how the Captain of salvation was made perfect through sufferings. (1) Jesus Christ was made perfect through sufferings, as by them He became a perfect Saviour, having finished the work which the Father gave Him to do. It was by fulfilling all righteousness, and perfectly performing the stipulated condition of the new covenant, that He purchased all the blessings of it, acquired a right to hold the possession of them, and to convey them to His spiritual seed. (2) The Captain of salvation was made perfect through sufferings, as under them His human graces and virtues grew up to perfection, and shone forth with the most amiable lustre and glory. (3) The Captain of salvation was made perfect through sufferings, as these were the perfect antitype of all that typified them, and as all the predictions concerning them were perfectly fulfilled. Lessons: 1. Here is a glorious person presented to our view, a Saviour made perfect through sufferings; to whom both saints and sinners may commit their salvation, with the fullest assurance that they shall not be disappointed. 2. Believers may be inspired with courage to persevere in the spiritual warfare, because they fight under the conduct of the Captain of salvation. He possesses every possible accomplishment as a Leader and Commander of His people. 3. Let us study to become more perfect in holiness, under all those sufferings and tribulations appointed for us in the adorable providence of God. The Captain of salvation was made perfect through His sufferings. In this He has furnished us with a noble and excellent pattern for our imitation. (*P. Hutchison, M.A.*) *Bringing many sons unto glory*:—I. A FEW OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING THE MANY SONS THAT ARE TO BE BROUGHT TO GLORY, THROUGH THE SUFFERINGS AND DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST. 1. They are sons who obtain this great privilege. The relation here mentioned is not that natural relation in which men stand to God as their Creator, for that is common to the human race, as they are all His offspring. Neither is it a mere external relation to God, as the members of the visible Church, for this exterior and visible adoption belongs to all baptized and professing Christians, and equally belonged to the Jewish Church, as a visible body, or nation of

men professing the true religion. But the character of sons specified in the text is expressive of a spiritual and saving relation which is peculiar to true believers. This great privilege, like the other blessings of the glorious gospel, lays a foundation for humility and gratitude in all on whom it is bestowed. They can never be too grateful to God for such an honour and blessing, or sufficiently humble under a deep conviction that they do not deserve it. 2. In connection with the privilege they possess the Spirit of adoption. By His saving operations upon them they are endowed with all the graces and tempers which become the children of God, and correspond to their privilege of adoption. They are habitually prepared for all gracious exercises and the acceptable performance of all holy duties. 3. The sons of God to be brought to glory form a vast number. This is a great and consolatory truth; and it should be the concern of all men to have this glorious truth realised in their own persons. 4. All the adopted and regenerated sons of God shall be brought to glory. The various griefs and afflictions of believers in the present state of discipline and mortality shall terminate in the felicity of the heavenly state. There the redeemed shall not only be entirely freed from all those sins and temptations, griefs and afflictions, to which they are subjected in this life, but they shall attain perfection in knowledge, holiness, glory, and immortality, together with the full and eternal enjoyment of God. II. The bringing of many sons to glory, through the sufferings of Christ, IS WORTHY OF GOD, AND BECOMING HIS CHARACTER. 1. The redemption of sinners of mankind, through Jesus Christ, is worthy of Jehovah, as it illustrates, in the highest degree, the glory of His moral perfections. How brightly shines the Divine wisdom in the plan of redemption! In devising this great plan, in connecting and harmonising all its parts, Divine wisdom excels in glory. Here the holiness and justice of God shine forth in the most resplendent glory. His hatred of sin, and the punishment of it in the Cross of Christ, are a far more glorious display of the justice and holiness of His nature than could have been given if mankind had never sinned, or, having sinned, had never been redeemed. Here the love of God is displayed in a manner the most amiable and engaging, in the gift of His only-begotten Son, and in subjecting a person so dear to Him to unparalleled grief, ignominy, and affliction. Here is displayed the Divine goodness in supplying the natural and spiritual wants of good men. Here is exhibited the Divine mercy in the full, free, and everlasting remission of sins. 2. The scheme of redemption, through the sufferings of Christ, is worthy of God, and becoming His character as the moral governor of the world. The Redeemer, in His whole mediation, acted in a subserviency to the holy law of God; He magnified and made it honourable by rendering to it perfect obedience, as a covenant of works, and by enduring its awful penalty. He furnished His disciples with an amiable and perfect example of that obedience which the law requires of them. He hath also procured and promised the aid and energies of the Holy Spirit, to qualify them for every part of Christian obedience. 3. It was worthy of God, and becoming His character, not to suffer Himself to be deprived of worship and obedience from the whole human race; nor them to be cut off from a participation of His goodness and the enjoyment of Him as their portion. 4. The scheme of redemption is worthy of God because it reflects the highest honour on His adored Son Jesus Christ. He has the honour of repairing the breach which sin had made between God and men, and hath reconciled them to Him by the blood of His Cross. He has the honour of performing the condition of the covenant of grace, whereby all the blessings of it were purchased, and the promises of it ratified and made sure to the heirs of promise. He has the honour of being the grand repository of the covenant-blessings, the administrator of them, and of sending down the Holy Spirit to apply them. He has the honour of being the Head of the Church, and of administering the whole affairs of Divine providence for the good of the Church. He has the honour of beholding a numerous seed as the fruit of His unparalleled labours and sufferings. He will have the honour of presiding in the final judgment, and of awarding the retributions of that solemn and eventful day, both to the righteous and the wicked. And He will be the honoured medium through which all the blessedness of the heavenly state will be communicated to the redeemed for evermore. 5. The method of redemption, by the death of Christ, is worthy of God, because it is, in a variety of respects, more excellent than the constitution established with the first Adam for obtaining life to himself and his posterity. The perfections of God are more glorified by the gospel-method of salvation, and particularly His mercy, for which there was no place under the first covenant. According to that constitution the goodness of God might have free egress towards men while innocent

and obedient; but no provision was made in it for the remission of sin, or for purification from it, when he became guilty and polluted. By the constitution of grace His law is more magnified; for Adam could only obey it as a mere man, but Christ obeyed it as the Lord from heaven. The sinner's title to life by the gospel stands upon a more glorious foundation. Though the covenant of works had been kept, man's title to life would only have been founded upon a perfect human obedience; but according to the gospel-scheme it rests upon the divinely perfect righteousness of the Son of God. Gospel-holiness is also conveyed into the souls of men in a more excellent channel. Adam received the principles of holiness in the channel of creating goodness; but gospel-holiness is communicated as the fruit of the Redeemer's purchase, in the channel of redeeming love. The worship of the redeemed has something in it more excellent. In the state of innocence man could adore God as his creator, preserver, benefactor, and governor; but the redeemed can worship the adorable Trinity, not only in the above respects, but also in their economical character, in the plan of redemption, as a reconciled Father, a Saviour from guilt and misery, and a Spirit of sanctification and comfort, whose office it is to apply the blessings of redemption and put the chosen of God in possession of them. To all these ideas add that the future happiness of the redeemed will be greater than man's happiness could have been by the original covenant. For not only will it be conveyed to them through the mediation of Jesus Christ, as purchased by His blood, but they will have more enlarged and endearing discoveries of the perfections of the Godhead as displayed in the scheme of redemption, which will prove an inexhaustible and everlasting source of enjoyment; while they will have the additional felicity of reflecting, that though once they were sinners and sunk in perdition and misery, yet they were rescued from the jaws of destruction by the power and grace of the great Redeemer, and raised to unmerited and undecaying honours and enjoyments. This consideration will sweeten and accent the song of the redeemed, and fill them with joy unutterable, and full of glory. Lessons: 1. Since the method of salvation, through the sufferings of Jesus Christ, is so worthy of God, it must be worthy of us to embrace it as all our salvation and all our desire. 2. Our hearts should be deeply impressed with this important truth, that the only way of salvation for sinners is through the mediation and sufferings of Jesus Christ. 3. If sinners of mankind can be saved only by the death of Christ, how aggravated is the guilt and how deplorable is the condition of our modern infidels, who with profane mockery and insolent contempt reject the gospel-method of salvation, together with the inspired oracles by which it is revealed and proposed to the acceptance of men! 4. This subject shows us that in subordination to the glory of God it is the great end of the gospel and of the death of Christ to perfect the state, character, and felicity of good men. 5. Let sinners and saints be careful to improve the method of salvation set before them in the gospel. 6. To conclude: Let me call you who are the children of the Most High to adore and admire that unsearchable wisdom which devised a scheme of salvation so worthy of God in all the possible attitudes in which it can be viewed, and so happily adapted to your character and circumstances. (*Ibid.*) *Christ appointed Captain of salvation*:—I. A reason is rendered in the words of what he had asserted in the foregoing verse, namely, that Jesus the Messiah was to suffer death, and by the grace of God to taste of death for all. WHY HE SHOULD DO THUS, ON WHAT ACCOUNT, WHAT GROUND, NECESSITY, AND REASON THERE WAS FOR IT IS HERE DECLARED—it was so to be, "For it became Him," &c. II. THE DESIGN OF GOD IS EXPRESSED IN THIS WHOLE MATTER, AND THAT WAS—TO BRING MANY SONS UNTO GLORY. 1. The eternal designation of them to that glory whereunto they are to be brought is peculiarly assigned to Him. "He predestinates them to be conformed to the image of His Son" (Rom. viii. 28–30). 2. He was the spring and fountain of that covenant (as in other operations of the Deity) that was of old between Himself and His Son, about the salvation and glory of the elect (see Zech. vi. 13; Isa. xlii. 1; Prov. viii. 20–30; Isa. l. 4, liii. 11, 12; Psa. xvi. 10, cx. 1, 6). 3. He signally gave out the first promise, that great foundation of the covenant of grace, and afterwards declared, confirmed, and ratified by His oath, that covenant wherein all the means of bringing the elect to glory are contained (Gen. iii. 15; Jer. xxxi. 32–34; Heb. viii. 8). 4. He gave and sent His Son to be a Saviour and Redeemer for them and to them; so that in His whole work, in all that He did and suffered, He obeyed the command and fulfilled the will of the Father. 5. He draws His elect, and enables them to come to the Son, to believe in Him, and so to obtain life, salvation and glory by Him. 6. Being "reconciled to them by the blood of His Son," He reconciles them to Himself by giving them

pardon and forgiveness of sins in and by the promises of the gospel, without which they cannot come to glory (2 Cor. v. 18–21). 7. He quickens them and sanctifies them by His Spirit, to "make them meet for the inheritance of the saints in light," that is for the enjoyment of glory. 8. As the great Father of the family He adopts them, and makes them His sons, that so He may bring them to glory. He gives them the power or privilege to become the sons of God (John i. 12), making them heirs and co-heirs with Christ (Rom. viii. 14-17), sending withal "into their hearts the Spirit of adoption, enabling them to cry Abba Father" (Gal. iv. 6). 9. He confirms them in faith, establisheth them in obedience, preserveth them from dangers and oppositions of all sorts, and in manifold wisdom keeps them through His power to the glory prepared for them (2 Cor. i. 21, 22; Eph. iii. 20, 21; 1 Pet. i. 5; John xvii. 11. 10. He gives them the Holy Ghost as their Comforter, with all those blessed and unspeakable benefits which attend that gift of His (Matt. vii. 11; Luke xi. 13; John xiv. 16, 17; Gal. iv. 6). III. THERE IS IN THESE WORDS INTIMATED THE PRINCIPAL MEANS THAT GOD FIXED ON FOR THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THIS DESIGN OF HIS, FOR THE BRINGING OF MANY SONS TO GLORY; IT WAS BY APPOINTING A CAPTAIN OF THEIR SALVATION. All the sons of God are put under His conduct and guidance, as the people of old were under the rule of Joshua, to bring them into the glory designed for them, and promised to them in the covenant made with Abraham. And He is called their Αρχηγος, "Prince, Ruler, and Captain, or Author of their salvation," on several accounts. 1. Of His authority and right to rule over them in order to their salvation. 2. Of His actual leading and conduct of them by His example, spirit, and grace, through all the difficulties of their warfare. 3. As He is to them "the Author or cause of eternal salvation," He procured and purchased it for them. IV. There is expressed in the words, THE ESPECIAL WAY WHEREBY GOD FITTED OR DESIGNED THE LORD CHRIST UNTO THIS OFFICE, OF BEING A CAPTAIN OF SALVATION UNTO THE SONS TO BE BROUGHT TO GLORY. To understand this aright we must observe that the apostle speaks not here of the redemption of the elect absolutely, but of the bringing them to glory, when they are made sons in an especial manner. And therefore he treats not absolutely of the designation, consecration, or fitting of the Lord Christ unto His office of Mediator in general, but as unto that part, and the execution of it, which especially concerns the leading of the sons unto glory, as Joshua led the Israelites into Canaan. By all the sufferings of the Lord Christ in His life and death, by which sufferings He wrought out the salvation of the elect, did God consecrate and dedicate Him to be a Prince, a Leader, and Captain of salvation unto His people, as Peter declares the whole matter (Acts v. 30, 31, ii. 36). 1. The whole work of saving the sons of God from first to last, their guidance and conduct through sins and sufferings unto glory, is committed unto the Lord Jesus; whence He is constantly to be eyed by believers in all the concernments of their faith, obedience, and consolation. (1) With care and watchfulness (Psa. cxxi. 4). (2) With tenderness and love (Isa. xl. 11). (3) He leads them with power, authority, and majesty (Micah v. 4). 2. As the manner how, so the acts wherein and whereby this Antecessor and Captain of salvation leads on the sons of God, may be considered; and He doth it variously. (1) He goes before them in the whole way unto the end. (2) He guides them and directs them in their way. (3) He supplies them with strength by His grace, that they may be able to pass on in their way. (4) He subdues their enemies. (5) He doth not only conquer all their enemies, but He avenges their sufferings on them, and punisheth them for their enmity. (6) He provides a reward, a crown for them, and in the bestowing thereof accomplishes this His blessed office of the Captain of our salvation. And all this should teach us—(*a*) To betake ourselves unto Him, and to rely upon Him in the whole course of our obedience, and all the passages thereof. (*b*) To look for direction and guidance from Him. (*John Owen, D.D.*) *The expediency and propriety of appointing a suffering Captain of our salvation*:—When Christianity was first published to the world, the earliest objection that was raised against it arose from the low and suffering state in which its Author appeared. It is then a subject worthy of our contemplation to inquire into the reasons that might move Almighty God thus, in direct opposition to the prejudices and expectations of both Jews and Greeks, to appoint the Captain of our salvation to be made perfect by a state of sufferings. I. If we consider our Saviour as THE AUTHOR OF A NEW RELIGION, His appearance in a suffering state frees His religion from an objection which applies with full force to every other religion in the world. Had our Saviour appeared in the pomp of a temporal prince, as the Jews expected Him; had He appeared in the character of a great philosopher, as the Greeks would have wished Him, often had

we heard of His power and of His policy, and been told that our religion was more nearly allied to this world than to the other. But when we hear the Author of our faith declaring from the beginning that He must suffer many things in His life, and be put to an ignominious and tormenting death, these suspicions must for ever vanish from our mind. Thus our religion stands clear of an objection, from which nothing, perhaps, could have purged it but the blood of its Divine Author. II. If we consider our Saviour AS A PATTERN OF VIRTUE AND ALL PERFECTION, the expediency of His appearing in a suffering state will further be evident. One great end of our Saviour's coming into the world was to set us an example, that we might follow His steps. But, unless His life had been diversified with sufferings, the utility of His example had been in a great measure defeated. It is observed by an historian, in relating the life of Cyrus the Great, that there was one circumstance wanting to the glory of that illustrious prince; and that was, the having his virtue tried by some sudden reverse of fortune, and struggling for a time under some grievous calamity. The observation is just. Men are made for sufferings as well as for action. Many faculties of our frame, the most respectable attributes of the mind, as well as the most amiable qualities of the heart, carry a manifest reference to a state of adversity, to the dangers which we are destined to combat, and the distresses we are appointed to bear. Who are the personages in history that we admire the most? Those who have suffered some signal distress, and from a host of evils have come forth conquerors. III. If we consider our Saviour as A PRIEST, who was to make an atonement for the sins of men, the expediency of His making this atonement by sufferings and death will be manifest. It is one of the doctrines revealed in the New Testament that the Son of God was the Creator of the world. As therefore He was our immediate Creator, and as His design in our creation was defeated by sin, there was an evident propriety that He Himself should interpose in our behalf, and retrieve the affairs of a world which He had created with His own hands. In the work of redemption, therefore, it was expedient that there should be a brighter display of the Divine perfections, and a greater exertion of benevolence than was exhibited in the work of creation. IV. If we consider our Saviour IN THAT STATE OF GLORY to which He is now ascended, the propriety of His being made perfect by sufferings will more fully appear. Because He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, therefore hath God highly exalted Him, hath given Him a name above every name, and committed to Him all power in heaven and in earth. (*John Logan.*) *The expediency of Christ's sufferings*:—I. TO LEAVE NO ROOM FOR SUSPECTING THE TRUTH OF HIS MISSION. 1. Had the Messiah appeared as a powerful and illustrious prince, the bulk of mankind could not have had an opportunity of freely examining His credentials. Almost none, but the great and the mighty, would have dared to come into His presence; or if they did venture to approach Him, they would undoubtedly have been filled with dread and perturbation. Dazzled with His splendour and His glory, they could not have maintained that calm dispassionate state of mind which is necessary for judging of the pretensions of a messenger from heaven. 2. And had the gospel been ushered into the world in this splendid manner, what a ground of exultation would it have afforded to the infidel and profane! Would they not have long since triumphantly said the Christian faith was not a rational homage to the truth, but a blind submission to earthly influence and authority. 3. But besides, while the mean, afflicted condition of our Lord thus strongly evidences the truth of His religion, it also renders that evidence more palpable and striking by the glory and success with which the religion was afterwards attended. II. TO EXHIBIT HIM AS A PERFECT PATTERN OF VIRTUE TO HIS FOLLOWERS. 1. When we behold the Saviour of men placed in like circumstances with ourselves, subject to all our sinless infirmities, submitting to the most unmerited indignities, exposed to the most bitter and unrelenting persecution, and even patiently enduring the Cross, despising the shame, acquitting Himself so gloriously, we dwell with delight upon the at once lovely and admirable character, and feel ourselves naturally prompted to give all diligence to make it the pattern of our conduct. 2. And as the sufferings of Christ were thus necessary to make the virtues of His life appear fitted for our imitation, so without these sufferings there would have been many Divine and heavenly graces, which His life could not have exhibited. Those which are commonly denominated the passive virtues, and which we account the most hard to practise, could then have had no place in His character. 3. But not only were the sufferings of the Messiah requisite to make His example both of sufficient influence and extent, they were requisite also to render that example more exalted and illustrious than it could otherwise have been. They ennobled and

perfected the graces of His character; they called forth to public view, in a substantial and living form, that consummate and unshaken integrity which, never before nor since, appeared among men. III. TO MAKE HIM A PROPER PROPITIATION FOR OUR SINS. Had not Christ suffered and died, we could never have reasonably hoped for the remission of sins. For had pardon been dispensed by the Almighty to His offending creatures, without exacting the penalty due to their crimes, how would the glory of the Divine perfections have been displayed, and the majesty of the Divine government maintained? Who would have regarded its authority, or feared to violate its commands? Sinners would have been emboldened to multiply their transgressions, and tempted to suppose that the God of unspotted purity — the God of unchangeable veracity, was altogether such a one as themselves. IV. TO MAKE ROOM FOR HIS BRINGING MORE FULLY TO LIGHT A FUTURE STATE OF IMMORTALITY AND GLORY. 1. Let us consider their expediency, in order to prepare the way for a fuller demonstration of its existence. What so proper to convince us that the promises of eternal life are true, as to behold Him, who delivered them, Himself coming forth triumphant from the grave, and visibly ascending into heaven before us? Were the most stubborn infidel left to choose for himself a proof of his future existence, would it be possible for him to desire a plainer and a more perfect demonstration? But it is evident, that had not Jesus suffered and expired, this visible, striking demonstration could not have been afforded. For without first dying, how could He have risen from the dead? And had He not risen from the dead, what indubitable security could we have had of life and immortality? 2. But the sufferings and death of Christ were not only expedient to prepare the way for a full demonstration of the existence of a future state of glory, they were expedient also to point out in a more striking manner the way by which that glory is obtained. The object of the Deity seems to be not merely to communicate happiness, but to form His creatures to moral excellence. He hath designed them for a state of immortal felicity; but before they enter upon that state, He hath made it necessary that they shall have acquired virtuous habits; and to acquire again their virtuous habits, He hath ordained them to pass through a painful course of discipline. And the more painful and difficult this course becomes, the purer will be their virtue and the richer their reward. V. TO GIVE US FULL ASSURANCE HE KNOWS AND SYMPATHISES WITH OUR FRAILTIES AND OUR SORROWS, AND WILL THEREFORE MERCIFULLY INTERCEDE WITH THE FATHER IN OUR BEHALF. To whom do we in the day of affliction look up for such mercy and compassion, as from those who have been afflicted themselves? From His experience of our trials, we are assured He hath not only the power, but the inclination to succour us. He knows well where our weakness lies, where our burden presses, and what will prove most proper for supporting and relieving us. Lessons: 1. From the doctrine which we have now illustrated, what reason have we to admire the wisdom of God! We see that it is admirably adapted to confirm our faith, to improve our nature, to comfort our souls, and, in a consistency with the honour of Thy perfections, to bring many returning sinners unto glory. 2. But this subject, while it leads us to admire the wisdom of God, demonstrates to us also in a most striking manner, the deep malignity of sin. For if such a remedy as the sufferings and death of Christ was, in the councils of heaven, deemed necessary to be employed against it, how evil and pernicious must its nature be!—how odious in the sight of God, and how destructive of the order and happiness of the whole creation! Let us then hate sin with a perfect hatred. 3. Did it behove Jesus to be made perfect through sufferings, then let us who are His disciples learn to submit to our sufferings with patience, and consider them as a requisite part of our education for heaven. (*A. Savile, M.A.*) *The refuting power of truth*:—I. IT REFUTES THE ERROR THAT THE UNIVERSE IS EITHER ETERNAL OR THE WORK OF CHANCE. The text speaks of One who is the Cause and End of all things. II. IT REFUTES THE ERROR THAT CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS ARE INCOMPATIBLE WITH THE DIVINE CHARACTER. III. IT REFUTES THE ERROR THAT GREAT SUFFERINGS, IN THE CASE OF INDIVIDUALS, IMPLY GREAT SINS. IV. IT REFUTES THE ERROR THAT GREAT HONOURS CAN BE OBTAINED WITHOUT GREAT TRIAL. There is no kingdom for man worth having that is not reached "through much tribulation." V. IT REFUTES THE ERROR THAT THE GRAND END OF CHRISTIANITY IS TO CONNECT MAN WITH DOGMATIC SYSTEMS OF ECCLESIASTICAL CONSTITUTIONS. The end is higher; to bring men not to creeds or churches, but to "glory"—a glory spiritual, divine, ever progressive. VI. IT REFUTES THE ERROR THAT THERE ARE BUT FEW THAT SHALL BE SAVED. (*Homilist.*) *The*

discipline of suffering:—When we ponder these words we shall all come to feel, I think, that they have a message for us on which we have not yet dwelt with the patient thought that it requires, though we greatly need its teaching. The currents of theological speculation have led us to consider the sufferings of Christ in relation to God as a propitiation for sin, rather than in relation to man as a discipline, a consummation of humanity. The two lines of reflection may be indeed, as I believe they are, more closely connected than we have at present been brought to acknowledge. I do not however wish now to discuss the propitiatory aspect of the sacrifice of Christ's life. It is enough for us to remember with devout thankfulness that Christ is the propitiation not for our sins only, but for the whole world, without further attempting to define how His sacrifice was efficacious. And we more on surer ground, when we endeavour to regard that perfect sacrifice from the other side, as the hallowing of every power of man under the circumstances of a sin-stained world, as the revelation of the mystery of sorrow and pain. Yes, Christ, though He was Son, and therefore endowed with right of access for Himself to the Father, being of one essence with the Father, for man's sake, as man, won the right of access to the throne of God for perfected humanity. He learnt obedience, not as if the lesson were forced upon Him by stern necessity, but by choosing, through insight into the Father's will, that self-surrender even to the death upon the Cross which was required for the complete reconciliation of man with God. And the absolute union of human nature, in its fullest maturity, with the Divine in the one Person of our Creator and Redeemer, was wrought out in the very school of life in which we are trained. When once we grasp this truth the records of the Evangelists are filled with a new light. Every work of Christ is seen to be a sacrifice and a victory. Dimly, feebly, imperfectly, we can see in this way how it became God to make the Author of our salvation perfect through sufferings; how every pain which answered to the Father's will, became to Him the occasion of a triumph, the disciplining of some human power which needed to be brought into God's service, the advance one degree farther towards the Divine likeness to gain which man was made; how, in the actual condition of the world, His love and His righteousness were displayed in tenderer grace and grander authority through the gainsaying of enemies; how, in this sense, even within the range of our imagination, He saw of the travail of His soul and was satisfied. Dimly, feebly, imperfectly we can see how also Christ, Himself perfected through suffering, has made known to us once for all the meaning and the value of suffering; how He has interpreted it as a Divine discipline, the provision of a Father's love; how He has enabled us to perceive that at each step in the progress of life it is an opportunity; how He has left to us to realise "in Him" little by little the virtue of His work; to fill up on our part that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in our sufferings, not as if His work were incomplete or our efforts meritorious, but as being living members of His Body through which He is pleased to manifest that which He has wrought for men. For we shall observe that it was because He brought many sons to glory, that it became God to make perfect through sufferings the Author of their salvation. The fitness lay in the correspondence between the outward circumstances of His life and of their lives. The way of the Lord is the way of His servants. He enlightened the path which they must tread, and showed its end. And so it is that whenever the example of Christ is offered to us in Scripture for our imitation, it is His example in suffering. So far, in His strength, we can follow Him, learning obedience as He learned it, bringing our wills into conformity with the Father's will, and thereby attaining to a wider view of His counsel in which we can find rest and joy. (*Bp. Westcott.*) *The Godworthiness of salvation*:—It might be presumptuous to say that God was bound to become a Saviour, but it may confidently be asserted that to save becomes Him. The work He undertook was congruous to His position and character. It was worthy of God the Creator, by whom all things were made at the first, that He should not allow His workmanship in man to be utterly marred and frustrated by sin. The irretrievable ruin of man would have seriously compromised the Creator's honour and glory. It would have made it possible to charge the Divine Being with failure, to represent Him as overreached by the tempter of man, to suspect Him of want of power or of will to remedy the mischief done by the fall. On this subject Athanasius, in his discourse on the Incarnation of the Word, well remarks: "It would have been an indecency if those who had been once created rational had been allowed to perish through corruption. For that would have been unworthy of the goodness of God, if the beings He had Himself created had been

allowed to perish through the fraud of the devil against man. Nay, it would have been most indecent that the skill of God displayed in man should be destroyed either through their carelessness or through the devil's craftiness." The God-worthiness of the end becomes still more apparent when the subjects of the Divine operation are thought of as, what they are here called, sons. What more worthy of God than to lead His own sons to the glory for which man was originally fitted and destined, when he was made in God's image, and set at the head of the creation? The title "sons" was possibly suggested by the creation story, but it arises immediately out of the nature of salvation as indicated in the quotation from the eighth Psalm—lordship in the world to be. This high destiny places man alongside of the Son whom God "appointed heir of all things." "If sons, then heirs," reasoned Paul; "if heirs, then sons," argues inversely the author of our epistle. Both reason legitimately, for sonship and heirship imply each other. Those who are appointed to lordship in the new world of redemption are sons of God, for what higher privilege or glory can God bestow upon His sons? And on those who stand in a filial relation to God He may worthily bestow so great a boon. To lead His sons to their glorious inheritance is the appropriate thing for God to do. (*A. B. Bruce, D.D.*) *God's glory in giving His Son to die:*—If we take a view of God's special properties, we shall find the glory of them so set forth in Christ's Incarnation and Passion, and the redemption of man thereby, as in nothing more. I will exemplify this in five of them. 1. The power of God hath been manifested by many wonderful works of His since the beginning of the world. The book of Job and book of Psalms do reckon up catalogues of God's powerful and mighty works; but they are all inferior to those works which were done by the Son of God becoming man and dying; for hereby was the curse of the law removed, the bonds of death broken, the devil and his whole host vanquished. The Son of God did this, and much more, not by arraying Himself with majesty and power, but by putting on Him weak and frail flesh, and by subjecting Himself to death. Herein was strength made perfect in weakness (2 Cor. xii. 9). 2. The wisdom of God was greatly set forth in the first creation of all things in their excellent order and beauty, and in the wise government of them; but after that by sin they were put out of order, to bring them into a comely frame again was an argument of much more wisdom, especially if we duly weigh how, by the creature's transgression, the just Creator was provoked to wrath. To find out a means, in this case, of atonement betwixt God and man must needs imply much more wisdom. For who should make this atonement? Not man, because he was the transgressor; not God, because He was offended and incensed: yet God, by taking man's nature upon Him, God-man, by suffering, did this deed; He made the atonement. God having revealed this mystery unto His Church, every one that is instructed in the Christian faith can say, Thus, and thus it is done. But had not God by His infinite wisdom found out and made known this means of reconciliation, though all the heads of all creatures had consulted thereabout, their counsels would have been altogether in vain. We have, therefore, just cause with an holy admiration to break out and say, "Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" (Rom. xi. 33). 3. The justice of God hath been made known in all ages by judgments executed on wicked sinners, as the punishment of our first parents, the drowning of the old world, the destroying of Sodom and Gomorrah with fire and brimstone, the casting off the Jews, the casting of wicked angels and reprobate men into hell fire; but to exact the uttermost of the Son of God, who became a surety for man, and so to exact it as in our nature He must bear the infinite wrath of His Father and satisfy His justice to the full, is an instance of more exact justice than ever was manifested. 4. The truth of God is exceedingly cleared by God's giving His Son to die, and that in accomplishment of His threatening and promises. (1) For threatening God had said to man, "In the day thou eatest of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt surely die" (Gen. ii. 17). How could God's truth have been accomplished in this threatening, and man not utterly destroyed, if Christ had not died in our nature? (2) For promise, the first that ever was made after man's fall was this, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head" (Gen. iii. 15). As this was the first promise, so was it the ground of all other promises made to God's elect in Christ. Now God having accomplished this promise by giving His Son to death, how can we doubt of His truth in any other promise whatsoever? The accomplishment of no other promise could so set out God's truth as of this; for other promises do depend on this, and not this on any of them. Besides, this is the greatest of all

other promises. We may therefore on this ground say, "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?" (Rom. viii. 32). 5. God's mercy is most magnified by sending His Son into the world to die for man. "The mercies of God are over all His works" (Psa. cxlv. 9). But the glass wherein they are most perspicuously seen is Jesus Christ made man, and made a sacrifice for man's sin. (*W. Gouge.*) "*Just like Him*":—A missionary, addressing a pious negro woman, said, "Mary, is not the love of God wonderful?" and then, enlarging on its manifestation in the atonement of Christ, he made the appeal, "Is it not wonderful?" Mary simply, but we may add sublimely, replied, "Massa, massa, me no tink it so wonderful, 'cause it is just like Him." **In bringing many sons to glory.**—*The test of sonship*:—I. A DEFINITION OF GOD. We are told that for Him, and by Him, are all things; for Him—on His account—to manifest His glory—to display His perfections. God hath created all things for Himself. "Well, does not that look selfish? Is that worthy of God?" If we do anything for ourselves, and to show forth ourselves, we do it to show forth something that is finite and imperfect; and in attempting to show forth ourselves, and seek our own ends, we are overlooking the interests of other people. Therefore it is most improper for a creature to do anything chiefly to promote his own glory. But it is otherwise with God, for He is perfect, and the manifestation of Himself is the manifestation of perfection. Would you wish anything else? Shall creation be for any lower end than the exhibition of the Creator? Nor is the manifestation of Himself apart from the highest hope of the universe, for God is love; the manifestation of love and beneficence is, therefore, the diffusion of happiness. There is no greater, more benevolent purpose than the creation of all things for Himself. All things in the universe, however great, are subservient to an end infinitely greater than themselves. However small, they are not so insignificant as not to be employed for the greatest of all ends—for the manifestation of God the infinite. II. THE GRACIOUS DESIGN OF THIS GLORIOUS, THIS INFINITE BEING. It is to bring many sons unto glory. These many sons are to be brought unto glory from among a rebellious and condemned race. 1. The first step towards this is to make them sons—to convert, to change them from foes to children; for by nature and by practice we are enemies to God, and not subject to the will of God. We are thus constituted sons through an act of God's free, sovereign, unmerited favour. He pardons all our sins. He puts the spirit of adoption into us, and as He manifests Himself to us as our loving Father, He enables us to feel to Him as loving and trusting children. We seek Him whom we avoided; we trust Him whom we dreaded; we serve Him against whom we rebelled; we are sons. 2. And, having made us sons, He then brings us to glory. God does not form children for Himself and then forsake them. III. But what is HIS METHOD? By a Mediator, called in the text the Captain of Salvation. The same word is translated in other passages, the Prince of Life—in others, "the Author and Finisher of faith." Here it is translated "Captain." He is our Captain. He goes in advance. He acts as our Champion. He fights our great adversary the devil for us—defeats him—"destroys him that had the power of death, even the devil." We can do all things through our Captain strengthening us. But we go on to observe that this Captain of Salvation was to be qualified for His office by suffering. He was to be made perfect by suffering. Emphatically He was a man of sorrows. By those sorrows He was made perfect, not as to His Divinity, for that could not be made more perfect, nor as to his moral purity, for that was perfect necessarily; but made perfect—that is, qualified for His office. The suffering was sacrificial. He had to atone for our sins. He had not merely to go before us as our Captain, but to bear the cross. So He was made a sacrifice for us. And He was to be made an example as well as a sacrifice. Men suffer. This is a world of trouble, and He could not have been an adequate example if He had not been an example in that which we are called to endure. He was to be a sympathising friend on whom we could look as understanding our case, as able to feel with us and for us, and this would be impossible except by suffering. And, therefore, He was fitted to be the Captain and Leader of our Salvation by suffering. IV. THE GREAT PROPOSITION. It was befitting in Him for whom and by whom are all things, in thus bringing many sons into glory through the mediation of the Captain of Salvation, to make the Captain of Salvation fitted for His work through suffering. It was befitting the Eternal God that His designs should be accomplished; and as suffering was essential to the end He had in view, was it not befitting that God should not spare even His own Son in order that He might be qualified for the work of bringing many sons to glory?

(*Newman Hall, LL.B.*) *The bringing of many sons to glory*:—I. THE OBJECT TO BE ACCOMPLISHED WAS THE BRINGING OF MANY SONS TO GLORY. A parent deals not with his children on selfish and mercenary principles. He does not, like a lawgiver, merely protect them, and dispense to them according to their merits; or, like a master, merely remunerate their work. He deals with them in love. "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine," is the language of parental affection. The riches of Divine all-sufficiency are not, like the possessions of an earthly parent, diminished by being shared, affording the less for each that many partake. No; like the light of the sun, each receives the full enjoyment. "He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son." The abode destined to receive them is the heaven of glory, where every object and scene is resplendent with the glory of God and of the Lamb; their inheritance, the kingdom of glory; their portion the God of glory; their associates, His glorious family; their employments and enjoyments are all glorious: and, what is essential to their enjoyment of all is, that they are for ever perfected in personal glory—the glory not merely of celestial splendour, but the moral glory of unsullied holiness—the noblest glory in the eyes of God and of all holy intelligences. II. THE PLAN ADOPTED FOR THIS END. A leader to glory is appointed, and He is made "perfect through sufferings." We have a country to possess, a journey and a warfare to accomplish, an enemy to conquer, and a victory to win. Christ is the breaker-up of the way, the leader and commander of the people. In order that the Son of God might fulfil the offices of our Redeemer—in order that He might have a banner to lift up in this character, and a willing host ranged under it—it was necessary that He Himself should pass through the last extremity of conflict and death, and be thus made perfect through suffering. Let us inquire in what respects, and for what ends, this was necessary. 1. To make an atonement for our sins, and redeem our souls. 2. His sufferings were requisite in order to His perfect adaptation as our pattern and example. 3. His sufferings were endured also in order to His more perfectly identifying Himself by sympathy with His people, and engaging their absolute confidence. (*Alex McNaughton.*) *Eternal redemption*:—There is, perhaps, nothing we understand better, in the conduct of others, than what is becoming or unbecoming in their spirit and deportment. We are almost eagle-eyed to discover whatever is worthy or unworthy of a man's rank and character. This almost instinctive sense of propriety in human conduct might, if wisely employed, enable us to judge wisely of what is becoming in the Divine conduct. For, if we expect wise, good, and great men to act up to their character and avowed principles, we may well expect that the infinitely wise, great, and good God will do nothing unbecoming His character and supremacy. When, therefore, it is said that it "became" Him to save sinners, only by the blood of the Lamb, it surely becomes us to search in His character and salvation, not for reasons why redemption could not, or should not, be by atonement, but for reasons why it is so. Now, upon the very surface of the case, it is self-evident that an infinitely wise God would neither do too much nor too little for the salvation of man. Less than enough would not become His love; more than enough would not become His wisdom. I. BRINGING MANY SONS TO GLORY IS GOD'S CHIEF AND FINAL OBJECT, IN ALL THE MERCY AND GRACE WHICH HE EXERCISES TOWARDS MAN. 1. Now glory, as a place, is the heaven where God Himself dwells and reigns, visibly and eternally. It is His own special temple, resplendent with His presence, and vocal with His worship. It is His own central throne, from which He surveys and rules the universe. 2. Again, glory, as a state of character, is likeness to the God of heaven;—it is to bear the image of His spotless holiness, and to breathe the spirit of His perfect love. This is the glory to which God proposes to bring many sons. Now this heaven is so unlike our earth—where God is altogether so invisible, and man so unholy and unloving—that, to say the least, a very great change for the better must take place in men before they can be fit for such glory. There are some things in this heaven which are not very agreeable to the natural mind of man, such as universal and everlasting spirituality and harmony. Such being the sober facts of the case, it surely "becomes" God to take care that this heaven, which is to be His own eternal temple and throne, shall not be disgraced nor disturbed by the presence of unholy or alienated inhabitants. II. THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST ARE DECLARED TO BE THE WAY IN WHICH IT BECAME GOD TO BRING MAN TO GLORY. III. It is declared that, in saving man by the sufferings of Christ, GOD HAD A REGARD TO THE RELATION IN WHICH ALL THINGS IN THE UNIVERSE STOOD TO HIMSELF. What He did in making Christ a sacrifice for our sins was what "became" Him to do as the author and end of all things visible and

invisible. Now—1. It certainly became God to save man in a way that should not endanger the safety of angels. But this could not have been done by penitential salvation. That would have been to tell all the unfallen universe that tears would repair any injury they might ever do to the honour of God or their own interests. A fine lesson in a universe where even innocence is no safeguard from temptation! 2. It certainly became God to save man in a way which should not impeach His character for not saving fallen angels. But could they have felt thus if the next race of sinners had been pardoned on mere repentance? Eternal happiness offered to one race of sinners, and eternal misery inflicted on another race of sinners, would be an eternal anomaly in the moral government of God but for the atonement made by Christ on our behalf. But now no holy nor wise being can wonder that grace reigns by the blood of the Lamb of God. Nor can they wonder that Satan and his angels are not redeemed, seeing it was by opposing this scheme of redemption they sinned and fell. 3. It became God to redeem man, and confirm angels, in such a way as to leave no possibility of imagining that any higher happiness could be found out than the voluntary gift of God conferred. 4. It became God to redeem man, and to confirm angels, in such a way as to render the impartiality of His love to both for ever unquestionable. Accordingly, it is as sons that He will bring men to glory—the very rank which all the unfallen spirits in all worlds hold. (*R. Philip.*) *The road to glory*:—The text seems to represent Almighty God as looking down upon His sinful and rebellious creatures, and taking counsel for their instruction, as we might imagine some father, like him in the parable, made acquainted with the wretchedness of his prodigal son, and devising within himself a way in which he might recover him to goodness and to happiness. Do you observe what is here implied? 1. They who were to be brought to glory were not yet in a fit state for glory. It was a work to be done; something for which provision was to be made—something which was intended, planned, and gradually to be perfected. Alas! it is too true, man in his natural state is not prepared for a world of which the description is, that "therein dwelleth righteousness." 2. Yet are they capable of becoming so. Like the ore not yet cleansed from the worthless earth with which it is mingled, or like the precious stone covered with rust or clay, but of which the skilful eye perceives that it may be purified, and refined, and polished, and "fitted for the master's use," even hereafter to bear a place among his treasures. Such was the being for whom God had a design of mercy. 3. But how to accomplish it? 4. Here we perceive a reason why "the Captain of our salvation" was "made perfect through suffering." Man, who was to be hereafter glorified, was now lying under the penalty of sin; he was in a state of condemnation, as a transgressor of the laws which God has appointed for His creatures. Like the heir of a vast estate, but found guilty of some crime, by which that estate is forfeited, his condemnation lies between him and the inheritance assigned to him. "Why," perhaps you ask, "might not the Lord freely pardon these His guilty creatures, these His offending sons?" Verily, "the secret things belong unto the Lord our God"; but this we know—the judge here on earth, the magistrate, cannot freely pardon the offender against human laws; they cannot set him free without endangering the whole fabric of society. Therefore was "the Captain of our salvation made perfect through suffering"; therefore through suffering did He accomplish our salvation. Christ died, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. 5. Now, then, consider man in this stage of his progress towards glory. Much has been done, but much remains to do. The slave may be emancipated from chains, but he is not emancipated from base and servile ways, and is altogether unfit for the glories of a throne or the presence of a king. God, therefore, in "bringing many sons to glory," has other plans of mercy beyond the atonement made. Their corruptions must be purified; the evil of their nature cured. How, then, is this to be effected in a way consistent with that Being with whom we have to do? What must be done if a benefactor were to approach the slave and show him how a price was paid for his redemption, and that the moment he claims freedom an estate is prepared for him to enjoy, if he were once fitted for the inheritance. He must be first persuaded of his present wretchedness, willing to be released from it, and to receive the benefit proposed. And in the case of earthly bondage there is no difficulty; the evils of such a state are felt and acknowledged. Not so in the case of Satan's bondmen; they are too often willing slaves. And this He does for the sons whom He leads to glory. He "convinces them of sin," that it is their guilt—"of righteousness," that it is to be found in Christ—"of judgment, the prince of this world is judged"—that this world must be overcome, or they must

share its doom. When God was leading the Israelites into the land of Canaan He did not rid the land at once of its inhabitants, but put them out little by little. And so no doubt He has a merciful purpose in all the difficulties which His people meet with in their progress towards the heavenly Canaan. Here, too, we see—here at least we believe we see—the reason of those troubles which many of God's faithful people pass through. Is the Christian harassed by the remainder of sin, so that "when he would do good evil is present with him"? Or is it the straitness of poverty which weighs him down? In all those secret trials which the world sees not, as well as all those which are evident to all, there is one intent which we cannot but see: God is weaning the heart from the present world, and drawing it to Himself. (*Archbp. Sumner.*) *Bringing many sons to glory:*—God is here represented as executing a great work—that of "bringing many sons unto glory." "Glory" is a grand word—one of the grandest in the vocabulary of human speech; and it is habitually employed in Scripture to denote the "great recompence of reward" which awaits the righteous in the world to come. In the Old Testament it is said: "The Lord will give grace and glory" (Psa. lxxxiv. 11); "Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory" (Psa. lxxiii. 24); and in the New: "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Rom. viii. 18); "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. iv. 17); "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. i. 27); "The salvation which is in Christ, with eternal glory" (2 Tim. ii. 10). Well does heaven realise the brilliant and impressive name of "glory." The place—the pursuits—the pleasures—the inhabitants—all are glorious. 1. The place is glorious. Paradise—to which the departing spirits of the righteous pass—is certainly a locality. As the residence of Christ, that region of the universe must needs be glorious, having objects adapted to the organisation, and aptitudes, and tastes of his fine humanity. And who can tell but, even when the pure spirit is dissevered from its sister-frame, these objects let in their glory on the soul? But at last, in admirable and exquisite adaptation to the complete humanity of believers, the "new heavens and new earth" will come. It may seem sentimentalism, but it is sober sense, to say: If earth be so fair, how beautiful must heaven be! if the azure skies be so resplendent, how majestic must be that sublimer world! 2. The pursuits are glorious. The inhabitants of heaven shall "see God." His Divine Essence, indeed, can never be beheld by human eye (1 Tim. vi. 16). But there will probably be an outburst of visible glory from His eternal throne, significant of His presence and His majesty. At any rate, the soul will realise His infinite wisdom, and might, and purity, and love, with such clearness, and vividness, and power, as, in a sublime sense, to behold the invisible God. In heaven they will literally behold His glorious person—they will have Him for their associate and friend—they will gaze into the deep recesses of His love. 3. The pleasures are glorious. Deep and strong, no doubt, they are, like the mighty and majestic sea—yet, probably, calm and placid, as the bosom of the lake in the sunshine of the summer-sky. 4. The inhabitants themselves are glorious. What an expressive phrase—"the spirits of just men made perfect!" To the scenes, the pursuits, and the pleasures, of the heavenly world, the constitutions and characters of its inhabitants will completely correspond. Such is the glory of heaven. It is summarily denoted by St. Paul in the expression—an "exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. iv. 17). There is a glory of the flowers—there is a glory of the stars—there is a glory of the sun. But each, and all, is far exceeded and outshone by the glory of the heavens. And what is so bright, and beautiful, and precious, is "eternal;" it shall last for ever—it shall never pass away. And whom does Jehovah bring to this celestial glory? "Sons"—"many sons." 1. The filial relation of believers to God is often set forth in Scripture. There are two ways in which one person may become another person's child—birth and adoption. In the writings of St. John and St. Peter, the former—in those of St. Paul, the latter is propounded as the fundamental idea of the believer's sonship. Starting from either of the two conceptions, we are free to carry out the figure into the collateral and kindred ideas of protection, guidance, instruction, discipline, comfort, pity, and tenderest love, as bestowed by God on His believing people. It is as children that they are brought to glory. 2. The statement that "many sons" are brought to glory is quite consistent with the passages which indicate that comparatively few of the inhabitants of earth are in a state of salvation. Already, a mighty multitude of souls have been ransomed and renewed. In future times fore-

told in prophecy, "a nation shall be born in a day," and tribes and tongues shall shout, "Come and let us go up to Jehovah's house." 3. These "many sons" God is "bringing to glory." He chose them to this bright inheritance in the depths of the past eternity (Ephes. i. 4–6; 2 Thess. ii. 13). He sent His Son to win and work out "an eternal redemption" for them (John iii. 16; Rom. v. 8; viii. 32). He arrests them, by His Spirit, amidst the wildness of their wanderings, and adopts them into His cherished family (Rom. v. 17; viii. 29, 30; 2 Cor. v. 18; Ephes. ii. 1–10; Col. i. 12). He "guides them by His counsel" (Psa. lxxiii. 24). He "will never leave them nor forsake them" (Heb. xiii. 5). He "keeps them by His power, through faith, unto salvation" (1 Pet. i. 5). At last, He receives them to glory (Psa. lxxiii. 24). He introduces, and bids them welcome, to their paternal home. 4. The "many sons" whom the Father brings to glory are here represented as standing in a very intimate relation to Jesus Christ. He is "the Captain of their salvation." Glorious Captain! who would not follow Thee? Yet this Captain had "His sufferings." From His cradle to His grave, He was "a man of sorrows." In body, in soul, in circumstances, He suffered grievously (Isa. liii. 2–6, 10; Zech. xiii. 7; Matt. iv. 1, viii. 20, xi. 19, xxvi. 36—xxvii. 50; Luke xix. 41; John iv. 6; Gal. iii. 13; 1 Pet. ii. 21, iii. 18, iv. 1). 5. But He is also represented as "made perfect through sufferings." (*A. S. Patterson, M.A.*) **Make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.**—*The Captain of salvation*:—He might conceivably have saved men by a direct act of sovereign power and mercy. But He chose to save by mediation. And this method, if not the only possible one, is at least fitting. It became Him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, to bring His sons to glory in this way. 1. Because He was thereby following the analogy of providence, doing this work of deliverance in the manner in which we see Him performing all works of deliverance recorded in history: *e.g.* the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt. God led His ancient people from Egypt to Canaan, like a flock, "by the hand of Moses and Aaron." 2. The method involves that salvation is a gradual process. It is a march under the guidance of a Leader to the promised land. The sons of God are led to glory step by step. The new heavens and the new earth are not brought in per saltum, but as the result of a development during which the word and history and passion of Christ work as a leaven. Redemption has a history alike in the Leader and in the led. Redemption after this fashion became Him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, better than an instantaneous deliverance. The latter might reveal Divine omnipotence, but the former affords scope for the display of all Divine attributes: power, wisdom, patience, faithfulness, unwearied loving care. The method of salvation by a Leader involves certain things with reference to the Leader Himself. 1. He must, of course, be a Man visible to men, whom He has to lead; so that they can look unto Him as the Leader and Perfecter of faith, and, inspired by His example, follow Him on the path which leads to glory. 2. Out of this primary requirement naturally springs another. He who in person is to lead the people out of the house of bondage into the promised land must, in the discharge of his duty, encounter hardship and suffering. He must share the lot of those whom he has to deliver. Neither Moses nor Joshua had an easy time of it. The leadership of Israel was for neither a dilettante business, but a sore, perilous, often thankless toil and warfare. And there never was any real leader or captain of men whose life was anything else than a yoke of care, and a burden of toil and sorrow. They have all had to suffer with those they led, and more than any of the led. What wonder then if the Captain or Leader of the great salvation was acquainted with suffering? Must He be the solitary exception to the rule which connects leadership with suffering? If out of regard to His dignity as the Son He must be exempted from suffering, then for the same reason He must forfeit the position of leader. To exempt from suffering is to disable for leadership. Companionship in suffering is one of the links that connect a leader with those he leads and gives him power over them. This brings us to a third implicate of the method of salvation by a captain for the Captain Himself. 3. It is, that experience of suffering is not merely inseparable from His office as the Captain of salvation, but useful to Him in that capacity. It perfects Him as Captain. Here at length we reach the climax of the apologetic argument; the final truth in which, when understood, the mind finds perfect rest. If this be indeed true, then beyond all doubt it became God to subject His Son to a varied experience of suffering. To proclaim its truth is the real aim of the writer. For though his direct affirmation is that it became God to perfect His Son by suffering, the really important thing is the in-

direct affirmation that the Son was perfected by suffering. The writer means to say that Christ was perfected by suffering, in the sense that He was thereby made a perfect leader. The perfecting of Christ was a process resulting in His becoming a consummate Captain of salvation. It was a process carried on through sufferings, taking place contemporaneously with these. It was a process begun on earth, carried on throughout Christ's whole earthly life, reaching its goal in heaven; just as the crowning with glory and honour began on earth and was completed in heaven. The crowning was the appointment of Jesus to the vocation of Saviour, the perfecting was the process through which he became skilled in the art of saving. The theatre or school of His training was His human history, and the training consisted in His acquiring, or having opportunity of exercising, the qualities and virtues which go to make a good leader of salvation. Foremost among these are sympathy, patience, obedience, faith, all of which are mentioned in the course of the epistle. The official perfecting of every ordinary man includes an ethical element. An apprentice during the course of his apprenticeship not only goes through all the departments of his craft and acquires gradually skill in each branch, but all along undergoes a discipline of character, which tends to make him a better man as well as a good tradesman. The supreme qualification for a leader of salvation is the possession and exercise of high heroic virtues, such as those already enumerated. He leads by inspiring admiration and trust; that is, by being a moral hero. But a moral hero means one whose life is hard, tragic. Heroes are produced by passing through a severe, protracted curriculum of trial. They are perfected by sufferings—sufferings of all sorts, the more numerous, varied, and severe the better; the more complete the training, the more perfect the result, when the discipline has been successfully passed through. Hence the fitness, nay, the necessity, that one having Christ's vocation should live such a life as the gospels depict; full of temptations, privations, contradictions of unbelief, ending with death on the cross; calling into play to the uttermost the virtue of fortitude, affording ample scope for the display at all costs of fidelity to duty and obedience to God, and in the most desperate situations of implicit filial trust in a heavenly Father; and through all these combined furnishing most satisfactory guarantees for the possession of unlimited capacity to sympathise with all exposed to the temptations and tribulations of this world. How can any son of God who is being led through fire and blood to his inheritance doubt the value of a Leader so trained and equipped? (*A. B. Bruce, D.D.*) *A captain worth a whole brigade*:—Our Leader inspires confidence. He has never been defeated. Mark you! how He conquered the weaknesses of humanity, pride, self-seeking, avarice, and resentment—how he conquered the Tempter on the Mount; how He conquered death and the powers of hell! We know whom we trust, and that He will lead us to victory. In one of the Napoleonic battles on the Peninsula, a corps of British troops were sorely pressed and began to waver. Just then the Duke of Wellington rode in among them. A veteran soldier cried out: "Here comes the Duke, God bless him! the sight of him is worth a whole brigade!" So to the equipped warrior under the ensign of the cross, a sight of Jesus, our leader, is a new inspiration. He who is for us is mightier than all that be against us. Jesus is able to assure the victory to every redeemed soul who is loyal to Him. (*T. L. Cuyler, D.D.*) *Christ perfect through sufferings*:—I THE LORD JESUS IS A PERFECT SAVIOUR. 1. For, first, He is perfectly adapted for the work of saving. (1) The singular constitution of His nature adapts Him to His office. He is God. He is also man. No nature but one so complex as that of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God, would have been perfectly adapted for the work of salvation. (2) And as He was adapted in His nature, so it is very clear to us that He was also adapted by His experience. A physician should have some acquaintance with disease; how shall he know the remedy if he be ignorant of the malady. Our Saviour knew all because "He took our infirmities," &c. (3) If you will add to His perfect experience His marvellous character, you will see how completely adapted He was to the work. For a Saviour, we need one who is full of love, whose love will make him firm to his purpose. We want one with zeal so flaming, that it will eat him up; of courage so indomitable, that he will face every adversary rather than forego his end; we want one, at the same time, who will blend with this brass of courage the gold of meekness and of gentleness; we want one who will be determined to deal fearlessly with his adversaries—such an one we have in Christ. 2. Furthermore, as Christ is thus perfectly adapted, so He is perfectly able to be a Saviour. He is a perfect Saviour by reason of ability. (1) He is now able to meet all the needs of sinners. That need is very great. The sinner needs

everything. "More than all in Christ we find"; pardon in His blood; justification in His righteousness; wisdom in His teaching; sanctification in His Spirit. He is the God of all grace to us. (2) As He has this power to meet all needs, so He can meet all need in all cases. There has never been brought to Christ a man whom He could not heal. (3) As He can meet all cases, so He can meet all cases at all times. 3. Once more, let me remind you that Christ is a perfectly successful Saviour. (1) I mean by this that, in one sense, He has already finished the work of salvation. All that has to be done to save a soul Christ has done already. (2) And, as He has been successful in doing all the work for us, to, in every case where that work has been applied, perfect success has followed. II. CHRIST WAS MADE A PERFECT SAVIOUR THROUGH SUFFERING. 1. By His sufferings He became perfect as a Saviour from having offered a complete expiation for sin. Sin could not have been put away by holiness. The best performance of an unsuffering being could not have removed the guilt of man. Suffering was absolutely necessary, for suffering was the penalty of sin. 2. Again, if Christ had not suffered He could not have been perfect as a Saviour, because He could not have brought in a perfect righteousness. It is not enough to expiate sin. God requires of man perfect obedience. If man would be in heaven he must be perfectly obedient. Christ, as He took away our guilt, has supplied us with a matchless righteousness. 3. Yet, thirdly, it was necessary that Christ should suffer to make Him a perfect Saviour so far as His sympathy goes. 4. Finally, upon this point; He thus became perfect as our exemplar. III. CHRIST'S HAVING BEEN MADE PERFECT THROUGH SUFFERING WILL ENNOBLE THE WHOLE WORK OF GRACE. "It became Him for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory"—that is the great work—"to make the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering." The whole thing will work for His glory. Oh, how this will glorify God at the last, that Christ, the man, should have been perfect through suffering! 1. How this will glorify Him in the eyes of devils! It was in man that they defeated God; in man God destroys them. 2. How greatly will God be exalted that day in the eyes of lost spirits. You will not be able to say, "My damnation lies at God's door," for you will see in Christ a suitable Saviour. 3. Oh, what delight and transport will seize the minds of those who are redeemed! How will God be glorified then! Why, every wound of Christ will cause an everlasting song. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Perfection through suffering:*—The presence of evil in this earth, and of all the sorrow and suffering that flows from evil, naturally appears to be the one great imperfection that mars the economy of the world. Here, however, the sacred writer boldly faces the mystery, and dares to speak of this great and all-pervading imperfection as the necessary condition of a higher perfection—a perfection so high and glorious as to justify all that has seemed inexplicable in bringing it about. We cannot for a moment doubt that God, being omnipotent, could if He willed bring evil to a summary end. But if He could crush out all evil, and yet does not do so, it is clear that some purpose of benevolence and love higher than would be answered by this procedure must actuate Him to adopt the course that He does. Now we ourselves are in a position to notice that the presence and operation of evil in one form or another calls forth, or perhaps we should say contributes to form, qualities and characteristics such as are not within our own observation and experience otherwise produced. If a man's temper should never be tried, we cannot see how he can learn self-control; unless a man be exposed to danger or to opposition, how shall he develop courage? If he never has a trial or a pain, how can he become patient? Or we might illustrate the subject thus: Mere exclusion from the conditions of trial and temptation will not transform human character, although it may change human conduct. Suppose that an habitual drunkard migrated to a locality where intoxicants could not be obtained, he would become outwardly sober certainly, but would he be a sober man in the moral sense of the word? Supposing that a quarrelsome man were banished to a Juan Fernandez, he would certainly live in peace because he had no one to quarrel with; but are you sure he would not pick a quarrel with the captain of the ship that carried him back to England? No; our observation shows us that something more is needed than mere seclusion from evil to make us truly good. Indeed, it teaches us more than this. It would lead us to conclude that contact with evil in some form or another would seem to be necessary in order to develop the highest form of character. Are any of us disposed to ask, Why cannot the highest form of good be otherwise produced? It is enough to answer that God, so far as we know, invariably works through means. Further, we observe in Nature that each end is the

product of certain particular means, or specific combinations of means, and of no other, and reverence and piety lead to the conclusion that in each case the means are the best that could be chosen. But if this be so in the physical world, why should it not be so in the moral? And there rises up before the Divine consideration the vision of the One absolutely perfect Man, who was, in the Father's foreknowledge, the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world. And this highest type is the product of the triumph of militant good over opposing evil; the ideal Man is perfected by suffering. Here, at any rate, the means have produced the end. Hence our text, we observe, speaks of something that we might almost call a Divine necessity; at any rate, it contains a distinct reference to the eternal fitness of things, to the fixed operation of the laws of causation in the spiritual as in the natural world. And yet, lest this should be taken to imply the existence of some superior necessity to which even God Himself is subject—lest we should fall into the old Pagan notion that fate is stronger than Deity, and that God is the creature rather than the Creator of universal law, the writer attaches to this very reference to the eternal fitness of things one of the most sublime declarations in all literature of the place that God holds in the universe He has made. "It became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through suffering." Let us dwell upon these two revelations of the Divine. All things are for God. He is the great final cause of all that is. "Thou hast created all things," cry the blessed spirits in the Land of Vision, "and for Thy pleasure they are and were created." It is manifest that if God Himself existed antecedently to all creation, all creation must exist for Him. And this implies that the potentialities, as well as the original actualities, of life were for Him. He must surely have known what He was calling into existence, and what possibilities would be involved for good or evil when He said, "Let us make man." And we ourselves are for Him. The prime object of our existence is not to obtain gratification for ourselves, but to answer His purpose concerning us. I am persuaded that one great secret of holiness lies in the recognition of this truth, and of all that is implied in it—I exist for God. In this new view of life, and in the acceptance of God instead of self as our centre of reference, lies the very essence of self-denial. We deny ourselves when, instead of asking, What do I like, we inquire, "Lord, what wouldest Thou have me to do?" And the second revelation is scarcely less important. "By Him are all things." He is the efficient as well as the final cause in His great universe of all that He designs to be eternal, and of all that contributes to what is eternal. This suggests to our minds the thought, that not only are the ages bound together by one great purpose, but more than this, God must be the best judge of the means by which that great purpose is to be subserved. And if He employs suffering as a means towards this end (and no doubt He is most reluctant to employ such a means), it must be because He sees this to be the means most suited to the end aimed at, indeed the only means that can bring about the specific results desired. Now it is obviously of the greatest practical moment that we should bear in mind that "of Him are all things" in our own personal experience. It is not the devil that is allowed to shape the features of the Christian's lot. Though he may be the agent in inflicting such sufferings, there is a deeper love underneath that permits them all for the promotion of a higher good. But if all things are for God, and we ourselves are for Him—if He is to derive a special gratification and satisfaction from our perfection—then may we not boldly affirm that all things are for us? and may we not confidently trust Him with the selection of means towards the great end that He has in view? It is this thought that will arm us to face trials without apprehension, and keep us from forfeiting the blessings of suffering by yielding to a murmuring spirit. Stoics might teach us to endure tribulation, and Epicureans might advise us to do our best to escape tribulation; but who had ever before thought of the possibility of glorying in tribulation? But the true Christian glories in it. He glories in it because it is a means towards an end. It is one of the "all things" that are of God, and that contribute to what God designs. We glory in that triumphant power of Divine grace which renders even evil the minister of good, and converts what we most shrink from into the means of inducing what we most desire. But the most surprising part of the text certainly is that in which Christ is represented as being submitted to the same means of development as ourselves in this respect. And our text affirms that it was in accordance with the eternal fitness of things that He should be perfected by suffering like the rest. If God's method of operation is this, that He produces ends by definite and

appropriate means, why should we expect Him to depart from it in a particular case? If the very highest form of human perfection could be induced, without any employment of means—and painful and unpleasant means—such as we are subjected to, would there not have been ground for the conclusion that these means were in themselves unnecessary? Surely with such premises, it would be difficult for us to draw any other conclusion than that the infliction of all this suffering was gratuitous, and therefore unkind. But Christ came to vindicate the Father's character and ways. Above all He came to deepen our sense of the Father's love and benevolence, and therefore it behoved Him to submit to the established law, and to make the highest use of the means which a Father's love has appointed for the training and perfecting of man. Jesus Christ is not any grander, any more glorious, in the moral sense of the word, even when He sits on the throne, than He was when He hung in anguish, faint and dying, on a felon's cross. We can guess at His perfection up yonder in the glory; we can see it on the cross. And it is just the sort of perfection that sanctified sorrow and suffering amongst ourselves is known, in some degree at any rate, to produce. Self-control in its highest form; self-effacement that seems wonderful in its completeness, even in Him of whom we have learnt to expect whatever is highest and noblest; courage that took measure beforehand of all that was to come, and yet never flinched; obedience that would not, that did not, fail when the consequence was torture and death; patience that continued to endure when relief at any moment was within His reach; faith that would not doubt the Father's love, though all that He was suffering seemed to contradict it; hope that looked on through the horrors of the present to the joy that was set before Him; magnanimity that despised the shame; benignant pity that pleaded for His very murderers; and, above all, changeless and unconquerable love that many waters could not quench nor floods drown—these were amongst the characteristic perfections that have shone upon the world from Calvary, and are shining still. And these are all of them such as sorrow and suffering contribute to form; indeed, it is easy to see that some of these characteristics could not have existed, otherwise than potentially, even in the perfect Man, had He not been exposed to suffering. But it may be asked, How could Jesus Christ be perfected when He was never imperfect? Perfection may be regarded as either relative or absolute. Absolute perfection is the attribute of God, and belonged to Christ in His eternal Godhead from all eternity. But, again, there is such a thing as relative perfection —a perfection, that is to say, that is relative not only to the object and its ideal, but to the conditions to which it is for the time being submitted. There never was a time, then, when Jesus Christ was relatively imperfect. As a mere child no doubt He was all that a child could be; and as a young man I question not, though we know actually nothing of His youth, He presented to His contemporaries a perfect model of youthful manhood. But, as we have seen, there are certain forms of manly and, perhaps I should say, Godlike virtue that are only brought forth to perfection, so far as we know, by trial and suffering; and Jesus Christ could not be the absolutely Perfect Man until these characteristics had been by suffering acquired. For example, we are taught that He learned obedience by the things that He suffered. Now there never was a time when Jesus Christ was disobedient; but obedience, to be perfect, must be submitted to test. You cannot call a child obedient if his obedience has never cost him anything, nor do you know that he will obey when the trial comes unless he has been already put to the test. In this sense, and in this sense only, Christ learut obedience by the things that He suffered. Alas! the words apply very differently to many of us! We disobey, and we suffer for it, and perhaps suffer severely, and then we begin to think that perhaps obedience is the truer wisdom. But He, on the other hand, learned the habit of obedience without ever tasting the bitter fruits of disobedience. His sufferings came in the path of obedience, and instead of deflecting Him from it confirmed Him in it. His own brethren did not believe on Him. Here were trials at home harder to bear than poverty and want. But from this form of suffering He learned to stand alone, to be the less dependent on man, and the more in the society of His Father; while instead of His affections and sympathies being shrivelled and blighted by this unfavourable atmosphere they seem to have flowed forth all the more freely towards all who felt their value and responded to their advances. Yet another sorrow sprang from the attitude assumed towards Him by the religious world. It is never pleasant to be regarded as a heretic by those who represent a dominant and intolerant orthodoxy. I have known cases in which men have become embittered against and estranged from their fellow-Christians for life because of what they have suffered through practi-

cal excommunication. But where we may miss the lesson, Christ learned it. On the one hand, He learnt from all this how little trust was to be reposed in the theories and systems of men. But look again, and observe how all through His ministry He suffered from the contradiction of sinners against Himself, and this suffering contributed to His perfection in two ways. It seems to have deepened and strengthened the intensity of His hatred against sin, and to have taught Him the necessity of using great plainness, and even in some cases severity of speech in convicting sinners, while it also produced in Him a wonderful patience in dealing with sinners. Did He, could He, suffer from temptation, and was He perfected by this also? The writer of this Epistle says so in so many words. We know how much of severe pain temptation often causes; how it sometimes seems as if we were so circumstanced that it must needs be pain to resist, and probably not less but greater pain to yield. He never had, it is true, a fallen nature, and a bias towards evil such as we have; and many feel as if that must needs have rendered it impossible for Him to be tempted as we are. But are we able to judge how much this advantage may have been compensated by the special trials that belonged to the unique position that He occupied? Who shall affirm that the urgent demands of such an appetite as hunger, aggravated to a scarcely conceivable intensity by the pains of a forty days' fast, were more easy to deny than the cravings of abnormally-developed lust in the manhood of a confirmed sensualist? And this is only one example out of many that should suffice to prove the reality of the sufferings to which He was exposed by temptation. Where is there another in human history whose temptation was so severe as to wring blood-drops from the agonising body? Never say that Jesus's temptations were nothing to yours, because He was innocent when you are impure, unless you have passed through such an agony and bloody sweat as fell to His lot in Gethsemane. But here as elsewhere suffering perfected the Man. He learnt how Divine power—the power of the Eternal Spirit—can master and triumph over the strongest claims of nature; and thus through suffering He rose to the very culminating-point of true self-mastery, and was able to lay Himself upon the altar a whole burnt sacrifice. Yes, the self-control of Jesus Christ differs from all other instances of it in these particulars: First, He seems to have been able to take the measure of His sufferings before they occurred—an experience which is happily impossible to us; and, second, all the while that He was enduring them He knew perfectly well that He had only to express a wish and His sufferings would have been at an end. Thus His obedience was made perfect, and with His obedience His human character. The means produced the end with Him that it might produce the self-same end with us; and from the moment of His perfection by suffering He consecrated suffering as a minister of the Divine purpose, so that His followers might no longer shrink from it and tremble at it, but rather glory in it as a conquered foe that has become our friend. (*W. H. M. H. Aitken, M.A.*)

Perfect through suffering:—I. JESUS WAS MADE PERFECT THROUGH SUFFERING. 1. Not (1) Physically. (2) Intellectually. (3) Morally. 2. But in His Saviourhood. (1) Example. (2) Expiation. II. THE FOLLOWER OF JESUS IS MADE PERFECT THROUGH SUFFERING. 1. It deepens his humility. 2. It increases his power of endurance. 3. It stimulates his sympathy toward those who suffer. 4. It awakens within him stronger yearnings after a better world. (*J. K. Jackson.*)

Christ's perfecting by suffering:—I. THE GREAT SWEEP OF THE DIVINE ACTION IN THE GIFT OF CHRIST AS IT IS SET FORTH HERE. It is "bringing many sons unto glory," wherein there lies, of course, a metaphor of a great filial procession, being led on through all changes of this lower life, steadily upwards into the possession of what is here called "glory." The same metaphor colours the other expression of our text, "the Captain of our salvation." This great procession of sons up into glory, which is the object and aim of God's work, is all under the leadership of Him who is the Captain, the foremost, the Originator, and, in a profound sense, the Cause of their salvation. So, then, we have before us the thought that God brings, and yet Christ leads, and God's bringing is effected through Christ's leadership. Look at the extent of the Divine act. "Many" is used not in contrast to "all," as if there was proclaimed here a restricted application of Christ's work in the Divine idea; but "many" is in opposition to "few," or, perhaps in opposition to the One. There is One Leader, and there is an indefinite number of followers. Then, note, the relationship which the members of that great company possess. The many are being brought as "sons"; under the leadership of the one Son. Then note further, the end of the march. This great company stretching numberless away beyond the range of vision, and, all exalted into the dignity of sons, is steadfastly pressing

onwards to the aim of fulfilling that Divine ideal of humanity, long since spoken in the psalm which, in its exuberant promises, sounds liker irony than hope. "Thou crownest Him with glory and honour." They are not only steadily marching onwards to the realisation of that Divine ideal, but also to the participation of the glory of the Captain who is the "brightness of the Father's glory," as well as "the express image of His person." So again, the underlying thought is the identity, as in fate here, so in destiny hereafter, of the army with its Leader. He is the Son, and the Divine purpose is to make the "many" partakers of His Sonship. He is the realisation of the Divine ideal. We see not yet all things put under man, but we see Jesus, and so we know that the ancient hope is not the baseless fabric of a vision, nor a dream which will pass when we awake to the realities, but is to be fulfilled in every one, down to the humblest private in that great army, all of whom shall partake in their measure and degree, in the glory of the Lord. This, then, being the purpose—the leading up out of the world into the glory, of a great company of sons who are conformed to the image of the Son—we attain the point from which we may judge of the adaptation of the means to the end. The Cross is surplusage if Christ be a prophet only; it is surplusage and an incongruity if Christ be simply the foremost of the pure natures that have walked the earth, and shown the beauty of goodness. But if Christ have come to make men sons of God, by participation of His Sonship, and to blanch and irradiate their blackness by the reflection and impartation of His own flashing glory, then it "became Him, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." II. THE PARADOX OF THE METHOD ADOPTED TO CARRY OUT THIS DIVINE PURPOSE. The leader must have no exemption from the hardships of the company. If He is to be a leader, He and we must go by the same road. He must tramp along all the weary path that we have to tread. He must experience all the conflicts and difficulties that we have to experience. He cannot lift us up into a share of His glory unless He stoops to the companionship of our grief. Again, we learn the necessity of His suffering in order to His sympathy. Before He suffers, He has the pity of a God; after He suffers, He has learnt the compassion of a man. Then we learn, further, the necessity of the Captain's suffering in order to emancipate us from the dominion of the evil that He bears. No Christ is enough for me a sinner except a Christ whose Cross takes away the burden and the penalty of my transgression. And thus "it became Him to make the Captain of salvation perfect through suffering," else the design of making men His sons and sharers of His glory could never come to pass. III. THE HARMONY BETWEEN THE LOFTIEST CONCEPTION OF THE DIVINE CHARACTER AND NATURE AND THESE SUFFERINGS OF JESUS. The writer dwells upon two aspects of God's relation to the universe. "It became Him *for* whom are all things, and *by* or through whom are all things." That is to say, the sufferings and death of the Christ, in whom is God manifest in the flesh, are worthy of that lofty nature to the praise and glory of which all things contribute. The Cross is the highest manifestation of the Divine nature. Another aspect, closely connected with this, lies in that other clause. Christ's sufferings and death are congruous with that Almighty power by which the universe has sprung into being and is sustained. His creative agency is not the highest exhibition of His power. Creation is effected by a word. The bare utterance of the Divine will is all that is needed to make the heavens and the earth, and to "preserve the stars from wrong." This work needs the humiliation, the suffering, the death, resurrection, ascension, and session at the right hand of God, of the Captain of our salvation and the Prince of our life. So, though by Him are all things, if we would know the full sweep and omnipotence of His power, He points us away from creation, and its ineffectual fires that pale before this brighter Light in which His whole self is embodied, and says, "There, *that* is the arm of the Lord made bare in the sight of all the nations." Omnipotence has made the world, the Cross has redeemed it. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Perfect through sufferings*:—1. The first qualification for such a commander is that he be one we can wholly trust. In order to this he must not only have knowledge but experience. To win our faith our Captain had to fight our battle. 2. But more than this: He has to change our whole characters: to wean us from all evil and win us to all good, to change our hearts so that we should seek to be holy. He could not do so without suffering. I have known a mother, tender and pure, with a son once her joy but now her heart-break, a prodigal, wilful, scornful, and seemingly to all good reprobate. On a certain night she knew he was in an evil place and company. She went forth with the biting sleet and snow drifting upon her. With prayer she closed her ears to foul and ribald speech, with prayer she closed her eyes to shameless sights, with prayer

through insult and blasphemy and blows she made her way and stood before her son, torn and bleeding, to plead with his better heart, if any better heart remained in him. A sorrowful and yet a noble sight! As he looked on her, bitter, remorseful thoughts and tender memories of good filled his heart. Never had he seen his sins as he saw them now written on her crushed, broken heart, and it touched and startled him into a new feeling of glory and virtue. That mother's love became her, and her sorrow perfected her for the work of redeeming her son from the evil of his ways. Even so the Lord Jesus yearned to save His lost ones, and came forth in His purity into the haunts of our sin and degradation, and walked among us, despised and rejected and blasphemed and crucified. If the human heart is not rotted out, if there is truth or ruth left in us, the thought of that sorrowful love should fill us with contrition and touch us with a feeling of Divine things again. He was perfected by suffering to make this last appeal to us. If there is anything that will reach and touch and change and melt our hearts, it is the sight of that sorrowing love, wounded for our iniquities, and bruised for our transgressions. (*W. C. Smith, D.D.*) *Perfect through sufferings*:—How was it that the discipline of suffering improved the unimprovable Saviour? Not in the way of pruning off tendencies to anything bad: for in Him there never were any. There was no self-conceit there to be purged out: no arrogance to be taken down: no hardness to be softened by experience of pain. No higher degree was possible, in the scale of moral excellence—of purity, kindness, unselfishness, truthfulness. But round this central core of unimprovable perfection, there might gather special qualifications fitting for the fulfilment of His great atoning work, such as not even He could have without passing through that baptism of suffering which was implied by His life and death. Christ was "made perfect through sufferings," in the sense that He was made more completely equipped and prepared for the work He came to do, by the sufferings He underwent. I. By His sufferings, HE ATONED FOR SIN, AND TOOK IT AWAY. II. Another respect in which Christ became through sufferings the Saviour we know Him for—IS IN THE MATTER OF HIS BEING AN EXAMPLE FOR US IN OUR DAYS OF SORROW. III. Then, again, sufferings perfected our blessed Saviour and made Him what we know Him for, IN THE MATTER OF SYMPATHY WITH US. "He has felt the same": how that brings the Divine Redeemer close to us; as nothing else could! IV. Now, does the text mean more? Is there an uncomfortable feeling in any mind, that in all this we have been evading a plain statement of God's Word, because it seems as though it would not fit in with our theology? Does any one think that if we really read the text honestly, IT WOULD CONVEY THAT SUFFERING IMPROVED CHRIST MORALLY, made Him better, just in the same sense in which suffering improves us, and makes us better? The idea is startling. Yet good men and wise men have held it and delighted in it. One such (Archer Butler), a firm believer in our Lord's Divinity, has maintained that all those long nights of prayer, all that endurance of contradiction, the agony in the Garden, the final struggle on the Cross, had power (I quote his words) "to raise and refine the human element of His Being beyond the simple purity of its original innocence; so that, though ever and equally without sin, the dying Christ was something more consummate still than the Christ baptized in Jordan." I confess at once, I cannot venture to say so. The Best could never grow better. One cannot bear to exalt even the dying Redeemer by saying what seems to cast a slight on Him who preached the Sermon on the Mount. And veil it as you may in more skilful phrases, it comes to that, when you speak of sorrow as working "a refining and exalting change" upon Christ! Yet perhaps without irreverence it may be said that the human in Him must have learnt, daily, intellectually: and (so joined are they together) in some sense, thus learning, have morally grown. And true it is, doubtless, that "Virtue tried and triumphant ranks above untried innocence." (*A. K. H. Boyd, D.D.*) *Christ made perfect through suffering*:—I. A DESCRIPTION OF THE DIVINE MAJESTY. 1. His absolute superiority and authority. 2. His infinite power and skill. By Him the world was planned, constructed, and is sustained. II. THE BLESSED WORK WHICH THE DIVINE BEING HAS UNDERTAKEN TO PERFORM. 1. The object: "glory." 2. The means: "being made sons." 3. The number: "many." III. THE METHOD BY WHICH THE DIVINE BEING WILL ACCOMPLISH THIS WORK. 1. He has appointed Jesus "the Captain of their salvation." 2. For this work Christ was prepared. "Perfect through suffering." IV. THE APPROPRIATENESS OF BOTH THE WORK AND THE METHOD UNDERTAKEN BY THE DIVINE BEING. 1. It became His truth and faithfulness. 2. It became His holiness and justice. 3. It became His wisdom. (*J. Burns, D.D.*) *The ministry of suffering*:—There are few things less understood, or more misrepresented, than human suffering. In too many

cases it is regarded as the penal scourge, rather than as the kindly rod that chastens and corrects. Let us inquire—I. How THE MINISTRY OF SUFFERING CONTRIBUTED TO THE PERFECTION OF CHRIST. The Scriptures teach us that in Christ there was no moral or spiritual deficiency. How then could a Being so holy be made "perfect through sufferings"? 1. The perfection of sacrifice. The work of human redemption required not only a sinless, but a suffering agent. The victim must not only be unspotted, but laid on the altar and subjected to the fire of suffering, in order to become a valid offering. 2. The perfection of moral development. The perfection of Christ's character in later life must have been of a higher description than that of His younger days: the one was the perfection of innocence, the other the perfection of a tested and experienced virtue. His character was always like a piece of pure, unalloyed gold, but it shone with a brighter lustre at the last, because it had been submitted to the friction of pain and sorrow. 3. The perfection of sympathy. One thing necessary to the exercise of true sympathy is the power to forget self. Selfishness must sink before sympathy can rise. Another thing necessary is the personal knowledge of sorrow. II. THE MINISTRY OF SUFFERING AS IT CONTRIBUTES TO THE PERFECTION OF BELIEVERS. 1. Suffering to be a blessing, must be rightly borne. In the temper in which we submit to it depends whether it is to be the angel that sweetens or the demon that sours us. 2. There is much unreality often about the best of men. In speech and action we are not always true. There is often a smattering of half-unconscious, half-wilful misrepresentation about our conduct. We sometimes deceive ourselves, and sometimes half-unwittingly try to deceive our God. The ministry of suffering strips us of all this. (*The Lay Preacher.*) *Fulfilling the pleasure of the Lord*:—I. A WORK INTENDED. 1. A relationship was to be established: "sons." 2. A leadership is undertaken: "bringing." 3. A goal is assigned: "glory." God's revelations to His people will be in everlasting crescendo. II. A METHOD ADOPTED. 1. It was the Divine appointment that those led to "glory" should have a captain or prince over them. 2. This great Forerunner was perfected as a Captain of salvation through suffering. (1) Jesus Christ, by atoning for sin, had a righteous basis for undertaking the leadership of souls. (2) In suffering, Jesus Christ grappled with His enemies and ours and laid them low. (3) In His suffering, Jesus passed through the various phases of human experience, and thus became qualified to succour those who were following Him. (4) In Him all conceivable qualities for a perfect Captain of salvation are found. (5) Nor will the host He leads to glory be small. III. THE REASON ASSIGNED. "For it became Him," &c.—*i.e.*, it was suitable for Him, becoming to Him. 1. This plan accords with the yearnings of Infinite Love. 2. This plan accords with God's righteousness. For thereby He has condemned sin that He might conquer it. 3. God magnifies His wisdom. The Leader adequate to all emergencies. 4. This plan will disclose God's faithfulness. 5. And manifest His power. (*C. Clemance, D.D.*) *Perfect through suffering*:—"Unaccountable this!" said the Wax, as from the flame it dropped melting upon the Paper beneath. "Do not grieve," said the Paper; "I am sure it is all right." "I was never in such agony!" exclaimed the Wax, still dropping. "It is not without a good design, and will end well," replied the Paper. The Wax was unable to reply at once, owing to a strong pressure; and when it again looked up it bore a beautiful impression, the counterpart of the seal which had been applied to it. "Ah! I comprehend now," said the Wax, no longer in suffering. "I was softened in order to receive this lovely durable impress. Yes; I see now it was all right, because it has given to me the beautiful likeness which I could not otherwise have obtained." *Adversity a discipline*:—James Douglas, son of the banished Earl of Angus, afterwards well known by the title of Earl of Morton, lurked during the exile of his family in the north of Scotland, under the assumed name of James Innes, otherwise "James the Grieve" (*i.e.*, Reve or Bailiff). "And as he bore the name," says Godscroft, "so did he also execute the office of a grieve or overseer of the lands and rents, the corn and cattle, of him with whom he lived." From the habits of frugality and observation which he acquired in his humble situation, the historian traces that intimate acquaintance with popular character which enabled him to rise so high in the State, and that honourable economy by which he repaired and established the shattered estates of Angus and Morton. (*Sir Walter Scott.*) *Perfect through suffering*:—The people of Verona, when they saw Dante in the streets, used to say, "See, there is the man that was in hell!" Ah, yes, he had been in hell;—in hell enough, in long severe sorrow and struggle; as the like of him is pretty sure to have been. Commedias that come out divine, are not accomplished otherwise. Thought, true labour of any kind, highest

virtue itself, is it not the daughter of Pain? Born as out of the black whirlwind;—true effort, in fact, as of a captive struggling to free himself: that is Thought. In all ways we are "to become perfect through suffering." (*T. Carlyle.*)

Vers. 11-13. **He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one.**—*The unity of Christ and His people*:—1. A description of the work which Christ has come to accomplish for His people. He is described as "He that sanctifieth," and His people as "they who are sanctified." Jesus sanctifies both Himself and His people with His own blood, expiating and purging away their sins, and fitting them, and Himself as their Surety, for coming with acceptance into the presence of the holy God. This is the great end of the Saviour's mighty undertaking, to bring His people near to God. To a creature with a moral nature like man, distance from God is misery—it is death. Thus He is in our text most comprehensively, as well as appropriately, described as "He that sanctifieth." We say, most comprehensively; for this is the sum of all that He accomplishes as the Saviour of His people—most appropriately, for the word as here used carries us back to the shedding of blood needful for sanctification under the law, and suggests the necessity of the fact which the apostle is expounding, that Jesus, in sanctifying Himself and His people, should in common with them both suffer and die. 2. The declaration of the reason why the Son of God, in sanctifying His people, must Himself of necessity be a sufferer. The ordinance of consecration for the priesthood under the law suggests this necessity; yet the question remains, whence the necessity of the shedding of blood? Our text answers this question—"He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one." Here is the essence of the Divine scheme for sinners' redemption. I. WHATSOEVER IS THEIRS IS MADE HIS. 1. Their sin. One man may spontaneously make himself liable for his neighbour's debt, but a husband is necessarily liable for the debts of his wife, because they are "all of one." This is only a shadow of Christ's liability for the sin of His people. Like the husband, Christ may be regarded as having spontaneously assumed the relation of unity with His spouse, but having become one flesh with her, He is, voluntarily indeed, yet necessarily, liable for her debts. 2. Jesus having thus become chargeable with the guilt of His people's sin, became subject to its penal effects. With their sin their suffering also is made His. 3. With their sin their death also is made His. Death was from the beginning the appointed penalty of sin. II. WHAT IS CHRIST'S IS TRANSFERRED TO HIS PEOPLE. 1. His righteousness is made theirs (2 Cor. v. 21). Thus the holy God can look with complacency on "the ungodly" believing in Jesus. Not that He esteems less hateful their sin. Not that He esteems less honourable His own law, but He accepts them "in the beloved," and He is "the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." 2. His death is made theirs. He had obeyed as His people's surety and head. In the same capacity He died. Thus, when He died on the Cross, His people died in Him. "If one died for all, then were all dead," or "then have all died." This is the glorious security of His people, that having died in their surety, their salvation, in the most important sense of the word, is already accomplished. 3. Christ's resurrection, as well as His death, is made theirs. In the person of their Head they have already risen and taken possession of their inheritance. (*Alex. Anderson.*) *Sanctification*:—I. SANCTIFICATION CONSISTS OF TWO ACTIONS. 1. Separation. 2. Renovation. II. SANCTIFICATION IS CARRIED ON BY TWO AGENTS. 1. "He that sanctifieth." The Holy Spirit works in man to will and to do. 2. "They who are sanctified." There must be acquiescence on our part. The Spirit influences: we act. He teaches: we believe. (*Homilist.*) *Man's Redeemer—His humanity, function, and fraternalness*:—I. THE HUMANITY OF CHRIST. "All of one"—one nature. His humanity serves to—1. Enlist our sympathies. 2. Encourage our hopes. II. THE FUNCTION OF CHRIST. To make man holy. "He that sanctifieth." This work of His—1. He has undertaken in sovereign love. 2. Is indispensable to our well-being. III. THE FRATERNALNESS OF CHRIST. "Not ashamed to call us brethren." Then—1. Let us not be afraid to approach Him. 2. Let us not be ashamed of His followers, however humble. (*Ibid.*) *Christ and His brethren*:—This word "for" noteth a cause of that which was said before; and he had said this. He that leadeth other into the glory of God by the same way he must enter also himself. He addeth now the cause and ground of that saying, because they must be of one nature, both He that leadeth and they that are led into this salvation. A proof and declaration that it is so is added by the apostle in the residue of the verse, "And for this cause He is not

ashamed to call us brethren": whereunto is straight added the testimony of Psalm xxii., out of which he proveth it, "I will show forth Thy name unto My brethren: in the midst of the congregation I will praise Thee." Now where it is said here, "He that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of one," we have to consider that even in the manhood of our Saviour Christ is virtue and grace, in which He doth sanctify us. For not only as He is God He sanctifieth us, but also in His human nature He hath this virtue and power to make us holy; not taking His nature such from the Virgin Mary, but making it such by pouring into it the fulness of His Spirit. The holiness which the apostles had in their calling they had it from Jesus Christ, made man, and walking in that vocation before them. Even so it is with us. All that is good in us, and all the righteousness that can be in us, we have it neither out of the east, nor west, but from the body of Jesus Christ, neither is there in the world any other sanctification. Even as our hands and arms and other members are not nourished but only by the meat received of the head, so our spiritual meat of righteousness and life is not given us but from our Head, Jesus Christ. And as the veins are means by which nourishment is conveyed to every part, so faith is the means by which we receive from Christ all that is healthful unto us. And as by joints and sinews our members are really knit and made a body unto the head, so really, by one Spirit we be knit unto Christ as perfectly one with Him as our members are one with our head. And where it is said here, He that doth sanctify, showing the present time and the work still doing, it teacheth us that our sanctification hath a daily increase, and when it is fully accomplished, then God calleth and our days are at an end. And let us note this well, if we be Christians we are still sanctified by the Spirit of Christ, for so it was in Him. He grew still in grace before God and men. If thou be grafted into His body thou hast His Spirit, and it will have His work in thee. Thou shalt not be weary of well-doing, nor cease to rejoice in God thy Saviour, but still increase in spiritual grace till thou come to the age of the fulness of Christ. It followeth, "For this cause He is not ashamed to call us brethren." Upon good cause the apostle saith, "He is not ashamed," for if He humbled not Himself in great love of us, how justly might He account it shame to be as we are? He that made heaven and earth, He that is the immortal and glorious God, one with His Father, before whom all angels do obey and all princes are earth and ashes; ought we not to say, seeing it pleaseth Him to acknowledge us, that are but poor creatures, that He is not ashamed of us? And if His highness abased itself to our low estate, and was not ashamed, let us learn to be wise and know what the Lord requireth of us for all the good which He hath done unto us. He saith in the gospel, "He that is ashamed of Me and My words before men, I will be ashamed of him before My Father which is in heaven. Pride, or flattery, or covetousness, or vanity, or fear, or what you will, may make us now ashamed to confess him, or to dissemble that ever we knew Him; but when all this corruption is taken from us, and the grave and death shall take their own, our former foolishness will make us so afraid that we will pray unto the hills to hide us, but vows and wishes shall be but foolish thoughts. It followeth, "I will declare Thy name unto My brethren." We are called the brethren of Christ, not in society of flesh and blood, for that the wicked have with Him as well as we, who are yet no brethren, but strangers even from the womb. But as they are natural brethren, which are born of the same parents, so we are brethren with Christ, that are born of God, through the same Spirit, by which we cry, "Abba, Father," the fruit whereof is in glorifying His name, even as our Saviour Christ saith, "He that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven, he is My brother" (Matt. xii. 48). And when it is further said, "In the midst of the congregation I will praise Thee." First, here we must needs confess what duty is among men, even that they edify one another; for as many as are of Christ are called in this covenant: "I will declare Thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the congregation I will praise Thee." The graces of God are not such that they can be locked up in our hearts or kept secret, but they will burn within like fire, and make us speak with our tongues, that we may make many brethren partakers of our joy. And tell me, I beseech you, what man excelleth in anything, and hath not a delight to speak of his cunning? Doth not the shipman talk of the winds, the ploughman of his oxen? Will not the soldier be reckoning up his wounds, and the shepherd telling of his sheep? So it is with us if we be the brethren of Christ. The covenant of our kindred is, "I will declare Thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the congregation I will praise Thee." Let them know this, all to whom it is spoken, and let them discern between hypocrites and

true Christians. Some think it a praise to be close men, secret to themselves, that by their words you shall never know them, of what religion they be. Those men, where they think they hide themselves most, there they lay widest open their shame, and while they think to keep it secret of what religion they are, this their dissimulation proclaimeth it louder than the blast of a trumpet that they be of no religion at all; at all, I say, touching any religion of God; for if it were of Him it would show forth His praise, and what their heart believed their mouth would confess it. We are ashamed to exhort men to do well; we are not ashamed to provoke them to sin. We are ashamed to minister talk of faith and religion; we are not ashamed of rotten and unclean works of wantonness. We are ashamed to speak to the praise of God; we are not ashamed to blaspheme His name. We are ashamed of Christ; we are not ashamed of the devil. The prophet David was a good scholar in this doctrine. When he opened his mouth unto God and vowed, "I will speak of Thy name before kings, and will not be ashamed" (Psa. cxlv. 21, cxix. 46). Pray, dearly beloved, that we may be partakers of the same grace. It followeth now in the 13th verse, "And again, I will put my trust in Him." This psalm the prophet made when he was delivered from the layings of wait of Saul and from all his enemies; wherein, as he was a figure of Christ, so it is most properly and truly verified in Christ that he said of himself. Now, because the apostle allegeth this to prove our Saviour Christ to be man like unto us, mark how the argument followeth. Christ saith, "I will put My trust in God"; but it were a very improper speech, and such as the Scripture never useth to say, God will trust in God. Therefore there must be a nature in our Saviour Christ inferior to His Godhead, in which he speaketh thus: "I will trust in Him," and that was His perfect humanity like unto ours, in which we saw Him subject to peril, and how, according to His trust, God His Father delivered Him. And here the apostle allegeth such Scripture for proof of the manhood of Christ, as also proveth that He is our King; for where he saith, "I will trust in Him," it noteth that Christ was not weak in faith, but assuredly trusted in the power of God His Father, that He should overcome the devil. And let us here learn for our instruction when we have had experience of God's benefits, as the prophet had, let us vow as he did—we will put our trust in Him. When David remembered how God had delivered him from a lion and a bear, he was not afraid of the uncircumcised Philistine. When St. Paul had reckoned so many calamities out of which God had delivered him, he boasted of a holy hope, and said he was sure that ever God would deliver him. Another testimony yet followeth to prove the humanity of our Saviour Christ, and it is this: "Behold Me, and the children which Thou hast given Me." This is written in the eighth of Isaiah, in which chapter the prophet foretelleth the captivity of the Israelites by the king of Ashur, how it is determined of God that the people, for all their rebellions, should surely perish; but yet so that God, for His Church's sake, would bridle their rage, and save some who might praise His name. These threatenings and promises both, while the people contemptuously reject, the Lord biddeth the prophet cease, and bind up these promises for another people that should believe; and then the prophet answering again to God, in acknowledging all His truth and goodness, saith thus: "Behold, I and the children that God hath given me." Now, here we must learn as the apostle teacheth. Was the prophet Isaiah a man like unto his children, that is, like unto those which obeyed his word? Then was our Saviour Christ perfect man, like unto us, whom He hath delivered from sin and death. And if He have saved us He hath saved those whom God hath given Him, flesh of His flesh, and bone of His bone; for this is His intercession unto His Father, "Behold Me and My children." One other thing we must learn in this. There was an apostasy of all men, so that they which believed were made as signs and wonders; yet howsoever the world was the prophet saith, "Behold me and my children." Such shall be the days of Christ, many shall fall away, religion and faith shall be persecuted, iniquity shall abound. What, then? Our Saviour Christ saith, "Lo, I and My children." If the whole world fall away, we would not regard their multitude to follow them to do evil, but we would alone stand with the Lord our God. We must further mark in these words that the prophet saith, "Behold the children which Thou hast given me." In that it is said, God hath given us to His Son Christ, it teacheth us to acknowledge His free gift and grace; and let none of us think there was any wisdom in ourselves why we would choose Him, nor any constancy in us, by which we could cleave unto Him; but God in His grace drew us, that we might come unto Him, and with His power He strengthened us, that we should abide with

Him. (*E. Deering, B.D.*) *Unity of Sanctifier and sanctified:*—The assertion that the Sanctifier and the sanctified are all of one may be conceived of as answering two questions naturally arising out of ver. 10, to which it furnishes no explicit answer. First, Christ is called the Captain or Leader of salvation: how does He contribute to salvation? Is He simply the first of a series who pass through suffering to glory? or does He influence all the sons whom God brings to glory so as to contribute very materially to the great end in view, their reaching the promised land? Second, what is the condition of His influence? what is the nexus between Him and them, the Leader and the led, that enables Him to exert over them this power? The answer to the former question is, Christ saves by sanctifying; the answer to the latter, that He and the sanctified are one. The answer in the first case is given indirectly by the substitution of one title for another, the "Leader of salvation" being replaced by the "Sanctifier"; the answer in the second case is given directly, and forms the doctrine of the text: the Sanctifier and the sanctified are all of one. This statement I regard as the enunciation of a principle; by which is meant that the unity asserted is involved in the relation of Sanctifier to sanctified. Whether there be only one or many exemplifications of the relation is immaterial. Though only one Sanctifier were in view or possible, the proposition would still continue to be of the nature of a principle. The point is, that Christ, as Sanctifier, must be one with those whom He sanctifies, could not otherwise perform for them that function. The Sanctifier is holy, the sanctified when He takes them in hand are unholy. That being so, it needs to be said that, notwithstanding the separation between the parties, there is a unity between them surmounting the difference. And that can be said with truth, for otherwise the two parties could not stand in the relation of Sanctifier to sanctified; they could only stand permanently apart as holy and unholy. Unity is involved in the nature of the case. That is precisely what the writer means to say. He states the truth as an axiom, which he expects even his dull-minded readers to accept immediately as true; and he means to use it as a key to the cardinal facts of Christ's human experience. Unity to some extent or in some sense is involved, that is clear. But in what sense, to what extent? This is not plainly indicated. The style at this point becomes noticeably laconic; the sentence lacks a verb, and is worn down to the fewest words possible, after the manner of a proverb, "For the Sanctifier and the sanctified of one all." Does it not look as if his purpose were to lay stress, not on descent from one God, one Divine Father, but rather on the result, the brotherhood or comradeship existing between the two parties? Is not his idea that Sanctifier and sanctified are all "of one piece, one whole," two parties welded into one, having everything in common except character? From whatever point of view, the ritual or the ethical, we regard the Sanctifier's function, this becomes apparent on reflection. Conceive Christ first as Sanctifier in the ethical sense, as Captain or Leader of salvation; it is evident that in that capacity it behoved Him to be in all possible respects one with those He took in hand to sanctify. For in this case the sanctifying power of Jesus lies in His example, His character, His history as a man. He makes men believing in Him holy by reproducing in His own life the lost ideal of human character, and bringing that ideal to bear on their minds; by living a true, godly life amid the same conditions of trial as those by which they are surrounded, and helping them to be faithful by inspiration and sympathy. The more genuinely human He is, and the more closely the conditions of His human life resemble ours, the greater His influence over us. His power to sanctify depends on likeness in nature, position, and experience. Conceive Christ next as Sanctifier in the ritual sense, as a Priest, consecrating us for the service of God by the sacrifice of Himself; and the same need for a pervading, many-sided unity is apparent. The Priest must be one with His clients in God's sight, their accepted representative; so that what He does is done in their name and avails for their benefit. He must be one with them in death, for it is by His death in sacrifice that He makes propitiation for their sins. He must be one with them in the possession of humanity, for unless He become partaker of human nature He cannot die. Finally, He must be one with them in experience of trial and temptation, for thereby is demonstrated the sympathy which wins trust, and unless the Priest be trusted it is in vain that He transacts. (*A. B. Bruce, D.D.*) *All men are brethren in Christ:*—If Christ and we are all of one, much more are we among ourselves. A king and a beggar are of one; a rich man and a poor man are of one; a fair and beautiful man or woman and they that want beauty are of one. We descended all of Adam, and

were taken out of the dust of the ground; therefore let us not insult one over another. The wax that hath the print of the king's seal on it is the same in substance with the wax that hath the print of the seal of a mean man; yet it is honoured in that the king's seal is set on it. So we are all of one weak and waxy nature, save that it pleaseth God to set a more honourable print upon one than on another. Therefore, let us not think highly of ourselves, and condemn our brethren, but submit to them of low degree, using the greatness that God hath given us, to the glory of the Giver. (*W. Jones, D.D.*) *Christ not ashamed to call us brethren*:—1. As Christ is not ashamed to call us brethren, so let us do nothing so near as we can that may shame this our Brother. Is it not a shame that the king's brother should be a common drunkard, whoremaster, or such like? Doth not the king take himself disgraced by it? And shall we that are brethren to the King of kings take such courses as that great ignominy should redound to Christ by it? As He is not ashamed to call us brethren, so let us do nothing that may pull a shame on Him and His gospel. 2. Can a brother that is a wealthy man, of fair revenues, and ample possessions, see any of his brethren go begging? Will he not rather receive him to his own house, and set him at his table? Christ, which is the Lord of heaven and earth, is our brother; therefore let us fear no want, so long as we fear Him. This may be a comfort to us in all our calamities, that Christ and we are brethren. (*Ibid.*) *Christ the Restorer of the Divine ideal of humanity*:—As some noble ruin can be best restored by one who possesses the original model or some other key to the builder's design, so the Saviour's fitness for His office is partly found in the fact that He has in Himself the perfect type of regenerated humanity. The presentation of His life at once shows men what they ought to become, and summons and incites them to its attainment. (*W. Landels, D.D.*) **Not ashamed to call them brethren.**—*Christ not ashamed to call us brethren*:—I. CHRIST OUR BROTHER. "In all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren." Human nature was divided by the ancients into body, soul, and spirit. Take this tripartite nature of man and see how like He is to us in all things. 1. The body. "He was an hungered." All the pains and anguish of intense hunger were felt by Him—Brother then to all the poor and hungry! He thirsted. On the Cross He said, "I thirst"—Brother then to all who in any way thirst! He knew what the pleasures of life were. He was a guest at feasts—Brother then of those who know the dangers of plenty! He was weary. He was asleep in the boat after His long toil. He sat weary with travel and heat by the well—Brother then to all who are weary! He suffered bodily pain—Brother then of every sufferer! He died—Brother then to each of us in that He died! 2. The soul. He was our Brother in experiencing a shrinking from death; in manifesting human benevolence, compassion, and sympathy; in associating with humanity; in displaying love for children; in having private and special friendship for a few; in knowing the anguish of unrequited affection; and in manifesting human self-respect. 3. The spirit. There was that wonderful depression that came upon Him at different times. We have the agony of spirit in Gethsemane and on the Cross. He felt what it is to seem to be forsaken of God and all we can comprehend by being apprehensive of spiritual gloom, and the fear of being deserted by God. Again, He was tempted, and He had all the faculties and capacities to which temptations are applied and adapted. Once more, He "was made perfect through sufferings." "For both He that sanctifieth"—Jesus—"and they who are sanctified"—the followers of Jesus—"are all of one." He was a sharer with us in discipline by the same Father, and in sanctification by the same Spirit, journeying to the same heavenly glory. Thus "in all points He was made like unto His brethren." II. CHRIST IS NOT ASHAMED OF THE RELATIONSHIP.—Two brothers may be born in the same cottage, fed from the same breast and trencher, trained at the same school, and one of them may rise in social position, but with seeming greatness unite real littleness and be ashamed of his brother who continues a humble cottager. Or one may live a life of sensuality and bring disgrace on the family name, and the other be distinguished for virtue and benevolence, and the virtuous man may be ashamed of his brother. Or, one may have shown kindness continually to his brother and the other have repelled it by constant hostility and ingratitude, so that at last the other may be ashamed of him. Judging after the manner of men might not Christ be ashamed of us? But He is not. 1. Because of His mighty disinterested love. He loved us when we were unlovely and had no love to Him. Human love, when deep and true, is never ashamed of the lowliness of its object. A truly noble nature recognises

a friend the more he needs help. 2. Because He knows us thoroughly. Nothing is hidden from Him. He knows all our imperfections, and is not ashamed of us. 3. Because He knows what good is in us, for He put it there. He knows that at the bottom of our hearts, in spite of infirmities and shortcomings, we do love Him. Beneath the faded exterior and withered blossom and leaf He sees the living germ that shall bud and blossom and bear fruit. He sees the first homeward step of the prodigal, the first tear, and hears the first stammering prayer. And is this the Jesus that some of you are rejecting? Is this the Christ that some of you are ashamed to own? Surely you do not know who it is you thus treat with neglect. He is man's best friend, our true Brother. Accept His salvation and rejoice in His love. What an honour it is to have such a Brother! We may be obscure in the world, but we may look up and say, "The King of kings upon the throne of the heavenly Majesty is one who is not ashamed of me; He calls me His brother. How safe we are! What harm can come to us when He who rules the universe is our Brother?" (*Newman Hall, LL.B.*) *Christians joint-heirs with Christ*:—Jesus, the elder Brother, gets nothing apart from those whom He is not ashamed to call His brethren. "The law of primogeniture does not appear in the statute-book of heaven." We, the rightful heirs of wrath, are made heirs in common with Jesus. He will have nothing that He will not share with us. We are even now highly exalted with Him, "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come"; for we are "the Church, which is His body." (*T. W. Medhust.*) *The Brother born for adversity*:—One main work of the gospel is to give men the right to claim the sympathy, the care, and the help of God. A right. God has brought Himself by His own act within the region of rights and obligations. The relation of Creator and creature is superseded; that of Father and child, Saviour and saved, is substituted in its room. And into these relations new obligations enter, based upon purposes, promises, and hopes which God has announced or inspired. It now becomes Him to do that which, under no conception of His rectoral duty as Creator, could be claimed from Him. God has set forth Christ as the Man with whom He treats; the perfect Man, who explains the manward thoughts and hopes of God. It is the Son of His love who is concerned in the fulfilment of our hope. The Son of His love has interests profounder even than our own in our forgiveness, renewal, and growth to perfection. Realising what we are in Christ, we dare to use great boldness of access, we dare to plead rights and claims, which yet are not ours, save through a love which humbles while it exalts us, and chastens while it inspires. I. THE RELATION OF A BROTHER. There is a oneness which precludes the idea of separate interests. II. IT IS PRECISELY THIS RELATIONSHIP WHICH BY HIS INCARNATION AND PASSION THE SAVIOUR CLAIMS. He seeks to give us a relation that we can rest upon; which will draw us by the bands of fraternal sympathy to His strength when we are weak, to His bosom when we are weary and long for rest. III. It is said in a passage of the Book of Proverbs that "A BROTHER IS BORN FOR ADVERSITIES." That He might know our souls in adversities surely, the elder Brother of the great human family was born in the human home, tasted all pure human experiences, and made Himself familiar with all forms of human pain. God is born unto us, a Saviour. We are of His kindred, the brethren of His Christ. It is no pity that moves Him to us; it is pure and perfect love. God is pleading His own cause in pleading against our sins; He is striving against His own enemies in striving against our tempters and lusts. (*J. B. Brown, B.A.*) *Brotherhood with Christ*:—I. There are three particulars which require to be stated; the first of which is, THAT THEY WHO ARE BRETHREN PARTAKE OF ONE NATURE. Thus, then, it is said of Christ. "Forasmuch, then, as the children"—that is, God's children, the family in heaven and earth—"are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death"—or through dying—"He might destroy him that had the power of death," &c. It is also said of Christ, that "He was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross." And further: "What the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh," &c. Thus, then, we have the fact clearly revealed to us, that Christ laid the foundation of brotherhood by actually assuming the nature of those whom He now condescends to call brethren. The next particular to be mentioned is, that they who are brethren are so by natural birth, or they become so by adoption into a family. Now, no sinful descendant of Adam can, by virtue of his birth in the

flesh, become a member of God's family; it is utterly impossible. Nor can he be adopted into God's family unless born again—born of water and of the Spirit. He partakes of the spirituality of Christ, as Christ possesses his human flesh. The next particular is, that between those who are brethren in heart, as well as in fact, there is a family likeness and sympathy. Hence believers are enjoined to "let this mind be in them which was also in Christ Jesus"; and are said also to have put on the "new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him who created him." Thus, also, Christ is revealed to us as One who "can have compassion on us," and as One "touched with the feeling of our infirmities." II. From these three particulars we may infer that Christ, becoming our Brother, by taking on Him our nature, and linking that nature on to His deity, HAD POWER OVER THAT NATURE, first, to redeem, and then, by His Spirit, to infuse life—His own spiritual life—into it. Next, that, as the Elder Brother, He had the disposition, as well as the power, to put aside every obstacle in the way of our full and free adoption into His Father's family; so that, knowing Him as their Brother, they might exercise the spirit of adoption when received, and at once look up and call God Father. And lastly that, as a sympathising Brother, communicating His likeness to all the members of the household of faith, He must be the great object of our faith and the foundation of all our hopes as members of the family of God. Thus, then, is Christ set before us, under this symbol, in that very aspect which is most attractive; but when we see all His offices proceeding out of this central fact of brotherhood—when we spiritually know that the great Prophet of the Church is our Brother, that the great "High Priest of our profession" is our Brother, that the King of an unspeakably glorious kingdom is our Brother—when we are assured that the teaching of the Prophet is the teaching of our Brother, that the sacrifice offered by the Priest was the Brother Himself, that the blood which is shed for us was the blood of our Brother, that the grave wherein death became powerless, and from which emerged life and immortality, was the grave of our Brother; oh! what a ground do we then stand on for the realisation and enjoyment of the blessings of salvation, and for looking forward to the coming of the glorious King, who, with all the tenderness of a brother's faithful love, shall gather together the whole family of heaven in manifested union with Himself. (*G. Fisk, LL.B.*) *Some reasons why the Word became flesh*:—"Ashamed to call them brethren." Why should He be? It is no condescension to acknowledge the fact of brotherhood with humanity, any more than it is humiliation to be born. But there was a Man who emptied and humbled Himself by being "found in fashion as a man," and for whom it was infinite condescension to call us His brethren. We can say of a prince that he is not ashamed to call his subjects friends, and to sit down to eat with them; but it would be absurd to say so of one of the subjects in reference to his fellows. The full, lofty truth of Heb. i. underlies that word "ashamed," which is meaningless unless Jesus was "the effulgence of the Father's glory, and the very image of His substance." The writer quotes three Old Testament passages which he regards as prophetic of our Lord's identifying Himself with humanity. These three cited sayings deal with three different aspects of Christ's manhood and of the purpose of His incarnation; and they unitedly give, if not a complete, yet a comprehensive answer to the question, Why did God become Man? I. JESUS IS MAN, THAT HE MAY DECLARE GOD TO MEN. All other sources of knowledge of God fail in certainty. They yield only assertions which may or may not be true. At the best, we are relegated to peradventures and theories if we turn away from Jesus Christ. Men said that there was land away across the Atlantic for centuries before Columbus went and brought back its products. He discovers who proves. Christ has not merely spoken to us beautiful and sacred things about God, as saint, philosopher, or poet might do, but He has shown us God; and henceforward, to those who receive Him, the Unknown Root of all being is not a hypothesis, a great Perhaps, a dread or a hope, as the case may be, but the most certain of all facts, of whom and of whose love we may be surer than we can be of aught besides but our own being. II. JESUS IS MAN, THAT HE MAY SHOW TO MEN THE LIFE OF DEVOUT TRUST. Perfect manhood is dependent manhood. A reasonable creature who does not live by faith is a monster arrogating the prerogative of God. Christ's perfect manhood did not release Him from, but bound Him to, the exercise of faith. Nor did His true deity make faith impossible to His manhood. Christ's perfect manhood perfected His faith, and in some aspects modified it. His trust had no relation to the consciousness of sin, and no element either of repentance or of longing for pardon. But it had relation to the consciousness of need, and was in Him, as in us, the condition

of continual derivation of life and power from the Father. Christ's perfect faith brought forth perfect fruits in His life, issuing, as it did, in obedience which was perfect in purity of motive, in gladness of submission, and in completeness of the resulting deeds as well as in its continuity through His life. Out of His example we may take both shame and encouragement: shame, when we measure our poor, purblind, feeble, and interrupted faith against His; and encouragement when we raise our hopes to the height of the revelation in it of what ours may become. III. JESUS IS MAN, THAT HE MAY BRING MEN INTO THE FAMILY OF SONS OF GOD. 1. That through Him men may receive a new life which is His own. He can only impart His life on condition of His death. The alabaster box must be broken, though so precious, and though the light of the pure spirit within shone lustrous and softened through it, in order that the house may be filled with the odour of the ointment. 2. That men may, by the communication of His life, become sons of God. They are God's children, being Christ's brethren. They are brought into a new unity, and, being members of one family, are one by a sacreder oneness than the possession of a common humanity. 3. That men may become sharers in His prerogatives and offices. He becomes like us in our lowliness and flesh of sin, that we may become like Him in His glory and perfection. 4. That He may present His family at last to God. If we love and trust Him, He will hold us in His strong and tender grasp, and never part from us till He presents us at last, faultless and joyful, before the presence of His and our Father. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The graciousness of Christ:*—In the verses immediately preceding, the writer had set forth the incarnation, suffering, and death of Christ Jesus, as an indispensable condition of the great work of lifting the race of man into the Divine nature. Then he identifies and unites the two parties. Those for whom Christ suffered, for whom he became perfect through suffering, are lifted into His household, and are become one with Him. This idea runs through the whole New Testament. Men are adopted, we are told. They are of God's household. And that meant more in those days than it now means, by a difference of social arrangements in life. They are sons; they are heirs; they are Christ's brethren; they are united to Him as the branch to the vine. Now, the absolute inferiority of the human soul and mind to the Divine would lead one, in his meditations, to suppose that God could not well other than be ashamed. Adult companionship does not demand equality. It demands, however, some moral proportion. The Divine nature is illustrated here in this—that the feeling of God toward men, in their inferiority, is apparently feeling without regard to the coming character. God sustains toward the whole human race, we may believe, just the feeling which a true parent sustains toward a new-born child, while it is as yet neither good or bad, but is certainly feeble, weak, infinitely out of proportion to the parent. The feeble, the ignorant, the low—God loves them, and has infinite compassion for them, and is not ashamed of them. But quite beyond and different from this, are presumptive reasons why God should be ashamed—namely, in moral delinquency. The child, when it knows it has done unworthily, imputes to the parent a sense of shame in its behalf. And every Christian has times of despondency, not only, but of sober conviction that he has dishonoured himself, and that he has brought scandal upon the name of his Master. And in these hours one goes to Christ with the feeling that He must be ashamed too. We are ashamed to pray, and afraid to commune. And yet it is of just such that Christ says He is not ashamed. He is not ashamed to call them brethren, as we shall see. The shame spoken of is not simply a generous feeling. It is to be interpreted by its relation to the idea of personal communion. Christ is not ashamed to call men even brethren. Conceive of the most advanced and noble Christians that ever have lived in this world—of Martyn and Brainerd, as missionary martyrs; of Fénelon and Pascal, as contemplative Christians—and compare these, not with their own kind, but with the character and condition of the just made perfect. Compare the most peerless saint that walks among men with your ideal of the just and the perfect before God. "Hardly," one would say, "would God be willing to identify Himself with any human being—with even the highest and best." Yet so it is. He is not ashamed to call them brethren. If you consider, now, how far below these ordinary Christians live; how little there is that enters into the Christian experience; how the Divine life is, as it were, but in the germ; if you reflect how far from that ideal which Christ set before us the ordinary, average Christian experience is, men might well express surprise that Christ should be willing to call such Christians brethren. And yet He points to those that stand in the ordinary lot of life, the ordinary Christian experience, and says, "I

am not ashamed to call them brethren." Far below this level there is a throng who can scarcely be thought to have even a beginning; and yet there is a single spark. There are occasional impulses as if their souls would turn toward God. Bold are they for the world, but timid for righteousness, and hardly daring to say to their fellow-men, "I am a Christian." Ah! can it be that Christ is not ashamed to call them brethren? He is not. He has been made in the likeness of men, and has entered into the full temptation of men, that He might know to the uttermost, and to the very bottom, what man suffers. The lowest, poorest, meanest of Christian attainments find in Christ Jesus a spirit that is not ashamed. Banish from your minds an oriental monarchy. Banish the conception of such glory as lies in external appearances and external adjuncts. Consider what it is for God to be glorious. It is the glory of pity unfathomable. He considers glory to lie in long-suffering love. It is because He knows how to work for men that are ungrateful, that His heart swells with consciousness of its power. Look, then, upon the work to be done in this world. We can understand, if we consider it in its entirety, that this world is a school; that it is a healing hospital; that it is a training ground; that the Divine problem is, how to take the germ of life and bring it steadily up through all its transmutations, from age to age, until it becomes Divine; and to do it through suffering, through long-suffering, and through patience; to do it by inspiration; to do it by pain and by joy, by sorrow and by gladness, by all means. So to teach the human soul, and lift upon it the light of Divine glory, that it shall become like God—that is the work to be done in this world. Christ is not ashamed of this work. He is not ashamed of His scholars, neither of those in the lowest, the intermediate, or the highest form. He is not ashamed to call them brethren. Not because there is not much that is repulsive to a pure and high nature; but for His own reasons (Eph. v. 25–27). Without further unfolding this great, this wonderful truth, I ask whether any one need fear to begin a new Christian life with such a Saviour. If, when his prayers go up, they go into the hands of such an One; if all the invitations to a Christian life are those that come from a Brother's lips—from the lips of One who is not ashamed of our poorness, our vileness, our dullness, or our remissness—then any man can be a Christian. Need any one be discouraged who has begun to live a Christian life, because so often he has failed and fallen into backsliding? Is a true pupil discouraged because so many of his lessons are imperfect? There is encouragement, since we have One that is not ashamed of us, in spite of our many defections and inferiorities. Why should we not, therefore, gird up our loins, and take a fresh hold, with new consecration, on the Christian life? Will not every day's experience give reason and argument for gratitude to such a Lord as this? I think I have learned more of the nature of my Master from my bad than from my good. We learn both ways. But it is the sense of God's graciousness that impresses me. (*H. W. Beecher.*) **In the midst of the Church will I sing praise.**—*Christ singing:*—We have the record of Christ's use of some words of this psalm on the Cross; the author of this Epistle affirms that these words were also adopted by the Saviour. They illustrate—I. CHRIST'S ENGAGEMENT IN GOD'S SERVICE. In all ages, Christ is serving God in the midst of the Church, by His precepts, example, spirit. II. CHRIST'S SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT IN GOD'S SERVICE. In fellowship with the whole assembly of the good, whom He is not ashamed to call brethren, Christ serves God. But if their brother, He is their Leader in this praise. III. CHRIST'S VOLUNTARY ENGAGEMENT IN GOD'S SERVICE. Singing is no slavish act; real singing is not even perfunctory; probably, ideal song is spontaneous. Such is Christ's service. IV. CHRIST'S JOYOUS ENGAGEMENT IN GOD'S SERVICE. As soon as ever we can sing of our sadness, even the sadness is sweetened, and song is the very symbol of joy. Lessons: 1. The highest engagement of our life is serving God. 2. The true method of serving God is socially, willingly, joyfully. (*U. R. Thomas.*) **The children which God hath given Me.**—*Children to be brought to heaven:*—There was a mother lay dying some time ago, and she requested her children to be brought to her bedside. The eldest one came in first, and putting her loving hands on his head, she gave him a mother's parting message. Then came another, and then another. To all of them she gave her parting message, until the last—the seventh one, an infant—was brought in. She was so young she could not understand the message of love; so the mother gave it to her husband for her; and then she took the child to her bosom, and kissed it, and caressed it, until her time was almost up. Then, turning to her husband, she said: "I charge you to bring all these children home to heaven with you." (*D. L. Moody.*) *Children a life-work:*—I was in the company of a talented Christian lady, when a friend said to her, "Why have you

never written a book?" "I am writing two," was the quiet reply. "Have been engaged on one for ten years, the other five." "You surprise me," cried the friend; "what profound works they must be!" "It doth not appear yet what we shall be," was her reply; "but when He makes up His jewels, my great ambition is to find them there." "Your children?" I said. "Yes, my two children; they are my life work." (*Christian Age.*)

Ver. 14. **Himself likewise took part of the same.**—*The mystery of godliness:*—Our Saviour's birth in the flesh is an earnest, and, as it were, beginning of our birth in the Spirit. It is a figure, promise, or pledge of our new birth, and it effects what it promises. As He was born, so are we born also; and since He was born, therefore we too are born. As He is the Son of God by nature, so are we sons of God by grace; and it is He who has made us such. 1. This is the wonderful economy of grace, or mystery of godliness, which should be before our minds at all times, but especially at this season, when the Most Holy took upon Him our flesh of "a pure Virgin," "by the operation of the Holy Ghost, without spot of sin, to make us clean from all sin." He it was who created the worlds; He it was who interposed of old time in the affairs of the world, and showed Himself to be a living and observant God, whether men thought of him or not. Yet this great God condescended to come down on earth from His heavenly throne, and to be born into His own world; showing Himself as the Son of God in a new and second sense, in a created nature, as well as in His eternal substance. 2. And next, observe, that since He was the All-holy Son of God, though He condescended to be born into the world, He necessarily came into it in a way suitable to the All-holy, and different from that of other men. He took our nature upon Him, but not our sin; taking our nature in a way above nature. It was ordained, indeed, that the Eternal Word should come into the world by the ministration of a woman; but born in the way of the flesh He could not be. How could He have atoned for our sins, who Himself had guilt? or cleansed our hearts, who was impure Himself? or raised up our heads, who was Himself the son of shame? Priests among men are they who have to offer "first for their own sins, and then for the people's"; but He, coming as the immaculate Lamb of God, and the all-prevailing Priest, could not come in the way which those fond persons anticipated. He came by a new and living way, by which He alone has come, and which alone became Him. Because He was "incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary," therefore He was "Jesus," a "Saviour from sin." Because God the Holy Ghost wrought miraculously, therefore was her Son a "Holy Thing," "the Son of God," and "Jesus," and the heir of an everlasting kingdom. 3. This is the great mystery which we are now celebrating, of which mercy is the beginning, and sanctity the end: according to the Psalm, "Righteousness and peace have kissed each other." He who is all purity came to an impure race to raise them to His purity. He, the brightness of God's glory, came in a body of flesh, which was pure and holy as Himself, "without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but holy and without blemish"; and this He did for our sake, "that we might be partakers of His holiness." He who "hath made of one blood all nations of men," so that in the sin of one all sinned, and in the death of one all died, He came in that very nature of Adam, in order to communicate to us that nature as it is in His person, that "our sinful bodies might be made clean by His body, and our souls washed through His most precious blood"; to make us partakers of the Divine nature; to sow the seed of eternal life in our hearts; and to raise us from "the corruption that is in the world through lust," to that immaculate purity and that fulness of grace which is in Him. 4. And when He came into the world, He was a pattern of sanctity in the circumstances of His life, as well as in His birth. He did not implicate and contaminate Himself with sinners. He came into the world, and He speedily left the world; as if to teach us how little He Himself, how little we His followers, have to do with the world. And while He was here, since He could not acquiesce or pleasure Himself in the earth, so He would none of its vaunted goods. He would not accept lodging or entertainment, acknowledgment, or blandishment, from the kingdom of darkness. He would not be made a king; He would not be called Good Master; He would not accept where He might lay His head. His life lay not in man's breath, or man's smile; it was hid in Him from whom He came and to whom He returned. Now all this is quite independent of the special objects of mercy which brought Him upon earth. Though He had still submitted Himself by an incomprehensible condescension to the death on the Cross at length, yet why did He from the first so spurn this world, when He was not

atoning for its sins? He might at least have had the blessedness of brethren who believed in Him; He might have been happy and revered at home; He might have had the honour in His own country; He might have submitted but at last to what He chose from the first; He might have delayed His voluntary sufferings till that hour when His Father's and His own will made Him the sacrifice for sin. But He did otherwise; and thus He becomes a lesson to us who are His disciples. He, who was so separate from the world, so present with the Father even in the days of His flesh, calls upon us, His brethren, as we are in Him and He in the Father, to show that we really are what we have been made, by renouncing the world while in the world, and living as in the presence of God. (*J. H. Newman, D.D.*) *The moral significance of Christ's humanity*:—I. THE HUMANITY OF CHRIST WAS SELF-ASSUMED. 1. His antecedent existence. 2. His power over existence. 3. His interest in human existence. II. IT WAS SELF-ASSUMED IN ORDER TO DIE. 1. This fact is as wonderful as the former. 2. This fact can only be justified by the former. III. HE DIED IN ORDER TO DESTROY THE TERROR OF DEATH IN HUMANITY. 1. The terror of death is an idea. 2. Christ's death is suited to remove all painful ideas. (1) It shows that death is not the end of existence. (2) It shows that death might become the greatest blessing of existence. (*Homilist.*) *God translated*:—He "took"—he did not inherit, or receive—a body. It is not the language that describes the ordinary birth of a common man. How strange it would sound if we were to speak of our children as if they had a thought or volition respecting their nature, and as if they were pleased to take on them such and such a body, when they were born! It describes voluntary action. It was an act contemplated beforehand. It implies not only pre-existence, but power, dignity, and condescension. But the language clearly indicates a choice of one raised higher than all merely created beings. "He took not on Him the nature of angels, but He took on Him the seed of Abraham." That is, He is more than man. He is more than angel. He refused, when turning in His mind the course He should pursue, to take on Him the nature of angels, but concluded, for a good and sufficient reason, to assume even a lower place, and become a man. Is He less than God, that is more than man and more than angel? Did He create, and does He sustain, the world in which we dwell? The first chapter of John's Gospel unequivocally declares that fact. It is also unequivocally declared in the Hebrews. The practical result, then, of this exposition is this: Christ is presented to us as the comprehensible form of God. He is God translated. They that worship God as a mere spirit worship under the most difficult circumstances in which it is possible for the human mind to worship. It is the Scriptural remedy to worship the Father through Christ. And they that worship Christ as very God are enabled to worship under circumstances which make it very easy. For Christ is God present to us in such a way that our senses, our reason, and our affections, are able to take a personal hold upon Him. It is just the difference between a God afar off and a God near at hand; between a God that the heart can reach, and by its common sympathies understand and interpret, and a God which only the head and imagination can at all reach or descry—and even these only as astronomers' glasses descry nebulous worlds at so vast a distance that the highest powers cannot resolve them, or make them less than mere luminous mist. Why, then, did Christ come into the world, and take the form of man? Because men were His children, because He loved them, and because the way to take hold of them was to bring Himself down into their condition, so that they should be able to see Him and feel Him, and that by the power of sympathy God might have access to every human soul. That is the reason of the incarnation of Christ. He did the same as we do, in faint analogies. A Moravian missionary once went to the West Indies to preach to the slaves. He found it impossible for him to carry out his design so long as he bore to them the relation of a mere missionary. They were driven into the field very early in the morning, and returned late at night, with scarcely strength to roll themselves into their cabins, and in no condition to be profited by instruction. They were savage towards all of the race and rank of their masters. He determined to reach the slaves by becoming himself a slave. He was sold, that he might have the privilege of working by their side, and preaching to them as he worked with them. Do you suppose the master or the pastor could have touched the hearts of those miserable slaves as did that man who placed himself in their condition? This missionary was but following the example of the Lord Jesus Christ, who took on Him the nature of men, and came among them, and lived as they lived, that He might save them from their sins. Do any think that this view of God is degrading? If your God were

Jupiter, it would be; but if He is the Father of the universe, it is ennobling and full of grandeur. The grandest deeds in this world are the loving condescensions of great natures to the help of weak ones. No crown so becomes a king as the service of low and suffering natures by those that are high and happy. 1. In view of this, I remark that, as it is by the personal power of the Lord Jesus Christ, upon the hearts of His children, that He works all goodness in them, so all attempts to live a religious life which leave out this living, personal, present sympathy of the Christ-heart with our human heart, will be relatively imperfect. Men's lives will be imperfect enough, at any rate; but when they neglect this vital inspiration, it seems scarcely possible to live at all with religious comfort. Our religious joy never springs from the conception of what we are, but of what God is. No man's life, attainments, purposes, or virtues can yield him full peace. It is the conviction that we are loved of God, personally by name and nature, with a full Divine insight of our real weakness, wickedness, and inferiority that brings peace. Nor will this become settled and immovable until men know and feel that God loves them from a nature in Himself, from a Divine tendency to love the poor and sinful, that He may rescue and heal them. God is called a sun. His heart, always warm, brings summer to the most barren places. He is inexhaustible in goodness, and His patience beyond all human conception. 2. All those views of God which lead you to go to Him for help and strength are presumptively true views, and all those views of God which tend to repress and drive you away from Him are presumptively false views. Any view which presents God as a being whose justice shall make sinners, who wish to return to Him, unable to do so, is a false view. If we have done wrong, in Him is the remedy. He is the Sun that shows us, when we are in darkness, where to go; He is the bright and morning Star that makes our dawn and twilight come to us; He is our Way; He is our Staff; He is our Shepherd; he is our sceptred King, to defend us, from our adversaries: He is all in all, to all! 3. Those states of mind, then, in us, which bring us nearest to God, and which bring us to Him most confidingly, are such as honour Him most and please Him most. There are a great many who wish they could please God, and would give anything if they could only be prepared to please Him. Most will you please Him when you confide in Him! If earthly parents can lift themselves up into feelings of holy sympathy for a repentant child, what must be the feelings of God when His children come to Him for help to break away from sin, and to lead lives of rectitude? Read the fifteenth chapter of Luke, and find out what God's feelings are; and then say, "I will arise and go to my Father." (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Christ's assumption of human nature*:—I. AN IMPORTANT FACT IN REFERENCE TO THE SAVIOUR. 1. He assumed true human nature. 2. He did this for the welfare of mankind. II. THE GREAT OBJECT AND DESIGN CONNECTED WITH THIS FACT. 1. Death is that to which all mankind are subject. 2. Death is placed in the power of the great adversary of man. 3. The prospect of death exposes men to a fear amounting to mental bondage. 4. Christ delivers mankind from this bondage. Because Christ has made an atonement, Satan has no longer power over men to keep them in bondage. It only remains that we make an application of this atonement by faith, and then over us death has no more power. (*J. Parsons, M.A.*) *The Christian's protector*:—In a sermon from this text the Rev. Evan Harris, of Merthyr, makes the following divisions. 1. "The children." 2. "He also." 3. "The devil." I hear some timid disciple say, "Ah, I see the devil lurks in that text." Yes, he does; but remember that "He also" is there too. Fear not, timid one, for it cannot fare badly with "the children" if "He also" Himself is between them and the devil. The secret of safety is in being near Him. **Destroy him that had the power of death.**—*The devil's possession of the power of death*:—Sundry are the respects wherein the devil may be said to have the power of death. 1. As he is the executioner of God's just judgment. He is in this regard as an hangman, who may be said to have the power of the gallows because he hangeth men thereon. 2. As he is like an hunter, fisher, fowler or falconer. He hunteth, fisheth, and fowleth for the life, not of unreasonable creatures only, but also of reasonable men. 3. As he is a thief and continually layeth wait for blood, and seeks the precious life of man's body and soul. 4. As a continual tempter to allure or drive men into sin, and thereby to death. Herein he spared not Christ Himself (Matt. iv. 1, &c.). 5. As he is an accuser of men and as an adversary to press God's just law against men, and to call for judgment against them. 6. As he is a tormentor: for when he hath drawn men to sin he affrighteth them with the terror of death and damnation. In general nothing is more terrible than death. In this respect

death is called the king of terrors (Job xviii. 14). This kind of power, namely of death, attributed to the devil—(1) Showeth wherein his strength especially lieth: even in doing mischief and bringing men to destruction. His power is to hurt men. In this respect he hath names of destruction given unto him—as in Hebrew Abaddon, and in Greek Apollyon (Rev. ix. 11), and he is styled a murderer (John viii. 44). (2) It manifesteth the vile slavery and woful bondage of the devil's vassals. They serve him who hath the power of death, and doth what he can to bring all to death. What can any expect from him but death? The task that he puts on them is sin: the wages that he gives is death (Rom. vi. 23). (3) It is an incitation unto those to whom this kind of power is made known to be more watchful against Satan, more manful in resisting him, and the better prepared against his assaults. (4) It warneth all of all sorts to renounce the devil and all his works, to come out of his Babel: to come into and abide in the glorious liberty of the sons of God, which Christ has purchased for us: and to renounce Satan's service. As the devil hath the power of death, so Christ hath the power of life (John vi. 39, 40). (5) It amplifieth both the glory and also the benefit of that conquest which Christ hath gotten over him that hath the power of death. The glory of that victory appeareth herein, that he hath overcome so potent an enemy as had the power of death. The benefit thereof herein appears that he hath overcome so malicious and mischievous an enemy as exercised his power by all manner of death. Hence ariseth the ground of this holy insultation, "O death, where is thy sting?" (1 Cor. xv. 55). He who had the power of death, being destroyed, death now can have no more power over them that are redeemed by Christ. (*W. Gouge.*) *The death of death:*—We fear death with a double fear. There is, first, the instinctive fear, shared also by the animal creation, for the very brutes tremble as the moment of death draws near. Surely this fear is not wrong. It is often congenital and involuntary, and afflicts some of God's noblest saints; though doubtless these will some day confess that it was most unwarrantable, and that the moment of dissolution was calm, and sweet, and blessed. The child whose eyes feast upon a glowing vista of flower and fruit, beckoning it through the garden gate, hardly notices the rough woodwork of the gate itself as it bounds through; and probably the soul, becoming aware of the beauty of the King and the glories of its home, is too absorbed to notice the act of death, till it suddenly finds itself free to mount, and soar, and revel in the dawning light. But there is another fear of death, which is spiritual. 1. We dread its mystery. What is it? Whither does it lead? Why does it come just now? What is the nature of the life beyond? 2. We dread its leave-taking. The heathen poet sang sadly of leaving earth, and home, and family. Long habit endears the homeliest lot, and the roughest comrades; how much more the true-hearted and congenial; and it is hard to part from them. 3. Men dread the after-death. "The sting of death is sin." How can mortal man be just with God? How can he escape hell, and find his place amid the happy, festal throngs of the Golden City? All these fears were known to Christ. And He knew that they would be felt by many who were to be closely related to Him as brethren. If, then, He was prompted by ordinary feelings of compassion to the great masses of mankind, He would be especially moved to relieve those with whom He had so close an affinity, as these marvellous verses unfold. But in order to do it, He must die. He could not be the death of death, unless He had personally tasted death. He needed to fulfil the law of death, by dying, before He could abolish death. But He could only have died by becoming man. Perhaps there is no race in the universe that can die but our own. Others die because they are born; Christ was born that He might die. I. By death Christ destroyed the power of death. Scripture has no doubt as to the existence of the devil. And those who know much of their own inner life, and of the sudden assaults of evil to which we are liable, cannot but realise his terrible power. And from this passage we infer that that power was even greater before Jesus died. "He had the power of death." It was a chief weapon in his infernal armoury. The dread of it was so great as to drive men to yield to any demands made by the priests of false religions, with their dark impurities and hideous rites. Thus timid sheep are scared by horrid shouts and blows into the butcher's shambles. But since Jesus died, the devil and his power are destroyed. Destroyed! Certainly. Not in the sense of being extinct. Still he assails the Christian warrior, though armed from head to foot; and goes about seeking whom he may devour, and deceives men to ruin. Yet he is destroyed. Are we not all familiar with objects which are destroyed without being actually ended. Destroyed as objects of dread, though they linger in an attenuated and

impotent existence. Satan exists as a strong man; he is no longer armed, and is the attenuated shadow of his former self. II. BY DEATH CHRIST DELIVERS FROM THE FEAR OF DEATH. A child was in the habit of playing in a large and beautiful garden, with sunny lawns; but there was one part of it, a long and winding path, down which he never ventured; indeed he dreaded to go near it, because some silly nurse had told him that ogres and goblins dwelt within its darksome gloom. At last his eldest brother heard of his fear, and after playing one day with him, went with him to the embowered entrance of the grove, and, leaving him there terror-stricken, went singing through its length, and returned and reasoned with the child, proving his fears were groundless. At last he took the lad's hand, and they went through it together, and from that moment the fear which had haunted the place fled. And the memory of that brother's presence took its place. So has Jesus done for us. (*F. B. Meyer, B.A.*) *The destroyer destroyed*:—In God's original empire everything was happiness, and joy, and peace. If there be any evil, any suffering and pain, that is not God's work. God may permit it, overrule it, and out of it educe much good; but the evil cometh not of God. The devil's reign, on the contrary, containeth nought of good; "the devil sinneth from the beginning," and his dominion has been one uniform course of temptation to evil and infliction of misery. Death is a part of Satan's dominion, he brought sin into the world when he tempted our mother Eve to eat of the forbidden fruit, and with sin he brought also death into the world, with all its train of woes. Since that time Satan hath ever gloated over the death of the human race, and he hath had some cause of glory, for that death has been universal. There is something fearful in death. It is frightful even to him that hath the most of faith. It is only the gildings of death, the afterwards, the heaven, the glory, that maketh death bearable even to the Christian. Death in itself must ever be an unutterably fearful thing to the sons of men. And oh! what ruin doth it work! Now, this is Satan's delight. He conceives death to be his masterpiece, because of its terror, and because of the ruin which it works. The greater the evil, the better doth he delight in it. And death is very lovely to the devil for another reason—not only because it is his chief work on earth, but because it gives him the finest opportunity in the world for the display of his malice and his craft. Usually with many of the saints, if not in the last article of death, yet some little time before it, there is a ferocious onslaught made by the great enemy of souls. And then he loves death, because death weakens the mind. The approach of death destroys some of the mental power, and takes away from us for a season some of those spirits by which we have been cheered in better days. It makes us lie there, languid and faint and weary. "Now is my opportunity," says the evil one; and he steals in upon us. Hence I believe for this reason he is said to have the power of death; for I cannot conceive that the devil hath the power of death in any other sense but this, that it was originated by him, and that he at such time generally displays the most of his malice and of his power. I. BY THE DEATH OF CHRIST THE DEVIL'S POWER OVER DEATH IS TO THE CHRISTIAN UTTERLY DESTROYED. The devil's power over death lies in three places, and we must look at it in three aspects. 1. Sometimes the devil hath power in death over the Christian, by tempting him to doubt his resurrection, and leading him to look into the black future with the dread of annihilation. But by the death of Christ all this is taken away. If I lie a-dying, and Satan comes to me and says, "Thou art to be annihilated, thou art now sinking beneath the waves of time, and thou shalt lie in the caverns of nothingness for ever; thy living spirit is to cease for ever and be not." I reply to him, "No, not so; I have no fear of that; O Satan, thy power to tempt me here faileth utterly and entirely. See there my Saviour! He died, for His heart was pierced; He was buried; but, O devil, He was not annihilated, for He rose again from the tomb. And now, O Satan, I tell thee, thou canst not put an end to my existence, for thou couldst not put an end to the existence of my Lord. But now for a more common temptation—another phase of the devil's power in death. 2. Full often the devil comes to us in our life-time, and he tempts us by telling us that our guilt will certainly prevail against us, that the sins of our youth and our former transgressions are still in our bones, and that when we sleep in the grave our sins shall rise up against us. Thou pretendest that thou art one of the Lord's beloved: now look back upon thy sins: remember on such a day how thy rebellious lusts arose, and thou wast led if not quite to indulge in a transgression, yet to long after it. Recollect how often thou hast provoked Him in the wilderness, how frequently thou hast made His anger wax hot against thee." But now see how

through death Christ has taken away the devil's power. We reply, "In truth, O Satan, thou art right; I have rebelled, I will not belie my conscience and my memory; I own I have transgressed. O Satan, turn to the blackest page of my history, I confess all. But O fiend, let me tell thee my sins were numbered on the scape-goat's head of old. Go thou, O Satan, to Calvary's Cross, and see my Substitute bleeding there. Behold, my sins are not mine; they are laid on His eternal shoulders, and He has cast them from His own shoulders into the depths of the sea." Once more, you may suppose a Christian who has firm confidence in a future state. The evil one has another temptation for him. 3. "It may be very true," saith he, "that you are to live for ever and that your sins have been pardoned; but you have hitherto found it very hard work to persevere, and now you are about to die you will be sure to fail." "O fiend, thou temptest us to think that thou wilt conquer us; remember, Satan, that the strength that has preserved us against thee has not been our own: the arm that has delivered us has not been the arm of flesh and blood, else we had long since been overcome. Look thou there, fiend, at Him that is Omnipotent. His Almightiness is the power that preserves us to the end; and therefore, be we never so weak, when we are weak then we are strong, and in our last hour of peril we shall yet overcome thee." II. But now I want to show you that not only has Christ by His death taken away the devil's power in death, but HE HAS TAKEN AWAY THE DEVIL'S POWER EVERYWHERE ELSE OVER A CHRISTIAN. "He hath destroyed," or overcome, "him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." Death was the devil's chief intrenchment: Christ bearded the lion in his den, and fought him in his own territory; and when He took death from him, and dismantled that once impregnable fortress, He took away from him not only that, but every other advantage that he had over the saint. And now Satan is a conquered foe, not only in the hour of death, but in every other hour and in every other place. He is an enemy, both cruel and mighty; but he is a foe who quakes and quails when a Christian gets into the lists with him; for he knows that though the fight may waver for a little while in the scale, the balance of victory must fall on the side of the saint, because Christ by His death destroyed the devil's power. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Christ, the destroyer of the devil:—We take as the works of the devil those which this malignant spirit hath performed in order to the overthrow of the holiness and the happiness of mankind; and we must endeavour to consider or to ascertain how the effects of the atonement so counterbalanced the effects of the apostacy, that our Redeemer, in dying, may actually be said to have "destroyed the devil and his works." Now, the effects of the apostacy may justly be considered under two divisions; physical and moral effects: those whose subject is matter, and those whose subject is spirit; and if the Son of God destroyed the works of the devil, He must, in some way or other, have nullified both these effects, so that, physically and morally, He provided a full remedy for a disorganised creation. I. LOOK FIRST AT THE PHYSICAL EFFECTS OF ADAM'S SIN. Every pain to which flesh is heir, every sickness—the decay, and the dissolution of the body, are to be referred to sin as their first origin; and the temptation to sin having been of Satan, they are to be classed among the works of the devil. And above these consequences existing in ourselves, there are others to be observed in creation around us, whether inanimate or animate. We admit that death is not yet destroyed in the sense of having ceased to possess power; but death no longer reigns by right; it reigns only by sufferance. It is allowed to remain as an instrument for the advancement of certain purposes of the Almighty; but not as a tyrant in whom is vested an undisputed authority. Nay, death succeeded by a resurrection, is not in truth to be designated death. We can gaze on that spectacle of the grave—not the proprietor, not the consumer, not the destroyer, but just simply the guardian of the dust, of human kind, and confess that the resurrection will give overwhelming attestation to the annihilation of death. And if this resurrection is referred to the energies of the atonement it will demonstrate to the conviction of all orders of being that the Son of God effected in dying what the text announces as the great end proposed—"that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." We go on to observe, that similar statements may be applied to all those other effects which we designate the physical effects of rebellion. It is quite true that pain and sorrow are allowed to continue. But it is true that evil is at length to be wholly extirpated from the earth; and that not in consequence of any fresh interposition of God, or any new mediation of Christ, but simply through the effects of that expiatory sacrifice which was offered ages back upon Calvary. Then, when righteousness shall clothe every province of the globe, and happiness, the purest and most

elevated, shall circulate through the hearts and homes of all the world's families, and the lustre of an untarnished loveliness shall gild the face of every landscape, then shall our text be accomplished; then shall it be put beyond doubt that there was a virtue in the atonement to counteract all the physical effects of apostacy. II. We have now to consider what we term THE MORAL CONSEQUENCES OF APOSTACY, and we own it more difficult to prove their destruction than that of the physical. We shall fasten at once on the hard point of the question. Beyond all doubt the grand work of the devil is the everlasting destruction of the human soul. If it were the work of the devil to bring mankind to share his own heritage of woe; and if, in spite of the interposition of Christ, a vast multitude of our race shall be actually his companions in anguish, can it fairly be contended that there has been any direct counteraction of the works of the devil, or that the effects of redemption are at all commensurate with the effects of apostacy? May we not exclaim in the language of the prophet—"Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there? Why, then, is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?" We desire to meet this question fairly. We observe, then, that it is quite possible to charge too much on the devil, and to make excuses for men by throwing blame on the tempter. You say, if a man perish, his perdition is the work of the devil; but we are at issue with you here. The man is a redeemed man, and can be destroyed only through destroying himself. The devil does not destroy him. The devil, indeed, may put engines of destruction in his way; it is the man himself who makes use of those engines, and when he dies it is by suicide, and not by the blow of another. After all, it was not the devil that destroyed Adam. The devil tempted him; he could do nothing more. He did as much to Christ; and the destruction lay not in the being tempted, but in the yielding to temptation. And though Satan tempts, it is man who yields. Unless men perish through their own act, they are punished for what was unavoidable, and then their punishment is unjust. We contend, therefore, that it is far from essential to the complete destruction of the devil and all his works that all men should be saved. We will take this case first. We will call a fallen man Satan's work, and we think to show you, by a few brief remarks, that this work is far more than destroyed by the redemption, without the salvation of all. Satan's work is twofold—he has fastened on me death for original sin, and corrupt propensities which are sure to issue in actual sin. Hence, the devil's work is destroyed, if arrangements have been made by which I may escape the death, and resist the propensities. But as interested in the obedience and sacrifice of Christ—"The Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world"—life, eternal life, is within my reach; and this destroys the first part of the work. The Holy Spirit is given me for overcoming evil, and this destroys the second part of the work. Satan's work made death inevitable, and rendered me at one and the same time certain to sin and hopeless of pardon. Christ's work, on the contrary, made death avoidable, and rendered me, though not proof against sin, yet sure through repentance and faith of forgiveness. Does not then the one work actually destroy the other? What has Satan done in procuring my fall which has not been balanced by what Christ did in effecting my redemption? (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *Christ overcoming the devil by death*:—This God ordered—1. To accomplish that ancient promise to the seed of the woman, which was Christ; and threatening against the serpent, which was the devil (Gen. iii. 15). "It shall bruise thy head." that is, Christ should utterly vanquish the devil. 2. To deliver man by satisfying justice. Had the devil been by an almighty power vanquished, justice had not thereby been satisfied. 3. To magnify the power of the conquest the more; for Divine power is made perfect in weakness (1 Cor. xii. 9). 4. To bring the greater shame upon the devil; for what greater ignominy than for an enemy to be vanquished in his own kingdom, and that with his own weapon. The strongest and sharpest weapon that Satan had was death, and by it he did most hurt. Christ dealt in this case as Benaiah did with an Egyptian; he plucked the spear out of his hand, and slew him with his own spear (2 Sam. xxiii. 21). 5. To take away the ignominy of the Cross of Christ, Jews, Pagans, and all infidels scoff at our crucified God, but this glorious victory which Christ by His death obtained, showeth that it is a matter of much glory and much rejoicing. The apostle apprehended so much hereof, as comparatively he would glory in nothing saving the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ (Gal. vi. 14). 6. To put a difference betwixt Christ's death and the death of all others, even of the best of men. The death of others is only a freedom from troubles of soul and body, and an attaining unto rest and glory, which is by virtue of Christ's death. Christ's death is a conquering death, a death that tends to the advantage of all that believe

in Christ. 7. To take the old wily serpent in his own craft, Satan laboured at nothing more than to bring Christ to death: he used Scribes, Pharisees, priests, rulers, and people of the Jews, yea, Judas, Pilate and his soldiers, as his instruments herein. They thought all sure if Christ might be put to death; but Christ's death proved Satan's destruction. (*W. Gouge.*) *Power of death—not of life:*—When Cœcilia was brought before the judge Almachius, he said, "Knowest thou not that I have power of life and death?" "Not of life," she said, "but thou canst indeed be a minister of death." *The power of death destroyed:*—Archbishop Laud on the scaffold thus addressed his Saviour: "Lord, I am coming as fast as I can. I know I must pass through the shadow of death before I can see Thee. But it is but *umbra mortis*, a shadow of death, a little darkness upon nature; but Thou, Lord, by Thy goodness, hast broken the jaws and the power of death." As Dr. Neale remarks on this, "Yes, our Lord passed through the valley of death; we through the valley of the shadow of death. He tasted of death that we might never taste it; He died that we might fall asleep." **Through fear of death . . . subject to bondage.**—*The only effectual antidote to the dread of dissolution:*—Of all the passions that have place in the human mind, there is not one that takes a stronger hold of it than fear; and of all the objects that operate on that passion, there is not one that does so more strikingly and more impressively than death. Nor is this to be wondered at. For what is death? That from which there is no escape. That which not unfrequently comes when least expected. That which terminates every earthly relationship, acquisition, anticipation, enjoyment. Not only does it do what it does with all the eagerness of willinghood, but also with all the callousness of insensibility. Dwellings it disinhabits, families it scatters, and ties the most endearing it dissolves, without any compunction or regret. But much though death be the object of natural fear, the fear of it is in no slight measure increased when that which is natural has superadded to it that which is slavish. For though, like others, sinners fear death on account of what death is in itself, yet their fear of death, arising as it does from a consciousness of ill-desert, is rendered trebly fearful by the inward bitings of remorse, and by a sense of merited wrath. Is there no remedy for their dismay? The text answers the question. It were a mistake to infer that the power of the devil in reference to death is absolute. Such power, whether in reference to death or in reference to anything else, is not possessed by any finite being. It is the exclusive, the incommunicable prerogative—of Him, and of Him alone, who is infinite; of Him who, as occupying in His own right the throne of the universe, has the "keys of death." The power of the devil in reference to death is simply permitted power. But though the power of the devil in reference to death be simply permitted power, it is not limited to temporal death. It extends to, and, as here spoken of by the apostle, embraces more particularly, eternal death; in other words, the state of misery to which the term is applicable in its most aggravated signification. It is awful to think that there is in the universe a being possessed of such power as "the power of death"; of power not only to tempt to sin, "the wages of which is death," but to render the sinner the instrument of his own exposure to misery through all everlasting! It would be still more awful were that being invincible, indestructible. And how by His death has Jesus done this, in order that His death might be an antidote to the fear of death? I. BECAUSE BY HIS DEATH HE TRIUMPHED OVER HIM WHO HAD THE POWER OF DEATH. For this He became incarnate; for had He not become incarnate, He could not have been the surety of the guilty, nor as their surety could He have died. By it the violated law was magnified and made honourable; for the obedience of which it was the consequence was the obedience not only of a Divine Person, but of a Person absolutely faultless. Such was the result of the death of Jesus, because by His death sin was substitutionally expiated, by the expiation of which the devil lost his power of death, the loss of which was his own destruction. What a triumph! Never was triumph like it; for though He who conquered fell, by His fall He conquered. What, then, have they to fear from death who trust in Jesus, the destroyer by death of the destroyer? II. BECAUSE BY HIS DEATH HE DIVESTED DEATH ITSELF OF ITS STING. Death has been represented as coming in the order of nature; and hence it has been called the debt of nature, as if our original destiny could not have been carried into effect without its payment. For what is the fact, and therefore the teaching on this subject, that is credible? Is it that death is the work of nature? On the contrary, is it not that death is not the work of nature, but the work of sin? While he was sinless, was not man deathless? And is sin merely the procuring cause of death—that to which death owes its

existence and prevalence? Were this all, it would be evidential in no slight degree of the deadly tendency of sin. But this is not all. Not only in having originated it does sin lead to death as its moral consequence; but it is that from which death derives all its painfulness, all its hatefulness. Well, then, may sin be denominated not only the cause, but the sting of death. If this, then, be what sin really is; if it be that which renders death indescribably deadly, can language too strong be employed to express our sense of obligation to Him who died for sin? His death being sacrificial and propitiatory, by the stroke which slew Him, death lost its sting. The last arrow in the quiver of death was spent. The very dregs of the cup of trembling were wrung out. The malignant fury of the curse of the broken law was exhausted. So that now death may be a blessing, but can never be a curse, to those who trust in Him who died for sin. What, then, have they to fear from death? "The waters of Jordan" have applied to them a misnomer when they are called by the name Marah, for the bitterness of the curse is removed. There is "no lion" in the dark valley, neither does "any ravenous beast" walk therein. The "dart" of death is pointless, its wound must be harmless. III. BECAUSE BY HIS DEATH HE PURCHASED THE RIGHT TO REDEEM FROM DEATH THOSE TO WHOM DEATH WOULD OTHERWISE HAVE BEEN THE PATHWAY TO ETERNAL MISERY. It is much that Jesus should have stooped to combat with him who had the power of death, it is still more that He should have submitted to the endurance of the sting of death itself; but His experience of the one, and His triumphing over the other, would have failed to accomplish the object He had in view, were the bestowment of the good problematical or uncertain, which He thus sought and gained for those whom He represented. Their enjoyment, however, of that good depends not on a peradventure; their being put into possession of it is exposed to no jeopardy, and can be hindered by no casualty. As indicative of the high authority with which as their successful surety He is invested, He says, "I will redeem them from death." Having been the originator of the life that has been taken away, is there anything incredible in His being its restorer? If not, then, instead of having uncertainty attached to it, the future resurrection of the body is considered aright, when it is considered not as questionable, but as positively certain. What, then, have they to fear from death who trust in Jesus? To them, death is not to be the entire extinction of their corporeal, any more than it is to be a cessation of their spiritual being. What, then, have they to fear from death? Trusting in Jesus, they trust in Him who is the resurrection and the life. In short, trusting in Jesus, they trust in Him who died that they might live, and who lives that they may never die, but live. Where? Where there shall be "no death," where the darkness of the tomb shall be for ever excluded by the light of life, where the night of the grave shall be for ever lost in the day of immortality. (*Alex. Jack, D.D.*) *The fear of death*:—Of a sentiment so powerful and so general, it is natural to inquire the use and object. Of a terror so painful it is desirable to know the origin and the remedy. I. One beneficial effect, which the fear of death extensively produces, IS INDUSTRY IN OUR RESPECTIVE OCCUPATIONS. II. Another beneficial effect of the fear of death is TEMPERANCE. III. Another beneficial effect of the fear of death is THE PREVENTION OF MURDER. IV. If the love of life restrain us from doing violence to others, it must restrain us still more forcibly FROM DOING VIOLENCE TO OURSELVES; and the prevention of self-murder will be another beneficial effect of the fear of death. V. The fear of death produces its beneficial effects still more extensively, AS IT RESTRAINS THE VICIOUS PROPENSITIES OF THE HEART IN GENERAL, AND PROMOTES THE SENTIMENTS AND THE INFLUENCE OF RELIGION. VI. The fear of death, however, produces the most important of its beneficial effects, and indeed, lays the foundation of all the rest, BY SUGGESTING ON VARIOUS OCCASIONS THE MOST INTERESTING AND USEFUL REFLECTIONS TO THE MIND. (*W. Sparrow, LL.D.*) *Why men fear death*:—I. It is one reason why we are so much afraid of death, that WE EXPECT IT WILL BE PAINFUL. We see the dissolution of our fellow-creatures attended with paroxysms of pain. But these torments it is, in a great measure, in our own power to prevent. The common parent of disease is intemperance. II. Death, again, is rendered awful BY THE GLOOMY CEREMONIES THAT ATTEND IT. Take away the pomp of death, and you take away half its terrors. III. Death might be considered AS THE MEANS OF GRATIFYING THAT INCESSANT DESIRE OF NEW INFORMATION, which nature implanted in the human mind; which is always innocent and laudable, while directed by prudence and moderation; and which, in the present instance, ought to be united with humility and reverence, in proportion to the solemnity of the subject. IV. It is another obvious reason why we are so much affected by the scenes of death, THAT

WE DO NOT FREQUENTLY BEHOLD THEM. Were we daily to witness the dissolution of a neighbour, we should soon lose those powerful emotions of fear. V. Upon the same principle we may be assured that DEATH WOULD LOSE A LARGE PROPORTION OF ITS TERRORS, DID WE MAKE IT, AS WE OUGHT, THE FREQUENT SUBJECT OF OUR MEDITATIONS. Not only every instance of mortality, but every appearance of nature, might suggest the subject to our thoughts. Scarcely a day passes over us, but an animal or a vegetable perishes before our eyes. VI. Lastly, and above all, DEATH WOULD BE NO LONGER FEARED, WERE IT CONSIDERED ONLY AS THE END OF OUR LABOURS. The grave would appear no longer gloomy, could we but look upon it as our passage to eternal glory. Jesus Christ is the basis on which we must build our virtues and our courage. The shield that must defend us against all the terrors that death can assume. (*Ibid.*) *How Christ takes away fear of death*:—I. CHRIST TEACHES US THAT DEATH IS NOT THE END OF OUR BEING. II. CHRIST TEACHES US THAT THE SOUL DOES NOT WAIT IN THE GRAVE FOR THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY. III. CHRIST TAKES AWAY OUR FEAR OF DEATH, BY TEACHING US, IF WE ARE WILLING TO BE TAUGHT OF HIM, HOW WE MAY MEET OUR MAKER WITHOUT FEAR, IN THE GREAT DAY WHEN HE WILL JUDGE THE WORLD. IV. CHRIST REVEALS TO THOSE WHO ARE WILLING TO BE TAUGHT OF HIM, THE REST AND THE BLESSEDNESS OF HEAVEN, AND GIVES TO EACH SOUL AN INWARD ASSURANCE THAT IT SHALL ETERNALLY SHARE IN THEM. (*R. S. S. Dickinson*). *Deliverance by Christ from the fear of death*:—I. WHAT OF DEATH IT IS, BY WHICH THE PERSONS SPOKEN OF IN THE TEXT ARE KEPT IN FEAR AND BONDAGE. 1. Sin, the cause of death, operates in producing this effect. 2. The law which threatens death. 3. Afflictions, the harbingers of death. 4. Satan, who had the power of death. 5. Death itself. He knows not how rudely the last enemy may handle him, when he arrives. He is well aware that he is a merciless tyrant, that he knows not how to show pity. II. HOW DOES CHRIST DELIVER THEM FROM THIS FEAR AND BONDAGE? 1. By assuring them that He has made satisfaction for their sin, and will preserve them from its guilt and power. 2. By making known to them their deliverance from the law as a covenant. 3. By giving them to understand that their afflictions are all, to their souls, blessings in disguise. 4. By reminding them of the glorious victories which He hath obtained over Satan, their great enemy. 5. By promising them His presence at the hour of death. III. A FEW THOUGHTS CALCULATED TO GUIDE AND ENCOURAGE BELIEVERS WHEN SUFFERING AND DYING. 1. Keep a steady eye on the rod with which God corrects you, and you will see that He never gives it wholly out of His own hand. 2. Rest assured that all the afflictions measured out to you are the fruits of your heavenly Father's love. 3. Remember, that in being visited with affliction you are not singular. This is the discipline of your heavenly Father's house. 4. Live under the firm persuasion that your trials shall all issue well. They may, indeed, be numerous and horrific; but so soon as they cease to be necessary, they shall cease to be administered. 5. Submit to the will of God in all things. Sharp may be the stroke of His hand, but the way of duty is plain and obvious. Endeavour, in His strength, and spirit, and grace, to exercise patient resignation, and quiet submission. (*John Jardine.*) *Deliverance from the fear of death*:—I. CONSIDER THE FEAR OF DEATH, which is mentioned as one great evil from which we are delivered by Christ. 1. What is that fear of death from which Christ delivers? Fear in the general is a flight from evil, or the aversion of the mind from what we apprehend hurtful. The fear of death may be distinguished into two sorts—(1) There is a natural fear of death. Death is an enemy to nature, a rending asunder the two parts of our constitution, so closely united and long continued together. This is not a sinful fear and is useful. It is planted in our nature by the God of nature, and is the necessary consequence of self-love, and self-preservation. It is the rising of nature against its mortal enemy; the reluctance of sense against what would hurt and destroy it, without any reasoning or consideration about it. It is universal, and common to all men: it is fixed in human nature. From this fear Christ does not deliver us; for that would be to divest us of our sensible nature, and love of ourselves; though there is a great difference of degrees in different persons very much according to their natural temper, as some have greater natural courage, and others are more tender and easily impressed. Or according to their more eminent attainments in the Divine life, or more lively exercise of their faith, which very much weakens their natural fear, and sometimes carries them much above it. (2) There is a moral, or rational fear of death. Death, in the moral consideration of it, is a change of our state, a passage out of one world into another. It is a final determination of our main state, and a decisive turn for eternity. In this consideration of it, death appears more terrible, and is

apt to raise a greater fear. Wherever there is a just apprehension of the evil of sin, and of the Divine displeasure upon the account of it, it cannot but make the thoughts of death more terrible, and add weight to the natural fear of it. Besides, there is the love of this world. And wherever the love of the world prevails above the love of the Father; wherever there is an inordinate desire of life, and a carnal frame of mind; there the thoughts of death will be most uneasy. Besides, there are the certain consequences of dying. Death transmits them to the other world, and consigns them over to judgment. Add to this the uncertainty of their minds about their future state. 2. What is that bondage to which the fear of death does subject? It is a servile spirit, under the constant awes of displeasure and dread of punishment; when the natural fear prevails, and the rational fear is heightened, and both concur in all their circumstances to give a dread to the mind, and fix it in a state of slavish bondage. Now here it will be proper to consider the evil of this temper of mind, which the apostle represents by bondage, to be the more sensible of our deliverance from it by Christ. (1) It is a disparagement to the gospel-state, and unsuitable to the genius and design of it. The gospel is a state of liberty and freedom, in distinction from that of the law. (2) It is highly injurious and hurtful to ourselves. For example, it destroys the peace and comfort of our minds. It gives a sting to all the miseries of life, and renders them doubly grievous. The sickness and disorders of nature are more burdensome; it gives an accent to every groan, and quickens the sense of the sharpest pain. It makes the heart sick, under all the sickness of the body. It abates the relish of the best enjoyments, and damps the joy of the most prosperous state. The fear of death disturbs the mind in the performance of holy duties, and affects every service of life, as well as every enjoyment of it. It is an enemy to gladness of heart, and flatly inconsistent with the noble exercises of love, and joy and praise. Besides, it brings us into slavery to the devil, and is a powerful snare of sin. It gives the devil a great advantage over us. It is certain no man will be a martyr for Christ, or love Him more than his own life, which yet the gospel requires of every disciple of Christ, who is under the servitude of the fear of death. To conclude with one instance more, it sometimes leads to despair. A strange contrast this, that though they are afraid to die, their fear makes them unwilling to live, and the torment of fear makes them unable to bear the burden of life. II. CONSIDER OUR DELIVERANCE BY CHRIST FROM THE FEAR OF DEATH. How far, and by what means, we are delivered from it. There is a fundamental deliverance, when the foundation of it is laid, and the just ground of our fear is removed, so that if we are not actually delivered, yet there is a sufficient foundation laid for it in due time, and in a proper way. And our actual deliverance is begun in this world, and commences with our faith, or hearty subjection to the gospel of Christ. The dominion of fear is broken at the same time with the dominion of sin, and it is no longer a governing principle or prevailing temper. 1. He lays the foundation of our deliverance in His own person, and by what He has done Himself for us. (1) By His death. This is directly referred to in the context. The influence of the death of Christ to this purpose is variously represented in the Scripture. For example, by His death He made atonement for sin, and procured the forgiveness of it (Isa. liii. 10, 11; 1 John ii. 2; Heb. ii. 17). Besides, by His death He destroyed the devil, who had the power of death. When God the supreme judge is satisfied and reconciled, the devil loses his power to hurt them. Again, He has conquered death itself, and destroyed the power of it. It is no longer to be considered as a victorious conqueror, which lays waste all about it, and defies all control; it is a conquered enemy, though it is an enemy still. So the apostle says, "He has abolished death." When He rose from the dead, He visibly triumphed over all the power of death, and gave a sensible evidence of the acceptance of His performance and His complete victory over all His enemies. And as He conquered it in His own person, so He will utterly destroy it at last, for the "last enemy which shall be destroyed is death." The whole empire of death will cease, and there will be "no more any death." Add to all this, that He has changed the nature of it, and make it quite another thing. It was the execution of the Divine vengeance upon guilty rebels, but it is now a messenger of peace, and forerunner of the greatest good. It was a gloomy vale, which led down to the blackness of darkness; but it is now a passage to glory. (2) He lays the foundation of our deliverance by the gospel revelation, which was confirmed by His death. This is one of the peculiar glories of the gospel doctrine. It reveals the glorious resurrection of the body at last. It reveals the immortal life of the other world. 2. He actually delivers from the fear of death by the influence of His grace, or the assis-

tance and reliefs of the gospel dispensation. When we are sanctified by His spirit, we are justified by His blood, and there is "no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus." If we are reconciled to God, and in a state of favour, we are delivered from the curse of the law, and have nothing to fear from the power of death. Besides, it is by subduing the inordinate love of life, and of all present and sensible good. So we are "crucified to the world by the Cross of Christ," and "the world is crucified unto us." It loses the charms and influence it had before; and no more affects us than two dead bodies lying together affect one another. Further, it is by working suitable dispositions of mind to the heavenly state; or making us spiritually and heavenly minded. A prevailing love to God and heaven will expel the torment of fear; for "perfect love casteth out fear," and so in a proportionable degree to the measure of our love. The love of Christ will make us willing to die that we may be with Him, and inspire a noble confidence of mind under the greatest dangers and terrors of death. To conclude this matter, it is by clearer prospects, and present foretastes of the future blessedness. Lessons: 1. How unreasonable are the fears of good men. Art thou afraid of the dissolution of nature? It argues great weakness of mind, and involves great absurdity to fear that which we know beforehand cannot be avoided, which is the condition of our nature, and settled by a Divine decree. Or art thou afraid of changing worlds? But why, if it be to a better world, and to a state of blessedness, should we fear a change to so great advantage? or leaving a state of guilt and imperfection. 2. How great are our obligations to Christ! How admirable was the love of our Redeemer to "partake of our flesh and blood," and submit to die for us, that He might deliver us from the fear of death! How should this endear Him to us, and recommend the gospel to our value and esteem? (*W. Harris, D.D.*) *Deliverance from the fear of death:*—I. FROM WHAT FEAR OF DEATH ARE THE CHILDREN OF GOD DELIVERED BY JESUS CHRIST. 1. Not from the natural fear of death, which in itself is a sinless infirmity, like sickness or weariness. Our Lord Himself sometimes expressed an aversion to death (John xii. 27; Matt. xiv. 35). 2. From a slavish fear of death, which "hath torment" in it (1 John iv. 18), and unfits them for the duties of their particular callings, and disables them from prosecuting the things that belong to their peace and welfare. II. BY WHAT MEANS AND METHODS ARE THE CHILDREN OF GOD DELIVERED BY CHRIST FROM THE FEAR OF DEATH? 1. I shall show you what Christ hath already done to deliver or free the children of God from the fear of death. The death of Christ hath made death to look with another face than formerly it had. The death of Christ must needs sweeten the forethoughts of death to the chosen of God, because that He died in their stead: He did not only die in their nature, but in their room; not only for their good, but also in their stead. (1) Christ by His death hath taken away the true reason of the fear of death; that is, the curse and condemnation of the law of God (1 Cor. xv. 56). (2) Christ by His death hath deprived the devil of the power of death; and by this means also He hath delivered the children from a servile fear of death. 2. Let me proceed to show you what He continues still to do, in order to the freeing and delivering the children of God from the fear of death, and the bondage that ensues thereon. (1) He worketh and increaseth those graces of His Spirit in them which are destructive hereof, and opposite hereunto. (2) He delivers them from it by convincing and persuading them that they shall not be losers, but gainers, yea, great gainers, thereby. (*a*) It consists in a freedom from all evil. Which is subdivided into the evil of sorrow, and the evil of sin. (*b*) It consists in the fruition of all good. Believers, when they die, they enjoy God Himself, who is the chiefest good. (3) Christ delivers believers from the slavish fear of death, by giving them some real foretastes of heaven and of eternal life. Application: I would exhort you to prize and improve this great privilege. 1. You must be earnest with God, that He would apply to you this benefit of His Son's death by His blessed Spirit. 2. You must give all diligence to the attaining of a greater measure of faith, love, and hope. 3. You must "resist the devil," and withstand His temptations, not only to other sins, but to the sin of despondency in particular. (*R. Mayo, M.A.*) *Deliverance from the fear of death:*—I. THOSE WHOM CHRIST CAME TO DELIVER ARE REPRESENTED IN THE TEXT AS PARTAKERS OF FLESH AND BLOOD, AS OBNOXIOUS TO DEATH AND IN BONDAGE THROUGH FEAR OF IT ALL THEIR LIVES. Let us contemplate the feelings of a man approaching death with no well grounded hope of salvation through Christ. 1. In the first place, he experiences great losses, and finds no alleviations under them. Death comes to him in the character of an unmixed evil; to take from him all his earthly enjoyments, and to send him destitute into the invisible world. 2. This

man approaching death with no hope in Christ is surrounded with fearful darkness, and sees no light before him. The ocean spreads before him vast and dark, but he knows not to what shore it is bearing him. 3. The man approaching death with no hope in Christ anticipates terrible evils, and sees no way of escape. II. THE DELIVERANCE WROUGHT OUT BY CHRIST FOR THOSE WHO ARE HELD IN THIS FEARFUL BONDAGE. This is of a nature exactly adapted to the condition of those whom Christ came to deliver, and is comprised in three particulars. 1. Christ the Redeemer, mighty to save, furnishes for the children of His grace the most abundant alleviations under the losses of death. The Saviour is with them, their light and their salvation. 2. Christ having Himself risen from the dead, has poured the light of immortality over the darkness of the grave, and given assurance—that all who die in Him shall also rise to eternal life and blessedness. 3. Christ delivers His people from all the anticipated evils of death in the future world. III. THE MEANS BY WHICH THIS DELIVERANCE IS EFFECTED. The text declares that it is by death. In conclusion, I am led to remark—1. That infidelity is not more to be rejected on account of its falseness, than abhorred on account of its hostility to the dearest hopes of man. What does it do for its disciples in that hour when the soul most needs support? 2. Believers in Christ ought to enter more experimentally and practically into the design of His mediation and death. 3. In view of this subject let all be persuaded to take refuge in Him who alone can deliver them from the fear of death and the bondage of condemnation. (*J. Hawes, D.D.*) *Deliverance from the slavish fear of death*:—I. WHAT THERE IS IN DEATH TO EXCITE SUCH FEAR AS MAY JUSTLY BE TERMED A BONDAGE. 1. Death is an object of fear, from the bodily pains with which it is preceded and attended. 2. Death is an object of fear, because of the consequences which it visibly produces. 3. Death is an object of fear, because it is an event, the precise nature of which is unknown to us. 4. Death is a change which we undergo alone; that is, without the company of earthly friends. 5. Death is an object of fear, inasmuch as it separates the worldly man from all the present sources of his happiness. 6. Death is an object of fear, chiefly because we are sinners, and because by it we are introduced into the more immediate presence of the God whom we have offended. II. THE DELIVERANCE WHICH CHRIST HAS ACCOMPLISHED FOR HIS PEOPLE. (*Jas. Clason.*) *The fear of death removed*:—This text represents unto us two things:—I. THE SAD CONDITION OF SUCH AS ARE UNDER THE POWER OF SATAN. The sad condition is an estate of perpetual slavery and fear of death. 1. And this is a grievous slavery and bondage, not only because it is perpetual, but because of the great danger. For by fear of death may, by a metonymy, be meant the danger of death. For the proper cause of fear is danger once apprehended; for it is true that man may be in danger, and yet without fear, because the danger is not seen. 2. Aud the bondage of perpetual fear is woful, if not intolerable. II. Though this be a sad condition, YET THERE IS DELIVERANCE FROM THIS CONTINUAL DANGER, THIS PERPETUAL FEAR WHICH IS THE GREATEST SLAVERY OF ALL OTHER. 1. The beginning of comfort is to know that there is a possibility of freedom, and that the danger is avoidable or removable. The first degree of this deliverance is in Christ's death, whereby Divine justice was satisfied and freedom merited. 2. That the power of the devil was destroyed; for whilst it continued, the fear could not be removed. 3. This freedom and liberty is more complete, when upon faith in Christ's death sin is pardoned, and the cause of this fear is taken away. Then this slavery is changed into a blessed liberty, fear into hope, and the sorrow of death into the joy of life. (*G. Lawson.*) *Bondage through fear of death*:—It is not meant by the inspired writer, that when men are not thinking of death, they are still pressed down by its yoke. Death as yet is only in the future, and to oppress and harass it must of course occupy the thoughts. Those are no exception to the remark who fear not death because they do not allow themselves to dwell upon it: such persons it does not contemplate. And yet after all, perhaps, on closer examination the persons thus denied to be exceptions to the sentiment of the text may be fairly considered not exceptions to it, but examples of it. How comes it, it is reasonable to ask, that these men do not think of death? Are there not mementoes enough all around them? With these aids to reflection, if they still think little about the subject, is it not natural to infer that the subject has been so long avoided that the habit is complete, and the mind turns from it with an acquired as well as natural instinct? But supposing this the case, how forcibly does it prove the doctrine of the text? Does the mind fear death so much, that it dare not look it in the face, and hold free communion with it? Beyond all doubt, that mind is in bondage. Without running

into the extravagances of Stoicism, others have made representations of death, which might lead us to suppose that they did not regard it as an evil. With a kind of poetical philosophy, they would represent it as the glorious sunset of life, as needed repose after sublunary toils, as the retiring of the satisfied guest from the banquet! Now in answer to this it is freely admitted that all the circumstances of our dissolution are not unfavourable. Death does not wear, always or even generally, the most fearful aspect that it might put on. Nature in many respects makes a way for us, and smooths our passage to the other world. But after all allowances, the truth returns again with a force which nothing can resist, that death is the greatest of all evils. Instinct, reason, observation, all tell us this; and we are aware also that it is the Scripture representation. In Scripture it is called "the wages of sin," the "curse," "the king of terrors"; and because it is the most dread calamity which man here witnesses, it is put by a common figure of speech for all the misery which he inherits, or bring upon himself in this world or the next. To this decisive authority may be added, if not for confirmation, yet for the impression which it is calculated to make, the acknowledgment of Rochefoucault. This man, who might not unaptly be called the priest of godlessness, freely admits that "death and the sun are not to be looked at steadily." "The glory of dying resolutely," he remarks, "the hopes of being regretted, the desire of leaving a fair reputation, the assurance of being delivered from present miseries and freed from the caprice of fortune, are alleviating reflections, but by no means infallible. All," adds he, "which reason can do for us is to teach us to avert our eyes and fix them on some other object." But let us come home to our own selves. On what principle can we justify attention to any thing, if not to this? Of all the interests of man the highest are involved in death, and the most reasonable self-love requires us to weigh it well. The question therefore recurs again, why is it that we think of it so seldom and so slightly? I know of no satisfactory answer, but that furnished by the text. It is the fear of death which banishes it from our thoughts. The subject is obvious, meeting us at every turn. It is important, for eternity hangs upon it. It is personal, for it is appointed unto all men once to die. It is interesting—full of thrilling interest, of tragic interest, in its circumstances, nature and consequences. Now, whether this is a correct representation we all can determine for ourselves. If I mistake not we shall find on examination, that our minds recoil from death because it is a subject associated with no good to us, on the contrary connected with much evil. But it is vain, as already intimated, merely to avert the eyes. The wise man will seek relief some other way. Do we desire peace at the last? Would we count it a privilege to be able to take a near view of death, looking fully at all its horrors without dismay? Do we covet the feelings of St. Paul, when, after a survey of death, he cried out, "Oh, grave, where is thy victory?" There is no way of reaching them, but by the faith of the Son of God. Present thoughtlessness and folly will not do it: they will only aggravate the evil when at last it comes. And, as to philosophy, alas! it may answer some of the lighter purposes of life but can never pillow the soul in death. Most truly has it been said, that "the necessity of dying constitutes the whole of philosophic fortitude." It is a sullen, dogged silence, which utters no sorrow but feels much. It knows nothing of cheerful resignation, of lively hope. Oh, how far beyond its reach the spirit of the apostle on the eve of martyrdom: "I am now ready to be offered." This is exclusively Christian privilege. None can bestow it but He who gives the Christian his name, his character, his all. (*W. Sparrow, LL.D.*) *Fear of death*:—That king of terrors, as Job calls death; that terrible of all terribles, as Aristotle. Nature will have a bout with the best when they come to die. But I wonder (says a grave divine) how the souls of wicked men go not out of their bodies, as the devils did out of the demoniacs, rending, raging, tearing, foaming. I wonder how any can die in their wits, that die not in the faith of Jesus Christ. Appius Claudius loved not the Greek *Zeta*, because when pronounced, it represents the gnashing teeth of a dying man. Sigismund, the emperor, being ready to die, commanded his servants not to name death in his hearing. (*John Trapp.*) *Death near*:—Let us not stand in an immoderate fear of death. Death is a serpent without a sting. Though he grip us, yet he cannot hurt us. Damocles the Parasite extolled the magnificence of Dionysius, affirming that there was not an happier man in the world than he; wilt thou have a taste of my happiness? He caused him to be set in a chair of state, the table furnished with all delicacies, singing-men and women making melody with voices and instruments, noble attendants to wait on him; but therewithal he commanded a sharp

naked sword to be hung over his head by a slender horse-hair; the which he espying, took no pleasure in that paradise, but besought him earnestly to take him out of his happiness again. So though we have the world at will, though we be gentlemen, &c., yet the sword of death hanging over our heads continually must needs quail the courage of the greatest gallant. (*W. Jones, D.D.*) *How did Christ through death free from the fear of death?*—We, steeped in theology, would naturally reply, By offering Himself an atoning sacrifice for sin. But that is certainly not the writer's thought here. He reserves the great thought of Christ's priestly self-sacrifice for a more advanced stage in the development of his doctrine. What then is his thought? Simply this. Christ delivers from the fear of death by dying as a sinless one. Death and sin are connected very intimately in our minds, hence fear. But lo, here is one who knows no sin dying. The bare fact breaks the association between sin and death. But more than that: He who dies is our brother, has entered into our mortal state in a fraternal spirit for the very purpose of lending us a helping hand. We may not fully know how His death avails to help us. But we know that the Sanctifier in a spirit of brotherhood became one with us, even in death; and the knowledge enables us to realise our unity with Him in death, and so emancipates us from fear. "Sinners may die, for the Sinless has died." The benefit thus derived from the death of the sinless One is but the other side of the great principle, Sanctifier and sanctified all one. For it has two sides, it applies both ways. The Sanctifier becomes one with the sanctified in brotherly love; the sanctified become one with the Sanctifier in privilege. They are mutually one in both directions in God's sight; they are mutually one in both directions for the spiritual instincts of the believer, even before he knows what the twofold validity for God means. In proportion as we realise the one aspect of the principle, the Sanctifier one with us, we are enabled to realise and get benefit from the other. While the Holy One stands apart from us in the isolation of His sinlessness, we, sinners, fear to die; when we see Him by our side, even in death, which we have been accustomed to regard as the penalty of sin, death ceases to appear as penalty, and becomes the gate of heaven. (*A. B. Bruce, D.D.*) *Delivered from the fear of death*:—The following testimony was delivered by the Rev. Edward Deering, B.D. (author of some excellent lectures on this Epistle), shortly before his death in 1576. "There is but one sun that giveth light to the world; there is but one righteousness; there is but one communion of saints. If I were the most excellent creature in the world; if I were as righteous as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (for they were excellent men in the world), yet we must all confess that we are great sinners, and that there is no salvation but in the righteousness of Jesus Christ. And we have all need of the grace of God. And for my part, as concerning death, I feel such joy of spirit, that if I should have the sentence of life on the one side, and the sentence of death on the other side, I had rather choose a thousand times (seeing God hath appointed the separation) the sentence of death than the sentence of life." *The joy of death to the Christian*:—Concerning death, to them that be God's dear children, what other thing is it than the despatcher of all displeasure, the end of all travail, the door of desires, the gate of gladness, the port of paradise, the haven of heaven, the rail of rest and quietness, the entrance to felicity, the beginning of all blissfulness? It is the very bed of down (and, therefore, well compared to a sleep) for the doleful bodies of God's people to rest in, out of the which they shall rise and awake, most fresh and lusty, to life everlasting. It is a passage to the Father, a chariot to heaven, the Lord's messenger, a leader unto Christ, a going to our home, a deliverance from bondage and prison, a dismission from war, a security from all sorrows, and a manumission from all misery. So that the very heathen did in some places cause the day of their death to be celebrated with mirth, melody, and minstrelsy. And should we be dismayed at it, should we be afraid of it, should we tremble to hear of it? Should such a friend as it is be unwelcomed? Should the foulness of his face scare us from his good conditions? Should the hardness of his husk hinder us from his sweet kernel? Should the roughness of the tide tie us to the bank and shore, there to be drowned, rather than the desire of our home drive us to go aboard? Should the hardness of the saddle set us on our feet to perish by the way, rather than to leap up and endure the same a little, and so to be where we would be? (*John Bradford.*) *Fear of death prophetic*:—Do not the wicked themselves prophesy by their fear of death a worse condition of some dreadful judgment after this life, prepared for sinners, when none but they stand in such fear of death? Why doth one wish for it, and another tremble to hear of it? If it were but a sleep, no man would fear it at all; for who feareth to take his rest when the night

approacheth? If it did take away sense and feeling, and make men trees or stones, no man would fear it at all; for who would fear strokes, if he could feel no more than a stone? Or who would care for anything, if he had not sense of anything? Therefore this fear of death which you see in all but the faithful, doth presage some strange torment to those men which they begin to taste already before they die; like the spirit which persecuted Saul before his end. They desire not to be dissolved, but they fear to be dissolved; they go not to Christ, but their departure is an everlasting departure from Christ, to the devils, to hell, without either end or ease, or any patience to endure it. (*Henry Smith.*) *Jesus the conqueror of Death*:—He did not vanquish Death from afar, like some god of the ancient Olympus; He did not strike down the foe by arrows shot from heights of the empyrean. No; He Himself came down, Himself wrestled with Death; for a moment its cold hand was laid upon His heart, and then He arose, felled it to the ground by His glance; and walked our earth, as He had done before. (*Madame de Gasparin.*) *Christ's victory*:—I have often asked myself what was the effect in hell when Christ gained the victory over sin and death. There is a striking picture in the "Apocryphal Gospels" of what it might have been. At the moment Christ died the tidings reached Beelzebub, "Jesus hath died, and hath overthrown thy kingdom on earth." Then David with his harp of gold, and Isaiah, the prophet, are heard singing and shouting with joy, "Lift up your heads, oh ye gates, and be ye lift up ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in" (Psa. xxiv.). Beelzebub replies with the haughty question, "Who is this King of Glory?" And the answer comes: "The Lord strong and mighty: the Lord mighty in battle." Again in trembling tones Beelzebub asks: "Who is the King of Glory?" And again rings out the pæan of triumph, "The Lord of Hosts, He is the King of Glory." Then just as the Philistines fled before David, so all the devils flee when they hear what Christ has done. That is figure, but this is fact, that through death Christ overcame him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. (*H. W. Webb-Peploe, M.A.*) "*He also Himself*":—"Have you ever noticed," wrote a beloved friend who was near death, "the glorious redundancy of the apostle's words, 'He also—Himself—likewise took part of the same?'" This friend had death before him for many months, and he found in these words the richest Divine comforts. We want a Christ that can live like us, and when we come to die we shall want a Christ that could die like us. (*C. Clemance, D.D.*) *Jewish conception of death*:—How strongly this argument would appeal to the Hebrew readers of the Epistle is clear from the Rabbinical theology, which often speaks of the fear of death and the accuser as a constant companion of man's life. In every dangerous crisis of life, on a lonely journey, or on the high seas, the Jew seemed to see the accuser pleading for his death. "In this life," says the "Madrash Punchuma," "death never suffers man to be glad." (*W. Robertson Smith, M.A.*) *Fear of death*:—Mr. B—— mentioning to Dr. Johnson that he had seen the execution of several convicts at Tyburn, two days before, and that none of them seemed to be under any concern, "Most of them, sir," said Johnson, "have never thought at all." "But is not the fear of death natural to man?" said B——. "So much so, sir," said Johnson, "that the whole of life is but keeping away the thoughts of it." (*Baxendale's Anecdotes.*) *Fear of death the means of conversion*:—The fear of death seldom leads to conversion, but it did in the case of Henry Townley, afterwards minister of Union Chapel, Calcutta. As a young man he was threatened with pulmonary consumption, and thought not to have long to live. Dissatisfaction with his own life and opinions led him to a thorough investigation of the evidences of Christianity, and then came not only intellectual belief, but the consecration of his entire nature to God. His distress of mind was great, and he had not in the circle of his acquaintance a single religious person to assist him towards right. After much mental conflict it came thus. He was looking on Blackfriars Bridge at the setting sun, on a bright, calm evening, and prayed that the Sun of Righteousness might shine on his dark, perplexed state, and immediately the answer came in the melting of his soul towards God and the possession of unspeakable peace. (*Ibid.*) *Deliverance from the fear of death*:—As far as my experience has gone, I have found that young Christians and timorous Christians really die more triumphantly. There are exceptions, however. I will tell you how this is. It is the Lord's kindness. He does not let the devil have a shot at them at the last, because they could not bear it. Do you remember how John Bunyan describes this? He says that when Mr. Fearing went to cross the river of death, "the water was lower than ever it was known." So it is with those who are like Mr. Fearing; but when you see that

there is a fight when old people come to die, you may conclude that they are getting their last victory. They are getting the serpent's head under their heel; and they will take their last leap from the serpent's head to the throne. (*S. Coley.*) *Death like going into another room:*—In the quiet watches of the night Dr. Bushnell's wife asked him how death looked to him. "Very much like going into another room," was the answer. (*Dr. Bushnell's Life.*) *Why fear death:*—When Sir Henry Vane was condemned and awaiting execution, a friend spoke of prayer that for the present the cup of death might be averted. "Why should we fear death?" answered Vane. "I find it rather shrinks from me than I from it." (*Little's Historical Lights.*) *Fear of death:*—There are some that are like what is fabled of the swan. The ancients said the swan never sang in his lifetime, but always sang just when he died. Now, there are many of God's desponding children, who seem to go all their life under a cloud; but they get a swan's song before they die. The river of their life comes running down, perhaps black and miry with troubles; and, when it begins to touch the white foam of the sea, there comes a little glistening in its waters. So, though we may have been very much dispirited by reason of the burden of the way, when we get to the end, we shall have sweet songs. Are you afraid of dying? Oh! never be afraid of that: be afraid of living. Living is the only thing which can do any mischief; dying can never hurt a Christian. Afraid of the grave? It is like the bath of Esther, in which she lay for a time to purify herself with spices, that she might be fit for her lord. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *No fear in death:*—Among the few remains of Sir John Franklin that were found far up in the Polar regions there was a leaf of the "Student's Manual," by Dr. John Todd—the only relic of a book. From the way in which the leaf was turned down, the following portion of a dialogue was prominent:—"Are you not afraid to die?" "No." "No! Why does the uncertainty of another state give you no concern?" "Because God has said to me, 'Fear not. When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee.'" This leaf is preserved in the Museum of Greenwich Hospital, among the relics of Sir John Franklin. (*Baxendale's Anecdotes.*) *Death of a believer:*—Old Mr. Lyford being desired, a little before his death, to let his friends know in what condition his soul was, and what his thoughts were about that eternity to which he seemed very near, he answered with a cheerfulness suitable to a believer and a minister, "I will let you know how it is with me"; and then, stretching out a hand that was withered and consumed with age and sickness—"Here is," said he, "the grave, the wrath of God, and devouring flames, the just punishment of sin, on the one side; and here am I, a poor sinful soul, on the other side; but this is my comfort, the covenant of grace which is established on so many sure promises, has saved me from all. There is an act of oblivion passed in heaven. I will forgive their iniquities, and their sins will I remember no more. This is the blessed privilege of all within the covenant, among whom I am one." (*T. Rogers.*) *Peace in death:*—The late Mr. Young, of Jedburgh, was once visiting the death-bed of an aged member of his congregation, who was hourly looking for his last change. "Well, my friend," said the minister, "how do you feel yourself to-day?" "Very weel, sir," was the calm and solemn answer, "very weel, but just a wee confused wi' the flittin." (*Children's Missionary Record.*) *No death for the Christian:*—Shall we ever quite fully realise the mighty and joyful truth that there is no death for the Christian? In his beautiful tribute to the quaint old town of Nuremburg, Mr. Longfellow makes this mention of its peerless artist:

> "*Emigravit* is the inscription on the tombstone where he lies:
> Dead he is not, but departed—for the artist never dies."

But how much grander the thought that "*Emigravit*" may most fittingly be the inscription on every Christian's tombstone!—not dead, but only gone before to that blessed land of peerless beauty, where blossom unfading flowers, and everlasting fountains flow. Why should we not give up the use of the word death as applied to the Christian?—for death is the alienation of the soul from God, not the quitting of earth for heaven. *No danger in death for the good:*—"I want to talk to you about heaven," said a dying parent to a member of his family; "we may not be spared to each other long; may we meet around the throne of glory, one family in heaven!" Overpowered at the thought, his beloved daughter exclaimed, "Surely you do not think there is any danger?" Calmly and beautifully he replied, "Danger! my darling. Oh! do not use that word. There can be no danger to the

Christian, whatever may happen. All is right. All is well. God is love. All is well—everlastingly well—everlastingly well." (*J. Stevenson.*) *Which death:*—"Are you afraid of death?" said a friend to a German pastor. "Which death do you mean?" replied the dying man. "Jesus my Saviour saith, 'He that believeth in Me hath eternal life. He that believeth in Me shall not see death.' Why should I be afraid of what I shall not even see? The real death is past. Outward death, separation of body and soul, we have to endure, and God gives us grace and strength in this last trial; but the sting of death has been taken away." (*A. Saphir.*) *A death scene:*—The late Rev. Mr. Innes, of Gifford, after a life prolonged beyond the days of most men, literally fell asleep; through life a truly peaceful man, his latter end was peculiarly so; without the suffering of disease or any acute pain, the pins of his tabernacle seem to have been gently loosed. Some days before, one of his parishioners, a farmer, called, and seeing him cheerful, said he was glad to see him so well, and that, as mild weather was at hand, he would soon get better, and be visiting them again. He replied, "No; I wish no such flattery. You see here a poor old man on his death-bed, but without alarm: I tell you that. Hear, and tell all your neighbours, my parishioners, that my comfort now, and hope for eternity, is just the gospel of Christ I have preached to them sixty years, and there is no other." He was wonderfully composed at all times. But a week before his death one called, and, seeing a book of small type before him, asked him if he saw to read without his glasses. He said, "Oh, no; I cannot read even my Bible without glasses: but," strengthening his voice, "I am thankful that I have a Bible that I have read; and I can mind some texts that I can see and feel now as I never did before. Oh, it is a precious book!"

Ver. 16. **The nature of angels.**—*Angels:*—It must be a spiritual one,—for "He maketh His angels spirits." It must be very pure,—for they are "the holy ones." Very lofty,—for they "stand before the throne, and always behold God's face." Very powerful, too, they must be,—for "they excel in strength." And very busy they must be, and very humble,—for "each has six wings, and with twain he covers his face, with twain he covers his feet, and with twain he does fly." And very accurate they must be,—for they bear their messages so faithfully. And very unselfish,—for they always give all the glory to God alone. They are not entirely spotless,—for "He chargeth His angels with folly"; and some did once fall. And they never seem to originate anything—they go where they are sent, they say what they are instructed, they do whatever they are told. Neither does their love appear to be so much their own love, as a love with which they are commissioned. And their office is not, for the most part, so much with the souls of men, to convert, or to influence, or to comfort them, as with the outer circumstances of men—to minister to them in their dangers, in their wants, in their difficulties. And how does "the nature of angels" stand related to our own? Is it higher or lower? Originally, in Eden, I do not know; but I should say the angelic nature was then the lower, because that is said of man which is never said of angels, that he was "made in the likeness of God," and because to man was given what was never given to angels—supremacy and sovereignty over all the works of God. The fallen nature of man is, on the whole, lower. But only a little—"a little lower than the angels." But how is it with man's redeemed and renewed nature? Beyond a doubt, it is above angels; for such as Christ's present glorified nature is, such is that. The angels never sing our song—theirs is jubilant, but ours is triumphant, their theme is creation, ours is grace; they praise God in His works, we adore and love Him in His Son. And do not you know that we shall "judge angels," and that we shall reign with Christ for ever and ever. We bless God for His holy angels! We bless Him that there is anything so pure and beautiful in His creation for us to think of and to love. We bless Him that we have such presences, so stilling, so assuring, so restful. We bless Him for that incentive to all propriety in our solitary hours—an angel's ear, and an angel's eye. We bless Him for the debts we owe to those ethereal beings, of which we are yet but dimly conscious. We bless Him that they take charge of our daily walk, and our midnight slumbers. We bless Him that He commits it to creatures so lovely to exercise His merciful providences. We bless Him that they ministered so tenderly to their and our dear Lord in the days of His sojourn here, and that now they do all they do for us for that Jesus's sake. We bless Him that they take such pious interest in our spiritual welfare, and rejoice in the tears of which they know that the sadness is joy. We bless Him that those who look on us so kindly do also behold His face. We bless

Him that when we come to die, it is they, those heavenly watchers, who shall waft our spirits on their wings to heaven. We bless Him that we with them, and they with us, we shall mingle our songs and our services, and encircle the throne together with our common praise. We bless Him that when Christ, and we with Christ, shall come back again to this earth, we shall be attended by the glory of the holy angels. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) **He took on Him the seed of Abraham.**—*Christian sympathy*:—We are all of one nature, because we are sons of Adam; we are all of one nature, because we are brethren of Christ. All those common feelings, which we have by birth, are far more intimately common to us, now that we have obtained the second birth. Our hopes and fears, likes and dislikes, pleasures and pains, have been moulded upon one model, have been wrought into one image, blended and combined unto "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Yes, and one thing needful; one narrow way; one business on earth; one and the same enemy; the same dangers; the same temptations; the same afflictions; the same course of life; the same death; the same resurrection; the same judgment. All these things being the same, and the new nature being the same, and from the same, no wonder that Christians can sympathise with each other, even as by the power of Christ's sympathising in and with each of them. Nay, and further, they sympathise together in those respects too, in which Christ has not, could not have, gone before them; I mean in their common sins. This is the difference between Christ's temptation and ours: His temptations were without sin, but ours with sin. Temptation with us almost certainly involves sin. We have still earthly principles in our souls, though we have heavenly ones, and these so sympathise with temptation, that, as a mirror reflects promptly and of necessity what is presented to it, so the body of death which infects us, when the temptations of this world assail it—when honour, pomp, glory, the world's praise, power, ease, indulgence, sensual pleasure, revenge are offered to it—involuntarily responds to them, and sins—sins because it is sin; sins before the better mind can control it, because it exists, because its life is sin; sins till it is utterly subdued and expelled from the soul by the gradual growth of holiness and the power of the Spirit. Of all this, Christ had nothing. He was "born of a pure Virgin," the immaculate Lamb of God; and though He was tempted, yet it was by what was good in the world's offers, though unseasonable and unsuitable, and not by what was evil in them. He overcame what it had been unbecoming to yield to, while He felt the temptation. He overcame also what was sinful, but He felt no temptation to it. And yet it stands to reason, that though His temptations differed from ours in this main respect, yet His presence in us makes us sympathise one with another, even in our sins and faults, in a way which is impossible without it; because, whereas the grace in us is common to us all, the sins against that grace are common to us all also. We have the same gifts to sin against, and therefore the same powers, the same responsibilities, the same fears, the same struggles, the same guilt, the same repentance, and such as none can have but we. I do not of course mean to say that we are one and all at the same point in our Christian course, or have one and all had the same religious history in times past; but that, even taking a man who has never fallen from grace, and one who has fallen most grievously and repented, even they will be found to be very much like each other in their view of themselves, in their temptations, and feelings upon those temptations, than they might fancy beforehand. This we see most strikingly instanced when holy men set about to describe their real state. Even bad men at once cry out, "This is just our case," and argue from it that there is no difference between bad and good. They impute all their own sins to the holiest of men, as making their own lives a sort of comment upon the text which his words furnish, and appealing to the appositeness of their own interpretation in proof of its correctness. And I suppose it cannot be denied, concerning all of us, that we are generally surprised to hear the strong language which good men use of themselves, as if such confessions showed them to be more like ourselves, and much less holy than we had fancied them to be. And on the other hand, I suppose, any man of tolerably correct life, whatever his positive advancement in grace, will seldom read accounts of notoriously bad men, in which their ways and feelings are described, without being shocked to find that these more or less cast a meaning upon his own heart, and bring out into light and colour lines and shapes of thought within him, which, till then, were almost invisible. Now this does not show that bad and good men are on a level, but it shows this, that they are of the same nature. They have common ground; and as they have one faith and hope, and one Spirit, so also they have one and the

same circle of temptations, and one and the same confession. (*J. H. Newman, D.D.*) *On the Incarnation of Christ*:—I. WHAT IS NATURALLY INFERRED from Christ's "taking on Him the seed of Abraham." 1. The Divine nature of Christ. 2. The reality of Christ's human nature. 3. The truth of His office, and the divinity of His mission. 4. His voluntary choice and design, to assume a condition here upon earth low and contemptible. II. WHY CHRIST TOOK UPON HIM THE NATURE OF MAN, AND NOT OF ANGELS. 1. The transcendent greatness and malignity of the sin of the angels above that of men. (1) As being committed against a much greater light, which is to be the proper guide and ruler of the will in all its choices. (2) The sin of the angels commenced upon a greater liberty of will and freedom of choice. There was no devil to tempt them to become devils; no seducer of a stronger reason to impose upon theirs; they moved entirely upon the motives of an intrinsic malice. 2. The next, and perhaps the grand cause, that induced Christ to take upon Him the nature and mediation of men, and not of angels, might be this; that without such a Redeemer, the whole race and species of mankind had perished, as being all involved in the sin of their representative; whereas, though many of the angels sinned, yet as many, if not more, persisted in their innocence; so that the whole kind was not cashiered by a universal ruin, nor made unserviceable to their Creator, in the nobler instances of active obedience. (*R. South, D.D.*) *The Incarnation*:—I. The general scope of this passage you will all apprehend to be this, that the children of Adam, being now all children of wrath, ALL NEEDED A SAVIOUR; and the Saviour they needed must not be in the form of God, or of an angel; He must be in the likeness of sinful flesh; whatever else He is, HE MUST BE MAN. Accordingly, Jesus Christ, the Mediator, who was God from eternity, became man, in the fulness of time. Concerning God, even the Father, we know something from other sources than Revelation. Nature and Providence declare His eternal power and Godhead; whereas our acquaintance with the Son of God is derived from Revelation alone. But the Bible assures us that Jesus Christ is God—and it assures us also that He is man; and the assertion of His Godhead is equally positive as that of His manhood. As we are told, the Word was made flesh—that the Divine, and not any angelic nature, was incarnate; so, we may confidently infer, that the assumption of manhood by any inferior, or created spirit, would not have answered the mighty purposes of God's mercy in our redemption. For the Divine wisdom will never employ a mightier agency than the occasion demands. Having thus stated the necessity, as this is evidently asserted in the Word of God, that our Saviour should unite in His person the nature of God and the nature of man, I would proceed—II. To inquire, WHEREIN THAT NECESSITY CONSISTED? 1. I do not propose to inquire into the propriety of this dispensation, as it regards the Divine nature or the Divine government. We are, indeed, assured of the fact, that the incarnation of the divinity, and the atonement made by the God-man, were requisite, in order that the expression of mercy to sinners might not be inconsistent with the glorious character, which unites perfect holiness and rectitude with boundless love and compassion. God reveals these things to us only as far as our present necessities require; and further, with certainty of truth, we cannot go. 2. But, as regards ourselves, and their bearing on our interests, our Father in heaven is as liberal in His communications, as He is reserved in the other case. And I propose to suggest a few of the reasons which make it apparent, that, in order to perform the part of a Saviour to us, it behoved Christ, the Son of God, to take on Him the nature of man. What are our wants, our miseries, as sinners? We have broken the Divine law; and of course we are condemned. We need, therefore, pardon or justification. This can be obtained only by a sacrifice. Therefore, we need a priest who may offer the sacrifice and reconcile us. Then, we are very weak; we need support. We are very stubborn; and therefore we need to have our hard hearts broken. We cannot regulate our actions; therefore, we need a law and a lawgiver: and we are exposed to powerful enemies, from whom, unless protected, we perish; and for all these reasons, it is manifest we need One who has the authority and power of a King. And yet further, we are most ignorant of that which we are infinitely concerned to know, which we are most unwilling to learn, and most ready to forget; which needs to be demonstrated to us, and impressed upon us with the most striking evidence; and so Christ is our Prophet. What is necessary to be shown is, that our Redeemer must be both Divine and human, otherwise He could not discharge any one of these three offices. (1) It was needful that, in order to be a Priest, our Redeemer should be both God and man. If the Word had not become man, He could not have died

—He could not have offered up a sacrifice, nor made expiation. A priest implies a sacrifice, as a father implies a child, a master a servant, a governor subjects. Wherefore He took human nature, and made it part of Himself, that He might have something to offer up to God. We need to advert here to two distinct and important considerations: the essence of a sacrifice, a real sacrifice, is obedience, contrary to the natural inclination or will of that which is sacrificed. The Divine nature of the Son could not be a sacrifice to God, having the very will of God itself. But every man has that distinct will which is of the essence of freedom and responsibility. The man Jesus had that will. It is impossible those sufferings He needed to endure that He might make His soul an offering for sin, should have been inflicted on our Priest, had He appeared to the world in the form of God. But that He might suffer from man whatever was necessary for man's redemption, He hid Himself under their own form, so that nothing of God might be visible but His moral glory, His holiness, His power, His rectitude, His unspeakable love, His unfathomable mercy: and men dared to inflict upon the Son of God so disguised, whatever the Divine government and their eternal salvation required. Our Priest, then, must be man. That He must be God, is too plain to need proof. A Divine sufferer alone could be a worthy sacrifice for the sins of the world. And now, oh, sinners, this wonderful Person is your Priest. The God-man made atonement, the God-man maketh intercession for you. Cling to His sacrifice; accept His mediation; plead His obedience with the Father. 2. But, secondly, because we are weak and wayward, and exposed to many foes, and powerful, therefore, we need a King. And none can be such a King as we need, but One who is both God and man. Almighty is His power, infinite His knowledge and wisdom, immeasurable His love, unfailing His rectitude; and He is "bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh." In all your frailties and ignorances and temptations manifold, remember that He your Divine Sovereign is man, and has suffered being tempted, and is qualified to succour you when ye are tempted. Let the almightiness and infinite love of your most gracious King, God's Son, your Brother, assure your hearts that following Him, ye shall be conquerors, yea, more than conquerors. 3. It was necessary that our Prophet, He who should effectually teach us, should be not simply God, or mere man, but both: and none could so teach us who was not both God and man. It is a gross mistake to suppose that what mankind needed most was knowledge of good and evil; or that the possession of this knowledge, in even the highest perfection, is sufficient of itself to subdue the heart to the obedience and love of God. The Jews possessed this knowledge as much as we do. Even regarding the heathens themselves, I will make bold to affirm, there is scarcely a duty or rule of morality, laid down in the New Testament, but may be found expressed, with more or less clearness, in the writings of some one or more of their poets or philosophers. It was not necessary, therefore, that another temple of God should be reared of stones, or that, from that dead temple, the same dead law, the mere letter of outward and verbal instruction, should be promulgated. But when righteousness had grown a stranger upon earth, then God sent that Teacher, His Son, who should found a new, a living temple, of which He was the Foundation; and should be Himself a Living Law, not only informing men, but showing them, in His own life, what they should be; and overturning the notion that what He enjoined was impossible, by the undeniable performance of it by Himself in their own nature. He is an effectual Teacher, for He has power not only Himself to work the works of God, but to communicate that to others whereby they also may work them. His instruction is quickening and saving: He is the true light, for it is light which is the life of men. A perfect teacher of righteousness could neither be mere man, nor in the form of God. A mere man could not, as is evident from two plain reasons. He could not exemplify His own precepts—He could not prove that obedience was possible, and He could not give the Spirit, for the Spirit is God, and how could a man, a creature, communicate God the Creator? And yet, without the Spirit of God, no man can be taught of God. And now, let us suppose that Christ, the Prophet of the Church, had delivered His teaching to us in the form of God, that He taught us without being incarnate: might not the human heart have raised these plausible objections? "Thou commandest me to keep Thy law, but Thou art God, and I am dust and ashes. Thou dost promise me the aid of Thy Spirit; but I have not seen or heard of any one in whom, by that aid, this end was accomplished." To prevent this murmur, and the reasons on which it might have rested, God became man, and, as man spoke to men from the same level on which they stood. We saw Him in humiliation, in sorrow, in the struggles

of temptation, in the fears and agonies of death, "ever in the battle, but ever aloft"; and then finally victorious, when He seemed for ever vanquished, for, by yielding to death He conquered him and his ruler, in the irresistible might of weakness quelling all the powers of hell. This is our Redeemer, this our Saviour. This is He announced from of old, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. How wonderful, how glorious His person; uniting the majesty of the eternal God with the meanness of mortal man; qualified to do whatever was necessary to be done, to suffer whatever needed to be endured for the honour of God and the salvation of man! How mysterious is His condescension, how sublime His humility—the pure streams of His mercy overflowing the world, while the flames of His zeal consumed Himself. (*R. Lee, D.D.*) *On passing by angels to redeem men*:—If He who made all things took upon Him man's nature, we may feel sure that there is in that nature some intrinsic excellence and greatness, one proof of which is that it is capable of being united with the Person of the Word who was in the beginning with God, and was God. But so, unquestionably, was the angels' nature; for man is a little lower than the angels. Here were two fallen races before the eye of the Redeemer, and we cannot doubt that it was optional with Him to redeem either of them, or both. Why He did not redeem both must be left to sovereign wisdom. I. FALLEN ANGELS, IF REDEEMED, WOULD NO DOUBT BECOME AS GREAT AND GLORIOUS AS BEFORE. We see in this world enough of degradation made by sin to keep us from doubting the power of sin to degrade fallen angels into devils, and devils into alliance with swine. But the memory of innocence and of bliss in heaven no doubt remains in them. What a good work it would have been to redeem that memory and restore that angel. How sad, one might say, to think that Christ would not redeem him, but went after South Sea Islanders and the aborigines of the British Isles, than whom none was ever more lost to shame, or more distant from God. And what a wicked world this, which He redeemed, has proved. Thus far the few are saved; the many hate God. II. But in reply it may be said, HIS SUCCESS MIGHT HAVE BEEN NO BETTER HAD CHRIST MADE REDEMPTION FOR ANGELS INSTEAD OF FOR MEN. Angels might have invented objections to Him as men did; some might go so far as to deny His Godhead and incarnation, and ask whether a good God would let His innocent Son visit such an abode, to suffer and die for devils; and what virtue there could be in the sufferings of one for the sins of others; and whether it is just to substitute an innocent being for the guilty? It is the great mystery of wisdom that while God does His pleasure, it is in such a way that every man exercises his free choice. III. THOSE WHO DO NOT ACCEPT REDEMPTION PROVIDED FOR THEM BY THE SON OF GOD ARE TO BE ASSOCIATED HEREAFTER WITH A RACE OF SINNERS WHOM CHRIST DID NOT REDEEM. Nothing surely is better adapted to make us accept the offers of the gospel; for if Christ passed them by and came to save us, no fancy can picture what it must be to receive from His lips a consignment to their abode and to their society. IV. THE SUBJECT OPENS TO US A VIEW OF HUMAN HAPPINESS FOR ALL WHO ACCEPT OF SALVATION. If the Redeemer sought the greater amount of happiness in those for whom He decided to make atonement, He surely will find it in us who enter heaven, not as a recovered seat from which we were ignominiously expelled, but a world new, untried, awakening in us sensations of wonder and joy which now it doth not enter into the heart of man to conceive. There will be a quality in our joy which could never be known to those who fell from heaven. And shall we lose it? Are we looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God? (*N. Adams, D.D.*) *Fallen humanity elected to redemption in preference to fallen angels*:—I. THERE ARE STRONG REASONS WHICH MIGHT HAVE LED US TO SUPPOSE THAT GOD WOULD HAVE GIVEN THE PREFERENCE TO FALLEN ANGELS. 1. The superiority of angelic natures. 2. The probability of their greater misery. 3. Their greater competency of appreciating the redemptive act. II. ALTHOUGH THERE MIGHT APPEAR STRONG REASONS FOR THE CHOICE OF FALLEN ANGELS, WE CAN DISCOVER MOST SATISFACTORY REASONS FOR THE ELECTION OF FALLEN MEN. 1. The election of men in preference to fallen angels furnishes a more striking manifestation of Divine justice. 2. A more striking manifestation of Divine independence. 3. A more striking manifestation of Divine condescension. Lessons: 1. How cautious should we be in pronouncing judgment upon the conduct of God. 2. How devoutly earnest should man's acceptance of this redemption be. 3. How zealously should those who have become participators of this redemption seek to extend it to others. (*Homilist.*) *Men chosen—fallen angels rejected*:—I. In the first place, the translation of our authorised version runs thus: "HE TOOK NOT ON HIM THE NATURE OF ANGELS." Our Lord

and Saviour Jesus Christ did not take upon Himself the nature of angels. His condescension dictated to Him, that if He did stoop, He would descend to the very lowest degree; that if He did become a creature, He would become, not the noblest creature, but one of the most ignoble of rational beings, that is to say, man, therefore, He did not stoop to the intermediate step of angelship, but He stooped right down and became a man. Let us notice the wisdom and the love of this, and I think there will be something to cause us to glorify God for so doing. 1. If Christ had taken upon Himself the nature of angels, He could never have made an atonement for man. 2. Had our Saviour become an angel, He would never have been a fitting example for us. I cannot imitate an angelic example. If you would give me something to imitate, give me a man like myself, then I may attempt to follow him. 3. Sweetly, also, let us remember that if Christ had been an angel, He could not have sympathised with us. In order to sympathise with our fellow creatures we must be something like them. Suppose a man made of iron, or of brass, could he sympathise with our wearied lungs, or with our aching bones? 4. Once more, Christ became a man, and not an angel, because He desired to be one with His dear Church. 5. Again, if Christ had not taken upon Him the nature of man, then manhood would not have been so honourable or so comfortable as it is. II. The literal translation, according to the marginal reading, is, "HE TOOK NOT UP ANGELS, BUT HE TOOK UP THE SEED OF ABRAHAM," by which is meant, that Christ did not die to save angels, though many of them needed salvation, but He died to save fallen man. 1. I do not think it is because of any difference in the sin. When two criminals are brought before a judge, if one of them is to be saved, and the other punished, very likely the judge will say, "Let the greatest offender die, and let the less offender be saved." Now, I do not know that Satan was a greater offender than man; I am not sure that the fallen angels sinned more than man did. "Why, sir," you say, "man's sin was a very little one; he only stole some of his Master's fruit." Aye, but if it was such a little thing to do, what a little thing it would have been not to do it! If it were so little a thing, how easily he might have avoided it! and, therefore, because he did it, it became all the greater sin. 2. But suppose there is not much difference in their sin, the next question is, which of those two beings is the most worth saving? Which would serve his Maker most, if his Maker should spare him? And I defy any of you to hold that a sinful man is a more valuable creature than an angel. 3. Sometimes the government will say, "Well, here are two persons to be executed; we desire to save one: which of the two would be the most dangerous character to allow to continue an enemy?" Now, which could hurt God the most, speaking as man would speak, a fallen angel, or a man? I answer, that fallen man can do but little injury to Divine government, compared to a fallen angel. 4. Perhaps it would be said, if one is to be saved, let that one be saved who would take the least trouble to save. Now, which could be saved with the greatest ease, should you suppose a fallen angel, or a fallen man? For my part, I can see no difference; but if there be any, it strikes me that a restoration does not put things one-half so much out of order as a revolution; and to have restored the angels to the place from which they had fallen, speaking as a man must speak, would not have been so hard as to have taken fallen man out of the place from which he had fallen, and placed him where fallen angels had once stood. 5. But, you may say, God saved man because He pitied him. But then why did not He pity the devils? I know two men living on three or four shillings a week. I pity one of them very much, indeed; but the other, who is no better off, I pity him the most, for he once knew better times. Man, it is true, fell out of Eden; but Satan fell out of heaven, and is the more to be pitied on account of the greatness of his fall; and, therefore, if pity had ruled the day, God would have decided for the fallen angels, and not for fallen men. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Kindred aids rescue:*—There is no sympathy like that of those who are bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. Let some stranger see a child fall into yonder river, and his irresistible impulse is to plunge in and rescue that child. But his zeal to do so is mere indifference compared with the heart-rending agony that tears the soul of the child's mother. Some years since, in a wild valley of Dauphiné, in France, an eagle, we are told, swooped down from its lofty eyrie, clutched a helpless infant in its sharp talons, and soared aloft with it to the peak of an almost inaccessible mountain. The peasants, looking on with horror at the sight, in confusion and excitement, knew not what to do. But not so the mother. Hearing of the disaster, love gave wings to her feet, and so she leaped, nay, flew almost, from crag to crag, until, mounting higher and higher, she reached

the summit and clasped the uninjured captive to her bosom. Kinship intensifies sympathy. It is just of that the apostle would have us to gather a clear and strong idea. Christ is bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh, one of ourselves; bound up with us in the bundle of life, bound to us by ten thousand close and tender ties, along which there thrill and throb the vibrations of a strength—a Divine, a supernatural strength, that flows down indeed to the heart of even the feeblest and lowliest of His sufferers upon earth. (*Bp. of Algoma.*) *Humiliation of Jesus*:—The founder of the Russian empire left his palace and capital, the seductive pleasures and all the pomp and royalty, to acquire the art of ship-building in the dockyard of a Dutch sea-port. He learned it that he might teach it to his subjects; he became a servant, that he might be the better master, and lay in Russia the foundations of a great naval power. Nor has his country been ungrateful; her capital, which bears his name, is adorned with a monument to his memory, massive as his mind; and she has embalmed his deathless name in her heart and in her victories. Yet, little as men think of Jesus, lightly as they esteem Him, a far greater sight is here. There, in a king becoming a subject that his subjects might find in him a king, there was much for men; but here there is much both for men and angels to wonder at, and praise through all eternity. The Son of God stoops to toil. What an amazing scene! (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) *The secret of true philanthropy*:—Great philanthropic programmes must begin at Bethlehem, and comprehend the mysteries of Golgotha, if ever they would ascend from Bethany into the heavens. He who would make life a redemptive mission must go to the very base of society, and begin his work there. Men invariably fail when they begin at the high twig rather than the buried root. To serve man, Christ became man. So in serving others we must identify ourselves with them. Christ was in the darkness, but the darkness was not in Him. This identification of Himself with the human race made Christ accessible to all classes. Man needed for a season—only for a season, as one summer in the year is enough—a visible manifestation of God. So by coming to us, and being like us, and humbling Himself to the death of the Cross, He saved us. We, too, in our philanthropic work must go down. Kings are only the blossomings of the great communal tree. "Down to the roots" is the cry of the true philanthropy. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *Christ's close contact with humanity*:—You remember that happy story of the wild negro child who could never be won till the little lady sat down by her, and laid her hand upon her. Eva won poor Topsy by that tender touch. The tongue failed, but the hand achieved the victory. So was it with our adorable Lord. He showed us that He was bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh; He brought Himself into contact with us, and made us perceive the reality of His love to us, and then He became more than a conqueror over us. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) "*He was one of us*":—On the centenary of the birth of Robert Stephenson there was a very large demonstration at Newcastle. The town was paraded by a vast procession who carried banners in honour of the distinguished engineer. In the procession there was a band of peasants, who carried a little banner of very ordinary appearance, but bearing the words, "He was one of us." They were inhabitants of the small village in which Robert Stephenson had been born, and had come to do him honour. They had a right to a prominent position in that day's proceedings, because he to whom so many thousands did honour was one of them. Even so, whatever praise the thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers can ascribe to Christ in that grand celebration when men shall be no more, we from earth can wave our banners with the words written upon it, "He was one of us."

Ver. 17. **Made like unto His brethren.**—*A sermon preached on Christmas Day*:—This high feast of the nativity of our blessed Saviour is called by St. Chrysostom "the great metropolitan feast." For, as to the chief city the whole country resorts (Psa. cxxii. 4); so all the feast-days of the whole year meet and are concentred in the joy of this feast. If we will draw them into a perfect circle, we must set the foot of the compass upon this, "God was made like unto man." My text is laid down unto us in the form of a model proposition; which consists of two parts, the *dictum* and the *modus*. Here is, first, the proposition, "Christ is made like us." Secondly, the modification or qualification of it, "It behoved Him so to be." First, in the proposition, our meditations are directed to Christ and to His brethren. And we consider "what Christ is, and what we were." God He was from all eternity, but in the fulness of time "made like unto us." But we were miserable sinners, enemies to God. But now, by Christ's assimilation to us, we are made like unto God. Secondly, the modification carries out thoughts to those two common

heads—the convenience, and the necessity of it. Now this again looks equally on both—on Christ, and on His brethren. If "in all things it behoved Christ to be like unto His brethren," which is the benefit, heaven and earth will conclude, men and angels will infer, that it behoveth us to be made like unto Christ, which is the duty. My text, ye see, is divided equally between these two terms, "Christ," and "His brethren." That which our devotion must contemplate in Christ is, first, His divine; secondly, His human, nature; thirdly, the union of them both. First, His divine nature; for we cannot but make a stand, and inquire who He was who ought to do this. Secondly, His human nature; for we find Him here "flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bones," made like unto us in our flesh, in our souls. "What can we say more?" Our apostle tells us, "in all things." And then, thirdly, will follow the union, expressed in the passive "to be made." in His assimilation, and the assumption of our nature. All these fill us with admiration; but the last raiseth it yet higher. Fourthly, the end of all is the end of all—our salvation; the end of our creation, of our redemption, of this assimilation; and the last end of all, the glory of God. Then "His brethren" and He will "dwell together in unity." I. In the first place, in an holy ecstasy we cry out with the prophet, "Who is He that cometh?" (Isa. lxiii. 1). "Who is He that must be made like unto us?" "What is done?" and, "Who did it?" are of so near relation that we can hardly abstract one from the other. We, who are children of time, have need of a captain who must be born in time. We were sick of a bold and foolish ambition to be gods. And this disease became epidemical: we all would be independent, our own lawgivers, our own God. Pride threw us down; and nothing but humility, the exinanition of the Son of God, could raise us. II. Therefore, in the next place, as Christ is "God of His Father," so He is "man of His mother"; the Son of God, and the Son of Mary. That He appeareth in the likeness of our flesh, that He appeareth and speaketh and suffereth in our flesh, is the high prerogative of the gospel. And here He publisheth Himself in every way of representation. 1. "In our image or likeness," "in the form" of a servant, our very picture, a living picture, such a picture as one man is of another. 2. "By way of comparison." For how hath He dilated Himself by a world of comparisons! He is a "Shepherd," to guide and feed us; a "Captain," to lead us; a "Prophet," to teach us. He is a "Priest," and He is "the Sacrifice" for us. He is "Bread," to strengthen us; a "Vine," to refresh us; a "Lamb," that we may be meek; a "Lion," that we may be valiant; a "Door," to let us in; and "the Way," through which we pass into life. He is anything that will make us like Him. Sin and error and the devil have not appeared in more shapes to deceive and destroy us than Christ hath to save us. 3. By His "exemplary" virtues; and those raised to such a high pitch of perfection, that neither the heretic, nor the Turk, nor the devil himself could reach and blemish it. III. We must now, with a reverent and fearful hand, but touch at the passive "to be made," which pointeth out the union of both the natures in one person. The apostle telleth us that "it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren." And "to the apprehension of this union" (as to the knowledge of God), as Ambrose saith, "we are led by weak and faint representatious drawn from sensible things," and by negations. "Not after this manner." He was made like unto us, it is true: but not so as flesh and blood may imagine, or a wanton and busy wit conceive. His glory did not take from Him the form of a servant, nor did this assimilation lessen or alter Him in that by which He was equal to His Father. This is "a great mystery" (1 Tim. iii. 16); and mysteries cannot be searched nor sounded to the depth. It fareth with us in the pursuit of profound mysteries as with those who labour in rich mines. When we dig too deep, we meet with poisonous fogs and damps instead of treasure; when we labour above, we find less metal, but more safety. Humility and purity of soul are the best convoys in the ways of knowledge. Be not then too inquisitive to find out the manner of this union. That Christ "was made like unto us," is the joy of this feast; but that He ought to be so, is the wonder and ecstasy of our joy. That He would descend, is mercy; but that He must descend, is our astonishment. Had the apostle said, "It behoved us that He should be made like unto us," it had found an easy belief; the "it behoved" had been placed "in its proper place," on the face of a captive. All will say, "It behoved us much." But to put a *debet* upon the Son of God, and make it a beseeming thing for Him to become flesh, "to be made like unto us," is as if one should set a ruby in clay, a diamond in brass, a chrysolite in baser metal, and say they are placed well there. To give a gift, and call it a debt, is not our usual language. On earth it is not; but in heaven it is

the proper dialect, fixed in capital letters on the mercy-seat. It is the joy of this feast, the angels' anthem, "A Saviour is born!" And if He will be a Saviour, an Undertaker, a Surety, such is the nature of fidejussion and suretyship, *debet*, "He must," "it behoveth Him"; He is as deeply engaged as the party whose Surety He is. 1. Let us look on the aptness of the means, and we shall soon find that this "foolishness of God" (1 Cor. i. 25), as the apostle calls it, "is wiser than men, and this weakness of God is stronger than men"; and that the *debuit* is right set. For "if you will have extremes meet, you must have a middle line to draw them together": and, behold, here they meet, and are made one! The properties of either nature being entire, yet meet and concentre as it were in one person. Majesty putteth on humility; Power, infirmity; Eternity, mortality. By the one our Saviour dieth for us, by the other He riseth again; by the one He suffereth as man, by the other He conquereth as God; by both He perfecteth and consummateth the great work of our redemption. 2. So then here is an aptness and conveniency: but the words, "It behoved Him," imply also a kind of necessity. That God could be made like mortal man, is a strange contemplation; that He would, is a rise and exaltation of that; that He ought, super-exalteth, and sets it at a higher pitch; but that He must be so, that necessity in a manner should bring Him down, were not His love infinite as well as His power, would stagger and amaze the strongest faith. It is true, this condescension of His, this assimilation, was free and voluntary, with more cheerfulness and earnestness undertaken by Him than received now by us. But if we look back upon the precontract which passed between His Father and Him, we shall then see a *debuit*, "a kind of necessity," laid upon Him. Our Saviour Himself speaketh it to His blessed mother, "I must go about My Father's business" (Luke ii. 49). We may measure His love by the decree; that is, we cannot measure it: for the decree is eternal. Application:—1. If Christ be like unto us, then we also ought to be like unto Him, and to have our assimilation, our nativity, by analogy and rules of proportion answerable unto His. To be like unto Him! Why, who would not be like unto Him? "Like Him" we all would be in His glory. But to be like Him in the wilderness, like Him in His daily converse with men, like Him in the high-priest's hall, like Him in the garden, like Him on the Cross: this we like not; here we start back, and are afraid of His countenance. But if we will be His brethren, this is the copy we must take out, these be our postures, these our colours: bathed in His blood, it is true; but, withal, bathed in the waters of affliction, bathed in our tears, bathed in our own blood. 2. As He was made like unto us, so are we made like unto Him. We are not born so, nor so by chance. This resemblance is not drawn out with a thought or a word. How many be there who bear Christ's name, yet are not like unto Him, because they will not be made so! 3. As there was a *debuit* upon Christ, so there is upon us. As "it behoved Him" to be made like unto us, so it behoveth us to be made like unto Him. A humble Christ, and a proud Christian; a meek Christ, and a bloody Christian; an obedient Christ, and a traitorous Christian; Christ in an agony, and a Christian in pleasure; Christ fasting, and a Christian rioting; Christ on the Cross, and a Christian in a Mahometical Paradise, there is no decorum in it, nothing but solecism and absurdity. 4. This duty is not only becoming, but necessary. For if a kind of necessity lay upon Christ, by His contract with His Father, "to be made like unto us"; a great necessity will lie upon us, by our covenant with Him, to be like unto Him; and woe unto us, if we be not! It is "that one thing necessary": there is nothing necessary for us but it. (*R. Farindon, B.D.*) *Like to His brethren:*—I. THE DETAILS OF THIS CONFORMITY. 1. Similarity of natures. 2. Similarity of circumstances. He took His place as one item in the great mass of humanity, and assumed no position inconsistent with manhood. II. THE EXPEDIENCY OF THIS CONFORMITY. "It behoved Him." Even sovereignty is bound by law. 1. We must not deny or dispute the fact because we cannot understand the reasons on which it is founded. 2. Can we, who are less than God, complain if we also are under restraints of law? III. THE OBJECT OF THIS URGENT AND IMPORTANT PURPOSE OF GOD. 1. "Merciful" sympathy can only flow from experience. 2. "Faithful." (1) To all the types and promises that had gone before. (2) To the work He undertook. (3) In His character. (*Homilist.*) *What behoved Christ:*—I. Note, first of all, THE EMPHASIS OF THAT EXPRESSION "IT BEHOVED HIM TO BE MADE IN ALL THINGS LIKE UNTO HIS BRETHREN." And observe that the "all things" here, concerning which our Lord's likeness to mankind is predicated, are not the ordinary properties of human nature, but emphatically and specifically man's sorrows. That will appear, I think, if you notice that

my text is regarded as being a consequence of our Lord's incarnation for the help of His fellows. "He laid not hold upon angels, but He laid hold upon the seed of Abraham." Wherefore, "in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren." Now, if the likeness here be the possession of true manhood, then my text is mere tautology, and it would simply be saying, "He became a man, wherefore it behoved Him to become a man." The same conclusion is, I think, fairly to be deduced from the last words of our chapter, where the fact of His suffering being tempted, is stated as His preparation to help, and as His qualification as a merciful and faithful High Priest. That is to say, the "all things" of which our Lord became partaker like us His brethren, are here the whole mass—in all its variety of pressure and diversity of nauseousness and bitterness—the whole mass of human sorrow which has ever made men's hearts bleed and men's eyes run. Christ, in His single Manhood, says the writer, gathered unto Himself every form of pain. All the miseries of all men forced themselves into, and filled His heart. You and I have but a drop given to us; He drank the whole cup. Our natures are not capable of sorrow as varied, as deep, as the sorrow of Jesus Christ; but for each of us surely the assurance comes with some subtle power of consolation and strength. II. So that brings me to the next point suggested here, viz., OUR LORD'S VARIED, ALL-COMPREHENSIVE SORROW WAS A NECESSITY IMPOSED UPON HIM BY THE PURPOSE WHICH HE HAD IN VIEW. "He taketh hold, not of angels, but of the seed of Abraham"; and therefore He must have a hand like theirs, that can grasp theirs, and which theirs can grasp. Unless the Master had Himself been standing on the heaving surges, and Himself been subjected to the beating of the storm, He could not revive and hold up the sinking disciple. And so our Lord's bitter suffering, diffused through life and concentrated on the Cross, was no mere necessary result of His humanity; was not simply borne because, being a Teacher, He must stand to His principles whatever befell Him because of them; but it was a direct result of the purpose He had in view, that purpose being our redemption. Therefore to say, "It behoved Him to be made in all things like unto His brethren," is but to declare that Christ's sufferings were no matter of physical necessity, but a matter of moral obligation. We know not by what mysterious process the Son learned obedience by the things which He suffered, nor can we understand how it was that the High Priest who would never have become the High Priest had He not been merciful, became yet more merciful by His own experience of human sorrow. But this we know, that somehow the pity, the sympathy of Christ, was deepened by His own life; and we can feel that it is easier for men to lay hold of His sympathy when they think of His sufferings, and to be sure that because in all points He was tempted like as we are "He is able to succour them that are tempted." Comfort drops but coldly from lips that have never uttered a sigh or a groan; and for our poor human hearts it is not enough to have a merciful God far off in the heavens. We need a Christ that can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities ere we can come boldly to the Throne of Grace, assured of finding there grace in time of need. III. Lastly, we have here THE SPECIFICATION OF THE MAIN PURPOSE OF OUR LORD'S SORROWS—"that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest." Christ's help is not merely the help of a wise Teacher. Men do not want only teaching. Their need goes far deeper than that. Christ is not the Helper whose help goes down to the depths and the roots of men's necessity, unless He is Priest as well as Prophet and King. He comes to do something as well as to say something; comes to alter our relations to God, as well as to declare God's heart to us. And then, notice again how here we have Christ's priestly office extended over His whole life of suffering. The popular representations of the gospel, and the superficial grasp of it, which many good people have, are accustomed to draw a broad line of demarcation between Christ's life and Christ's death, and to concentrate the whole of the sacrificial and expiatory character of His work in His death only. My text goes in the other direction. It says that all that long-drawn sorrow which ran through the whole life of Jesus Christ, whilst it culminated in His death, was His sacrifice for the sins of the world. For all sorrow, according to Scriptural teaching, is the fruit of sin; and the sinless Christ, who bore the sorrows which He had not earned, in bearing them bore them away. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*)

Christ's likeness unto His brethren:—Likeness is asserted without qualification, and yet there are limits arising out of the nature of the case. One limit of course is that there can be no likeness in moral character. This limit is implied in the very titles applied to the two parties, Sanctifier and sanctified, and it is expressly stated in the place where Christ is represented as "tempted in all respects similarly, apart

from sin" (chap. iv. 15). Another limit, nowhere referred to in words, but tacitly assumed is, that the likeness is in those respects only in which our life on earth is affected by the curse pronounced on man for sin. Overlooking this principle, we might fail to be impressed with the likeness of Jesus to other men in His experience; we might even be impressed with a sense of unlikeness. There are respects in which Christ's life was unlike the common life of men. He was a celibate; He died young, and had no experience of the temptations of middle life, or the infirmities of old age; in outward lot He was the brother of the poor, and was well acquainted with their griefs, but of the joys and temptations of wealth He had no experience. But these features of difference do not fall under the category of the curse. Family ties date from before the fall. The doom pronounced on man was death immediate, and prolonged life is a mitigation of the curse. Wealth too is a mitigating feature, another evidence that the curse has not been executed in rigour, but has remained to a considerable extent an unrealised ideal, because counteracted by an underlying redemptive economy. It will be found that Christ's likeness to His brethren is closest just where the traces of the curse are most apparent: in so far as this life is (1) afflicted with poverty, (2) exposed to temptations to ungodliness, (3) subject to death under its more manifestly penal forms, as when it comes as a blight in early life, or as the judicial penalty of crime. Jesus was like His brethren in proportion as they need His sympathy and succour, like the poor, the tempted, the criminal. (*A. B. Bruce, D.D.*) *Advantages of Christ's manifestation in the flesh:*—Let us consider the design of our Saviour's mission, that He came into the world to save sinners by turniug us away from our iniquities, and thereby purifying to Himself a people zealous of good works; and we shall find that the manifestation of Christ in the flesh did more effectually answer this end than any other means could. 1. The first advantage that occurs is the simplicity of the character which the Deity assumed from whom the precepts of eternal life might issue with all the sanction of the Godhead, without the terror of its majesty. 2. As the end of Christ's coming was to turn us to the Lord, and as no obedience to His laws can be truly acceptable, but that which springs from love, so no scheme could possibly engage so strongly our gratitude as that which so manifestly declared His abundant love to us in sending His Son to take our nature upon Him. (*H. Usher, D.D.*) *Christ like His brethren:*—I. IT IS AN ACT OF DIVINE CONDESCENSION TO HUMAN WEAKNESS. Our thoughts of God are imperfect and obscure, because He is invisible and cannot be perceived by any of the senses. The incarnation of Christ conducts man to the knowledge of God and to communion with Him. Let it awaken our gratitude, that the new and living way is open to us; that we are not assembled before a lifeless image, practising vain impure and cruel rites; that the purpose of our solemn assembly is to celebrate the love of our Creator. II. Christ's being made in all things like His brethren renders Him A FIT EXAMPLE FOR THEM TO IMITATE. It is by beholding the glory of the Lord that we are changed into the same image, and this is agreeable to the principles of human nature. Imitation is one of our first and strongest principles. The example of Christ is every way fitted for our instruction. From His humility we learn that pride was not made for man. From His meekness towards those who injured Him we learn to repress anger and revenge. The young may learn from Him subjection to their parents; the wise may learn to employ their wisdom in instructing the ignorant; the great may learn to be good; the poor may learn contentment, and the afflicted resignation. In imitating His devout retirement we perceive that man is made for devotion, and that in the exercise of it our souls return unto their rest. III. Christ was made in all things like His brethren THAT HE MIGHT SYMPATHISE WITH THEM. He took not upon Him the nature of angels, for then He could not have sympathised with men. As in circumstances of distress and danger we most need the sympathy of a friend, so Christ became "a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." (*S. Charters.*) *The Father's pity and the Son's sympathy* (in conjunction with Psa. ciii. 13):—The thought which I desire, by the comparison of these texts, to suggest is this—How the compassion of God for men, disclosed in the Old Testament, has grown in the New into the fellow-feeling of Christ. We have not lost our Father's pity; we have gained a brother's sympathy. 1. Both halves of revelation agree in giving impartial prominence to two aspects of God's moral attitude towards us—to His aspect of displeasure towards the sinner as identified with his sin, and His aspect of grace towards the sinner as separable from his sin. Whatever the Old Testament discloses of Divine kindness to men, of gentle forbearance, and enduring watchful care, and abundant forgiveness, and healing helpfulness, seems all of it to be the condescen-

sion of One who is too great to be anything else than nobly pitiful. 2. There is no doubt whatever that some souls, fed on such views of God as these, did grow up to a spiritual stature quite heroical. Long and close meditation on the greatness and on the pity of Jehovah produced very noble men of God. Abraham, Moses, Samuel, David, Elijah, Daniel, were men in whom was united rare spiritual strength with rare spiritual tenderness. To grow familiar with the vastness and unimaginableness of the Divine nature through the habit of laying one's soul alongside the lofty One who inhabiteth eternity makes the soul wax great. For true greatness of soul is near of kin to a manly lowliness of soul; and he who frankly and profoundly worships Him who is alone noble enough for worship will find himself ennobled. 3. At the same time, the characteristic tendency of Old Testament saints to look at the Divine goodness as coloured by His pity and as having a constant reference to His distance above His creatures implied an imperfect appreciation of His love. Compassion is not the perfection of love. Love, when it is perfect, vanquishes what it cannot obliterate, the distinctions of high and low, of great and small. It refuses to be separated from its loved one. It can no longer be at ease while he suffers, or rich while he is poor, but bridges the gulf of difference, identifies itself with its object, and forgets to pity that it may learn to sympathise. By doing this new thing, which no Old Testament believer had dared to credit Him with doing, God disclosed a manner of love for men for which the name of pity is too weak. The Creator has become also a creature; and with us He has henceforth in Jesus Christ one nature, common; a common history; one life, one death. In brief, to the paternity of God has been added the fraternal tie. 4. Now, what is the worth to us of this new relation which God has acquired to man? There are three directions at least in which actual experience must be held to modify even the compassions of the Most Merciful. (1) For one thing, it gives such knowledge of every similar sufferer's case as no mere spectator can have. (2) If anything could induce us thus to make God the confidant of our life, it would be this further result of His incarnation, that in this respect at least, so far as human experience goes, He has put Himself on our own level. He has abolished at His own choice the gulf which parted us. He is our equal; He is our Fellow. (3) There is still another fruit of the incarnation more striking than all. A chord which has been once set in unison with another vibrates when its fellow is sharply struck. God has set His heart through human suffering into perpetual concord with human hearts. Strike them, and the heart of God quivers for fellowship. If this is compassion, it is so in a more literal sense than when we use the word as a mere synonym for pity. It is sympathy, in the Greek and New Testament sense; it is, as our version has it, being "touched" with the same feeling. It is the remembrance of His own human past which stirs within the soul of Christ when, now, from His high seat, He sees what mortal men endure. Ah! that a world of weary sufferers only knew what beatings of heart are answering back from within the unseen where the Eternal hides! (*J. O. Dykes, D.D.*) *Human nature of Christ*:—Suppose a number of prisoners confined in one of our old gaols, and there is a person desirous to do them good; imagine that he cannot be admitted unless his name is put down in the calendar. Well, out of his abundant love to these prisoners he consents to it, and when he enters to talk with them they perhaps think that he will come in with cold dignity; but he says, "Now, let me say to you first of all that I am one of yourselves." "Well," they say, "but have you done aught that is wrong?" "I will not answer you that," saith he; "but if you will just refer to the calendar, you will find my name there. I am written down there among you as a criminal." Oh, how they open their hearts now! They opened their eyes with wonder first, but now they open their hearts, and they say, "Art thou become like one of us? Then we will talk with thee." And he begins to plead with them. Sinner, dost thou see this? Christ put Himself as near on a level with thee as He could. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) **A merciful and faithful High Priest.**—*Christ's priestly office*:—Christ as God could have been merciful unto us, although He had not been made like unto us; but not as our High Priest. There is an ability of sufficiency, and of power; and so Christ as God was able to succour those that are tempted, although Himself had never been tempted. But there is an ability of idoneity or fitness, or aptness and disposition; and so the apostle says here, "For in that Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted." The priestly office of Christ is the great storehouse of all that grace and comfort which we have on this side heaven: it is that whereby we are reconciled to God the Father and relieved against temptation. I. WHEN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST DIED UPON THE CROSS, HE DID OFFER UP HIMSELF A SACRIFICE UNTO GOD

THE FATHER. Yea, as if all sacrifices were met in Him: all those titles that are given unto other sacrifices, they are given unto Him. There are three sorts of sacrifices: some were living; others were not living, and those were either solid, as bread and the like; or else they were liquid, as wine and oil. There was always a destroying of the thing offered. II. WHEN THIS SACRIFICE WAS UPON THE ALTAR, THEN THE SINS OF ALL BELIEVERS, PAST, PRESENT, AND TO COME, WERE ALL LAID UPON JESUS CHRIST (Isa. liii. 6). III. WHEN THESE SINS WERE THUS LAID UPON CHRIST, HE DID THEREBY GIVE FULL SATISFACTION UNTO GOD THE FATHER, UNTO DIVINE JUSTICE. IV. ALL THIS HE DID AS OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST, AND IN A MORE TRANSCENDENT AND EMINENT MANNER THAN EVER ANY HIGH PRIEST DID BEFORE HIM. V. HOW DOES ALL THIS CONDUCE TO OUR COMFORT OR HOLINESS? 1. Is it not a comfortable thing in the ears of a poor sinner that there is a storehouse of mercy set up? that the Lord hath erected an office of love, and of mere compassion for poor sinners? Is it not a comfortable thing that God the Father is satisfied, and so your sins pardoned? 2. But you will say, "Does it not much conduce to our grace or holiness too?" Yes, this truth does conduce much to our holiness too. The new covenant of grace is founded upon the satisfaction of Jesus Christ upon the cross, upon that oblation (see chap. ix. 13–15). But again, that we may see how this doth conduce to our holiness: strengthen faith, and we strengthen all. If faith be weakened, all grace is weakened: strengthen your faith, and you strengthen all your holiness and all your graces. 3. The more a man does deny his own righteousness, the more holy he is with gospel holiness. (*W. Bridge, M.A.*) *The work of our High Priest*:—If we now inquire further what the work of the high priest was and is, that accordingly we may address ourselves unto Jesus Christ for succour, we shall find that it is also to pray and intercede for the people. I. WHEREIN CONSISTETH THIS INTERCESSION OF JESUS CHRIST? 1. It consists in this: His appearing for us in heaven. His owning of our cause and of our souls to God the Father (chap. ix. 24). 2. He doth not only appear for us, but by virtue of His priestly office he does carry the power, merit, and virtue of His blood into the presence of God the Father in heaven, and sprinkles the mercy-seat with it seven times. Seven is a note of perfection. Those that Christ suffered for He does intercede for. He takes all their bonds, and He carries them in unto God the Father, and He says, "Father, I have paid these bonds, I have satisfied Thy justice for these poor sinners, and now My desire is that they may be acquitted from these debts" (chap. ix. 11, 12). 3. He doth not only carry the power and virtue of His blood and present it to God the Father for our discharge, but He does also plead our cause in heaven, answering unto all those accusations that are brought against us (Rom. viii. 33). 4. He doth not only plead our cause and take off accusations that are brought against us, but He does also call for absolution and pardon of poor sinners at the hand of God the Father in a way of justice and equity; and therefore He is called our Advocate (1 John ii. 1). II. THE PREVALENCY OF CHRIST'S INTERCESSION WITH THE FATHER will appear if we consider the inclination and disposition that God the Father hath unto the same things that Christ intercedeth for. If a child should come and intreat his father in a matter that the father hath no mind to, or that the father is set against, possibly he might not prevail; but if a beloved child shall come and pray the father in a business that the father likes as well as the child, surely then the child is very like to speed. We have a notable expression to this end in John x. 17: "Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I may take it again." "I lay down My life": here is His suffering and His satisfaction. "That I may take it again": go up to heaven and take it again and intercede. The Father loves the world in giving Christ; the Son loves the world in dying for us; and the Father loves Christ again for loving us. III. DOES THE LORD JESUS CHRIST INTERCEDE FOR US IN HEAVEN AS OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST? Yes, and He does do this in a more eminent way than ever any high priest did before Him. 1. He hath gone through more temptations than ever any high priest did. 2. In sympathy and compassion He goes beyond all the high priests that ever were before Him. 3. He is more faithful in His office and place than ever any high priest was. IV. HOW DOTH ALL THIS CONDUCE NOW TO OUR COMFORT OR OUR HOLINESS, TO OUR GRACE OR PEACE? 1. To our comfort. Is it not a comfort to a poor man to have a Friend above, near the King, that may be able to do him kindness? A man sometimes says, "I had a friend indeed in the court, but now he is dead." Aye, but here is a Friend that never dies: He ever lives to make intercession. Friends may alter and turn enemies; but He changeth not. But you will say unto me. "This is exceeding good, and very comfortable

in itself; but what is this to me? for I am afraid that the Lord Christ does not intercede for me." (1) It is no presumption for us to bear ourselves upon the intercession of Jesus Christ (see Matt. xv. 22–28). (2) Who those are that the Lord Christ does intercede for in heaven (see 1 John ii. 1). (3) How willing, how infinitely willing He is to intercede for us! Now if a man do receive money for to lay out for the benefit of others, poor orphans, or the like; if a man be faithful, certainly he will lay out the money for them, according to the intention of him that did trust him with the money. The Lord Jesus Christ is anointed as our great High Priest, to do the work of the priestly office: and this is one work, to intercede, and therefore He must needs be very willing to do it. Again, the more anything is the work of a man's relation, wherewithal he is clothed, the more (if he be faithful) is he willing to do the work. When men are exalted and come to greatness or honour, then they give down the comforts of their relation unto those that depend upon them: if a father come to any great preferment, the comfort of the relation of the father then falls down upon the children. And so, if one friend do come unto preferment, the comfort of the relation (or friendship) falls down. Now the Lord Jesus Christ, He is our High Priest; and He is now exalted, He is gone to heaven: and therefore all the comforts of all the relations that He stands in towards us do now fall upon us. And therefore He is very willing, because this is the work of His relation. And further, It is the work of His office. What a man does by office, that he does willingly: what a man does by office, he does industriously; what a man does by office, he does it readily; according unto a man's place, or office, so will his interpretation be. 2. This intercession of Jesus Christ; this work of the priestly office of Christ, and the consideration thereof, it does conduce exceedingly unto our grace and holiness. For—(1) What a mighty encouragement is here unto all poor sinners for to come unto Jesus Christ. (2) The more I see that the Lord Jesus appears in heaven for me, the more am I engaged to appear on earth for Him. (3) The more I consider or apprehend that the Lord Jesus Christ does lay out Himself for me, the more am I engaged to lay out myself for Him. (*Ibid.*) *Our High Priest's offering*:—Now if we inquire further, we shall find also that the work of the High Priest was and now is to offer up the gifts of the people unto God; to present our prayers, praises, duties, services, and all spiritual performances unto God the Father, and to procure acceptance of Him. I. WHAT DOTH OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR CHRIST, OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST, WHEN HE OFFERS UP OUR GIFTS UNTO GOD THE FATHER? 1. He doth take our persons, and carries them in unto God the Father in a most unperceivable way to us. He knows that if our persons be not first accepted our duty cannot be accepted: Love me, and love my duty; love me, and love my service: hate me, and hate my service. 2. As He doth take our persons, and lead and carry us into the presence of God the Father, so, when we perform any duty, He doth observe what evil or failing there is in that duty, and draws it out, takes it away before He presents the duty to God the Father. 3. As He takes away the iniquity of our holy things, so He observes what good there is in any of our duties or performances; and with that He mingles his own prayers and intercessions, His own incense, and presents all as one work mingled together unto God the Father. II. WHAT ABUNDANCE OF FAVOUR AND ACCEPTANCE THIS OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST HIMSELF HATH IN HEAVEN. 1. It was an agreement between God the Father and Christ, the second Person, before the world was, that in due time He should come into the world, take flesh upon Him, and die for sinners: and He did so. But before Christ came into the world there were thousands of souls saved; how came they to be saved? They came to be saved by the blood of Christ, and before Christ died. So then, God the Father saved them upon Christ's bare word, that He would come into the world and die for them. What a mighty trust was here! 2. Again, the trust appears in this: that He was made, when He came into the world, the great Lord Treasurer of all the grace and comfort that should be given out unto the children of men. 3. But yet further, when our Lord and Saviour Christ died, and ascended unto God the Father to heaven, as soon as ever He came into heaven, saith the Father to Him, Thou hast now suffered, "Ask of Me, and I will give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession"; all the world at one word. It was a mighty and a great trust that the Father did put upon Him. 4. Yea, as if all this were not enough, the Father did put the keys of heaven and of hell into His hand: the keys of heaven and hell into the hand of Christ (Rev. i. 18). III. HE DOTH IMPROVE ALL THAT HIS OWN ACCEPTANCE, FOR OUR ACCEPTANCE; PLANTING ALL OUR DUTIES UPON HIS OWN ACCEPTANCE, UPON THAT

ACCEPTANCE THAT HE HATH WITH THE FATHER. The favour and acceptance which the high priest had, in the time of Moses, was not for himself: he did improve it all for the people: he was to lay it out all for the people, and not for himself. Our High Priest goes beyond all other high priests in this particular also: for now, as for other high priests, though they went in with their incense, and covered the mercy-seat with a cloud, yet it was but once in the year; but our High Priest is always in the holy of holiest, and never goes out of it, ever covering the mercy-seat with His intercessions. Take their high priest, and though he was very holy as Aaron was, yet sometimes he made the people naked unacceptable; but our great High Priest never makes His people naked, but always clothes them with His own righteousness. Take their high priest, and though he did go into the holy of holiest for the people, yet he never led the people into the holy of holiest, they stood without; but our great High Priest is not only gone into the holy of holiest Himself but doth also lead every poor believer into the holy of holiest (chap. x. 19). IV. WHAT ABUNDANCE OF ACCEPTANCE THEREFORE WE HAVE IN ALL OUR DUTIES BY HIM. Yes, we know that the pair of turtles were accepted in the time of the law by those that could offer no more. Surely much more now will a poor turtle be accepted in the time of the gospel, and those that could but bring goats-hair towards the making of the Tabernacle, they were welcome: and shall it not be so now much more in the times of the gospel? That which is little in regard to quantity, it may be great in regard of proportion; as the widow's mite was. Christ takes that lovingly that comes from love, whatever it be, though it be never so weak. Well, but suppose that a man's duty or service be performed with many failings, infirmities, hardness of heart, straitness of spirit, distracting thoughts; this is my case: Oh! is there any acceptance for such a duty as this is? We know how it was with Nicodemus, and the woman that came trembling and touched the hem of Christ's garment. And we must know that in every duty that we do perform there are two things: there is the sacrifice, and there is the obedience in offering the sacrifice. Though the sacrifice may be imperfect, yet your obedience in offering the sacrifice may be perfect, with gospel-perfection. V. BUT HOW DOTH ALL THIS MAKE FOR OUR COMFORT, OR FOR OUR GRACE? 1. Surely, we cannot but see already how it doth make for our comfort. Is it not a comfortable thing for a man to know that his duties are not lost? that his prayer is not lost? that his hearing the Word is not lost? that his searching the Scriptures is not lost? that his communion is not lost? A man is unwilling to lose anything: and the more precious it is the more unwilling to lose it. Further, is it not a comfort for a man to have liberty to go unto the mercy-seat and there for to meet with God? Besides, is it not a great comfort to a man for to know how it shall go with him at the day of judgment? Once more; is it not a comfort for a poor beggar to be relieved at a rich man's door? 2. But how doth this make unto our holiness, unto holiness of life? Much every way: 1. In case I be ungodly, here is that that may for ever keep me from opposition to the good ways of God. I have said sometimes (may a wicked man say) concerning godly men's duties, that it was their hypocrisy; and I have said concerning such and such professors, this is your pride, and this is your singularity; and I have opposed, with all earnestness, the prayings of some of God's people; but is this true, that the Lord Jesus Christ takes every prayer of the meanest of God's children and carries it into the bosom of God the Father? and shall I dare to oppose that that the Lord Jesus Christ presents unto His Father? The Lord in mercy pardon me. I will never speak one word against the persons, meetings, or supplications of the godly again. 2. In case a man be a wicked man, here is mighty encouragement for to come unto Jesus Christ; aye, and to come presently. For is Jesus Christ the ladder that Jacob saw, by whom we go up to heaven? Then, till I do come to Christ, all is nothing, all is lost. 3. In case a man be godly, this truth doth conduce to our further holiness and growth in grace. If I be godly, then here I see infinite reason why I should be much in duty; not only pray, but be much in prayer. Why? for the Lord Christ taketh all, and carries all into the bosom of the Father, mingles His own odours, intercessions with it, although it be but a sigh and a groan. Further, the more evangelical you are in your obedience, the more holy ye are in your lives. I conclude all with this, if that the Lord Jesus Christ, our great High Priest, offers up all our gifts unto God the Father, whereby we have acceptance, what infinite cause have we all to be thankful to God for Christ, and to love Jesus Christ for ever! (*Ibid.*) *Our High Priest's blessing*:—I shall speak of one work more of our great High Priest, and that is, to bless the people. I. WHAT THE BLESSING OF CHRIST OUR HIGH PRIEST IS, WHEREIN IT CONSISTS, AND WHAT CHRIST DOTH,

WHEN HE DOTH BLESS THE PEOPLE. I answer in the general, that the blessing of the gospel, and of Christ, consisteth in spiritual things especially, and not in temporal (Eph. i. 3). But more particularly, if ye ask me wherein this consisteth, I shall name but two things: 1. First, This blessing of the gospel, or of Christ, it consists in a supernatural and spiritual enjoyment of God in Christ: the love and favour of God in Christ. Again, it consists also in the inhabitation of the Holy Ghost in our hearts: the giving out of the Holy Ghost unto the hearts of men. And therefore it is added: "And the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen." II. DOES THIS BLESSING PROPERLY OR SPECIALLY BELONG UNTO JESUS CHRIST? Yes, for He and none else was made a curse for sin; and therefore it belongs unto Him above all the world for to bless. III. IS THE LORD JESUS CHRIST WILLING FOR TO BLESS POOR SINNERS AND INCLINED UNTO IT? Yes, He is very willing: this blessing of the people, it is a work whereunto He is most delighted. Ye shall observe, therefore, what abundance of blessings Christ scattered among the people when He was here upon the earth. IV. BUT DOTH HE DO IT? Yes, He doth do it, and doth it fully. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." Not only meritoriously but by the hand of Christ. And, saith he, He hath done it with all spiritual blessings, and He hath done it by Jesus Christ. 1. When Christ our High Priest doth see that a man is weak in grace or weak in gifts, and hath some work or service for him to do, then the Lord doth bless him. Oh, soul, increase and multiply, increase in thy gifts and graces. 2. As the Lord doth bless weak gifts and graces when He intends to use them, so also when as He hath made use of a man, when a man hath done the work of God, then the Lord blesses that man. 3. As He does bless at this time, when a man hath done His work, so also when a man is willing for to leave all His relations and natural engagements for to follow Him, to cleave close unto Him, and to His ways and ordinances. 4. The Lord Christ, our High Priest, does bless when the world curses; a special time of Christ's blessing is when the world curses. 5. In the fifth place, the Lord Christ does also bless when His people do graciously enjoy the ordinances purely and evangelically administered. V. HOW DOES ALL THIS CONDUCE UNTO OUR COMFORT AND UNTO OUR HOLINESS? 1. First for comfort: is it not a comfortable thing to be blessed by Jesus Christ? Is it not a comfortable thing for a man to have all his cursers to be blessers? 2. How does this make unto our holiness? Very much: this holds forth great encouragement unto all poor sinners for to come to Christ without delay. But yet further, as there is an encouragement for to come unto Christ, so this argument does also encourage us to go on in the good ways of Christ, notwithstanding all opposition that we meet. Times of opposition are Christ's blessing time. 3. Again, this argument does not only speak encouragement against all opposition, but it does also encourage us to go on in the good ways of God when we are called unto it, though we have but little strength and weak parts. Though there be but little oil in the cruse, though there be but little meal in the barrel, if Christ call to the work He will bless a man in it: and when Christ blesses, He does multiply and increase a man's parts in the using of them. 4. And yet further, if all this be true, why should not a man be contented with his condition, though he be never so mean? Truly he is too covetous, whom the blessing of Christ will not satisfy. Well, whatever my condition be, yet I may be blessed by Jesus Christ; and hath the Lord blessed me? then will I be contented with my condition, though it be never so mean, I have all, as Jacob once said, I have all. 5. Yea, in the fifth and last place: Here is that, which if well studied and considered, will provoke us all for to bless the Lord, and continually to bless the Lord! What is the life of a Christian here but a continual blessing of God? (*Ibid.*)

Our High Priest:—The strong point in the Hebrew economy was the high priest. His whole office and function was mercy, compassion. He stood between weakness, or sinfulness, or want, and the remedy; and mercy was the appointed channel through which to the imagination and the affection of the people God's grace flowed down to them; so that all their associations with him were those of lenity, of compassion, of mercy. He was the one great benefactor. He was an emancipator. He was, in the Jewish system, a central point out of which came light, and never scowls nor darkness. No other name, therefore, whether of king or of prophet, would be likely to strike the Israelite with such a feeling of religiousness, with such an elevating influence, or with such welcomeness, as that of high priest; and that is the reason why it was planted on the Saviour. It was a heart reason. How different was this mode of presenting the function of Christ Jesus from that which came up

in after times! The view of an executive God; the view of a law-giving and law-executing God, that repels men by fear more than it draws them by love; the view of an abstract God, epitomised in philosophy—how few there are that can accept such views! It was a historical person, a personal person, a national person, that the Jews were prepared to accept; and when Jesus Christ was presented to them as really their Redeemer, under the figure of the high priest, it brought round about Him all those romantic, enthusiastic, and national feelings for which they were so famous. The whole function of the Saviour was founded upon the ignorance, the sinfulness, and the helplessness of men; and no revelation was needed to make these known. There is not a man who is not satisfied that he sins with every part of his being; and there is a concatenation of sinfulness running through his whole life. There is not a man who, when he undertakes to do anything in the direction of purity, is not conscious of his helplessness. There is not a man who, when he strives to be true and noble in his better nature, is not conscious that everything goes against him. And it was on this consciousness that high priest-ship was founded. Sin, then, is a matter of universal consciousness; and the only question is, is there any belief, any remedy for mankind who are subject to it? By way of preface, I may say first, that the human race has come to its ideal of God through growth. In the earlier period men came in conflict, first with the natural law of the globe; and fate and force were the more useful interpretations of that great law. When men developed near the animal line, the qualities of nature transcendently filled the heavens to their conception. The earlier thought of God as something separable from nature was that He was a Being that thundered and smote; that He was a Being possessed of great power; that He was a Being of tremendous avenging ability and force. Such were the elements that were earliest appreciable to the human race in their conception of the Divine Being. But as men grew civilised, and enlarged their experience, their capacities and their civic life, there grew up in them what I might almost call physical qualities of the Divine Being—namely, the moral elements. The warrior, more nearly than the brute giant, began to take on qualities which attracted admiration. Out of the warrior grew the king; and he represented the sense of public justice and of restraint for the benefit of his kingdom. Then came in the notion of the judge. Joined closely, also, with the idea of the executive, was the idea of the executioner to carry out his edicts. And all these elements were tinged somewhat with the conception of a king. It was not until we came down to as late a time as the earlier periods of the Old Testament history that the disclosures of the Divine nature began to be more ample. There was a state of receptivity, at last, in the human race by which you could bring to the conception of men, though very imperfectly, a larger notion of God. Then came the revelation of God as a universal Father. But when we come to the latest disclosure, even the fatherhood of God stood aside, as it were, that it might be represented to men by an intermediate conception. Christ came to give to the word "Father" its true and full meaning. Christ took on the human body, and He took it on with all its relations to matter. He came into the world to represent the Divine humility, the Divine helpfulness, the Divine sympathy with infirmity and sin. He came into life at the very lowest point; and He understood from the standpoint of compassion every conceivable human experience. There was not a thought or a feeling possible to human nature, that our Saviour did not have a knowledge of it, so that He is able to succour those who are tempted in those respects. There is not a single passion, a single inclination, a single hunger, a single fear, a single bitterness, a single experience of the human mind, in which He has not been schooled. He so gave Himself to human nature that it might be said that from the crown to the lowest dungeon, from the rich man's mansion to the ditch of the beggar, there is not a faculty with whose workings He was not familiar. In order to be a good artist I do not need to play every tune: I simply need to know each string, and what its possible combinations are, and how to make them; and although our Saviour did not go through all the various phases of experience which men go through, His education in the knowledge of humanity was perfect. Now, this very conception is itself Divine. Divinity stands not in the red right-hand of power; it is not omnipotence and omniscience: it is goodness; and goodness centres in love. So, then, we are to find the Divine nature manifested in goodness, which is the very highest conception of Divinity. I do not want any man to explain to me how Christ is equal to the Father: all I want is to know that His character is a disclosure of character of God. We should bear in mind that, according to the

teaching of the New Testament, Christ is the High Priest that has ascended into heaven. He is close to every one. The man who is murmuring his last prayer in a dungeon can think himself into the very presence of the High Priest in heaven. He who is wounded on the battle-field thinks, as the army thunders away, and his companions leave him, "The High Priest is close at hand." The poor miserable creature of degraded conditions can, by thinking, bring himself into Christ's presence. He is accessible to all; and there is no need of any one's saying, "Who shall ascend up into the heavens and bring the Saviour down?" He is near to each man. The central force of the universe, then, according to this representation, is compassion; it is helpfulness, and over those who have run through the whole range of wrong-doing, and who are seeking to rise out of cruelty, and lust, and pride, and selfishness, and every sort of degradation, there broods—what? Wrath? No. There broods over them the High-Priesthood of Christ Jesus—the compassion of One who knows how to feel for those that are out of the way; the enriching power of Christ's heart. That is the tractive power of the universe. If it be in your power, conceive of Christ as such a High Priest as He was to the Jewish imagination, as a being set apart from among mankind because He had compassion on those who were out of the way, who was tried and condemned, and who suffered like His fellow-men so that He could have compassion on them. He descended from heaven and took upon Himself the nature of man, and was made in the likeness of man. He came into life at the bottom and partook of the experiences of men, and passed through every conceivable state of the human mind in order that He might stand and say, "Oh, fallen, weak, sinful, guilty, wretched creatures, I am your brother; and I am clothed with God's nature; I am in the Father and He is in Me; and I bring to you the tidings of summer on your winter. The God whose I am, and whom I represent, who abides in Me and in whom I abide, is a God of tender love, who would not that any should perish, but would that all should live." That is the message which the Lord Jesus Christ brings to men. If there be men who are afraid to worship Christ, I have two things to say. In the first place, when you worship the Father you worship exactly the same being that I do when I worship Christ. Men had no knowledge of what to put into the fatherhood of God until it was proclaimed in the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, really what you call "Father" and what I call "Jesus" are just the same thing. In the next place, if there were a difference, do you suppose God would be angry if you made a little mistake and worshipped the Son instead of the Father? If a postman handed to my wife a letter which was directed to me, do you suppose there would be a scene? Would we scold him because he handed it to the wrong person when he thought he was handing it to the right one? Where two are united in perfect love a mistake like that does not make any difference. Another thing. When you say that you cannot worship Christ as you do the Father, what do you mean by worship? What is it but giving to another all the enthusiasm which you are capable of feeling? You cannot love supremely without worshipping; for love is the highest worship; and all this riddle about dynastic notions vanishes into space. When you worship Christ and pray to Him, you worship and pray to the Father; and when you worship the Father and pray to Him, you worship and pray to Christ. Then, there are those whom a consciousness of guilt and imperfection keeps back from venturing upon one who is set forth in the Scriptures as their God. Many persons feel, "Oh, if I were not living in the way that I am, I would be willing to pray to God"; but as represented by the High Priest Christ Jesus, God stands before you and recognises you; and the foundation of His recognition of you is that you are weak, guilty, out of the way, and continually sinning. He came to call sinners. There were none so wicked that He was not willing to minister to them. The worse a man is the more he needs a Saviour, and the more the heart of Christ yearns towards him. Not only so, but He is gentle and tender in His dealings toward those who are out of the way. He says, "A bruised reed I will not break, and the smoking flax I will not quench, until I bring forth judgment unto victory." You know that when you first kindle a lamp there is just a little bit of a blue flame; that it quivers on the wick as if to see whether it can expand into a full flame; and that it is not safe for you even to breathe upon it, so that you must turn your face aside lest you blow it out; but Christ says that when a man has fallen so low that the spiritual life in him is as feeble as the flame of a newly-lighted lamp, He will not put it out. The all-merciful love of Jesus Christ, who is the atonement of the world, and who reveals in Himself the nature of the Divine

Father, is curative by its very moral character. It represents the love of Him who is for ever giving His life to make life in those whom He has created. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Christ a merciful and faithful High Priest*:—1. He must be merciful; for He must deal with God for sinful and miserable man, for to relieve him. And He is then merciful, when He doth not only know man's misery, but is inwardly sensible of it, so as to be moved and that effectually to succour him. This mercifulness is opposed not only to ignorance of others' misery, and senselessness, but also to harshness, severity, cruelty. And Christ was more merciful than ever any man or angel was, and there was great need He should be so; for if every offence, nay, if many and great offences, should move Him to passion, and enrage Him so as to reject them and their cause, or proceed to plead against them, or condemn them, how many thousands should perish everlastingly? 2. As He is merciful, so He must be faithful, and such as poor sinners may safely trust unto, and depend upon, when they commit their cause concerning their eternal estate into His hands. Christ may be said to be faithful, either to God, who hath given the office of high priest, and a command to discharge it, or unto man, who, according to the rules of God's Word, believes in Him, and commits Himself and all that he hath unto Him. And then He is actually faithful, when He performs all things belonging to His sacerdotal office, and goes through with His work until He hath perfectly finished, and sinful man attains that for which he trusted Him. Man may be merciful and not faithful; Christ is both, and will be sensible of our case and cause, will mind it, and do it as His own. In this respect our hope is firm and our comfort is unspeakable. Blessed are all they that trust Him. This is His qualification, the best that ever was or can be in any priest. 3. The work, the principal work is, to make reconciliation for the sins of His people. (1) He hath His people, and they are such as know Him and trust in Him. (2) These have their sins and are guilty. (3) Reconciliation therefore is necessary; otherwise they die, they perish everlastingly. (4) There must be some one, and the same a priest both merciful and faithful, to make this reconciliation, and this is Christ. (*G. Lawson.*) *The generosity of our kinsman*:—The chief of the Koreish were prostrate at his (Mahomet's) feet (after the conquest of Mecca). "What mercy can you expect from the man whom you have wronged?" "We confide in the generosity of our kinsman." "And you shall not confide in vain: begone! you are safe, you are free." (*Gibbon.*) *Christ's intercession compassionate*:—How a tender-hearted mother would plead with a judge for her child ready to be condemned! Oh, how would her bowels work; how would her tears trickle down; what weeping rhetoric would she use to the judge for mercy! Thus the Lord Jesus is full of sympathy and tenderness that He might be a merciful High Priest. Though He hath left His passion, yet not His compassion. An ordinary lawyer is not affected with the cause he pleads, nor doth he care which way it goes; profit makes him plead, not affection. But Christ intercedes feelingly, and that which makes Him intercede with affection is, it is His own cause which He pleads in the cause of His people. (*Thomas Watson.*) **To make reconciliation for the sins of the people.**—*The reconciliation of sinners by the death of Christ*:—I. IT IS SAID HERE, IT BECAME OUR SAVIOUR, OR HE MADE HIMSELF A DEBTOR, TO DO WHAT HE DID. 1. Though He acted willingly, and laid down His life freely, yet this became Him in respect of His compassion and great good-will to men. 2. It became Him in respect of His Father's will, and the pursuit of that business in which He was engaged. 3. It behoved Him in all things to be made like unto us. What, sin and all? No; God forbid; that is excepted (chap. iv. 5). Our Saviour was made like unto us. (1) In our limitation, contraction, bodily shape. He was as we are, confined to time, place, bodily weakness and infirmity. (2) In passions, affections and sensitive apprehensions. Only there is this difference; in us they ebb and flow, but in our Saviour they were exactly governed. (3) In our necessities of relief and support, as eating, drinking, sleeping, cessation from action. Therefore, we read, that He was weary, hungry, and the like. II. In the next place it follows that HE WAS LIKE UNTO US, THAT HE MIGHT BE A MERCIFUL AND FAITHFUL HIGH PRIEST. This was done with respect to us; in a way of compassion and pure good-will. Two things evidence this unto us. That the state which our Saviour submitted to, the principle that moved Him, was pure good-will. (1) The motive of God's sending Him, and of His coming. (2) The end and business of His coming was all from good-will. (3) In respect of God, it is said, that God "so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." And then (4),

The business that He came about: which doth give us a full account of our Saviour's intention, and doth justify our Saviour's work. For He came about a work as certainly Divine as the very Creation itself was. III. In the next place it follows THAT OUR INFIRMITIES ARE COMPASSIONABLE. These three things put together, do something lessen the sins of man, and procure him pity with God. 1. That he is liable to fail and be mistaken. 2. That in his constitution he doth consist of body and spirit. 3. That he is exposed to all sorts of temptations from without in this dangerous world. So that through the grace of God it is not so much what sin is as what the demeanour of a person is after sin. The same goodness that doth pardon penitents doth punish obstinacy. Inferences: 1. Though we are under guilt, yet let us not despair: for if we do submit, and turn to God, it is a case of mercy, and God will forgive. 2. Let us have no hard thoughts of God upon occasion of His present judgments, or future denunciations. Let us consider the temper that is in obstinate sinners. God may give repentance to the sinner, but He cannot give pardon to the impenitent. 3. Take notice, that to be tempted, and to sin, are two things. None can hinder an offer to be made; but it lies in our power to resist it. Satan may tempt, but he cannot force. Neither are we alone; for God will assist us, and will not be wanting to those that are willing to make use of His strength. 4. Let us counterwork the Evil One, by frequent proposals of good. If there be evil thoughts suggested, put yourselves upon good thoughts and motions. Live not carelessly in the world, since the world is a place of so much danger. 5. Do not run away with every report, nor bite at every bait; since we live among our enemies in a place of danger, difficulty, ill representations. (*B. Whichcote, D.D.*) *Christ our High Priest, merciful and faithful:*—1. The high priest was in the Jewish Church an eminent instrument of God, the most visible and eminent type of Christ that was. And truly, were not the high priest in the Jewish state transcendently supplied, he would be greatly missed. But, thanks be to God, whereas they had the shadow, we have the substance. The high priest was always a middle person between God and the people, to be in readiness to make approaches to God, whatsoever the necessity was. 2. And then He was merciful, viz., to make the best of our case; to compassionate us in misery, and to help us out. 3. Not only merciful but faithful; true to our cause, will make the best of our case. One that is trusted by God for us. 4. Next, in things pertaining to God. Where I observe that the business of Christ is wholly spiritual. Christ's government is in the mind, understanding and conscience. Christ did not come into the world for worldly ends and purposes; these are things far below His intentions. The notion of Christ's government is for mental illumination, delivery from sin, moral refinement, sanctification here, and glorification hereafter. They do act in the spirit of Christ, who are preachers of righteousness by words and by practice; what is not spiritual is wholly foreign to Christ's kingdom, and to His government. And then again, Christianity lays a foundation of no enmity, but only to unrighteousness and to wickedness. For if we be in a true Christian spirit, we will endeavour to reconcile, and we must be in reconciliation with everything that holds of God and that God doth uphold. 5. Whatsoever is declared concerning Christ; whatsoever the excellency of His person: this is the advantage that we have by it; that He makes use of all His power and interest for our benefit; and He was appointed of God to this end, that He might make reconciliation for the sins of the people. I am now from these words to give you an account of the business of reconciliation, which is the great undertaking of our Saviour; which is the product of infinite wisdom and goodness, and which is our greatest concernment, as being fundamentally necessary to happiness. For it is not possible we should be made happy by God Himself, if not reconciled to Him; we are eternally undone if this be not done. 1. This Reconciler goes in a way of moral motion. 2. He treats with both parties at variance. 3. He doth equally consider the right of both sides. 4. Reconciliation must be mutual. 5. It is acceptable every way to each party: the work of reconciliation is acceptable to God and man. To God, because God's honour is maintained, and because infinite wisdom and goodness have therein exercised themselves. And to man, because man is put upon nothing but what is best in itself; that a man if he did but consider, he would not be saved in another way. And man now is out of danger, and looks upon God as his Friend. And God delights in this His product, infinite wisdom and goodness together. This is the representation I make you concerning the matter of reconciliation. I will now speak of the manner of reconciliation, and show you what our Saviour in

our behalf did undertake, that was highly satisfactory to the mind of God, and according to His will; and therefore it was the true manner of reconciliation. 1. Concerning the quality of sin. Here is a declaration of its unworthiness, its odiousness in the sight of God, its ill demerit, its hurtfulness to the creature; for it destroys the subject, and is a pernicious example. Now it is fit that the person to be restored be made sensible of his condition, and what the physician hath done for him. 2. In respect of the law, four things were done by Christ's undertaking. (1) God's unquestionable right to make laws depending on His own will and pleasure. (2) The necessity of such laws that are in themselves good and founded in the relation the creature stands in to God. (3) The reason and equity of all these laws. (4) Man is bound in subjection to them. All these things are acknowledged by our Saviour's undertaking. 3. An open condemnation of sin is requisite and fitting in this case of the creatures wilful practice upon God; and to be for ever hereafter a check upon all lusts. And this is remarkably done by our Saviour, since He died for sin. This arrogant practice of the creature is sufficiently witnessed against; since an innocent person hath died for it. And doth not this look backward, and condemn what man hath done; and look forward, and restrain lust and sin, for all time to come? So that this being in itself worthy, is satisfactory to God, and the pardon of sin is thereby facilitated. 4. Owning God as supreme and sovereign, and owning the rule of right, is done in the very nature that had transgressed. 5. There is demonstration of God's veracity and holiness. He had given out prohibition under the penalty of death. "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt die the death." And this is fulfilled in the very letter. God's holiness and impartiality is declared, and this is according to the mind and will of God; and a matter that is acceptable is always matter of satisfaction. 6. He brings things to rights again. That is done by our Saviour's undertaking. The curse was taken off, and God returns to blessing, and He hath blessed man ever since. The passage is open to our free communication with God. (*Ibid.*) *Reconciliation with God*:—To effect this, all that is necessary is to persuade the sinner to cease his rebellion and submit to Him. In Christ God is reconciled to the sinner, and there is no need to persuade Him. He is love, the sinner is enmity. He is light, the sinner is darkness. He is nigh unto the sinner, but the sinner is afar off from Him. The great object then to be accomplished is, to destroy the sinner's enmity, that he may have Divine love; bring him from his darkness into Divine light; bring him from his evil works nigh unto God, and reconciliation is the result. (*John Bate.*)

Ver. 18. **Himself hath suffered, being tempted.**—*A tempted Saviour, our best succour*:—I. MANY SOULS ARE TEMPTED—CHRIST WAS TEMPTED. 1. They are tempted from all quarters. 2. They are tempted in all positions. 3. Every age has its temptations. II. AS THE TEMPTED OFTEN SUFFER, CHRIST ALSO SUFFERED. Temptation, even when overcome, brings with it to the true child of God a great degree of suffering. The suffering consists in two or three things. 1. It lies, mainly, in the shock which sin gives to the sensitive, regenerate nature. A man who is clothed in armour may walk through the midst of tearing thorns and brambles without being hurt; but let the man be stripped of his garments, and how sadly will he be torn. Sin, to the man who is used to it, is no suffering; if he be tempted, it is no pain to him; in fact, frequently temptation yields pleasure to the sinner. To look at the bait is sweet to the fish which means to swallow it by and by. But to the child of God, who is new-made and quickened, the very thought of sin makes him shudder; he cannot look at it without detestation. Now, in this case, Christ indeed has fellowship, and far outruns us. 2. Suffering, too, arises to the people of God from a dread of the temptation when its shadow falls upon us ere it comes. At times there is more dread in the prospect of a trial than there is in the trial itself. We feel a thousand temptations in fearing one. Christ knew this. What an awful dread was that which came over Him in the black night of Gethsemane! 3. The suffering of temptation also lies often in the source of it. Have you not often felt that you would not mind the temptation if it had not come from where it did? "Oh!" say you, "to think that my own friend, my dearly beloved friend, should try me!" Ah! but the Man of Sorrows knew all this, since it was one of the chosen twelve who betrayed Him. And, besides, "it pleased the Father to bruise Him." 4. I have no doubt, too, that a portion of the sorrow and suffering of temptation may also lie in the fact that God's name and honour are often involved in our temptation. III. THEY THAT ARE TEMPTED HAVE GREAT NEED OF SUCCOUR, AND CHRIST IS

ABLE, HAVING HIMSELF BEEN TEMPTED, TO SUCCOUR THEM THAT ARE TEMPTED. Of course this is true of Christ as God. The *Christos*, the anointed One, the High Priest of our profession, is in His complex character able to succour them that are tempted. How? 1. Why, first, the very fact that He was tempted has some succour in it to us. If we had to walk through the darkness alone, we should know the very extremity of misery; but having a companion, we have comfort; having such a companion, we have joy. 2. But, further, the fact that He has suffered without being destroyed is inestimably comforting to us. If you could see a block of ore just ready to be put into the furnace, if that block of ore could look into the flames, and could mark the blast as it blows the coals to a vehement heat, if it could speak it would say, "Ah! woe is me that ever I should be put into such a blazing furnace as that! I shall be burnt up; I shall be melted with the slag; I shall be utterly consumed!" But suppose another lump, all bright and glistening, could lie by its side, and say, "No, no, you are just like I was, but I went through the fire and I lost nothing thereby; see how bright I am; how I have survived all the flames." Why, then, that piece of ore would rather anticipate than dread the season when it too should be exposed to the purifying heat, and come out, all bright and lustrous, like its companion. 3. And you will remember, too, that Christ, in going through the suffering of temptation, was not simply no loser, but He was a great gainer; for it is written, it pleased God "to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." It was through His suffering that He obtained the mediatorial glory which now crowns His head. 4. But more, in that Christ hath suffered, being tempted, He is able to succour us who are tempted by sending His grace to help us. He was always able to send grace, but now as God and man He is able to send just the right grace at the right time, and in the right place. You know a doctor may have all the drugs that can be gathered, but an abundance of medicine does not make him a qualified practitioner; if, however, he has been himself and seen the case, then he knows just at what crisis of the disease such and such a medicine is wanted. The stores are good, but the wisdom to use the stores—this is even more precious. Now it pleased the Father that in Christ should all fulness dwell; but where should the Son of Man earn His diploma and gain the skill with which to use the fulness aright? Beloved, He won it by experience. 5. Having suffered Himself, being tempted, Christ knows how to succour us by His prayers for us. There are some people whose prayers are of no use to us, because they do not know what to ask for us. Christ is the Intercessor for His people; He has prevalence in His intercession, but how shall He learn what to ask for? How can He know this better than by His own trials? He hath suffered, being tempted. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Christ's temptability*:—We could not have a more unmistakable declaration than that respecting the reality of our Lord's temptations on earth. His conflict in the wilderness, and His agony in the garden, were not dramas acted on the stage of life by one who assumed our *rôle*, but facts in the real experience of One who was true to the core. His life was our life in its surroundings and in its conflicts, and therefore, when He ascended to heaven victorious over death, He appeared there for us as our representative, as a Man in whom, once and for ever, God's ideal of human nature was absolutely realised and fulfilled. Hence, in this passage, He is spoken of as our High Priest, who was taken from among the people; although being without sin, He was able to stand on their behalf as the holiest of all, nearer to God than they. From the wilderness to the Cross—nay, from the cradle to the Cross—Jesus suffered, being tempted. I. Now the use we may make of that FOR OUR ENCOURAGEMENT appears in many forms. 1. For example, a tempted yet triumphant leader implies future victory for those who follow Him. It is not always easy to believe in the coming triumph of good over evil. There is a sort of backwater of temptation which some of us have experienced, which is more dangerous than the direct current of evil which we breasted so bravely at first. We seem to get the better of some sin; but then, when the strain of vigilance relaxes, a stream of evil tendency comes from another direction and takes us unawares. Thus some of our best moments have appeared afterwards to be the precursors of our worst; and it is at such a time that we lose heart and think of giving up the struggle, till we learn to look beyond ourselves to Him, who Himself suffered being tempted—who was content to fight with our weapons, and with them won the victory. Then the hope is aroused that even yet we shall come off more than conquerors, through Him that loved us. 2. Besides this, another difficulty of ours is swept away by the inflowing of our thought about this temptable yet victorious Saviour—namely, the difficulty that arises from

the notion that the higher the life the freer it must be from assault. If that were true, Christ Jesus would never have been tempted at all. The wind blows strongest on the hill-tops. Our Lord was on loftier heights than we ever reach, yet from the beginning to the end of His career on earth "He Himself suffered, being tempted." 3. There is yet another message of comfort from this verse to tempted Christians—namely, that they may be quite sure of their Lord's sympathy. It is this which is specially insisted upon in the passage before us, and it was partly with a view to make Divine sympathy manifest and appreciable to us that "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." I remember reading somewhere of a little child whose dead body was washed up on the shore during a gale. It was taken by loving, reverent hands, and buried amid the tears of strangers in the village churchyard. There was no clue to the birth, or to the name, or to the parentage of that little waif—it was just "somebody's darling," that was all; and when they put up a tombstone, they did not know what inscription to choose, till at last they thought of two words, which were carved on the marble slab—"God knows." Aye, and there is no wreck of your hopes, no struggle amid the blasts of temptation, about which you may not say to yourself "God knows," and the assurance of His sympathy will be to you as life from the dead. II. Turning now from the encouragements which we may hope to gain from the truth here enunciated, let us try to look more closely into THE NATURE OF THESE TEMPTATIONS. About many of them we probably know nothing. They are out of our range, as in some respect Jesus Himself was. A sensualist cannot understand the more subtle suggestions of the Evil One, and ordinary Christians have no conception of Paul's consciousness of sin when he cried, "Of sinners I am the chief." Still more unsearchable are certain temptations which came to the Saviour of sinners—for they were too keen and subtle for us—just as there are sounds in the world which our gross hearing cannot catch, and sights our dull eyes cannot see. But though temptations are the more subtle in proportion to the holiness of the one who is tempted, and vary in form according to his circumstances and conditions, it may be taken as approximately true that the three avenues by which evil approaches human nature are summed up in these words: "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." This summary, indeed, is the revelation of the Holy Spirit, who leads us into all truth; and it is complete in itself. 1. Take an example or two of His own inward struggles to illustrate the first of these. No doubt Jesus was free from some of the baser and more animal suggestions of the adversary, but His physical frame laid Him open to others. (1) We read that after He had fasted forty days, He was hungry; and at once a temptation to supply His wants addressed itself to His weakness. Who of us would have hesitated to do what was thus suggested? Jesus did hesitate and decisively refused, because it would be using for self power which He had come on earth to use for others. But cannot our Lord understand, from that experience of His, those numberless temptations which address themselves now to such a sense of want in us? The miserable little starveling who lives like an Ishmael amid our boasted civilisation, seeing and smelling abundance of good things in shops, with only a pane of glass between his hunger and its satisfaction; the unfortunate man who is out of work because trade is bad or has changed its locality, and who comes home after a weary, useless, all-day tramp, to see a starving wife and pale, pinched children, till he curses the injustice which he cannot despise or defy; and the still more wretched woman left with children dependent on her, who even when in work cannot get them bread, and is tempted to do anything for food. These, whom we forget, Jesus remembers, while we, who never had a day without food in all our lives, cannot understand that conflict. He does understand the desperate temptation, and the glorious triumph over it. (2) But there are other temptations which assail us through the physical life. We read that Jesus was weary with His journey; that He slept heavily from sheer fatigue directly the boat set sail; and we find in the Gospels other indications that He shared our experiences of tiredness and weakness. Some of you are often oppressed by a sense of this. It not infrequently brings about spiritual depression, which you seem powerless to shake off. Tired ones, look up to your Lord! He knows all about this, and stands beside you in it; and it may be that in answer to your prayer He will give you such a sense of His presence that you will be able to say with Paul, "When I am weak, then am I strong. I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me." 2. There is a second set of temptations which our Lord well understands—I allude to those which come through the distastefulness of our surroundings. The patience of our

Lord appears the more marvellous when we think of the absolute repulsiveness to His holy nature of much that He was in contact with every day. 3. Now, we are taught by our Lord's example that it is not always God's will that we should seek to escape uncongenial surroundings. Jesus could have done so at any moment; but although He sighed deeply in spirit and said, "O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you, how long shall I suffer you," yet He did not leave the world, and would not leave it till His mission was fulfilled. It may be that you have to bear witness for Christ just where you are; that if you retreat from your post, no voice will there be uplifted for Him, and no life will silently check the growth and spread of evil. 4. We have not time now to speak at any length of other temptations which came to our Lord through His energies and capacities. Whenever you forego the opportunity you have to take a thing wrongly when it is easy to take it, you are in fellowship with Christ, who resisted that temptation victoriously over and over again. (*A. Rowland, LL.B.*) *The trials of Christ the trials of the serious*:—I. We learn from these words ONE IMPORTANT END OF THE TEMPTATION OF OUR DIVINE REDEEMER. It was to give us an assurance of sympathy and aid under the pressure of such trials as we must all of us expect. 1. Now I am speaking only to those who believe in the Divinity of the Saviour, and that what He took upon Him was "human nature." Now, the nature which our Divine Redeemer took upon Him was not that nature which Adam had after his fall. It was not a nature in which the higher principles were in bondage, and from which the light of the Divine presence was withdrawn, but the original human nature which Adam had in the early days before his fatal disobedience. 2. The trials He underwent were the trials incident to such a nature. There are, you know, some circumstances which we cannot imagine to present temptation to any but a very badly constituted being. There are other circumstances which cause trial quite independently of such considerations, and others, again, which can be afflicting only in proportion to the completeness of the subordination of the rest of the principles to the conscience, and of the whole to Divine influence. For instance, to say that a man was severely tried by being placed in circumstances in which he would have to abstain from theft, would be to express a low opinion of him. But to say that he was severely tried by being placed in a position where he should do without food, would imply no such estimate of his character. Why not? Because it would be natural to him to desire food. II. From what has been said, it will appear THAT OUR TRIALS RESEMBLE CHRIST'S, JUST IN THE SAME DEGREE THAT OUR NATURE RESEMBLES HIS. Our Divine Redeemer came to do very much more than save us from the punishment of sin. He came to save us from its power. He came to renew our nature by restoring to it what it had lost. We Christians are spoken of as "renewed in the spirit of our mind"—as "having put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." St. Paul exhorts the Colossians to the abandonment of certain sins on this distinct ground—"seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds," &c. Now, it is just in proportion to our progress towards this ideal of a Christian that our trials will resemble those of our Lord and Master. In a word, the trials of the serious are those which resemble Christ's. These trials are principally of two kinds. One kind is that which consists in the patient endurance of afflictions, which must, from the nature of the case, cause pain and sorrow—afflictions which no degree of holiness could prevent us from feeling while they last. In cases of this kind the Saviour's example certainly teaches us the power of endurance with which man is endowed. The other class of trials peculiar to the serious are those which address themselves to their zeal for the service of the Most High. In trials of this kind, where serious men fear that they may be hindering the spread of God's dominion among men—by not "going with the times" (as men say) in religious matters of doctrine or worship—the history of our Redeemer's temptation is peculiarly instructive. Every one of the proposals of Satan seemed for the glory of God and the furtherance of the ends the Redeemer had in view. To work a miracle was not merely to appease the pangs of hunger, but to prove Himself the Son of God. To cast Himself from a pinnacle of the temple was at once to give evidence of His reliance upon the Most High and to impress the assembled Jews with the belief that their Messiah had appeared among them, as they expected, from heaven, and had "suddenly," as was predicted, "come to His Temple." To secure the kingdoms of the world was an end which might for a moment seem to justify the use of almost any means. And yet it was in this proposal—the proposal to secure the greatest ends by the adoption of unlawful means—that the tempter was unmasked. In a word, we are supported

by the remembrance of the Redeemer's trials in all cases where we have declined to "make the end sanctify the means"—where we have declined to "do evil that good may come." We are taught that when God has appointed means to an end, we cannot gain that end—His end—by other means; that when He has ordained a time, we must not—while acting in accordance with His regular appointments—be impatient of delay. We are taught to endure the constant taunts—the utterances of zeal without knowledge, or of thoughtlessness without either—to endure being called indifferent to our Master's cause! We are taught to hope on, and to be firm, amid all the clamorous calls to encourage disorder, ecclesiastical lawlessness, heresy, schism, to promote what we think wrong—or else, forsooth, see "sin triumphant and Jehovah conquered!" We are taught, I say, to reject the temptation, as we hear the voice of our Divine Redeemer saying to us through the record of His trials, "Be still, then, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the heathen; and I will be exalted in the earth." (*J. C. Coghlan, D.D.*) *The higher the life, the more open to assault*:—The wind blows strongest on the hill-tops. As you climb some mountain you may find that for a time you lose the breeze which hindered you lower down, because you are sheltered by the mountain itself; but when you have climbed higher, and peered over the jagged edge, you can hardly keep your feet or gain your breath, for the awful wind howls and screams across the ravine below to buffet you remorselessly. Our Lord was on loftier heights than we ever reach; yet from the beginning to the end of His career on earth "He Himself suffered, being tempted." (*A. Rowland, LL.B.*) **Able to succour them that are tempted.**—*The efficient sympathy of Christ*:—I. THE SUFFERING. 1. It was personal suffering. 2. It was positive and most painful suffering. 3. In all its reality, variety, and extent, it bore the special character of temptation. II. THE SUCCOUR. 1. This succour is accompanied with the truest sympathy. "If ever I fall into a surgeon's hands with broken bones," is a remark which has become almost proverbial, "give me one whose own bones have been broken." How can those who have never known what illness is enter with the tenderness of a perfect fellowship into the chambers of the sick? or how can those who have never known a want understand with a matter-of-fact experience the anxieties of the poor and needy? 2. This succour is imparted with the utmost promptitude. 3. This succour is conveyed in the form of actual deliverance or effective relief, or at least adequate support. (*E. A. Thomson.*) *The suffering Saviour's sympathy*:—I. JESUS SUFFERING. 1. The feeling. It was a trying thing to Him even to dwell here among men. He suffered in being placed where He could be tempted. 2. The fact that He was tempted—tempted up to the suffering point. 3. The fruit. He was made perfect through His sufferings, and fitted for His solemn office of High Priest to His people. (1) Temptation to sin is no sin. (2) Temptation does not show any displeasure on God's part. (3) Temptation really implies no doubt of your being a son of God. (4) Temptation need not lead to any evil consequences in any case. (5) Do not make it any cause of complaint that you are tempted. (6) Far from your hearts be the idea that any temptation should lead you to despair. Jesus triumphed, and so shall you. II. JESUS SUCCOURING. "He is able to succour them that are tempted." 1. In this we note His pity, that He should give Himself up to this business of succouring them that are tempted. He lays Himself out to succour them that are tempted, and therefore He does not hide Himself from them, nor pass them by on the other side. What an example is this for us! He devotes Himself to this Divine business of comforting all such as mourn. He is Lord of all, yet makes Himself the servant of the weakest. Whatever He may do with the strongest, He succours "them that are tempted." He does not throw up the business in disgust; He does not grow cross or angry with them because they are so foolish as to give way to idle fears. 2. The text treats of His fitness also. (1) He has the right, acquired by His suffering, to enter in among sufferers, and deal with them. (2) He has also the disposition to succour them. He obtained that tender temper through suffering, by being Himself tempted. (3) And then He has the special ability. Our Blessed Master, having lived a life of suffering, understands the condition of a sufferer so well that He knows how to make a bed for him (Psa. xli. 3). 3. His methods of succouring them that are tempted. (1) Usually by giving a sense of His sympathy. (2) Sometimes by suggesting precious truths, which are the sweet antidote for the poison of sorrow. (3) Sometimes He succours His people by inwardly strengthening them. (4) I have known the Lord bless His people by making them very weak. The next best thing to being strong in the Lord is to be extremely weak in yourself. They go together, but sometimes they

are divided in experience. It is grand to feel, "I will not struggle any more; I will give all up, and lie passive in the Lord's hand." III. JESUS SOUGHT AFTER. 1. Where else can you go? 2. Where better can you go? (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The suffering Succourer*:—1. His sufferings were many and cruel, and such as never any did endure; yet His greatest sufferings were reserved to the last. And though He never sinned, yet He knew and felt the woeful consequences of sin, and the punishments it deserves. 2. He was tempted; for no sooner was He baptized, and publicly initiated and declared in the sight of heaven and earth to be the Son of God, but Satan, the great enemy, set upon Him, and attempted His ruin; yea, all His sufferings, as from Satan, were temptations; and it is very likely he did assault Him most violently in the end. By both these He knew what a sad and woeful thing suffering for sin is, and how hard a thing it is to be tempted and not to sin, and how much such as being violently tempted do sin are to be pitied. For if He, who had the greatest power that ever was to overcome temptations, was hardly put to it, He could not be ignorant how dangerous man's condition is, and how easily a frail sinner may be foiled. 3. This suffering and temptation made Him more merciful and faithful, and able to succour. To succour is to do all things for the procuring the reconciliation of His people; and His ability to succour is His mercifulness and fidelity, whereby He is every way fitted, powerfully inclined, and effectually moved to succour them. To be able sometimes is to be fit, as Varinus observeth; and so it may be here taken. And the more fit, the more able. The saying is, "None so merciful as those who have been miserable"; and they who have not only known misery, but felt it, are most powerfully inclined, not only to inward compassion, but to the real relieving of others miserable. And this was a contrivance of the profound wisdom of that God, who is infinitely knowing and merciful, to find a way how to feel misery and be merciful another way. This was by His Word assuming flesh, that in that flesh He might be tempted violently and suffer most grievously; and all this that He might be more merciful and effectually succour sinful man. (*G. Lawson.*) *The Lord Jesus Christ a succouring Christ to tempted souls*:—I. JESUS CHRIST IS ABLE TO SUCCOUR TEMPTED SOULS. I will say nothing of the great power that He hath with the Father, or in His own hands. He is able by conquest for to succour you that are tempted; He is able by conquest for to raise the siege that is laid against our souls; He hath beaten through the enemy—as now, if a town be besieged by an enemy, and the enemy abroad in the field, having an army in the field, if any one will come to raise the siege, they must fight through the army, they must beat through the army before they can raise the siege. Never a tempted soul but is thus besieged with temptation, closely begirt, and the devils were abroad in the field, were masters of the field till Christ came, and no man nor angel was able to beat through; but Jesus Christ beat up the quarters all along, beat through the enemy, cast out devils all along, overcame. II. But you will say, We will grant Christ is able to succour tempted souls; but IS HE WILLING? Yes, He is infinitely willing to succour poor tempted souls. Our great succour lies in reconciliation with God the Father, as by comparing these two verses together doth appear. God the Father hath set Him forth to be a propitiation; it was the will of God the Father that Jesus Christ should come and make propitiation; it was His will. Now, look into the fortieth Psalm, and see what Christ saith concerning the will of the Father (Psa. xl. 7). Again, it argues that He is very willing to succour poor tempted souls, because He was so willing to cure diseased bodies; when He was upon the earth He was willing to cure them, so willing, as though it did cost a miracle, yet He would do it. III. But though He be able and willing, yet IT MAY BE HE IS NOT FAITHFUL. Yes, saith the former verse, faithful; merciful and faithful High Priest. Faithful in all His house as Moses was. What honest man will break his word, go contrary to his oath? He is sworn into this office of the High Priest. Yea, we have not only His promise and His oath, but the Father's bond for the Son's performance: "The seed of the woman shall break the serpent's head"; it shall bruise his heel; she shall break his head. The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand. This is the work that is in His hand, to succour tempted ones: it shall prosper in His hand. IV. But suppose He is faithful, HOW DOTH HE SUCCOUR those that are tempted in the day and time of their temptation? 1. Christ succours tempted souls before the temptation comes sometimes, by a special manifestation of Himself, His love and fulness, to them. Again, He succours before the temptation by filling the heart with the Holy Ghost. When the vessel is filled with one liquor, it keeps out another. 2. He succours also under temptation by opening the eyes of him that is tempted to see that it is but a temptation. A temptation is half-cured when a

man knows that it is but a temptation: when a man's eyes are open to see the tempter and the temptation. Therefore men are so hardly cured, because they are hardly persuaded that it is a temptation. When they see that, then they say, "Get thee behind me, Satan." Christ opens their eyes. Again, He succours under temptation, by letting fall some glimpse of His love, some love-look upon a tempted soul. And so, when Peter was in the high priest's hall, Christ looks upon him, and he went out and wept bitterly. 3. After temptation He succours: by filling the heart with joy unspeakable and full of glory; by sending the angels to minister: as when the devil left Christ, had tempted Him and left Him, then came the angels and ministered to Him. Every way—before temptation, and in temptation, and after temptation—the Lord Jesus Christ is a succouring Christ to tempted souls. He was a Man of Sorrows that He might be a God of succours; His heart is full of succours. V. APPLICATION. 1. Whilst I stand upon this truth, methinks I hear a solemn and gracious invitation to all poor tempted souls to come unto Jesus Christ, to come for succour. (1) He will succour tempted sinners most when they are most tempted. (2) He will not only succour thus, but He will succour you that are tempted when you cannot succour yourselves; when your own thoughts cannot succour you, when your own thoughts dare not succour you, or when your own thoughts trample upon your evidences, and when your own thoughts shall make a mutiny in your hearts, and set all on fire: "In the multitude of my thoughts Thy Word comforts my soul." (3) He will not only succour thus, but He will succour poor tempted souls with a notwithstanding: notwithstanding all their failings and infirmities. 2. If this doctrine be true, what ground of strong consolation is here unto all the saints! 3. If Jesus Christ be a succouring Christ, then let us be succouring Christians. Shall the Lord Jesus Christ carry a poor tempted soul upon His shoulder, by way of succour, and shall I carry him upon my shoulder as a burden? 4. If the Lord Jesus Christ be a succouring Christ, then why should we yield unto our sins and to our temptations? 5. If there be a truth in this—Christ is a succouring Christ—let us all labour to answer Christ. It is the duty and the property of the people of God to observe what God is doing upon their hearts, and to help on that work. If Jesus Christ be succouring of any of your souls against your temptations, oh! help on the work; it is your duty to help it on, and to answer Him. (*W. Bridge, M.A.*) *Of experience of suffering causing succour to others that suffer:*—This effect following upon Christ's suffering, being tempted, namely, that He is fit and ready to succour others that are tempted, giveth evidence of an especial benefit of God's providence in suffering His only-begotten Son and also His adopted children to be so far tempted as to suffer thereby. By this means they are brought to afford mutual succour one to another in like case. Thus saith the apostle, "God comforteth us in all our tribulations, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God" (2 Cor. i. 4). The Lord, to stir up the Israelites to succour strangers, rendereth this reason, "Ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Exod. xxiii. 9). A like reason is rendered of showing mercy to servants (Deut. v. 15). It is found by experience that child-bearing women are more pitiful to others in their travails than such women as are barren. The like may be said of such as are afflicted with any painful malady. Much more humanity used to be shown in the city to such as are visited with the plague than in the country, because in the city more used to be infected therewith. 1. From hence it appears that it is expedient that ministers of God's Word be men of like passions with others (as the apostles say of themselves, Acts xiv. 15), that so they may more commiserate others. If ministers themselves had never been in a natural state, but always entire, they could not so pity others as now they do. The like may be said of magistrates, and of all that have power and authority over others. 2. God's wisdom is herein manifested, in that He suffers flesh to remain in the best, that thereby they may be moved the more to bear with others. Christ suffered Satan to sift Peter, that when he was converted he might strengthen his brethren (Luke xxii. 31, 32). This is a good use which saints may make of their slips. 3. Oh! how great is the inhumanity of such as, having tasted misery, and being delivered from the same, are hard-hearted to those that fall into the like misery and refuse to succour them; yea, rather deal hardly with them, and add to their affliction. This was it which Nehemiah upbraided to the Jews after their return from captivity (Neh. v. 7, &c.). The like doth Jeremiah while the Jews were besieged (Jer. xxxiv. 13, &c.). The like may be upbraided to such as have power among us, in commonwealth, Church, or family. 4. For our parts, as God by His providence hath made us able

and fit to succour others, let us herein show ourselves like unto Christ. Let us open our bowels to such as are in distress (note Gal. vi. 1; Tit. iii. 3). Let all of all sorts—magistrates, ministers, masters, rich men, old men, men in health, and such as have been tempted or afflicted—learn to succour others. (*W. Gouge.*) *The Succourer of the tempted:*—I. THE HOLY SUFFERER HIMSELF. Who is He? It is the co-equal, co-eternal Son of the Father, assuming the nature of His brethren upon earth; a human nature in the covenant line, on purpose to bear our sins, and bring in everlasting salvation for our rejoicing. Our text holds forth His being "tempted," as a peculiar feature of His sufferings: "He suffered, being tempted"; and it may not be unprofitable if I advert to the temptations that He endured. Temptation, you know, was addressed to Him in a threefold form; and in all these we are called to tread in His steps. The first was care, the second was covetousness, and the third was presumption. Now, before I go to other parts of the subject, I think the prominent point of Christ's sufferings in consequence of temptation was its contrast to the holiness of His nature. The nearer a Christian lives to God, the more his soul thus aspires after spiritual and holy things, the more hateful and distressing is every temptation. And this, I think, is the only fair way of answering all objection upon the point: that the suffering in consequence of temptation arose from the contrast of temptation with holiness—the hatefulness of sin to the mind that is bent on the holiness of God. "He suffered, being tempted," because temptation was the very antipodes to the holiness of His nature. But we pass on to remark yet further upon His unparalleled sufferings; and whether we glance at the sufferings of His body or the sufferings of His soul, or unite them in one contemplation, we may utter the exclamation of the propbet, personating Christ, "Behold and see, all ye that pass by, if there be any sorrow like unto My sorrow, which is done unto Me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted Me in the day of His fierce anger." Unparalleled sorrows were sustained by Christ. And oh! how did He suffer? We do not hear one word of complaint while He is suffering only from creatures; the malice of Pharisees He braves silently; the temptations of the devil He vanquishes with "Get thee hence"; but when He at length feels the curse of a broken law entering His very soul, then He opens His mouth: "O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me." "He suffered, being tempted." And all this as covenant Head, as the Representative of His Church; all this in His Suretyship character. II. HIS EXERCISED FOLLOWERS. And really I am quite ashamed that you and I should make any complaints about it at all. It is true His people have to endure the malice of the same enemies now; but then they have an indemnity; they have a holy security that they cannot perish, that they shall none of them "be tempted above that they are able," and that "with the temptation also He will make a way of escape." Why, I wonder what they are to do without temptations, without trials. They are expressly designed for the purpose of calling out the graces of the Holy Spirit, and giving occasion for the triumphs of Christian experience, to the consummation of time. But look we, further, to the position of the real child of God when the tempter aims at the very same point that he did all along with Christ. "If Thou be the Son of God": if thy Christianity be real. I like, if he brings me an "if," to meet him with one of God's "shalls" and "wills"; and they are always more powerful and impressive than "ifs." There are no "ifs" in Scripture respecting the children of God, except they be "ifs" of demonstration; they are all "shalls" and "wills" there. "I will be their God, and they shall be My people." If Jehovah has put a cry in your heart for mercy and pardon and peace wholly in Christ, under a consciousness of your need, be assured of this, that He will never abandon the work of His own hands. He will go on to be gracious. Now shall I tell you how our Lord "is able to succour" you? It is just simply by revealing Himself. "I am thy salvation"; "It is I; be not afraid." It comforts, it cheers, it upholds. Just observe what encouragement here is for faith to the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. Having Himself "suffered, being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted." He has the fulness of grace; "all power is given to Him in heaven and in earth"; it is in His own hands, and he is "full of grace and truth." "He is able to succour them that are tempted." "Well," say you, "is He willing?" Suppose I reverse the question: Are you willing that He should? or are you looking somewhere else for succour? Are you willing that He should do it in His own way? (*J. Irons.*) *Christ's succour to the tempted:*—I. HAVING SUFFERED UNDER TEMPTATION, CHRIST KNOWS THE FORCE OF TEMPTATION, AND CAN SYMPATHISE WITH OUR ENDURANCE OF IT. He knows by experience—the most thorough, realistic kind of knowledge. 1. He has seen the nature

of the evil. 2. He has suffered from the assaults of temptation. II. KNOWING THE FORCE OF TEMPTATION, AND SYMPATHISING WITH THE SUFFERING IT CAUSES, CHRIST IS ABLE TO SUCCOUR THE TEMPTED. 1. His sympathy is itself succour. 2. By His knowledge and sympathy He can give just such grace as is needed. Pathology must precede therapeutics. The diagnosis of disease is the first duty of the physician, and it is the most difficult; when that is successfully accomplished, the prescription follows almost as a matter of course. 3. His knowledge and sympathy encourage our trust. III. BEING THUS ABLE TO SUCCOUR THE TEMPTED, CHRIST IS A FIT MEDIATOR BETWEEN GOD AND MAN. This is not stated in the text, but it is the inference towards which the writer is leading us. And the connection of thought is apparent. The Mediator has a twofold relationship. He represents God to man and man to God as "Apostle" and as "High Priest" (chap. iii. 1). 1. The ability to succour is, of course, of primary importance in the representative of God to man; for He comes not merely as an ambassador to declare the mind of God, but as a Saviour to redeem the world to God and preserve the redeemed from falling into further sin. 2. It is also important in the representative of man to God. (*W. F. Adeney, M.A.*) *Succour in Christ for the tempted*:—The Divine Son of God, before His incarnation in our flesh, was, in His own personal being, separate from the sons of men. He knew, He felt, as a Creator, all that we suffer. But one link was wanting to bind Him to us; in fact, a gulf of vast extent lay yet between us. He had not undergone these things—we had undergone them. No cry of suffering had ever arisen from Him; from man, every hour since the Fall had sent up its utterance of woe. This distinction no Divine knowledge can overstep; this gulf no tender love of the Creator for His creature can ever bridge over. Personal experience is the prerogative of personal being, with which none can intermeddle, and which God Himself infringes not. Ever since the dawn of thought its exercise has been enriching each one of us. Its fruits are our own, in a manner in which nought else is our own. Ask the poor victim of suffering and pain where lies the charm in that one face, pale and wan, and with no outward charm, which above all others he loves to see bending over his bed and ministering to him? Others bring gifts; she, it may be, can bring none: others speak many words of studied kindness; she, perhaps, speaks but little and seldom; but there is that in the calm usual face, the ordinary casual word, the help, better and more precious, and more powerful, and more beloved than all on earth besides. Yes; because that face has known sorrow—that sympathy, flowing so still, comes from the deep fountains of personal suffering; because that one, having suffered, knows how to succour them that suffer. Thus, then, Christ's temptation was His training; and we have now to consider how it may be our help. The question for us is, How may we, dwelling in the midst of temptation day by day, make use of our Lord's temptation, as an element in His course for our redemption, to help us in our conflict? I would say, then, to the tempted, first—Strive to understand Christ; not in the self-sufficient, lower sense of the word "understand," but in its higher and humbler sense—to take in a living idea of the length and depth and breadth and height of that marvellous sympathising humanity which Christ bears about Him now, as He did then. Watch it growing broader and deeper by sorrow and suffering and temptation; watch it taking into itself, as a great world-wide stream, all those lesser drops, those tributary rills, of thy sorrows and mine, thy sufferings and mine, thy temptations and mine. Nay, more; follow in the wonderful gospel record day by day the onward course of the Son of God. Bear in mind who He was and whence He came. See the calm surface of the ocean of Divine love and Divine wisdom becoming ruffled by the disturbing forces of our troubled humanity, till at length His whole being is torn into the fierce waves of the tempest, and He cries, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death," and claims the sympathy of those who were so unequal to console Him: "Tarry ye here and watch with Me." And all this for the very purpose that He might be touched with a feeling of thine infirmities—all this that He might in His present ascended state bear every temptation and suffering of every man on earth in His heart. (*Dean Alford.*) *On temptation*:—1. There is a vexing, corroding, afflictive disposition in every temptation, when it takes least, though it do not prevail. These fire-balls, fire-darts of Satan have a danger with them; though they do not burn down our spiritual building to the ground, there is somewhat of a suffering with them. Paul calls his buffetings a thorn, or a prick in the flesh, and therefore afflictive (see also Luke xxii. 31). Satan comes to meet us, and though we do not consent to him, yet a gracious heart cannot but look upon it as an affliction to be thus followed and hunted with a temptation. And the Holy Ghost alludes to this

practice when He saith here in the text, Jesus Christ is able to succour. The word succour signifies such a succouring as brings in help unto those that cry out. 2. Doth God suffer His own children thus to suffer? Yes, and many times the best are most tempted; those that are most eminently godly are most foully assaulted. David, Job, Peter, Paul, and Christ Himself was. Yea, God doth not only suffer Satan to come and present evil objects before His servants, but suffers him to go so far as to solicit, to follow on his temptation. Yea, God doth not only suffer this, but at that very time when the saints have had most of God then they have suffered by the hand of temptation. When Paul had been taken up into the third heaven, then a messenger (Satan) was sent to buffet him. And would you know the reason? Good authors say that God suffers His own dear children to be tempted that they may be more enlightened. Temptation enlightens the tempted; thereby they are more experienced. God suffers His children thus to be tempted that they may be cleansed. These are God's scullions to make His golden pots of the sanctuary the brighter. God suffers His own children to be tempted that they may be conserved or kept: He preserves them from one sin by being tempted to another. And Paul says that he received that messenger of Satan twice, that he might not be exalted. God suffers His children to be tempted that their graces may be increased. As the fire is blown up by the wind of the bellows, and the strength of an argument draws out the strength of the answerer, so do these temptations draw out the strength of the tempted. God suffers His children to be tempted that they may be discovered to themselves and others, what their sins and graces are. You do not know what the liquor is until the vessel be bored; then you know it. And the word that is here used for temptation originally signifies to bore, as a vessel is bored. God suffers His children to be tempted that occasionally they may be made more fit to receive the fulness of Christ as a Saviour. A man not tempted may receive the fulness of Christ as the head; but unless a man be tempted he is not fit to receive the fulness of Christ as a Saviour. Hereby they are made like unto Jesus Christ. Christ was made like to us, that He might be tempted; and we are tempted that we may be made like to Him. 3. But you will say, "If God's own people, His children, be sorely tempted, how is that true which you have in 1 John v. 18: "Whosoever is born of God sins not: he that is begotten of God keeps himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not"? The devil toucheth him not; and if the devil does not so much as touch him, how can this be true that he suffers thus by the hand of his temptation? For answer hereunto ye must know that this word touching, in Scripture phrase, besides the literal sense, sometimes notes an hurting or harming of one. So in Psa. cv. 15: "Touch not Mine anointed"; which is explained in the following words: "and do My prophets no harm." Again this same word touching, in Scripture phrase, sometimes notes communion; and so when the apostle forbids the Corinthians fellowship and communion with idolaters, saith he, "Be ye separate, and touch no unclean thing"; touching there noting communion and fellowship with them in their worship: do not in the least measure have any communion with them. So now, although it pleases God to suffer Satan thus to vex His children with temptation, yet notwithstanding they have not fellowship or communion with him. (*W. Bridge, M.A.*) *Sympathy the fruit of suffering*:—Leopold, Grand Duke of Baden, in the midst of the suffering caused by his complaint, said to his physician, "Tell me, doctor, are there any who suffer as much as I do?" "Yes, your highness," replied the doctor; "I have a patient afflicted with the same disease, and lying on a bed of straw." "On straw!" cried Leopold. With a trembling hand he rang the bell, and ordered his servants to have the best bed in the castle taken to the sick man, as well as all other necessaries.

CHAPTER III.

VER. 1. **Wherefore, holy brethren.**—*The heavenly calling*:—"Wherefore" connects generally with chaps. i., ii., where Christ is Apostle (chap. i. 1–3) and High Priest (chap. ii. 9, &c.), though immediately with "faithful" (chap. ii. 17) and the closing words of chap. ii. The author had in view this comparison with Moses, and prepared the way for it by using "faithful" in chap. ii. 17. The author had called believers "sanctified" and "sons" (chap. ii. 11–13); recalling this, and realising

what it implied, he addresses the Hebrews as "holy brethren." Further, he had set before them what the great salvation was to which they were destined (chap. ii. 3), and to which the Captain of their salvation had attained, even lordship over all things in the world to come (chap. ii. 5, &c.); and as called to this heavenly world and already tasting its powers (chap. vi. 5, ii. 4), he addresses them as partakers of "a heavenly calling"; that is, sharing in a call to the possession of the heavenly world to come. In the word "heavenly" there is struck for the first time, in words at least, an antithesis of great importance in the Epistle, that of this world and heaven; in other words, that of the merely material and transient and the ideal and abiding. The things of this world are material, unreal, transient; those of heaven are ideal, true, and eternal. Heaven is the world of realities, of things themselves (chap. ix. 23), of which the things here are but "copies." There is the true Tabernacle (chap. viii. 2); the city that hath the foundations (chap. xi. 10); the heavenly Jerusalem and Mount Zion (chap. xii. 22); the kingdom that cannot be shaken (chap. xii. 27, 28); the true "country" which the patriarchs sought (chap. xi. 16)—all the eternal real things of which the things of this world are but shadows (chap. x. 1); and to these things we are called and are come, for this heavenly world projects itself into this present life like headlands of a new world into the ocean. This world of realities has been revealed, for Christ, who belongs to it, has come from it, and has opened up the way to it by entering it through death as our Forerunner (chap. vi. 20) and High Priest (chap. x. 19). This real world is the abode of God, where He is as He is in Himself. It is that which He has destined to be put in subjection to man as his final possession (chap. ii. 5-8). Being true and consisting of things themselves, it cannot be shaken, but remains after the great convulsions under which things that are made pass away (chap. xii. 27). Then it may be called earth or heaven, for earth and heaven coincide. (*A. B. Davidson, LL.D.*) *The causes of men's being holy, and of calling them so:*—This excellent prerogative of being holy cannot arise from men's selves. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one" (Job xiv. 4). "But every good and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights" (James i. 17). This Father of lights communicateth holiness to men two ways. 1. By imputing unto them the righteousness of His Son. Thus we are said to be "made the righteousness of God in Christ" (2 Cor. v. 21), and Christ is said to "be made of God righteousness unto us" (1 Cor. i. 30). 2. By conveying His Spirit into us, who altereth our nature and disposition, and enableth us to perform the works of righteousness. In this respect He is not only called the Holy Ghost, but also the Spirit of holiness (Rom. i. 4); and sanctification is said to be of the Spirit (2 Thess. ii. 13), because it is wrought in us by the Spirit of God. Thus this excellent title "Holy" gives no matter of boasting unto man (2 Cor. iv. 7); but it giveth great cause of glorying in God. The apostle here giveth these Hebrews this title not so much in regard of their parentage, because the root from whence they sprouted was holy (Rom. xi. 16); for the partition wall betwixt Jew and Gentile was now broken down, and all that were of the faith of Abraham were counted to be of Abraham's seed (Gal. iii. 7). The apostle therefore here gives them this title—1. In regard to their profession, whereby they were distinguished from profane persons. 2. In regard of his opinion of them; for he judged them to be true members of the holy Church (1 Cor. vi. 11). Thus he usually styleth all to whom he wrote "saints"; that is, holy ones. How did the apostle know that they were holy? By their holy profession; for the ground of judging others is not certainty of knowledge, but the rule of love (1 Cor. xiii. 7). (*W. Gouge.*) *Directions to be holy:*—That we may be such "holy brethren" as are here set down—1. Be well informed in the nature of holiness. If the mark be mistaken, the more diligence we use, the further we shall be off from it. The faster a traveller goes in a wrong way, the farther he may be from the place to which he desires to go. The Jews, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, were farthest off from true holiness. 2. "Cleanse yourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit." Thus may you "perfect holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor. vii. 1). It is a course which all of all sorts observe for perfecting a thing, namely, first to remove the impediments; thus physicians purge out peccant humours, chirurgians draw out festering matter, husbandmen stock up broom, briars, thorns, and all noisome weeds. 3. Have special care of your company. Avoid the society of unholy ones (Psa. xvi. 3). That this means is very powerful is evident (Prov. xiii. 20, xxii. 24, 25). 4. Be constant in using such means as God hath sanctified for attaining holiness; for God will

be found in His own way. The means are—(1) Public; (2) private; (3) secret. Public means are the Word and Sacraments. 5. Be instant and constant in prayer, and that for the Holy Spirit which is promised to those that ask Him (Luke xi. 13). This Spirit it is which makes us holy. 6. Be patient under crosses; for God doth chasten His, that they might be "partakers of His holiness" (chap. xii. 10). (*Ibid.*) **Partakers of the heavenly calling.**—*The heavenly calling:*—The calling of saints is here commended unto us by this attribute "heavenly." It is here in this place attributed to saints' calling—1. To distinguish it from earthly callings. 2. To show the excellency thereof; for excellent things are called heavenly; great, deep, excellent mysteries are called heavenly (John iii. 12). 3. To declare the end of this calling, which is to bring us to a heavenly kingdom (1 Thess. ii. 12), namely, an inheritance incorruptible, reserved in heaven (1 Pet. i. 4). This particular excellency here mentioned by the apostle is of force to raise up our hearts unto heaven, seeking the things that are above. It doth also instruct us how to walk worthy of this calling, namely, by an inward heavenly disposition and an outward heavenly conversation. (*Ibid.*) *The superiority of Christianity:*—I. THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN DISPENSATIONS IN RESPECT TO THEIR NATURE. 1. This distinction of nature is set forth in the word by which the apostle designates the Christian's vocation. He terms it "the heavenly calling." (1) The word rendered here "calling" must not be confounded with the gospel's general invitation to salvation, but refers to that to which believers are entitled through Christ Jesus. (2) It is termed "heavenly," not in respect to its source, for Judaism and Christianity have a common origin. Both are of God, in respect to the nature of the blessings proffered and the sphere where the blessings are to be enjoyed. (3) The intimate and exalted fellowship of those united under the banner of this "heavenly calling" is here noticeable: "Holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling." (*a*) "Brethren" by kinship closer and more enduring than that formed by natural bonds. (*b*) "Holy," in the sense of being set apart by God the Father, through Christ His Son, by the Holy Spirit, to one heavenly and sacred aim—the service of God alone. (*c*) "Partakers"; literally, "holding things in common." Sharers together of the privileges of the "heavenly calling." (4) Noticeable also are the terms applied to the Lord in connection with the heavenly calling, and the earnest exhortation of the apostle to due consideration of Christ in these offices. "Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus." (*a*) The word rendered "consider" means to observe well, to consider attentively, to ponder thoughtfully. (*b*) The word "apostle" (literally, "one sent"), as applied to our Lord here, is peculiar, this being the only place where this special term is applied to Him. We may regard the word "apostle" as used to avoid ambiguity, and also at the same time to set forth our Lord as having been "sent" of God, and therefore divinely authorised, as was Moses. (*c*) The expression "the High Priest of our profession," suggestively represents the Divine authority, and also the redemptive feature so prominent in the Christian system. II. THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN CHRIST AND MOSES IN THE RELATION THEY SUSTAINED TO THEIR RESPECTIVE DISPENSATIONS. 1. Christ is here represented as being the owner of the "house" He served, Moses being only servant of the "house" he served. (1) Notice the significance of the term "house." Its meaning, as applied to Christ's house, is given in ver. 6. (2) The sense in which Christ is, and Moses was not, owner of the "house" each respectively served thus becomes obvious. The apostle, however, even here, holds still prominently before us that it was in His capacity as "Son" He also redeemed. 2. This ownership in the "household of faith" sustains the apostle in his next position—that Christ has a higher claim to homage and honour than Moses. 3. The prominent and practical characteristic here mentioned should not be lost sight of in connection with Christ's superiority to Moses, namely, His faithfulness. III. PRACTICAL AND SOLEMN INFERENCES FROM THE PRECEDING POSITIONS. 1. An earnest lesson from the history of the past (vers. 7–12). 2. Practical counsel as to what they should do (ver. 13). 3. The only reliable evidence of our union with Christ (ver. 14). 4. The essential importance of every-day religion (vers. 15–18). (1) To prevent hardness of heart. Heedlessness is the beginning and the sure evidence of hardness (ver. 15). (2) To avoid that grieving of the Holy Spirit which is inevitably followed by Divine judgment (vers. 16, 17). 5. The fearful cause of all defection from God and of all sin against God—"unbelief" (ver. 19). (1) It was the cause of the first sin of our first parents in Eden. (2) It was the cause of the first murder on record. (3) It was the prolific cause of all those terrible effects which culminated in the destruction of

all religious life in the antediluvians, with the exception of one man, and led to the destruction of the whole race of mankind save Noah and his family. Oh, what a hydra-headed, destructive monster is unbelief! (*D. C. Hughes, M.A.*) **Consider the High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus.**—*Christ to be appreciated*:—A young lady, a novice in art, said to her father, who was an accomplished man of taste, "Father, I cannot enjoy the works of the old masters." "Then," said he "look at them till you can." Even so, if one were to say, "I cannot appreciate the Cross," our earnest reply would be, "Study it till you can." (*C. Clemance, D.D.*) *Christ should be contemplated*:—It is recorded of a celebrated philosopher that, pursuing his investigations on the subject of light, he ventured on a bold experiment. Without the protection of smoked glass, he turned his naked eye on the sun, and kept it fixed there for awhile. When he removed it, such was the impression made upon his eyes, that whichever way he looked, upwards, downwards, right or left, he saw nothing but the sun. The last thing he saw at night, the first thing he saw in the morning, was the sun. What a blessed thing it would be for us if we had some such view of Christ, if the glory and love of Him who died, and was buried, and rose again for us, Jesus Christ our Lord, was thus impressed upon our souls! (*A. C. Price, B.A.*) *Consider Jesus*:—Hazlitt once copied a painting of Titian's, and showed it one evening to his friends, Charles and Mary Cowden Clarke. It was fine, but as he held the light to it, and thus unconsciously showed his own intellectual head, square "potential forehead," and eyes full of earnest fire, they felt that he was really the picture to gaze at. In like manner, Jesus lifts the light of truth to the picture of duty, but He also grandly embodied it in His daily life. (*T. R. Stevenson.*) *Consider Jesus and banish frivolity*:—The wise picture-dealer at Oxford was right, who, handing to an undergraduate the fine engraving of an ancient master, said, "Hang this on your walls, sir, and it will soon banish all the pictures of jockeys and ballet-girls." (*F. W. Farrar, D.D.*) *Priesthood of Christ*:—About a hundred years ago a Welsh boy heard a sermon upon the priesthood of Jesus Christ. It was a new idea to the boy, filling him with astonishment and delight. The doctrine was so excellent and sweet to him, that without delay he opened his heart to it. To this day all the Welsh revere his memory, for that boy became the Rev. Thomas Charles of Bala, the apostle of his native land, the founder of day and Sabbath schools and of the Bible Society. And such a faith in Christ will give you, too, a true and fruitful life. (*J. Wells, M.A.*) *The advantages derived from considering Jesus*:—I. The solemn consideration of Jesus Christ may well RECONCILE YOU TO ANY DIFFICULT OR TRYING CIRCUMSTANCES in which you may be placed. Compared to His what are all the duties which we have to perform, or any sufferings which we have to endure? How few have to "resist unto blood, striving against sin." Every repining thought must be subdued. II. "Consider the Apostle and High Priest of your profession," and you will see in Him A MODEL FOR YOUR CONDUCT, and will learn how to act in circumstances of difficulty or distress. Amid injustice and ill-treatment, which so easily discompose the mind and render one's duty so peculiarly difficult, Jesus has taught us how wisdom, integrity, and goodness would act. Now the principles which formed the character and governed the whole conduct of Jesus are evidently these two—faith in God and love to mankind. Clearly discovering in His character and conduct the wonderful efficacy of these principles, we must fix them in our souls if we wish to fulfil the more difficult duties of life or rest in composure and peace of mind amid its various ills. III. To consider Jesus will ANIMATE AND ENCOURAGE YOU AMID THE DIFFICULTIES AND ILLS OF LIFE. He foresaw all the extent of His sufferings, and "in all things made like unto His brethren," He felt all the depression natural to the human mind in such disheartening prospects; but declining any exertion of supernatural powers, He resigns Himself to the violence of wicked men, with no other defence but that Divine grace and those heavenly principles which the humblest of His followers may through His mediation attain. And can His admirable conduct be exhibited to us in vain? Can it be contemplated without exciting our efforts and prompting our imitation? (*R. Boog, D.D.*) *The Christian and his Redeemer*:—I. A DESCRIPTION OF TRUE CHRISTIANS. 1. A common character: "Holy." 2. A common relationship: "Brethren." 3. A common privilege: "Partakers," &c. A call from heaven and to heaven. II. A DESCRIPTION OF THE GREAT REDEEMER. 1. The Apostle of our profession. Sent from God to us. 2. The High Priest of our profession. By Him we draw near to God, even as by Him God draws near to us. 3. The Christ Jesus—the anointed Deliverer. III. THE OBLIGATIONS OF TRUE CHRISTIANS TO THE GREAT REDEEMER. "Consider." Men's characters are formed

by their thinkings. Meditation is the most constant and influential operation of our nature. (*U. R. Thomas.*) *The Advent call:*—"Consider," then, it is here directed, "the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus." Seeing what He is, according to the statements of the two previous chapters; how great, how Divine, how human, how merciful, and how faithful; how sufficient in His atonement for sin, how experienced in His sympathy with the tempted; consider Him, fix your thoughts upon Him. Now in what aspects are we here charged to consider Christ? 1. As "the Apostle of our profession"; that is, of our confession, or common faith. An apostle means an emissary, or ambassador, or representative—one who comes to us with a message or commission, in this case from God Himself. We ought to be transacting business with Him, if I might so express it, every day; dealing with Him as to the concerns of our life, inward and outward, and conscious that, in so doing, we are dealing also with God Himself. 2. Again, the High Priest of our confession. You know how large a part of this Epistle is occupied with the subject thus introduced: the priesthood of Jesus Christ as satisfying all those wants which any other priesthood could only indicate and impress. "Hark the glad sound! the Saviour comes"—why is it a glad sound? It is not because we wanted an Apostle, and because we wanted a High Priest? Put Christ out of sight altogether for a moment, and then see how dark life is, the present and the future. See what it is to be conscious of sin, and then suppose that there were no Christ, no Saviour, no Propitiation, and no Intercessor! Yes, we know that we *shall* all want Him; as our Apostle, as God's representative, that is; as our all-wise Teacher, our Revealer of God as He is, as the Person in whom as well as by whom God deals with our souls, and bids us also to deal with Him; want Him also as our High Priest, our Sacrifice and Propitiation for sin, our merciful Intercessor, our faithful Advocate with God. (*Dean Vaughan.*) *Christians invited to consider Christ:*—I. THE CHARACTERS ADDRESSED: "Holy bretbren." 1. All real Christians are—(1) Partakers of the same spiritual nature. (2) Members of the same family. (3) Interested in each other's welfare. 2. Christians are "holy"—(1) By the dedication which they have made of themselves to God. (2) By the purification of their minds, 3. They are partakers of a calling—(1) Heavenly in its origin. (2) Heavenly in its end. II. THE ADVICE GIVEN. 1. Christ was a Divine Messenger. He is a Divine Person. He was divinely sent (John iv. 34, v. 23, and vii. 16). 2. Christ was a voluntary messenger. He came willingly (Heb. x. 5-9). The undertaking was arduous, but "He gave Himself for us." 3. Christ was a merciful messenger. He came not to destroy, but to save; and it was all free, unparalleled mercy. 4. He is "the High Priest of our profession." (1) He made an atonement for sin (Heb. ix. 28). (2) The Jewish high priest blessed the people (Numb. vi. 23-27). (3) The Jewish high priest interceded for the people; and Christ ever liveth to make intercession for us. 5. The advice given is, "Consider the apostle," &c. Consideration is the exercise of thought, not a hasty glance at an object, but a deliberate exercise of the mind. Hence we should consider Christ. (1) That we know Him. The knowledge of Christ is the most beneficial we can possess; but no man can know Christ who will not consider Him. (2) That we may be grateful to Him. Our obligations to Christ should bind us to be grateful to Him; but these obligations can be known only by consideration. (3) That we may keep His commandments. No man can keep Christ's commandments who neglects the advice in the text. (4) That we may emulate His example. (*Sketches of Sermons.*) *The consideration of the apostleship and priesthood of Christ inculcated:*—I. THE CHARACTERS HERE PECULIARLY ADDRESSED. 1. "Holy brethren." Every one must possess holiness, not indeed in perfection: but, as it were, the Christian's element, where he breathes with freedom and with peace. Sin is the Christian's aversion, and therefore he looks forward with joy to that period when he shall put off this body of sin, and be in possession of a holy and blessed state in heaven. 2. The characters here addressed are described as "Partakers of the heavenly calling." Here we speak of the manner in which such are brought to this brotherly love. II. THE HIGH CHARACTER GIVEN IN THE TEXT OF CHRIST JESUS. 1. "Apostle." The Redeemer of mankind, though one with the Father and the Holy Spirit, is declared to have come out from God in the capacity of a servant. In His commission to His disciples after the Resurrection, He acknowledged His own apostleship. He says, "As My Father hath sent Me, so send I you." 2. "High Priest." The high priest was to offer up the evening sacrifice and prayer. Christ Jesus appears offering Himself a perfect sacrifice for sin. III. THE DUTY RECOMMENDED. "Consider." As if he had said,

do not turn away from Him, as though you had no interest in this great subject; but let your attention be drawn off from everything else, that your soul may be found resting here. (*F. H. Fell, M.A.*) *The Apostle and High Priest of our profession*:—I. THE AGENTS. Who are exhorted to consider Christ? The "holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling." "Holy brethren." The terms define sufficiently the class of persons to whom this exhortation is directly addressed. It is a word, not for those who are without, but for those who are within. The two terms are interesting separately, and in their union. If they do not certify what all the worshippers are, they certainly declare what each ought to be. You may detect here the twofold division of duty, which from its fountain in the decalogue flows down, and penetrates all the moral teaching of the Scriptures. Christians get both the first and the second commandments printed on their life. They love the Lord with all their heart, and their neighbour as themselves. They are "holy" to God, and "brethren" to men. Further, they are "partakers of the heavenly calling." It comes from above, and invites them thither. II. THE OBJECT. Whom should the holy brethren regard? "The Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus." "Our profession" is the religious system which we adopt—the confession which we make and maintain. It indicates profession to God, and confession one with another. We hold the truth, and we hold it together. We hold to God by faith, and to our brethren in love. It is not the truth in type and shadow, but the truth Himself unveiled—God manifest in the flesh. Our profession, finally, is not self-righteousness, but faith. It is not what I am able to do, but what God is willing to give. Our plea is, not that our sins are small, but that our Saviour is great. "By grace are ye saved through faith." Of this profession, the Apostle and High Priest is Christ Jesus. Either office is important in itself; and the union of both in the person of the Lord Jesus has a distinct and peculiar importance of its own. An apostle is one sent out. Missionary, with which we have become so familiar in our days, is the same word in another language. An inexpressible dignity is connected with the mission of this Apostle. The sender, the sent, and the errand, are all great. All our missions are copies of this great original. He is High Priest too. It is His office to go into the holiest with atoning blood, and there plead for the rebellious. With His own blood our High Priest has entered into the heavens, where He ever liveth to make intercession for us. In His own personal ministry He was first Apostle and then High Priest. In the order of time His mission as God's representative sent out to us was first accomplished, and thereafter His mission as our representative sent in to God. Throughout His personal ministry in the body He acted as Apostle; at His death and resurrection and ascension He became High Priest. When Jesus as our High Priest passed into the heavens, His personal ministry as our Apostle ceased; but He has not left Himself without a witness. He has left that work to His servants. He prescribed their task, and promised them aid (Matt. xxviii. 20). Not only every preacher, but every believer of the Word, is an apostle, charged and qualified to make it known. When He ascended He left on earth a multitudinous ministry. Nor is Divine commission wanting to the meanest: "Let him that heareth say, Come." In a similar manner the intercession of the High Priest in heaven is reduplicated on the earth. "Brethren, pray for us," expresses the true instinct of the new creature in a time of need. All who preach in any form to men also pray for them; and, besides these, a great number of the Lord's little ones, who lack courage or skill to speak a word for Christ, speak in secret to Him, for their neighbours and for the world. In view of both these offices He said to His disciples, "It is expedient for you that I go away." His ascension into heaven spreads both the apostleship and the priesthood over the world. In contact with the earth's surface the sun would be only a consuming fire; from the height of heaven it sheds down light and heat on every land. So Christ, after the days of His humiliation were done, was a "Light inaccessible and full of glory." III. THE ACT. How the holy brethren should regard Christ: "Consider Him." Consider Him the Apostle. Well we may. When the heavens must open, and a messenger come forth bearing the mind of God to men, we have cause to rejoice that the mission is intrusted to a partaker of our nature. It was necessary that we should meet God; to make the meeting possible, God became man and dwelt among us. Consider Him who has brought out the message, for He is "gentle and easy to be entreated." Consider Him the High Priest. He is before the throne, charging Himself with all the interests of His people. He has power with God, and pity for man. (*W. Arnot.*) *Consider Christ*:—I. We have here ONE GREAT COMPRE-

HENSIVE COMMAND. The word "consider" implies in the original an earnest, fixed, prolonged attention of mind. 1. The first remark that I would make is that a Christian man's thoughts should be occupied with his Saviour. How do you Christian people expect to get any blessing from Jesus Christ? Does He not work by His truth? And can that truth which sanctifies and saves produce effects if it is not appropriated by the meditative occupation of our minds with it? What is all the gospel to you unless it is consciously present to your understanding, and through your understanding is ruling your affections, and moulding your will, and shaping the outgoings of your life? 2. Then, that being premised, note how much practical direction as to the manner of that occupation of mind and spirit with Christ lies in that single emphatic word "consider." (1) There is surely implied, to begin with, that such occupation must be the result of conscious effort. Why, you cannot even make money until, as you say, "you give your minds to business." A man sitting at a desk cannot even add up a column of figures correctly if he is thinking about a hundred other things. And do you think that the Divine glories of Christ are to flow into a man's soul on condition of less concentration and attention? (2) But, still further, our gaze on Him must be the look of eager interest; it must be intense as well as fixed. I do not wonder at so many people thinking that there is nothing to interest them in the gospel. There is nothing—and that because they do not come to it with awakened eagerness, and so because they have no hunger it is tasteless. If we would hear Christ, we must keep our ear attent unto His voice. To superficial investigation no treasures are disclosed, we must dig deep if we would find the vein where the gold lies. Still further, another requisite of this occupation of mind with Christ and His work may be suggested as included in the word. (3) Our consideration must be resolute, eager, and, also, steady or continuous. A hurried glance is as profitless as a careless one. You do not see much on first going into a dark room out of the light; nor do you see much on first going into the light out of the dark. It was Newton, I think, who, when asked as to his method of working in attacking complicated problems, had only the simple answer to give, "I keep it before me." Yes, that is the way to master any subject of thought. The steady gaze will, by slow degrees, see order where the random glance saw only chaos. And we shall never see the glory of that light which dwells between the Cherubim if our visits to the shrine are brief and interrupted, and the bulk of our time is spent outside the tabernacle amidst the glaring sand and the blazing sunshine. Let us fix our eyes on Him, our Lord. Surely there is enough there to draw and satisfy the most prolonged eager gaze. He is our Example, our Redeemer, our Propbet. In Him we see all of God that man can apprehend, and all of man. In Him we behold our wisdom, our strength, our righteousness. II. THE GREAT ASPECTS OF CHRIST'S WORK WHICH SHOULD FIX OUR GAZE. We have Himself proposed as the object of our thoughts. 1. He is the Apostle of our profession. No declaration was more common on our Lord's lips when on earth than that He was "sent of God." He is the sent of God. And our loving thoughts are to lay hold upon this aspect of His nature and work, not to tarry in the simple manhood, fair and blessed as that is, but to discern in Him the complete expression of the Divine Will, the complete fulfilment of the slow marching revelations of God, the perfect, final, eternal word spoken of God among men. 2. Then we are to think of Him as our High Priest. "As Apostle," it has been well said, "He pleads God's cause with us: as High Priest He pleads our cause with God. The Apostolate and the Priesthood of Christ are both included in the one word—Mediator." III. THE GREAT REASONS FOR THIS OCCUPATION OF MIND AND HEART WITH CHRIST, OUR MEDITATOR. These are to be found in the remaining portion of this verse. 1. Our relation to Christ and the benefit we derive from it should impel us to loving meditation on Him. "Holy brethren." 2. The calling of which we are partakers should impel us to loving meditation. God in Christ calls us to His service, to His love, to His heaven. Of this call all Christian souls are recipients. Therefore it becomes them to set their thoughts and love on that Saviour, through whom they receive it at the first, and continue to feel its quickening impulse and its immortal hopes. 3. Further, the avowal which we have made concerning Him should impel us to loving, steadfast contemplation. He is "the Apostle and High Priest of our profession," or, perhaps, more accurately, "of our confession." Our creed avows that Christ is everything to us. Alas! alas! how many of us proclaim in our lives that He is nothing. If these tremendous sentences are believed at all by us, what means this languid, occasional half-hearted gaze upon Him? Surely, if we believe them, we should never turn away from beholding that

face, so gentle and so Divine, radiant with the brightness of God, and soft with the dewy pity of a brother and a priest! Is your life in accordance with your confession? If not, what is the confession but a blasphemy or a hypocrisy? And what does it avail except to make the life more criminal in its forgetfulness of your Saviour? (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Consider Christ*:—When a traveller passes very rapidly through a country, the eye has no time to rest upon the different objects in it, so that, when he comes to the end of his journey, no distinct impressions have been made upon his mind. This explains how it is that death, judgment, eternity, make so little impression upon most men's minds. More souls are lost through want of consideration than in any other way. The reason why men are not awakened is, that the devil never gives them time to consider. He beguiles them away from simply looking to Jesus: he hurries them away to look at a thousand other things. But God says, Look here, consider the Apostle and High Priest of your profession; look unto Me, and be ye saved. I. BELIEVERS SHOULD LIVE IN DAILY CONSIDERATION OF THE GREATNESS AND GLORY OF CHRIST. Oh, could I lift you away back to that wonderful day, and show you Jesus calling all the angels into being, hanging the earth upon nothing; consider Him, and see if you think He will be a sufficient Saviour. I can as little doubt the sureness and completeness of my salvation as I can doubt the sureness of the solid earth beneath my feet. And where is Jesus now? All power is given to Him in heaven and on earth. Oh, could you and I pass this day through these heavens, and see what is now going on in the sanctuary above—could you see the Lamb, surrounded by all the redeemed, the many angels round about the throne, and were one of these angels to tell you, "This is He that undertook the cause of lost sinners—consider Him—look long and earnestly upon His wounds—upon His glory—and tell me do you think it would be safe to trust Him? Do you think His sufferings and obedience will have been enough?" Yes, yes, every soul exclaims, Lord, it is enough! Oh, rather let me ever stand and gaze upon the Almighty, all-worthy, all-Divine Saviour, till my soul drinks in complete assurance that His work undertaken for sinners is a finished work. II. CONSIDER CHRIST AS THE APOSTLE, OR MESSENGER OF GOD. Now Christ is an Apostle, for God ordained and sent Him into the world. Oh, could I lift you away to the eternity that is past;—could I bring you into the council of the Eternal Three; and as it was once said "Let Us make man";—could I show you how God from all eternity designed His Son to undertake for poor sinners;—could I show you the intense interest with which the eye of God followed Jesus through His whole course of sorrow, and suffering, and death. Oh, sinner, will you ever doubt any more whether God the Father be seeking thy salvation? III. CONSIDER CHRIST AS THE HIGH PRIEST OF OUR PROFESSION. 1. Consider Him making atonement. Now the atonement has been made, Christ has died, His sufferings are all past. And how is it that you do not enjoy peace? It is because you do not consider. 2. Consider Christ as making intercession. (*R. M. McCheyne.*) *The Apostle and High Priest*:—I. THE APOSTLESHIP OF CHRIST. In its exact and original signification an apostle is "one who is sent," *i.e.*, the bearer of a message from some one. There have been many revelations of God, differing in kind, differing in degree and completeness. The greatest and most complete revelation of God is in Jesus Christ. In the teaching of Christ, in pregnant saying, or parable, or discourse, we have a revelation concerning God which it had not entered the mind of man to conceive. II. THE HIGH-PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST. The essential idea of a priest is that he comes between man and God; and the essential idea of a priesthood is that of a class of men who act as mediators between God and men. The priest offered sacrifices, or conducted religious ceremonies, but he did these things not for himself, but for the worshippers. If it be true that without blood there is no remission of sins, it is also true that without an intervening priest, there was no shedding of sacrificial blood, and therefore no remission. Carry these thoughts with you then, and you will see why Christ is called the High Priest of our profession. High Priest, because He stands for mankind before God: High Priest, because He has made one all-sufficient sacrifice for the sins of men: High Priest, because He does for men what they could not and cannot do for themselves. Christ's priesthood means that we have a way by which we may approach the eternal and all-holy Father. They who are conscious of their own unworthiness may plead the worthiness of Christ, may rest with confidence on the sympathy of Him who wore our humanity as a brother-man. Christ's priesthood further means that a sacrifice has been made by which the defilement of sin is removed, and a new relation begun between men and God. Christ's priesthood means that in His crucifixion, from which He did not

shrink, there was given to men a means of reconciliation with God. And, once more, Christ's priesthood means that there is in heaven One who pleads continually for pardon for sinful men. To what now, I ask, should these considerations of the apostleship and priesthood of Christ tend? The writer of this Epistle uses them to add point to his exhortation, and to warn against unbelief. I know that some among you are fully aware of the responsibilities of belief, and shrink from doing or professing anything which seems to go beyond your power to practise. Have you ever thought of the responsibilities in which the want of belief may involve you? Have you ever, amid your doubts and hesitations, considered this, that by your doubts and hesitations you are practically denying that the revelation of God in Christ is a revelation to you; that you are practically saying, "Christ's sacrifice was no sacrifice, so far as I am concerned." True it is that they who enter into the temple, have their responsibilities; but are they free from responsibility who stand at the threshold and will not enter in? And the same considerations may be used to quicken and sustain our faith. Christ is our Apostle; therefore we have a sure knowledge of God. Christ is our High Priest; therefore, we have in our hearts the assurance of Divine love, and the abiding hope of Divine forgiveness. (*D. Hunter, B.D.*) *The study of Jesus*:—I. THE SUBJECT FOR STUDY. 1. Consider the person of Jesus. Christianity is Christ; and if Christ be not God-Man our religion is the dream of sanguine enthusiasts or the fraud of ingenious impostors. 2. Consider the offices of Jesus. (1) In His Divine-human capacity Jesus is the Apostle of our confession. (2) As Apostle Jesus has a mission. He is High Priest. II. THE STUDENTS. 1. Confessors. Practical confession is the living up to all we believe, and the carrying out of all that that belief involves. 2. Holy brethren. Christ was born and died that He might communicate His Holy Spirit, by whose regenerating, adopting, and sanctifying work we are made holy, the sons of God, and His brethren. 3. Partakers of a heavenly calling. (1) Walk worthy of it. (2) Make it sure. III. THE METHOD OF STUDY AND THE SPIRIT IN WHICH IT IS TO BE PURSUED. 1. As for the method, the word "consider" is descriptive of the posture of the earnest student who abstracts his attention from every other object, and pores over the thing in hand with unflagging industry until he has mastered it. (1) To our study of Jesus we must give undivided attention. We know so little of Christ, in spite of all our prayer and meditation, because we think of so much else while we are trying to think of Him. (2) Our study must be deep. Just as nature is grand or commonplace according as our reading is profound or superficial, so is it with the great subject of Christian study. (3) Our study must be patient and persistent. That knowledge is not worth much, and is often worth less than nothing, which is acquired in a few weeks' scamper over a mighty continent. 2. The spirit. (1) Reverential. (2) Humble boldness. (*J. W. Burn.*) *Consider Christ fully*:—If you wish to look at a portrait of Raphael's, what would you think to see only the forehead uncovered, and then only the eyes, and so on, until all the features had been separately seen? Could you gain a true idea of the picture as a whole? Yet this is the way men look at the picture of Christ in the Gospels, reading a few verses and mottoes here and there, and never considering the life in its wholeness and harmony. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Consider Christ intently*:—Consider not lightly, as they that do not mind the thing they look upon. Their eyes are upon it, but their mind is on another matter. Look on Him with the sharp eye of your mind. Consider that in Him all the treasures of wisdom lie hid. He is a rich storehouse, in whom ye may find all the pearls and jewels of wholesome doctrine. In Him there is salvation, and in no other; therefore all other teachers set aside, listen to Him. When the judge of assizes gives the charge, all that be in the shire-house, especially they that be of the great inquest, consider seriously what is spoken. When the king makes a speech in the Parliament-house, the whole House considers earnestly what he says. Christ Jesus, the King of kings, speaks to us in the ministry of the Word, yet few consider the excellent things that be spoken. The Queen of Sheba considered Solomon well, all that he spake or did. Behold, here is a greater than Solomon. Therefore let us diligently consider what He says. If they were matters of no moment, we were not to be blamed, though we did not consider them; but being of such weight, touching the eternal salvation of our souls, what madmen be we, that we consider them no better. If one should talk to us of gold and silver, we would consider what he says. Christ speaks to us of that which surpasseth all the silver in the world, yet we regard Him not. Let us consider Him now, that He may consider us hereafter when He comes with His holy angels. (*W. Jones, D.D.*) *Of Christ as an Apostle*:—I. THE GENERAL FUNCTION OF CHRIST, as a Prophet, Apostle,

and Minister of the Word of God, was to make known the will of the Father unto His people. II. His SPECIAL CALL to that function was immediate from the Father. Christ thus saith of Himself (John xx. 21). Oft does Christ make mention of this that His Father sent Him. Where Christ saith to the Jews (John v. 37, vi. 46, i. 18). III. THE PRIVILEGES which belonged to an apostolical function, and in a most eminent manner appertained unto Christ, were these. 1. Christ laid the foundation, for He first preached the gospel (Gen. iii. 15). Yea, Christ Himself was the very foundation (1 Cor. iii. 11). He is also the chief corner-stone (Eph. ii. 20). 2. The whole world was Christ's jurisdiction. No limits were set to His function (Psa. ii. 8; Eph. ii. 17). 3. He had His gifts immediately by the Spirit (Isa. xi. 2; Luke ii. 20). 4. He received the Spirit more abundantly than any other (John iii. 34; Col. ii. 3, 9; John i. 16). 5. He could not but have infallible assistance in that He was the very truth itself (John xiv. 16; Luke iv. 18). 6. He also must needs have power of giving gifts, in that He was the prime Author of all gifts (Eph. iv. 7; John xx. 22). 7. About miracles He had more power than ever any other. 8. Vengeance especially belongeth unto Christ (Rom. xii. 19). When the apostle delivered the incestuous person over to Satan, he did it in the name and with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. v. 4). (*W. Gouge.*) *Christ the only Apostle and High Priest of our profession*:—Where Christ is said here to be the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, we must learn this: that we that be Christians profess no other teacher, nor no other Saviour, but that Christ is both our wisdom and our justification; His word is ours, His doctrine is ours, His wisdom is ours, we profess not one jot whereof He hath not been an Apostle unto us; and whosoever he be that teacheth us other things than what Christ hath taught us already, he is not of our profession nor of our brotherhood. And more than this, we are sure he teacheth nothing but vain illusions and imaginations of men; for all treasures of wisdom and true knowledge are hid in Christ. And seeing it hath pleased Him to be our Apostle, who is the Son of God, the brightness of His glory, the ingraven form of His substance, the Heir of all things, the Maker of heaven and earth, far greater than angels, how unthankful be we if His doctrine be not our profession; nay, how mad be we, if we will change Him for any other or for all other. Whatsoever glorious names they bring, of fathers, doctors, councils, we neither know them nor their names. If they be ministers of Christ unto us, their feet are beautiful, and their names are honourable. If they be their own ministers, we know them not, nor all their glory. Now where the apostle calleth Christ the High Priest of our profession, as we have learned before, if He be our Apostle, we have no other teacher. So we learn here, if He be the Priest of our profession, no part of the office of His Priesthood we may give to another, but profess it clearly that He is our priest alone. And as the priest is ordained to make sacrifice for sin, and to be a mediator between God and man, so all this work we must leave wholly unto Him, receive no other, upon whom we will lay this reconciliation, to purge our sins, and to bring us to God, but Christ alone. (*E. Deering, B.D.*) *Open Christian profession*:—Let us look at the word "profession." We are very apt to undervalue things with which abuse and danger are connected, and which may be easily counterfeited. There is such a thing as a mere outward hypocritical profession; but is that a reason why we should not attach importance to confessing Christ? With the heart we are to believe unto righteousness, and with the mouth we are to confess that Jesus is the Lord. It may be a mere lip-utterance to say, "I believe in Jesus"; it may be only a form to sit down at the Lord's table; but as the outward expression of an inward reality, it is a great and blessed fact. Let us not be secret disciples; let us not come to Jesus merely by night, ashamed to bear testimony to the gospel. Our confession of Christ in the outward Church, in the congregation of professed disciples, in the ordinances of Christ's institution, let us not undervalue it! Remember with gratitude that you have publicly professed Christ; that into the Church of Christ you have been received by baptism, and acknowledged at the Lord's Supper as a brother and partaker of the heavenly calling. Let the remembrance of this be to us continually helpful, and stimulate us to adorn the doctrine of the gospel by a Christ-like life and walk. (*A. Saphir.*)

Ver. 2. **Faithful to Him that appointed Him.**—*Fidelity in personal duties*:—The general prosperity of human life and the peace and comfort of individuals greatly depend on the diligence, the cheerfulness, and the spirit with which our personal duties are fulfilled. I. I mention as the first, AN HABITUAL AND PRACTICAL REMEMBRANCE THAT GOD HATH APPOINTED US OUR DIFFERENT CONDITIONS, and that a proper

discharge of the duties resulting from them, from a regard to His authority, is service due and done to God. Christianity thus brings religion home to the most minute departments of human life, to the house and to the field, to the shop and to the farm; and intimately unites earth to heaven. II. Personal fidelity includes HONEST AND ASSIDUOUS ENDEAVOURS TO UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENT DUTIES OF OUR SEVERAL CALLINGS OR CONDITIONS, AND TO ACQUIRE THE TALENTS NECESSARY TO PERFORM THEM WELL. But I must observe that a knowledge of the duties of a calling, and even the best talents for discharging them, are not sufficient. Personal fidelity chiefly consists in the diligence, animated by religious motives, which produces the activity which our separate duties require; and therefore I remark—III. That men discover their fidelity when they MAKE CONSCIENCE OF THE MORE DIFFICULT AND BURDENSOME, as well as of the more easy duties of their particular callings. IV. Men show their fidelity in their personal duties, when they do NOT NEGLECT, FOR THE SAKE OF PLEASURES, THEIR PROPER BUSINESS OR EMPLOYMENTS. V. Fidelity to Him who hath appointed men their respective callings, requires that they shall DO AS MUCH GOOD IN THEM AS THEY HAVE THE MEANS OR OPPORTUNITY TO DO; and that they shall manage them to the best advantage, for which their knowledge or abilities have qualified them. VI. Personal fidelity requires that men REGARD AND FULFIL ALL THE DUTIES OF THEIR CALLINGS OR SITUATIONS, AND NOT MERELY A PART OF THEM. VII. Personal fidelity requires that men shall do the duties of their proper stations, ALTHOUGH EVERY WORLDLY MOTIVE SHOULD TEMPT THEM TO NEGLECT OR TO VIOLATE THEM. VIII. Fidelity in the duties of our proper callings ought ever to be ACCOMPANIED WITH PRAYER TO GOD, AND AN HABITUAL AND DEVOUT DEPENDENCE ON HIM FOR HIS BLESSING. I conclude with observing, that if a faithful discharge of social duties were the whole of religion, even on such terms no man could be justified by works. In fidelity to conscience, and in zealous endeavours for promoting the glory of God and the good of mankind, Archbishop Usher was perhaps exceeded by few of his own, or of any other order. Yet we find among his last, what were certainly none of his worst words, "Lord, forgive my sins of omission." Even in the discharge of their secular callings, men of the worthiest characters are far from being already perfect, and after all their best attainments have need to pray, "Lord, enter not into judgment with Thy servants." (*John Erskine, D.D.*) *Christ the Son and Moses the servant:*—1. And here that it is said, "God appointed Him," we see the root of this love, that Christ should come a Saviour among us. And as we must give unto our Saviour Christ the glory of our redemption, in the sacrifice of His body, so we must give unto the Father the praise of His mercy, that hath freely loved us, and predestinated us eternally unto life; for as this is our profession, that Christ hath done the deed, so this is our profession, that God the Father hath appointed Him unto it. 2. The second thing here witnessed of Christ, and in which we are assured He is our only Prophet, and are provoked to hearken unto Him, is "that He was faithful in all the house of God." This faithfulness is truth and integrity in discharge of this office committed to Him, wherein He set all His care and industry, that He might be found faultless, that like as He was sent of God to be a Prophet to reveal His will, so He did faithfully perform it, teaching only doctrine and ordinances of His Father (John vii. 16, viii. 28, xvii. 8). How diligently then ought we to hear such a Prophet as hath so faithfully spoken. And here we have all a very good lesson taught us, in the person of Christ, to what calling soever we be called of God, in the same let us be faithful; if we be preachers, faithful preachers; if we be princes, faithful princes; if we be judges, faithful judges; if we be treasurers, faithful treasurers; if we be merchants, faithful merchants; whatsoever we be, faithfulness must be our praise. 3. It followeth, "He was faithful as Moses in all His house." What was the faithfulness commended in Moses? That he did in every point according to that which God had commanded. This was then the faithfulness of Christ, to do nothing but at the will of His Father; and this St. John witnesseth expressly in many places. Here is the image of this faithful minister, like unto Christ, one that preacheth nothing but the Word of God, nor for any cause but God's glory. Now, more touching this comparison here made between Christ and Moses, there is no doubt but the apostle useth it to join the Hebrews unto Christ; for how they accounted of Moses he knew well, and whatsoever was spoken of him they did willingly apply themselves to mark, and his praise did win their affections to be more equally bent to learn Christ. Taking this occasion, he beginneth his comparison, making this as common both to Christ and Moses: that either of them ruled in the house of God, and either of them was faithful in his charge, but yet so, as Christ was much more honourable,

and therefore to be of us acknowledged our only Prophet. Now, lest the comparison should seem equal, or Moses should be accounted as great as Christ, he showeth the great excellence of Christ above Moses, that the Jews may also learn to honour their Messias as it becometh them. It followeth now in the fifth verse, "And Moses was faithful in all His house, as a servant for the testimony of the things which should be spoken, but Christ as the Son is Ruler of His house." Now, how much more honour the son hath in his father's house than he that is a servant, so far Christ is above Moses, and above all. And in this the apostle needed not use many words, for that Moses was a servant, all confessed that God calleth him oft His servant Moses. And that Christ was the Son no man doubted, and the Scripture giveth Him plainly the title of the Son of God. Here we have all taught us a lesson of good humility, and how to know ourselves, and what place we have in the Church of God. It followeth, "For a testimony of the things which should after be spoken." For this purpose Moses was a servant, and in the performance of this duty was faithful: he was a servant to bear witness unto the people of all the words which God should speak unto them, that is, a servant faithfully declaring all the law of God. And Moses also himself did bear witness of Christ. And Moses, the most renowned of all prophets, what was he? a servant to declare unto the people all that the Lord had spoken. Who is he now will presume above Moses, to speak of his own head, ordinances, and laws? Who will establish decrees of his own in the house of God? Whosoever he be he shall carry his judgments. He is not a servant, as Moses was; but he exalteth himself to be a master; for if he were a servant he would do the work of a servant, and bear witness what his Master had said. It followeth, "But Christ as the Son is over His house." So that, being the Son of God, who is heir of all things, He ruleth in this house as Lord and Governor, whose commandment alone doth stand. And again, being the Son of God, eternally begotten of His Father, He ever did, and shall do to the end, rule and have the sovereignty in His own house. Therefore, even as before the apostle made his exhortation, that they would consider this Apostle and High Priest of their profession, even so let us humble ourselves under this High Lord in the House of God; let us obey His voice, let us be all faithful in our calling, that before Him we may have a good account, especially the minister, that he will be a faithful servant, keeping his fellowship in the Church of God, and bearing witness of all that the Lord hath spoken. (*E. Deering, B.D.*) *Christ and Moses*:—Every word here is an echo of something going before, and is instinct with persuasive virtue. "Brethren" of Him who in a fraternal spirit identified Himself with the unholy, and for their sakes took flesh and tasted death. "Holy," at least in standing, in virtue of the priestly action of the Sanctifier; and because holy in this sense, under obligation to make their consecration to God a reality by living a truly Christian life. "Partakers of a heavenly calling"—thus described, at once with truth and with rhetorical skill, with a backward glance at the greatness of the Christian's hope as the destined lord of the future world, and with a mental reference to the contrast between that glorious prospect and the present state of believers as partakers of flesh and blood, and subject to death and the fear thereof; reminding them at the same time of the blessed truth that as Christ became partaker of their present lot, so they were destined to be partakers of His glorious inheritance, the unity and fellowship between Him and His people being on both sides perfect and complete. The titles here ascribed to Jesus also arise out of the previous context, and are full of significance. Specially noteworthy is the former of the two, "Apostle," here only applied to Christ. The basis for the title is such a text as Exodus iii. 10: "Come now therefore, and I will send thee [*ἀποστείλω*, Sept.] unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth My people the children of Israel out of Egypt." Moses was an apostle, as one sent by God on the important mission of leading the enslaved race of Israel out of Egypt into Canaan. Christ was our Apostle, as one sent by God to be the Leader in the great salvation. The Apostle of our Christian confession and the "Captain of salvation" are synonymous designations. "Consider the Apostle" means, consider for practical purposes a subject already sufficiently understood; "consider the High Priest" means, consider the doctrine of Christ's priesthood, that ye may first understand it, and then prove its practical value. Christ the Apostle is the immediate subject of contemplation. That aspect is in view throughout the third and fourth chapters, the priestly aspect being presented at the close of the latter, as an introduction to the long discussion which commences with the fifth chapter and extends to the tenth. "Consider the Apostle of our confession" is the rubric of this new section. To guide consideration,

a point of view is suggested congruous to the practical aim. The aim being to promote steadfastness in the Christian faith and life, the selected point of view is the fidelity of Jesus our Apostle. God made Jesus by giving Him His unique place in the world's history, as the chief agent in the work of redemption. And Jesus was faithful to God by discharging faithfully the high duties entrusted to Him. What the Hebrews are invited to do, therefore, is to consider Jesus as the faithful Captain of salvation, who never betrayed His trust, shirked His responsibilities, or neglected duty to escape personal suffering, and who at the last great crisis said, "Not My will, but Thine be done." For of course the theatre in which Christ's fidelity was displayed was His earthly life of trial and temptation. He has already held up Jesus as Priest, as one who is faithful to the interests of those for whom He transacts before God, and therefore entitled to their confidence. The two views supplement each other, and complete the picture of the Faithful One. Faithful as Priest to men in virtue of sympathies learned on earth, faithful as Apostle to God in the execution of the arduous mission on which He was sent to the world; in the one aspect inspiring trust, in the other exciting admiration and inciting to imitation. The following comparison between Christ and Moses at once serves the general end of the Epistle by contributing to the proof of the superiority of Christianity to Judaism, and the special end of the present exhortation by affording the opportunity of extracting wholesome lessons from the fate of the people whom Moses led out of Egypt. In doing this, he simply does justice to the familiar historical record of the Jewish hero's life, and to God's own testimony borne on a memorable occasion, the substance of which he repeats in the words, "as also Moses [was faithful] in His house." "My servant Moses, faithful in all My house, he," God had said emphatically, to silence murmuring against him on the part of his brother Aaron and his sister Miriam. He lays hold of the suggestive words "house" and "servant," and turns them to account for his purpose, saying in effect, "Moses was as faithful as any servant in a house can be: still he was only a servant, while He of whom I now speak was not a mere servant in the house, but a Son; and that makes all the difference." Verses 3 to 6 are substantially just the working out of this thought. But it may be asked, the subject of comparison being the respective fidelities of the two apostles, is not a reference to their positions irrelevant? What does it matter whether Moses was son or servant, if he was faithful in all God's house, in all parts of his work as the leader of Israel? If one were comparing two commanders in respect of bravery and military genius, would it not be an irrelevance to say of one of them, he was the better man, for he was the king's son? The question is pertinent, but it admits of a satisfactory answer. Reference to the superior dignity of Christ is relevant, if His position as Son tended to enhance His fidelity. That it did the writer doubtless meant to suggest. Farther on we find him saying, "Though He was a Son, yet learned He obedience." Similarly he says here in effect: "Christ, though a Son, was faithful to His vocation amid trial." It is a just thought. Beyond doubt we have in Christ as Son a more sublime moral spectacle of fidelity than in any ordinary man called to play a great and responsible part in history. To the fidelities which He has in common with other men, the Son adds this other: resolute resistance to the temptation to use His sonship as an excuse for declining arduous heroic tasks. But there is more than this to be said. The reference to the dignity of Christ looks beyond the immediate parenetic purpose to the ultimate aim of the whole Epistle. It is designed to insinuate the great truth that Christianity is the absolute, eternal religion. This idea casts its shadow on the page at three different points—1. In the contrast between Moses and Jesus as respectively servant and Son. 2. In the representation of the Ministry of Moses as being for a testimony of things to be spoken afterwards (ver. 5). 3. In the representation of Christians as pre-eminently though not exclusively God's, Christ's, house (ver. 6). The assertion manifestly implies the transiency of the Mosaic system. It suggests the thought that the house as it stood in the time of Moses was but a rude, temporary model of the true, eternal house of God; good enough to furnish shelter from the elements, so to speak, but unfit to be the everlasting dwelling-place of the children of the Most High, therefore destined to be superseded by a more glorious structure, having the Spirit of God for its architect, which should be to the old fabric as was the "magnifical" temple of Solomon to the puny tabernacle in the wilderness. At verse 6 transition is naturally made from Moses to the lessons of the wilderness life of Israel. The writer is haunted by the fear lest the tragic fate of the generation of the Exodus should be repeated in the experience of the Hebrew Christians. He hopes that the powerful motives arising out of the truths he has stated may bring

about a better result. But he cannot hide from himself that another issue is possible. For the future fortunes of Christianity he has no anxiety; he is firmly persuaded that it will prosper, though the Hebrew Church, or even the whole Hebrew nation, should perish. That fatal catastrophe he dreads; therefore with great solemnity he proceeds to represent retention of their position in the house of God as conditional: "Whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the boasting of the hope." (*A. B. Bruce, D.D.*) *Faithful services*:—What God requires is faithfulness to that which He has entrusted to us. A poor man is responsible for the little of his poverty, and sins if he withhold his mite. The Church needs the gifts of the poor; the gifts of the industrial and labouring classes. She needs the influence of those who think they have no influence. She needs the sympathies and prayers of those who can only stammer out of their sin-burdened hearts, "God be merciful to me a sinner." The most fertile summer showers are composed of unpretending little drops. Water-spouts are far less beneficial than the steady, soaking, noiseless rain. *Importance of fidelity in the Christian life*:—Though in the life and character of Moses there are many striking excellencies, the faithfulness of Moses is the feature on which the apostle dwells. It is, indeed, the most important feature in our character as servants of God. And well were it for us if we laid more stress on faithfulness, and thought less of gifts and talents, or of success and results. For while it belongs to God to appoint unto each of us severally our positions, to distribute gifts according to His wisdom, and to reward us with results hundredfold, sixtyfold, or thirtyfold, it belongs to us to be faithful to God wherever He has placed us, and in the gift and task which His love assigns. We see the summary and result of the true disciple's life in the decisive words of the Master (Matt. xxv. 21). (*A. Saphir.*) *Moses and the Jews*:—More than Luther is to Germany, more than Napoleon is to France, more than Alfred, or Elizabeth, or Cromwell, or William III. is to England, Moses was to the Jewish people—prophet, patriot, warrior, lawgiver, all in one. (*R. W. Dale, LL.D.*) *A faithful mother*:—The Bishop of Manchester was giving the prizes one day to the scholars, in a school with which he is connected. A large number of the parents and friends of the scholars were present. They all knew and loved the bishop, as a good, and learned, and very useful man. In the midst of their exercises, as he stood surrounded by the scholars, the good bishop was led to speak of his mother. "She was a widow," said he, "with some children to support and educate. God helped her to be faithful. She sacrificed her own ease and comfort for the good of her children. Her home was a poor one. She had to struggle hard for our support. But she managed to make that home the brightest and the happiest place to us. Her children through her faithful efforts have since risen to positions of honour and usefulness, where they are helping to make the world better. She is now," said the bishop, and here his voice was broken with deep feeling—"She is now living in my house, paralysed, speechless, helpless, but every time I look at her dear face, I thank God for giving me such a mother. All that I am, and all that I have I owe to her." *Faithful to duty*:—In the terrible April gale of 1851, the lighthouse on Minot's Ledge, near Boston, was destroyed. Two men were in it at the time, and a vast multitude were gathered upon the shore, waiting in anxious distress for the expected catastrophe. Every hour, however, the bell tolled the time, and ever the light pierced the dark raging storm, and bid the sailor beware. No howling blast could silence the one nor rising wave extinguish the other. At last one giant wave, mightier than the rest, rose up and threw its arms around the tower, and laid it low in the waves. Then alone was the bell silent, then alone did the light cease to shine. (*J. M. Reid.*)

Vers. 3-6. **He that hath built all things is God.**—*Divine socialism*:—1. "He that built all things is God." He began in the undated past, and He keeps on in sundry ways and with diverse materials from generation to generation. To-day is built up out of yesterday and all its predecessors, and the vast and prolific morrow will be constructed out of the incomprehensible and mighty to-day. 2. "Know ye that the Lord, He is God. It is He who hath made us and not we ourselves." "We are His workmanship," created of old, with a body that is a finely built machine, opulent in resources, and apt for our uses; with a mind of surprising capacities; perception and reason, memory and conscience, hope and trust, reverence and love, and above all with a spirit that links us with the Infinite, makes us susceptible of being "created anew in Christ Jesus," after the type of His holy life. The home is His work, built as the primary institution for choking

in the germ the destructive self-seeking of the human race, and developing that love which forgets self, considers all, and creates an atmosphere of domestic and social ozone that refreshes and exhilarates everybody who breathes it. 3. But God's supreme building work goes very far beyond that unit of civilisation, the home, and seeks to construct out of the individuals of which the world is composed one vast moral commonwealth, a spiritual republic, a divine "house," in which selfishness shall be killed outright, and God and freedom, righteousness and love, reign for ever and ever; a "house" with servants like Moses, sons like Jesus, faithful in all things; a free, aggressive, and holy spiritual community; a perfect form of society, into which nothing enters that defiles, or makes a lie. This is the Divine ideal, the sum and crown of the long and patient labours of God upon men, the image and pattern of the things, towards the realisation of which all the pulling down and plucking up of nations, and states, and churches, and all the reconstructing of systems and societies, stedfastly and assuredly tend. 4. "Whose house are we"—we Hebrews recently become followers of Jesus, but not the less belonging to God's building; for He goes forward amid the wreck of systems, the sacking of Jerusalem, with unbroken persistence, calm and sure, though not swift, towards the eternally pre-ordained top-stone. The fires of God (Heb. xii. 29) sweep through the structure with a fierce and cleansing blast, not a grain of gold is lost; but lo! here! an ampler edifice, on a wider foundation, richer in its architectural beauty, rises into sight as the dwelling-place of the sons of men. 5. Whence it follows, if you are able to hear it, that in the truest sense God is the first Socialist; the Author of that gospel which has done more to create motive and inspire practical enthusiasm for the real welfare of men, than all other systems and agencies and persons put together. 6. Two workers of unapproachable greatness stand out with decisive significance as social creators and organisers. Many builders have done excellently, but Moses, a faithful servant in the house of the Father, and Jesus, a faithful Son, have excelled them all. The making of Israel was in the hands of Moses. The making "of all things new" is the work of Christ. 7. Moses, indeed, was faithful in all His house as a servant, and built up, as Ewald says, "for the first time in all human history a whole nation, prepared to put itself under obligation to live hereafter only in accordance with true religion and her requirements, and to look for salvation in all time to come only from loyalty in its religious life, and the love of the true God, which this loyalty pre-supposes." Better foundation than that can no man lay—God, freedom, righteousness, love; and on every part of it is prophetically written the name of the coming Christ. 8. But the chief purpose of the writer of the letter to the Hebrews is to show that Christ is a greater Builder than Moses. In what, then, was Jesus greater than Moses? In the basis on which He built? No; for both built on the same. In the spirit in which He did His work? No; for both could say, "It is my meat to do the will of my Father, and to finish His work." In fidelity to His trust? Yes; but this is not in the writer's mind: but rather the fact that Christ proves Himself to be nearer the founts and sources of spiritual power. (1) Did Moses speak of a "definite Deity"? Christ's view of God as the Father and Saviour of all men, and of all alike, is the fullest gospel men have yet seen, and makes the amplest provision for all the needs of the individual and social life of mankind. (2) Did Moses build on the heights of freedom? Christ much more! It is to His incarnation and sacrifice we owe the knowledge of the unutterable worth of one soul, the marvellous possibilities of one corrupted and lost human being! From him comes the impulse to liberty. (3) Is Moses a legislator? so also is Christ. He did not come to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fill out and realise their plan; not to demolish their often-dropped ideal, but to take it up and embody it in the life of men. He leads to higher ways of action; to patience, forbearance, forgiveness and self-devotion, for the sake of the weakest and worst; and what men could not do or suffer under "the law" they accomplish with ease and grace under the gospel. (4) Since Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, is greater than Moses the servant of God, in that He furnishes the one thing that was lacking, viz., motive-power; and furnishes it on a scale of limitless magnitude, and with a fitness for human need that leaves nothing to desire, "let us hold fast our boldness and the glorying of our hope to the end," and so prove that we are of this Divine house. God's commonwealth is as sure to be established as the heavens and earth are built. Only let us give His gospel free play; treat it as containing the key to all our social problems as well as to our individual uses, and it will prove itself as victorious over the difficulties of

humanity as it has signally triumphed in the experience of numberless individuals. (5) But recollect, we only belong to that "house" in so far as "we hold fast our boldness" and do not fail in brave deeds, in bold initiative, in courageous persistence, in the speech and work that vindicate and back our confidence. God has no room for cowards and idlers. (6) Partnership in that "house" requires another quality, viz., that of holding fast "the glorying of our hope," *i.e.*, our exulting hopefulness. "In social things," says John Morley, "we may be sure undying hope is the secret of vision," and it is also the secret of patient work. "We are saved 'socially' by hope." Amid all this conflict of human passion and opinion, God's work of salvation and regeneration goes on, "without haste and without rest," towards its long since predicted consummation. (*John Clifford, D.D.*) *The being and attributes of God proved from His works:*—I. THIS WORLD MIGHT HAVE HAD A BEGINNING. There is nothing absurd in this supposition. We can easily conceive that there was a time when the heavens and earth did not exist; and consequently that there was a time when they first came into existence. Now, if the world existed of necessity, it would be absolutely immutable, or incapable of change. II. If this world might have begun to exist, then IT MIGHT HAVE HAD A CAUSE OF ITS EXISTENCE. Upon this principle the apostle supposes that "every house is builded by some man," or owes its existence to some cause. And this mode of reasoning from the effect to the cause, is perfectly agreeable to common sense. Should the greatest sceptic travel two or three hundred miles into a wild wilderness, and there discover a very ancient and elegant house, he would instantaneously draw the conclusion in his own mind that that house was built by some man. III. If the world might have had a cause, then IT MUST HAVE HAD A CAUSE. When a number of men walk in procession, they bear the relation of antecedent and consequent to each other, but not the relation of cause and effect. The motion of those who walk before is no cause of the motion of those who walk behind. The operation of our own minds gives us a clear and distinct perception of cause and effect. When we walk, we are conscious of a power to produce motion. Our idea of cause and effect is as clear and distinct as our idea of heat and cold, and is as truly correspondent to an original impression. This being established, the way is prepared to show, that if the world might have had a cause, it must have had a cause. IV. THE CAUSE WHICH PRODUCED THIS WORLD MUST BE EQUAL TO THE EFFECT PRODUCED. No cause can produce an effect superior to itself. For just so far as an effect surpasses the cause, it ceases to be an effect, and exists of itself. 1. The Creator of all things must be possessed of almighty power. This is the first attribute of the first cause which His great and marvellous works impress upon the mind. 2. The Author and Framer of the world must be supremely wise and intelligent. Mankind have always admired the beauty of the world. Uniformity amidst variety appears through every part of creation. 3. The builder and upholder of the world must be everywhere present. It is the nature of all created beings and objects to be constantly and absolutely dependent upon their Creator. 4. The Maker and Governor of the world must be a being of boundless knowledge. He must necessarily know Himself, and be intuitively acquainted with all His natural and moral perfections. And by knowing these, He must necessarily know all possibles; that is, all things which lie within the limits of omnipotence. 5. The first, supreme and intelligent Cause of all things must be eternal. To suppose the first Cause had a cause of His existence, is to suppose there was a cause before the first Cause; or to suppose He was the cause of His own existence, is to suppose that He existed and operated before He did exist; or to suppose that He came into existence without any cause, is to suppose what has been proved to be impossible. 6. The Framer of our bodies and the Father of our spirits must be a being of moral rectitude. The moral faculty of man carries in it a clear demonstration of the moral rectitude of his Maker. Besides, the whole world bears innumerable marks of the Divine goodness. Deductions:—1. If it be true that the visible world displays the being and perfections of the Deity, then all who reason themselves into atheism are guilty of extreme folly. 2. If there be a being of supreme power and intelligence, who is the Creator and Proprietor of the world, then there is great reason to think that He will dispose of all things to His own glory. 3. If there be a being who hath made us, and who will absolutely dispose of us, then it is very desirable to receive a revelation of His will. 4. If there be a God who is possessed of every natural and moral perfection, then it is fruitless for those who believe and acknowledge His existence to deny the divinity of the Scriptures in order to get rid of their

disagreeable doctrines. 5. If there be a God, then all His reasonable creatures are bound to be religious. Our capacity to know God obliges us to glorify Him as God. (*N. Emmons, D.D.*) *God in History*:—There is a God in history. The undevout historian, like the undevout astronomer, is mad. Every house is built by some one, but He that built all things is God. There is a house, a structure that fills the ages, its foundations laid millenniums ago. Great events are like columns in their structure, like arches, like graceful pinnacles, and a glorious dome shall complete it by and by. And it must be a fool that can look on the structure of history, with all its marvellous adjustments and adaptations, its many and varied apartments, its evidence of architecture, symmetry, and beauty, and say there is no Architect in history. (*A. T. Pierson, D.D.*) **Christ as a Son over His own house.**—*Christ the Lord, and Moses the servant*:—To speak of Moses to the Jews was always a very difficult and delicate matter. It is hardly possible for Gentiles to understand or realise the veneration with which the Jews regard Moses, the servant of God, Think of the history of Moses. It was wonderful from the very commencement. His whole life was a sacrifice of love and of obedience to the God of His fathers Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob; a life of self-denial and affection to the people of his choice. Look at his peculiar position. He was mediator of the covenant, the ambassador (apostle) and plenipotentiary (as it were) of God. All God's dealings with Israel were transacted through him. Look, again, at the work Moses accomplished; at the great things which the grace of God performed through him. Through him God brought Israel out of Egypt, and led them through the Red Sea; He gave the ten commandments and the whole law by him; by him the whole national life of Israel was organised. But after admitting fully the excellence of Moses, the apostle proceeds to show the still greater glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. It must have struck you that in many respects Moses was a type of Jesus. But yet, what a difference! The zeal of Moses was not free from earth-born elements, and had to be purified. But there was nothing in Jesus that was of the earth earthy; no sinful weakness of the flesh was in Him who condescended to come in the likeness of sinful flesh. But notice the imperfection of Moses as a servant. How different was Jesus! He declared the full, perfect, and free love of God. The house, the building, means the children of God, who by faith, as lively stones, are built upon Christ Jesus the Foundation, and who are filled with the Holy Ghost; in whom God dwells, as in His temple, and in whom God is praised and manifested in glory. A Christian is like the tabernacle; he is a sanctuary. There is the holy of holies, the holy place, and the outer court. But in all the glory of God is to be revealed; the holiness of God to be shown forth. His body is the Lord's; the members of his body are Christ's members. God is to walk in it, to dwell in it, to rest in it. He is to be not merely a visitor, but an indwelling guest, "abiding in him." How manifold are the mansions in which He dwells! As there are many mansions in the Father's house above, as there are many mansions in His Church below, so also are there many rooms in the spiritual house of the individual believer; in various manifestations of grace, strength, and love, does God dwell in us. But the apostle adds—shall I call it a condition? shall I call it an encouragement? "If you hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of your hope unto the end." And with the exhortation is the word of promise: "Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." "They that trust in the Lord shall be like Mount Sion, which cannot be moved, but standeth fast for ever." Oh, blessed word and promise of God, that He will keep us unto the end! "Hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of your hope firm unto the end." Faith is the mother of Hope; but how often is the mother strengthened and cheered by the daughter! Cherish the hope which in Christ Jesus is given unto you who believe in the Saviour. (*A. Saphir.*) *Christ as a Son over His own house*:—I. AS A SON OVER HIS OWN HOUSE, CHRIST EXERCISES THE PREROGATIVES OF EXCLUSIVE SUPREMACY. II. CHRIST AS A SON OVER HIS OWN HOUSE IS ITS ONLY REDEEMER. III. THE LORD JESUS CHRIST AS A SON OVER HIS OWN HOUSE HAS PROCURED FOR IT THE GIFTS AND THE GRACES OF HIS HOLY SPIRIT. 1. During His personal ministry, our Lord instructed "His own house" in the things which pertained to the kingdom of God. As the Prophet of the Church, He made known the whole counsel of God for the obedience of faith. 2. Our Lord was, moreover, even in His estate of humiliation, "a Son over His own house," as its Sovereign from whom emanate all the laws which regulate both its internal economy and "the outward business of the house of God." 3. Christ is no longer

visibly present in that house over which He presides as a Son. "The heavens must retain Him until the times of the restitution of all things." Still, He is truly and ever present by His Spirit, whom He sends forth in every age to carry forward many of the sublime designs of His mission into the world. (*John Smyth, D.D.*) *The spiritual house:*—I. First of all, THE HOUSE: WHAT HOUSE IS THIS? "Whose house are we." It is a house composed of all true believers. It is a spiritual edifice. Only look at the contrast; the house of bondage and the house of light and liberty; the former under Moses as a servant, and yet a master—the latter under Jesus the Son, and He also the Master. Oh! what a precious truth it is, that the believer passes from the one to the other. II. Now, let us CONSIDER THE PROOF THE TEXT GIVES TO US WHEREBY A MAN MAY KNOW WHETHER HE REALLY BELONGS TO THIS HOUSEHOLD. It does not say, "If you hold fast your confidence and the rejoicing of the hope," you shall belong to this house; but it says, "Whose house we are" if we do so and so. That is the proof of my being a member of that house. Observe here the contrast is not between belonging to the house of Christ and no house. Observe, it is not between having religion and no religion. It does not say, "If you have confidence, and if you have hope, you prove that you are religious, as contrasted with those who have no religion"; but you prove that you belong to the house of Christ, as contrasted with the house of Moses. That shows us that whatever a man may say about his religion, yet if he has not confidence, he has gone back to the Mosaic dispensation. Now I do say to you, this house of Christ, as contrasted with the house of Moses, is a glorious house. It has no parallel in the universe. There is nothing like the household of God, belonging to Christ; even angelic intelligences, though a part of that household, are eventually not to be compared to the members of Christ's household. The believer is brought into such a union with God's own Son, as communicates to him a blessedness unknown to any other creature. Even now, look at the wonderful privileges to which believers are called—fellowship with the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, and community of nature with Christ; Christ having humanity, we having the Divine nature! Only conceive what is held out to us—the glorious promise that we shall behold the glory that He had with the Father before the world was! The apostle says, "whose house are we, if we hold this fast"; if this is manifest in our feelings and deportment. We must get that kind of confidence that neither hell nor earth can shake, and that is to be got by implicit trust in the promises of the Lord. So again the expectation: you are to hold fast the confidence "and the rejoicing of the hope." What hope? That He will come again; "the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ"; that is the hope. There is a rejoicing of common expectation; but the expectation of the Christian must be definite. Let me give you two or three important practical rules for retaining this confidence and hope. 1. First of all, thoroughly understand the relationship into which you enter when you enter the house of Christ. Understand thoroughly your relation to God the Father. It is in proportion as you see that, together with your relationship to the Son and Holy Ghost, that you feel confidence that you shall hold fast. Feel this: if God be my Father, will He give me a stone if I ask Him for bread? Certainly not. Then how much more will He not give me His own Spirit if Christ be my own Saviour? Will He withhold the robe of righteousness in which I may stand before Him? Certainly not, if Christ died that I might have it. If the Holy Ghost be an indweller of my soul, will He quit me? Certainly not. 2. Then another thing bear in mind that you should hold fast; that this work is the work of the Holy Ghost, through whatever instrumentality the Holy Ghost may operate on you. Learn, therefore, to exercise an unqualified dependence on the Holy Ghost. While you are using every possible means, learn to be always dependent on the Holy Ghost, as completely as though you did nothing, at the same time remembering that the Holy Ghost does work by means. 3. Another thing: remember that the path of duty is the path in which all these things are met with and enjoyed. (*C. Molyneux, M.A.*) *The Church Christ's house:*—No less power was requisite to make the Church than to make the world. The world was made out of nothing, the Church made out of materials altogether unfit for such a building. Christ, who is God, drew the platform of the Church, provided the materials, and by almighty power disposed them to receive the reform. He has compacted and united this His house, and has settled the orders of it, and crowned all with His own presence, which is the true glory of this house of God. (*M. Henry.*) *Christ in relation to the true Church:*—I. HE OWNS IT. 1. This proprietorship is founded on His creative work. 2. His redemptive work. II. HE

OCCUPIES IT. 1. As a permanent Resident. 2. As a hospitable Host. 3. As a Master. (*Homilist.*) **Whose house are we.**—*Christians are God's house:*—What a singular honour is this, that we should be God's house—yea, His dwelling-house. 1. A nobleman hath many houses, which he dwells not in himself, but letteth them forth to other men. We are not houses to let, but God Himself dwelleth in us; we are His mansion-house. It pleaseth Him of His infinite mercy to dwell in such base houses as we are. 2. If God dwell in us, and we be His house, then how neat and handsome should it be kept. Shall a king's house be overgrown with weeds? Shall there be filthy corners in a king's palace? And shall we that profess ourselves to be God's house be full of pride, envy, and malice? The devil found his house swept and garnished to his mind, and shall not God's house be swept for the entertaining of Him? Let us garnish ourselves, which are God's house, with the sweet flowers of faith, love, hope, zeal, humility, temperance, patience, sobriety, that God may take delight to dwell in us. 3. There is no man, especially if he dwell in a house, and it be his own, but will bestow needful reparations on it; and do you think God will suffer His house to lie unrepaired? Nay, being God's house, we shall want nothing for soul or body. If we decay in faith, zeal, and other graces of His Spirit, He will in due season repair them again; He will keep His house wind-tight and water-tight; He will preserve it from wind and weather—yea, the gates of hell shall never prevail against His house. 4. A man may have a house and be defeated of it: some wrangling lawyer may wring it out of his hand, or he may be weary of his house, and make it away. None can snatch God's house out of His hand; He is no changeling; He will keep His house for ever. What? are we the house of God simply? Live as we list, and do what we will? No, verily: but if we hold fast the confidence, &c. One special quality of a good house is to be firm and stable. If it be a tottering house, ready to shake in every wind and tempest, a man will have small joy to dwell in it; even so, we that be the house of God Almighty must not be wavering and inconstant, but we must stand sure, and hold fast the graces we have received. There be two things which we must hold fast: faith and hope; the boldness that we have by faith to come into the presence of God, to whom we have access by Christ, apprehended by faith, and by virtue whereof we may boldly call God Father, and open our minds freely to Him—that is the nature of the word. (*W. Jones, D.D.*) *Of those who are the house of Christ:*—This pronoun (*we*) may be taken two ways—1. Jointly, for the whole Catholic Church, which is the society of all that ever did or shall believe in Jesus Christ. 2. Distinctly, for every particular believer. For the body of a particular professor is said to be the temple of the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. vi. 19). Fitly are saints styled a house. For—1. As stones and timber, they are brought together and fitly laid, and that for God to dwell among them (2 Cor. vi. 16). 2. As a house is set upon a foundation (Luke vi. 48), so are saints built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief Corner-stone (Eph. ii. 20). 3. As Solomon's temple was beautified and adorned with silver, gold, variety of pictures, and other ornaments (2 Chron. iii. 4; 1 Kings vi. 29), so saints are decked and adorned with the various graces of God's Spirit (Gal. v. 22, 23). 4. As a house inhabited hath a governor over them, so the society of saints have one over them who is called the Master of the house (Matt. x. 25). 5. As in a house there is a household which consisteth of children, servants, and others, so in the Church of God (Matt. xv. 26; Luke xi. 7). 6. As in a great house there are variety of officers, so in the Church there are stewards, ministers, and others (2 Cor. xii. 28). 7. As in a house all needful provision useth to be stored up, so in this house of Christ there is bread of life, water of life, and needful food and refreshing. Singular comforts must needs hence arise to those that are parts and members of this house; and that by reason of—1. The sure foundation whereon it is settled (1 Cor. iii. 11). 2. The fast knitting of the parts of the house together (Eph. ii. 21). 3. The excellent ornaments thereof, which are the glorious graces of God's Spirit. 4. The good laws and constitutions for better governing the same, being all contained in the Word of God. 5. The wise Governor thereof. 6. The excellent household. 7. The useful offices in it. 8. The variety and sufficiency of provisions appertaining thereto. That which is expected of such as are of this house is—1. That they cleanse themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit (2 Cor. vii. 1; vi. 16–18). Otherwise this house of Christ may prove the devil's stye. 2. That they deck and adorn themselves with the graces of God's Spirit (Col. iii. 12). 3. That they be subject to their Governor, and to the good orders that He establisheth among them. 4. That they be content with the place and portion which the Master of the

household allots unto them. 5. That they maintain unity amongst themselves; for a house divided against itself shall not stand (Matt. xii. 25). (*W. Gouge.*)
If we hold fast the confidence.—This conditional speech importeth—1. That some professors in the visible Church may make defection, and not persevere to the end. 2. That such as shall make final defection hereafter are not a part of God's house for the present, howsoever they be esteemed. 3. That true believers must take warning, from the possibility of some professors' apostasy, to look the better to themselves, and to take a better gripe of Christ, who is able to keep them. 4. That true believers both may and should hold fast their confidence unto the end; yea, and must aim to do so, if they would persevere. 5. That true believers have ground and warrant, in the promises of the gospel, both to hope for salvation, and to rejoice and glory in that hope, as if it were present possession. 6. That the more a man aimeth at this solid confidence and gloriation of hope, the more evidence he giveth that he is of the true house of God. (*D. Dickson, M.A.*)
Holding fast:—The word which is rendered "confidence" in this verse is not the same as that which appears in other places in the same chapter. "We are made partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end," says the fourteenth verse. "We are His house if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." The two things are substantially the same, and yet there is a shade of difference in the meaning of each of them. The word in my text translated "confidence" literally means "frank speech"—saying everything is literally the renderingof the expression. And the thought is just this, when you are upon terms of perfect confidence with anybody, as we say, we "know him," or "I can say anything I like to him." And that is the sort of thing this writer enjoins as the essential of the Christian man's relationship to God. Two friends, two lovers, a parent and a child, that understand each other, it does not matter much what they are talking about; anything will serve, because each knows that down to the very bottom of the other heart it is joy to that other heart to make itself manifest. But if there be the slightest tinge of distrust or alienation, like a sensitive plant, the leaves all fold themselves together, and so shut themselves up, and constraining silence comes. So, says my text, this marks the true relation to God, that there is such perfect trust that there is perfect frankness. And so you get, you know, such other words as these in this same Epistle, about "having access with confidence," about "coming boldly to the Throne of grace," and the like, all of them carrying the same suggestion of intimacy. Hold fast the frank speech, which is a child of trust, and the trust which is the parent of the frank speech. And my text gives us a practical hint when it calls this temper and disposition the confidence of hope. It is precisely in the measure in which we cherish the Christian hope with regard to that future—that guilt, and with guilt anxiety, and with anxiety fear, being all done away with, there comes this full and free communication. The child that doubts the father's favour, and is conscious of its own faults, sulks in the corner and says nothing. The child that is sure of its Father's forgiveness, and is conscious of its own faults, has no rest till it tells its faults. And so the frankness which comes of confidence is based upon that assurance which covers all the future with a great light of hope, and all the past with a great light of pardon and oblivion. And then the other side of this disposition is conveyed by that other significant word, "Hold fast," not only the confidence, but the "glorying," which is more nearly the meaning of the word than the "rejoicing" of our version, the "glorying," which likewise is the fruit of hope. Now, this "glorying" does not mean an act of glorying, but it means the subject matter, or the occasion. That is to say, it does not describe a man's disposition or notion, but it describes something outside of him, which excites that emotion, and on which it is fixed. So you see my text has two horns to it, as it were; the one lays hold of something in me, and says to me, "You see to it that you hold fast your confidence," and the other points to something without me, and says, "In order that you may see that you keep hold of the thing which entitles you to rejoice, to triumph, to glory, to boast yourselves." That is to say, we have here set forth the great facts of the gospel, all gathered up into that one word, the matter for our boasting, and that boasting which is no self-complacent bragging of our own strength, but a certain triumphant exultation in a thing that lies outside of us, and with which we have nothing to do but accept it, that glorying, the confidence of which I have been speaking, is, in a certain sense, the child of hope. For the more we are familiar with the great issues to which God is leading us, if we will, the more we shall keep firm hold of the

ground for rejoicing and triumph which lies in the message of His love. And all life, with all its bitterness, with its changes, and defeats, and sorrows, it will all, smitten, as it were, into beauty by this light of the future that falls upon it, it too will all become material for triumph, for exultation, for gladness. And now let me say a word as to the effort that is required to keep this hold of which my text speaks. The word is a very vivid and very natural one, the metaphor strong but most familiar, the grasp of a muscular hand which tightens itself round something that it will not part with, is set before us as the analogue to which our Christian disposition and temper is to be conformed. And so we come just to these two practical advices—"Hold fast the inward emotion; and hold fast the outward Object upon which it rests." How do you hold fast an inward emotion? How can we stereotype and make permanent the flowing currents of our inward life? Perhaps not absolutely is it possible for us to do so. All emotion is evanescent. Well then, swiftly renew it as it dies. The carbon points in the electric lamp burn away with tremendous rapidity, but there is a little mechanical action behind them which keeps pushing them forward with proportionate swiftness, so that there is always a fresh surface presented to be consumed and to be illuminated. And so you and I can do, day by day renewing the temper which day by day is dropping away, as it were, burnt out, we can cultivate the habit of frank speech to God. If you want to hold fast your confidence, cultivate as you can the habit of coming near to God, and telling Him everything. And that we may, let us beware of dropping into the evils which certainly will break that communion and will darken that confidence. For no man will be on frank terms with God that has not got coiled in his heart some evil which he knows to be a devil, and yet will not cast out. And then, on the other hand, as we have to cultivate the inward emotion, so we have to cultivate our firm grasp of the outward thing, the material and ground of our glorying and of our hope. All muscular effort tends to relaxation. That is to say, if a man lays hold of a rope ever so tightly, unless there is a continual renewal of the muscular impulse the grasp will slacken by degrees. There are three ways by which you lose your hold of God's truth. Some of you let it be dragged out of your hands by violence; some of you let it drop out of your hands by carelessness; and some of you fling it away out of your hands because you want to clutch something else. And so for all three ways by which men lose their Christianity here comes the exhortation: hold fast the ground of your glorying, and keep a tight grip of Jesus Christ. Those whose slack hands let Him go generally open their hands a finger at a time, or a joint at a time, and do not know what they are doing until the palm is open and empty. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Marks of the Church of God*:—Here the apostle setteth down three especial marks by which the children of God are known: the first is the joy of their hope; the second, the assurance of it; the third, the constancy and perseverance unto the end. And let us not think but that God hath done thus with us, whom He hath chosen to eternal life. He hath prepared our hearts to know and feel His unspeakable gift which He hath given us; for if we should bestow any gift upon men, we are not so unwise to give a precious thing unto him that knows not what it is; we would not give him a diamond that would think it to be a piece of glass, nor we would not give him a pearl that would think it to be a grain of salt, for we should lose both our labour and our thanks. And shall we think the Lord will so bestow His heavenly blessings? Will He give His gifts to those that know them not, who cannot give Him again the praise of His goodness? No, He will never do it; but, as Peter saith, He hath taken us for His own people to the end we should show forth His virtues that hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light; and therefore, if we be in the covenant of His grace, appointed to the inheritance of His glory, it is impossible we should not feel the comfort of it, and know the height and breadth of His great mercy and grace. Another thing here to be learned, if we will know ourselves to be this house and Church of God, is, that as we hold this hope, so we must hold it steadfast and without wavering unto the end, for so, the apostle saith, we must have steadfast assurance of our hope; he calleth it in the sixth chapter "a full persuasion of hope." St. Paul calleth it his intentive hope, a hope in which he shall never be frustrate. So that this assurance is in a true and living hope, and it casteth out mistrust and wavering, even as faith doth, for faith and hope cannot be separate, neither in nature nor property; but if you have faith, you have hope, and as your faith is, so is your hope—a sure faith, a lively hope; a wavering faith, a blind hope; for our faith is a persuasion of the love of God in Christ, and our hope is an apprehension of the glory which by that love is

given unto us. It cannot be that we should know the love and grace of God, which is our faith, but we must know the fruit of His love, that is, His glory and eternal life, which is our hope; if therefore we be sure that God doth love us in Jesus Christ, we are also sure that God will glorify us through Jesus Christ; and as our faith rejoiceth in God's favour, so our hope rejoiceth in God's glory; and as our faith is sure that nothing shall separate the love of God from us, so our hope longeth after the incorruptible inheritance which we feel and know is laid up in heaven. So this constancy and boldness of our hope, without wavering, laid up in our breasts, and crying still within us, "Come, Lord Jesu," this hope is our warrant we be the house of God. Now, the third thing which we must here mark for our instruction is perseverance, for so he saith, "We must hold our rejoicing continual unto the end." A most necessary thing, and such as without which all our labour is lost, but a thing hard to attain unto, know it by the experience of it, for scarce one of a great many doth grow up into fervency of zeal, and so continueth unto the end. And therefore the more danger is unto us in this behalf, the more watchful we must be to avoid the peril. The greatest enemy we have to make us fall, that we should not hold this constancy to the end, is our own flesh. And if it may have any rule in this work we are undone, for flesh will like of nothing long. Even as Solomon saith, the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear with hearing; but be the tune never so sweet, at last we desire another. (*E. Deering, B.D.*) *The nature and advantages of the believer's confidence*:—I. ON WHAT THE STRENGTH AND PERMANENCY OF THIS FEELING OF CONFIDENCE DEPENDS. It depends on a continued realisation of the Lord Jesus Christ, the great object of our faith, and an enlargement of our views concerning His glory and excellency. No desire or resoluteness on our part to retain the sentiment of confidence will avail, without presentation to the mind of the object by which it is excited (see vers. 1, 2). In the construction of this sentence, as well as in what follows, it is remarkable how the inspired writer always keeps in view the connection of those whom he addresses with Him of whom He speaks. Is He an Apostle or High Priest?—it is "of our profession." Is He a Son over His own house?—it is added, "whose house are we." This appropriation of Him to us gives us a peculiar interest in all that is said of Him. II. THE ADVANTAGES OF THIS FEELING OF CONFIDENCE AS PROMOTING THE MORAL GOOD OF THE SOUL. Whilst the great question of our peace with God remains undecided, the prevailing motive under which any religious effort can be put forth is fear; itself not the legitimate motive, but leagued as it must be with the paralysing influence of uncertainty on so momentous a concern, it can have no steady or permanent efficacy in producing efforts for good. Therefore, the apostle says, "Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but the spirit of adoption." Unquestionably a spirit of fear is not a spirit of power; and those moralists who expect great results by exciting fear in the minds of men must be disappointed; it is as if a general should expect to achieve a great victory by filling the minds of his soldiers with fear when entering on the contest. We know how easy, and in many cases how successful, an enterprise is made by having the mind supported by confidence in matters of this world; the same principle holds in religion, that a spirit of confidence in God is a spirit of power for enduring and accomplishing what His holy will requires. There is, no doubt, a material difference between the confidence of the men of this world, connected as it is with high self-estimation, and leading to presumption and insolence which often defeat itself, and that confidence of the believer in God, which is connected with the lowest estimate of himself, and with the most entire meekness and humiliation of spirit, and which is seen, as often exercised in the patient endurance of reproaches and trials, as in the strenuousness of the soul for religious objects. But as human nature is constituted, peace of mind, with the hope of support, and enterprise, and success from God, all entering into the idea of a believer's confidence, give him a spirit of power in the great undertaking of his soul's salvation, by which he pursues a resistless course, utterly unknown to minds under the vacillating influence of uncertainty and fear—difficulties yield, and enemies are repelled before him; and there is a moral influence and dignity in his character to which the consciences of others give the secret homage due to power. But the main strength of the feeling of confidence towards God which faith begets consists in its exciting love to God, which is the great legitimate principle of moral obedience. Farther, the effect upon the understanding is no less striking or deserving of notice in forming an estimate of the moral efficacy of believing confidence in the truth of God. The apostle says that God hath given us "the spirit of a sound mind," by which we are certainly to

understand a greater degree of rationality, and of the influence of our reason on our heart and habits. It is easy to account for uncultivated men becoming intellectual, by having their minds strongly excited by the weight of an eternal interest to study, and reason from day to night upon the most profound of all subjects. And it is no less easy to determine why intellectual irreligious men cannot reason soundly upon religion—they have not been impelled to inquiry by the same pressure; they have not learned the views nor imbibed the principles which would enable them to reason, either with sense or safety, on this momentous subject. It is not the mere exercise of the understanding, but the nature of the subjects about which it is conversant, that gives it force as a moral engine; the greatest metaphysician may be completely outdone in judging of matters of common life by a man of plain common sense, and in matters connected with the soul's salvation his judgment may be completely outdone by a plain Bible Christian. But even when the mind has been employed with the utmost attention on the truth, and comes to its conclusions, their efficacy is small and unabiding until the confidence of faith in the Divine testimony becomes a fixed sentiment in the mind. A conclusion depending on a process of reasoning may strongly impress us whilst we retain the recollection of the process by which we arrived at it; but when that is lost, its impression is weak, and utterly fails before an opposing temptation. How often is it the case with men that they feel little confidence in their own conclusions, however legitimately they may appear to have arrived at them, unless they are fortified by the concurring opinions of those who are reputed wise. This observation leads to the conclusion to which we desire you to come on this subject—that it is not the mere cultivation of the faculty of reason, nor its exercise on the appropriate subjects, that give it real force and steadiness for habitually influencing our moral character, but the distinct apprehension of the Divine testimony concurring with and sanctioning the different positions to which the mind has assented. Reason and faith in the Christian are closely allied in that exercise, for though the Christian must, on the testimony of God, receive some things as true which are above the comprehension of his reason in the present state, God does not propose to him what is contrary to it; and in the peculiar points, the faith of which is essential to salvation, God leads the human mind to an understanding of that which He requires it to believe. III. THE INFLUENCE THIS CONFIDENCE HAS ON HAPPINESS. In its lowest degree it produces a repose of the soul, to which the gay and thoughtless of this world are utter strangers. It is equally obvious that the state of mind in which it possesses energy to pursue the dictates of the higher faculties, wherein it is exempted from the control of degrading passions, and especially has its leading affection, its chief desire, toward that great Source of all good, to which, by its original relations, it was allied, and for enjoying which its capacities were framed, must be the happiest state of the soul; and that all apparent happiness, in a different state, is as delusive in its nature as it is transitory in its duration. Recourse to God, considered in itself, is at all times an unfailing source of joy to the soul that has confidence in Him. It is inward, and independent of outward combinations, which he could not command; it accords with stillness and retirement, which are so irksome to the children of pleasure; it purifies and ennobles the soul; nor is there in it, when rightly understood, the least vestige of delusiveness or enthusiasm; for, though not depending upon sense, or carried on through its medium, its evidence of reality is quite as satisfactory. He whose soul goes out in confidence to God knows God's existence—His attention to his desires—His approbation of the confidence which the soul cherishes in Him from the testimony of His written Word—of that Record of Truth which will survive and prove its reality when all the objects of time and sense shall have passed away for ever. (*Donald Fraser, D.D.*) *Means for perseverance*:—To help us on in holding out, these graces following, among others, are very useful. 1. Humility. This is the basis and foundation when the fore-mentioned house is settled. Christ saith that a man who builds a sure house digs deep (Luke vi. 48). God giveth grace to the humble (Prov. iii. 34). For this very end we are forbidden to be high-minded, lest we fall (Rom. xi. 20). Self-conceitedness and pride make men careless (Rev. iii. 17). 2. Sincerity. This is an inward soundness. If the foundation be not sound, the edifice cannot be well settled on it. Soundness is that which maketh last and endure. Sappy, rotten timber will quickly fail. Counterfeit grace will not last. 3. A settled resolution to hold out to the end (Psa. cxix. 106). 4. Jealousy. Jealousy, I say, in regard of the temptations whereunto we are subject, and of our own weakness. Satan is subtle (1 Pet. v. 8). Sin is deceitful (Heb. iii. 13); and

we are of ourselves foolish, and prone to yield to sin and Satan. If we be secure or careless, we may be soon taken as birds in a net. 5. Prudence. For the manifestation hereof avoid occasions which may draw thee out of thy Christian course. 6. Growth in grace. By this we shall be the more strengthened and the better enabled to hold out. 7. Walking with God. By this he that never saw death pleased God all the days of his life (compare Gen. v. 24 with Heb. xi. 5). 8. Stedfast expectation of the prize or reward that is set before thee. It is said of Moses that he had respect unto the recompense of the reward (Heb. xi. 26). 9. Prayer—faithful, fervent, constant prayer. Christ used this means for Himself (Heb. v. 7). This means He also used that Peter's faith might not fail. By the foresaid means we may continue to enjoy our spiritual strength, as Caleb did his bodily strength (Josh. xiv. 11), and as Moses, whose natural force abated not (Deut. xxxiv. 7), we shall still bring forth fruit in old age (Psa. xcii. 14). (*W. Gouge.*) *Christian stability* :—An established, experienced, hopeful Christian is, in the world, like an iceberg in a swelling sea. The waves rise and fall. Ships strain and shiver, and nod on the agitated waters. But the iceberg may be seen from far, receiving the breakers on its snow-white side, casting them off unmoved, and, where all else is rocking to and fro, standing stable like the everlasting hills. The cause of its steadiness is its depth. Its bulk is bedded in calm water beneath the tumult that rages on the surface. Although, like the ships, it is floating in the water, it receives and throws off the angry waves like the rocks that gird the shores. Behold the condition and attitude of Christians! They float in the same sea of life with other men, and bear the same buffetings; but they are not driven hither and thither, the sport of wind and water. The wave strikes them, breaks over them, and hisses past in foam; but they remain unmoved. They were not caught by surprise while they had a slight hold of the surface. The chief part of their being lies deep beyond the reach of these superficial commotions. Their life, "hid with Christ in God," bears without breaking all the strain of the storm. (*W. Arnot, D.D.*) *Example of stability* :—The *Macrocystis pyrifera* is a marine plant, rising from a depth of one hundred and fifty or two hundred feet, and floating for many fathoms on the surface of the sea. Darwin says, "I know few things more surprising than to see this plant growing and thriving amid the great breakers of the Western Ocean, which no masses of rock, however hard, can long resist. The stem is round, slimy, and smooth, and seldom has a diameter of so much as an inch." How great its resistance to withstand the strain of such a sea! In spite of storm and breakers, the species maintains itself from century to century; for the strength with which it clings to the naked rock, and faces the fury of the elements, has been poised by the wisdom of God. (*J. Hartwig.*) *Means of stability* :—As we tie a tender tree to some other tree that it may not be broken by the winds, and cast anchor in a storm to fix the ship that it may not be driven by the tempest; so ought we to join and apply our weak and faint hearts to the firm pillar of God's word, and fix the ship of our souls by the anchor of hope, that it sink not. (*John Arndt.*) *Confidence in death* :—Donald Cargill, on the scaffold, July 27, 1681, as he handed his well-used Bible to one of his friends that stood near, gave this testimony: "I bless the Lord that these thirty years and more I have been at peace with God, and was never shaken loose of it. And now I am as sure of my interest in Christ, and peace with God, as all within this Bible and the Spirit of God can make me. And I am no more terrified at death, or afraid of hell because of sin, than if I had never had sin: for all my sins are freely pardoned and washed thoroughly away through the precious blood and intercession of Jesus Christ." *Confidence to the end* :—The time came when Luther was to write no more. He was at Eisleben, attending a Protestant synod. It was the 17th February, 1546. He felt that he was dying. "Pray, brethren; oh! pray for the spread of the gospel," he said to his fellow-labourers. Then he took a turn or two in the room, and lay down. "Friends, I am dying. Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commit my spirit." "Reverend father," said Dr. Jonas, "do you die firm in the faith you have taught?" Luther opened his eyes, which were half-closed, looked fixedly at Jonas, and replied, firmly and distinctly, "Yes." That was the last word he uttered; then his great spirit went home.

Vers. 7, 8. **As the Holy Ghost saith.**—*Scripture* :—1. The authority of the Scripture is not of man, but of the Holy Ghost. 2. The Scriptures are no dumb letter; but the voice of the Holy Ghost, who by them speaketh. 3. The Holy Ghost is God, the Inspirer of the prophets that wrote the Scripture. 4. The Holy Ghost is

a distinct person of the Godhead from the Father and the Son, exercising the proper actions of a person inspiring the prophets, inditing the Scriptures, and speaking to the Church. (*D. Dickson, M.A.*) **To day, if ye will hear His voice.**—*The voice of Jesus*:—Numerous are the voices audible to man throughout this terrestrial sphere. As he journeys on the pathway of life, they salute his ears at every step. In the busy city, the secluded hamlet, the open field; in the arid desert, and on glassy ocean, their words are heard. These voices are vastly dissimilar in their utterances and in their tones, and are fraught with momentous consequences to man. There is creation's voice, and they who lend an attentive ear will find "tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, sermons in tones, and good in every thing." Then there is the voice of conscience, which proclaims sin and guilt, warns of misdoing, and harasses with fears. Then there are a multitude of human voices which make glad the heart. The voice of a mother, resonant with ineffable tenderness. The voice of friendship, how it brightens the eye, awakens sympathy, cheers in the hour of adversity. How welcome the voice of mercy, as it announces pardon to the transgressor, or utters a gracious reprieve to the condemned. Then there are other voices, the object of whose utterance is to lure man from the path of virtue, degrade, and destroy. But amid these multifarious voices, the one referred to in our text ever sounds distinct. Like sweetest music it falls upon the ear of the soul, and, when listened to, makes melody in the heart. It is the voice of Divine love, compared with which human affection sinks into insignificance. It sounds in the ear of the sinner and tells of liberty, comfort, strength. Sometimes this voice is preceded by manifestations of Almighty power such as occurred to Elijah on Horeb's mount. The destructive wind of adversity may break in pieces the mountain of earthly prospects; the fire of personal afflictions may threaten to consume our bodies; and then follows the still, small voice, proclaiming the illusive character of the fleeting things of time. This voice is constantly asking admission to the human heart (Rev. iii. 20). The saints of old heard it, and were filled with joy; the disciples, journeying, heard it, and their hearts burned within them. Saul of Tarsus heard it, and it crushed out all his pride, laid him low in the dust, subdued his rebellious spirit, and evoked the prayer —"Lord, what wilt Thou have me do?" But how many close their ears to that voice, and turn away from the loving Saviour! The hue of health flushes the cheek, vigorous physical life is theirs, easy circumstances surround them, and all will be well. The period when we are to hear that voice is to-day; now is the accepted time, this is the day of salvation. By to-morrow the pulse may cease its beating. "To-day, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." He asks your attention, your heart, your soul, your all; but He uses no compulsion. If ye will hear! (*R. Kingshott.*) *An admonitory address*:—I. THE GREATNESS OF THE SPEAKER. 1. He who addresses you is Christ the Redeemer. This calls for serious consideration. 2. It is He who has witnessed all your past life and behaviour. 3. It is He who will judge you at last, as having a perfect knowledge of your whole life. 4. His judgment is "upright." Then there will be no mercy, but all will be judgment. II. THE THINGS WHICH CHRIST SAYS. 1. He says that your time is gone! This is a serious address. 2. He says that eternity is at hand!—a long, a never-ending eternity! 3. Christ farther says, What have you done with your privileges, and how have you improved the means of grace in past time? 4. Christ still farther says, When will you be ready, and what would make you ready to enter into glory? III. THE TIME SET FOR YOUR HEARING THESE THINGS is mentioned in our text as being "to-day"—not to-morrow. IV. THE CONSEQUENCES OF ATTENDING TO OR NEGLECTING THESE THINGS. If repentance be obtained, heaven will be your everlasting happy home. If sin continues, hell will be your doom. (*Jas. Kidd, D.D.*) *A dissuasive from procrastination*:—I. There is a voice which may, with emphatic propriety, be termed THE VOICE OF GOD. 1. The providences of God, particularly those of an afflictive nature. 2. The sacred Word—both law and gospel. II. THE VOICE OF GOD DEMANDS OUR SERIOUS ATTENTION. 1. Should a servant decline the reasonable commands of his master—a son, the gentle authority of his father—or a subject turn his back upon his prince, who might condescend to address him? 2. The nature of the subject upon which He deigns to address us is another reason for our attention to His voice. He calls us to no hard service. He invites us to approach that we may receive those blessings which constitute the happiness of man. III. YOUR ATTENTION TO THE VOICE OF GOD SHOULD BE WITHOUT DELAY. IV. IF WE WOULD LISTEN TO THE VOICE OF GOD WE SHOULD BE CAUTIOUS NOT TO ADOPT A CONDUCT WHICH WILL PREVENT OUR ATTENTION TO ITS ADMONITIONS. 1. You must

avoid that state of insensibility into which so many nominal Christians have fallen. 2. It will be of equal importance that you also studiously avoid the inordinate cares of life, which first this obstruct and then close up the avenues to the soul, and so produce a fatal insensibility. 3. Moreover, it will be of vast consequence that you avoid temptation; for the mind is rendered insensible in proportion as it becomes familiar with sin. 4. Finally, beware of the whirlpool of scepticism—the dangerous shoals and fatal rocks of infidelity. (*S. Lowell.*) *Peril of delaying repentance*:—Not to listen to God's voice (evil and perilous though it be) is a far lesser evil than to will not to listen to it. Men fail to listen through the impulse of passion; they will not to listen through deliberate choice. A single sin, grave though it be, is of human infirmity; to defer repentance, when called, is deliberately to reject God. 1. He does not promise you time. One time is our's, now. The past is gone; the future is not yet. One time we ever have, a time fleeting by, an ever-passing present. God renews to us this present again and again, in every moment of our being. You can attend, or pray, or resolve at this moment. When the next is come, you may, if God's grace continues, do the same. But you cannot efface what you have done; you cannot replace what you have left undone. But there will be a morrow which will have no to-morrow except eternity. God has promised pardon to the penitent, but where has He promised a morrow to the procrastinator? 2. He has not promised thee grace. He gives His grace at all times freely. We have no claim upon it; else it were not grace, but debt. He gives it overflowing, without, beyond, against our deserts. But He gives it with wisdom also. He gives it although it is abused; but He does not give it in order that it should be abused, or to encourage man's abuse of it. But it would be to encourage man's abuse of it, to store it up for those who not only again and again refuse it, but who refuse it now because they may have it hereafter (Rom. ii. 4, 5). What is it but to make the mercy of God the occasion of sin, to sin on now, because God is so good, that thou thinkest that He will give thee grace to repent hereafter? And when wishest thou that He should give thee grace to amend? Next year? or the next? or the next? No! In none of these, if thou art even thus far honest with thyself, dost thou wish to amend. No, not yet. How is this? Because thou knowest full well, that even in these six years, thy passions will not be exhausted, thy desires will not be weakened; the wants which thou suppliest unlawfully will still be craving; the evil habits which thou nurturest will be even strengthened; the embers of thy earthly fires will not have died out. "When, then," God may ask, "wilt thou choose Me?" Alas, if thou speakest truly, thou wilt say, "When I have nothing else to prefer to Thee." God is nothing to thee. Thou wantest, willest, wishest nothing of God, but to escape Him. It is not God thou choosest, but thyself still. One thing alone thou really choosest, impunity in sin. Those who picture to themselves future repentance, picture to themselves at best only the exchange of pleasure for pleasure, unlawful pleasure, it may be, for lawful; but mostly they picture to themselves a time when they shall be worn out to the world and the world to them, in sickness or death. Then they would give up what they cannot keep; they would part with what has parted with them; and they would receive in exchange—not God whom they know not, but—in some way, they know not how, escape from hell. 3. But wilt thou then have the will to repent? Judge of the future from the past. Think of the time when thou wert just hesitating on the borders of sin, when it first looked pleasant to thee, when first thou was tempted to some slight forbidden gain to take some little thing that was not thine, to give way to some childish or youthful vanity, to taste some slight forbidden pleasure. If thou hast not repented yet, hast thou more or less mastery over thyself now than then? Is it easier to thee to abstain from greater sin now than from lesser sin then? Too surely, thy bands have been bound faster around thee; thy desires have become stronger; thy will weaker. People sin, out of the very habit of sinning. Sin wears out the heart, the mind, the soul, the strength; not itself. It lives on upon the life of soul and body. It lives upon their destruction; but itself thrives and is vigorous in their decay. You have seen the fungus, unsubstantial, putrid, stinking, disgusting, poisonous, fed from the yet living tree. You know it to be the token of decaying life on which it feeds. Such is sin. Its seat is in the will. It corrupts the will. The corrupted will anticipates the sin in act; it survives the power to enact. Avarice, falsehood, hatred, censoriousness, vanity, hypocrisy, love of ill-gotten goods, impurity, will live on in the aged sinner's soul; they will accompany him to the last; they will pass out of this world with him and in him; but whither will they accompany him? Will they escort him, as an angel-train, guarding him from the evil spirits, who

wait for the departure of the disembodied soul, to seize on their lawful prey? Will they carry him to Abraham's bosom, into the realms of peace and truth and love, where nothing defiled shall enter? Will they present him before the judgment-seat of Christ, who bids us to love one another as He has loved us, to purify ourselves as He is pure, to deny ourselves as He denied Himself and emptied Himself of His glory that He might take our shame, and thereby bring us to partake of His glory and His love? (*E. B. Pusey, D.D.*) *Taking the first opportunity of grace*:—1. It is God which worketh in us both to will and to do (Phil. ii. 13). And no man can come to Christ except the Father draw him (John vi. 44). Is it not then a point of wisdom to yield when God draws? 2. Thou knowest not what a day may bring forth; therefore put not off the grace that is offered thee to-day. Boast not thyself of to-morrow (Prov. xxvii. 1). 3. By putting off an opportunity men make themselves more unfit for another opportunity; for sin, the longer it groweth the stronger it groweth, and the heart useth to be more hardened by putting off means of softening. As they who had received grace were exhorted to persevere therein, put not off to-day, much less let childhood put off to youth, or youth to man-age, or man-age to old-age, or old-age to death-bed. (*W. Gouge.*) *The offer of salvation*:—1. That while men have the offer of salvation and the word preached unto them, it is their day. 2. That by the outward hearing, God requireth the heart to be brought down and mollified. 3. That He requireth present yielding, to-day, while he calleth, without delay, because we cannot be sure how long God will spare or continue his offer beyond this present. 4. He that studieth not to yield his heart to believe and obey God's word, sounding in his ears, hardeneth his heart. For what is it else not to harden their heart, but heartily to believe and give obedience? (*D. Dickson, M.A.*) *Religion "to-day"*:—I. THE VOICE THAT SPEAKS. "To-day if ye will hear His voice": whose voice? The voice of God. It is the Holy Ghost that speaks, the source of all inspiration; so that all Scripture may be regarded as "His voice." And if it be the voice of God, does it not demand your deep attention, your prompt obedience? Shall God speak, and man refuse to hear? Nor does He speak to you in vengeance, but in love. He does not make His appeal to-day to the sword of justice, but He makes His appeal to the blood of His Cross. And oh! can there be any subject more momentous—involving, as it does, your highest interests for time and for eternity? "To-day if ye will hear His voice." But how does He speak? Most impressively, most earnestly: by His Word, by His Gospel, by His providence, by your reason, by your conscience. But what does He say? There are two subjects, on which He addresses you: your own condition as a sinner in His sight—your guilt, pollution, and depravity; and the rich provision of His mercy in the mediatorial character and work of His beloved Son. II. THE PROMPT AND IMMEDIATE ATTENTION IT DEMANDS. "To-day if ye will hear His voice." Why "to-day"? Because to-day all is ready. The great salvation is ready; the way of access to the throne is ready; the great Intercessor there is ready; the angels that hover over this assembly are ready; and the Church on earth is ready, to bid you welcome to its communion, Why "to-day"? why "to-day"? Because you will never have a more suitable season than to-day. Be assured, that the longer you delay, the more deep and firm will be the hold which the world will get of your heart; "the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches," like the thorns in the parable, will have grown up to choke every good resolution. Why "to-day"? why "to-day"? Because you have delayed long enough. Ah! too long—too long. You should have heard His voice long ago; you should have heard His voice in the days of your youth; you should have heard His voice in early childhood. You should have heard His voice the first time He spoke to you. You should have heard His voice in the advantages which you enjoyed; in parental instruction—in the Sabbath School—under a faithful ministry. Why "to-day"? why "to-day"? Because you may not see to-morrow. Amid the stillness of "this night," death may enter in at your window. Or to-morrow may come, and this voice not speak to you to-morrow. Or if the voice speak to you to-morrow, you may not be in circumstances to profit by it. Now, it convinces of sin; to-morrow it may not convince. Now, conscience speaks; but to-morrow conscience may be seared. III. THE SOLEMN WARNING, the admonition, the remonstrance, by which a prompt and immediate attention to the voice that speaks to you is enforced. "To-day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." 1. "Harden not your heart" with infidel objections. Do not say—"The Scripture is not true." Have you proved it? Can you stake eternity upon it? You know you cannot. 2. Do not "harden your heart" by saying you cannot believe. You will not. It is not for want of evidence, but for want of inclination. 3. Do not

say, "I am not responsible for my belief." It is false. You are responsible for your belief; the great God holds you responsible for your belief; and so far from your not being responsible for your belief, your destiny will turn upon it. It is upon that very thing it will hinge. "He that believeth, shall be saved; and he that believeth not, shall be damned." 4. "Harden not your heart." Oh! think of the consequences if you do. The result is inevitable; the consequence is infallible. He will turn upon you in indignation, who now bends to you in condescension and love. The cup of salvation is handed round amongst you; dash it not untasted from your lips. The sceptre of His grace is stretched out to you; touch it and live. (*T. Raffles, D.D.*) *Instant consideration of religion recommended:*— I. THE EXCELLENCE OF RELIGION, AND YOUR INTEREST IN THE PRACTICE OF IT. Both these are indisputable. What do you set your thoughts on, when you take the affairs of religion under your consideration? Is it not the glory of God, and your own salvation from sin and wrath? Now what is so excellent in itself, so honourable, so suitable to the capacities of thinking beings, as these pursuits which form the nature of practical religion? II. THE UNCERTAINTY OF LIFE, AND THE DANGER OF DYING UNPREPARED FOR ETERNITY. What is human life? A vapour, appearing a little while, and then vanishing. III. THE IMMUTABILITY OF GOD'S PRESENT DEMANDS. Whatever He requires of you now, He will require twenty or thirty years hence, should you live so long. The method of pardon is already fixed. The Unchangeable will never alter it. And if He will not, men cannot. If you dislike at present humiliation; if you feel now an aversion at a dependence on the Lord Jesus Christ for justification; if the duties of holiness seem hard and disagreeable at this instant, they will for ever be so, in relation to depraved dispositions. IV. THE LONGER IT IS DELAYED, YOUR AVERSION AND INABILITY TO IT WILL INCREASE. Was your life threatened with some distemper, how would you reason, and how would you act? Would you say, I will stay till I be a little worse, and then I will apply to a physician? Would it not be reckoned madness to sport in this manner with life and health? V. THE NECESSITY OF AN OPERATION OF DIVINE GRACE ON YOUR SOULS. God is now striving with you. But what if these are the last touches He will ever give a heart so long hardened against Him? (*Alex. Shanks.*) *The solemn caution:*—I. THE VOICE REFERRED TO. 1. It is the voice of mercy. 2. It is the voice of Divine authority. 3. It is the only voice directly connected with the sinner's salvation. 4. This voice addresses us through various mediums of communication. II. THE ATTENTION DEMANDED. 1. That we hear so as to understand it. 2. That we hear so as to believe it. 3. That we hear so as to obey it. III. THE SPECIFIED PERIOD FOR HEARING CHRIST'S VOICE. 1. Short. 2. Uncertain. 3. Succeeded by the darkness of the grave. IV. THE IMPORTANT CAUTION ANNEXED. "Harden not your hearts"—1. By inattention to the concerns of the soul. 2. By pursuing the works of darkness. 3. By yielding to the influences of unbelief. 4. By a sordid attachment to the present world. Application. (1) You are all responsible, for the voice of Christ has repeatedly sounded in your ears. (2) You have all your day—a period given for the improvement of your privileges and mercies. (3) How necessary, then, to hear His voice! How important that you harden not your hearts! (4) Let our influence be laid out in bringing the ignorant and perishing of our race to hear the joyful sound, that they may not perish for lack of knowledge! (5) Let us be watching and preparing for the second advent of the Saviour, when they that are in their graves shall hear His voice and live. (*J. Burns, D.D.*) *Sinners entreated to hear God's voice:*—1. The first motive which I shall set before you with this view, is the shortness and uncertainty of life. I urge you to become religious to-day, because you are not sure of to-morrow. Need I tell you, that you are frail as well as mortal; that you must not only die, but may die soon and suddenly? Who, let me ask, are the persons that die suddenly and unexpectedly? Are they the feeble, the infirm? No, observation will tell you, that they are the youthful, the vigorous, the strong. She will tell you that while the former, like a reed, bend before the blast and escape, the latter, like the stubborn oak, brave its fury, and are prostrated. 2. This remark suggests a second reason, why you should not postpone religion to another day. You cannot properly, or even lawfully, promise to give what is not your own. Now to-morrow is not yours; and it is yet uncertain whether it ever will be. To-day, then, is the only time which you can properly or lawfully give to God. 3. A third reason why you should commence a religious life to-day, is, that if you defer it, though but till to-morrow, you must harden your hearts against the voice of God. God commands you to commence immediately a religious life. Now if you do not comply, you must refuse,

for there is no medium. Here then is a direct, wilful act of disobedience to God's commands; and this act tends most powerfully to harden the heart; for after we have once disobeyed, it becomes more easy to repeat the disobedience. But this is not all. If you disobey, you must assign some excuse to justify your disobedience, or your consciences will reproach and render you uneasy; if no plausible excuse occurs, you will seek one. If none can readily be found, you will invent one. This also tends most powerfully to harden the heart. A man who is frequently employed in seeking arguments and excuses to justify his neglect of religion, soon becomes expert in the work of self-justification. He is, if I may so express it, armed at all points against the truth; so that in a little time nothing affects him, no arrow from the quiver of revelation can reach his conscience. But if, as is sometimes the case, his excuses prove insufficient, and his understanding and conscience become convinced, he can avoid compliance only by taking refuge in an obstinate refusal, or by resolutely diverting his attention to some other object, till God's commands are forgotten, or by a vague kind of promise that he will become religious at some future period. Whicheoever of these methods he adopts, the present impression is effaced, and his heart is hardened. He has resisted the force of truth, and thus rendered it more easy for him to resist it again. In a word, he has less religious sensibility; he has become more inaccessible to conviction, and less disposed to yield to it, than before. Now this is precisely what the Sciptures mean by hardening the heart to-day. (*E. Payson, D.D.*) *The Holy Ghost saith "to-day":*—It is the mistake and ruin of many, both young and old, that they believe and obey Satan rather than God. The one motto is "to-day!" the other is "to-morrow!" I. A GREAT SPEAKER. Much depends, for the way in which we regard and treat what is said, on the person who says it. In connection with the Holy Ghost being the speaker here I have three remarks to make. In regard to what is said, you may be sure that— 1. It is important—for "the Holy Ghost saith" it. Much importance is attached to what great men say. A man's position gives importance to what he says—a king, for instance, or a statesman, or a master, or a judge. How much more important is the word of the Holy Ghost, whether it be in the way of warning, or encouragement, or command, or reproof! When He comes to you, you may be sure it is some momentous errand that has brought Him; and while all Scripture is His Word, such a saying as that in our text is His, in a special sense, and is of peculiar significance. And as, when a king speaks, every voice is hushed, so when the Holy Spirit speaks, there may well be the deepest interest, attention, and reverence. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith." 2. It is true—for "the Holy Ghost saith" it. Sometimes the word of the wisest and greatest is not to be trusted, and even the truest and best may mistake. Here is One who never deceived, never mistook, never was untrue, whose word never was broken—the Holy Ghost. He is the "Spirit of truth." His is the "Scripture which cannot be broken." 3. It is kind—for "the Holy Ghost saith" it. He is the Spirit of Love as well as of Truth. With what a gentle voice He speaks. I dare say you have seen people in anxiety about their souls. Their happiness was gone. And in regard to all this, you have heard it said that it was the Holy Spirit's doing; and you have thought hardly of Him in consequence. And yet never was He more kind than when He did this very thing. When He awakens and alarms, it is to warn of coming danger, and lead to flight and safety. Will you not listen to Him as a loving Friend? II. A MOMENTOUS WORD.—"To-day!" This is what the Holy Ghost says. It is a little word, but it has a world of meaning in it. It may be said to be at once a warning and an invitation. 1. It sets before us the time for repenting. Sin is rebellion against God, and each new sin is another act of rebellion still further endangering the rebel's head. What is to be done? The sin must have an immediate arrest laid upon it—must be forsaken. Here is a boy who has begun to be in earnest about his soul. He knows he is lost. He would like to be saved. But he would like to keep his sins too, at least for a while. He is just like that lad, who, while working among the waggons on a railway, has had his leg so bruised and crushed that there is nothing for it but to have the limb taken off. But he cannot make up his mind to part with it. Day after day he asks to have the operation deferred, each day thinking it will not be so difficult the next; though his whole experience has proved that it would have been easier at first, and that the longer the delay, the more difficult it will always become. At length the surgeon, if he is wise and kind, will break in on this state of things, and say, "We cannot tamper with a matter of this kind any longer. It is as much as your life is worth, to put off another day. The choice lies between your limb and your life; which are you

prepared to lose? Whatever is to be done, must be done at once. It must be now or never." And even so it must be with sin, with the evil habit, the forbidden indulgence—it must go at once. I know how difficult it is. It is compared to cutting off a right hand, or plucking out a right eye. "I'll repent one of these days. I'll repent to-morrow." And thus it goes on from day to day, till at length the Holy Ghost breaks in with His great word, and says, "To-day!" There must be no more putting off. You have lost too much time already. It is as much as your soul is worth to wait longer. Or is there a girl who has got a sense of her sin, but fears she is too far gone to be saved. She has put off so long, that she believes she is now past hope. "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." She is like to give way to utter despair. Nay, but the Holy Ghost saith, "To-day!" It is not too late yet. It may be too late to-morrow. 2. It sets before us the time for believing. But here, too, what delay! Here is one trying to make himself better first. He says he is not fit to come to Jesus as he is. His heart is too hard: his sin is too great. He is like that diseased boy who can hardly walk, and yet refuses to see the doctor, or to knock at the infirmary door, because he is too ill, or does not yet sufficiently feel his need of help. He hopes to go by and by. He might not be received as he is. His case is too desperate. He must try to improve himself a little first. He does not see that the worse he is, the greater is the necessity for getting help at once. And when the Holy Ghost saith "To-day," it is as if He said, "Now is the time to flee to Jesus, whatever you may be. Now is the time to come to Him, all as you are." What a happy day it would be if we heard some of you saying, "Lord we take Thee at Thy word to-day! we come to Thee to-day!" 3. It sets before us the time for working. It is good for ourselves to work. Idleness of every kind is evil,—unhealthy for the body, for the spirits, for the soul. And so, Christian workers get personal benefit from their work. We need to be doing some work for Christ and for others, to keep our own souls healthy and lively and right. It is good for others. There are few for whom the youngest of us could not do something. It is pleasing and honouring to God. God likes to see His people working. It is one proof of their love to Himself. But where is all this to be done? Here on earth. And by whom? Not only by the old, but by the young also. And when? Now. Perhaps some of you are purposing to be workers when you are grown up. You think of doing nothing meanwhile. But "the Holy Ghost saith, To-day";—not when you are older, but now while you are yet young. The kind of work which the Lord now asks of you can only be done here—not in heaven. Can you think of so many perishing all around you, without your doing anything for them? Can you do or give nothing for the heathen now? And so it is as regards giving for Christ. I fear we are far behind in this respect. What a sad thought it will be, "I might have done something for Christ, if I had only begun in time!" 4. It sets before us the best time for repenting, for believing, for working—"to-day." Not when you are older, not when you are better qualified, but just now, immediately—to-day. You must have noticed the tide gradually coming in till the shore was covered; and when it was at its full, how eager the fishermen were to get their boats afloat; and how easy it was then as compared with what it was when the tide was back. The tide may be said to be in with you now: it is full tide; it is the time for getting your own boat afloat, and helping others with theirs: and for your encouragement, and for your warning, ere it go back, "the Holy Ghost saith, To-day!" 5. It sets forth the time for repenting, for believing, for working, as very short: a day—this day—to-day. You say you must enjoy yourselves, and see what the world can do for you. Or you must learn your business first. Nay; but here again, "the Holy Ghost saith, To-day!" It is slipping past, and will soon be over. 6. It sets forth what may be the only time for repenting, for believing, for working. "Oh that thou hadst heard, even thou, in this thy day!" As if every one had his "day"—and when that is lost, it is lost for ever. "Thou knewest not the time of thy visitation." This may be the only "to-day" we shall ever see. III. THE LESSON. 1. Value to-day. Regard it and treat it as you do other precious things. We may well say what a daughter told me she heard her dying mother, a Christian woman, saying a few days ago. It was Sabbath morning, and when the early sunshine lighted up her room, after a long night of restlessness and suffering, she was overheard saying, "Dear day!" Oh yes, it should be a "dear day" to us all, for it is the "day of grace," the "day of salvation." 2. Improve to-day. "Make hay when the sun shines." If the day is so precious and so short, then surely we should make the very most of it. Do not waste it. Lay it out as a steward of God. 3. Remember that the night cometh.

—Every day has its night, and so has this one. Whether you are improving it or not, it is going away, and the night will soon be on. (*J. H. Wilson, D.D.*) *The entreaty of the Holy Ghost*:—I. THE SPECIAL VOICE OF THE HOLY GHOST. 1. How does the Holy Ghost thus speak? (1) He saith this first, in the Scriptures. Every command of Scripture calls for immediate obedience. (2) Further, while the Holy Ghost speaks in Scripture on this wise, He speaks in the same manner in the hearts of His people, for he is a living and active agent. (3) The like is also true when the Holy Ghost speaks in the awakened. (4) Once more, the Holy Ghost speaks thus by His deeds as well as by His words. We have a common proverb that actions speak more loudly than words. Now the acts of the Holy Spirit in the leading of many to the Saviour are so many practical invitations, encouragements, and commands to others. 2. But why so urgent, blessed Spirit, why so urgent? It is because the Holy Ghost is in sympathy with God; in sympathy with the Father who longs to press the prodigal to his bosom; in sympathy with the Son who is watching to see of the travail of His soul. II. A SPECIAL DUTY. "Hear His voice"—that is, hear it obediently, eager to do what he bids you, as he enables you. Do not hear and forget. Retain the truth in your memories, and, better still, practise it in your lives. 1. Hear ye the Lord when He instructs you. How often are men's ears stopped up with the wax of prejudice, so that they are dull of hearing. They have made up their minds as to what the gospel ought to be, and will not hear what it is. 2. But the Lord does more than instruct you, He commands; for let men say what they will, the Gospel to be preached to the ungodly is not merely warnings and teachings, it has its solemn, positive commands. 3. But the Lord does more than command, He graciously invites; with tenderness He bids sinners to His banquet of mercy. Shall His love be slighted, and His bounty treated with scorn? 4. But the Lord does more than invite, He adds His promises. Oh do not count yourselves unworthy of them. 5. The Lord also threatens, as well as entreats. He declares that the despisers shall wonder and perish. If Christ be rejected, eternal wrath is certain. III. A SPECIAL TIME EMPHASISED. 1. To-day, that is while God speaks. Oh, if we were as we should be, the moment God said "Seek ye My face," we should reply, "Thy face, Lord, will I seek": as soon as the invitations of mercy were heard there would be an echo in our souls to them. Hear God to-day, for to-day He speaks. 2. The apostle says in the next chapter, "To-day—after so long a time." I see that some of you have bald heads, or grey hairs lie thick upon them. Is it not long enough to have provoked your God these sixty years? "To-day," that is, especially while the Holy Ghost is leading others to hear and to find mercy; to-day, while the showers are falling, receive ye the drops of grace; to-day, while there are prayers offered up for you; to-day, lest the preaching of the Word of God should come to be a matter of routine, and the preacher himself, discouraged, should lose all zeal for your soul; to-day, while everything is peculiarly propitious, hear ye the voice of God. While the wind blows, hoist the sail; while God is abroad on errands of love, go forth to meet Him. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *To-day*:—From first to last, salvation is the product of the mighty energies of the Holy Ghost, and is brought about by His voice speaking to our hearts. We shall never be disposed to seek for salvation until the Holy Spirit of God in one way or another begins to stir our desires. Further, we may say that, although we are distinctly commanded to repent and believe the gospel, we never shall repent without His first having convicted us of sin; so that from first to last, on our side as well as His, salvation is of the Lord. All this is true; but it is only one side of the truth, though it is a side we must not ignore. I can imagine a man saying or feeling, "If that be so, I am not responsible for my conduct. If the Holy Spirit of God is not pleased to strive with me it is impossible for me to come to Christ; therefore, unless He make me willing I can do nothing. I do not distinctly feel that He is drawing me now, and therefore there is nothing for it but to go on living in sin until my call comes, if it ever do come at all." 1. First, are you quite sure that God has not spoken to you, and that you may not have failed to hear His voice, either because in your sin you did not wish to hear it, or because in your perversity and ignorance you had made up your mind that His voice must speak in a certain particular way, while God has seen fit to speak after quite a different manner? 2. And, second, is your conscience quite clear that He never has spoken to you, and you have known it, and been convinced of it, and yet have hardened your heart against His call? It is quite true that you cannot come unless the Spirit draw, but is it equally true that He has never drawn? It is not too much to say, that whatever moves you in the right direction, whatever in-

fluences you to forsake sin and turn to God, is the work of the Holy Ghost. The fervent desire after better things, the inward restlessness, the sense of guilt, the feeling of shame, the fear of punishment, the longing for purity and moral freedom —all these are the effects of the influence of God the Holy Ghost. You shall never be able to say, "I would, but God would not." Oh that God might never have to bring the opposite charge against you! I have spoken of one great danger against which we have to guard, if we would benefit by the Divine voice, the danger of ignoring it, and failing to recognize it; but remember there is yet another danger, and to it our text more particularly alludes; it is the danger of hearing God's voice so plainly that we can entertain no reasonable doubt but that it is God's voice, and yet while He is speaking hardening our hearts against Him. "Harden not your heart." These words bring before us the thought of a capacity that we all possess. We all possess the power to harden our hearts against the gracious influences of God. It is a dangerous thing to do under any circumstances, even when our relations with God are not concerned. I once heard a man say, "I used to think it manly to repress my feelings, and so I set myself to steel my heart against them, and now I cannot feel when I would. Happen what may, I might offer my fortune for a tear, and offer it in vain." This may be a serious matter. We have no more right to murder our feelings than any other element in our manhood, but that is a small thing as compared with the folly and the sin of hardening our heart against the Holy Spirit of God. And remember this is a sin which we all remain capable of committing, however strong the influences of God the Holy Spirit may be. He never so influences us that it is impossible for us to resist Him. What shall we say of the folly of him who mutilates his own moral nature of all its higher sensibilities and capacities of spiritual apprehension, and of his own accord elects to be "past feeling"—"twice dead, plucked up by the roots, and withered"? But remember, there is only one way of avoiding this terrible issue, and that is by yielding at once. But when the Holy Ghost speaks, and you hear His voice, there is always a "now" in it. He takes care to put before you something to be done then and there. "To-day harden not your heart." You are responsible for this winged moment that is even now flying from you. The Holy Ghost saith, "To-day if ye shall hear His voice, harden not your hearts." Oh, think of all the possibilities, the glorious possibilities of to-day! (*W. Hay Aitken, M.A.*) *To-day—a voice for the opening year:*—I. THE HOLY GHOST COMMANDS IT, AND THEREFORE IT IS BINDING. The obligation is founded on—1. Absolute proprietorship. 2. Mediatorial interposition. II. THE HOLY GHOST COMMANDS IT, AND THEREFORE IT IS PRACTICABLE. III. THE HOLY GHOST COMMANDS IT, AND THEREFORE IT IS URGENT. 1. The Holy Ghost thoroughly understands the transcendent importance of the work. The Holy Ghost knows exactly the portion of time allotted you for the work. (*Homilist.*) *The right time:*—You admit that it would be the right time to start on a certain journey when the following four conditions were all combined. First, a clear duty to undertake the journey; secondly, a safe route; thirdly, a suitable conveyance waiting for you; fourthly, the danger that you could not go on a later day. To these might be added that your life depended on your starting at once (as happened to myself years ago, when I found myself in a village where cholera was raging fearfully). Now all these five conditions meet, and press you to betake yourself to the Lord Jesus for immediate salvation. Add now to these undeniable arguments the other one—that every day you postpone makes it harder for you to come. Many years ago the merchant-ship *Lowell* went ashore on the New England coast in a terrific gale. Her bows projected so far up towards the shore that the crew leaped off the bowsprit and were rescued, one by one, by the keeper of a neighbouring lighthouse. All leaped off except the first mate, who had been in feeble health; he continued to walk the deck and give orders to the men. The keeper shouted to him, "Jump ashore this tide or you are lost!" The poor man continued to tramp the deck, which soon crashed to fragments, and he was swallowed up in the wreck. What was the matter? The terrors of the scene had so deranged his weak nerves, that he had become insane and laughed at the idea of danger. Yet that unhappy officer of the sinking ship did not act more insanely than you do in persisting in risking the life of your precious soul. When Jesus calls, your salvation depends on prompt obedience. It was short work with Peter when Christ said to him, "Follow Me." Again was it short work with him when he was sinking in the waves and cried out, "Lord, save me." It was short work with the Philippian jailer when he heard Paul's directions and threw himself into the Saviour's arms on the spot. All the Bible

narratives (except that of Nicodemus) describe a prompt action where salvation was secured. Prompt obedience saves! (*T. Christlieb, D.D.*) *Only to-day is yours*:—To-day only, to-day is yours; to-morrow belongs to God, and you have no right to take it for granted that He will certainly give it you. What if He does not? An incident occurred some years ago which illustrates this point in a manner so exceptionally startling that I should not venture to relate it to you if it had only come to me by hearsay. I am able to relate it as a fact on the authority of a gentleman who was acquainted with the person referred to. A young lady of good family, a woman of the world, and a devotee of fashion, came home from a religious service, which she had been induced to attend, evidently profoundly impressed. On returning to her chamber, and turning over in her mind all she had heard, I suppose she felt under the force of a mighty influence that was drawing her towards better things. Moved no doubt by a spiritual impulse, she sat down by her table, and took pen, ink, and paper, and wrote down these words: "If God spare my life for six months from this time, I will give my heart to Him." She signed her name, and then I suppose a misgiving must have crossed her mind, for she drew her pen through what she had written, and she wrote again underneath, "If God spares me for three months from this time, I will give my heart to Him." Once again the voice within, I apprehend, urged the danger of delay. "Are you sure that you will live three months longer?" And a second time she drew her pen through what she had written, and once more she wrote, "If God spare me for one month from the present date, this day month I will give my heart to Him." The day before that date there was to be a great fancy dress ball, and she had made up her mind she must go to that ball at all costs; something, I conclude, told her that it would not be consistent to go if she were a real Christian, so she fixed the date just one day beyond this last scene of dissipation. "If God spare me one month from this time, I will give my heart to Him"; and she signed her name, and she went to her bed. The next morning her lady's maid came to call her as usual. She tapped at the door, but there was no answer. She threw it open, entered the room, looked at the bed. There upon the bed lay her young mistress, a cold corpse, and by her side was a sheet of paper, and on this sheet of paper were written the words, "If God spare me for one month, I will give my heart to Him." God did not spare her for one night. She had heard God's voice, but, alas! there would seem to be too much reason to fear that she had done what I entreat you not to do. "To-day if ye shall hear His voice, harden not your hearts." One more illustration, and it shall be on the brighter side. Some years ago, at the close of an evangelistic service, a rough sort of man—a collier he was—came up to the minister who had preached. "Sir," he said, "do you mean what you told us in your address to-night?" "What did I tell you?" "Why, sir, you said that if we were determined to seek and find salvation, we might have it to-night." "Yes," said the preacher, "I did mean that." "Very well, sir; then I want to find it. It must be settled to-night with me; it must be settled now." "Thank God," said the preacher, "I am glad to hear you say that. Now let me try and show you how you may get it." Well, they had a long talk together. The preacher set before the poor ignorant man as plainly as ever he could the way of salvation; and then they got to their knees, and there they knelt praying and crying to God together, while the preacher sought to direct the seeking soul to Christ. Time was creeping on, and at last the clock struck eleven. The preacher was very weary, and naturally enough, having his own home duties to care for, he said to the collier, "My dear fellow, I think now that perhaps you had better go home and consider what I have been saying. I don't see that we can get very much further to-night"; for the poor man was very ignorant and full of unbelief. "Sir, didn't you tell me that it might be settled to-night?" "Yes," said the preacher. "Very well," then he said; "I have made up my mind if it can be settled to-night it shall be settled to-night; I don't rise from my knees until it is settled." "Very good, then," said the preacher, "if that is so we will stay together." The clock struck twelve, still they were kneeling together; one, and still they were kneeling together; two, and still they were there. The summer's sun was just rising, daylight was just beginning to dawn, the poor man was thoroughly worn out. Like Jacob wrestling with the angel, he had no strength left. The moment of our weakness is the moment of God's power. Fairly exhausted and wearied out, at last he was fain to trust himself in the arms of Christ. He might have done so at first as well as at last, but it was only after these hours of anguish that he was brought to the point of utter helplessness and self-despair, and so at length he just rested his

weary soul on Jesus, and in a moment the burden was gone. He sprang to his feet with a joyful shout. "Glory be to God," he cried, "it is settled at last; it is settled at last!" With a happy heart he went on his way rejoicing. In the middle of that day there was a hue and cry raised in the neighbourhood that there had been an accident down in the coal-pit, and, as is the custom in colliery districts, everybody rushed to the pit to know what had happened. The tidings soon spread that a portion of the earth in the pit had fallen in, and there was every reason to fear that a man was buried under the rubbish. Half a dozen stalwart colliers were soon at work, working with all that heroic determination which distinguishes those men under such circumstances. For many a long hour they continued their toil, until at last they got near to the place where the unfortunate man was imprisoned. Gently and carefully they prised up the superincumbent mass, and freed one shattered limb after another, and at last lifting the weight off the man's breast, they dragged him out all crushed and shattered as he was. As he felt the load taken off him, he opened his eyes for the last time. A smile came over his begrimed countenance as he gasped out, "Thank God it was settled last night!" and he fell back and died. To-day, to-day, to-day! (*W. Hay Aitken, M.A.*) *The folly of procrastination*:—It is recorded of Archias, a chief magistrate, in one of the Grecian states, that he was unpopular in his government, and excited the hatred of many of the people, who conspired against his life. The day was arrived when a fatal plot was to be executed. Archias was more than half dissolved in wine and pleasure, when a courier from Athens arrived in great haste with a packet, which contained, as it afterwards appeared, a circumstantial account of the whole conspiracy. The messenger being admitted into the presence of the prince, said, "My lord, the person who writes you these letters conjures you to read them immediately; they contain serious affairs." Archias replied, laughing, "Serious affairs to-morrow"; and so continued his revel. On the same night, in the midst of that noisy "mirth, the end of which is heaviness," the assailants rushed into the palace, and murdered Archias, with his associates; leaving to the world a striking example of the evil of procrastination. In ten thousand affecting instances, something like this has been the conduct and the fate of men respecting the concerns of eternity. They have been warned, but, like the unhappy prince whose case we have recited, they have said, "Serious things to-morrow," and when in an unexpected hour their souls have been "required," they have left the world exclaiming, "How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof!" (*S. Lowell.*) *The importance of the present moment*:—The old sun-dial at Alfric, in Worcestershire, has lately been repaired, and its motto regilt. Now all eyes may read the weighty words inscribed on it by a vanished hand of long ago—"On this moment hangs eternity." Is this statement true? Assuredly it is. As we live and act at the present moment we decide our future: living for God, we shall live for ever with God; living for this world, we perish with it. *Come while the lamp burns*:—There is a story told in ancient history of a certain king who lighted a lamp, and had it hung in his palace: he then sent heralds forth to bring every criminal and rebel to his presence, that they might obtain pardon. Those who came while the lamp was burning were set free; but those who delayed till the lamp had gone out, or who altogether neglected the invitation, met with a terrible death. *The folly of increasing the burden of sin by delay*:—A hermit was conducted by an angel into a wood, where he saw an old man cutting down boughs to make up a burden. When it was large he tied it up, and attempted to lift it on his shoulder, and carry it away; but, finding it very heavy, he laid it down again, cut more wood, and heaped more on; and then tried again to carry it off. This he repeated several times; always adding something to the load, after trying in vain to raise it from the ground. In the meantime, the hermit, astonished at the old man's folly, desired the angel to explain what this meant. "You behold," said he, "in the foolish old man an exact representation of those who, being made sensible of the burden of their sins, resolve to repent, but soon grow weary, and, instead of lessening their burden, increase it every day. At each trial they find the task heavier than before, and so put it off a little longer, in the vain hope that they will by and by be more able to accomplish it. Thus they go on adding to their burden till it grows too heavy to be borne; and then, in despair of God's mercy, and with their sins unrepented of, they lie down and die. Turn again, my son, and behold the end of the old man whom thou sawest heaping up a load of boughs." The hermit looked, and saw him in vain attempting to remove the pile, which was now accumulated

far beyond his strength to raise. His feeble limbs tottered over their burden; the poor remains of his strength were fast ebbing away; the darkness of death was gathering around him; and, after a convulsive and impotent attempt to lift the pile, he fell down and expired. **Harden not your hearts.**—*Hardening the heart:*—I. TO HARDEN THE HEART IS TO CHERISH A VOLUNTARY INSENSIBILITY TO GOD AND DIVINE OBJECTS. II. HOW THE HEART IS HARDENED. 1. By fixing its affections supremely on the world. A striking exemplification of this was furnished by that miser whose hand, cold in death, still held its firm grasp upon his gold, when his spirit had gone to the bar of God. 2. By refusing to turn the attention to Divine things. No truth is plainer than this; that a man will not feel what he does not think of. God unthought of, must leave the heart as hard and unmoved as it would be were there no God, no Christ, and no heaven. 3. By excusing sin. The object of every excuse formed by the mind is to impair or destroy a sense of obligation and guilt. 4. By presumptuous hopes and expectations from futurity. The very language of such hopes is, the authority and glory of God shall not be felt now; the evil of sin and the awful realities of a future world shall not be felt now; all sensibility shall be deadened by hopes from futurity. These hopes of a future repentance, fellow-sinner, are a shield to your heart, which the arrows of the Almighty will never penetrate. III. TO ENFORCE THE EXHORTATION NO LONGER TO HARDEN THE HEART, BY THE CONSIDERATIONS IMPLIED IN THE TEXT, "To-day if ye will hear His voice." The declaration implies—1. That to harden the heart is a fatal obstacle to hearing and obeying the go-pel. 2. To harden the heart is the only obstacle to an immediate compliance with the demands of the gospel. 3. To abstain from hardening the heart is as easily done at the present as any future time. 4. The last consideration is that those who now harden their heart may never hear and obey the gospel. This appears, if we consider, in all such cases, the increase of guilt. To harden the heart against the voice of God once is a high measure of provocation; and if it be the tendency of sin, of accumulated guilt, to exhaust the patience of God and to provoke His speedy vengeance, what must be the effect of hardening the heart with the formal design of continuing to rebel against Him? When in its own nature it involves every act of future sin; when its whole strength—strength, too, thus to offend God—is derived from the fact that God is good and long-suffering? What purpose embodies baser ingratitude, a more direct insult to God, greater hardihood in rebellion, and a greater amount of crime; and what purpose could the sinner form to provoke God's instant vengeance if this does not? Again, there is a fearful principle of God's administration which arrays all its alarms before such persons. "Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone." (*N. W. Taylor, D.D.*) *Soul insensibility:*—I. HOW THIS HARDNESS OF HEART IS EVIDENCED. 1. One of these signs is dulness of conscience. A sensitive conscience is only the possession of those whose hearts have not been hardened, or have been softened. But where there is religious insensibility the hearing of the conscience is confused, its sight perplexed, its voice low and weak. This is the state of the moral nature of which Paul speaks when he describes a "conscience seared with a hot iron"—an allusion, evidently, to the custom, that was very prevalent among ancient Eastern doctors, of cauterising any affected flesh. Sin is indeed a terrible caustic to the conscience. At first it burns the living moral tissue very painfully, but at last it leaves it insensitive, almost destroyed. 2. Another sign of a hardened heart is poverty of love. No tale of human want or woe stirs their pity or prompts their help; no statement of God's great bounty or wondrous love awakens their praise. 3. Another sign—comprising those we have mentioned, and suggesting several more—is inability to be moved by the gospel truth. II. HOW THIS HARDNESS OF HEART IS ATTAINED. 1. By familiarity with the mere theory of religion. It is well enough to have true ideas, to accept a correct creed; but if those ideas linger only in the intellect, are merely themes for memory, imagination, logic, and do not send down into the affections an influence that will permeate the entire being; if that correct creed is a mere mental property, held and defended jealously by the mind, but not colouring and controlling the plans and loves and whole scope of the daily life, then those ideas, that creed, however true, produce hardness of heart. They lose their freshness, and thus much of their force. The soul becomes accustomed to them, as the forester to the rustling of the foliage, or the mariner to the murmur of the waves. And that familiarity intercepts every effort to arouse, and startle, and awaken. 2. By a neglect of religious claims. Some by procrastination, others by stolid indifference, refuse to come face to face with such questions as

"What must I do to be saved?" The capacity for religion diminishes, and almost dies out through disuse. Is it not thus with every power we possess? 3. By conscious indulgence of any sin. The man who continues, perhaps, in a very studied secrecy, to carry on some business scheme that he knows to be fraudulent, to cherish some desire that he knows to be impure, to maintain a habit that he knows is stamped with meanness, or uncharitableness, is doing the very best he can to become insensible to sincerity, holiness, nobility, and love. III. How THIS HARDNESS OF HEART IS TO BE PREVENTED. 1. Be earnest. Triflers petrify with terrible rapidity. 2. Be real. They who simultaneously live two lives—the outward, upright, pious, irreproachable: the inward, false, godless, corrupt are, by all the restraint and repression that their hypocrisy involves, hardening their hearts, becoming in heart "as hard as a piece of nether millstone." 3. Be watchful. Not only to avoid trifling and to keep wide of all hypocrisy, but because of the insidious influence of familiarity with holy things, there is need in every one for watchfulness. Often introspect yourself to see if you are getting less tender-hearted; and if you are, use every means that can soften and quicken you again. IV. How THIS HARDNESS OF HEART IS TO BE REMOVED. 1. How can the hard heart be broken? God has provided the means. (1) The dispensations of His providence, such as the loneliness of Jacob, the manifold sorrows of Job, the sickness of Hezekiah, are designed to quicken our spiritual nature. (2) God's Word is a hammer that has crushed the pride, shivered the self-righteousness, broken the "stony heart" of many a sinner. (3) The Cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, and all that cross signifies of a life of love, of sacrificial suffering, and of atoning death, is the great power for melting and subduing human hearts. (4) The Spirit of God, sometimes using these means, sometimes acting directly upon the human spirit, is the power that takes away "the stony heart, and gives a heart of flesh." 2. What are the signs that the heart is rightly broken? (1) There is consciousness of sin. As in broken stones we find fossils of the reptile or the fern, telling of the time when it was a soft, clay-like substance, easily impressible; so in the process of breaking the hard heart, there is revealed the reptile of actual sin, as well as the fern of fair promise. "God be merciful to me a sinner!" "Father, I have sinned." (2) There is the sense of God's gracious presence. When the heart is rightly broken, He who was "sent to heal the broken-hearted" is there. "The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit." (*U. R. Thomas.*) *The response of the heart*:—I. WHEN WE HEAR GOD'S VOICE THE HEART MUST RESPOND. The assent of the intellect, the admiration of the understanding, the fervour of the imagination, and even the conviction of the conscience, do not suffice. God speaks to the heart. Oh that Christ may dwell there! God's voice is to soften the heart. Alas! by nature we are hard-hearted; and what we call good and soft-hearted is not so in reality and in God's sight. God wishes us to be delivered from hardness of heart, that is, from dulness of perception of His love and beauty, from ingratitude and lukewarmness towards Him, from pride and impenitence, from self-seeking and unrest. When we receive God's Word in the heart, when we acknowledge our sin, when we adore God's mercy, when we desire God's fellowship, when we see Jesus, who came to serve us, the heart becomes soft and tender. For repentance, faith, prayer, patience, hope of heaven, all these things make the heart tender. Can we be hard—thinking much of ourselves, discontented with our lot, envious or unforgiving, worldly and restless—when we hear the voice of God—"I am the Lord thy God; I have loved thee with an everlasting love; thou art Mine." "As I have loved you, love one another." II. ALL SIN BEGINS IN THE HEART. And what is the error of the heart? What else but unbelief? God speaks, and the heart is to believe. If the heart is hardened, it believes not; and regarding neither the threatenings nor the promises, it leans not on the strength and love of God: unbelief is the mother of all sin and sorrow. III. UNBELIEF IS DEPARTURE FROM THE LIVING GOD. How simple is this! As long as you trust God you are near Him. The moment you doubt Him your soul has departed into the strange country. Faith is the link between God's fulness and strength and our emptiness and weakness. If the soul cries out, Abide with me, or Nearer to Thee, the answer of Jesus is, Only believe! (*A. Saphir.*) *Of the causes of hardness of heart*:—1. Natural hardness. This is the original cause of habitual hardness. If that be not taken away this will accompany it; both will be mixed together. 2. Unbelief. This makes men disrespect promises, threatenings, mercies, judgments, and all other means which are of use to soften, or break men's hearts (Deut. i. 32, ix. 23; Psa. lxxviii. 22, 32). 3. Hypocrisy. By this men cover and hide their sin, whereby

they wax bold in sinning. 4. Pride. For this is ordinarily joined with scorn, disdain, and such like vices as make men refuse and reject the means which might mollify their hearts. 5. Presumption. When sins are committed against knowledge, conscience, light of nature, and motions of the Spirit, they are as heavy weights that press out all spiritual sense and life. 6. Of committing or long lying in the same sin. Many small knocks or blows, long continued, do in time as much as a great blow at once. 7. Relapse. 8. Lewd company. Lewd companions will by evil counsel, bad example, bold encouragement, make men impudent and obstinate in sinning (Prov. i. 10, &c.). 9. Superfluity of the things of this world; as of wealth, honour, ease, pleasure, applause, and other such things as men by nature delight in. 10. Multitude of crosses not sanctified. There are as many blows upon the smith's anvil (2 Chron. xxviii. 22; Psa. lxxviii. 31, 32). (*W. Gouge.*) *Remedies for preventing or redressing hardness of heart*:—I. TAKE HEED OF ALL AND EVERY OF THOSE CAUSES WHENCE HARDNESS OF HEART ARISETH. 1. Regeneration. Hereby natural hardness is removed. 2. Faith. Hereby unbelief is redressed. 3. Sincerity. This keeps out hypocrisy. 4. Humility. Hereby pride and other like vices are kept down. 5. A fear of God. This will withhold us from gross sins. 6. Christian prudence. This will make men weary of multiplying sins and long lying therein. 7. Spiritual watchfulness. This will uphold in such a course as will preserve us from relapse. 8. Holy jealousy, lest we should by company be drawn aside. 9. Contempt of this world and of the things thereof, that we be not ensnared and overcome thereby. 10. Patience under all crosses, as laid on us by our heavenly Father for our good. II. LABOUR TO FEEL THE HEAVY BURTHEN OF SIN (Psa. xxxviii. 4). (*Ibid.*) *Harden not your hearts*:—The metal of the human soul, so to speak, is like some material substances. If the force you lay upon it do not break it, or dissolve it, it will beat into hardness. If the moral argument by which it is plied now, do not so soften the mind as to carry and to overpower its purposes, then on another day the argument may be put forth in terms as impressive, but it falls on a harder heart, and therefore with a more slender efficiency. You have resisted to-day, and by that resistance you have acquired a firmer metal of resistance against the power of every future warning that may be brought to bear upon you. You have stood your ground against the urgency of the most earnest admonition, and against the dreadfulness of the most terrifying menaces. On that ground you have fixed yourself more immoveably than before; and though on some future day the same spiritual thunder be made to play around you, it will not shake you out of the obstinacy of your determined rebellion. (*T. Chalmers, D.D.*) *Obduracy of heart*:—There is a striking image employed by one of the old divines to illustrate the obduracy and insensibility of the human heart. He compares a man in this condition to the blacksmith's dog, who, although lying at the foot of the anvil, is either not moved at all by the sparks which are continually falling about him, or only disturbed for an instant; while he returns again and again to his old position, and sleeps as sound as ever. *Hardening the heart*:—The pirate Gibbs, whose name for many years was a terror to commerce, was finally captured and executed in the city of New York. He acknowledged before his death that when he committed the first murder his conscience made a hell within his bosom; but, after he had sailed for years under the black flag, his conscience became so blunted he could rob a vessel, murder all its crew, and then lie down as peacefully to rest as an infant in its cradle. *Hardness of the heart*:—Stones are charged with the worst species of hardness: "As stubborn as a stone." And yet the hardest stones submit to be smoothed and rounded under the soft friction of water. Ask the myriads of stones on the seashore what has become of all their angles, once so sharp, and of the roughness and uncouthness of their whole appearance. Their simple reply is, "Water wrought with us, nothing but water; and none of us resisted." If they yield to be fashioned by the water, and you do not to be fashioned by God, what wonder if the very stones cry against you? (*J. Pulsford.*) *The hardening of the heart* has its gradations of—1. Carnal security, which comforts itself with the outward possession of the means of grace; and from—2. Natural indifference and insensibility to the Word, proceeds on through—3. Unbelieving disparagement. 4. Faithless neglect, and—5. Reckless transgression of the Word—6. To rejection, contempt, and denial of it; and thence to a—7. Permanent embittering of the wicked heart; to a—8. Conscious stubbornness of the wicked will; to the—9. Bold tempting of the living God Himself, until in—10. Complete obduracy, judicial retribution begins the fulfilment of its terrible work. (*J. P. Lange.*) *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.*) *Hardness of heart*:—Known, discovered, and revealed sins, that are against the conscience, (are) to be avoided as most dangerous preparatives to hardness of heart. (*S. Rutherford.*) *Harden not your hearts*:—"Harden not your hearts"; there is no need, they are hard enough already. "Harden not your hearts"; there is no excuse, for why should you resist love? "Harden not your hearts"; there can be no good in it—a man is the less a man in proportion to his loss of tenderness of heart. (*Christian World Pulpit.*) *Sin hardens the heart*:—The effects of sin 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. (*G. Neil, M.A*)

Ver. 9. **When your fathers tempted Me.**—*How men can tempt God*:—1. If having means we neglect them, fondly flying to the supposed providence of God; if Christ, having a pair of stairs to come down by, should have cast Himself down from the pinnacle of the Temple, He had tempted God. 2. Men tempt God when, having had evident proof and manifest experience of His wisdom, power, mercy, and goodness, yet if they be driven into any straits, and see no present means to come out, then they murmur against God, despair of His providence, and are ready to exclaim against God. This was the Israelites' fault, and thus often times they tempted God in the wilderness. They had seen with what a strong hand God had brought them out of Egypt, yet for all that when they were in any difficulty then God was of no power or willingness to do for them. This was a tempting of God which highly displeased Him. Therefore in all distresses let us trust in Him, though all worldly means fail us; in sickness and health, in poverty and wealth, in death and life let Him be our pillar to lean upon. (*W. Jones, D.D.*) *Israel in the wilderness*:—The thought of Moses naturally suggests the Israelites in the wilderness. Faithful was the Mediator, through whom God dealt with them: but was Israel faithful? God spake: did they obey? God showed them wonderful signs: did they trust and follow in faith? And if Israel was not faithful under Moses, and their unbelief brought ruin upon them, how much more guilty shall we be, and how much greater our danger, if we are not faithful unto the Lord Jesus? The history of the wanderings of Israel in the wilderness is most instructive (1 Cor. x.). According to the solemn words addressed by the glorified Saviour to the Church of Thyatira, Israel's experience is to be a warning to all the Churches. 1. It is a marvellous history from beginning to end. The exodus out of Egypt, the passage through the Red Sea, the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai, the manna, the pillar of cloud and fire, the victory over Amelek, the rock that followed them, the garments that never became old; all is miracle, full of the wondrous love and power of God, who is Israel's Redeemer. Consider the Messenger, the Angel of the Covenant, Christ, who led them. Their whole life and history was a life and history by the word of God. Do you know this as a present experience? 2. It was a history of solemn and glorious privilege. God separated Israel unto Himself. Their daily need, their absolute dependence on Divine help, the constant gift of manna, guidance and defence, the daily beholding of God's mighty and gracious works—all this was a marvellous privilege, the life of faith was made near and easy. Is this not a picture of the Christian's life? 3. It is a sad history from beginning to end: continual murmuring, doubt, ingratitude, idolatry, sin; looking back unto Egypt and its pleasures, forgetting its degradation and bondage, doubting God's goodness and power, yielding to the temptations of lust and tempting the Lord Jehovah, the faithful and merciful Christ. It is a sad history, full of fearful judgments. And yet the Lord was with them all the days, and every day, ready

to bless and to gladden them. Do you understand the parable? Yet was there in Israel also faith and love; and God remembers the time of their espousals, when they followed Him in a land that was not sown. There were not merely murmurings, but hymns of thanksgiving; there were willing offerings unto the Lord of gold and silver, there was victory over the enemies, there were Joshua and Caleb, who followed the Lord fully. (*A. Saphir.*)

Vers. 10, 11. **They do always err in their heart.**—*The errors of the heart*:—I. THE CONDUCT OF MANKIND UPON EARTH IS A MATTER OF GREAT ANXIETY TO OUR FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN. Men are apt to think it a matter of indifference how they behave themselves, so that they do not involve their temporal prospects. Little do they reflect upon the grief that their impiety occasions to the best of benefactors. A lamentable thing it is for them and for others, that they forego the privilege of living in the fear of God; for it is impossible to live so happily in any other way as in that which God lays down for the guidance of His people. But it is not only in this way that God shows His solicitude for the welfare of His creatures—He makes great efforts to restrain men from ill-doing by the operation of His Spirit. In the minds of wicked men His Spirit strives. And one result of this benevolent intervention is, that men cannot do wrong without feeling uneasy about it. The man that leads a life of injustice is seldom in a happy, quiet state of mind; misgivings torment him, fear agitates him, and anxiety about the future makes him restless and miserable. This uneasiness and misery is intended by his heavenly Father to drive him from sin into the ways of righteousness and peace. II. ERRORS IN THE UNDERSTANDING ARE NOT UNCOMMON. Men take up wrong notions and act upon them as if they were right. But for all this, they are right at heart, and the goodness and the purity of their intentions (humanly speaking) guide them safely through the shoals and quicksands around them. I do not say without damage to their reputation, nor without impairing their usefulness, but their real singleness of intention and uprightness in motive leads them far away from those dangers that otherwise would environ them. Now things are not so when a man has what is called a bad heart. Beyond such in depravity are others who have no sort of conscience respecting the injuries they inflict on their fellow-creatures. Men may be met with, and mere children also, who would rob a widow of her last penny and care not about her misery. III. WHAT THE REMEDY FOR SUCH A STATE OF THINGS REALLY IS. "They do err in their hearts, for they have not known My ways": the proper remedy for crime is, therefore, the knowledge of God's ways. But we must not fall into the mistake of supposing that the knowledge of the ways of God signifies the being informed as to the purport of these laws. Here, as in many other parts of Scripture, the word denotes approval by experience, as well as knowledge in the ordinary sense. The ways of God are excellent, and commend themselves to such as keep them. In every case these are united in the ways of God. If prayer be enjoined as a duty, it is that we may receive the blessing when we rightly draw nigh to Him. Devotion has many mercies attached to it; and light, grace, comfort, or peace are given according to our wants. Without the duty we could not have the blessing, and men who slight the one lose the other. Our happiness never can be separated from our duties. (*John Davis, B.A.*) *Heart corruption*:—Methodius compares the inbred corruptions of man's heart to a wild fig tree growing upon the wall of some goodly temple or stately palace, whereof, although the main trunk of the stem be broken off and stump of the root be plucked up, yet the fibrous strings of it piercing into the joints of the stone work will not be utterly extracted, but will ever and anon be shooting and sprouting out until the whole frame of the building be dissolved and the stonework thereof be disjointed and pulled in pieces. (*T. Brooks.*) *Heart error*:—Error is insidious in its approaches. It flatters by liberality and betrays by sophism. We are not reconciled to it at once. There are disgusts to be allayed and fears to be vanquished. Little by little are we allured. Of none, perhaps, is the equivocal character more certain than of this. We believe it always originates in an undue conception of sin. This may be greatly modified. It does not "appear sin." Often, we believe, is it strengthened by the forgetfulness that our facts and faculties are alike limited, and by a pretension to knowledge far beyond our actual attainment. Let us beware of the first wrong direction of thought and feeling, however minute the degree; fearful may be the after deviations. The voyager enters a current which seems propitious, there is no apparent diversion from his course, his bark speeds well, his oar does not toil nor his sail strain. In his confidence all promises success. But

while he examines, scarcely does it seem that he has advanced. Much again and again reminds him of what he has noticed just before. A strange familiarity impresses his sense. Still current flows into current, while onward and buoyant is his track. Soon he feels an unnatural vibration. Where he glided, he now whirls along. The truth seizes upon him. He is sweeping a whirlpool. Long since he has entered the verge of a maelstrom, and he is now the sport of its gyrations. No power is left his helm or mast; he is the trembling, unresisting prey. He hears the roar; he is drawn into the suck of the vortex. Not only the circle lessens, the very circle slopes. The central funnel and abyss, dark-heaving, smooth, vitreous, yawns. The mariner shrieks, the skiff is swallowed up, where the waters only separate to close, where the outermost attraction was but the minister to the famine of this devouring maw. (*Dr. R. W. Hamilton.*) *The root of sin in the heart*:—In every man's heart there is this triple root of sin; no one who knows his own heart will dispute it; the root of selfishness, from which spring self-indulgence, self-will, self-esteem, and the whole brood of vanity and pride; the root of worldly-mindedness, which issues in ambition, in covetousness, in the love of money, in the desire of advancement, of honour, of power; and the root of carnal-mindedness, from which, if it be not cut down betimes, and kept diligently from shooting up again, the lusts of the flesh will sprout rankly, and overrun and stifle the soul. (*Archdeacon Hare.*) **They have not known My ways.**—*God's ways*:—Here we are to consider two points. 1. What are the ways of God. 2. How their not knowing of them was an aggravation of their sin. A way is that course wherein one walketh. It is attributed unto God metaphorically, and that in two respects—1. Actively; setting out that way wherein God Himself walks. 2. Relatively; intending that way wherein He would have us to walk. Of the former kind there are two sorts. 1. God's secret way. This is His unsearchable council (Rom. xi. 33; Isa. lv. 9). 2. His manifest way. Under this in special are contained His works, whereby He declares Himself and His Divine properties unto us, as power, wisdom, truth, mercy, justice, wrath, &c. (Deut. xxxii. 4; Psa. cxlv. 17). The ways wherein God would have us to walk are His precepts (Psa. xxv. 4, 8, 9; lxxxi. 13; Isa. ii. 3). The two latter kind of ways are here especially meant, namely, His works and His precepts. The works of God are styled His ways, because we may see Him as it were walking therein. For by His works we may discern the footsteps of His properties and providence (Psa. lxviii. 24). By the goings of God are meant the distinct acts of the Divine providence. Where it is said to God, "Thy way is in the sea, and Thy path in the great waters," reference is had to God's manifestation of His power, wisdom, mercy, and justice in dividing the Red Sea for the Israelites to pass through it, and overwhelming their enemies thereby (Psa. lxxvii. 19). In this respect that God's works are ways wherein He may be seen walking, it is our duty—1. To understand the ways of God, so far as He is pleased to walk in them, and to make them known to us. Thereby He shows Himself to be such a God as none can be imagined to be like unto Him (Psa. lxvi. 3, lxxxvi. 8). 2. To acknowledge the equity and righteousness of God's ways (Psa. cxlv. 17). This is it whereabout God makes with the Israelites this vehement expostulation, and that again and again (Ezek. xviii. 25, 29, and xxxiii. 17, 20). To impeach God's ways of iniquity is a high degree of blasphemy. 3. To admire and magnify the Lord in His ways (Psa. cxxxviii. 4, 5). Much is this duty pressed in, and under the title of God's works (Psa. ix. 1, xl. 5). God's precepts are frequently styled His ways. To demonstrate this more clearly this epithet way is often joined with God's precepts and commandments (Psa. cxix. 27, 32, 33, 35). God by His precepts doth declare unto men how they should carry themselves towards Him and towards one another, so as they are as a way for them to walk in, to observe and to do them. God's precepts are not for mere speculation, but for practice. It is the proper use of a way to walk in it. (*W. Gouge.*)

Ver. 12. **An evil heart of unbelief.**—*Unbelief*:—How does unbelief show itself? What are some of the evidences of unbelief? It shows itself in positive rejection of the gospel. There can be no difficulty in detecting that form of unbelief which says "There is no God." Perhaps none of you belong to that class. You would shrink from such a creed, whose air is the dungeon, whose element is darkness, whose hope is disappointment, whose doom is everlasting and clearly-declared banishment from God. It shows itself in another shape, namely, in a theoretical acceptance of Christianity, but in practically living without it. You are a Christian just in as far as the grace of God transforms your heart. This unbelief shows

itself very often in refusing certain parts of the Bible as inspired—accepting by all means some books, but doubting others. I do not complain that you doubt, but I complain that you are satisfied with your doubts. The most upright and honest mind may doubt about a book in the Bible, but a thoroughly sincere mind will never rest satisfied with a doubt. He will resolve to find reasons conclusive either to accept or reject. Another evidence of such unbelief is often shown in rejecting, or rather undervaluing, the great and distinctive peculiarities of evangelical religion. You must, if you believe the gospel at all, accept it in its fulness, or reject it altogether. Nature accepts the existence of a God; grace alone, living faith, believes that He is God manifest in the flesh. Another proof of this unbelief is seen in disliking a spiritual and a pure worship. Whenever unbelief begins to incrust itself on man's heart he begins less to like a pure and spiritual worship, and more and more to be ensnared and charmed with a pompous and gorgeous ritual. This unbelief develops itself in pride. Wherever there is a proud man there is an unbelieving man. What is pride? It is just the passion that exudes from unbelief. Wherever there is pride there is a man at a distance from God; wherever there is deep humility, there is a man who feels that he is living near to God. This unbelief shows itself in presumption. Many men think God is all mercy; then sin again, and draw upon His mercy again; whereas the idea of the Bible teaches us that the very mercy that has to-day forgiven the sin committed yesterday is the strongest motive, and the likeliest and most constraining influence for avoiding all sin for the future. Another evidence of such unbelief is despair. In fact, these two, presumption and despair, alternate. The man that presumes to-day will generally be found in despair to-morrow. Presumption looks to God's mercy alone; despair looks at justice alone. Faith looks at mercy and truth met together; righteousness and peace embracing and kissing each other. (*J. Cumming, D.D.*) *On the heart of unbelief*:—I. WHAT IS IMPLIED IN UNBELIEF, or what we are to understand by a heart of unbelief. It implies—1. Ignorance. We mean not that which is occasioned by a deficiency of means, nor that which is owing to want of instruction in the doctrines of the gospel. That in view is, in Scripture, sometimes denominated blindness of heart. It is that gross darkness which hangs over the minds of those who are not united to Christ, by reason of which they do not spiritually understand the great truths which they notionally credit. One may have all knowledge and yet be deplorably ignorant in a spiritual respect. Therefore the character of all unbelievers, the most knowing as well as the most ignorant, is that they know not God, and obey not the gospel. 2. The rejection of, or refusal of a proper assent to the testimony of God. Many pretend to assent to the Divine testimony who do it not in a right manner or on proper grounds. They believe the truth of Revelation, and of particular doctrines. But for what reasons? Their fathers had the same persuasion. These things are believed by the church of which they are members, and it requires the same of them. Or, perhaps, they find no sufficient reason for calling in question the proofs of the inspiration of Scripture which are ordinarily brought. But such an assent is not that which accompanies salvation. For this is founded on the authority of God impressed on the word and manifesting itself powerfully to the conscience and heart. 3. Obduracy. It is not only essential to saving faith that the understanding be supernaturally enlightened, but that the heart be graciously mollified. For "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness." This is the most secure fortress of unbelief. Though rational considerations and common operations may produce a great change in the understanding, conscience, and affections, yet these are only the outworks of the soul. The will, as to any saving change, remains absolutely impregnable till the Holy Spirit makes a breach in it by that fire, and by that "hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces." 4. A rejection of the person and mediation of Christ. This is the crowning point of unbelief in all. As it hath been often said that the formal act of faith consists in receiving Christ, it may be also asserted that the rejection of Him constitutes the formal act of unbelief. As submission to the righteousness of Christ is the greatest act of faith, the rejection of His righteousness is the greatest act of unbelief. This is sometimes done openly, as when the very profession of His name is treated with scorn. Others do it more secretly by maintaining a profession while they make it only a cloak for their sin. There is still a more secret way of rejecting Him. For many apprehend that they have given their hearts to Christ, while some hidden lust still keeps firm hold of them. 5. A refusal on the part of those who hear the gospel to believe the record of God with particular application to themselves. 6. Distrust of God in Christ.

In faith there is a resting on Christ alone for salvation as well as a cordial reception of Him. But unbelief refuses this exercise. Faith depends on His righteousness as the only ground of justification before God, but unbelief either contemptuously rejects this, or vainly endeavours to join it with the works of the law, or refuses it under the pretence of personal unworthiness. 7. Disobedience. There is the greatest contumacy in unbelief. "This is the commandment of God, that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ." Now, unbelief spurns at this commandment and tramples it under foot. It denies salvation through free grace to be practicable, reasonable, or comfortable. It says in effect, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey Him?" All may be exhorted to try themselves, by what hath been now observed, that they may know whether they really believe in Christ, or continue under the power of unbelief? 1. Try your knowledge. If it be supernatural and saving you will be convinced of your natural ignorance and of your absolute need of Christ, as of God, made unto you of wisdom. It will warm your heart with love to the unseen Redeemer. 2. Try the nature of your assent to the Divine testimony. Do you assent to its truth just because of the authority of God manifested in it? Do you trust the promise just because you judge Him faithful who hath promised? This is the only true foundation of faith. 3. Hath the obduracy of your heart been broken? If this be the case, you have learned that it is naturally a stony heart. The remaining obduracy of your heart is your daily grief, and you are still claiming His promise, "A new heart will I give you." 4. Have you received the Saviour, or do you still reject Him? If the former, then you have received Him in all His offices—as a Prophet, Priest, and King. 5. Do you claim a particular and personal interest in God's promise, in Christ exhibited therein, and in all the blessings presented to you through Him? It is the attainment of true believers alone really to appropriate Christ to themselves. 6. Do you rely on God in Christ? If so, you despise every other confidence, and are fully satisfied that your own righteousness is only a refuge of lies, and your own strength absolute weakness. 7. If you be delivered from the power of that disobedience which is in unbelief, you will obey from the heart, and habitually delight in the ways of God. If you know the obedience of faith you will constantly aim at the obedience of holiness. II. THE CAUSES OF THAT POSITIVE UNBELIEF WHICH CONSISTS IN A REJECTION OF THE SAVIOUR. The corruption of human nature is the primary cause of all the particular evils that prevail in the heart or life. To this polluted fountain all the streams of iniquity must be traced. It is the ocean of depravity in the heart that, by its swelling tides, fills so many distinct channels. All men are naturally disposed to reject the testimony of God because they are born in sin. Therefore all without distinction are called children of disobedience, or of unbelief. There are several things within the sinner himself, and some also of an outward nature, that operate on his mind as causes of that unbelief which is called positive or acquired, or of the continuance and increase of the natural unbelief of the heart, especially as manifested in the rejection of salvation through Christ, to illustrate some of which is our present design. Amongst these are—1. Ignorance. This hath been already viewed as an ingredient in unbelief. But it may be also considered in the light of a cause. Acquired unbelief proceeds especially from wilful ignorance. Of this sin Peter accuses the hearers of the gospel. For this, he says, "they are willingly ignorant of." The same complaint is made by the Psalmist, "They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness." 2. The love of sin. This is naturally supreme in the heart. It must be so indeed, because sin reigns in us. It is impossible that a supreme love of sin and faith in the Saviour should subsist in the same heart, for where faith is it purifies the heart. 3. Attachment to the objects of sense. Man, even according to his original state, from the very frame of his nature, hath a great and intimate connection with these. But this is unspeakably augmented by sin. In the state of innocence the senses were subjected to reason, but now reason is subjected to them. Therefore the whole man, as unrenewed, is denominated from these. He is called the natural, animal, or sensual man. 4. Inconsideration and indifference about the grace exhibited in the gospel. It is given as the character of sinners that they turn back from God, and will not consider any of His ways. Men presumptuously give the sacrifice of fools because they consider not that they do evil. 5. The agency of Satan. He works on the root of unbelief in the heart, and prompts men actually to reject eternal life. Therefore, he is called the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience. He makes them view the concerns of eternity as of little moment compared with those of time, and so entangles their minds with the affairs

of this life as to make them suspend all serious attention to those of that which is to come. He likewise represents sin as a small matter, that they may give themselves no trouble about salvation. 6. The love of the world. The pleasures, riches, and honours of this world swell so much in the sinner's eye that he views all eternal objects in a diminished light; he considers them as of no consequence, as unworthy of his pursuit. 7. The fear of suffering. This hath often proved a snare. We have frequently perceived its influence in preventing a confession of Christ, and where it continues to overpower the mind it as really prevents a genuine faith in Him. 8. Lastly, perhaps the most powerful cause of unbelief is the pride of man. This natural principle in its influence in the heart directly opposes faith. It discovers itself in a variety of ways. It appears as a pride of reason, of wisdom or learning, of will, of righteousness, and of strength. Are these, then, the causes of that unbelief which consists in a rejection of the Saviour? It must undoubtedly be your duty, depending on Divine grace, to give all diligence to counteract their operation. For this purpose—1. Labour to attain a real acquaintance with the truths of God. While you are assiduous in acquiring a doctrinal knowledge of them let it be your special aim to know them experimentally and practically in their power on the heart and life. 2. Supplicate the power of Divine grace for destroying the reign of sin in your hearts. It is the work of the Spirit to accomplish this by creating you again in Christ Jesus. 3. Endeavour to get your hearts loosed from sensible objects. Consider their insignificance, and the unspeakable value of those that are spiritual. 4. Despise not the grace that is in your offer. To recommend it to your attention you are assured that it is abundant, for "where sin hath abounded, grace did much more abound." You know not how soon you may be deprived of the offer. Consider the danger of continuing to refuse it. There remaineth no more sacrifice for sin. 5. Beware of listening to the suggestions of Satan. His name tells you what he is—an adversary. Be not ignorant of his devices. And this is his great device to keep men at a distance from Christ. Some he prevails with one way, some another. But whatever method he take, if he can effect this, his great object is gained. The more that Satan instigates you to reject Christ, the more earnest ought you to be to embrace Him, for he desires nothing so vehemently as to deprive God of His glory and you of salvation. 6. Pray for deliverance from this present evil world, from the love and from the fear of it. It does not merit your love, for it makes no worthy return. Why should you fear the world? It cannot really hurt you. The utmost it can do is to kill the body. 7. Be denied to yourselves. How dangerous is it for a professed disciple to deny his Master? But whence are any chargeable with this aggravated sin? It is just because they have not learned to deny themselves. (*John Jamieson, M.A.*) *On the evil and aggravations of unbelief*:—1. It strikes against all the perfections of the Divine nature. All these are illustriously displayed and infinitely glorified in the work of man's salvation. If you reject the Son of God, you are chargeable with practical blasphemy against each of the Divine attributes. You in effect call the wisdom of God foolishness. It is not to you the wisdom of God. Nor is it the power of God. For by your unbelief you say that it was exerted, even in this great salvation, for no great end. You also insult His holiness, as if it were a needless regard to trifling offences. By rejecting the Saviour you materially say that sin is a light matter, and that Christ died in vain. You brand His justice as if it were a groundless severity; for by refusing to accept of the obedience and sufferings of Christ, as in your stead, you practically declare that He obeyed and suffered without any real necessity. You virtually deny His faithfulness; for he that believeth not in God hath made Him a liar. His very love, which is the great source of salvation, you dare to treat as if it were unmeaning compassion; as being exercised about those who have no need of it; mercy extended to those who are not miserable, offering salvation to those who can easily save themselves. 2. It does injury to all the Persons of the adorable Trinity. The Father declares Christ to be His beloved Son; and this is His record, that in Him there is eternal life: yet sinners by their unbelief refuse to give it credit. The Son testifies concerning Himself; yet they reject His testimony. They will not allow Him to be the faithful and true witness. The Holy Spirit hath attested the excellency of that salvation exhibited in the gospel, not only as the Spirit of inspiration, but by signs, and wonders, and divers miracles. He still attests it by common and saving operations on the hearts of men. Though God reveals Himself in the gospel under the endearing character of love, and though He describes the scheme of redemption as the most glorious of all the Divine councils, yet unbelief refuses Him all honour

in this gracious revelation. 3. The great evil of this sin appears from the dignity of the person of Christ, and especially from the truth of His Divine nature. He is the more immediate object of faith; for by Him we believe in God: therefore unbelief is more immediately committed against Him. 4. Unbelief is greatly aggravated from Christ's relation to us as our Kinsman-Redeemer. The greater the condescension of any person, the greater is the evidence of his love, and the more inexcusable is our ingratitude if we make not a proper return. And behold! what infinite condescension is here. 5. The atrocious nature of this sin appears from the dignity of the mediatory office of Christ. The honour conferred on Him by His mission, as well as that essentially belonging to Him in His person, is often mentioned as a valid reason of faith, and as a striking proof of the evil of unbelief. This is the work of God, a work of the greatest importance, that work in the success of which He is especially concerned, "that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." 6. The sin of unbelief is greatly aggravated by the reason of various relations in which the Son of God offers Himself in the gospel to sinners. That no person whatsoever may have excuse for rejecting Him from a pretended unsuitableness to his necessities in the character that Christ bears, in unspeakable love He reveals Himself in every character with which the necessity, nay, the misery of man, can in any respect correspond. Is the sinner in a widowed state, is he desolate and forsaken like a wife of youth? In great mercy this Kinsman-Redeemer saith, "Thy Maker is thy Husband." Is he, in a spiritual sense, an orphan? He reveals Himself as a Father to the fatherless, in His holy habitation. And in Him, indeed, the fatherless findeth mercy. Is he friendless and destitute? Here is "a Friend born for adversity, a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother," a Friend who hath laid down His life for His enemies. Is he foolish and ignorant? Christ proclaims Himself as the Counsellor. Hath he gone astray, and is he altogether unable to recover himself? He appears as a compassionate Shepherd, who "gathers the lambs with His arm, carries them in His bosom," and "brings back the hundredth sheep that was lost, on His shoulders, rejoicing." Is he weak? He is the Strength of Israel. Is he in a starving condition? Then Christ declares that He is the Bread of Life. Is he dead in trespasses and sins? The God-man is the Resurrection and the Life. Where then is thy excuse, O unbelieving man? There is no want in thyself but may be amply supplied in Christ, and will be amply supplied by a believing application to Him. 7. This sin is greatly aggravated from the work which Christ hath performed, and the blessings that He hath purchased. 8. A consideration of the variety of means and ordinances with which the hearers of the gospel are favoured tends to illustrate the great guilt of this sin. The greater the tenderness of a parent, and the more various the plans he pursues in order to reclaim a rebellious child, the greater is his guilt if he persists in rebellion. And how various are the means of grace which sinners enjoy—means of conviction, illumination, conversion, comfort, confirmation, and edification! 9. Under the power of this sin men refuse the influence of every consideration that hath weight with them in other things. In human affairs they are generally engaged by the reasonableness of any proposal. The proposals which God makes to us, in the Word, are highly reasonable. He offers eternal life, through Jesus Christ, without money and without price. He assures us that we cannot save ourselves. Yet the sinner prefers death to life. 10. This is a sin that can never be committed by heathens. For "how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?" Although their sin is declared to be inexcusable, yet their doom is more tolerable. 11. This is a sin that could never be committed by devils. Unspeakable is their guilt indeed. But they have never added, and never can add, to their other sins that of rejecting salvation through Jesus Christ. 12. This is a sin against the very remedy. "If ye believe not," saith Christ, "that I am He, ye shall die in your sins." 13. This sin, in some sense, lays bonds on Omnipotence. It does not so absolutely. It is impossible that the creature can ever defeat the purpose of the Creator, whatever it be, for He will do all His pleasure. But sinners may, and often, do counteract the operations of God as to their tendency in themselves. Thus they oppose their natural tendency, though they do not defeat the immutable purpose of God, but actually accomplish it. From these considerations we learn—1. That unbelief attempts a second time to undo all that God hath done for His own glory and for the happiness of man. According to its nature, it is determined to war against God in all His works, though at the dreadful expense of warring against the soul. 2. The source of the ruin of many hearers of the gospel. Whatever attention they pay

to the sins of their conversation, they are under no apprehensions about those of the heart. They endeavour to reform their lives, to deliver themselves from the more gross pollutions of the world. But oh! consider, that this is only to wash the outside of the cup, and of the platter; and that how much soever it please men, however beneficial it be to society, it comes far short of pleasing God. (*Ibid.*) *On the prevalence of unbelief in believers*:—Though its power is broken like a tree that is blasted by lightning, or felled by the axe, there is still a corrupt root in the heart which retains a principle of life, and is continually sending forth its bitter scions, which is perpetually springing up, and often greatly troubles the Christian, so that he is thereby defiled. 1. It discovers itself by suggesting doubts about the reality of religion, or the truth of fundamental doctrines. 2. It appears in seeking sensible manifestations as the foundation of faith. Faith and sense are two things entirely different. Faith is the life of the Christian on earth. Sense is the life of saints in glory. Faith is a persuasion of the truth of God's testimony, on His own faithfulness pledged in the Word. Sense is the enjoyment of those blessings which are the subject of this testimony. We must first believe and then see; for it is not sense, but faith, which must be our support in this life. But Christians are often disposed to invert this order. They would first see, and then believe. 3. It appears in disbelieving the promise of God when providence seems to oppose its fulfilment. It is no small measure of faith that can bring a Christian to the same exercise with Job: "Though He shall slay me, yet will I trust in Him." 4. Unbelief discovers itself in unbelievers by making them doubt of God's love to them because of their unworthiness, or when their love to Him is weak. They measure the extent and duration of Divine love by their own variable exercise; though they may be well assured, that as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are His ways higher than their ways, and His thoughts than their thoughts. The love of God to thee, weak Christian, is eternal. For He hath said—yea, He is presently saying, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love." It is unchangeable; for the Lord thy God in the midst of thee—rest in His love. Can anything, then, be more unjust to thy God than to doubt the truth of His love to thee because of the weakness of thy love to Him; when He hath at first extended loving-kindness over thee, and hath ever since been compassing thee about with mercy? 5. It often prompts the Christian to deny the whole of his experience because he is at times assaulted with terrors of conscience on account of sin. To conclude from these that all former experience has been a mere delusion proceeds from a mistaken apprehension of the Christian life; as if it were impossible that any who are savingly converted could feel a work of the law on their consciences. True it is that one of the blessings of the covenant of grace, and one of the most eminent fruits of justification, is peace of conscience. But we are not to suppose that this peace is altogether uninterrupted. As it admits of different degrees in different believers, so also of different degrees in the same person, according to the sovereignty of God's dispensation, or the variation of circumstances. 6. Unbelief takes advantage when matters exceed expectation. We have a striking example of this in the conduct of the disciples when Christ appeared to them after His resurrection. "They believed not for joy, but wondered." 7. Unbelief exerts its influence in disposing him to yield to corruption or temptation from a doubt of God's willingness to deliver. It is as if a soldier in the field of battle were to assure himself that he should be overcome; and under the influence of this apprehension should at the very first onset throw down his arms and desert his standard. How unlike is this to the soldiers of Jesus Christ, who must endure hardness, who ought to stand fast, quit themselves like men, and be strong. There is no sin or danger in doubting our own sufficiency. All is wrong with us, till we despair of it, till we see our greatest strength to be mere weakness. But to doubt of the strength of our Head is absolute unbelief; nay, to doubt of it as ours. This is the great reason of our falling. 8. In neglecting duty from an apprehension of danger. Fear is the child of unbelief; and where there is a persuasion of the Divine call, and yet disobedience to it from the fear of danger, it is a greater act of unbelief than the disbelief of the call itself. The rejection of God's call discovers ignorance and blindness of heart; but a refusal of obedience when conscience feels the force and authority of the call is more dishonouring to God because it is a gross abuse of light. 9. It uses every effort to drive Christians away from the exercise of prayer when it is not immediately answered. God could as easily answer the prayer of His people at first as afterwards; but it is His pleasure that they should

join hope and patience with their faith. They must be taught submission to His will as to the season. He delights in their holy importunity, and will thus enhance the value of His blessings before He bestows them. 10. Unbelief breaks out in anxious thoughts about temporal subsistence. Like Asaph, they are in danger of fretting when they see the prosperity of the wicked. But there can be nothing more unreasonable. For this prosperity is nowise enviable, as it often proves their destruction. 11. This corruption often discovers itself in fears of death. It is one of the glorious fruits of the death of Christ to deliver His people not only from the power but from the fear of death. But many real Christians are so weak in faith, that all their life, through fear of it, they are subject to bondage. These fears also discover the strength of unbelief. For by indulging them they deny and deprive themselves of one blessed fruit of the purchase of Christ—a deliverance from the fear of death. Lessons: 1. Judge not of the love of God to you by the course of providence. If you take a just and comprehensive view of this it will prove a powerful confirmation of the truth of His Word. But a partial view can only tend to fill you with perplexity. 2. Beware of interpreting the designs of providence by its external aspect. It is denying providence and deceiving ourselves to explain it in this manner. For nothing can be a more uncertain evidence of the real design of God's procedure than its outward appearance. In general its intention is the very reverse of what carnal reason would suppose. 3. Do not imagine that there is any real humility in doubting or denying what God hath done for your souls, whatever evidence you have of His love in a work of progressive sanctification. There is a great ingratitude in such conduct: for whatever self-abasing thoughts you entertain, you ought always to acknowledge the truth of God's loving-kindness towards you. 4. Amidst all doubts, fears, and disquietudes, endeavour to present exercise of faith in Christ. This is the most effectual and confounding reply to all the reasonings of unbelief and temptations of Satan. This is a mean of comfort which has been often blessed to doubting saints when their Christian experience hath been of little use to them, when every other mean hath failed. To one groping in darkness there cannot be so convincing an evidence of the reality of light as to get a view of the sun shining in his strength. (*Ibid.*) *On vigilance as to a heart of unbelief*:—1. This exhortation by no means implies that it is either in our will or in our power to change our hearts. For, although it is otherwise with respect to conversion, regeneration is everywhere represented as a real change affected on the heart of the sinner, wherein he is entirely passive, as a new creation, a calling of things that be not, a quickening of those who are dead, a transformation into the image of God; in a word, as a work of such a nature, that it requires an exceeding greatness of Divine power. 2. This exhortation implies that we are in great danger of being negligent. The power of sin in our hearts, the temptations of Satan, and the influence of the world, are all evidences of the danger we are in of rejecting Christ. 3. It implies the necessity of watchfulness and jealousy of ourselves. Take heed, look around you, lest ye be misled as to the great interests of salvation. We are called to such vigilance as become a watchman appointed for the very purpose of observing the motions of an enemy. 4. These words denote the necessity of knowing our natural state as under the dominion of sin. It is not said, Take heed "lest there enter into your hearts any motion of unbelief," as if it were a thing that had no root within us, a habit to be contracted by imitation, or by a course of iniquity. But, take heed lest there *be* in any of you a heart of unbelief; as plainly declaring that this is natural to every man, and that it is so as denominating his whole heart. 5. It implies the possibility of knowing our present state. 6. It expresses the necessity and importance of the knowledge of our state. Were not this knowledge of the greatest consequence to us, the Holy Spirit would not press us so earnestly to take heed that we deceive not ourselves. The importance of this knowledge appears from that of its subject; as the glory of God and our eternal comfort are inseparably connected with it. On this question, whether we be in Christ? depends another of the greatest moment, whether God's highest end, not only in the works of creation and providence, but in redemption, and the highest end of our being be accomplished? This is the one thing needful, compared with which everything else that requires our attention is less than nothing and vanity. 7. It implies that it is highly incumbent on us to examine ourselves for discovering our state. The phrase here used signifies a looking not only about us but into ourselves, a trying of our own hearts: for thus alone can we discover the dominion or prevalence of

unbelief. 8. This injunction declares the necessity of a diligent use and improvement of all the means of grace. We are not to confine our attention merely to what passes within us for attaining a knowledge of our state, but diligently to attend to ordinances as the means instituted by God for rectifying our state, if it be bad, and for giving us a greater degree of certainty. 9. It implies that Christians ought not only to know their real state but to attend to their present exercise. 10. This injunction further implies that the sin of believers, in itself considered, hath no less guilt, and is attended with no less danger than that of the unregenerate. 11. It also implies that our preservation in a state of grace is inseparably connected with the use of means on our part. From the foregoing observations, those who are still negligent about the state of their hearts may be exhorted—1. To the exercise of self-examination. 2. Beware of spiritual sloth. This is the ruin of many hearers of the gospel. They will not give themselves so much trouble as to make a diligent inquiry into their state for eternity. 3. Earnestly apply to God Himself that He may open and incline your hearts. He alone can perform this work. It is His prerogative. It is entirely a supernatural work. It is not bestowed on men like any natural gift, such as wisdom or prudence. It must be communicated by the effectual operation of the spirit, implanting a new nature. For God saith, "Behold I make all things new." (*Ibid.*) *On the necessity of vigilance as to unbelief:*—The necessity of taking heed to the gospel, of embracing Christ, and adhering to Him in the exercise of genuine faith, appears—1. From the impossibility of escape to final unbelievers. 2. From the severity of the punishment awaiting unbelievers. 3. The dignity of Christ's prophetical character. The chapter in which our text lies begins with this argument: "Wherefore . . . consider the Apostle . . . of our profession, Christ Jesus." How are we to consider Him? We are so to devote our minds to the contemplation of all His excellencies as fully to satisfy ourselves that He is every way worthy to be the object of our faith. We must consider Him as "the Apostle of our profession"; for He is that great Prophet whom God hath sent, after having promised Him so often and so long. 4. The honour put on those who steadfastly adhere to Christ. They are His house! He occupies their hearts, their whole persons, as His constant dwelling; for He hath said, "I will dwell in them." They are "builded up for an habitation of God through the Spirit." If so, we ought surely to be extremely vigilant, lest, by an evil heart of unbelief, we exclude this blessed inhabitant. 5. The authority of the Holy Ghost. This argument is proposed (vers. 7, 8). Unbelief, when described as a tempting of God, is held up to view as committed against each Person of the adorable Godhead. It is spoken of as a tempting of the Father (Psa. xcv. 7). It is viewed as committed against Christ (1 Cor. x. 9). And here it is considered as directed against the Spirit. Unbelief is thus described, because it is a rejection of that salvation in which each Person of the Trinity hath a peculiar and distinct operation. It is especially a tempting of the Holy Ghost, because it is more immediately opposed to His work in applying this salvation to the hearts of men. By unbelief He is peculiarly resisted, as He, according to the order of subsistence, is the Finisher of all the external works of God. Therefore unbelievers are not said to resist the Father, or the Son, but the Spirit. Two things are mentioned in the passage, in which the authority of the Holy Spirit is interposed. First, He enjoins on us the exercise of faith in hearing the voice of God, the present exercise of faith, without admitting of any delay—"To-day, if ye will hear." Then He warns us against unbelief and activity in hardening ourselves and tempting Him, like the ancient Jews. It is, therefore, necessary that we take heed, lest we be found chargeable with resisting the Holy Spirit of promise by a rejection of that which is the great subject of His testimony and ground of His operation in the Church, the salvation purchased by the blood of Christ. 6. The danger of being unexpectedly deprived of our day of grace. This argument is urged by the apostle, from the example of God's procedure with the Israelites (ver. 11). The day of grace is never extended beyond the day of life. But the latter sometimes continues after the former is gone. 7. The unspeakable blessedness necessarily connected with genuine faith. "For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end" (ver. 14). The great privilege which the apostle seems especially to have in his eye is union to Christ. He, in His incarnation, was made a partaker of us: "Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise took part of the same." Now, this participation is mutual; for being joined to the Lord, we are one spirit with Him. The apostle seems especially to describe faith as the evidence

of our real participation of Christ. He exhibits it under one character, which is a certain proof of its sincerity. It is of a permanent nature. It is not a transient notion in the head, or affection in the heart, which we have to-day, and lose to-morrow, but a fixed principle, making us to abide in Christ to the end of our course. 8. The danger of exclusion from God's rest. This argument is urged by the apostle in the last verse of this chapter, connected with the first of the following: "So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief. Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it." This argument is intimately connected with one already considered, arising from the danger of our day of grace coming to an end. 9. The all-penetrating nature of the Word of God. This argument is adduced (chap. iv. 12, 13). From the foregoing observations we infer—(1) That God deals with us in the gospel as rational creatures. He proposes innumerable motives, which have a natural tendency to affect the will. He works on the affections by the most pressing entreaties, tender expostulations, and exceeding great and precious promises. As man is naturally swayed by hopes of honour, pleasure or interest, He shows that all these in their true value and perfect essence are engaged solely on His side. Thus He "draws with the cords of a man" (Hosea xi. 4). (2) The necessity of having the heart right with God. Did the priests under the law examine the sacrifices, not only outwardly, but inwardly, to discover if there was any blemish? So doth our great High Priest. He looks not only to the conduct, but to the heart, to see if there be any such blemish there, as would render the sacrifice a corrupt thing. For all things are naked and opened to Him. (3) One mark by which the voice of Christ may be known. It is of a heart-penetrating nature. "The sheep," saith the Great Shepherd, speaking of Himself, "hear His voice: . . . for they know it. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers." Many flee from a searching ministry. But surely this is the greatest folly, and a certain evidence that the heart is bad. For "he that is of the truth, cometh to the light." What is this but, as far as possible, to flee from the presence of the Lord, to flee from the Word of God, who, by the means of His own appointment, is quick and powerful? (4) Christians may learn the danger of grieving the Holy Ghost. You do so by not improving His gracious motions within you when stirring you up to duty, and by committing sin. (5) Those who are habitually careless may be warned from this branch of the subject not to tempt and resist the Holy Spirit. (*Ibid.*) *On the tendency of unbelief*:—From these words we are therefore to illustrate the natural tendency of unbelief, or its influence in producing a departure from the living God. 1. This expression implies a rejection of spiritual and eternal life, through Jesus Christ. This sin, as persisted in, issues in a total separation from the blissful enjoyment of God as reconciled, an eternal banishment "from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power" (2. Thess. i. 9). 2. It often produces a secret apostasy from Christ. Many retain the form of godliness, while they practically deny the power thereof. They indulge sin in the chamber of imagery, or practise it so secretly that their characters are not blasted. 3. Unbelief induces to a departure from all purity and strictness of profession. 4. Unbelief drives others so far that they entirely renounce a religious profession. 5. Unbelief often issues in confirmed, or in judicial obduracy. 6. It tends to the commission of the unpardonable sin. This evil heart is a sluice which, if once opened, knows no restraint but what is imposed on it by the restraining, preventing, renewing, or preserving grace of God. It is a torrent that would soon burst through all the fences of reason, natural dictates of conscience, common light, and strong convictions—nay, of saving grace already received, were not believers kept by the power of God through faith as the mean, kept by continual supplies from the fulness of Christ, and thus preserved from perishing. It is naturally a rejection of the living God, and of that life of God, which can alone preserve from total apostasy and eternal death. 7. It tends to the indulgence of all sin. As unbelief is itself the departure of the heart from God, it continually impels to an universal departure from Him in the life. He who is under the power of unbelief never views sin as sin. Unbelief, which rejects Christ and salvation through Him, must necessarily give a preference to sin, his enemy. Nay, that very preference which the unbeliever gives to sin is the immediate cause of his rejection of the Saviour. The character of evil here given to the heart seems, indeed, especially to refer to the great efficacy of positive or acquired unbelief; for it makes the heart a great deal more wicked than it was before. Nor is it merely called evil, but the word used denotes great activity in evil, a labour in increasing

its own corruption and that of the life, in strengthening itself in its own wickedness. 8. It tends to eternal death. If, as hath been said, it be a rejection of spiritual and eternal life, this must be the inevitable consequence. (*Ibid.*) *On the improvement of the doctrine of unbelief*:—I. We may improve it for INSTRUCTION. 1. We may learn, in general, the great reason of the unprofitableness of the hearers of the gospel. It is their want of faith. 2. It may be inferred that we ought to view every sin in its natural tendency. This particularly applies to unbelief. Therefore the apostle holds up this sin in its genuine scope, in departing from the living God. This is one great object of the deceitfulness of sin to conceal its true spirit, design, and end. But we ought to tear off the veil, and then shall we see that its ways lead down to death. 3. A departure from the ordinances of the gospel is a departure from God. The Hebrews might be apt to excuse themselves for renouncing the gospel dispensation in the hour of trial by pretending that they still secretly adhered in heart to God, trusted in the Messiah, and retained a respect to ordinances formerly enjoined. But the apostle shows that, by departing from the gospel, they really apostatised from the living God. Others may endeavour to excuse themselves in like manner from their inward respect to God, while they refuse attendance on the means of grace. But all who habitually do so renounce the authority of God, who hath an undoubted right to appoint what religious ordinances soever He pleases. Unless we acknowledge His authority in this respect, our hearts do not submit to Him; we rise up in actual rebellion against Him. 4. The great danger of speaking irreverently of the Holy Spirit, either as to His person or operations. 5. We may learn that even the partial exercise of unbelief in the hearts of God's people is highly provoking to Him. Therefore we are so earnestly dehorted from it. We have an instance of His displeasure in this respect with two eminent saints, Moses and Aaron, although Moses was the principal actor. II. This subject affords ground of TRIAL. Let every one put this important question to his own heart, "Do I really believe in Christ, or am I still under the power of this evil heart of unbelief?" 1. If your faith be saving, you are convinced that it is the work of God. 2. It is attended with evangelical repentance. "They shall look on Me whom they have pierced, and shall mourn." Have you never been made to abhor yourselves? Has all your sorrow for sin been confined to its consequences? If so, you are yet strangers to the faith of God's elect. 3. The heart is purified by means of it. This grace always produces holiness. It instigates to, and is instrumental in, the mortification of all known sin. 4. It worketh by love. It produces a supreme love to God. For "he that loveth not, knoweth not God." It works by love to the brethren. For "hereby do we know that we are passed from death to life," &c. 5. It overcometh the world. The Church is represented as having the moon under her feet. This may be understood of the present world, of which, because of the uncertainty of all its enjoyments, the moon in her many waxings and wanings, in her constant changes, is a very proper emblem. Faith overcomes the world in its allurements. 6. It produces a high esteem of Christ; for to them that believe He is precious. 7. Faith receives and improves Christ in every respect in which He is revealed. It embraces Him in His person as God-man. Therefore believing is called receiving Him. Indeed, faith is, on our part, the great instrument of union to Christ. Faith embraces His righteousness. Therefore it is called the righteousness of faith, and said to be unto all and upon all them that believe It receives Him in all His offices, as made of God to us wisdom, righteousness, and sanctification. 8. Faith purifies the life. "As the body without the spirit is dead, even so faith without works is dead also." That faith which does not influence the practice is deceitful and destructive. (*Ibid.*) *To all, faith*:—In Scripture the "heart" expresses the whole spiritual nature of man—his mind or understanding, his feelings and passions, his spiritual being, his will. Under sin the heart's thoughts are darkened, its passions degraded, its will perverted (Jer. xvii. 9; Ezek. xi. 19; Eccles. viii. 2). Accordingly, the gospel deals first and above all with the heart. Mere change of life, while a deceitful heart remains, will avail nothing. The gospel's first promise, therefore, is (Ezek. xxxvii. 26, 27). The renewed heart implies everything—new light to the darkened mind, a renewed will, a new life. The root of all the evils that afflict our race is the unbelieving heart. You will find many urge in those days that, as faith is simply belief in testimony, as to whose value people may differ, unbelief is no sin. For instance, you may hear that a certain event took place in London last week, and the evidence seems to you so good that you believe the report; a friend of yours, however, does not believe it, because he thinks the evidence untrustworthy. In

neither case does moral blame attach to the person; all that can be said is, that the two friends differ. Now any one who reads Holy Scripture will soon discover that, as to the great truths of religion, Scripture treats faith in them, or unbelief, in no such easy temper as this. Faith, accordiug to the Bible, is our first duty, and unbelief a damning crime (Mark xvi. 16; John vi. 29, iii. 18). What, then, is the essence of saving faith? (Rom. x. 9, 10). It is believing God's testimony concerning His Son, concerning our doom as sinners, His love as our Saviour, His death for us, His resurrection, His reign over us, and His Spirit's work in us. As to God, it is our taking Him at His word, in all He tells us of our emptiness, and of Christ's fulness. As to ourselves, it is the assertion and triumph of the higher nature within us over the lower, of the unseen and eternal over the world of sense about us and within us. We see, then, why faith saves. It lays hold upon God; it overcomes the world. The believer lives as seeing Him who is invisible, as in presence of things eternal. God has clearly revealed to us this unseen life, and established by many infallible proofs both its existence and its awful character. Reason deals with the evidence, and then, assured of the facts, faith's eye gazes upon them as though they were visible, and the believer lives under the abiding sense and power of them. What this power is, we see in Heb. xi. Whereas, where an evil, unbelieving heart is, there will be found the victory not of faith, but of the world—evil thoughts, evil desires, evil words, evil acts, the deceitful heart desperately wicked. In Rom. i. 28–32 we have one of the reasons why unbelief is condemned. It is a sin against knowledge. It may be said, indeed, that many live in ignorance of unseen realities; but whence springs this? With multitudes, from indifference. They care for none of the things that make for their soul's peace, and hence take no pains to know God's way of peace for guilty sinners. Multitudes, again, are lost by procrastination. The longer the delay, the less the hope. Worldliness grows upon one, deadness of heart spreads and deepens; ossification, stoniness of heart—the truest and most awful mortification known to us; the conscience becomes dulled, the eye of sense opens, the objects of sense allures, faith's eye closes, and unseen things become dim, shadowy, unsubstantial. Luxuries become, from habit, necessities; the lust of the flesh, &c., grow by indulgence; and the desires after better things unseen dwindle by disuse. Faint wishes after heavenly things, and these but seldom take the place of settled purpose; while the strong will, every day stronger, drags down the captive spirit to earth, and sense, and sin. Pride unites with careless indolence in making the unbeliever reject the gospel. He rebels against its simplicity. His good name, good works, good character—something of self as are equivalent for salvation; whereas, all the while, eternal life is God's free gift, which can neither be bought nor bribed, but must come of God's own rich, undeserved grace, for His Son's sake. Strange, too, as it may seem, the evil heart betrays its presence as much by shame as by pride; but it is the false shame, which springs not from sin but from fear of the opinion of the world about us. There is but one way to God, but there are a thousand ways of departing from Him. He who is the slave of impure thought, of anger, hatred, malice, envy, or covetousness, will find that his evil heart will soon open up a way by which he may depart still further from the living God. To each and all the gospel says—Return. The test of faith is obedience. (*W. McLean.*) *The evil of unbelief*:—1. Unbelief hardens men's hearts against means afforded for their good (2 Kings xvii. 14; Exod. ix. 19, 21). 2. It keeps them from being established in the way of God (Isa. vii. 9). 3. It makes them reject those whom God sends (John v. 38; Matt. xxi. 32). 4. It takes away the profit of God's word (Heb. iv. 2). 5. It perverts the plainest manner of teaching (John iii. 12; x. 25). 6. It makes miracles not to be regarded (John xii. 37). 7. It enrageth men's minds against the truth (Acts xvii. 5). 8. It moved the apostles to depart from people (Acts xix. 9). 9. It makes men unfit to call on God (Rom. x. 4). 10. Unbelievers can in nothing please God (Heb. xi. 6). 11. They are no sheep of Christ (John x. 26). 12. They are under Satan's power (2 Cor. iv. 4). 13. To unbelievers nothing is pure (Titus i. 15). 14. The gifts which Christ bestows upon them are fruitless and without power (Matt. xvii. 20). 15. Christ's own power is stinted to them (Matt. xiii. 58). 16. Unbelief makes men do detestable acts (1 Tim. i. 13). 17. It was an especial cause of the rejection of the Jews (Rom. xi. 20). 18. It was the cause of many external judgments (Heb. iii. 19; xi. 31). For it makes men run headlong into danger (Exod. xiv. 23). 19. It excludes from heaven (Heb. iv. 11). 20. It thrusts down to hell (Luke xii. 46; Mark xvi. 16; John iii. 18; 2 Thess. ii. 12; Rev. xxi. 8). Can that which is in

itself so heinous a sin, and that which has so many fearful effects following upon it, be accounted an infirmity? If we would judge it as indeed it is a true, proper sin, a cause of many other gross sins: a sin most dishonourable to God, and damnable to our own souls: we should take more heed of it, and be more watchful against it. (*W. Gouge.*) *Duties due to Christ, as He is the living God*:—Sundry duties are to be performed unto Christ in this respect, that He is the living God. 1. Acknowledge Him to be the true God (Josh. iii. 10; Jer. x. 10). 2. Be zealous of His honour (1 Sam. xvii. 26; 2 Kings xix. 4, 16). 3. Fear Him that hath the absolute power of life (Luke xii. 5; Heb. x. 31). 4. Tremble before Him (Dan. vi. 26; Deut. v. 26). 5. Adore Him (Rom. xiv. 11). 6. Serve Him (1 Thess. i. 9; Heb. ix. 14). 7. Turn to Him (Acts xiv. 15). 8. Long after Him (Psa. xlii. 2; lxxxiv. 2). 9. Hold close to Him (John vi. 68, 69). 10. Seek life of Him (John vi. 33; v. 40). 11. Trust in Him (1 Tim. iv. 10; vi. 17). 12. Account it a great privilege to be His son (Hos. i. 10; Rom. ix. 26; Heb. xii. 22). 13. Pervert not His word (Jer. xxiii. 36). 14. Never depart from Him (Heb. iii. 12). (*Ibid.*) *Dishonest doubt*:—I. THE EVIL IN UNBELIEF. 1. Distrust is born of evil experience. The innocent child is credulous. Its confidence is destroyed by what it comes to see of dishonesty, falsehood, and selfishness. But this product of sin ought not to become the principle by which to weigh the truth of higher things. 2. Infidelity has dishonoured our nobler nature. Its philosophy is materialistic. Its theory of human origin is degrading. The unbelievers of every age neglect the human spirit and pamper the lower nature of man. 3. Scepticism is a covert for sinners. Infidel eras in all human history have been connected with selfish luxury and license. II. THE INHERENT DAMNATION. The miser has no faith in kindness. The seducer no faith in woman's virtue. The trader in souls no faith in any rights of the weak. The traitor no faith in loyalty. And so such men as Nabal, and Aaron Burr, and Benedict Arnold, carry about inherent damnation. Yet the principle of evil unbelief, run to extreme in their cases, is the same, in only less degree, in every unbeliever's heart. III. THE TREATMENT OF DOUBT. Do not denounce or debate. Give kind, clear, truthful, positive argument; but do not argue in a strife of wits. Raise the standard of Christian living, promote revivals. For "if any man will do His will, he shall know." The gospel is a mystery; then an experience, then a growth in knowledge, under true conditions. (*The Homiletic Monthly.*) *An evil heart of unbelief*:—We are prone to lay the stress of religion on the head and the outward conduct—on an orthodox faith and a correct life. But we make a grave mistake. Not with the head, but "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness." It is "an evil heart of unbelief" that is our greatest danger. 1. Because of the insidious character of such a moral state. An overt act we cannot hide from view, but an evil heart may have seduced us far away from God before we are conscious of it. 2. Because of the radical character of such a condition—a bad heart vitiates every moral act. 3. Because the danger arising from such a spiritual state is most imminent. (*J. M. Sherwood, D.D.*) *The rejection of revealed truth referable to moral depravity*:—I. Unbelief in the revelation of Jesus Christ is EVIL IN ITS NATURE. Unbelief is not a mere error in judgment; a mere miscalculation of the amount and force of testimony:—but a state of the heart involving disobedience to God; aversion to His truth. And is not the heart that is capable of all this, an "evil heart";—a rebellious heart;—a hard, ungrateful heart? Yes, unbelief, so far from being no sin, or a small sin, is the radical principle, the most noxious element of all sin. And if all unbelief be thus evil, how pre-eminently evil is that unbelief which not only refuses to hear and to yield assent when God speaks, but which sets at naught such a message as the glorious gospel—a message of love and mercy, of peace and pardon and life. II. Proceed to show that the heart of unbelief is "an evil heart," by tracing this unhappy state of mind to some of its CHIEF CAUSES. That which is always and essentially evil in its NATURE cannot be imagined to have any other than an evil SOURCE. 1. And on this point the Word of God is clear and decisive. It uniformly traces unbelief, in all its forms, to a corrupt source. It represents it as generated and nourished by pride, by prejudice, by unhallowed appetite and passion, by corrupt habits of living, by a desire to be free from all the restraints which the faith of the gospel imposes. If the children of unbelief were really actuated by that spirit of candid inquiry; can it be imagined that their manner of investigating the religion of Jesus Christ could be such as it too commonly is? Can it be believed that levity, sneer, habitual ridicule, and profane scoffing become the discussion of matters so infinitely important? 2. The same charge of unhallowed origin is still further established against

the spirit of unbelief, by the undoubted fact, that while its votaries are unceasing and ardent in their efforts to draw those around them from the religion of Christ; they discover no serious desire either to practise themselves, or to inculcate on others that which they profess to believe. 3. Again, the history of the rise and progress of many of the most common cases of infidelity, plainly demonstrates that its source, no less than its nature, is evil. Thousands of the young, as well as of the aged, have been, manifestly, drawn into infidelity by their evil passions and their vices. III. No less evil are its EFFECTS. Our blessed Saviour has taught us to judge of all moral professions and claims by this test. "Therefore," said He, "by their fruits shall ye know them." With regard to the DOCTRINES which unbelief inculcates, they are, notoriously, as to the great mass of them, radically and essentially corrupt. It has, indeed, been often remarked, and with great justice, that INFIDELITY HAS NO PRINCIPLES. In truth, there was scarcely the smallest exaggeration in the charge of the satirist when he said that the sum of their creed is "to believe in all unbelief." Now, is it possible to conceive that such principles, or rather such absence of all principle, can tend to promote the order, purity, and happiness of society? As well might we dream of darkness begetting light, or of committing men to the school of Satan and his angels, to be trained up for the heavenly paradise. And as the speculative opinions of the votaries of unbelief are generally and essentially corrupt; so their practice has been, in all ages, worthy of their creed. Who, let me ask, ever since the religion of Jesus Christ has existed in the world, have been most conspicuous for the regularity, purity, and benevolence of their lives—infidels or Christians? That the effect of unbelief in revealed truth has ever been to generate moral corruption is attested by all history. Read, for example, the "Confessions of Rousseau," that wonderful monument of perverted genius, who undertook to paint his own likeness, and you will behold the portrait of one of the most polluted and miserable of men. Read what Voltaire and his royal patron and companion in unbelief, the Prussian monarch, say of each other, and you will find one of the most revolting and loathsome pictures of moral baseness ever presented by men claiming a decent place in society. But further; who, let me ask, have ever been found throughout Christendom most zealous and active in forming and executing plans for the benefit of mankind? What class, I say, have ever been found most ready for every such good work—infidels or Christians? On the other hand, by what class of persons are the great mass of the crimes which pollute and disturb society committed? They are infidels, either open or secret. Further, was it ever known that any son or daughter of Adam was reformed from a wicked life by embracing infidel opinions? But oh, how often has the dying culprit been heard to confess with anguish and tears that infidel sentiments led him astray; that the rejection of the Bible gradually led to profaneness, to intemperance, to lewdness, to fraud, to robbery, perhaps to murder,—and at length to the infamy of a felon's death! I am aware that it will be said by those who are determined to resist all evidence on this subject, that many professing Christians have been as immoral as other men. This is, no doubt, a fact; and yet it does not in the least degree weaken our argument, or militate against the doctrine of our text. On the contrary, it rather confirms every word which has been uttered. Were these persons real, or only nominal Christians? Nay, infidels theselves are witnesses that they were nominal Christians only. Why else have they, with few dissenting voices, acknowledged that the morality of the Bible is the best in the world? Practical inferences: 1. We may see the reason why Christian faith is so constantly in Scripture enjoined as a duty, and the absence of it condemned and threatened as a sin. The fact is—as you have heard—faith is so essentially connected with the state of the heart and the current of the affections; its very nature so inseparably involves moral feeling, practical choice, and the spirit of obedience; that where it is present it is the gem of all that is good in the soul; and where it is absent, there is the essence of rebellion. 2. We may learn how many and great are the evils which must necessarily flow from the decline and the weakness of faith in the real Christian. The "evil heart of unbelief" is not confined to that infidelity which is speculative and entire. It exists, and exerts a pestiferous influence, in the case of many a sincere believer. This is the worm at the root of all spiritual duty, prosperity, and comfort. In short, faith, among the Christian graces, is like the main-spring in a well-adjusted machine. Its character affects everything. 3. We may infer that infidelity is, in every respect, hostile to the best interests of civil society. An infidel people will ever be an immoral,

profligate people; and a people characteristically immoral and profligate cannot long continue to be a free and happy people. 4. We are taught, by what has been said, that if we desire to bring our children and others committed to our care to the knowledge and love of the truth, we must not content ourselves with mere frigid instruction, with mere addresses to the intellectual powers. We must take measures to enlist the whole man in the great subject. 5. We may learn from this subject the reason why the great, the rich, the philosophical, and the honourable among men so seldom embrace the genuine gospel; and also why, when they do profess to embrace it, they so rarely appear to enter heartily and thoroughly into its spirit. The reason is—not that there is any deficiency of evidence in the gospel; the real and principal reason is, that men "cannot serve God and mammon." 6. We may see, in the light of this subject, the alarming situation of infidels. 7. Finally, this subject teaches us the unspeakable importance of Christians showing forth their faith by their works. It was once said by a female martyr, of feeble body, but of firm and undaunted spirit—when standing before her merciless persecutors, who endeavoured to perplex and confound her by their learned subtleties—"I cannot meet you in argument for Christ, but I can die for Him." My dear fellow professors, we may not be called to "die for Christ"; but we can all live for Him. (*S. Miller, D.D.*) *The necessity of a believing heart*:—I. THE TRUE NOTION OF FAITH. Faith, which is the principle of the gospel, respects the promises and declarations of God, and includes a sure trust and reliance on Him for the performance. Beyond this there is no further act of faith. Religion is a struggle between sense and faith. The temptations to sin are the pleasures of this life; the incitements to virtue are the pleasures of the next. These are only seen by faith; those are the objects of every sense. On the side of virtue all the motives, all the objects of faith engage. On the side of vice stand the formidable powers of sense, passion and affection. If this be the case, if religion has nothing to oppose to the present allurements of the world but the hopes and glories of futurity, which are seen only by faith—it is no more absurd to say men are saved by faith than it is to say they are ruined by sense and passion, which we all know has so much of truth in it, that it can have nothing of absurdity. II. The character given in the text of AN UNBELIEVING HEART—namely, that it makes us depart from the living God. 1. That it is for want of faith, considered as a principle of religion, that men depart from the living God. The knowledge of God is but like other natural knowledge, as long as it has it residence in the head only. To become a principle of religion it must descend into the heart, and teach us to love the Lord with all our minds, with all our souls, and with all our strength. The faith then of the gospel, and which the wicked man is an utter stranger to, is that faith which makes us cleave steadfastly to the Lord with full purpose of heart. 2. That faith cannot be a principle of religion till it has its effect and operation in the heart. Even sense works in the same manner, and, powerful as it is, has no effect till it has made its way to the heart, the seat of all our passions and affections. There, and there only, it prevails as a principle of action. Sense produces no sensuality till it warms the affections with the pleasures of the world; and faith produces no religion till it raises the heart to love and to embrace its Maker. The great advantage the world has over religion lies in the certainty and reality of its objects, which flow in upon us at every sense. To supply this defect on the part of religion, Revelation was given to assure us of the certainty and reality of things future; without which assurance they could have no effect or influence on our affections. 3. That the motions and operations of the heart are in great measure under our own power and government. We find daily that we can check our passions and inclinations to serve the purposes of this life, and if we would do as much for that which is to come, we shall answer all that the apostle in the text requires of us, when he exhorts us to take heed of an evil heart of unbelief. (*Bp. Sherlock.*) *Warning against backsliding*:—I. THERE IS MUCH UNCONSCIOUS BACKSLIDING. In a petrifying spring articles are often placed under the dropping water, and as it trickles down upon them they are gradually hardened till they become like the very stone. So is it with sin. Gently and slowly it seeks its way into the heart, and hardens it day by day, even while the possessor of that heart may be more or less unconscious of the change that is going on. This is backsliding. Sin permitted, the heart gradually hardened, unbelief taking his place on the throne, and then, departure from the living God. II. THIS UNCONSCIOUS BACKSLIDING MAY EXIST IN QUARTERS WHERE WE LEAST SUSPECT IT. The word of the text is, "lest there be in any of you." "Any of you," what a search-

ing word! "Lord, is it I?" It is always dangerous to stay ourselves upon our strength, our knowledge, our experience; upon anything, in fact, but the sustaining grace of God supplied to us through faith from moment to moment. It is worthy of note, and has often been remarked, that in the accounts of backsliding furnished in Scripture, men seem to have failed just in those points of character where they were supposed to be strongest. III. THE TRUE SAFEGUARD AGAINST THIS UNCONSCIOUS DECLENSION. "Consider . . . Christ Jesus." As the devout Jew was encouraged to walk about the holy city, and note her strength and beauty, so are we urged to consider the Lord Jesus in every aspect of His blessed character, offices, and work. Only with the eye of faith fixed on a full-orbed Christ, and a heart occupied in the consideration of Him, shall we be able to comply with the exhortation of the text. (*W. P. Lockhart.*) *The evil heart of unbelief*:—Anybody who has common power of observation, must be struck by the wonderful things which are constantly attributed in Holy Writ to faith, or believing in the word of God—be it what it will—and especially in that revelation of Himself which He has made in Christ Jesus (see Rom. iv. 5; Gal. iii. 11; Mark ix. 23; Matt. xvii. 20; Luke viii. 48, &c.). But a second thing, equally beyond doubt, is universally asserted of this Divine grace: that from a true faith springs of necessity, like a tree from its root, a corresponding obedience, a bringing forth the fruits of the Spirit. To be a believer and a doer of the Word are the very same thing. Faith or belief is holy living, and holy living is faith, being one and indivisible; so that the inward principle, denoted by the term faith, comprehends all things which, whether in our justification or sanctification, are made by the word of God essential to our everlasting salvation. Now, then, this nature of ours, which makes us what we are—men, and not angels or brutes—is not a single or a simple thing, but is made up of at least two parts, what we call our heart and our head, or our understanding. The first, that by which we feel, and love, and hate, and have a choice or will; and the other, that by which we see what is right and true, and in a lower form of it, reason about the things of the world in which we live, and which our senses present to us. Some things belong only to the head, and if that consents to them, it is enough; it is the belief which belongs to that kind of truths. Such are many things in numbers, and what is called science, and many matters of fact; men and people, for instance, mentioned in books, and many concerns of this life; the heart or will has nothing to do with them one way or other. But other things have not only a true and a false, but a right and wrong about them, and when admitted as true, make it absolutely necessary for us to approve them and to act upon them, and by reason of them; and since, therefore, they touch at once the heart and the head, they cannot be really believed, unless those two parts of our nature go together. When they do so, then, and then only can we, indeed, and in truth, be said to believe them. And when anything is thus admitted, and beats down all opposition before it, and occupies all our nature, all the spiritual being, whatever of it by which we think and feel, is made to act as God intended it to do. As a wheel rolls when the needful force pushes it in a particular direction, or any other machine moves when the spring is touched, so does the man. He is agitated, he is moved; thought and feeling go forth into visible actions he does and acts accordingly; his nature is at unity with itself, and all obstacles being overpowered, impels him in one way. Now, the solemn thing for us to consider is this, that such is the case with all that God has revealed to us in the glorious gospel of His Son. It is not made up of things to be received into the head, only as part of us, and to be kept like book-knowledge, outside of the soul, but it is to be accepted by our whole and entire soul. You see, then, in an instant, what a number of powerful enemies there are within us, to divide, even in things of themselves most clear, the heart and will from the head, and to prevent that living and true belief in Christ, and in His gospel without which no soul of man can be saved. What a fearful alienation from God, as a spiritual God, there is in the heart, whatever natural graces may adorn it! What an iron stubbornness of will and resolution to conform all things to itself, and not itself to the eternal law! Yet God, if He is God, is not a word, or a fancy, but an awful King, who must in all things be obeyed. Flowing from the same evil source, what an unspeakable repugnance there is to such a love of Christ, as shall have power over us. What vanities, what idolatries, what coldnesses! What an evil ally in the world about us, and the enemies—not of flesh and blood, but princedoms, dominations, and powers, even all the hosts of Satan—who rest not day or night, but toil to harden up the evil heart within us, to the destruction of all living faith, and the ruin of the soul. (*J. Garbett.*) *Of*

infidelity:—I. IN ITS NATURE IT DOTH INVOLVE AN AFFECTED BLINDNESS AND IGNORANCE OF THE NOBLEST AND MOST USEFUL TRUTHS; a bad use of reason, and most culpable imprudence; disregard of God's providence or despite thereto; abuse of His grace; bad opinions of Him, and bad affections towards Him. II. THE CAUSES AND SOURCES FROM WHENCE IT SPRINGETH. 1. Negligence, or drowsy inobservance and carelessness; when men being possessed with a "spirit of slumber," or being amused with secular entertainments, do not mind the concerns of their soul, or regard the means by God's merciful care presented for their conversion; being in regard to religious matters of Gallio's humour, "caring for none of those things." 2. Sloth, which indisposeth men to undergo the fatigue of seriously attending to the doctrine propounded, of examining its grounds, of weighing the reasons inducing to believe; whence at first hearing, if the notions hap not to hit their fancy, they do slight it before they fully understand it, or know its grounds; thence at least they must needs fail of a firm and steady belief, the which can alone be founded on a clear apprehension of the matter, and perception of its agreeableness to reason. 3. Stupidity, or dulness of apprehension, contracted by voluntary indispositions and defects; a stupidity rising from mists of prejudice, from streams of lust and passion, from rust grown on the mind by want of exercising it in observing and comparing things; whence men cannot apprehend the clearest notions plainly represented to them, nor discern the force of arguments, however evident and cogent; but are like those wizards in Job, who "meet with darkness in the daytime, and grope at noonday, as in the night." 4. Bad judgment; corrupted with prejudicate notions, and partial inclinations to falsehood. 5. Perverseness of will, which hindereth men from entertaining notions disagreeable to their fond or froward humour. 6. This is that hardness of heart which is so often represented as an obstruction of belief. 7. Of kin to that perverseness of heart is that squeamish delicacy and niceness of humour which will not let men entertain or savour anything anywise seeming hard or harsh to them, if they cannot presently comprehend all that is said, if they can frame any cavil or little exception against it, if every scruple be not voided, if anything be required distasteful to their sense; they are offended, and their faith is choked. 8. With these dispositions is connected a want of love to truth, the which if a man hath not, he cannot well entertain such notions as the gospel propoundeth, being nowise grateful to carnal sense and appetite. 9. A grand cause of infidelity is pride, the which doth interpose various bars to the admission of Christian truth; for before a man can believe "every height [every towering imagination and conceit] that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, must be cast down." Pride fills a man with vanity and an affectation of seeming wise in special manner above others, thereby disposing him to maintain paradoxes, and to nauseate common truths received and believed by the generality of mankind. A proud man is ever averse from renouncing his prejudices and correcting his errors, doing which implieth a confession of weakness, ignorance, and folly. He that is wise in his own conceit, will hug that conceit, and thence is incapable to learn. A proud man, that is big and swollen with haughty conceit, cannot stoop down so low, cannot shrink in himself so much, as to "enter into the strait gate, or to walk in the narrow way, which leadeth to life": he will be apt to contemn wisdom and instruction. 10. Another spring of infidelity is pusillanimity, or want of good resolution and courage. Christianity is a warfare; living after its rules is called "fighting the good fight of faith"; every true Christian is a "good soldier of Jesus Christ"; the state of Christians must be sometimes like that of the apostles, who were "troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears"; great courage therefore, and undaunted resolution, are required toward the undertaking this religion, and the persisting in it cordially. 11. Infidelity doth also rise from sturdiness, fierceness, wildness, untamed animosity of spirit; so that a man will not endure to have his will crossed, to be under any law, to be curbed from anything which he is prone to affect. 12. Blind zeal, grounded on prejudice, disposing men to stiff adherence unto that which they have once been addicted and accustomed to, is in the Scripture frequently represented as a cause of infidelity. So the Jews, being "filled with zeal, contradicted the things spoken by St. Paul"; flying at his doctrine, without weighing it: so "by instinct of zeal" did St. Paul himself persecute the Church; being "exceedingly zealous for the traditions delivered by his fathers." 13. In fine, infidelity doth issue from corruption of mind by any kind of brutish lust, any irregular passion, any bad inclination or habit; any such evil disposition of soul doth obstruct the admission or entertainment of that doctrine, which doth prohibit

and check it; doth condemn it, and brand it with infamy; doth denounce punishment and woe to it: whence "men of corrupt minds, and reprobate concerning the faith"; and "men of corrupt minds, destitute of the truth," are attributes well conjoined by St. Paul, as commonly jumping together in practice; and "to them," saith he, "that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure, but even their mind and conscience is defiled"; such pollution is not only consequent to, and connected with, but antecedent to infidelity, blinding the mind so as not to see the truth, and perverting the will so as not to close with it. III. THE NAUGHTINESS OF INFIDELITY WILL APPEAR BY CONSIDERING ITS EFFECTS AND CONSEQUENCES; which are plainly a spawn of all vices and villainies, a deluge of all mischiefs, and outrages on the earth: for faith being removed, together with it all conscience goeth; no virtue can remain; all sobriety of mind, all justice in dealing, all security in conversation are packed away; nothing resteth to encourage men unto any good, or restrain them from any evil; all hopes of reward from God, all fears of punishment from Him being discarded. No principle or rule of practice is left, beside brutish sensuality, fond self-love, private interest, in their highest pitch, without any bound or curb; which therefore will dispose men to do nothing but to prey on each other with all cruel violence and base treachery. Every man thence will be a god to himself, a fiend to each other; so that necessarily the world will thence be turned into a chaos and a hell, full of iniquity and impurity, of spite and rage, of misery and torment. (*I. Barrow, D.D.*) *Unbelief*:—1. The great reigning sin. 2. The great ruining sin. 3. That which is at the bottom of all sin. (*J. P. Lange.*) *Unbelief and faith*:—Of Duncan Matheson, the Scottish evangelist, it is said that the most difficult people he had to deal with were those who "concealed a hard heart under a thick coat of Evangelical varnish." To extend his usefulness, he secured a printing press, and wrote upon it, for a motto, "For God and Eternity." **Departing from the living God.**—*Apostasy from the living God*:—I. GOD IS A LIVING GOD. 1. Not a mere historical God; a God that has been and is no more. 2. Not a theoretical God—a Being made up of abstract propositions which we call theologies. 3. Not a dormant God—impassive, sluggish, inactive. 4. "Living"—always, everywhere, intensely. II. DEPARTING FROM THE LIVING GOD IS AN IMMENSE EVIL. 1. The greatest insult to Him. 2. The greatest calamity to self. Cut the stream from the fountain, and it dries up; hew down the branch from the tree, and it withers to death; detach the planet from the sun, and it rushes into darkness and ruin; separate the soul from God, its fountain, root, sun—and ruin is its destiny. III. UNBELIEF IS EVERMORE THE CAUSE OF THIS DEPARTING. Had men an undoubting, strong, abiding, and practical faith in the living God, and their obligations to Him, they would cling to Him with all the tenacity of their existence. (*Homilist.*)

Ver. 13. **Exhort one another.**—*Restraining of spiritual intercourse in families*:—I. THE EVIL OF THE RESTRAINING AMONG NEAR RELATIVES OF FREE INTERCOURSE ABOUT THEIR SOULS, IS EVIDENT from this, first of all—1. That it is a breach of God's express command in the text, "Exhort one another daily." If this duty lies on professing Christians simply as such, much more must it be obligatory on husband and wife, brother and sister, parent and child. 2. The evil of it appears in that it involves, I suspect to a very large extent, the sin of being ashamed of Christ and of His words. Whence that strange silence, that awe-struck air in the presence of a brother? If it were before a stranger, one might try to account for it in different ways. But this will not do among persons accustomed to open their minds freely on every other subject. 3. This restraint cuts off all the precious innumerable benefits which God intended to arise from the exhortation enjoined in the text, and which in families were all the greater, in virtue of the constant opportunities and peculiar facilities there afforded for it. What daily consolation, what instruction, what warning, what encouragement, what direction, are thus lost for ever! 4. There is a specially mischievous effect produced by it on the children of a family. The absence of it throws a fearful stumbling-block in their way. Is heaven a reality? Is Christ indeed beloved? Is the soul imperishable? The faith of the child, such as it is, is gradually sapped and undermined. 5. Near relatives are, by this restraint, deprived of one of the mightiest incentives to a holy life. II. THE CAUSES of this. 1. The unregenerate condition of too many parents, and other near relatives, professing religion. They cannot speak of Christ, because they are ignorant of Him. They cannot commend Him to others, because they have never themselves embraced Him. The world is their theme, because it is their treasure, their god. 2. Careless, inconsistent walking before God and each other, among

near relatives, is one painful and powerful cause. Persons professing godliness, united in very endearing ties, are not careful to order their lives in each other's sight, entirely as becomes the gospel. Honesty forbids it. It is felt that it were hypocrisy to talk of Christ's love and of His law, unless, at least, it were with the avowed design of committing the parties to an immediate change. But still farther—3. And in close connection with inconsistent walking, yet distinct from it, I believe that the chief cause of the restraint in question among the people of God is to be found in the want of soul-prosperity, and of a close and habitual intercourse in secret with God and His blessed Word. The want, in short, of religion, or the low state of it, are the real causes of this evil. III. There can be little difficulty in discovering and noticing THE REMEDIES, under God, for the evil. These must take their character from the causes. 1. I besought you to ask yourselves, as in God's sight, whether ye were Christ's indeed. 2. If the cause lie with you in careless and inconsistent walking, whatever other remedies you may employ, let that command be heard, "Put away the strange gods which are among you, and prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve Him only." And especially—3. In the third place, seek the remedy for this evil in a closer walk with God, in a more habitual, living fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. (*C. J. Brown.*) *Model exhortation*:—I would have every minister of the gospel address his audience with the zeal of a friend, with the generous energy of a father, and with the exuberant affection of a mother. (*Fénélon.*) **Lest any of you be hardened.**—*Soul-fossilisation*:—I. THE EVIL ITSELF. 1. It is from an obstinate refusal to attend to Divine things, which are irksome and painful, and the soul is better pleased with those things which are congenial, and afford pleasure and satisfaction. 2. It is from the natural character of the heart, which, unless renewed, refuses to bend to the teachings of grace and the leadings of the Holy Spirit. II. THE PREVALENCE OF THE EVIL. It exists everywhere that human nature exists. It is both natural and acquired. The heart, though naturally hard, is made harder by the circumstances by which it is surrounded. III. THE END AND CONSEQUENCE OF THE EVIL. It is like the fossilisation of an object which we sometimes see. A piece of wood or cotton is placed under the drip of a waterfall; in a short time it is encrusted, and becomes, to all intents and purposes, a stone. It is hard, unimpressionable, will neither melt nor burn. So the heart of man may become a fossil, incapable of good actions, tender thoughts, holy feelings. (*Homilist.*) *The danger of heart-hardening through sin*:—I. THE SOURCE OF GREAT AND ALARMING DANGER. 1. Sin is deceitful. (1) In its appearances. (2) In its promises. (3) In its influences. 2. Sin prevails through its deceitfulness. In the time of temptation its deformity is hid; its real character is veiled. Many a man on a dying bed has been compelled to feel the difference of the views he has entertained in health and in a state of sickness. But when sin presents itself to the objects of its temptation, it suggests itself as easy to be avoided: "Oh, you are not the slaves of sin; you may avoid it, or you may limit your progress in it; yield to the temptation, and stop when you please." So the devil deceives the human mind. It often changes its tone, and it is equally deceitful in both cases. It is sometimes represented as irresistible; the man says, "I have no power to resist it." This is the way the mind is operated upon by the tempter. Oh, how great is the deceitfulness of sin! 3. Sin hardens through its deceitfulness. (1) Hardness of heart implies a state of moral insensibility, the moral susceptibility of the heart being removed, the soul becoming callous, so that spiritual things do not impress. (2) In hardness of heart there is a principle of inflexibility and rebellion in the heart. It is not merely hard like stone; there is something like a reaction: the hardness is manifested in its resistance to the claims of truth—an inward principle of rebellion against God. (3) Sin hardens the heart by strengthening the principles and habits of iniquity in us. The restraints of conscience in this way are overcome. II. THE CONDUCT THAT IS TO BE PURSUED UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES. We must "exhort one another." 1. Now exhortation implies instruction. We are to endeavour to diffuse "the savour of the knowledge of Christ Jesus the Lord." 2. This exhortation implies warning and reproof; where it is necessary to warn our fellow-creatures that are in danger of "being hardened through the deceitfulness of sin"; to set the danger before them, and affectionately to point out to them the dreadful consequences which must ensue. 3. But this implies also encouragement. We ought to encourage one another to look to God, to seek much grace to enable us to counteract the influence of sin. 4. But this exhortation to which we are admonished is private exhortation. Now let me remind you that the discharge of

this duty does necessarily imply a disposition to receive exhortation as well as to give it. 5. But this is a serious and a very difficult duty to discharge successfully. (1) If you exhort one another let it be seriously, then; do not affect to give religious instruction in a spirit of levity. Let us remember that the soul is the object concerned. (2) And let it be with a right spirit; do not assume superiority; do not pretend to dictate like masters. (3) In love. (4) Seasonably. Watch for opportunities. (5) Prayerfully. All our effort will be unavailing without God's blessing. (6) Frequently. "Daily," *i.e.*, as often as you can seasonably. (7) Urgently. Whatever we do we must do now, or perhaps we shall not do it at all: we know not what another hour may bring forth. (*Josiah Hill.*) *Private exhortation*:—1. Private Christians not only may, but should, keep Christian communion amongst themselves, and mutually exhort and stir up one another. 2. This is a necessary means of preserving people from defection. 3. And a duty daily to be discharged while it is to-day; that is, as oft, and as long, as God giveth present occasion and opportunity for it, lest a scattering come. (*D. Dickson, M.A.*) *A warning against hardness of heart*:—I. THE HARDENING CHARACTER OF SIN. 1. There is no doubt whatever that living among sinners has a hardening tendency upon men. You cannot walk about in this great lazar-house without receiving some contagion. 2. Let me here remark that the sins of God's people are peculiarly operative in this manner. If I see a drunkard intoxicated, I am simply shocked at him, but I am not likely to imitate his example; but if I see the same vice in a man whom I respect, and whose example has hitherto been to me the guide of my life, I may be greatly grieved at first, but the tendency of my mind will be to make an excuse for him; and when one has succeeded in framing a plausible excuse for the sin of another, it is very natural to use it on one's own behalf. Association with inconsistent Christians has been the downfall of many young believers. The devil delights to use God's own birds as a decoy for his nets. 3. It is often a long and laborious process by which conscience is completely seared. It usually begins thus: the man's first carefulness and tenderness departs. It may not seem a great evil to have less abhorrence of evil, but this truly is the egg from which the worst mischief may come. The next distressing sign of growing hardness is increasing neglect or laxity of private devotion, without any corresponding shock of the spiritual sensibilities on account of it. Another symptom of increasing callousness of heart is the fact that hidings of the Saviour's face do not cause that acute and poignant sorrow which they produced in former times. Still further, when the soul is hardened to this extent, it is probable that sin will no longer cause such grief as it once did. It is a sad sign of coming declension when we can talk of sin lightly, make excuses for it, or make jokes about it. The next step in this ladder, down, down, down to destruction, is that sin thus causing less grief is indulged in more freely. After this there is still a greater hardening of heart—the man comes to dislike rebukes. II. THE PECULIAR POWER WHICH LIES IN SIN TO HARDEN THE HEART. It is the deceitfulness of sin. The heart is deceitful, and sin is deceitful; and when these two deceitful ones lay their heads together to make up a case, there is no wonder if man, like a silly dove, is taken in their net. One of the first ways in which sin deceives the professor is by saying, "You see no hurt has come of it." Forgetting that the immediate results of sin are not always apparent in this world, and that if hardness of heart be not apparent it is all the more real. Then sin will whisper next, "This would be sin in other people, but it is not in you. You see you were placed in a peculiar position; there is indulgence for you which could not be accorded to other men: you are young," says sin, "nobody could accuse you if you did go a little rashly to work—if you were an older professor it would be very wrong." Then if it is an old man who is to be deceived, sin will cry, "You must take care of yourself; you need more indulgence than others." If a man be in private life, sin will then suggest, "It does not matter in you: it would be wrong in a church-officer, but nobody knows it in your case." If it be some person in high repute, then sin whispers, "Your character is so well established it will bear it." Again, sin will sometimes have the impudence to say, "It is very easy to repent of it." This vile traitor is even dastardly enough to take the doctrines of grace and turn them into a reason for sin. III. THE REMEDY WHICH IS PROVIDED IN THE TEXT FOR US TO USE WITH OTHERS. "Exhort one another." Doubtless many professors would be saved from gross sins if mutual exhortation were more commonly practised in the churches of God in the power of the Holy Spirit. All of you, without exception, whether you be rich or poor, see to each other's souls; say not, "Am I my brother's keeper?" It is so pleasant

to restore a brother from the error of his ways, that I can offer you no greater reward than these two, to screen the name of Christ from shame, and to have the pleasure of saving a soul from death and covering a multitude of sins. IV. SUPPOSE THIS TO BE THE CASE WITH ANY ONE OF US, WHAT THEN? Some of us are in such a position that we are not very likely to be exhorted, we are keepers of the vineyard, and have none who would take upon themselves to admonish us. Our enemies, however, very ably supply the lack, for they often tell us very profitable, but very unpleasant truths. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Hardness of heart*:—Hardness scarcely needs an explanation. It is that which, taking it from the armoury or from the smithery, gives the power to any metal to resist a weapon thrown against it; to turn the edge of the sword, to blunt the point of the spear, to quench the fiery dart, as it were: and in that sense of course it would be auspicious to have something that was hardened. But to render insensitive that which is carried within, and which ought to be sensitive; to have a disposition which has the power of turning away an appeal, of dismissing an argument, and of making vital truth a matter of indifference—that kind of hardening is much to be deplored. And it is just that which we are cautioned against. Every physician knows that a medicine is worn out by continuous use. As it were, the system adapts itself to it, and it ceases to be remedial. So there is a power in repetitious truth to become unremedial to men. This hardening is not brought about on purpose in those to whom I refer. I am not speaking to that class of persons who deliberately set themselves against the truth; I am speaking to that very much larger class of persons who first become indifferent to truth, and then are deceived in regard to it, and at last are snared by its enemies. One of the circumstances which tend to deceive men, and to wear out the power of truth upon their conscience and upon their understanding, is the attempt to make truth merely the cause of susceptibility, or of mere emotions. Men want to be stirred up; they want to feel; but feeling constantly stirred up and never employed loses tone. It is bad for any man to have feeling that abides as feeling. Now it is the peculiar nature of religious truth that it plays upon excitability. Of truth there is much that touches hope, much that touches fear, and much that touches conscience, on every side; but it is a very dangerous thing for a man to hear more truth preached than he cares to practise. You may say that so much of that which he hears as he does not practise goes over to the account of instruction; and that may be so in regard to truth set forth in a didactic form; but to accustom oneself to hearing truth merely for the sake of having it play upon the susceptibilities is very dangerous, because it is a very deceitful experience; and yet there are multitudes of persons that do it. Then, next, there are a great many who hear the teaching of the Word of God, who receive it into good ground—that is, into their reason—who approve it, who feel as though they ought to give heed to it, and who wish to profit by it, but in whom the impulse dies with that wish, and does not convert itself into a choice. They say, "I think that view was just: it commends itself to my mind as truth, and I really have been taking it home to myself; I am thinking about it; the time has come when I should be a better man, and take some steps in advance; if I am ever going to be a Christian man I ought to become one now"—and that is about the extent to which they go. Now, when a man has done that through the first year, when he has done it through the second year, and when he has done it through the third year, he begins to be tattooed, as it were. Constant iteration and trituration harden the skin, and the sensibility of his mind becomes like the sensibility of the palm of his hand, and grows leather-like. By reason of the continual handling of a man's judgment his power of choosing becomes inert and inoperative. The perpetual raining of truth upon a man may be kept up without developing in him either character, as I said in the first instance, or choice, as I say in the second instance. Then, when the truth is being preached to men of their own sinfulness, and of their great need of a transformed nature, so that they shall rise from the flesh life to the spirit life, a great many persons feel as though this were a thing that ought to be pondered. They feel as though time should be taken to think of it. They are afraid they shall commit themselves without having reckoned whether, beginning a Christian life, they can complete it. So they take it into account. And there are two points to be made on that subject. In the first place, there is one class who take it into account, not by meditation and thought, but by reverie. It is one thing for a man to say, "God be merciful to me, a sinner; without the interposition of Divine grace I am lost; and I will cry immediately to God for help; I will begin a Christian life to-day." That is effectual. But, on the other

hand, a man, coming home from listening to a strong sermon, says, "That was well put. What if I should go to church next Sunday night, and the minister should preach on Lazarus? And what if I should be awakened? And what if I should have one of those terrible experiences which I have heard of? And what if all the sins of my life should be brought before me? And what if I should roll all night in distress? Then the minister would come and see me, and friends would gather around me, and I would pray and wrestle, and by-and-by there would suddenly come a burst of light, and I should be converted, and everything would be new to me; and I would join the Church, and what a happy day it would be for father and mother when they saw me do that! And I would be a real Christian—not a lean, skinny Christian, like some that I have seen." Thus a man weaves the fabric of an imaginary life, and it is all reverie. He supposes he is thinking about religion. He says, "I am taking it into consideration." Oh, fool! you are taking it into consideration very much as a spider weaves silk when he makes cobwebs to catch flies on. It is all in the air. It is vacuous. There are other persons who have a very salutary horror of insincerity. They say to themselves, "This matter of religion is of transcendent importance, and if a man is going to be a Christian he ought to consider it well." And there is a certain sort of comeliness in this. No man ought to go tumbling headlong into a profession of religion. But it is not necessary that a man should have a theological education before he can become a Christian. And, besides, no man can wait. No man does wait. There is not a man of you who, when the way of manhood is pointed out to him, does not choose. You go one way or the other. You know what truth is, and you either take the way of truth or the way of falsehood. Ten thousand influences upon every side have been pressing home the truth upon you. And what is the result? You say, "Yes, religion is a profoundly important thing; and yet it is one that ought to be much thought of." But this ought not so to be. It is not for you, like a ship in a harbour, to cast anchor now, and swing with every tide that carries you first north and then south, for ever changing and never travelling. It is not for you to stand still and talk about thinking. A long time ago you ought to have been doing. You ought before now to have chosen, and to have converted sensibility into conduct and character. And if all the excuse you have for not entering upon a Christian life is that you do not want to do it until you have laid the foundations of thought; if you excuse yourself by saying, "I do not want to go into a Christian life until I have made sure that I will not come out of it," then let me warn you lest you harden your heart through the deceitfulness of sin in this most guileful and specious form. At last, when men have got past these stages, there comes the stage of easy acquiescence and of mild criticism from the standpoint of mere taste. They make such a voyage as boys make who take their whittled-out miniature boats over to the park and sail them across the lake and back again. There is as much in one of these voyages as in the other. There are others who criticise the truth from a logical and instructive standpoint. They have intellectual acumen, they have critical sensibility, they are good critics: a great deal better critics than they are Christians. The truth may be as weighty as eternity; it may be a truth that reaches to the very heart of Christ; it may be the whole theme of salvation by faith in the Saviour: and all that it does to them is to excite in them a momentary pleasure of the taste, a transient gratification of the intellect, and a generous criticism as to its ability or inability, as the case may be. And what is the condition of a man upon whom the presentation of the weightiest truths no longer awakens sensibility, nor stimulates a disposition to choose, nor creates an impulse in the right direction? These are not bad men—that is, in the sense of being vicious, or in the sense of being guilty of outrageousness in any way. Often their conduct is conformable to all the best rules of social life. But they have sealed themselves against the higher forms of spiritual growth which translate one from the life of the body to the life of the Spirit. And their chances for development in true manhood as it is in Christ Jesus grow less and less every day through the deceitfulness of sin which is hardening their hearts. And so as men grow old, as age creeps on them, upon natural decay is superinduced this waste which arises from the constant hearing of the truth and from non-action, and which results in men's coming into that dry and arid state in which the harvest is past, and the summer is ended, and they are not saved. And now, what is to be done? Consider the guilt of every man who thus practises upon himself. It was only as early as 1400, I think, in the war between the Turks and the Greeks, that that magnificent structure, the

Acropolis, and the temple of Minerva, and the statue of Minerva, and that wonderful frieze, the work of Phidias, whose very fragment has been the despair of the art of modern days, were destroyed. Into the magnificent temple of Minerva, which was the glory of Athens, the Turks threw bombs, which exploded and shattered the temple into a mass of shapeless ruins; and that which adorned the ripest age of the world in beauty and art perished, as it were, in an hour. To have demolished an old granite fort, to have battered down an old earthwork, would have caused sorrow to no one; but to have blotted out the grandest and most exquisite achievements of human taste, human thought, and human hand-skill, must have filled with regret every heart that loved what was beautiful. But what is any statue, even from the chisel of Phidias, or what is any temple, compared with man, who is the temple of God? and what was ever wrought in ivory or marble that was to be compared with the humanity that is in every man? and for you to destroy that humanity in yourself, to turn it into courses of evil, in spite of the influences that are tending to draw it the other way; and so to trample under foot and extinguish your higher nature—that is wanton. It is wicked beyond the power of language to express its degree of wickedness. Woe be to the man who corrupts his spiritual nature, or overlays it with animalism, or beats it down in spite of its crying, and destroys it. Consider, too, what is the nature of the truth that men resist. If the gospel of Christ had simply disclosed to men the infamy of their condition, if it had merely poured out upon them warnings and threatenings, if it had withheld from them all promises of mercy, then there would have been little to attract them to it, and there would have been some reason for their revulsion from it; but the whole presentation of the truth as it is in Christ is charming to the reason, to every noble sensibility, to every feeling of honour, and to every elevated taste, however exacting. The whole tone and the whole sphere of the New Testament is as sweet as music, and ought to vibrate upon every unperverted heart, and ought to make every soul desire to have that commerce with God and with the Lord Jesus Christ by which it shall rise and take hold upon its immortal destiny. And now, suffer me not to preach to you; suffer me to beseech you. If there are any here who have serious thoughts, let me say to them, Serious thoughts are very well if you make something out of them. In summer, when drought has long prevailed, clouds come trooping through the sky, and the farmer says, "Ah! at last the weary, parched earth will be refreshed"; but no, the clouds have no rain in them, they pass on, and the ground is as dry as it was before. To-morrow other clouds sail in caravans through the heavens, and give promise of refreshing showers; but the showers do not come. Thoughts that produce no results are of little account. To be worth anything they must be condensed into forms of active life. And while I urge you to heed and ponder the Word of God, I bid you to beware of taking it so that it shall not lead to the production of fruit in your Christian life. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Hardened by being melted:*—When the cloud is dried up off the mountain's brow, and the dew off the rock, the mountain is as great as before, and the rock as hard; but when convictions fade away from the heart of a natural man, they leave the mountain of his sins much greater, and his rocky heart much harder. It is less likely that that man will ever be saved. Just as iron is hardened by being melted and cooled again; just as a person recovering from fever relapses, and is worse than before. (*R. M. McCheyne.*) *Character tends to fixity:*—The Bible says nothing about how an old man can cleanse his way. When a man reaches the age of forty or fifty he cannot change the shape of his collar, how much less that of his character! (*Prof. H. Drummond.*) *Past feeling:*—It is not necessary for a man to die out of the world in order that his spiritual salvation may be closed. There are many who are doomed before they die. They reject the offers of salvation until they become hardened and encased as it were in steel, beaten hard like steel, and at last they become so hardened that they resist all impression, they will not listen, and their insensibility grows upon them. It is a fact which cannot be denied, that the more we resist the offers of mercy the more insensible we become to them; all spiritual sensibility in the case of some people seems to have died out before they quit this world, and it is against this that I warn you. (*J. Stoughton, D.D.*) *Spiritual insensibility:*—A minister of the gospel on one occasion made a solemn appeal to the young to seek God without delay, urging as a motive that, should they live to be old, difficulties would multiply, and their reluctance to attend to the subject would increase with their years. As the preacher descended from the pulpit at the close of the service, an aged man came forward, and extending his hand to him, with much emotion remarked, "Sir,

what you said just now is unquestionably true. I know it from my own experience. When I was young I said to myself, I cannot give up the world now, but I will by-and-by when I have passed the meridian of life and begin to sink into the vale of years; then I will become a Christian; then I shall be ready to attend to the concerns of my soul. But here I am, an old man, and not yet a Christian. I feel no readiness nor disposition to enter upon the work of my salvation. In looking back, I often feel as though I would give worlds if I could be placed where I was when I was twenty years old, for there were not half as many difficulties in my path then as there are now." Though tears coursed down his cheeks as he gave utterance to these truths, the emotions that were stirred up within him, like the early dew, soon passed away: he did not turn to God. *Heart-hardening*:—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.*) *A hardened heart*:—An old man, one day taking a child on his knee, entreated him to seek God now—to pray to Him—and to love Him; when the child, looking up at him, asked, "But why do you not seek God?" The old man, deeply affected, answered, "I would, child: but my heart is hard—my heart is hard." **The deceitfulness of sin.**—*The deceitfulness of sin*:—Our vital energy finds issue in three great regions: those of thought, of word, of deed. In each one of these there is duty, and there is fault. In each of them there is the voice of God speaking in our consciences, there is the written law of God guiding, confirming, furthering, that inward voice; in each of them there is in us the constant disposition to set conscience and to set God aside, and to become our own guides, our own masters. Let us then take each one of these in turn, and show in each how manifold sin is, how deceitful. I. SINS OF THOUGHT. Nothing is so deceitful as the taking account of our own thoughts and feelings. Memory cannot copy faithfully the picture which has faded away, but overlays and tricks it out with fresh and unreal colours. Still, there is no question that our real thoughts can be got at, and their liability to sin justly measured, if we will spend time and trouble over it. We may venture to say that the great burden of our sins of thought will be found to consist in a want of honest, conscientious adoption and following of what we know to be real and true. When selfish views spread before us in all their attractiveness, the fertile plains of Sodom tempting us to dwell in them, does the course of self-denial to which we are pledged instantly assert its claim? When the temper is roused by insult, when the pride is stung by contumely, when the self-opinion is buffeted by designed slight, and the tyrant fiend of revenge springs to his feet in a moment,—do our eyes see, or do they refuse to see, the Spirit of the Lord lifting His standard against him? II. Sins of WORD. And here I shall not speak of bad and unholy and impure words, of evil speaking, lying, and slandering: these are manifest: if we fall into these, we know it, we repent of it; but I shall speak of sins of word more beneath the surface, into which when we fall, we do not know it, of which, when we have fallen into them, we are little accustomed to repent. And I believe such sins will mainly be found, as regards our dealings with men, in stating or not stating the very truth of our sentiments and feelings and beliefs. I am not now speaking of hypocrisy, nor of any wilful and conscious disingenuousness, but of a general want of clear and fearless truthfulness. When will men come to feel that the blessed gospel of Christ never was and never can be the gainer by any false statement, any equivocation, any shrinking from dangerous truth or unwelcome fact? If again the effect of this timid untruthful religion be bad on a man's self, much more is it hurtful and fatal on others. III. Sins of ACT AND DEED: doing what we ought not to do, leaving undone what we ought to do. Oh that there were in any of us the habit of referring our questioning thoughts at once to His verdict whom we profess to serve; of guiding our actions simply, humbly, fearlessly, by His precept and His example! If we were earnest like Him, humble like Him, wise like Him, we should recommend and adorn

our unflinching course of Christian duty by quietness, by unobtrusiveness, by consideration for others, by knowledge what to say, and when, and to whom. It is not the busy protester against what other men do, it is not the man who is ever found up in arms against the usages of society, who does the good; but he who is gifted with sound judgment enough to overlook things indifferent, to join in practices which he himself would perchance not have chosen, if by so doing he may cheer, and bless, and hallow, and leaven, the society in which God has cast his lot. An unsocial, uncomplying, individualising life may be very flattering to pride; may serve as a salve to the conscience, and make a man fancy himself very good and pure; but there can be no doubt that such a course is a life-long sin, bringing dishonour on the blessed gospel of Christ, and hardening men's hearts against its influence. (*Dean Alford.*) *The deceitfulness of sin*:—Sin, we must remember, has, properly speaking, no separate independent being of its own. It is the spiritual and moral quality either of some act, or of the habitual inward tone of mind and spirit, of a moral agent; and it is a diseased and unnatural quality and state in such an agent which is described. But to this horrible work of sin men are, as the apostle's word imply, lured on by the deceitfulness of sin. What then is this? Sin being that disordered acting of the spiritual nature in which the will chooses that which is against the will of God, the deceitfulness of sin must mean that there is a tendency in this disease to conceal its own presence, and so to shut out from the sight of him in whom it is acting the evil which is being accomplished within him. That there is this attribute about it the very smallest acquaintance with our nature and its actings may easily convince us. For what else are all those fair names for evil, those easy judgments concerning it, which are everywhere conventionally current, but the working of this its deceitful power? Why is it that the fondness of lust is termed gallantry or pleasure? Why is it that the cold and heedless selfishness of debauchery is talked about as spirit and gaiety, but because sin's common working is thus utterly deceitful and untrue? But above all, this deceitfulness of sin may be seen in the false estimate which it leads men to form of their own moral and spiritual condition. And this in all ways. For, first, how does it blind men's eyes to their own actual condition. Most men would be marvellously startled if they suddenly learned what was the clear view which their daily intimates possessed of their weaknesses and faults. And why? Surely for no other reason than because they habitually judge themselves so partially, and shut their eyes so weakly to their own besetting sins. And as this first deceit as to the actual presence of evil in their characters is thus practised upon most men, so too plainly are they deceived also as to its growth within themselves! How little do men who give themselves up to it perceive the increase of sin within themselves. And this must be so. For every allowance of evil weakens in its own degree that special power of conscience by which it passes sentence on our actions. But once more, it is not only the actual presence of the evil, or the increase of the work of evil within them, which is hidden from those on whom it is passing, but they perceive nothing whatever of its deep spiritual significance. It is altogether altering their relation to the unseen world around them, and they know not of it. The adopting love of Christ had gathered them into His family: His heart yearned over them; for His sake the Eternal Spirit wrought in them. He was ever beside them. But the deceitfulness of sin veils to them all these blessings. The heavenly world seems to withdraw itself. Nor is it only peace and joy that this man thus loses. This, again, increases in another way his own inability to see the evil of the sin which possesses him. For only under Christ's Cross, only in the full sight of His love and holiness, and bitter agony for us, can we see anything of the true evil and hatefulness of sin; and so its deceitfulness, which prevents his seeing those, deludes him wholly till it robs him of his soul. If these things are happening around, and it may be among us, what practical lessons should they enforce on us? 1. Surely, the need of a resolute watchfulness against these seductions. They who would walk safely amidst the deceitful whispers of an enchanted land, or hold on their course in spite of sounds so falsely sweet that they have lured every listener to destruction, find no escape save in stopping their ears to the voice of the enchanter. And so must it be now with those who would escape from the deceitfulness of sin within them. They must "watch and be sober." 2. But farther, this should be a time not only for self-searching, but for beginning resolutely in some particular actions a course of more earnest service of God. And this course of more earnest service should not be any new way devised for ourselves, but the doing more completely and conscientiously, and as to God and our Lord Jesus Christ, our own appointed duty. (*Bp. S. Wilberforce.*)

The deceitfulness of sin:—Though sin admits of no definition in itself, any more than sound or colour or odour, being, all four alike, primary ideas; it may be defined, *i.e.*, indicated, by pointing out its relation to other things with which it is essentially connected. 1. St. Paul defines sin by comparing it with law: "Sin," he says, "is the transgression of the law." He means the law of God, the supreme Being, the sovereign power of the universe. God has prescribed us laws, which we may or may not observe. Sin is in man what deviation from their orbits would be in the heavenly bodies, if they were endowed with a will and a power of disobedience, and should shoot off from the paths in which they now move with so much order, beauty, and beneficence. 2. So again we may define sin by its effects, its "fruits," its "wages," as the apostle calls them; and how easy and how melancholy the definition. It is enough to fix the thoughts on one particular, and that is, death. How wide the sweep of its scythe! how universal the havoc which it makes! 3. Once more let us look at sin in relation to the process by which it accomplishes these deadly effects. How comes it, we ask, that while sin is acknowledged to be the prolific source of all misery, still men make light of and rush into it? Sin has undoubtedly made passion strong, the imagination wild, the conscience weak; and these are parts of the explanation; but not the whole. In addition to this, sin deceives them all through, and in connection with, the understanding, to which deception properly belongs. Men cheat themselves, or allow themselves to be cheated out of eternal life. With the strength of passion, and the stupor of conscience, and the weakness of will, has been united, in marvellous sympathy, a sad hallucination of the judgment; and so we have done, and practised, it may be, what we should have thought perfectly impossible, as long as our reason remained with us, and what has ever since been a matter of painful and self-condemning recollection. And now, what is the conclusion of the whole matter? We have seen what sin is in relation to God and His law; what it is in its effects, and what it is in the process of its working. What now are the natural inferences from these points? Two at least present themselves, viz., that it is the greatest of all evils, and, at the same time, that it is the most insidious. The law, of which it is the transgression, is the prime law, the parent law, the law which makes all others possible, the law which develops moral agency, and binds the moral universe together. It is to the ethical, what gravitation is to the physical world. If sin were perfectly and completely triumphant, it would overthrow society as by an earthquake, shaking the deepest foundation of all things; and not all things in our world merely, but every other world also, where the distinction between right and wrong is known. If the Divine law is so comprehensive, fundamental, and absolutely necessary, then sin is a tremendous, and, in relation to all others, an incommensurable evil. The same conclusion is inevitable, when we look at it in its bearing, not on our moral but our sentient nature, our susceptibility to pleasure and pain, happiness and misery. All the suffering this moment in the world, whether of mind or body, whether open or secret, whether social or individual, whether from the recollection of the past, or the anticipation of the future, or the pressure of the present, springs from the root of sin. Oh, what folly to be fleeing from other evils—poverty, sickness, obscurity, shame, bereavement—and yet take no measures, while opportunity is afforded, to escape from the consequences of sin and its intrinsic evil! Oh, my friends, sin is a great evil; and it is as deceitful as it is great. It beguiles the soul it ruins. It is like those diseases which put the patient asleep, so that he slumbers into the very grave; or those which cause him to indulge fond hopes of life, up to the moment Death throws his unerring dart. It deceives in regard to a man's particular acts, and in regard to his whole moral state. (*W. Sparrow, LL.D.*) *Deceitfulness of sin*:—1. It assumes false names. 2. It prefers false claims. 3. It offers false excuses. 4. It makes false resolutions. (*J. Burns.*) *Religion the great security against the delusions of sin*:—It is an old and just observation, "that no man ever became completely wicked at once." But, notwithstanding all the kind restraints of conscience, of shame, and the terrors of futurity, which Providence has mercifully opposed to the progress of sin, it does, however, make wonderful advances in the world. I. A MAN CANNOT ENTIRELY ABANDON HIMSELF TO THE COMMISSION OF EVIL, TILL HE HAS ABSOLUTELY EXCLUDED THE APPREHENSION OF GOD FROM HIS THOUGHTS. It is not usual ever for bad minds to put their dark workings in execution till every eye be closed; they shun the light they hate, because their deeds are evil. And is it possible that they should fly from the presence of a man fallible as themselves, and yet dare to stand the inspection of that Eye, to which the very darkness is no darkness at all; before

which all hearts are open, and to which no secrets are hid? Again, it is observable that when a man has once begun to indulge the dispositions and habits of vice, he gradually withdraws himself from every object which may infer a reproach upon his conduct, or suggest to him the necessity of reforming it. He deserts the places of public adoration; he declines the society of pious and good men; and suppresses the exertion of every thought that bears upon it any visible stamp of virtue and religion. He guards himself against the apprehension of God, as against a dangerous companion. He finds himself incapable of advancing one step, while this stands in his way; it opposes his progress, as the armed angel did that of the ambitious prophet, and obstructs the accomplishment of his wicked views. II. When the apprehension of the Deity is once suppressed, A MAN MAY BE LED, IMPERCEPTIBLY, BY THE DELUSIVE ATTRACTION OF ERROR, through each successive degree of impiety, till he arrive at last at a state of absolute insensibility and final impenitence. The bad affections, which were before chained down, are now let loose; and sin, deceitful enough in itself, gains an easy ascendant upon a mind which is willing to be deceived, and which dreads nothing so much as the necessity of subscribing to conviction. By what shallow reasonings, by what poor pretences, men suffer themselves to be cheated out of their virtue! 1. One pretence that is generally made is, "That religion contracts our faculties into narrow bounds; that, in order to enlarge them, it is necessary to burst her bands asunder, and cast away her cords from us; that every passion has its natural object, and that it is an infringement on natural liberty to restrain the indulgence of them; that, since life is at best so short, the best method of making it longer is to enjoy it; that the severities and rigours which are imposed by religious ordinance are only the inflictions of politic priests, who (being disabled by age and infirmity) would willingly make atonement for their own transgressions, by laying the severest restrictions on the liberties of others; that religion, in short, is the merest slavery; and that a man denies himself a pleasure which nature has allowed him, who does not give a full scope to the indulgence of every passion." This method of arguing is attended by two very great and very evident defects. (1) It is by no means evident (though it has been sometimes insinuated) that religion forbids the enjoyment of any delight which nature and reason allow; and whoever presumes to exceed the bounds prescribed by reason and nature, will be sure to meet the disappointment his presumption deserves. And it is notorious to a degree, that those who pretend to a greater latitude of enjoyment than the rest of mankind, have in fact the least real enjoyment of all. (2) The austerities which are charged upon religion are trifling, in comparison of the repeated penances, mortifications, to which the libertine is reduced, by disappointed passions, a distempered constitution, and an unquiet mind. 2. Another deceit that men are apt to put upon themselves is, "That the sins they commit are so inconsiderable, that they will certainly be overlooked by the eye of infinite mercy; that they make such short incursions into the ways of wickedness, as to leave their retreat secure whenever they please; and that they are in no danger of falling into any flagrant or presumptuous act of evil." This is so fatal a deceit, that one would almost be induced to think that it had been better for some men to have fallen immediately into a flagrant breach of duty (upon their first revolt from virtue) than to have crept on in the commission of what are usually called inconsiderable sins. And for this reason there is something so shocking to a mind that retains any sense of God and goodness in the reflections which succeed the commission of any greater crime, that a man recoils from it with the utmost horror and detestation, and is often carried backward to greater degrees of virtue by the very violence with which he fell from it. But, on the other hand, while a man continues to flatter himself that the sins he commits are trifling, he is gradually amused into an increase of wickedness and guilt. He goes on step by step, without perceiving the progression, and is deluded into his destruction by an opinion of his security. 3. And this brings on the last illusion in which sin is apt to involve the human mind; which is this—when the persons who have thought themselves so secure begin to look calmly back, and discover the unthought-of advances they have made in vice, they stand amazed; and conclude it as impossible for them now to return, as they did before to have proceeded so far. (*T. Ashton, D.D.*) *The deceitfulness of sin*:—I. SIN HAS A SINGULAR POWER TO DECEIVE. 1. Its deceit may be seen in the manner of its approaches to us. It comes in a very subtle way, offering us advantage. Intellectually, it comes with a question, or an inquiry. Ought we not to question and to inquire? Are we to receive everything implicitly? The question is, however, full often the thin end of the wedge, which Satan drives home in the form of carnal

wisdom, doubt, infidelity, and practical atheism. How tiny a drop of sinful distrust of God's Word will poison all the thoughts of the soul! Sin frequently comes as a bare suggestion, or an imagination; an airy thing, spun of such stuff as dreams are made of. The thought fascinates, and then the spell of evil begins its deadly work; thought condenses into desire, and desire grows to purpose, and purpose ripens into act. I have known a sin insinuate itself by the way of the repulsion of another sin. A man will fly from pride to meanness, from moroseness to jollity, from obstinacy to laxity. Thus the shutting of one gate may open another, and one sin may crawl in as another creeps out. 2. Sin is deceitful in its object, for the object which it puts before us is not that which is its actual result. We are not tempted to provoke our Maker, or wilfully cast off the authority of righteousness. No, no; we are moved to do evil under the idea that some present good will come of it. Thus are we lured and bird-limed like the silly fowls of the air. The object set before us is delusive: the reward of sin may glitter, but it is not gold, and yet as gold it thrusts itself upon our erring judgment. 3. Sin is deceitful, next, in the name it wears. It is very apt to change its title: it seldom cares for its own true description. Almost every sin, nowadays, has a pretty name to be called by on Sundays, and silver slippers to wear in fine society. 4. Sin also shows its special deceitfulness in the arguments which it uses with men. Have you never heard its voice whispering to you, "Do not make much ado about nothing. Is it not a little one?" The point of the rapier is small, and for that reason the more deadly. Then will sin raise the question, and say, "Is this really wrong? May we not be too precise? Are not the times changed? Do not circumstances alter the command?" Sin is great at raising difficult points of casuistry. He that wills to do wrong is eager to find a loophole for himself. 5. This deceivableness is further seen in the excuses which it frames afterwards. 6. The deceitfulness of sin is seen again in its promises; for we shall not go far into sin without finding out how greatly it lies unto us. 7. Sin is deceitful in the influence which it carries with it. When yielded to, it tries to shut off the door of repentance. II. THIS DECEITFULNESS HAS A HARDENING POWER OVER THE HEART. 1. Partly through our familiarity with sin. We may look at hateful sin till we love it. 2. Then there follows on the back of this insensibility to sin an insensibility to the gospel. III. THIS DECEITFULNESS OF SIN, AND THIS TENDENCY TO BECOME HARDENED, NEED TO BE FOUGHT AGAINST. 1. The way to keep from hardness of heart, and from the deceitfulness of sin, is to believe. You shall find that, just in proportion as faith grows strong, the deceit of sin will be baffled. 2. If you would be saved from the deceitfulness of sin confess it honestly before God. Pray that sin may appear sin: it cannot appear in a worse light. Thus thou shalt not so readily be caught in its traps and lures. 3. Cultivate great tenderness of heart. Do not believe that to grieve over sin is lowering to manhood; indulge thyself largely in sweet repentance. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The lies of the temptress:*—There is a possible reference here, in this personification of sin, as leading men away by lies, to the story of the First Temptation. There, the weapons of the Tempter were falsehoods. I. FIRST, THEN, MY TEXT SUGGESTS TO ME SIN'S LIES ABOUT THE BAIT. The old story is typical, and may stand as a well-developed specimen of the whole set of evil deeds. Either for the sake of winning a desirable object, or for the sake of avoiding some undesirable issue; we never do the wrong thing, and go away from God, except under a delusion that we shall be better and happier when we have got the desired thing than we should be without it. Now I do not mean to say that there is not a very solid reality in the pleasurable results of a great many wrong things. If a man chooses to sin to gratify sense, he does get the sensuous enjoyment out of it. But there is another question to be asked. You have got the thing you wanted; have you,—what then? Are you much the better for it? Are you satisfied with it? Was it as good as it looked when it was not yours? Is not the giant painted on the canvas outside the caravan a great deal bigger than the reality inside, when you go in to look at him? Is there anything that we have got by doing wrong for it, howsoever it may have satisfied the immediate impulse in obedience to whose tyrannous requirements we were stirred up to grasp it, which is worth, in solid enjoyment, what we gave for it? Having attained the desire, do we not find that it satisfies not us, but only some small part of us? If I might so say, we are like those men that old stories used to tell about that had swallowed some loathly worm. We feed the foul creeping thing within us, but ourselves continue hungry. Besides, sin's pleasures are false, because along with them all comes an after tang that takes the sweetness out of them. There is only one thing that promises less than it performs, and which can satisfy

a man's soul; and that is cleaving to God. II. AGAIN, NOTE THE LIES ABOUT THE HOOK. "Ye shall not surely die." I suppose that if any man had clear before him at the moment of any temptation, howsoever fiery and strong, the whole sweep of the consequences that are certainly involved in his yielding to it, he would pause on the edge, and durst not do it. But sin suppresses facts; and here are a few of the barbed points that she hides. She does not tell you anything about outward consequences. Every year there come into Manchester young men who fancy they can play the game and not pay the stakes. She suppresses the action of conscience. There is nothing more awful than the occasional swiftness and completeness of the revulsion of feeling between the moment before and the moment after. She suppresses the action of sin upon character. You cannot do a wrong thing, "departing from the living God," without thereby leaving an indelible mark upon your whole spiritual and moral nature. Loftier aspirations die out of you, the incapacity for better actions is confirmed, and that awful mysterious thing that we call "habit" comes in to ensure that once done, twice will be probable, and twice done, thrice and innumerable times will be almost certain. There is nothing more mystical and solemn about our lives than the way in which unthought-of and trifling deeds harden themselves into habits, and dominate us, whether we will or no. And so the sin which once stood in front of us with a smile and tempted us, because it was desirable, afterwards comes behind us with a frown, and is a taskmaster with a whip. The flowery fetters become iron, and the thing once done gets to be our master, and we are held and bound in the chain of our sins. And more than that, there is the necessity for perpetual increase, heavier doses, more pungent forms of evil, in order to titillate the increasing insensitiveness of the nature. You take a tiger cub into your house when it is little; it is prettily striped, graceful in its motions, playful and affectionate; and it grows up, and when it is big, it is the master of you, if it is not the murderer of you! Do not you take the little sin into your hearts. It will grow, and its claws will grow, and its ferocity will grow. And now all these consequences suggest the last of sin's suppressions that I would specify. They all make a future retribution a probable thing. And that future retribution is a plain and necessary inference from any belief at all in a God, and in a future life. But the tempting sin has nothing to say about that future judgment, or if it has, has only this to say: "Ye shall not die." You are like sailors that get into the spirit room in a ship when she is driving on the rocks, and, as long as you can get the momentary indulgence, never mind about what is coming. III. THEN NOTICE AGAIN, THE LIES AS TO THE CRIMINALITY OF THE DEED. "Hath God said, Ye shall not eat?" is the insinuated suggestion that creeps into most men's minds. Just as housebreakers carry some drugged meat for the house-dogs, when they intend to break into some lonely farmhouse, so we are all adepts in applying gentle phrases to our own evil, while, if the same thing is done by anybody else, we shall flame up in indignation, as David did when Nathan told him about the man and his one ewe lamb. Therefore, it comes to this—do not you trust to instinctive utterances of inclination calling itself conscience. Remember that you can bribe conscience to say anything but that it is right to do wrong. You will get it to say anything that you teach it about what is wrong and what is not. And therefore you must find a better guide than conscience. You have to enlighten it and educate it and check it, and keep it wakeful and suspicious, as the price of purity. The same set of lies about the criminality of our actions operates with still greater effect after the commission. I was speaking a moment or two ago about the sudden waking of conscience when the deed is done. But there is a worse thing than that, and that is when conscience does not wake. IV. THE LAST WORD THAT I WISH TO SAY IS IN REFERENCE TO THE FALSEHOODS OF SIN IN REGARD TO THE DELIVERANCE THEREFROM. These other lies, like bubbles, sometimes burst. The first of them, about the pleasures, generally bursts as soon as the thing is done. The others about the pains and the criminality often disappear, when pricked by some thought of God and contact with Him. But the repertory of the deceiver is not empty yet. And she can turn her hand and bring out another set of lies, in order to retain her dominion. For the sin that said to you before you did it: "There is no harm in it; you do not need to do it again; it is only just once and it will be done with," says to you, after you have done it, when you begin to feel that it was wrong, and try to shake off its guilt and power: "You have done it now! You never can get away any more. The thing is past, and neither in regard of its consequences nor in regard of its power will you ever escape from it. What you have written you have written. You are mine!" And

so she lays her iron claw upon the man and holds him. So sin lies to us just as she lied before. And I have to come with the message that, of all her falsehoods none is more false and fatal than the falsehood that a sinful man cannot turn from his evil; conquer all his transgression; begin a new happy, clean life; and be sure of forgiveness from his Father in heaven. "Jesus Christ, the faithful and true witness," has died that it may be possible to bring to us pure and true promises of lasting and satisfying blessedness, and to avert from each of us, if we will trust in the power of His blood, the worst and penal consequences of our transgression, and, if we will trust in the power of His imparted Spirit, to make our future altogether unlike our past, and deliver us from the habit and entail of our sins. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The devices by which sin beguiles*:—I. One of the most obvious ways in which it works this mischief is, by diverting the attention from that to which it ought to be directed. Man's power of attention is limited; it cannot be directed to all things at the same time; it must take them in succession. Neither should it bestow itself equally upon all things, but graduate its time and earnestness according to circumstance. Of this feature of our constitution sin, taking advantage, so fills the mind with other things, that no room is left for the things of religion. A man is thus made to forget God, by the simple obtrusion of other things upon his attention. 2. Sin deceives also by the false and captivating colours in which it decks out things forbidden. Their beauty was not their own. They wore a mask. It is no very uncommon thing for certain visions and appearances to pass before the mind, under the influence of disease, which wear all the lineaments of persons and things with which we are familiar, and yet possess no reality whatever. But not to take so violent a case for illustration; let us simply reflect how depression or hilarity of animal spirits affects all our views of things. The one will hang the brightest heaven with mourning; the other will shed an air of cheerfulness over the deepest gloom. Now it is somewhat in this way that sin deludes. It causes things to appear in unreal colours. 3. A third way, in which sin deceives, is by making us miscalculate time. What is our life? It is compared to a "watch in the night," to a "tale that is told," to a "vapour which appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away," to a "race that is run," to a "battle that is fought," to the "labour of the day," to the dimensions of a "span." Yet, notwithstanding, may I not with all confidence ask whether his own feelings have not often virtually given the lie to these statements? Thus does sin deceive the young. To say nothing of the uncertainty of life, they are in error in regard to the length of it. 4. This property, which is specially named in the text, arises from our being creatures of habit. By the law of habit, the doing of a thing once, makes it easier to do it again, and creates an inclination towards the repetition of the act. Notice the manner in which the spider endeavours to secure the unwary insect, which has fallen into its web, and you have a pretty accurate representation of the process. One attenuated thread after another is woven round it, each easily broken, each in itself too trifling to be regarded or felt, but all, in their united strength, beyond its ability to break. There the victim lies, making mighty efforts to escape, but more and more hopelessly each successive moment. Thus it is, that sinful habit insensibly weaves around us its meshes. (*W. Sparrow, LL.D.*) *The dangerous deceitfulness of sin*:—I. HOW SIN IS TO BE TAKEN AS SAID TO BE DECEITFUL, AND WHEREIN ITS DECEITFULNESS LIES. 1. With reference to the external object and act about it, sin's deceitfulness lies in false appearances and delusive promises. 2. As to indwelling corruption, who can tell the many ways it has to deceive and destroy? Sin here is the man sinful, proving a tempter to himself. (1) In enticing to it: What pains does the sinner take to justify or extenuate the evil he is bent upon? desirous by a deceitful varnish to take off from its horrid appearance, that it may give as little disturbance to conscience as possible. All endeavours are used, not only to colour the object, but to corrupt the eye by a disguising tincture, that the sight of things may not be according to truth, but according to his desire. (2) In confirming in it; drawing on its servants even to final obduracy and destruction. To this end false principles are admitted, or perverse inference drawn from true ones: the Scriptures are wrested, precious promises, instances of grace abounding to the chief of sinners, &c., and arguments fetched from all, whereby sinners encourage themselves to add sin to sin. II. THE POWER AND PREVALENCY OF THE DECEITFULNESS THAT BELONGS TO SIN. 1. How strangely powerful is the deceitfulness of sin, with reference to the many who love and live therein, though they are told of its present deceit and destructive issue? 2. How powerful is the deceitfulness of sin, that can persuade men that are made

for another world, to look no farther than this; and so seek for happiness where it is never to be found, or call that so, that is bounded by sense and time, as if they had nothing higher to mind. 3. How powerful is the deceitfulness of sin, as to the numbers over whom it still reigns, though all its servants sooner or later confess the delusion? III. WHAT HARDNESS THIS TENDS TO AS MATTER OF FEAR AND FLIGHT. 1. Habitual. This is the result of repeated acts of sin, strengthening the natural depravity, and confirming in it. Hereby the sinner is emboldened in his way, and becomes a stranger to much of that shame and sorrow, reluctancy and remorse, which he was sometimes wont to feel. 2. Judicial, or inflicted from heaven. Lessons: 1. Hence learn the reason of that mighty storm that is ordinarily felt in the breasts of true penitents upon their first becoming such. 2. How adorable is the grace of God, as to all that get safe to heaven; what joy will there be upon their arrival! 3. It need not seem strange that holy men are afraid of nothing so much as sin, and cannot allow themselves to follow a multitude to do evil (Exod. xxiii. 2), it being too dear a compliment to be paid to any, to run the hazard of being hardened first, and so of perishing for company. 4. How dangerous is their mistake, who whilst under the power of sin, think their case good, because their consciences are quiet? And with how many is it thus? 5. How great is our advantage in having the Bible and living under the gospel? By which we are warned of sin's deceitfulness and armed against it. 6. How desirable is the state of such as are in covenant with God, having chosen Him in Christ for theirs, and given up themselves unto Him. They are hereby become His special charge, as well as His peculiar delight. 7. Is the case so sad of being hardened in sin? Let the dread of this awaken a present and perpetual opposition to it in every one that would be safe. (1) Begin at the root: see that corruption, as to its power and reign, be mortified within. Get by faith into union with Christ. (2) Let conscience be instructed from the Word of God, and charge it to be faithful, and hearken to its voice. (3) Beware of running upon temptation in a vain presumption you may come off safe. Your strength lies not in yourselves, but must come from heaven; and you have no promise of protection out of God's way. (4) Keep the cross of Christ as much as possible in view, and remember it was sin that nailed Him to it. (5) Solemnly renew your covenant with God, and often reflect upon it with approbation; that whenever tempted to sin, you may be able readily to answer, I have opened my mouth unto the Lord and I cannot go back (Judges xi. 35). Thy vows are upon me, O God (Psa. lvi. 12). (6) Live under an awful sense of God's presence with you, and plead it with yourselves, that you may act accordingly. (7) Frequently call yourselves to account. The beginnings of sin may be most hopefully resisted; but like a slight disease, may prove dangerous in the neglect, and threaten death. (8) Use yourselves to a life of self-denial as to the flesh and the world. (9) Keep up lively apprehensions of death and judgment approaching. (10) Make your constant, serious application to heaven, for wisdom to discern, and grace to withstand the deceitfulness of sin. (*D. Wilcox.*)

The deceitfulness of sin:—I. WHAT IS SIN. To love God and to love our fellow-creatures with a pure heart fervently is the gospel law, and our own conscience witnesses that it is holy, just, and good. Whatever is the contrary to, whatever comes short of this law is sin. Now, if we trace up sin to its fountain, then we call it birth sin—derived from our first father Adam. But, if we trace sin to the streams that flow from this unclean fountain, then we call it actual sin, done by our own will. Then sin is everything we do which we ought not to do, and everything we leave undone which we ought to do. If we trace it to its different kinds we find some sins done against God only, others against God and man too. There are sins of the thought, sins of the heart, sins of the tongue, sins of the hand, sins of the whole body. II. THE DECEITFULNESS OF SIN. 1. Sin draws us away from the thought of God and of His grace; of what He has done for us, and of what we owe to Him. 2. Then unbelief slips in; unbelief of God's Word. So Satan tempted Eve. 3. If only we disbelieve God's Word, then we are ready to be caught with the bait which sin offers, fair and tempting to the sight, hiding under it danger and death. 4. Be not misled by the deceitfulness of sin, to go on without repentance, without conversion of heart to God. Is not delay the devil's favourite word? 5. Nor let sin beguile you to misuse the doctrine of the grace of God. III. THE EFFECT OF SIN. It hardens the heart. (*E. Blencowe, M.A.*) *The deceitfulness of sin*:—I. MY BUSINESS SHALL BE TO SHOW YOU THE DECEITFULNESS OF SIN AND HOW MUCH THEREBY WE ARE IN DANGER. 1. Evil takes another name though it doth always retain its nature. Covetousness passeth

for a thrifty temper and good husbandry. Prodigality for being generous. Vanity is reputed necessary remission of mind, and foolish talking to be affable conversation. Lavish expense of time goes for exercise and recreation due to the body. Finding fault with others is reckoned to be reproof of sin. Sharpness and severity to be strictness of conscience. Backbiting is accounted an endeavour for reformation. Jealousy and suspicion to be care for right and truth. Busy meddling with other men's affairs, lives, and judgments, is said to be activity for the advancement of religion. And to control others' liberty, a care for their souls. Presumption is thought to be faith in God. Curious determinations beyond Scripture, to be the improvement of faith, and inconsiderate dulness to be the denial of our reason. Malcontent to be sorrow for sin. Excessive use of the creatures, to be Christian liberty. Sometimes evil suggesteth to us pleasure and delight, and sometimes gain and profit. 2. Evil holds us in hand that it is a matter of our right, and that which we may do in the use of our liberty. Whereas it is not power to be able to do that which is not fit to be done, this is not liberty, but licentiousness. 3. Evil covers itself with some probable notion or circumstance. Nothing in this vain world is more usual than colours, pretences, representations, excuses, appearances contrary to reality and truth. 4. Evil warrants itself sometimes by the difference of time and place, sometimes by measure and degree, sometimes by mode and manner. 5. Evil pleads sometimes the necessity of the case, and that it is unavoidable. 6. When evil hath once entangled us there is another evil (and it may be a greater) though necessary to hide or extenuate it. For evil, if it be looked into, will be ashamed of itself. Upon this account it is that men are ashamed to own it, and sometimes with a lie deny it. Cain, Gehazi, Ananias, and Sapphira. 7. Evil justifies itself by prescription and general practice. So it was formerly, and so it is still. And this is taken for a justification. 8. I shall observe in the last place that which is most dangerous of all others, and that is this: when the first motion towards repentance and conversion is looked upon as if it were the sovereign remedy of repentance itself. As if sorrow for sin were the whole product of repentance, whereas, indeed, that which is true repentance must be accompanied with the forsaking of sin and bringing forth the fruits of righteousness. II. How GREAT REASON WE HAVE, ACCORDING TO THE ADVICE OF THE APOSTLE, TO TAKE HEED THAT WE ARE NOT DECEIVED. 1. Because in this state we run all manner of hazards and dangers. 2. Our several faculties have different inclinations, and some of them are not at all capable of reason, therefore not to be governed by any moral considerations, which make it a very hard province that we are to act in. 3. Things without us, and round about us, presented with their several advantages, do many times provoke and allure us, and are hardly to be denied. 4. That which should be for our security, viz., company and converse, often becomes a snare to us. 5. He that is officious to bring us into his condemnation, he is forward to fit us with suitable objects that shall raise our apprehensions and draw us into evil. 6. There are many things impure and contrary to religion to which we are tempted that the world do not reckon among the greatest crimes. 7. Man is such a compound that heaven and earth, as it were, meet in him, terms that are extremely distant. Man in respect of his mind is qualified to converse with angels and to attend upon God. And in respect of these noble faculties he is liable to be tempted to insolency, arrogancy, and great presumption, and self-exaltation. 8. If we do not use self-government, and moderate our powers by subduing the inferior to the superior, we fail in that which is our proper work and province. 9. If God be not understood and acknowledged in our worldly enjoyments and recommended to us by them; if He be not intended in all our actions, then do we not comply with the relation we stand in to God, nor act according to our highest principles, nor answer our capacity, nor are true to our own interest. For our highest faculties are God's peculiar, God's reserve, made for God, and fit to attend upon Him, and to receive from Him. Since, therefore, there is this danger—(1) Let us act with caution and with good advice, by conversation with the best and wisest men. For it is an easy matter to be deceived without great care and diligence. (2) But chiefly let us make application to God, by meditation and prayer, who will not be wanting to us. Let us carefully avoid all presumption, pride, arrogancy, and self-assuming. Do not on the sudden, but see before you do; and understand well before you act. (*B. Whichcote, D.D.*) *On the danger and deceitfulness of sin*:—I. First, I shall endeavour to represent to you THE GROWING DANGER OF SIN, and by what steps and degrees bad habits do insensibly gain upon men and harden them in an evil course.

All the actions of men which are not natural, but proceed from deliberation and choice, have something of difficulty in them when we first practise them, because, at first, we are exercised in that way; but after we have practised them awhile they become more easy, and when they are easy, we begin to take pleasure in them; and when they please us we do them frequently, and think we cannot repeat them too often; and, by frequency of acts a thing grows into a habit, and a confirmed habit is a second kind of nature: and so far as anything is natural, so far it is necessary, and we can hardly do otherwise; nay, we do it many times when we do not think of it. 1. Men begin with lesser sins. No man is perfectly wicked on the sudden. 2. After men have been sometime initiated in these lesser sins they are prepared for greater; such as lay waste the conscience and offer more violence to the light and reason of their minds. 3. When a man hath proceeded thus far he begins to put off shame, one of the greatest restraints from sin which God hath laid upon human nature. And when this curb once falls off, there is then but little left to restrain and hold us in. 4. After this it is possible men may come to approve their vices. For if men's judgments do not command their wills and restrain their lusts, it is great odds, in process of time, the vicious inclinations of their wills will put a false bias upon their judgments; and then it is no wonder, if men come to boast of their sins and to glory in their vices, when they are half persuaded that they are generous and commendable qualities. 5. From this pitch of wickedness, men commonly proceed to draw in others, and to make proselytes to their vices. But that which renders the condition of such persons much more deplorable is, that all this while God is withdrawing His grace from them. For every degree of sin causeth the Holy Spirit of God with all His blessed assistances to retire farther from them. And thus, by passing from one degree of sin to another, the sinner becomes hardened in his wickedness. For the mind of man, after it hath long been accustomed to evil, and is once grown old in vice, is almost as hard to be rectified as it is to recover a body bowed down with age to its first straightness. II. I shall, from this consideration, take occasion to SHOW WHAT GREAT REASON AND NEED THERE IS TO WARN MEN OF THIS DANGER, and to endeavour to rescue them out of it. If we believe the threatenings of God which we declare to others, if we have any sense of our own duty and safety, we cannot but be earnest with sinners to break off their sins, and to give glory to God by repentance before darkness come. III. I apply myself to this work of EXHORTATION—the duty commanded here in the text. 1. To persuade those who are yet in some measure innocent, to resist the beginnings of sin, lest it gain upon them by degrees. Vice may easily be discouraged at first. It is like a slight disease, which is easy to be cured, but dangerous to be neglected. As there is a connection of one virtue with another, so vices are linked together, and one sin draws many after it. When the devil tempts a man to commit any wickedness, he does as it were lay a long train of sins, and if the first temptation take, they give fire to one another. 2. To persuade those who are already engaged in a wicked course, to make haste out of this dangerous state. And there is no other way to get out of it but by repentance; that is, by a real change and reformation of our lives. (*Archbishop Tillotson.*) *The deceitfulness of sin:*—Who is it that is deceived? It is the sinner himself. Does he need to be deceived? Is there not in us all a strong enough direct inclination to that which is evil? There is also a deceit which over-reaches and ensnares us into the commission of what, but for that mistake, we would have avoided or abhorred. Again, if the sinner is deceived, who is it, or what is it that deceives him? Here we must observe that when we speak of sin's being deceitful, it is not so much anything without us, taking the advantage of our weakness, but it is the corruption within, which makes us see things in a wrong light, and draw unjust and pernicious consequences from them. I. I shall endeavour to open a little the CHIEF BRANCHES OF THE DECEITFULNESS OF SIN. 1. Its disguising itself and wholly concealing its nature. 2. Its forming excuses for itself, and thereby extenuating its guilt. 3. Its insinuating itself by degrees, and leading men on from the voluntary commission of some sins to the necessity of committing more. II. I proceed now to consider THE DUTY WHICH IS FOUNDED BY THE APOSTLE ON THE DECEITFULNESS OF SIN, viz., mutual exhortation. 1. As to the persons who are obliged to exhort others. It seems in this passage to be laid upon Christians in general, without any exception. This is perfectly consonant to the spirit of true religion, and to our relation one to another. There is also a particular obligation upon superiors of all sorts, whether in office, as magistrates; in station, as persons of wealth and opulence; in years, as those whom time and experience

should have enriched with solid wisdom; in relation, as parents and masters of families. But it is also plainly a part of Christian friendship, even for equals to exhort one another, and kindly to communicate their mutual experience in the spiritual life. We all stand in need of it; we may all be the better for it. I do not remember anything recorded more truly glorious for a monarch than what we are told of Philip of Macedon, that he heard reproofs not only with patience, but with pleasure; and I am sure there is nothing more like a Christian than to profit, not only by the admonitions of friends, but by the reproaches of enemies. If they are just, reform what is amiss; if they are probable, abstain from the appearance of evil; if they are neither the one nor the other, submit to them with patience, as a part of the will of God. 2. The season in which the duty of mutual exhortation is to be performed. Exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day; by which we are to understand that it is to be done frequently, and without delay. 3. The manner in which this exhortation must be given, if we hope to do it with success. (1) You ought not to reprove at an uncertainty, upon bare rumour and suspicion. (2) It ought not to be done when the offending person is in an ill temper to receive it. (3) We are not to reprove those whom we have reason to believe to be such desperate wretches, that they would be but the more exasperated, and sin in the more daring manner, on account of the reproof (Prov. ix. 7; Matt. vii. 6). On the other hand, positively, when reproof or exhortation are administered—(1) It should be made appear, as much as possible, to flow from love and affection as its principle. (2) As it ought to flow from love as the principle, so it ought to be conducted with meekness in the manner; no railing or reviling expressions, which will look like the wounds of an enemy to destroy, and not the balm of a physician to cure. (3) Reproof should be given with some degree of zeal as well as meekness; we should avoid the extreme of remissness as well as severity. A slight careless reproof is often worse than none; for it is ready to make the offender think lightly of his own offence. I shall give an instance of this. Swearing, and taking the name of God in vain, is sometimes ridiculed, instead of being reproved. This seldom has a good effect. It ought, indeed, to be despised for its folly; but, at the same time, it ought to be deeply abhorred for its guilt. (4) In admonishing one another for particular sins, we should still keep in view the source of all sin, a polluted nature, and the great danger of the sinner, as in a sinful state. (5) Let those who would acquit themselves of this duty in a proper manner be particularly watchful and circumspect in their own conduct. Lessons: 1. From what has been said, you may see the great corruption and depravity of our nature. 2. From what has been said, let us be led to strictness and frequency in self-examination. If sin is so deceitful, it may easily lurk unobserved. Self-knowledge is a study of as great difficulty as importance. 3. From what hath been said, let me beseech all, but especially young persons, to beware of the beginnings of sin. 4. I shall close the subject, by addressing an exhortation to those who have been long and hardened sinners; who have many habits of vice cleaving to them; who have hitherto despised the gospel, and even sat in the seat of the scornful. Why will you longer continue at enmity with Him, while He is offering you mercy? (*J. Witherspoon.*)

The deceitfulness of sin:—I. THE CAUTION. In the text sin is, by a bold figure of speech, personified, as it is in several other parts of Scripture. But we are not to suppose that there is a being called sin; but an evil principle that is at work in the world and in all our hearts. We will now notice some of the means adopted by sin to deceive the ungodly. 1. It assumes to itself soft and specious names. Sin, notwithstanding the exalted place it holds in the affections of men, is an abominable thing. Professors of religion, be you aware that you endeavour not to lessen the enormity of sin. 2. Sin deceives by promising pleasure, while it conceals the evils connected with it. It promises pleasures it can never give. Absalom listened to sin, and was stimulated in his rebellion by the hope of raising himself to his father's throne. The event showed he was deceived, and lost his life beside. David listened to sin, when he thought of the pleasure of Bathsheba's company, and thought, "No eye will see, no one would know." He, too, was deceived, for his sin became patent to all Israel, and peace fled from his house for ever. There is one case recorded in Scripture which shows how sin deceives, and hardens, and finally damns the soul—Judas. 3. Sin deceives by misrepresenting the revelations of God's Word. Instructed by that Word, we are taught to think of God as a being of infinite perfection, and that all His attributes being perfect, they cannot clash one with another—that all are holy, wise and good. But sin suggests to man's mind a God all mercy: it puts out of sight the fact that God is a God of holiness. Again, sin leads men

to reason thus: God is too lofty to behold the things done upon earth; it is inconceivable that He will take knowledge of men's actions; He has worlds to guide and direct. 4. Sin deceives, by persuading the man that there is time yet to seek pardon, and persuades him to defer the season of repentance till a later period of life. Now, there is no want of good intention on the part of many. Sinners are deceived by sin, and flatter themselves that because they know what is right, there must be some good in them, though they practise it not. They comfort themselves, that though at this particular moment they do not put their good resolutions into effect, they intend to do it, and they think there is some virtue in that. II. THE MEANS PRESCRIBED.—"Exhort one another." Those who undertake to give advice should themselves be endued with wisdom and understanding. An ignorant or presumptuous person will be likely to do more harm than good. That wisdom which is gained by experience is most likely to prove useful to others. Intimate friends may exhort and counsel one another, and admonish one another of their faults. But even here a caution is needful. Some do this in such a censorious sort of way, such a "Stand by, I am holier than thou" sort of air, that the advice they give, however good, is certain to be rejected. Men are never to be scolded into doing that which is right. In reference to this part of our subject I would say, never engage in this duty except with much prayer for the guidance of the Holy Spirit; and then between your exhortation and example there must be a consistency. If not, it will render any effort altogether vain. III. THE TIME when this duty is to be performed—"Daily, while it is called to-day." The present may be the only opportunity. Christians are daily going astray; every day they need exhorting. By way of application, I would entreat you all to watch well your heart, and resist the beginnings of sin, lest it should end in ruin. A spark is easily put out, but how difficult to extinguish a conflagration! Resist the unholy thought before it becomes the unholy deed, and pray that ye enter not into temptation. I will illustrate by an anecdote what sin does. There was a little boat floating near the bank in the river a few miles above the falls of Niagara; a mother was working in a field near by. She had cautioned her little daughter not to go to the water; but thither the child strolled. She saw the boat, jumped into it, which moved with her weight. She was pleased with the feeling. The boat slipped from its moorings, and began softly to float down the stream. More and more pleased was the child. The sun glittered on the tiny waves; everything was pleasant and delightful to the child. Quicker, and more quick, but yet softly and silently, that vessel shot down the river with its unconscious and joyous freight. The mother looked, and saw her child carried quickly to the current towards the fall. She screamed and ran—she plunged into the water; she ventured far, and failed. The boat is caught in the foaming rapids; it is carried over the precipice; the child is lost. Something like this may be seen daily. We warn you. (*W. Jarbo, D.D.*) *Deceptive nature of sin*:—I heard a minister not long since, while preaching on the nature and deceptive influence of sin, make use of the following illustration:—"Suppose," said the preacher, "an individual should go to a blacksmith and say to him, 'Sir, I wish you to make me a very long and heavy chain; here are the dimensions. Have it done at such a time, and I will pay you the cash for it.' The blacksmith is pressed with other and more important work, but for the sake of the money he commences the chain, and after toiling hard many days, finishes it. The individual calls. 'Have you made that chain?' 'Yes, sir; here it is.' 'That is very well done. A good chain; but it is not long enough.' 'Not long enough! Why, it is just the length you told me to make it.' 'Oh yes, yes; but I have concluded to have it much longer than at first; work on it another week. I will then call and pay you for it.' And thus, flattered with praise and encouraged with the promise of full reward for his labour, he toils on, adding link to link, till the appointed time when his employer calls again, and, as before, praises his work; but still he insists that 'the chain is too short.' 'But,' says the blacksmith, 'I can do no more. My iron is expended, and so is my strength. I need the pay for what I have done, and can do no more till I have it!' 'Oh, never mind; I think you have the means of adding a few links more; the chain will then answer the purpose for which it is intended, and you shall be fully rewarded for all your labour.' With his remaining strength and a few scraps of iron, he adds the last link of which he is capable; then says the man to him, 'The chain is a good one; you have toiled long and hard to make it. I see that you can do no more, and now you shall have your reward.' But, instead of paying the money, he takes the chain, binds the labourer hand and foot, and casts him into a furnace of fire. 'Such,'" said the preacher "is a course of sin. It promises

much, but its reward is death." (*C. Field.*) *Sin*:—It appears fair, but is filthy; it appears pleasant, but is pernicious; it promises much, but performs nothing. (*M. Henry.*) *The deceitfulness of sin*:—There was an abbot who desired a piece of ground that lay conveniently for him. The owner refused to sell it, yet, with much persuasion, was contented to let it. The abbot hired it for his rent, and covenanted only to farm it for one crop. He had his bargain, and sowed it with acorns, a crop that lasted three hundred years. Thus, Satan begs but for the first crop: let him sow thy youth with acorns, they will grow up with thy years to sturdy oaks, so big-bulked and deep-rooted, that they shall last all thy life. Sin hath a shrewd title when it can plead prescription, and Satan thinks his evidence as good as eleven points at law when he hath once got possession. Let him be sure of thy youth, he will be confident of thy age. *The change sin works in the conscience*:—Soft sponges become flints oftentimes by a peculiar process. There are in sponges particles of flint or silex; these are ever attracting particles to themselves, until in process of time the whole mass is an aggregate of silicious matter, and the softness of the sponge has disappeared. It is exactly thus with your conscience: its sensibilities are gradually giving way to the hardening particles that are introduced by every sin you commit. *The fatal chain*:—Professor Drummond tells of an over-laden coal barge which stood in the river: "A sailor reported to the captain that the water was gaining upon the vessel. The captain drove him away with scoffs. Twice, thrice, the warning was repeated. Each time the warning voice was unheeded. At last the barge began to give evidence of sinking. The captain ordered the men to the boats. They took their places. He then said: 'I told you there was plenty of time.' Then he took out his knife to cut the cable which bound the boat to the barge. He fell back with a cry of horror. The cable was an iron chain!" The eleventh hour is an hour of haste and danger and disappointment. The thread becomes a cord, the cord a cable, the cable a chain. The time to get clear of a sinking craft is now. *The accelerating progress of an ungodly course*:—A denier of the original taint of sin once stood before two pictures which hung side by side upon a wall. The first was the portrait of a boy with open brow, and curls that looked golden in the sunshine, and cheeks whose damask beauty shamed the ripened fruit, wearing that happy smile which can be worn but once in life—a smile whose rippling waves are poisoned by no weeds of suspicion, and break upon no strand of doubt, looking gaily up from the flowered earth into the azure heaven without the slightest misgiving. From the canvas of the second picture there glared out a wolfish eye—the home of all subtlety and malice; and in the gloom of the dim lighted cell you might perceive the matted hair, and garments stained with blood; chains clank, or seemed to clank, upon his fettered limbs. All tell of the desperate character of the man. On these two pictures hanging side by side, the denier of the original sin fixed his gaze, until the exclamation burst out at length in a tone of half concealed triumph, "What! do you mean to say that these two beings were originally and radically the same? Do you mean to tell me that any amount of evil teaching could ever develop that guileless child into that debased and godless man?" The artist volunteered the information that the portraits were taken from the life of the self-same individual at different stages of his history. You know the moral of the tale. There is an accelerating progress in an ungodly course, increasing with the momentum of an avalanche when the first stages of its course have run. The descent into perdition is easy, when the strivings of the passions are seconded by the dictates of the will. Sinner, I charge thee, beware lest thy sin become habit. (*W. M. Punshon, D.D.*) *Habits*:—Like flakes of snow that fall unperceived upon the earth, the seemingly unimportant events of life succeed one another. As the snow gathers together, so are our habits formed. No single flake added to the pile produces a sensible change—no single action creates, however it may exhibit, a man's character; but as the tempest hurls the avalanche down the mountain, and overwhelms the inhabitant and his habitation, so passion, acting upon the elements of mischief which pernicious habits have brought together by imperceptible accumulation, may overthrow the edifice of truth and virtue.

Ver. 14. **We are made partakers of Christ.**—*Partners of Christ*:—There is nothing that Christ hath, but we have part of it. His wisdom, holiness, His righteousness is ours; yea, His kingdom is ours. We are heirs, yea, co-heirs with Him of His kingdom. As the man at the day of marriage says to his wife, "With all my worldly goods I thee endow," so the Lord Jesus endoweth us with all His goods; by reason whereof, being poor and worth nothing, we become exceeding rich.

Christ is ours, death, life, the world is ours. Oh, unspeakable prerogative vouchsafed to dust and ashes! Let us walk worthy of this honour whereunto we are advanced: being Christ's partners, let us not be the devil's partners. Let us be holy as He is holy, humble as He is humble; let us contemn this world with all the vain pleasures that be in it as He did. What fellowship is there between Christ and Belial? (*W. Jones, D.D.*) *Fellows of Christ*:—What does this mean? The first idea that suggests itself is that "Christ" stands as a synonym and compendium of salvation, just as "Moses" in the above-quoted words of Paul is a synonym for the redemption he was God's instrument in achieving. An alternative course is open to the interpreter: to render, "partakers with Christ," and to find in the words the thought that only such as persevere in faith share in the glory and the joy conferred on Him at the close of His earthly career as God's faithful apostle. This view, however, though true in itself, attains to its full heights only when we adopt a bolder course, and take *μέτοχοι* as meaning here, as in chap. i. 9, "companions" or "fellows." We then get the striking thought that by persistent loyalty to the Christian vocation we become fellows of Jesus. It is intrinsically likely that the passage about the Messiah quoted from the forty-fifth Psalm in the first chapter was present to the writer's mind at this point. It speaks of the Messiah as anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows, implying that they too, in their measure, have a cup full of joy. In the present connection of thought mention is made of a "boasting of hope," a hope rising into exultation, implying a still higher measure of triumphant joy when hope reaches its consummation. The idea, "the faithful the fellows of Christ," is also in full sympathy with the thought expressed in ver. 6, "whose house are we." The faithful are God's house, at the head of which is Christ, God's Son. They are God's house not as Moses was, as servants, but as sons, therefore the brethren of Christ. But brotherhood is a thing of degrees. There is an initial brotherhood, in which, as Paul says, a son differs nothing from a servant; and there is a brotherhood, the result of a normal moral development, in which a younger son, at length arrived at maturity, becomes the companion of the elder brother. We are brethren to begin with, but if we are faithful we shall end in becoming fellows. And so our author, having already said of those who persevere that they are the house of God, now takes a step in advance, and in renewing his exhortation to steadfastness says, "The faithful are not only the house of God and the brethren of Christ, they are His fellows, sharing His joy and having perfect communion with Him in spirit." (*A. B. Bruce, D.D.*) *A persuasive to steadfastness*:—I. First, then, here is A VERY HIGH PRIVILEGE. "We are made partakers of Christ." Observe that the text does not say we are made partakers of rich spiritual benefits. There is more than that here. To be partakers of pardoning mercy, of renewing grace, of the adoption, of sanctification, preservation, and of all the other covenant blessings, is to possess an endowment of unspeakable value: but to be made "partakers of Christ," is to have all in one. You have all the flowers in one posy, all the gems in one necklace, all the sweet spices in one delicious compound. "We are made partakers of Christ"—of Himself. "It pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell," and we are made partakers with Him of all that He is ordained to be of God unto us—"wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." We are made partakers of Christ, when first of all by faith in Him we procure a share in His merits. Moreover, we are partakers of Christ, inasmuch as His righteousness also becomes ours by imputation. We further become partakers of Christ by living and feeding on Him. The sacramental table represents our fellowship. Partakers of Christ! Yes, and therefore with Him partakers in destiny. The language of the text reminds us that none of us have any title to this privilege by nature. "We are *made* partakers of Christ." From our first parentage we derived a very different entail. "We are made partakers of Christ." This is the Holy Ghost's work in us, to rend us away from the old wild olive, and to graft us into the good olive; to dissolve the union between us and sin, and to cement a union between our souls and Christ. This is work as grand and godlike as to create a world. II. The privilege of which we have spoken suggests A SOLEMN, SEARCHING QUESTION. Are we made partakers of Christ? There is nothing more to be dreaded than a counterfeit justification, a spurious hope. III. Now we come to THE UNERRING TEST. Patience comes to the aid of faith here. Evidences accumulate till the issue is conclusive. "We are made partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end." This passage may be read in two ways, neither of which violates the literal meaning of the original as we have it in our version, "the

beginning of our confidence," or, as I would rather translate it, "the foundation of our confidence," the basis on which our confidence rests. Take your choice. We will expound both. That man is a partaker of Christ who holds fast the faith he had at first, having received it, not as an education, but as an intuition of his spiritual life; not as an argument, but as an axiom he could not challenge, or rather as an oracle he received joyfully and bowed to submissively. The confidence which is based upon the true foundation, even Christ Jesus, is simple and clear as one's own consciousness. It asks no proof because it admits no doubt. Now what was the beginning of our confidence? Well, the beginning of my confidence was, "I am a sinner, Christ is a Saviour; and I rest on Him to save me." We were nothing at all, and Jesus Christ was all in all. We are not made partakers of Christ unless we hold this fast to the end. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Ver. 15. **To-day if ye will hear His voice.**—*To-day*:—I. TO-DAY: HOW RELATED TO YESTERDAY AND TO-MORROW. We are putting yesterday to its noblest use when we are using its experience to make the life of to-day better. We are preparing for the morrow in the truest way when we are striving with all our might to be faithful to the opportunity of to-day. II. TO-DAY: ITS IMPORTANCE. To-day is the critical moment of life. Our vital concern is with to-day. Life in to-day is an impressive feature of Biblical teaching. The emphasis of both Testaments is on to-day. "We must work while it is day." To look back is, in the judgment of the Master of our life, to unfit ourselves for the work of the kingdom of God. To be loyal to the Christian idea and order of life, we must be ready to break with the old for the sake of the new. There is little need, then, to dwell on the past. It is not behind us. In a very real sense it goes with us. The new continues, it does not efface the old. There is no "dead past"; the past is living in the present. Our present character is the Divine judgment upon our past conduct. But to-day is not only a history of the past, it is also a prophecy of the future. It is by watching to-day we can tell what will be on the morrow. Foresight is truly insight. There is no violent break between yesterday and to-day. Whatever is to come out of to-day exists in to-day. The future is not a revolution but an evolution. To-day is the child and heir of yesterday; to-morrow will be the child and heir of to-day. III. THE BLESSING AND OPPORTUNITY OF A DAY. It comes to us laden with blessing and promise, full of history and full of prophecy. It has taken many thousands of years to prepare it for us. In the very fuel that feeds its fires is the vegetation of primeval years. Every day that dawns has countless relations with things far and wide. Ancient Egypt and Israel, Greece and Rome, Scandinavia and primitive Germany, priests and philosophers, prophets and poets, discoverers and inventors, innumerable thinkers and workers, known and unknown, have helped to prepare the materials out of which to-day's opportunity has been made. We inherit the good, material and moral, wrought out through the experiences of many men and many races of men through many centuries. In the life of to-day are the results of the labour and struggle of all the yesterdays. No day is poor and commonplace. To the prepared soul every day is full of marvel and joy. Every day has its comedies and tragedies. Genius does not invent, it discovers and interprets. To find examples of heroism we need not turn to classic pages, nor search the annals of martyrdom. Heroism is as unfailing a reality as the daily dawn. Around and in each day are all the great marvels of creation, all the moral forces and splendours of life, and all the sacred realities to which the deeply moved soul has witnessed in every age. It is a familiar saying that life is but a day. It is said to express the awful and pathetic brevity of our existence upon this earth. But when we say each day is a life, we are giving expression to a truth of deeper importance and of greater practical value and use. There is nothing small. In the smallest things are the elements of the greatest. One day of life has in it the quality of the whole. In its acts and relations we see God making history, and man making his own future—making the character which creates condition and decides destiny. Are we making the most and the best of the opportunities of to-day? One of our older poets has represented the days as coming to us with their faces veiled; but when they have passed beyond our reach and call, the draped figures become radiant, and the gifts we slighted are seen to be right royal treasures. Let us make the most and the best of each day's opportunity for pure and noble enjoyment. The lesson of joy is as Divine a lesson to learn as that of obedience and sacrifice. Let us make the most and the best of each day's opportunity for thought and meditation. The inner life constantly needs deepening. The mind closed against new truth is

already dying. Let us make the most and the best of the opportunity for moral and spiritual growth and beneficent service which is afforded by the daily task. It is in the sphere of every-day duties most men must win the discipline which our earthly life is meant to yield, must form the character which is the crown of life, and prepare themselves for wider usefulness. It is only by living up to the ideal and duty of making each day perfect in itself we can make life a spiritual triumph. There are only "twelve hours in a day," yet how much can be done in and with a day. If we throw away a day no miracle will bring it back to us. There is no to-morrow for the work that ought to be done to-day. The cry, "Too late," is not false. The mercy of God is infinite every way, but an opportunity lost is lost for ever. Other doors may open, but that door is for ever shut. The exhortation, "Prepare to meet thy God," is, indeed, an exhortation to prepare for life, not death. Every day we meet God; every day we need to be prepared to meet Him. We prepare for what we suppose to be great days. But every day may be a great day, a Divine day. To-day all good and great things are possible. Let us by our faith and faithfulness, by our obedience to all best visions and impulses, turn it into a day of salvation, a day of God, one of the days of the Son of Man, one of the days of heaven upon earth. (*John Hunter.*) *To-day* :—1. Let me ask those who believe the truths of the gospel, but who put off the renunciation of the sins they condemn, and the consideration of the truths themselves to a future period, have you a reliable guarantee that you will have a future in which to consider, pray over, and meditate on these things? There is no such thing. The space between life and death is quickly traversed. 2. But, in the next place, addressing those who are thus procrastinating, let me suppose that you reach the remotest horizon of human age; is it not true that every day you neglect Divine truths the probability of your ever accepting them diminishes? In this world you require time to grow in knowledge; why should you argue that what God recognises in His providence He should not recognise in grace; but that He should leave you to a lifetime of ignorance, indifference, apathy, and then should give you light enough to guide you to heaven in your last moments? 3. But there is a third argument against all such delay. It is that whilst you are delaying the salvation of the soul, your heart is not all the while remaining empty. Your heart is being coloured by all it comes into contact with in the world. Now, if your soul has for forty, fifty or sixty years been absorbed about what you shall eat, what you shall drink, wherewithal you shall be clothed; or about the world's wealth, or the world's ambition, or the world's cares, will it be very easy to disengage it from its old routine upon a dying bed? Will it be very easy to alter the currents, change the channels, and empty the springs of such a heart when its beating becomes feebler, and life's sandglass is almost run out? 4. There is another fact, let me mention, one suggested to me by conversation with a physician, and I think it is a very just one, namely, the very structure of the brain, which is the hand of the mind, adapts itself to the action of the thoughts that have constantly passed through it. Now, if your thoughts have been ceaselessly absorbed with the things of this world, your brain is just adapting itself to the things of this world, and becoming unfit for others. A blacksmith's arm would never do for the most exquisite handwriting: his arm has been accustomed to other work; and that is only a coarser illustration of what is true of the brain, that it becomes adapted and physically fitted to the trains of thought that have ceaselessly rushed through it; till, when you come to speak to a dying man who has never had Divine thoughts in his heart and head, you have to deal with the most intractable of all materials; till, almost despairing, you must cease to teach, and begin only to pray. But I take another view of the danger of such a course. 5. As people grow older, on the supposition that they live to a protracted age, the impressibility of the mind becomes less, the blood chills with age, it runs more sluggishly through the arteries and veins; the memory in old age, you know quite well, becomes less retentive. Then is not that another evidence that it must be very difficult to impress Divine truths, everlasting motives, upon memories that scarcely recollect next day what was said on this; upon hearts that Mammon has trodden into the hardness of iron, and in which passions have scorched every fair and fragrant blossom? 6. Let me notice another reason and explanation of the danger of this procrastination: you are creating and strengthening every day a refuge to which you have recourse. It is a singular law in human nature, that what becomes your habit becomes almost your very nature; and as you are making to-day a refuge from conviction, a refuge from what you feel to be duty, that procrastination becomes a habit; and every time that you do so, the next

time you will be abler to do so. 7. But now the final result of not hearing God's voice, and of thus procrastinating to a future, is what is here called the hardening of the heart. Love degenerates to zero; the enthusiasm of your spring is all frozen hard in the winter of old age; what once awakened you to joy, to hope, to fear, to alarm, fails to awaken you any more; and it is possible that God may say, as he said of one of old, "Let him alone; My Spirit will not strive with man any more"; like Pharaoh, He gives him up to the hardness he himself has originated, an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. Some of you will say, "But is not the Holy Spirit of God able to change any heart, however hard? Is He not able to convert a man in his last gasp?" The Holy Spirit's work is always exercised on a system that promotes holiness, that glorifies Himself, that honours His holy Word; and your acting on the pleas that I now quote for you is simply sinning because grace abounds, and making the Holy Spirit's omnipotence an excuse for your worldliness. And, in the next place, let me remind you, that while the Holy Spirit is able to do all this, He will not, and it is unreasonable to expect that He will, dishonour the means that He has instituted. But perhaps you will argue, "But we know that men have been converted on their deathbeds; very frequently we read of instances the most remarkable of deathbed conversions; and this ought to cheer us in the prospect of a deathbed conversion." First of all, are you perfectly sure that your case is parallel in all points with the cases that you read? And then, in the next place, are you quite sure that such cases are not exceptional? I admit at once grace has its trophies in every age. But if this be exceptional, not the general rule, would you act in this way in common life? Would you plunge into the roaring cataract because one man, half a century ago, did so, and escaped? And then, let me add, those remarkable cases that you quote had not the opportunities that you have had. Now that is a very modifying element. The dying thief never heard of a Saviour till he saw Him nailed to the Cross. In none of these cases—here is the striking fact—was there a previous hardening process under the knowledge and the preaching of the truth. But some encourage themselves with this: "But you know the scenes of a deathbed are very solemn." They are very solemn indeed. "And may it not be true," you will say, "that when eternity envelops us like an ocean, that then we shall think, and pray, and believe, and be saved?" When the house is tumbling to ruins about the tenant, when life is ebbing from all the shores of the senses, when you are distracted by hopes to-day, by depression to-morrow; when cares in this world that you have left unsettled, pains and agonies within, separations, tears, sympathies, and sorrows are about you—oh! let me ask, is that an hour for thinking about the soul, of God, of the judgment-seat, a Saviour, an eternity? You may disguise it as you like, but you may depend upon it it is not. It is so easy in health to speculate what you will do; it is so difficult in a dying hour to settle what was unsettled before. The following illustration is by an American traveller: "In my to and fro rambles in foreign lands I once met with a party of young Englishmen, one of whom had lost his passport. By one dodge and another he continued to get on without it at the stations of secondary importance, but at length he came to the frontiers: the demand to see and examine the document was stern and imperative; his lack of it, as well as the artifices by which he had heretofore concealed it, was detected, and his further progress disgracefully arrested." How many will come to the frontiers of that eternal world towards which we are all journeying without a passport? We may evade all scrutinies at the way-stations. We may be admitted into reputable and virtuous society. We may enter the Church. We may eat and drink in the presence of Christ. But all this does not constitute a passport into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." Only learn wisdom from the children of this world, and do not delay to get your passport till you reach the very station where it will be demanded. It will then be too late. *Now* is the accepted time. (*J. Cumming, D.D.*)

The voice of God and the hard-heartedness of man:—I. THE VOICE OF GOD! Ah! it is a wonderful thing that the High and Holy One should condescend to speak to a rebellious and apostate race for their good. 1. And if you ask how He utters His voice to man, I answer, in the first place, it is uttered through the medium of external nature. By those who will listen to it, the voice is heard above, below, and around them. And yet there are men in this age of science and education, who can tread upon the green carpet of the earth, bespread with fruit and flower, without any responding emotions to the Giver of them all; who appear deaf to the count-

less notes by which His voice is uttered, and His wisdom, power and love proclaimed, and to whom it is requisite now as of old to say, "If ye will hear His voice, harden not your heart." 2. I next observe, that the voice of God is uttered through the medium of passing events. Whatever occurrence takes place, the really wise man hears in it a message from the throne of the Eternal. When affluence and power are bestowed, he hears the voice of God declaring, "Here are means and opportunities for promoting My glory and advancing the welfare of My creatures. Make a right use of them. Be a wise steward over them." When, on the other hand, poverty comes, he hears the voice of God admonishing, "Learn the perishable nature of earthly wealth, and lay up for thyself treasures in heaven." When sickness and bereavement come with their desponding and painful associations, he hears the voice of God declaring, "It is good for thee to be afflicted; before thou wast afflicted thou wentest wrong; but now thou shalt learn my statutes." 3. I next observe, that the voice of God is uttered through the medium of human instruction and example. Here a believing husband seeks to impress his wife with the truths of the gospel; there a wife, whose affections are set "on things above," deplores the excessive worldliness of her husband's mind. 4. I observe, further, that the voice of God is uttered through the medium of His inspired Word. II. THE NATURE, OR THE MANNER AND CHARACTER OF THE RESISTANCE MADE BY MAN TO THE VOICE OF GOD. The resistance commonly offered to the Divine appeals is not that of "the fool, who saith in his heart, there is no God," nor that of the recklessly worldly or the profoundly infidel, who cry out, "What is the Almighty, that we should serve Him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto Him?" The resistance offered by the bulk of the impenitent, is that described by the expression, "hardening the heart as in the provocation"; a delay and a disinclination to act up to the convictions of conscience from a deep rooted love of sin, like that of the people in the wilderness, than which nothing can be more provoking to the Holy One of Israel. When men disobey what they believe to be the voice of God, they must try to find some plausible excuse for their disobedience, or they must be most uncomfortable and uneasy in their minds. The individual who is frequently employed in gathering pleas for the neglect of religion soon becomes an adept in the work of self-justification. Having engaged in a warfare with his reason, his judgment and the best affections of his nature, he has nearly gained the victory, and the consequence is that he feels less religious responsibility than before, and is become almost inaccessible to any means of conviction. Now this is precisely what the Scripture means by "hardening the heart"; and this is the very thing that is done by those in a Christian land, who refuse to become Christians indeed and in truth. (*H. Hughes, B.D.*) *Neglecting the day of grace*:—An artist solicited permission to paint a portrait of the queen. The favour was granted; and the favour was great, for it would make the fortune of the man. A place was fixed, and the time. At the fixed place and time the queen appeared: but the artist was not there; he was not ready yet. When he did arrive, a message was communicated to him, that her majesty had departed, and would not return. Such is the tale. The King eternal consented to meet man. He fixed in His covenant and promised in His Word, the object, place, and time of the meeting: it is for salvation; it is in Christ; it is *now*. He has been true to His own appointment; but how often is it otherwise with man! (*W. Arnot.*) *Now is the time*:—When I think of opportunities, I think I may liken us here to-night to a number of men in the Arctic regions. They have been frozen up for a long time, and the ship is high and dry on great masses of ice. The thaw comes on; but the thaw, however, will last but for a very short time. They set their saws to work; they see a split in the ice; there is a long and very narrow lane of water. If they can get the ship along there before the water freezes it up again they may yet reach the shores of dear old England, and be safe; but if not they are frozen in for another winter, and very likely will be frozen in for ever. Well, now, to-night it seems just so with us. It seems as if the Spirit of God had purposely brought some of you here; and I do trust He is opening, as it were, the lane of mercy for you—causing your sins for a little time to loose their frosty hold, and opening your heart a little to the genial influences of the gospel. But, oh! if it should be frozen up again. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Ver. 16. **Some, when they had heard, did provoke.**—*Some but not all bad*:—I. MANY HEAR THE WORD OR VOICE OF GOD TO NO ADVANTAGE, BUT ONLY TO AGGRAVATE THEIR SIN. Their hearing renders their sin provoking unto God, and destructive to their own souls. It is, I confess, a great privilege for men to have the Word preached unto them, and

to hear it (Psa. cxlvii. 19, 20). But privileges are as men use them. In themselves, they are of worth, and to be prized. But unto us, they are as they are used. Hence the gospel comes unto some "a savour of death unto death" (2 Cor. ii. 16). Yea, Christ Himself, in His whole ministry was a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, a gin and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem (Isa. viii. 14; Luke ii. 34). And the enjoyment of any part of the means of grace is but a trial. II. IN THE MOST GENERAL AND VISIBLE APOSTASIES OF THE CHURCH, GOD STILL RESERVES A REMNANT UNTO HIMSELF, TO BEAR WITNESS UNTO HIM AND FOR HIM, BY THEIR FAITH AND OBEDIENCE. This He hath done, and this He will do. 1. To maintain His own kingdom in the world. 2. Should all faith utterly fail in the earth, should all professors provoke God and apostatise from Him, all gracious intercourse between the Holy Spirit and mankind in the world would be at an end. 3. God will do this for the work that He hath for some of His in all ages and seasons to do in the world. And this is great and various. He will have some always to conflict with His adversaries and overcome them, and therein give testimony to the power of His grace and truth. 4. God will always have a testimony given to His goodness, grace, and mercy. 5. God will always have a revenue of especial glory out of the world, in and by His worship. III. GOD LAYS A FEW, OFTTIMES A VERY FEW, OF HIS SECRET ONES IN THE BALANCE AGAINST THE GREATEST MULTITUDE OF REBELS AND TRANSGRESSORS. They are His portion, His inheritance, His jewels, dear to Him as the apple of His eye, and deservedly preferred unto the greatest heap of chaff and rubbish. (*John Owen, D.D.*)

Vers. 17–19. **With whom was He grieved.**—*God's long-suffering:*—Now where he saith, "With whom He was angry forty years," we have here to learn what is the long-suffering of the Lord, who doth not straight punish the sinner, but as He endured the manners of the people of Israel forty years, so He beareth with us in all our transgressions. If thus we consider this example and such like, we are no idle hearers, but profitably exercise ourselves in His judgments; and as we ought to give Him this praise, that He is long-suffering, so let us know what duty we ought again to render unto God for all His goodness; for a great many of us cry with loud voices, the Lord is merciful, but we be dumb and deaf, and have no hearts, when we should learn what His mercy requireth of us. For, tell me, what wouldst thou think of such a child, who, because his father is loving and kind, would therefore be rebellious and riotous? What wouldst thou think of a servant, that because his master is gentle and courteous, would therefore be careless in his work, and not regard him? What subject, think we, were he, that because his prince is good and favourable, would therefore be traitorous and conspire against him? Would we not give speedy sentence against such monstrous and unnatural men? And what hearts then have we that be here this day, if we will confess this great goodness of God, our King and Father, and yet walk in our sins before Him? Thus let us answer the long-suffering of our God: and howsoever He be angry with many, as with the Israelites in the wilderness, He will be pleased with us, as with Caleb, or Moses, and we shall enter into His rest. How can we have a better rule than to see in the Word how God is said to be angry with His people. He is angry here because they refused wisdom and embraced folly, because they forsook the word of truth and followed vain devices, because they would not enter into the rest promised them, but had more desire to return to the heavy labour and bondage of Egypt. This madness of the people the Lord is angry with, as a loving Father that had care over them. So, if we will have holy anger, let it be free from all hatred and revenge, and arise only for the profit and well-doing of our brethren (Mark iii. 5; 2 Tim. iv. 4; Jude 23). (*E. Deering, B.D.*) *Sin and its punishment:*—I. GOD IS NOT DISPLEASED WITH ANYTHING IN HIS PEOPLE BUT SIN; OR, SIN IS THE ONLY PROPER OBJECT OF GOD'S DISPLEASURE, AND THE SINNER FOR SIN'S SAKE. II. PUBLIC SINS, SINS IN SOCIETIES, ARE GREAT PROVOCATIONS OF GOD. III. GOD SOMETIMES WILL MAKE MEN WHO HAVE BEEN WICKEDLY EXEMPLARY IN SIN, RIGHTEOUSLY EXEMPLARY IN THEIR PUNISHMENT. "They sinned," saith the apostle, "and provoked God, and their carcases fell in the wilderness." To what end is this reported? It is that we might take heed, that we fall not after the same example of unbelief (chap. iv. 11). 1. The first use hereof is that which Hannah proposeth (1 Sam. ii. 3). Let men take heed how they arrogantly boast themselves in their sin and wickedness, which is too common with provoking sinners; for God is a God of knowledge and judgment. 2. Let us learn to glorify God because of His righteous judgments. The saints in heaven go before us in this work and duty (Rev. xi. 15–18, xv.

3, 4, xix. 1, 2). Not that we should rejoice in the misery of men, but we should do so in the vindication of the glory of God, which is infinitely to be preferred before the impunity of profligate sinners. IV. GREAT DESTRUCTIONS IN A WAY OF JUDGMENT AND VENGEANCE, ARE INSTITUTED REPRESENTATIONS OF THE JUDGMENT AND VENGEANCE TO COME (see Isa. xxxiv. 1–5; Dan. vii. 9–11; Matt. xxiv. 29; Heb. x. 26, 27; 2 Pet. iii. 5–7; Rev. vi. 13–17). (*John Owen, D.D.*) *Sin viewed in connection with its temporal results*:—It cannot, indeed, be contended that the wicked are openly, in this world, rendered invariable victims of Divine wrath; nor does subjection to misfortune prove previous subjection to vice. Providential visitations do not necessarily presuppose extraordinary impiety; and must not, therefore, be continually identified with judicial strokes. On the other hand, worldly prosperity is not an unfailing accompaniment to holiness—frequently very far otherwise. It is true, that in times of persecution, those will suffer who avow that they are "not ashamed of the gospel of Christ"; but still, at other periods, and even then, it will not be needful that they should be visited with such woes as are sent to correct the rebelliousness of the ungodly. If, therefore, we were called upon to point out a mode whereby man might ofttimes mitigate the rigours of his earthly pilgrimage, we would not hesitate to recommend to him the practice of holiness. Never forgetting that his first object in endeavouring to conform to the Divine will must, of course, be God's glory, in conjunction with his own salvation, we find, at the same time, ample reason to conclude, that his "peace on earth," no less than his bliss in heaven, will be advanced by his steadfast adherence to the ways of righteousness. You may have been accustômed to consider, that it is solely in reference to your spiritual concerns that your faith can be made available; but, surely, if the want of faith is liable, as in the instance referred to in the text, to become an occasion of temporal disappointment and failure, it may fairly be expected that its presence, which we know to be well-pleasing in the sight of God, will lead, in unnumbered cases, to results of a precisely opposite character. Our Almighty Father displays far more readiness to recognise the faith and love, than to punish the distrust and alienation, of His children. Though the murmuring Israelites were doomed for weary years to wander through the wilderness, and were even destined never to behold the fair and fertile land which lay beyond its bleak and barren regions, yet would it, think you, have been God's determination to exclude them from the country which they so desired to reach, had they firmly relied on His power and constantly respected His precepts? Already had He furnished them with evidences in abundance of His anxiety to promote their well-being. But no: they counted as nothing all previous demonstrations of His affection and His power; their sensibilities were unawakened, and their minds unconvinced, by any reasonable appreciation of the evidence which foregoing occurrences had supplied; and their tongues were as ready to murmur, and their hearts to faint, at every obstacle met with in their path, at every inconvenience experienced throughout their journey, as though no practical assurances had been given of God's readiness still to act as their Protector and Guide; as though no stupendous wonders had been wrought, and no providential kindness had been displayed. We marvel greatly at their obstinacy and blindness; but I question much whether, after all, we recognise, generally speaking, that principle in the Divine procedure with our race which was exemplified in the retributive treatment with which they met. They were losers, in a temporal point of view, through their unbelief. Had they trusted in God in seasons of apparent danger or real distress, they would speedily, doubtless, have been enabled to surmount all the difficulties of their pilgrimage, and have been happily and safely located in the land of promise. The world at large may ridicule the idea that a man's spiritual standing can have the remotest connection with the success or failure which may attend his pursuit of any temporal objects; and we are far enough from alleging that the maintenance of religious principle will necessarily ensure the prosperous issue of every enterprise; but its absence may, at any time, throw obstacles in the way which might not, under other circumstances, require to be encountered; and when we find that unbelief, and nothing else, was the cause of the exclusion of so many of the Israelitish wanderers from the choice and productive land of Canaan, we seem to read, in characters so plain that only wilful error can mistake their meaning, the great truth, that the earthly prospects of all may be materially and even vitally affected by the possession or the want of faith. We do not say that brilliancy of renown, that stores of earthly treasures, that high and commanding influence will belong to those who consistently repose faith in the wisdom and continual workings of the providence of God: these appertain but to few, nor can they fairly be ranked

amongst such acquisitions as are intrinsically adapted to produce felicity. But we say that when a man conducts each of his undertakings, from its commencement to its conclusion, with express reference to the will and watchfulness of the Almighty Governor; looking to Him as the Source of aid in all his difficulties, and regarding Him as the Author of all his success; we say that the man lives in the habitual exercise of such faith as will remove the most formidable obstacles out of his path; and that thus, while he is journeying towards a happier land, brighter sunshine, and unclouded skies, he is also engaged in the promotion of his own welfare meanwhile here below—in procuring, to a large extent, an increase to his happiness, even ere he is released from the infirmities of the earthly tabernacle. (*H. B. Moffat, M.A.*) **Because of unbelief.**—*The sin of unbelief:*—Why did they not enter into rest? Because they believed not. He does not single out the sin of making and worshipping the golden calf; he does not bring before us the flagrant transgressions into which they fell at Baal-peor. Many much more striking and to our mind more fearful sins could have been pointed out; but God thinks the one sin greater than all is unbelief. We are saved by faith; we are lost through unbelief. The heart is purified by faith; the heart is hardened by unbelief. Faith brings us nigh to God, unbelief is departure from God. Does it seem strange? By faith we draw near and worship God; by faith we receive God's love; through faith the Holy Ghost is given unto us; by faith we obey and follow Christ. Yet it is so natural and so like the goodness of God that all should be by faith. For the Lord is our God; He is all. He is willing to be, to give, to do all; to be God for us, to us, in us. By grace are we saved through faith, and even this trust is the gift of His blessed Spirit (Eph. ii.). Unbelief prevented Israel's entering into the promised land. Then it follows that faith enters into rest. If we trust in God, then the wilderness will be converted into the garden of the Lord. See the true Israel, Jesus our Lord, who was tested in the wilderness. He entered into rest, He enjoyed peace with God; and there was given Him power to tread upon the lion and adder, and to trample the dragon under His feet. Worshipping the Father He conquered; and the angels of God refreshed and gladdened His heart with their heavenly converse. Such is to be your life. Only believe, only worship, only harden not your heart, when in the Scripture and in the Spirit's teaching and in God's daily dealings you hear God's voice, and though wild beasts, hunger and privation, weakness and temptation beset you, you are safe, you are blessed. God is with you, who can be against you? (*A. Saphir.*) *The bar to progress:*—The words of our text are now perpetually being fulfilled in people who have missed their aim, who have not reached success. They belong to a crisis, a turning-point in the ancient history of God's people, and they suit the present modern condition of the world. They refer to those who were marching onward to a distinct end, but could not enter in because of unbelief. Thus they may fit us and our ways. This generation is enterprising and ambitious. It looks down every road, and tries every gate. Multitudes are seeking to go forward in divers ways. And the success of their advance depends upon their belief. I mean trust in the living power of righteousness, truth, and love, which is God's. No one can really enter into and enjoy any new work, state, or position; no one can really advance without reliance upon this. Look at education. What an impulse it has lately received! But what might be, what often is, the bar to its wholesome effect—to its success? Not merely the omission of the Scriptural or religious lesson from the time-table, but a misbelief in the great aims of education itself. Without an inculcation of righteousness, without trust in the great principles of law and order, and without an appeal to the spiritual capacities of the scholar, education may result in the scraping together of the worst ancient and modern moral mud into the cesspool of his mind, and in his alliance or union with that which is most actively mischievous in the world. We might see, moreover, how the law of our text governs many other movements. It specially rules such as are akin to that which originally called it forth. It was first spoken of those who migrated from Egypt to Canaan, but could not enter into the Promised Land because of unbelief. This makes us think of another great movement of these days—emigration. The overflow of crowded Europe is filling North America, and other great half-empty regions of the world. It is true that some of the conditions attending this transfer did not exist in any previous settlement of a new land. But one condition holds—for ever. The emigrant is sure to fail if he goes frivolously, if he fails to realise the severe conditions of migration, if he does not go with a steadfast heart, trusting—though he may not always define this process to himself—in the great eternal and Divine laws of life and growth, which always govern victory. The genuine spirit of enterprise

and energy begets success. It is a possession which increases to the holder, while the half-hearted loses the little that he holds. It slips from his feeble hand. Unquestionably, a successful act of migration demands much energy and perseverance on the part of those who move. We may be sure that the great laws of God overrule all adventure; and that the keeping of a good courage, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel, and the like Divine gifts, really lead to victory. These ever have entrance and dominion. I have said that the note of our text is in good tune with many of the greatest movements of our day. No true progress is made in anything except in accordance with the great laws of God. Moreover, it holds, not only in the advances which are being made into the freshly-opened regions of the earth, but in the revision of ancient home institutions, and the promotion of any social or political progress. Take, for instance, the giving of larger power in the State to the peasantry in our land. This is exercising both the legislature and society. And we are specially reminded of it by that period in the history of the Hebrews to which our text belongs. We are there told of a race which for hundreds of years had been in bondage along with their flocks and herds. We hear of the partial probation these people had gone through, of the education which they had received since they left the place of subjection. When they crossed the border into their new land they faced new conditions of life, they incurred greater responsibilities. They had to exercise more of that political power which belongs to a civilised country. In the pastoral desert, where these people had been sojourning, their chief concern had been to supplement God's gifts of food with such produce of nature as they could raise or gather from the soil or the flock. While thus living they were under such Divine or religious instruction as they had not received before. It is especially notable that they had to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest the Ten Commandments; learning thus their duty toward God and towards their neighbour. In the keeping of the great moral laws of God may be seen the assurance of national success. None can enter into or enjoy the real blessings of civilised society without a belief in these. This truth touches each, and as we are all members one of another, we do not merely watch spectacles of enfranchisement and the like, but by our loyal keeping of the great principle of righteousness shown in commonplace uprightness of life rising out of honest Christian faith, we welcome and assist any new-comers into the fuller rights of the national family, however little we may be brought into personal contact with them. Every Christian life is an active centre of goodness and influence reaching far beyond our sight. These words, "beyond our sight," might lead us to the thought of that unseen rest into which we cannot enter without belief. The true rest of the Land of Promise is not that craved by the sole of the foot, the sinew, and the brain; it is rather a sense of spiritual repose along with, or after, any work done as before God; though human results may not be seen to follow it. It marks a shelter from the strain of life which may be felt even in the whirl and pressure of its business. We all sometimes feel or yearn for this. It remains for the people of God—for such as put their trust in Him. It is occasionally, but most certainly, touched by them, even in this life. It survives disappointment, and arrives even in confusion. But we do not enter into it without belief. Let those who stand outside be invited and helped by the thought that the belief which leads to salvation is not begun by an assent to a current or formulated creed, but in the receiving of the influence of the living God who is revealed to us, and to whom we are joined by our Lord Jesus Christ. This living faith gives life and meaning to the creed. (*H. Jones, M.A.*) *Unbelief*:—A man in prison, with a signed and sealed permission to leave it and walk at liberty lying on the table beside him, untouched, unopened, yet bemoaning himself and unhappy in his cell, is just the image of us believers who have even a fragment of unhappiness about us. I think I can trace every scrap of sorrow in my own life to this simple unbelief. How could I be anything but quite happy if I believed always that all the past is forgiven and all the present furnished with power, and all the future bright with hope, because of the same abiding facts, which don't change with my mood, do not crumble, because I totter and stagger at the promise through unbelief, but stand firm and clear with their peaks of pearl cleaving the air of eternity, and the bases of their hills rooted unfathomably in the rock of God. (*James Smetham.*) *Unbelief*:—"Unbelief among sins," says an old writer, "is as the plague among diseases, the most dangerous; but when it riseth to despair, then it is as the plague with the tokens appearing that bring the certain message of death with them. Unbelief is despair in the bud; despair is unbelief at its full growth." *Warnings from the fate of others*:—When, a few years ago, a steamer was burned

on Long Island Sound, and the hulk of the vessel was afterwards beached, it was said that the bell of that steamer kept tolling through the day and through the night for weeks, solemnly and impressively, to those who passed by on the waters. And I have to tell you that God has so arranged it that right over the place where the soul goes down, or there is a moral shipwreck or awful spiritual catastrophe—that right over it there is a warning that rings through the day, and through the night, and through the years, saying, "Beware! beware!" (*T. De Witt Talmage.*) *Profiting by the disasters of others*:—Oh, that we could make that use of their disaster that Walden, the French merchant (father and founder of the Waldenses), did of that sad sight that befell him. For walking in the streets, and seeing one fall suddenly dead, he went home and repented of his Popish errors and profane courses. (*J. Trapp.*)

CHAPTER IV.

VERS. 1, 2. **Let us therefore fear.**—*Fearful of coming short*:—I. WITH WHAT DOES THE FEAR ENJOINED IN THE TEXT MAINLY CONCERN ITSELF? Now, the apostle cannot mean that we are to fear lest we should come short of heaven for want of merit. There is not a man living who will not come short of heaven if he tries that road. 1. The great point is lest we come short of the heavenly rest by failing in the faith which will give us rest. Note, then, that it becomes us to be peculiarly anxious that we do not come short of fully realising the spirituality of faith. Many are content with the shells of religion, whereas it is the kernel only which can feed the soul. 2. The exhortation of our text leads us to say that we must take heed lest we fail to discern the fact that the whole way of salvation is of faith. II. WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES MAY SUGGEST THE NECESSITY FOR THIS FEAR? 1. First, it is certain that many professors apostatise. Now, if others apostatise, may not we also? 2. Note, again, that we ourselves know others who are, we fear, much deceived, and fall short of true salvation. Though we have very much that is morally excellent, it may be that we are destitute of the real work of grace, and so come short of the rest which is given to faith. 3. Yet more, remember there are some professors who know that they are not at rest. "We that have believed do enter into rest," but you know you have no peace. III. WHAT SOLEMN TRUTHS DEMAND THE FEAR SUGGESTED IN THE TEXT? If we should really come short of heaven we shall have lost all its bliss and glory for ever. And we shall have lost heaven with this aggravation, that we did begin to build, but were not able to finish. Oh, fear lest ye come short of it. Nay, begin sooner, fear lest ye seem to come short of it, for he that is afraid of the seeming will be delivered from the reality. IV. HOW DOES OUR FEAR EXERCISE ITSELF? Our fear of coming short of the rest must not lead us to unbelief, because in that case it would make us come short at once. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *A check to presumption*:—I. The gospel is not only a revelation, but A PROMISE, and a promise exceeding great and precious. It not only holds forth to our view, but it proposes to our hope eternal life, and whatever is previously necessary to the acquisition of it. The promise was early made, and was often renewed with enlargements. Yes, in this blessed Book we have "a promise left us of entering into His rest." But what is this rest? We may view it as it is begun upon earth, or completed in heaven. Even while the believer is upon earth, this rest is not only ensured, but begun. 1. View him with regard to his understanding, and you will find that he has rest. 2. View him with regard to his conscience, and you will find that he has rest. He is freed from the torment of fear and the horrors of guilt. 3. View him with regard to his passions and appetites, and you find he has rest. While pride, and envy, and malice, and avarice, and sensual affections, reigned within, often striving with each other, and always fighting against the convictions of his judgment, the man's breast was nothing but a scene of tumult; he was "like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest." 4. View him once more with regard to his "condition and circumstances," and you will find that he has rest. He is freed from those anxieties which devour others, who make the world their portion, and have no confidence in God. With all his advantages here, a voice perpetually cries in his ears, "Arise and depart, for this is not your rest." How-

ever favourable the voyage, they are now on the treacherous ocean; and by and by they will enter the harbour—"then are they glad because they are quiet; so He bringeth them unto their desired haven." At death we are told the righteous enter into rest. And this rest is pure, undisturbed, and everlasting. They shall rest from "their labours." Though all activity, they shall be incapable of fatigue, for their powers will be fully equal to their work. II. THE STATE OF MIND IN WHICH WE SHOULD REGARD IT.—"Let us therefore fear," &c. The fear here enjoined is not that of the sluggard dismayed by difficulties, or of the unbeliever who suspects that the promise shall not be accomplished; but a fear of caution, vigilance; a fear which leads us to examine ourselves, and allows us, in this awful concern, to be satisfied with nothing less than evidence whether we have a title to heaven and are in a fair way to obtain this blessedness. 1. To excite in you this fear, remember the possibility of your coming short. Remember that out of six hundred thousand Israelites who came out of Egypt to possess the land of Canaan, two only entered! 2. Consider the consequence of coming short. Is it not dreadful to be deprived of that "fulness of joy" which God hath promised to them that love Him? What would it be to lose your business, your health, your friends, compared with the loss of the soul? And remember, there is no medium between heaven and hell; if you miss the one, the other is unavoidable. And remember also the aggravations which will attend the misery of those who perish in your circumstances. There is nothing so healing, so soothing, as the expectation of hope; and of course there is nothing so tormenting as the disappointment of it, especially where the object is vastly important. Yea, remember also that you will not only be disappointed in coming short, but you will be punished for it. (1) Let us observe, first, how thankful we should be for such a promise left us of entering into His rest! For surely we could not have reasonably expected it. (2) Let us, secondly, see how necessary it is in religion to avoid passing from one extreme into another. The gospel encourages our hope; but then it enlightens it and guards it. "Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear. Be not highminded, but fear. Work out your salvation with fear and trembling." (3) What are we to say of those of you who know nothing of this salutary concern? (*The Congregational Pulpit.*) *Necessity for religious caution*:—I. WE HAVE ACTUALLY A PROMISE MADE TO US OF AN ETERNAL REST. Christianity is no cunningly devised fable, but a certain offer of inconceivable felicity. It finds us wretched, and poor, and blind, and miserable. It finds us exposed to the inflictions of Divine wrath; it brings near to us the good news of pardon, grace, and mercy through the mediation of Jesus Christ. The adaptation of this rest to the weariness of man is very striking. II. THIS REST IS PROMISED TO THE PEOPLE OF GOD, AND TO THEM ALONE. Into that world of light and of love nothing enters that defiles. No revolt, no alienation, no reluctance, no coldness towards God is felt in heaven; God is love, and all who dwell near Him "dwell in love"; love to Him and to each other. III. THE POSSIBILITY OF COMING SHORT OF THE BLESSEDNESS OF HEAVEN IS AN IDEA SO TREMENDOUS, THAT IT MAY WELL AFFECT THE MIND WITH AWE. The apostle says, "Let us therefore fear," &c. The apparent improbability of retrieving error after death is so plainly stated, that the supposition of carelessness in so great a matter, is a supposition fearful in the extreme. All human evils are tolerable, because they are momentary. Earthquake, shipwreck, loss of property, death of friends—these calamities are limited; but the loss of salvation is an intolerable evil, because it is an evil which seems to admit of no termination. There is no object more pitiable than that of an immortal being wasting the few precious hours of life in the frivolous occupations of pleasure, or in the severer pursuits of gain, while yet he is reckless of the pains and pleasures, the gains and losses of eternity! (*G. T. Noel, M.A.*) *Fear and rest*:—The two words which claim our special consideration in this section are "fear" and "rest." I. We know only in part, in fragment. It is difficult for us to combine different aspects of truth. The earnest counsel of the apostle in this chapter, "Let us fear," may seem to be incompatible with his emphatic teaching that we have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; that he is persuaded that nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus; that we are to rejoice in the Lord alway. Yet a superficial glance at the Epistles, and at the Scriptures in general, will show that fear is an essential feature of the Christian. When Christ is accepted, there is peace; but is there not also fear? "With Thee is forgiveness of sin, that Thou mayest be feared." Where do we see God's holiness and the awful majesty of the law, our own sin and unworthiness, as in the atonement of the Lord Jesus? We rejoice with fear and

trembling. It is because we know the Father; it is because we are redeemed by the precious blood of the Saviour; it is as the children of God that we are to pass our earthly pilgrimage in fear. This is not the fear of bondage, but the fear of adoption. Looking to God, our loving Father, our gracious Saviour, our gentle and indwelling Comforter, we have no reason to be afraid. The only fear that we can cherish is that of reverence and awe, and a dread lest we displease and wound Him who is our Lord. But when we look at ourselves, our weakness, our blindness; when we think of our path and our work, of our dangers, we may well feel that the time for repose and unmixed enjoyment has not come yet; we must dread our own sinfulness and our temptations; we must fear worldly influences. II. BUT THE BELIEVER HAS REST NOW ON EARTH, AND HEREAFTER IN GLORY. Resting in Christ, he labours to enter into the perfect rest of eternity. But what did God mean by calling it His rest? Not they enter not into their rest, but His own. Oh, blessed distinction! God gives us Himself, and in all His gifts He gives us Himself. Does God give us righteousness? He Himself is our righteousness, Jehovah-tsidkenu. Does God give us peace? Christ is our peace. Does God give us light? He is our light. Does God give us bread? He is the bread we eat; as the Son liveth by the Father, so he that eateth Me shall live by Me (John vi.). God Himself is our strength. God is ours, and in all His gifts and blessings He gives Himself. By the Holy Ghost we are one with Christ, and Christ the Son of God is our righteousness—nay, our life. "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Or again, "I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me." Or as the Lord Himself, in His last prayer before His crucifixion, said to the Father, "I in them, and Thou in Me." Thus God gives us His rest as our rest. Our souls long for rest. "Oh, that I had the wings of a dove! Then would I fly away and be at rest!" is the sigh of every soul. And this rest is only in God's rest. Death brings no rest to our souls. It is Jesus Christ who alone can give rest to man; for only in Him we are restored and brought into communion with God. The great promise of Christ is rest. For He is the Restorer. We enjoy rest in Christ by faith. But the perfect enjoyment of rest is still in the future. There remaineth a sabbatism for the people of God. Believers will enter into rest after their earthly pilgrimage, labour, and conflict, and the whole creation will share in the liberty and joy of the children of God. The substance and foretaste of this rest we have even now in Christ. (*A. Saphir.*) *Use of fear*:—God planted fear in the soul as truly as He planted hope or courage. Fear is a kind of bell, or gong, which rings the mind into quick life and avoidance upon the approach of danger; it is the soul's signal for rallying. (*H. W. Beecher.*) **A promise . . . of entering into His rest.**—*The promise of entering into God's rest*:—Man from the first has been a restless creature. He lives by hope. His best pleasures are not in the things he actually possesses, but in the things he hopes for. He is always looking forward to to-morrow. Man's true life is the heavenly, and his earthly life is true only as it tends towards that. I. THE REST THAT GOD HAS PROMISED TO MAN. It is the undisturbed peace, the holy joy of the Divine nature, which nothing but likeness to the Divine can bring. II. THE POSSIBILITY OF COMING SHORT OF GOD'S REST. 1. A man may come short of the rest of the Sabbath. 2. Many of the Jews, to whom the rest of Canaan was promised, came short of it. 3. Man will never enter fully into the ideal life until he believes in God fully, trusts God with all his heart, ceases from his own self-will to be and do in harmony with the will Divine. III. HOW TO GUARD AGAINST THE POSSIBILITY OF COMING SHORT OF THE DIVINE REST. 1. Guard against unbelief. 2. Guard against presumption. 3. Cling to the great hope itself, and rejoice in it evermore. Think about it often, and all other hopes will pale when placed beside this. (*E. D. Solomon.*) *The promised rest*:—I. GOD HAS LEFT US A PROMISE OF ENTERING INTO HIS REST; a promise enough to satisfy all our desires, and to engage our heartiest endeavours after it. 1. The greatness of that reward which God has promised to us in the gospel. 2. Of this rest we should most certainly be made partakers, if we live so as we ought to do. II. IT IS AS CERTAIN THAT WE MAY BY OUR OWN FAULT COME SHORT OF IT. For the promise of this rest is not absolute, but conditional. It depends upon a covenant in which there are duties to be fulfilled on our part, as well as a reward to be made good on God's. And if we fail in the one, there is no reason to expect that He should perform the other. III. Let us take the advice of the text, and FEAR LEST WE SHOULD CHANCE SO TO DO. One might justly think that instead of arguing with men upon this subject, we ought rather to apologise for the absurdity of making that an exhortation which all men desire, and therefore must needs endeavour to attain unto. What is this but as if one should go about to argue with a covetous

wretch not to neglect a fair opportunity of growing rich. IV. THE BEST WAY TO SECURE TO OURSELVES THE PROMISE OF THIS REST, is to live in a continual fear of coming short of it. 1. This will be the most likely to engage our own care. 2. It will also be the best means to entitle us to God's favour. (1) This will above anything qualify us for the gracious assistance of His Holy Spirit, to enable us to discharge that duty which is required of us. (2) It will the best dispose us for the pardon of those sins which, when we have done all that we can, we shall still continue more or less to commit. Because he who thus fears will either never willingly fall into any sins, and then there can be no doubt that he shall find a very ready pardon of his involuntary offences. Or if he should be at any time led away by the deceitfulness of sin, yet this fear will soon awaken him, and bring him both to a sense and a deep abhorrence of it. (*Abp. Wake.*) *The fear of losing the promised rest*:—I. THE REST WHICH IS HERE SPOKEN OF. Union with Christ. II. THE EFFECT WHICH IT SHOULD PRODUCE UPON OUR MINDS. We must fear—1. Because we have numerous enemies who would rob us of this rest. 2. Because we have great interests at stake. 3. Because we have but a short and uncertain period to secure an interest in Christ, and be washed from the stains of sin. III. THE DREADFUL CONSEQUENCES OF COMING SHORT OF THIS REST. To mistake the way to heaven is to sink into hell. (*Neville Jones.*) *Fear of perishing*:—1. A race must be run ere we come to our full rest. 2. The constant runner to the end getteth rest from sin and misery, and a quiet possession of happiness at the race's end. 3. The apostate, and he who by misbelief breaketh off his course, and runneth not on, as may be, cometh short, and attaineth not unto it. 4. The apostasy of some, and possibility of apostasy of mere professors, should not weaken any man's faith; but rather terrify him from misbelief. 5. There is a right kind of fear of perishing; to wit, such as hindereth not assurance of faith; but rather serveth to guard it, and spurreth on a man to perseverance. 6. We must not only fear, by misbelieving to come short; but to seem or give any appearance of coming short. (*D. Dickson, M.A.*) *The Christian's privilege, danger and duty*:—I. THE CHRISTIAN'S PRIVILEGE: promised rest. 1. The character supposed. The promise of entering into the heavenly Canaan peculiarly belongs to those who have turned their backs on spiritual Egypt, and are journeying under Divine direction towards the "better country." 2. The blessing promised: "His rest." In the present we may have rest from the tyranny of sin (Rom. vi. 12–14); and from the distraction of anxious care, whether it precede our justification, and refer to our soul's safety (see ver. 3), or follow it (Isa. xxvi. 3; Rom. viii. 88, 39). Yet, however, the Christian may have rest now from the clamours of conscience, painful forebodings, &c., it is to heaven that he must look for—(1) A rest from toil. (2) A rest from pain. Glorified bodies are "safe from disease and decline." (3) A rest from sorrow. 3. The security offered is that of Almighty God. Men may promise largely, but not be able to fulfil. He is all-sufficient. II. THE CHRISTIAN'S DANGER: "Lest any of you should seem to come short of it." Unbelief the principle of ruin, hence so earnest (chap iii. 11, 12, 18, 19, and chap. iv. 3, 11). Nor is this without reason, for unbelief may operate destructively. 1. By means of open transgression. In these passages we are cautioned against the principle. In 1 Cor. x. 1–12, its sad effects are exhibited. 2. By means of secret wickedness. Hence lusting after evil things is deprecated (1 Cor. x. 6; see also Matt. v. 28; Psa. lxvi. 18). 3. By means of worldly mindedness. Faith apprehends invisible realities, and influences and saves us accordingly. But unbelief is the soul's blindness. 4. By means of indolence. Faith prompts us to do, and sustains us in suffering. Unbelief leads to negligence; and neglect is ruin (chap. ii. 3). III. THE CHRISTIAN'S DUTY: "Let us therefore fear." If the apostle feared for the Hebrews, it equally became them to fear. 1. Because of the shame, the personal disgrace of coming short. Not to pursue a worthy object when it is proposed is sufficiently disgraceful. To relinquish the pursuit is doubly so. Even sinners despise such inconsistency. 2. Because of the mischief of coming short. He is like one of the unbelieving spies who tempted Israel into sin and suffering (Numb. xiv. 4, 23). 3. Because of the ruin of coming short. Apostates sin against greater advantages, have gained a greater enlargement of capacity, fall from a greater elevation; therefore their punishment will be more severe. But how? Not with a desponding paralysing fear. (1) With a fear of caution, that properly estimates difficulty and danger, and induces circumspection (chap. xii. 12–15). (2) With a fear of vigilance; that narrowly watches first declensions, and promptly opposes the first advances of the enemy. (3) With a provident fear; that leads to husband our resources, to avail ourselves of the

assistance of our fellow Christians, and to cry to the strong for strength. And let it be an abiding fear. "Blessed is the man that feareth always." Improvement: 1. God hath promised a rest. 2. In prospect of the promised rest, let saints sustain the hallowed cross: "rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation," &c. 3. Let us exhort one another daily; both by the example of those who have halted, and of those who "inherit the promises" (chap. iii. 13, vi. 11, 12). (*Sketches of Sermons.*)

The gospel of rest:—The Christian salvation is here presented under a third aspect as a rest, a sabbatism, a participation in the rest of God; the new view, like the two preceding, in which the great salvation was identified with lordship in the world to come and with deliverance from the power of the devil and the fear of death, being taken from the beginning of human history as narrated in the early chapters of Genesis. One aim of the writer of the Epistle in this part of his work was doubtless to enunciate this thought, and so to identify the gospel of Christ with the Old Testament gospel of rest. But his aim is not purely didactic, but partly also, and even chiefly, parenetic. Doctrine rises out of and serves the purpose of exhortation. In so far as the section (vers. 1–10) has a didactic drift, its object is to confirm the hope; in so far as it is hortatory, its leading purpose is to enforce the warning, "let us fear." The parenetic interest predominates at the commencement (vers. 1, 2), which may be thus paraphrased: "Now with reference to this rest I have been speaking of (chap. iii. 18, 19), let us fear lest we miss it. For it is in our power to gain it, seeing the promise still remains over unfulfilled or but partially fulfilled. Let us fear, I say; for if we have a share in the promise, we have also in the threat of forfeiture: it too stands over. We certainly have a share in the promise; we have been evangelised, not merely in general, but with the specific gospel of rest. But those who first heard this gospel of rest failed through unbelief. So may we: therefore let us fear." To be noted is the freedom with which, as in the case of the word "apostle" (chap. iii. 1), the writer uses the term εὐηγγελισμένοι, which might have been supposed to have borne in his time a stereotyped meaning. Any promise of God, any announcement of good tidings, is for him a gospel. Doubtless all God's promises are associated in his mind with the great final salvation, nevertheless they are formally distinct from the historical Christian gospel. The gospel he has in view is not that which "begun to be spoken by the Lord," but that spoken by the Psalmist when he said, "To-day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." Not less noteworthy is the way in which the abortive result of the preaching of the gospel of rest to the fathers is accounted for. "The word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it." Is the word mixed with faith in the hearer, or by faith with the hearer? and what natural analogy is suggested in either case? The one thing certain is, that he deemed faith indispensable to profitable hearing: a truth, happily, taught with equal clearness in the text, whatever reading we adopt. At ver. 3 the didactic interest comes to the front. The new thought grafted into ver. 1 by the parenthetical clause, "a promise being still left," now becomes the leading affirmation. The assertion of ver. 2, "we have been evangelised," is repeated, with the emphasis this time on the "we." "We do enter into rest, we believers in Christ." A rest is left over for the New Testament people of God. The sequel as far as ver. 10 contains the proof of this thesis. The salient points are these two: 1. God spoke of a rest to Israel by Moses, though He Himself rested from His works when the creation of the world was finished; therefore the creation-rest does not exhaust the idea and promise of rest. 2. The rest of Israel in Canaan under Joshua did not realise the Divine idea of rest, any more than did the personal rest of God at the Creation, for we find the rest spoken of again in the Psalter as still remaining to be entered upon, which implies that the Canaan-rest was an inadequate fulfilment. The former of these two points contains the substance of what is said in vers. 3–5, the latter gives the gist of vers. 7, 8; whereupon follows the inference in ver. 9, a rest is left over. A third step in the argument by which the inference is justified is passed over in silence. It is, that neither in the Psalmist's day nor at any subsequent period in Israel's history had the promise of rest been adequately fulfilled, any more than at the Creation or in the days of Joshua. Our author takes the oracle in the Psalter as the final word of the Old Testament on the subject of rest, and therefore as a word which concerns the New Testament people of God. God spake of rest through David, implying that up till that time the long promised rest had not come, at least, in satisfying measure. Therefore a rest remains for Christians. He believed that all Divine promises, that the promise of rest in particular, shall be fulfilled with ideal completeness. "Some must enter in"; and

as none have yet entered in perfectly, this bliss must be reserved for those on whom the ends of the world are come, even those who believe in Jesus. "There remaineth therefore a rest for the people of God." A sabbatism our author calls the rest, so at the conclusion of his argument introducing a new name for it, after using another all through. It embodies an idea. It felicitously connects the end of the world with the beginning, the consummation of all things with the primal state of the creation. It denotes the ideal rest, and so teaches by implication that Christians not only have an interest in the gospel of rest, but for the first time enter into a rest which is worthy of the name, a rest corresponding to and fully realising the Divine idea. This final name for the rest thus supplements the defect of the preceding argument, which understates the case for Christians. It further hints, though only hints, the nature of the ideal rest. It teaches that it is not merely a rest which God gives, but the rest which God Himself enjoys. It is God's own rest for God's own true people, an ideal rest for an ideal community, embracing all believers, all believing Israelites of all ages, and many more; for God's rest began long before there was an Israel, and the gospel in the early chapters of Genesis is a gospel for man. We have seen that our author borrows three distinct conceptions of the great salvation from the primitive history of man. It is reasonable to suppose that they were all connected together in his mind, and formed one picture of the highest good. They suggest the idea of paradise restored: the Divine ideal of man and the world and their mutual relations realised in perpetuity; man made veritably lord of creation, delivered from the fear of death, nay, death itself for ever left behind, and no longer subject to servile tasks, but occupied only with work worthy of a king and a son of God, and compatible with perfect repose and undisturbed enjoyment. It is an apocalyptic vision: fruition lies in the beyond. The dominion and deathlessness and sabbatism are reserved for the world to come, objects of hope for those who believe. The perfect rest will come, and a people of God will enter into it, of these things our author is well assured; but he fears lest the Hebrew Christians should forfeit their share in the felicity of that people: therefore he ends his discourse on the gospel of rest as he began, with solemn admonition. "Let us fear lest we enter not in," he said at the beginning; "let us give diligence to enter in," he says now at the close. Then to enforce the exhortation he appends two words of a practical character, one fitted to inspire awe, the other to cheer Christians of desponding temper. The former of these passages (vers. 12, 13) describes the attributes of the Divine word, the general import of the statement being that the word of God, like God Himself, is not to be trifled with; the word referred to being, in the first place, the word of threatening which doomed unbelieving, disobedient Israelites to perish in the wilderness, and by implication, every word of God. The account given of the Divine word is impressive, almost appalling. It is endowed in succession with the qualities of the lightning, which moves with incredible swiftness like a living spirit, and hath force enough to shiver to atoms the forest trees; of a two-edged sword, whose keen, glancing blade cuts clean through everything, flesh, bone, sinew; of the sun in the firmament, from whose great piercing eye, as he circles round the globe, nothing on earth is hid. (*A. B. Bruce, D.D.*) *Christ's legacy of rest*:—This promise of spiritual rest is a promise left us by the Lord Jesus Christ in His last will and testament, as a precious legacy. Our business is to see to it that we be the legatees; that we lay our claim to that rest and freedom from the dominion of sin, Satan, and the flesh by which the souls of men are kept in servitude, and deprived of the true rest of the soul, and may be also set free from the yoke of the law, and all the toilsome ceremonies and services of it, and may enjoy peace with God, in His ordinances, providences and in our own consciences, and so have the prospect and earnest of perfect and everlasting rest in heaven. (*M. Henry.*) **Seem to come short of it.**—*The appearance of failure*:—It is a great principle under the Christian dispensation, that "none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself." We are "members one of another," so associated by intimate and indissoluble ties, that we ought never to consider our actions as having a bearing only on ourselves; we should rather regard them as likely to affect numbers, and sure to affect some, of our fellow men, to affect them in their eternal interests, and not only in their temporal. We have again the same principle, the principle that membership should influence actions, involved in a precept of St. Paul to the Thessalonians, "Abstain from all appearance of evil." There is something of a fine sound in advice which is often given, "Do what you know to be right, and care not what others may think"; but, after all, it is not universally, nor perhaps even generally, good and Christian advice. A Christian should consider

the opinion of his fellow Christians. Be not engrossed with securing your own salvation; see to it that ye be not, at the same time, endangering the salvation of others. In the chapter preceding that which is opened by our text, St. Paul had been speaking of those Israelites who, though delivered by Moses from Egypt, never reached the Promised Land, but perished, through unbelief, in the wilderness. From this the apostle took occasion to warn Christians that they might have some progress towards heaven, and still be in danger of missing its possession. And if this had been the whole tenor of our text, it would have afforded but little place for commentary, though much for private and personal meditation. But you will observe that St. Paul does not speak of "coming short," but of "seeming to come short." He "seems to come short" of the promised rest, who, in the judgment of his fellow men, is deficient in those outward evidences by which they are wont to try the genuineness of religion. But surely, all the while, he may not actually "come short": human judgment is fallible, and can in no case be guided by inspecting the heart, which alone can furnish grounds for certain decision; and, doubtless, many may be found in heaven at last, of which entrance thither survivors could entertain nothing more than a charitable hope. And is it not enough, if we do not "come short"? why should we further concern ourselves as to the not "seeming to come short"? We might answer, as we did in regard of the "appearance of evil," that it is a dangerous thing to approach danger. He who "seems to come short" must almost necessarily be in some peril of failure; and where heaven is at stake, no wise man, if he could help it, would run the least risk. Besides, it can hardly be that he, who seems to others to come short, should possess decisive and Scriptural evidences of his acceptance with God. But whilst there may thus be many reasons given why we should fear the seeming to come short, even were our personal well-being alone to be considered, the full force of the text, as with that which enjoins abstinence from the appearance of evil, is only to be brought out through reference to our being members the one of the other. We shall, therefore, take the passage under this point of view. In other words, we will examine what there is, in an appearance of failure, to do injury to the cause of Christianity, and therefore to justify the apostle in so emphatically calling upon you to fear, "lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it." Now as there are undoubtedly many ways in which we may actually come short, so must there be many in which we may apparently come short: who can tell up the methods in which the soul may be lost? neither can any one enumerate those in which it may seem to be lost. 1. And it must, we think, commend itself to you in the first place, that none will more "seem to come short," than those whose practice is in any way inconsistent with their profession, so that lookers-on can decide that their conduct is not strictly accordant with the principles by which they declare themselves actuated. He who professes to "walk in the light as God is in the light," may occasionally wander into dark paths, and yet be mercifully restored; but it can hardly fail but that the impression produced on observers, especially on men of the world, will be one as to the weakness of his principles, or a want of power in that religion which professes itself adequate to the renewing the world. And who will pretend to compute the amount of damage done to the cause of vital Christianity by the inconsistencies of those who profess themselves subjected to its laws, and animated by its hopes? 2. But there is another, if a less obvious mode of "seeming to come short." It should be observed that, though the apostle, when speaking of rest, must be considered as referring mainly to that rest which is future, there is a degree of present rest which is attainable by the Christian, and which is both the type and foretaste of that which is to come. Thus St. Paul, in a verse which follows almost immediately on our text, says of Christians, "We which have believed do enter into rest"; and afterwards, "He that is entered into His rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from His," evidently making the entering into rest, a present thing, as well as a future. Our blessed Saviour bequeathed His own peace, as a legacy to His Church; and what Christ entailed on us, may surely be enjoyed by us. The religion of the Bible is a cheerful, happy-making religion: the very word "gospel" signifies "glad tidings"; and he who has received good news into his heart may justly be expected to exhibit in his demeanour, if not much of the rapture of joy, yet something of the quietness of peace. But it is in this that righteous persons are often grievously deficient. Hence, in place of struggling with doubts and endeavouring to extinguish them, they may be said actually to encourage them, as if they befitted their state, and either betokened or cherished humility. A great

mistake this. There is commonly more of pride than of humility in doubts; he who is always doubting is generally searching in himself for some ground or reason of assurance; whereas, true, genuine humility, looks wholly out of self, not as forgetting the corruption which is there, but as fastening on the sufficiency which is in Christ. But, without dissecting more narrowly the character of the always doubting Christian, we cannot hesitate to say of him, that he is one of those who "seem to come short." If a present, as well as a future, rest be promised to the righteous—and what else can be denoted by such words as these, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee"?—certainly he, at least, "seems to come short" of that rest, who is continually the prey of fear and disquietude, who has never anything to express but apprehensions as to his deceiving himself, or who wears always the appearance of one ill at ease in regard of his spiritual interests. It could hardly fail to be a strong motive with religious persons to the cultivating cheerfulness of deportment, if they carefully remembered that others will judge religion by its apparent effects, and that, if they see it produce only sadness, they will be likely to shun it as opposed to all joy. A gloomy Christian may not be always able to help his gloom; but he should lament it, and strive with it; for what will a generous leader say of a soldier, who, commissioned to enlist others under the same banner with himself, makes his appearance in the world as a terrified and half-famished prisoner? 3. But now, having thus illustrated the text from inconsistency of conduct, and from the harbouring of doubts, either of which will cause a Christian to "seem to come short," let us take one other case, one which is not perhaps indeed as much under our own power, but one against which we may be always endeavouring to provide. The great business of life, as we all confess, is preparation for death. And a Christian's hope, a Christian's desire, should be that he may be enabled to meet death triumphantly. It should not content him that he may pass in safety through the dark valley, though with little of that firm sense of victory which discovers itself in the exulting tone, or the burning vision. This indeed is much—oh! that we might believe that none of us would have less than this. But, in having only this, a Christian may "seem to come short." And there is often a mighty discouragement from the death-beds of the righteous, when, as the darkness thickens, there is apparently but little consolation from the prospect of eternity. Even as, on the other hand, when a righteous man is enabled to meet death exultingly, as though he had to step into the car of fire, and be wafted almost visibly to the heavenly city, there is diffused over a neighbourhood a sort of animating influence; the tidings of the victory spread rapidly from house to house: the boldness of infidelity quails before them; meek piety takes new courage, and attempts new toils. And it ought not, therefore, to satisfy us that we may so die as not to come short of heaven: we ought to labour that we may so die as not even to "seem to come short of it." It is doubly dying, if, in dying, we work an injury to our brethren; it is scarcely dying, if we strengthen them for their departure out of life. This is, in its measure, the doing what was done by the Redeemer Himself, who, "through death, destroyed him that had the power of death": the believer, as he enters the grave, deals a blow at the tyrant, which renders him less terrible to those who have yet to meet him in the final encounter. And by continued preparation for death, by accustoming ourselves to the anticipation of death, that, through God's help, our passage through the valley shall be rather with the tread of the conqueror, than with the painful step of the timid pilgrim. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *The danger of falling short of the heavenly rest*:—I. THE NATURE OF THIS REST. 1. A rest from sin. 2. A rest from temptation. 3. A rest from trouble. II. TO WHOM THE PROMISE OF IT IS MADE. It is made, it is left to us; yes, wherever the gospel is preached, this inestimable prize is offered to those who believe in its life-giving doctrines. III. THE DANGER OF FALLING SHORT OF IT. Let me ask you, or rather ask your own consciences, Have you ever had any fears on the subject? If you have not, it can never have been an object of intense desire; it is impossible to be really in earnest about seeking the kingdom of heaven, without being anxious and fearful about it. Many who die with heaven in anticipation, it is to be feared will lift up their eyes in hell. Tremendous discovery this of their real state, when it is irretrievable, bitter knowledge of the truth, when it is too late to profit by it! I want you to fear now; now, when there is time and opportunity for repentance; now, when God waits to be gracious; now, when the atonement of Christ is available for your salvation: and mark the words of the text, for they are very explicit; like almost every thing in Scripture, they require minute inspection, in order to get their full force and meaning. "Fear,

lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it." You are cautioned to startle, as it were, at the very appearance of failure—to be alarmed at the least indication of it. (*J. P. Wright, M.A.*) *Coming short of the promised rest*:—I. A THREEFOLD CERTAINTY. 1. There is a rest. (1) A rest resulting from the inward assurance of God's pardoning love. (2) A rest from sin as a ruling and tyrannising power. (3) A rest of adoption. 2. There is a promise of this rest. 3. The promise is to believers. II. AN AWFUL UNCERTAINTY. Thus though the promise is made, there is in the case of many an awful uncertainty hanging over its issue. And how so? There is no accusation against God in the economy of His spiritual government; He does not arbitrarily unfold and withhold —no, God is our Father, full of compassion and tender in mercy. The accusation is proved against man himself. He wilfully shuts the open means of grace; he is the self-excluding and self-excluded from the pale of the promise. He comes short of it—it does not come short of him. (*T. J. Judkin, M.A.*) **The gospel preached.**—*The gospel preached under the Old Testament*:—I. 1. They had the same gospel blessings and mercies that we have. That God would be their God. This includes—(1) Regeneration, or the new heart, the heart of flesh, the writing of God's law in the heart (Jer. xxxi. 33; Deut. xxx. 6; Ezek. xxxvi. 25–27). (2) Reconciliation and remission of sins (Isa. i. 18; Jer. xxxi. 34; Lev. v. 6, 10). (3) Everlasting life and salvation in heaven (Psa. xvii. 15; lxxiii. 24; xvi. 11). 2. They had these blessings upon the same account, and in the same way, as we have them now. We receive all from the mere mercy and free grace of God in Christ; and so did they (Psa. li. 1; Dan. ix. 8, 9, 18, 19). II. A second argument might be taken from an historical induction of all those former times, and the several gospel discoveries which the Lord vouchsafed to them all along from time to time. III. Either the gospel was preached unto them of old, or else it will follow that they were all condemned, or else that they were saved without Christ; which to imagine were infinitely dishonourable to the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts iv. 12; Rom. iii. 20; Gal. ii. 16; Heb. xiii. 8). Objections: 1. Why do we call it the *Old* Testament, if it was gospel? This is only in regard of the manner of dispensation. 2. That the apostle often speaks of it as "that ancient dispensation," as if it was law and not gospel. We must distinguish between the thing preached, and the manner of preaching, between the shell and the kernel, the shadow and the substance. The thing preached was the gospel, though the manner of preaching it was legal. (1) It was dark, but the gospel is clear. (2) It was weak, but the gospel is powerful. (3) There was much of external splendour, but little of that power and spirituality that is in gospel worship. (4) It was a burdensome dispensation. (5) The manner of administration was legal, in regard of the bondage and tenor of it. Uses: 1. Encouragement to study the Old Testament, and the types and shadows of the Law. 2. Direction how to attain to the understanding of those mysteries. Study the gospel. 3. There is no part of the Scripture but is of use. We might see much of God and of the gospel in the chapters of the Levitical law, if we had the skill to search out the meaning and mystery of them. 4. Encouragement to believe and receive the gospel. (*S. Mather.*) *The preached gospel*:—I. IT IS A SIGNAL PRIVILEGE TO HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED UNTO US; TO BE EVANGELISED.—As such it is here proposed by the apostle; and it is made a foundation of inferring a necessity of all sorts of duties. This the prophet emphatically expresseth (Isa. ix. 1, 2). II. Barely to be evangelised, to have the gospel preached unto any, IS A PRIVILEGE OF A DUBIOUS ISSUE AND EVENT. All privileges depend as to their advantage on the use of them. If herein we fail, that which should have been for our good will be our snare. III. THE GOSPEL IS NO NEW DOCTRINE, NO NEW LAW. It was preached unto the people of old. In the preaching of the gospel by the Lord Jesus Himself and His apostles, it was new in respect of the manner of its administration, with sundry circumstances of light, evidence, and power, wherewith it is accompanied. So it is in all ages in respect of any fresh discovery of truth from the word, formally hidden or eclipsed. But as to the substance of it, the gospel is that "which was from the beginning" (1 John i. 1). It is the first great original transaction of God with sinners, from the foundation of the world. IV. GOD HATH GRACIOUSLY ORDERED THE WORD OF THE GOSPEL TO BE PREACHED TO MEN, WHEREON DEPENDS THEIR WELFARE OR THEIR RUIN. The word is like the sun in the firmament. It hath virtually in it all spiritual light and heat. But the preaching of the word is as the motion and beams of the sun, which actually and effectually communicate to all creatures that light and heat which is virtually in the sun itself. V. THE SOLE CAUSE OF THE PROMISE BEING INEFFECTUAL

TO SALVATION IN AND TOWARDS THEM TO WHOM IT IS PREACHED, IS IN THEMSELVES AND THEIR OWN UNBELIEF. VI. THERE IS A FAILING, TEMPORARY FAITH, WITH RESPECT TO THE PROMISES OF GOD, WHICH WILL NOT ADVANTAGE THEM IN WHOM IT IS. VII. THE GREAT MYSTERY OF USEFUL AND PROFITABLE BELIEVING, CONSISTS IN THE MIXING OR INCORPORATING OF TRUTH AND FAITH IN THE SOULS OR MINDS OF BELIEVERS. 1. There is a great respect, relation, and union, between the faculties of the soul, and their proper objects, as they act themselves. Thus truth, as truth, is the proper object of the understanding. 2. The truth of the gospel, of the promise now under especial consideration, is peculiar, divine, supernatural; and, therefore, for the receiving of it, God requireth in us, and bestoweth upon us a peculiar, divine, supernatural habit, by which our minds may be enabled to receive it. This is faith, which is "not of ourselves; it is the gift of God." (*John Owen, D.D.*) *On hearing the Word preached:*—Ever since these words were written the unprofitableness of preaching has been a subject of complaint to some, and of lamentation to others. On one side it has been alleged by the hearers that the word preached is unprofitable, not so much from want of faith or piety in themselves, as from want of zeal, of ability, of energy, or even of originality in the preacher. On the other hand, the person thus unsparingly assailed is led, perhaps unwillingly, to remark, that faults in hearers may be as numerous and as frequent as in him who speaks: and that the very best preaching has, in cases without number, been ineffectual through perverseness, inattention, or unbelief in the auditory. 1. A very common impediment to edification, and one of which every Christian mind, alive to the importance of social ordinances, must be peculiarly sensible, is the practice of irregular attendance at the house of God. 2. I have already remarked upon those who have created obstacles to their religious welfare by being absent in body from the house of God, I now come to those, who, by being absent in mind and spirit, make their bodily presence of no avail. 3. I now proceed to the fault of those who are present, and who attend to the Word preached, but who attend with improper dispositions, either in regard to their minister or their fellow-hearers. With respect to their minister, they are apt to be arbitrary and dictatorial; with respect to their fellow-hearers they are apt to be censorious in their application of the truth or duties inculcated. (*J. Sinclair, M.A.*) **Not being mixed with faith.**—*Profitable mixture:*—I. ISRAEL'S HEARING OF THE GOSPEL. 1. We shall notice, first, that the good news brought to Israel was a gospel of rest for slaves, a promise of deliverance for men who cried by reason of sore bondage. This was a fit emblem of that news which comes to us in the gospel of Jesus Christ. 2. The good tidings to Israel was a gospel of redemption in order to their entering into the promised rest. You have heard the word of reconciliation, and you know its meaning. Have you rested in it? 3. Furthermore, it was a gospel of separation. When you read the words of the Lord to His chosen ones, you are compelled to see that He means them to be a people set apart for His own purposes. The Lord has of old separated to Himself, in His eternal purposes, a people who are His; and His they shall still be, even till that day in which He shall make up His jewels. These belong to the Lord Jesus in a special way. These have a destiny before them, even in this world, of separation from the rest of mankind; for Jesus saith, "they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." 4. Still further, the gospel preached to the Israelites told them of a glorious heritage which was provided for them. 5. They had also preached to them the gospel of a Divine calling; for they were informed that they were not to enter into this land to be idlers in it, but they were to be a nation of priests. This, even this, is the gospel preached unto you. Count not yourselves unworthy of this high honour. 6. Once more: they had a gospel which promised them help to obtain all this. It is a poor gospel which sets heaven before us, but does not help us to enter it. "The Spirit helpeth our infirmities." "God shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." "Thanks be unto God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." II. ISRAEL'S FAILURE TO PROFIT BY THE GOSPEL WHICH THEY HEARD. 1. Though they heard it from many, they clung to Egypt. 2. Worse still, they provoked the Lord by their murmurings and their idolatry. 3. Moreover, they were always mistrustful. 4. They went so far as to despise the Promised Land. 5. When the time came when they might have advanced against the foe, they were afraid to go up. 6. The end of it was, they died in the wilderness. A whole nation missed the rest of God: it will not be a wonder if you and I miss it, who are but one or two, unless we take earnest heed and are filled with fear "lest, a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of us should seem to come short of it." III. THE FATAL CAUSE OF THIS

DIREFUL CALAMITY. Why was it the gospel that they heard did not profit them? "Not being mixed with faith." 1. Where there is no faith, men remain slaves to the present. If they did not believe in the milk and honey of Canaan, you see why they hankered for the cucumbers of Egypt. An onion is nothing comparable to an estate beyond Jordon; yet as they think they cannot get the estate, they pine for the onions. When men do not believe in eternal life, they naturally enough cry, "Give me bread and cheese. Let me have a fortune here." 2. If a man hears and has no faith, he learns nothing. What would be the use of your listening to lectures upon science if you disbelieved what the professor set forth? You are no pupil, you are a critic; and you cannot learn. Many professors have no faith, and, consequently, whoever may teach them, they will never come to a knowledge of the truth. 3. The truth did not affect the hearts of Israel, as it does not affect any man's heart till he has believed it. A man's soul touched by the finger of the gospel resounds the music of God. If the gospel is not believed, those fingers touch mute strings, and no response is heard. 4. A man that has no faith in what he hears does not appropriate it. There is gold! Eagerly one crieth, "Let me go and get it." Unbelief restrains him, as it whispers, "There is no gold, or it is beyond reach." He does not go to get it, for he does not believe. A hungry man passeth by where there is entertainment for needy travellers. Believing that there is food for his hunger, he tarries at the door; but if unbelief mutters, "There is a bare table within, you might as soon break your neck as break your fast in that place," then the traveller hurries on. Unbelief palsies the hand, and it appropriates nothing. That which is not appropriated can be of no use to you. 5. Lastly, these people could not enter in, because they had no faith. They could go to the border of the land, but they must die even there. They could send their spies into the country; but they could not see the fertile valleys themselves. Without faith they could not enter Canaan. Shall it be so with us, that, for want of faith, we shall hear the gospel, know something about its power, and yet miss its glories, and never enter into possession of the life eternal which it reveals? (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Not being mixed with faith:—There is always a pathetic interest, made up of sadness and hope together, in the sight of any good thing which fails of power and of its fullest life because it is a fragment, and does not meet the other part which is needed to complete the whole. A seed that lies upon the rock, and finds no ground; an instrument which stands complete in all its mechanism, but with no player's hand to call its music forth; a man who might do brave and useful things under the summons of a friend's enthusiasm, but goes through life alone, a nature with fine and noble qualities that need the complement of other qualities which the man lacks to make a fruitful life; a community rich in certain elements of character—as, for instance, energy, hopefulness, self-confidence, but wanting just that profound conscientiousness, that scrupulous integrity which should be the rudder to those broad and eager sails; a Church devout without thoughtfulness or liberal without deep convictions—where would the long list of illustrations end? Everywhere the most pathetic sights are these in which possibility and failure meet. Indeed, herein lies the general pathos which belongs to the great human history as a whole and to each man's single life. One of these failures is described in the text. Truth fails because it does not meet what the Scripture calls faith. This is evidently something more than mere assent that the truth is true. The essential relations between truth and the nature of man are evidently comprehended in their whole completeness. All that the hearer might have done to truth, all the welcome that he might have extended, all the cordial and manifold relationship into which he might have entered with the Word that was preached unto him—all this is in the writer's mind. All this is summed up in the faith which the truth has not found. Faith is simply the full welcome which the human soul can give to anything with which it has essential and natural relationship. It will vary for everything according to that thing's nature, as the hand will shape itself differently according to the different shapes of things it has to grasp. Faith is simply the soul's grasp, a larger or a smaller act according to the largeness or smallness of the object grasped; of one size for a fact, of another for a friend, or another for a principle; but always the soul's grasp, the entrance of the soul into its true and healthy relationship to the object which is offered to it. As soon as we understand what the faith is which any object or truth must find and mix itself with before it can put on its fullest life and power, we are impressed with this: that men are always making attempts which never can succeed to give to objects and truths a value which in themselves they never can possess, which can only come to them as they are taken home by faith

into the characters of men. We hear men talk about the progress of our country, and by and by we find they mean the increase of its wealth, the development of its resources, the opening of its communications, the growth of its commerce. These do not make a country great. They are powerless until they are mixed with faith; until they give themselves to the improvement of the human qualities which any real national life, like any real personal life, is made, and make the nation more generous, more upright, and more free. They may do that. It is in the power of a nation as of a man to grow greater by every added dollar of its wealth, but a dollar is powerless until it mixes itself with faith and passes into character. And so of far more spiritual things than dollars. You say: "How headlong my boy is! Let me give him a wise friend, and so he shall get wisdom." You say: "Here is my brother, who has been frivolous. Behold, a blessed sorrow is gathering about him, and out of the darkness he will come with a sober heart!" You say: "This man is coarse and brutish; let me set him among fine things, and he will become delicate and gentle." You say: "This selfish creature, who has not cared for his country in what seemed her soft and easy days, let the storm come, let the war burst out, or the critical election rise up like a sudden rock out of the calm sea, and patriotism will gather at his heart and set his brain to lofty thoughts and strengthen his arm for heroic deeds." For ever the same anticipations from mere circumstances, the same trust in mere emergencies, in facts and things, and for ever the same disappointment—no crisis, event, fact, person is of real value to the soul unless it really gets into that soul, compels or wins its welcome, and passes by the mixture of faith into character. So, and so only, does a wise friend make your boy wise, or sorrow make your brother noble, or fine and gentle circumstances make the coarse man fine, or the need of his country make the selfish man a patriot. Now, all this is peculiarly true with reference to religion. We put confidence in our organisations: let us plant our church in this remote village; let our beloved liturgy be heard among these unfamiliar scenes; and so men shall be saved. It is not so much that we have too much confidence, as that we have the wrong kind of confidence in the objective truth. "Let this which I know is verity come to this bad man's life, and he must turn." There is all about us this faith in the efficacy of ideas over character. The orthodox man believes that if you could silence all dissent from the old venerated creed the world would shine with holiness. How like it all sounds to the cry we hear in the parable coming forth from the still unenlightened ruin of a wasted life: "Nay, father Abraham; but if one went unto them from the dead they will repent!" Ideas are mighty. There is no real strength in the world that has not an idea at its heart. To declare true ideas, to speak the truth to men, is the noblest work that any man can covet or try to do. To attempt to gain power over men which shall not be the power of an idea is poor, ignoble work. But yet it is none the less certain that no man really does tell the truth to other men who does not always go about remembering that truth is not profitable till it is mixed with faith, that the final power of acceptance or rejection lies in the soul. But we must go farther than this. The mind of man is far too delicate and sensitive for anything unappropriated and not made a part of itself to be in it without doing it harm. The book which you have studied, but whose heart you have not taken into your heart, makes you not a wise man, but a pedant. And so it is with institutions. The government under which you live, but with whose ideas you are not in loyal sympathy, chafes and worries you, and makes you often all the more rebellious in your heart the more punctiliously obedient you are in outward action. And so especially it is in all that pertains to religion. What is the root and source of bigotry, and of that which goes with bigotry—partisanship? Is not the real reason of these morbid substitutes for healthy belief always this—that truth has been received but not "mixed with faith," not deeply taken into the very nature of the man who has received it? Take any truth—the truth, for instance, of the Lord's incarnation. Let it be simply a proved fact to a man, and how easily he makes it the rallying cry of a sect; how easily he comes to hate with personal hatred the men who do not hold it; how ready he is to seek out and magnify the shades of difference in the statements which men make of it who do hold the great truth along with him! But let that same truth be "mixed with faith," let it enter into the depth of a man's nature where it is capable of going, let it awaken in him the deep, clear sense of the unutterable love of God, let it reveal to him his human dignity, his human responsibility, his human need, and then how impossible it will be for him to be a bigot! What the bigot needs is not to be freed from the tyranny of his belief, but to be taught what it is really to believe. The partisan's partisan-

ship is a sign, not of his faith, but of his infidelity. This is what we all need to keep always in our minds as we read religious history, or look around us at the imperfect religious life of to-day. It is possible for us to believe the same everlasting truth which the bigots and the persecutors believed and yet escape their bigotry and terrible intolerance. But we must do it not by believing less deeply, but by believing more deeply than they did. The path to charity lies not away from faith, but into the very heart of faith, for only there true, reasonable, permanent charity abides. How vast a future this idea of faith opens to humanity! We think sometimes that we have come in sight of the end of progress, that we live where we can at least foresee an enchanted world. Our ships have sailed the sphere around; our curiosity has searched to the roots of the mountains and swept the bottoms of the seas. Men have played every *rôle* before us which imagination and ambition could suggest. What can there be before the eyes that are to come when we are gone but endless reiteration of old things? Is not the interest of life almost used up? No! The interest of life is not in the things that happen, but in the men who see. If man be capable of perpetual renewal by ever-increasing faith, then to the ever new man the old world shall be for ever new. What a light, too, this throws upon the life which many a fellow-man is living now close by our side. How much richer than we can begin to know the world must be to our brother who has a faith which we have not! The world is more to every true, unselfish man when he knows that his perception is no measure of its wealth, but that the deeper souls are all the time finding it rich beyond all that he has imagined. This same truth gives us some light upon the everlasting life, the life beyond the grave. Let us be sure that the new name in the forehead is what makes the reality of heaven far more than the gold under the feet. The new circumstances shall be much, but the new man shall be more. We can do nothing now to build the streets and gates, but by God's grace we can do much now to begin to become the men and women to whom one day heaven shall be possible. Then heaven when it comes will not be strange. Only a deepening of the faith by which we sought it shall we receive and absorb, and grow in and by its richness for ever and for ever. (*Bp. Phillips Brooks.*)

Cause of the unprofitable hearing of the Word:—I. In vindication of the principle, that NO UNBELIEVER CAN BE PROFITED BY THE PRIVILEGE AND BLESSINGS OF THE GOSPEL, IT WILL NOT REQUIRE MUCH PAINS TO SHOW THAT SUCH AN APPOINTMENT IS PERFECTLY CONSISTENT WITH GOD'S FAITHFULNESS AND TRUTH. God, no doubt, promised that He would confer upon His ancient people the heritage of Canaan; but surely He is Himself the best interpreter of His own will; and if we find that many, to whom the promise was given, entered not in because of unbelief, it is only reasonable to conclude that the giving of the promise at first was not irrespective of, but dependent on, the character and conduct of those to whom it was given. Jehovah was sincere, but for that very reason He required sincerity. He was willing to fulfil the promise, but His rebellious people were unwilling to receive it. God's promises are all sovereign. If they be laid hold of, they will and must be enjoyed. If, however, they be not laid hold of, if they be disbelieved, then they are void; for this reason, that they are revealed in such a shape that they become our property only when we believe them. The gospel will not enrich us unless we receive it with faith. The two truths, therefore, are quite compatible and harmonious, that salvation is absolutely gratuitous, while we can get it only by vigorously acting in faith upon Jesus Christ. To illustrate the matter by a comparison: When we walk, it is not the material and tangible substance of which our limbs are composed, it is not the bones and sinews which are the cause of motion. They are mere instruments or secondary agents which move only as they are impelled. Taken by themselves, or viewed in their component parts, they are mere masses of organic matter, devoid of all power or energy, and subject only to changes or motions that may be impressed on them. The real cause of motion in the limbs is the vital principle, which, unseen and incomprehensible, controls every function, effects every movement, operates every change. It is not the limbs, then, that cause the motion; they only perform the motion: the cause of the motion is the element of life, the spiritual and nervous energy which pervades the limbs and qualifies them for the task they have to perform. Now, in like manner, it is not the sinner that effects his own redemption, but the grace of God that has appeared unto us and to all men, bringing salvation. This is the sole and the omnipotent agent. No other agent could perform the work. But this agent does not work without means, and these means are just the faculties and powers of the human mind. God's grace operates through the instrumentality of our faculties, and if we chain up these faculties in

indolent inaction, we virtually resist the Spirit of God, and say we will not have the Lord to reign over us. II. EXPLAIN AND ILLUSTRATE THE GROUNDS OF THE DOCTRINE, THAT WANT OF FAITH VITIATES AND NEUTRALISES THE EFFECT OF SPIRITUAL PRIVILEGES. Faith is, if we may so speak, the power of spiritual digestion. And as it does not discredit the excellence of wine or any other nourishing substance, that it is incapable of strengthening the sick and exhausted invalid whose constitution is irreparably injured; so the promises of Divine grace are no way dishonoured when persons who want faith are found to derive from these promises no spiritual or solid advantage. The Word preached cannot profit when it is not mingled with faith in the hearer, for there can be no nutrition where there is no appropriation of food. There can be no vital circulation in the severed twig unless that twig be engrafted. The Word may be read, heard, studied, loved; but it is only the engrafted Word that is able to save our souls. It is only when believed that the gospel message is profitable. Faith, then, is necessary—1. Because, according to God's own appointment, it is the preliminary step of our being received into His favour. It is the constituted deed of entitlement. 2. Faith alone can secure us victory over our spiritual enemies. Here, again, the value of faith depends on its being on God's will and promise linked in connection with spiritual conquest. Our foes, Satan, sin, the world, and the flesh, are all mightier than our wills. But God has said this is the victory that overcometh them all, even our faith. Nothing else has such a promise. 3. Faith alone can impart peace to the soul. Such is its nature. For it is in fact just the belief that God is reconciled, attached to us, our Friend, our Father, even the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Unless we be persuaded of this we cannot love Him. 4. Lastly, faith alone can make us holy. If we believe Christ died for our sins, we shall feel the constraining influence of a motive that more than any other will excite us to obey the Divine will. And then the spirit of sanctification accompanies the exercise of faith, and purifies the soul in obeying the truth. Faith, therefore, is universally profitable. It is the harbinger of every other grace. (*Alex. Nisbet.*) *The mercy of the gospel*:—1. It's a great mercy in God to vouchsafe us the gospel, and to have it faithfully and constantly preached unto us so that we may hear it. 2. In this gospel there are precious promises, the chiefest whereof is that of entering into God's rest. 3. Men may hear the gospel preached, and yet receive no benefit by it through their own fault. 4. Therefore it concerns us all to fear this sin of apostasy as we fear loss of heavenly rest, God's eternal displeasure, hell, death, and eternal punishments. (*G. Lawson.*) *Profitless hearing*:—The gospel is a precious pearl, an unspeakable blessing of God, yet all that are partakers of it are not saved. Judas had the gospel, yet it profited him not. Simon Magus, Jerusalem, &c. The sun is not comfortable to all. The most delicate fare doth not make all bodies fat. The rain doth not make all grounds fruitful, neither doth the Word of God, though it be mighty in operation, profit all that partake of it (Luke xiii. 26; Matt. viii. 12); nay, it is the heaping up of a greater measure of condemnation to some through their own default (John xv. 22, ix. ult.). Why did the gospel do them no good? Because it was not mixed with faith in them that heard it. It is a metaphor borrowed from liquid things. A physician prescribes to a man a cup of strong wine, but he wills him to mingle it with sugar, lest it fume into his brain and make him sick; if he mingle it not and temper it well with sugar, he hurts himself. So because they mingled not the wine of the Word with the sweet sugar of faith it was their destruction, it turned them over even into hell. It is faith that makes the Word profitable. For the procuring of an harvest it is not enough to have ground, and seed cast into the ground, but rain must fall from heaven and be mingled with the ground. So it is not sufficient to bring ourselves as the ground to a sermon, to have the immortal seed of the Word sown in our hearts by God's husbandmen, but there must be the drops of faith mingled with this seed to make it fruitful. (*W. Jones, D.D.*) *The Word preached, yet profitless*:—There are few things more perplexing than the contrast between the vastness and variety of the means employed for the creation of religious impression, and the scantiness of the results arising from their employment. For all this there must necessarily be a cause. Does the fault lie in the instrument employed? Is the Word itself defective, either from style, topic, or tone, to meet the indifference of man's nature? Something there is in man's nature that stands out against the power of Scripture, that counteracts the medicine which would restore us to health. And this is the assertion that the apostle makes with regard to Israel. Affirming elsewhere the power of the Word, he affirms here the deficiency of man's faith. I. GOD DID

PREACH THE GOSPEL TO ISRAEL JUST AS GOD HAS PREACHED THE GOSPEL TO US. In popular thought and in popular language, it is oftentimes supposed that the gospel belongs rather to the Christian than to the Jewish dispensation. The truth is, that never was a moment in this world's history since the fall of man in which the gospel of Jesus Christ has not been proclaimed. We grant you this, that it may have been announced sometimes with more of power, and more of expansion, and more of fulness than at other times. But no sooner did the necessity commence than the blessed remedy was proposed by God. Nay, more than this—so anxious does it appear that God was to make that instrument effective in bringing back wayward sinners to Himself, that we find God has so planned His gospel as to make it speak to the three great departments of man's nature. He has made that gospel speak, in the first place, to man's hopes; in the second place, to man's senses; and lastly, to man's understanding. So, you see, that by enlisting all these faculties of man in His service, by telling man to look hopefully, by telling man to look intelligently upon this system, the Lord has grappled with the obduracy of man's nature, as it were fulfilling in all this His own declaration, "I will not let thee go until I bless thee." . . . And, as if to make it clear that nothing was left undone which could give God's truth a hold, a lodgment on the human soul, our blessed Master condescended to clothe His appeals in every possible variety of form. Affectionate expostulation, calm appeal, tender invitation, stern admonition—the attraction of promises, the thunders of threats—parable, illustration, allegory—the incidental remark, the studied discourse—the historical allusion, the original thought—the informal address at the sea-side, the deliberate comment in the synagogue. And yet, though thus the gospel was preached to them as to us, "the Word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it." II. THE CAUSE WHICH PREVENTED ISRAEL, AND PROBABLY PREVENTS US, FROM RECEIVING THE GOSPEL. And, if we are to apprehend this point aright, we must carry our thoughts into two channels, for it is necessary to determine what is meant by the reception of the gospel before we are in a position to admit the reason why the gospel is not received. Now, in reference to the former of these points, we are bold to express our belief that there exist most imperfect views respecting the reception of the gospel. Multitudes there are who conceive that they have accepted it because they listen to its truths and assent to its propositions. But we pray you to understand this, that if that were simply all that Scripture intends by receiving the gospel of Jesus Christ, we should find that there was no work for faith whatsoever. We grant there is all the difference in the world in some respects between a man who receives the truths of the New Testament and a man who rejects those truths. You have, so far as the understanding goes, that which a man has accepted, and so far he may be admitted into the ranks of Christian discipleship. But, after all, what is the gospel of Jesus Christ meant for? It is not meant to be simply a system of instruction. If so it would apply itself to man's mind. It was not meant simply to be a system of illustration. If so it would apply itself simply to man's fancy. It was not intended like abstract rules in scientific matters, as in mathematics for instance, to lay down dry and abstract propositions to be taken up and to be believed by men simply because they could not gainsay the system. No, the gospel was intended for more than this. It was intended doubtless to enlighten us; doubtless to instruct us; doubtless to edify us. But the great use of our Master's gospel is this: to win the whole man—the man of understanding, the man of intelligence, the man of religion—to win the whole man into a state of subjection to Christ Jesus. If there be amongst us any whose reception of the gospel is simply of that scientific kind that I have attempted to describe, it were not too much to say that that man has never received the gospel yet. "Not being mixed with faith in those that heard it." Suffer me to expostulate with you, and to ask you honestly this question, what has the gospel done in the way of profit with you? Has it come down with a power greater than mortal power to your souls, and made you feel that you were sinners? Has it made you feel your own utterly impotent powerlessness to restore yourselves back to God's favour? Has it made you feel this, that none but Jesus can stand between you and God as the effectual Atoner and the effectual Mediator? Has it come down into your conscience, making you to writhe under the sense of transgression? Has it done more than this, altered your habits? Is it building you up into conformity with the laws that are Christ Jesus'? If the gospel has been doing aught of this kind it has brought profit with it. But if it has only brought new ideas to your understanding, if it has only brought new thoughts to your intelligence, if it has qualified you, so to speak, to sit down and be catechised,

then has this gospel not done God's intention with regard to it, for it has not reclaimed the whole man and made that rebel a subject of Christ Jesus. (*A. Boyd, M.A.*) *Faith not to be mixed with fancies*:—1. Faith can stand with nothing, nor be mixed with truth but the Word; and the Word will not join, nor stand, nor mix with conceits, opinions, presumptions, but with faith; that is, it will be received, not as a conjecture, or possible truth, but for Divine and infallible truth; else it profiteth not. 2. Hearers of the Word may blame their misbelief if they get not profit. 3. Albeit a man get light by the Word, and some tasting of temporary joy and honour, and riches also, by professing or preaching of it, yet he receiveth not profit, except to get entry into God's rest thereby; for all these turn to conviction. (*D. Dickson, M.A.*) *Preaching and practising*:—It is a popular error to mistake that length is the only dimension of a sermon. A man said to a minister, "Your sermons are too short." Said the minister, "If you will practise all I preach you will find them quite long enough." (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *Unprofitable hearing*:—A person whose life was immoral urged his sister to go with him to hear his minister; but she smartly replied, "Brother, what are you the better for his preaching?" (*Baxendale's Anecdotes.*) *The gospel must be believed*:—A lady, travelling through the Southern States of America in a private carriage, one or two years after the Proclamation of Emancipation had been issued, chanced to be detained for the night in a little country inn, which stood so far off from the usual lines of travel, that it was evident a guest was very seldom entertained there. She was shown into a room, to prepare for tea, which was as full of dust as though it had not been entered or disturbed for years. She requested some attendance, and a poor, wretched-looking coloured woman was sent to her, with no apparent life or energy; nothing but utter listlessness and indifference expressed in every movement. After watching her useless performance for a few minutes, the lady said: "Auntie, I am from the North, and I am not used to having things this way at all. Now, you know, we Northerners set your people free, and I think you ought to try and make things comfortable for us when we come among you. Just see if you cannot make this room a little cleaner while I go down to tea." Saying this, the lady left the room. She returned in about an hour, and found, to her astonishment, the dusty room transformed into a picture of neatness. But more astonishing even than the transformation in the room was the transformation in the woman herself. She stood there looking inches taller. Life and energy were in every muscle and every movement. Her eyes flashed fire. She looked like a new creature. The lady began to thank her for the change she had made in the room; but the woman interrupted her with the eager question: "Oh, missus, *is* we free?" "Of course you are," replied the lady. "Oh, missus, is you sure?" urged the woman, with intense eagerness. "Certainly I am sure," answered the lady. "Did you not know it?" "Well," said the woman, "we heerd tell as how we was free, and we asked master, and he 'lowed we wasn't, and so we was afraid to go. And then we heered tell again, and we went to the Cunnel, and he 'lowed we'd better stay with ole massa. And so we's just been off and on. Sometimes we'd hope we was free, and then agin we'd think we wasn't. But now, missus, if you is sure we is free, won't you tell me all about it?" Seeing that this was a case of real need, the lady took the pains to explain the whole thing to the poor woman—all about the war, and the Proclamation of Emancipation, and the present freedom. The poor woman listened with the most intense eagerness. She heard the good news. She believed it; and when the story was ended, she walked out of the room with an air of the utmost independence, saying, as she went: "I'se free! I ain't a-going to stay with ole massa any longer!" She had at last received her freedom, and she had received it by faith. The Government had declared her to be free long before, but this had not availed her, because she had never yet believed in the declaration. The good news had not profited her, not being mixed with faith in the one who heard it. But now she believed, and, believing, she dared to reckon herself to be free. (*The Church.*) *Faith increased by faith*:—Faith is learnt by faith; that is, it is maintained, increased, and strengthened by exercise, just as walking, speaking, writing, &c., are learnt by walking, speaking, and writing. (*A. J. Bengel.*) *Hearing but not profiting*:—Jedediah Buxton, the famous peasant, who could multiply nine figures by nine in his head, was once taken to see Garrick act. When he went back to his own village, he was asked what he thought of the great actor and his doings. "Oh!" he said, "he did not know; he had only seen a little man strut about the stage, and repeat 7,956 words." Here was a want of the ability to appreciate what he saw, and the exercise of the reigning

faculty to the exclusion of every other. Similarly, our hearers, if destitute of the spiritual powers by which the gospel is discerned, fix their thoughts on our words, tones, gestures, or countenance, and make remarks upon us which, from a spiritual point of view, are utterly absurd. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Faith, the necessary grace*:—There must be an union and closing with Christ by faith before there can be any communication from Him of the graces of the Spirit. There must be an ingrafting into the root before there can be a communication of sap from the root to the branches. The grace of faith enlargeth the heart to receive Christ, and after it hath received Him it retains Him. I found Him whom my soul loveth—I held Him, and would not let Him go. The grace of love entertains Him with the embracements of the will and affections. Faith, like Martha, goeth out for Him, and brings Him along with the promise to the soul. Love, like Mary, sits down at His feet, to attend what is His will, and execute His commands. Faith is the only grace whereby a soul properly receives Christ; for to receive Him and to believe in His name are equipollents. (*William Colvill.*)

Vers. 3–6. **We which have believed do enter into rest.**—*The distinguishing characters of true believers*:—1. A sweet experience declared, "We do enter into rest." It is an experience of a spiritual and heavenly benefit; whereof Caleb and Joshua's experience was the type (Josh. xix.). And here consider—(1) The benefit experienced; that is, rest. Rest is a sweet thing, as all weary labourers do know. But of all rest soul-rest is the sweetest, and such is this. The rest here meant is the rest held forth in the promise of the gospel (vers. 1, 2). And if ye ask where it is found? it is not in heaven only, for the believer enters into it now; but it is in Christ, whether in earth or heaven. (2) The experience of that benefit, "We do enter." He says not we shall enter, viz., at death, but in the present time, we do enter. The believer's rest is not altogether put off to another life. It is not complete, indeed, till we come to heaven; but it is begun here, we are entering into it, and do enter; and the very entrance of the rest is sweet. 2. The parties in whose name this experience is declared, "We which have believed," viz., in Christ. Unbelievers still remain in their restless condition, but faith in Christ lays the soul to rest. I. WHO THEY ARE THAT HAVE TRULY BELIEVED. 1. They who have believed, have believed the grace and goodwill of Christ to them in particular, held forth in His word of grace to them, viz., a good-will to save them from sin and wrath. (1) They have believed Christ's grace and good-will to them, notwithstanding felt unworthiness (Luke xv. 18). (2) They have believed His grace and good-will towards the drawing them out of the miry clay of their sinfulness, as well as out from the rolling waves of guilt, the curse and eternal wrath. For this is the good-will of Christ testified in the gospel (Matt. i. 21). (3) The only foundation of their belief of it is the faithfulness of God in His word of grace (Gal. iii. 2). (4) They have betaken themselves to the grace and good-will of Christ in His word of grace, and laid all their weight upon it. 2. They who have believed, have believed on Christ as their own Saviour for life and salvation to them (Acts xv. 11). The sinner believing on Christ betakes himself to Him only, wholly and for ever. (1) He renounces utterly all expectations of rest to his conscience from the law, and betakes himself to a Crucified Christ for it (Phil. iii. 3). (2) He renounces utterly all expectations of rest to his heart from the world, and his lusts, and betakes himself to a full Christ for it (Jer. xvi. 19). II. THE ENTERING OF THOSE WHO HAVE BELIEVED INTO REST IN JESUS CHRIST. 1. I am to show what is supposed in that those who have believed do enter into rest. (1) Those who have not believed are in a state of restlessness (Isa. lvii. 20). Till the soul comes to Christ it can never get true rest: one may take rest as well on the top of a mast as get it in an ungodly, unregenerate, unconverted state. Those out of Christ have—(*a*) A restless station, an insecure standing (Deut. xxviii. 65, 66). (*b*) A restless labouring (Matt. xi. 28). (*c*) A restless wandering. (*d*) A restless burden-bearing. (*e*) A restless eternal state abiding them (2 Thess. i. 7–9). (2) Restless souls may be laid to rest in Jesus Christ. (3) It is by faith the restless soul is laid to rest in Christ (Rom. xv. 13). 2. I proceed to show what is that rest in Christ which they who do believe enter into. It is twofold, spiritual and heavenly, initial and complete. (1) They who have believed do enter into spiritual rest, which is their initial or begun rest. Though they should get little more rest for their bodies till they rest in the grave, they enter into soul-rest (Matt. xi. 29); they get rest for their souls in Christ. And none that know what soul-trouble is, but they will value it more than any rest out of heaven.

(2) Those who have believed do enter into heavenly rest at length. This is the rest completed. The grave is made a resting-place for their bodies for awhile, but the soul rests in Abraham's bosom at death till the resurrection. And then the soul and body together will have an everlasting complete rest together. 3. What is the import of their entering into that rest in Christ. (1) Sinners before they believe have a toiled, restless, uneasy life of it (Matt. xi. 28). No wonder, for they are God's enemies, the law's criminals, sin's slaves, and Satan's drudges. (2) All that believe are wearied people, that find they need rest, and would fain have it (Isa. xxviii. 12). (3) They see and believe there is a rest in Christ for them. (4) They come to Him as a resting-place by believing on Him. (5) They compose themselves for, and set themselves to rest in Him (Psa. cxvi. 7). (6) They are active to get rest in Christ. Entering speaks activity, and that lies in the exercise of faith. (7) They find a begun rest, but not complete; they are entered into it; though they are not yet come to the perfection of it, yet they are in the way to it. (8) The believer all his life long here is but entering into that rest: we do enter. The Israelites were forty years entering into Canaan, after they came out of Egypt. And from the moment of the first believing till the soul comes to glory, it is but entering into rest; entering being but an initial and imperfect action. Hence they that have come to Christ are still said to be coming (1 Pet. ii. 4). But at length they shall have it full and complete. 4. I come now to show how the soul is entered into rest in the way of believing, or the influence of faith to bring and lay the soul to rest. This is a mystery to the blind world: nobody can truly know the rest of the soul in Christ but those that have experienced it; nor the influence of faith that way, but those that have felt it, though they may talk rationally about it and preach it. (1) Faith discovers Christ as the only object commensurable to the desires of the soul (Psa. lxxiii. 25). (2) Faith takes possession of Christ as such an object offered to the soul: knits with Him in a marriage covenant by trusting on Him for all to itself (John i. 12). So it enters the soul to rest, as a wife in the house of her husband who has now made her final choice. (3) Faith draws the sting of guilt out of the conscience, and so enters the soul to rest (Rom. iii. 24, 25). (4) Faith sets the soul in safety (Prov. i. 33). (5) Faith mortifies and breaks the power of reigning lusts (Acts xv. 9). (6) Faith cures the soul of the dog-like appetite, that painful hunger and thirst which the eating of the forbidden fruit left in all mankind. Lay one never so soft, if hunger be gnawing him, and thirst scorching him, he cannot rest. Such is the case of all unbelievers, they are hungering and thirsting for satisfaction from the creature: they eat of the husks, but are never satisfied. (7) Faith contracts the desires of the soul into one point (Psa. xxvii. 4). (8) Faith sees it hath a fulness in Christ enough to answer all its needs: and hence the language thereof is, "I have all, and abound" (Phil. iv. 18). (9) Faith leaves all on Christ (Psa. x. 14). USE I. Of information. 1. Jesus Christ is a resting place for the weary (Matt. xi. 28). 2. True faith is an active and efficacious thing. It lays the restless soul to rest. 3. The way of believing is the way to solid rest. 4. Those who have believed may see what course to take at any time when their rest is disturbed. They must renew the actings of faith on Christ. USE II. Of trial. Hereby ye may try whether ye have truly believed in Christ or not; for they who have believed do enter into rest in him. USE III. Of exhortation. Ye who profess to have believed in Christ, rest in Him, and so evidence your faith. For motives consider—1. There is no need ye should go to any other quarter for what ye need; "For it pleased the Father, that in Him should all fulness dwell" (Col. i. 19). 2. There is no true rest to be found out of Christ (John vi. 67, 68). 3. It dishonours Him highly not to rest in Him. It gives out an ill report of Him to the world, whereby His name may be blasphemed, as if there were not enough in Him to satisfy in all cases. 4. Your not resting in Him will evidence your hypocrisy (Job. xxvii. 10). 5. Rest in Him now, and ye shall rest with Him for ever; but if ye forsake Him, He will cast you off, and ye will fall there where there is no rest for the ages of eternity. And it will aggravate your condemnation, that ye might have been well if ye could but have rested in Christ. (*T. Boston, D.D.*) *Rest for the true*:—1. Under all dispensations God has been holding out to mankind the promise of a glorious rest. 2. This glorious rest is something independent of all times, places, and privileges. 3. The enjoyment of this glorious rest is dependent upon a certain believing state of the soul. 4. This believing state of soul gives the enjoyment of this rest now. I. FAITH IN THE GOSPEL INVOLVES CONFIDENCE IN THE PATERNAL PROVIDENCE OF GOD, AND THIS GIVES

THE MIND REST FROM ALL SECULAR ANXIETIES. II. FAITH IN THE GOSPEL INVOLVES AN ASSURANCE OF GOD'S WILLINGNESS TO RECEIVE US AS SINNERS, AND THIS GIVES US REST FROM ALL DISTRESSING DOUBTS ABOUT OUR SALVATION. III. FAITH IN THE GOSPEL INVOLVES A TRANSFORMING IMPRESSION OF GOD'S BENEVOLENCE, AND THIS GIVES US REST FROM ALL THE DISTRESSING FEELINGS OF A SELFISH LIFE. IV. FAITH IN THE GOSPEL INVOLVES THE CENTRING OF THE SOUL UPON ONE OBJECT OF LOVE AND ONE COURSE OF ACTION, AND THIS GIVES REST FROM ALL THE PAINS OF DISTRACTION. V. FAITH IN THE GOSPEL INVOLVES AN ASSURANCE IN A BLESSED IMMORTALITY, AND THIS GIVES US REST FROM ALL DISTURBING THOUGHTS ABOUT OUR OWN DEATH AND THAT OF OUR FRIENDS. (*Homilist.*) *The rest of God's people*:—I. WHAT IS THE REST? 1. A rest from sin. 2. A rest from sorrow. 3. It consists of what is positive also. (1) It is a bestowment of eternal life. (2) It is being with Christ. (3) It is working for God without weariness, and with full power to do so. II. WHEN IS THE REST? It commences with the renewed soul when it first "looks not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen." It brightens upon us more and more as we rise from the lower, the temporal, to the higher, the eternal life. It is fully revealed to us when we have done with mortality and sin. III. FOR WHOM IS THE REST? Only for those who love holiness, and hate iniquity and sin. (*Ibid.*) *Rest*:—It appears from the text that even now persons of a certain character enjoy rest. I. OF THE NATURE OF THIS REST. It is not a rest merely to hear of, to speak of, and to desire, but a rest in actual enjoyment. "We who have believed do enter into rest." 1. That rest is pictured in some degree by its types—Canaan—the Sabbath—the Sabbatic year. 2. If the types may help us to a guess at the peace of the Christian, we may, perhaps, come at it a little more clearly by remembering the oppositions to peace which in the believer are removed. The believer rests from the guilt of sin because he has seen his sins laid upon Christ, his scape-goat, and he concludes that if sin were laid on Christ it is not on him. 3. Some conception of this rest may be gathered from the graces which a true faith begets and fosters in the Christian mind. After all, a man makes his own condition. It is not the dungeon or the palace that can make misery or happiness. We carry palaces and dungeons within ourselves, according to the constitution of our natures. Now, faith makes a man heavenly in mind; it makes him care more for the world to come than for that which now is; it makes the invisible precious to him, and the visible comparatively contemptible. Do you not see, therefore, what rest a true faith gives us amidst the distresses of this mortal life? Who cries for pebbles when he possesses pearls? The grace of faith, moreover, works in us resignation. He who fully trusts his God becomes perfectly resigned to his Father's will. The habit of resignation is the root of peace. Faith, furthermore, promotes unselfishness by kindling worthier affections; and so much is this for our peace, that it is most true that were a man perfectly unselfish it would be impossible for him to be disturbed with discontent. All our unrest lies at the root of self. II. HOW DOES THE CHRISTIAN OBTAIN THIS REST? "We which have believed." Do notice this, that the way in which the believer comes to his rest is entirely through belief or trust. And what is this believing? Why it is a simple trust; it is a trusting upon Christ as God's appointed Saviour; it is trusting the Father and believing in His infinite love to us; it is trusting the Holy Ghost, and giving up ourselves to the sway of His Divine indwelling. Trusting brings rest. III. WHAT IS THE GROUND AND REASON OF A CHRISTIAN'S REST? It is a dreadful thing to be at rest in extreme peril, lulled by false security. It is perilous to sleep in a house built on a foundation of sand, when the floods are out, and the winds are about, to sweep all away; it is horrible to be at peace in a condemned cell, when already the scaffold has been put up, and the hour of execution is hastening on! But the believer has good reason for being at peace, and why? He has these reasons amongst others. He trusts to be saved by a way which God has appointed. Here is a firm rock to rest on. What better person can we depend upon than Jesus, the Son of God? The believer, moreover, knows that all things which were necessary to save him and all the elect are already performed. In conclusion: 1. To the man who never has rested. Try God's way of rest. Trust, and you shall rest. 2. The next word is to those of you who once did rest, but do not now. You backslider, this is your word, return unto thy rest. You never will find rest out of Christ—especially you. 3. Lastly, to you who are at rest now, endeavour to keep it; and the way to keep it is the way you first gained it. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *A delicious experience*:—In the text we have a declaration of experience, "We which have believed do enter into rest," to which is very singularly added, "As He

said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest." The happy declaration is supported by the tremendous oath of judgment, which shut out the unbelieving race. There is usually a promise embedded in a threatening, like gold in quartz; just as there is generally a threatening as the reverse of the golden coin of promise. I venture to say that the threatening in this case even gives a touch of rose colour to the promise, for it runs thus, "If they shall enter into *My* rest." Whereas the declaration only says, "rest": "we which have believed do enter into rest," the word "My" is added. That little word is like a bright gleam amidst the blackness of the tempest. Oh, the glory of that which God calls "My rest"! I. THE PEOPLE TO WHOM THIS EXPERIENCE IS CONFINED. They rest, and no one else: they rest, because they have believed. As surely as unbelief shuts out, so surely does faith shut in. What is to believe? 1. To believe is, first of all, to accept as true the revelation of God; to give unfeigned assent and consent to all that God has made known in His Word, and especially to believe that He was, "in Christ Jesus, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." 2. The operative point of faith is the next one: we trust ourselves with Him who is revealed; thus we carry our belief of truth to its practical conclusion. 3. Out of this trust must come action agreeable thereunto. II. THE EXPERIENCE ITSELF: "We which have believed do enter into rest." We will propound no theory, and indulge no imagination, but keep to matters of fact. 1. Wherein do we rest? (1) We rest where God rests: that is, in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. What a wondrous personality we see in Him! As God, He is the infinite delight of the Father. As personified Wisdom, our Lord Jesus says, "I was by Him, as one brought up with Him; and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him." We cannot tell how much the Father loves Him, and how perfectly He rests in Him. (2) We rest in His work. Full atonement, perfect righteousness, glorious victory! 2. What is comprehended in this rest? All things. Here we lay every burden down. 3. What are the excellencies of this rest? (1) Honour. (2) A wonderful source of strength. (3) An incentive to diligence. (4) This rest also brightens life. 4. What are the limits of this rest? We may place them where we will. "According to your faith, so be it unto you." "We which have believed do enter into rest." It is an entrance, and no more, as yet. But when an Israelite had an entrance into Canaan, it was his own fault if he did not penetrate the interior, and traverse the land from Dan to Beersheba. "Ask, and ye shall receive." "All things are possible to him that believeth." III. THE PERSONAL ASSERTION OF THIS EXPERIENCE: "We which have believed do enter into rest." I like the positive speech of the apostle for himself and his friends. I do not invite any of you to say that faith gives you peace unless it does so. 1. It must be a matter of fact. We want no empty profession. 2. This declaration, that we have rest, should always be made with a holy purpose. We must not go about boasting of our peace. 3. If you can say as much as this—"By believing I have entered into rest," be thankful; for this privilege is a gift of love. It is a wonderful instance of sovereign grace that such unworthy ones as we are should enter into God's rest. But if you cannot say it, do not despair. Make it a point of question with yourself. Why have I not entered into rest? Is it because I have not believed? Oh, that all the way between here and heaven we may journey on with restful hearts, led beside the still waters! I have seen, in an old book, a portrait of Mr. Sibbes, the famous Puritan, and it says at the bottom of the likeness, "Heaven was in him before he was in heaven." Now, that must be so with us, for nobody gets into heaven who does not get heaven into himself first. Oh, to get heaven into us this morning, and keep it there for ever! (*Ibid.*)

The state of believers under the gospel:—I. THE STATE OF BELIEVERS UNDER THE GOSPEL IS A STATE OF BLESSED REST. It is God's rest and theirs. God created man in a state of present rest. This rest consisted in three things. 1. Peace with God. 2. Satisfaction and acquiescency in God. 3. Means of communion with God. All these were lost by the entrance of sin, and all mankind was brought thereby into an estate of disquietment. In the restoration of these, and that in a better and more secure way doth this gospel-state of believers consist (1) Without it our moral state in respect of God is an estate of enmity and trouble. (2) There is in all men before the coming of the gospel a want of an acquiescency and satisfaction in God. 3. Unto peace with God, and acquiescency in Him, a way of intercourse and communion with Him is required, to complete a state of spiritual rest. And this also, as it was lost by sin, so it is restored unto us in and by the gospel. II. IT IS FAITH ALONE WHICH IS THE ONLY WAY AND MEANS OF ENTERING INTO THIS BLESSED

STATE OF REST. And that both negatively so that without it no entrance is to be obtained, whatever else men may plead to obtain it by; and positively, in that it alone effects it, without a contribution of aid and strength in its so doing, from any other grace or duty whatever. III. THERE IS A MUTUAL INBEING OF THE PROMISES AND THREATENINGS OF THE COVENANT, SO THAT IN OUR FAITH AND CONSIDERATION OF THEM, THEY OUGHT NOT UTTERLY TO BE SEPARATED. 1. Because they have both of them the same rise and spring. They do both of them but declare the actings of the one holy God according to the distinct properties of His nature upon distinct objects. 2. Both of them, as annexed to the covenant, or as the covenant is administered by them, have the same end. God doth not design one end by a promise, and another by a threatening; but only different ways of compassing or effecting the same end. The end of both is, to increase in us faith and obedience. 3. Threatenings are conditional; and the nature of such conditions is, not only somewhat is affirmed upon their supposal, and denied upon their denial; but the contrary unto it, is affirmed upon their denial; and that because the denial of them doth assert a contrary condition. 4. The same grace is administered in the covenant to make the one and the other effectual. (*John Owen, D.D.*) *The Christian's rest*:—Comparing the Sabbath of God's rest at Creation with the Sabbath that is left to the people of God, he justifies the comparison by urging that "he that is entered into His rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from His." This, surely, would seem to show that when we cease from "our own works," the sacred rest commences. What, then, are "our own works"? By these I would understand all those wretched and laborious ways of life which have their origin and end in the corrupted principles of our own hearts, as contrasted with those ways of life and happiness which at once become ours, and with them a Sabbath-rest of spirit, when (and this is surely before the grave), abandoning all the miserable devices with which the wisdom of this world endeavours to delude itself into fictitious happiness, we cast our sins upon the sacrificed Lamb of God, our cares upon the Father of mercies, and, in the bright confidence of faith, walk humbly on to heaven, feeling already within us the dawnings of the heaven we are approaching. (*Prof. Archer Butler.*) **My rest.**—*The rest of God*:—The great and outstanding characteristic of it is, that it is Jehovah's rest. It is, in the first instance, God's own rest before it becomes ours; and it becomes ours, only because it, in the first place, is God's. The repose and blessedness of Jehovah Himself must be not only the model for, but identical with, the repose and blessedness of the creature, in so far as their capacities permit of it. But the history of God's dealings with our race presents us with several and somewhat different examples of that Divine resting, which is the source and the foundation of the rest of His Church. I. We have the rest of God THE CREATOR in the beginning, when He ceased from the work of creation, and rested on the seventh day from all His works which He had made. In that rest which Jehovah Himself found in a sinless and unfallen world, when the days' work was finished, and He kept and blessed the Sabbath day of creation, there was the foundation laid for the rest and blessedness of the unfallen creature. II. We have another Divine rest spoken of in Scripture—THE REST OF GOD THE SON, WHEN HE ROSE FROM THE DEAD, HAVING FINISHED THE REDEMPTION OF HIS PEOPLE AND CEASED FROM ALL THE WORKS THAT HE WROUGHT. He rejoiced in His finished work, calling upon His people to rejoice in it likewise. And there, where the Saviour found rest, will the soul of the sinner find rest also. III. There is yet another rest of the glorious Godhead referred to in Scripture—THE REST OF GOD THE SPIRIT, WHEN HE TOO SHALL HAVE FINISHED HIS LABOUR, and ceased from His works, and entered into His rest. The rest of the Spirit is yet to come. Nor can it dawn until the new creation, with all its glory, shall be finished, until the remaining power of sin in the elect creatures of God shall be destroyed, and until the Church of Christ, gathered out of every people, shall be complete in its members and perfect in their holiness, and so made ready to be presented unto God "a glorious Church," &c. And have the people of the election no share in this third and final rest of the Godhead, which shall sum up and include every other? Assuredly yes; for "there remaineth" still "a rest for the people of God." The unfallen creature of God was at the creation called upon to join in the Creator's rest; and there, even amid the gladness of Paradise, he found his chief happiness and joy. The redeemed sinner was at the redemption invited to share his Redeemer's rest; and there he found for his guilty soul pardon and peace. And the believer, at the dawn of the last and eternal Sabbath, shall be invited to share in the rest of the Spirit; and then he

shall find himself made perfect both in holiness and happiness. Heaven is now gathering within its ample arms all the good and true upon earth—the lights of this world, of whom the world was not worthy, the prophets, the righteous men and the witnesses for God—all those that have been born of the Spirit. And earth, too, is ripening its fruit in expectation of the coming day of the manifestation of the sons of God. And those that have been quickened from above, the children of God here, are growing in grace and holiness, and preparing for the rest on high. And when that harvest shall be all gathered, the Spirit shall cease from His work, even as the Father and the Son ceased from Theirs before; and with Him the saints, whom He has called, and chosen, and perfected, shall enter upon the last and the highest rest of God. (*J. Bannerman, D.D.*) *The rest of God and of man*:—What, then, is the rest of God? The "rest" which Genesis speaks about was, of course, not repose that recruited exhausted strength, but the cessation of work because the work was complete, the repose of satisfaction in what we should call an accomplished ideal. And, further, in that august conception of the rest of God is included, not only the completion of all His purpose, and the full correspondence of effect with cause, but likewise the indisturbance and inward harmony of that infinite nature whereof all the parts co-operant to an end move in a motion which is rest. And, further, the rest of God is incompatible with, and, indeed, but another form of, unceasing activity. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," said the Master; though the works were, in one sense, finished from the foundation of the world. Now can we dare to dream that in any fashion that solemn, Divine repose and tranquillity of perfection can be reproduced in us? Yes! The dewdrop is a sphere, as truly as the sun; the rainbow in the smallest drop of rain has all the prismatic colours blended in the same harmony as when the great iris strides across the sky. And if man be made in the image of God, man perfected shall be deiform, even in the matter of his apparently incommunicable repose. For they who are exalted to that final future participation in His life will have to look back, too, upon work which, stained as it has been in the doing, yet, in its being accepted upon the altar on which it was humbly laid, has been sanctified and greatened, and will be an element in their joy in the days that are to come. "They rest from their labours, and their works do follow them"—not for accusation, nor to read to them bitter memories of incompleteness, but rather that they may contribute to the deep repose and rest of the heavens. In a modified form, but yet in reality, the rest of God may be possessed even by the imperfect workers here upon earth. And, in like manner, that other aspect of the Divine repose, in the tranquillity of a perfectly harmonious nature, is altogether, and without restriction, capable of being reproduced, and certain in the future to be reproduced in all them that love and trust Him, when the whole being shall be settled and centred upon Him, and will, and desires, and duty, and conscience shall no more conflict. "Unite my heart to fear Thy name," is a prayer even for earth. It shall be fully answered in Heaven, and the souls made one through all their parts shall rest in God, and shall rest like God. And further, the human participation in that Divine repose will have, like its pattern, the blending without disturbance of rest with motion. The highest activity is the intensest repose. Just as a light, whirled with sufficient rapidity, will seem to make a still circle; just as the faster a wheel moves the more moveless it seems to stand; just as the rapidity of the earth's flight through space, and the universality with which all the parts of it participate in the flight, produce the sensation of absolute immobility. It is not motion, but effort and friction, that break repose; and when there is neither the one nor the other, there will be no contrariety between activity and rest; but we shall enjoy at once the delights of both without the wear and tear and disturbance of the one or the languor of the other. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Sabbath days*:—Maurice speaks of learning to keep Sabbath days in the midst of the world's din. *Why God rested*:—An architect who has built a majestic cathedral, a painter who has finished a glorious picture, a sculptor who has carved a noble statue, rests—not because his genius has been exhausted; it may even have been developed and exalted by his labour,—but because he rejoices when his idea has assumed a permanent form of grandeur or beauty. And so God rested—found delight in His material and spiritual creation. (*R. W. Dale, LL.D.*) *Faith and rest*:—Rev. T. Collins said to a man whom he visited, "Here, read this." "Round thee and beneath are spread the everlasting arms." "Whose arms?" "God's." "Where spread?" "Around my soul and underneath." "Why man, say you so? Sink down upon them, then, and rest." "I will try."

"James, James! there you are again, trying instead of trusting. Suppose you placed your child in the cradle and said, 'Now, dear one, rest'; would you expect the little one to set itself shaking the cradle and to say, 'I am trying'? Would he rest so?" "No, sir, he must be still to rest." "And so must you, James. Tell God, 'Thou art mine and I am Thine'; cast thyself on His fidelity; sink down upon Him, and on an arm firmer than rock, tenderer than a mother's thou shalt rest." (*S. Colcy.*) *Rest in God*:—The nearer a thing is to its centre, the less is the motion experienced. You do not feel the pitching and rolling of a steamer or a sailing vessel midships as you do elsewhere. Pin a bit of paper to the rim of a carriage wheel, and how swiftly it is whirled round when the vehicle moves. Fasten it on the axle and it revolves very slowly. God is the centre of the universe, especially the centre of all created beings. Live near Him, and you will feel less the shocks of trouble and the vibrations of sin. (*T. R. Stevenson.*) *Perfect rest*:—Those whose hearts are not at perfect rest resemble a bottle but partly filled with water, which is agitated by the least motion; those whose hearts are at ease are like the same bottle filled to the brim which cannot be disturbed.

Ver. 7. **To-day.**—*The present*:—Let us take that short division of time—to-day—the now—and consider what is the duty, the preciousness of each passing hour and day. 1. Let us notice that each day has its own gifts. A writer speaks of the hours passing by him like solemn virgins in long and silent procession. He sits in his garden and sees them pass. Their faces are veiled in their hands, they bear caskets full of various gifts, some trivial, some of inestimable value. Among these gifts are stores of brilliant diadems and fruits and faded flowers. He forgets his morning wishes, he lets the day pass by idly and neglectfully. At last, just as the evening is about to fall, he hastily snatches some of their slightest gifts, some harsh apple or withering rose, and as they turn and pass away in silence into the evening shadows, the veils slip from their faces, and he sees the look of scorn which their faces wear. Yes, every day has its gifts, but all good gifts are exactly what we make of them. Let us pray that God will teach us rightly to use His gifts of every day. 2. Each day has not only its own immediate gifts, but also its immediate opportunities. When the Roman emperor sadly lamented to his friends, "I have lost a day," he meant that on that day he had not conferred a kindness upon any one. How often by selfishness and temper, by egotism, by vanity and want of thought, we miss those opportunities of helping others in little ways which the angels in heaven might envy us. We may see men and women on every side of us, not by any means only among the poor, but among our social equals, staggering along under heavy burdens, which it does not even occur to us to put out even so much as our fingers to help. A word spoken in due season, how good it is! When good John Newton saw a little child crying over the loss of a halfpenny, and by giving it another dried its tears, he felt that he had not spent a day in vain. But it is not only by our daily neglect of a thousand little kindnesses and courtesies of daily life that we so lightly regard as mere grains of coarse sand in the hour-glass—moments as precious as if they were grains of gold. We lose them in a thousand other ways—not only lose, but squander and fling them away, and, worse than all, pervert them into opportunities of unkindness. In the words of the man of business, Time for us is money. But that is the least thing it is—for time is eternity. 3. Again, every day has its own stores of pure and innocent happiness. To those who walk through the world with open eyes every day reveals something beautiful. We are self-tormentors only because we are selfish and egotistical and vain. Our taste is corrupted; there are few of us to whom God wholly denies the grassy field of contentment, the simple wild flowers of innocent gladness, the limpid spring of the river of the water of life. That was a true saying of the ancients, "*Carpe diem*"—pluck the blossom of to-day. Our best hopes, our richest treasures, our destiny on earth, yes, even our heaven itself, lie not in the visionary future, but in the here and in the now. 4. And again, every day has its duties. What a special gift of God is this! Riches may fly away, fame may vanish, friends may die, but duty never ceases. This saves our poor little lives from most of their perplexities. Are we happy? Let not our felicity make us falter in the performance of a single duty, for on these duties that happiness itself depends. Are we unhappy? Strenuously try not to grieve over the bitterness, for action is the surest of solaces. In every case we cannot do better than obey the brave old rule, "Do the next thing." While we are doing our duty, it is always ours to say that we are doing the very thing for which God made us. One of the most charming of the Greek idylls tells

us how two poor fishermen, weary and cold, before the earliest dawn, while the moon still rides high in the heavens, rise from their beds of dried seaweed in their miserable hut, and while the waves dash fiercely on the shore hard by, repair their nets by the dim and uncertain twilight; and while they repair them, one of the men tells the other the story of how on the evening before he had fallen asleep very hungry and weary, and had dreamed that he stood on the rock where he was used to fish, and had thrown his line and caught a huge fish. When, with straining rod and line, he drew it to land, he found the fish to be made of pure and solid gold. And in his dream he thereupon took a solemn oath that he would sell his prize, and get wealth, and never dip line in the waves again. And now his poor ignorant thoughts were troubled with his oath, and he doubted whether he should renew his fishing. "Cheer up," says his old comrade, "you may fish. You did not take the oath, for you see you have not caught the fish of gold. What are dreams? But if not in a dream, in broad waking if you toil and watch, some good may perhaps come to your vision. Look out for the real vision, lest you die of hunger with your golden dreams." Is not the moral of this Greek idyll to be found even in Scripture? When the apostles waiting through those great forty days after the resurrection, when the appearance of the risen Lord seemed for a time to be hopeless, conscious of the pressure of their want and waiting, when it lay heavily upon them, what was to be done? Thank God, there is always something to be done. Each day has its duty, and He who gave the day and the duty gives also the desire to fulfil it. But not only has each day its duty, but each day has its one supreme duty before which all others sink into insignificance—the duty of repentance if we are living lives of sin; the duty of getting nearer to God and seeing His face if by our Saviour's mercy we have tasted that the Lord is gracious. Oh, if this duty be left neglected, no other duty can be a substitute for it. Every day is but a single spoke in the swift wheel of the revolving week, and the weeks flash into the months, and the months into the years, and the years roll on into the world beyond the grave. How many days are there even in a long life? How very few may be left to us! If, then, as we have seen first, every day has its gifts which we often despise; and secondly, every day has opportunities which we often waste; and thirdly, every day has its sources of happiness which we often forget; and fourthly, every day has its duties which the best so imperfectly accomplish; and fifthly, every day has its one thing needful which if left unaccomplished is utter ruin—ought we not to thank God that every day has also its gracious help. There is One of infinite help always at hand—God is our help and strength. He loves us, He will not forsake us. He who gave His own Son for our sins, shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? And is it not the Son who shall be our Judge? Is He not standing in heaven to make intercession for us at God's right hand? Is not conscience His voice within us? Has He not given us His Holy Spirit? Is not duty which He makes so clear to us His eternal law? and though He is infinitely far above us, He has given us a ladder between heaven and earth, so that we may ascend heavenward in our supplications, and His answer will fall back in blessings. (*Archdeacon Farrar.*) *The immediate claims of religion*:—I. THE PROPOSAL. "If ye will hear His voice." 1. By acknowledging His authority. 2. By considering His words. 3. By accepting the benefits which He offers. 4. By obeying His commands. II. THE MEANS OF ACCEPTING IT. "Harden not your heart." Beware of cruelty to your own souls. Beware of impenitence amidst the means and calls of religion. III. THE PERIOD TO WHICH IT REFERS. "To-day." 1. To-morrow you may be indisposed to listen to the voice of God. 2. To-morrow you may be incapable of hearing His voice. IV. THE END TO BE SECURED BY ACCEPTING IT. This the connection leads us to consider as "Rest." The heavenly rest. 1. Rest from sin. 2. Rest from sorrow. (*Essex Congregational Remembrancer.*) *To-day*:—We have two brief clauses to dwell upon: "If ye will hear His voice"; "Harden not your hearts." 1. The word "will" is not in the original. The apostle is not speaking at present of a willingness on the part of man, but of a grace on the part of God. The exercise of the human will does not come into view till the next clause. This says merely, "If ye hear," or "shall hear," God's voice speaking. It is the recognition of the Divine freedom to speak or not to speak. "If ye should hear God speaking, listen." It is conceivable that God may not speak. We may have wearied Him out by our inattention. He may say, "My Spirit shall no longer strive." "If ye should hear His voice." This awakens thought, quickens interest, arouses anxiety. What if I should have silenced that voice? Often have I heard without hearing. Often has the voice pleaded,

entreated, besought, and there was nothing in me that regarded. Neither hope nor fear, neither love nor dread, neither interest, nor apprehension, no, nor curiosity. "If ye hear" says, "which haply ye may not." 2. "Harden not your hearts." The figure is taken from that process of drying and stiffening which is fatal to the free play of a limb or the further growth of a vegetable. The "heart," in Scripture phrase, is that life-centre, that innermost being, out of which are the issues of thought and action, and upon the condition of which depend alike the decisions of the will and the habits of the living and moving man. When the heart is hardened, there is an end of all those influences of grace which till then can touch and stir, control and guide, inspire the quickening motive and apply the heavenward impulse. Sometimes this hardening is ascribed in Scripture to the operation of God. That is when the voice ceases to speak, and the will to disobey has become at last an incapacity to obey. But this we say. Never does the hardening begin on God's side; and never does the Divine hardening preclude the human softening. "Whosoever will"—that is the condition: and without the willing salvation cannot be even if it would. These are deep as well as sorrowful mysteries. The text of this day lets them alone. It addresses itself to the will, which is the man, and says, "Harden not your heart." If you will not harden it, certainly God will not. "Why will ye die, when He hath no pleasure in it?" If you hear, any one of you, the voice speaking—hear it say, "This is not your rest"; hear it say, "I am Thy salvation—come unto Me—abide in Me—I will refresh—in Me ye shall have peace"—harden not your heart. If the deceitfulness of sin should say within any of you, "The voice can wait—let it plead outside you till you have taken your fill of that which it cannot tolerate and cannot dwell with—then, when age comes, or sickness, or sorrow, or some shadow cast before of death or eternity, then hearken, then obey"—harden not your heart. 3. "To-day, if ye shall hear His voice." The Epistle returns again and again to that word. What is "To-day." It is the opposite of two times and two eternities. It is the opposite of yesterday and to-morrow in time; it is the opposite of an immeasurable past, an inconceivable future, in the eternity which God inhabits. "To-day" is at once the dividing line and the meeting point of the two—the barrier between the two finites, and the link between the two infinites. "To-day." What a word of reproof and of admonition—of thanksgiving and of hope—of opportunity and of blessing. Is not each To-day the very epitome and abstract of a life? It has its morning and its evening; it has its waking and its falling on sleep; it has its typical birth and death; it has its hours marked out and counted; it has its duties assigned and distributed; it has its alternations of light and shade; it has its worship and its service, its going forth to labour and its coming back to reckon. Within these twelve or these sixteen hours a life may be lived, a soul lost or won. (*Dean Vaughan.*) *Opportunity to be seized*:—Opportunity is the flower of time, and as the stalk may remain when the flower is cut off, so time may remain with us when opportunity is gone. (*J. Bond.*) *To-day*:—How much the Bible has to say about "to-day"—time present! This is really all we can call our own. It says very little about "yesterday" or "to-morrow." "Yesterday" is like a closed book; its record is finished. As "the mill cannot grind with the water that is past," so our work cannot be done with the strength and opportunities of yesterday. Of "to-morrow" we may repeat the old and significant saying, "It may never come!" *Opportunity*:—Opportunity has hair in front; behind she is bald. If you seize her by the forelock, you may hold her; but if suffered to escape, not Jupiter himself can catch her again. **Harden not your hearts.**—*Hardening the heart*:—I. THE MEANING OF THE WORD "HEART," AS HERE USED. Parents sometimes have the mortification of seeing their own children become stubborn against parental authority, and of seeing their requirements resisted and their counsels set at nought. Parents often see children, when they undertake to press them to do anything, instead of obeying, wax stubborn and rebellious. They stand and resist, and manifest a cool determination to persevere in their disobedience; and, so far as the philosophy of the act is concerned, resistance to God is just the same. The mind resisting truth "is hardening the heart," in the sense of the text. II. HOW IS IT THAT SINNERS DO HARDEN THEIR HEARTS? 1. This leads me to say that persons are very much in danger of hardening themselves, by holding fast to some erroneous opinion or improper practice to which they are committed. All their prejudices are in favour of it, and they are very jealous lest anything should disturb it. What danger such persons are in of assigning to themselves, as a reason for resisting the truth, that it clashes with some of their favourite notions! When they see its practical results contradict

some pet theory of theirs, they will strengthen themselves against it. I recollect an instance of this kind. One evening, in the city of New York, I found among the inquirers a very anxious lady, who was exceedingly convicted of her sins, and pressed her strongly to submit to God. "Ah!" she said, "if I were sure I am in the right Church, I would." "The right Church!" said I; "I care not what Church you are in, if you will only submit yourself to Christ." "But," she replied, "I am not in the Catholic Church, I am not in the right Church; if I were, I would yield." So that her anxiety about the "right Church" prevented her yielding at all, and she continued to harden her heart against Christ. 2. Others harden themselves by indulging in a spirit of procrastination. "I will follow Thee," is their language, "but not now." 3. I remark, again, that many persons strengthen themselves and harden their hearts by refusing, wherever they can refuse, to be convicted of their sins. They have a multitude of ways of avoiding the point, and force away the truth, and hardening themselves against it. Take care, for instance, of the practice of excusing sin. 4. But, again: Another way in which men harden themselves is that they are unwilling to come and do what is implied in becoming Christians. But a short time since, I was pressing an individual to yield up certain forms of sin of which I knew him to be guilty. "Ah," said he, "if I begin to yield this and that, where will it all end? I must be consistent," said he, "and where shall I stop?" Where should he "stop"? It was clear that the cost was too great, and that he was therefore disposed to harden himself and resist God's claims, because he considered God required too much. This is a very common practice. If you ask persons in a general way, they are willing to be Christians; but "what will be expected of them?" Ah! that is quite a different thing! Now you have set them to count the cost, and they find it will involve too great a sacrifice. They are wholly unwilling to renounce themselves and their idols; and accordingly they betake themselves to hardening their hearts, and strengthening themselves in unbelief. I will cite the case just referred to for a moment. The conversation respected at that time a particular form of sin. Now, why did he not yield at once? He saw that the principle on which he yielded this point would compel him to give up others; and therefore he said, "If I begin this, where shall I stop?" He gathered up all the reasons he could, and strengthened himself in his position. Thus he was hardening his heart; this was just what the Jews did when Christ preached. III. WHY MEN SHOULD NOT HARDEN THEIR HEARTS IN THIS WAY. 1. Perhaps the first thing that I shall notice will startle some of you. It is this: you should not harden your hearts, "because, if you do not do so, you will be converted." God has so constituted the mind that, as everybody knows, truth is a most powerful stimulant, which invites and draws the mind in a given direction. Truth induces it to act in conformity with its dictates. Now, to do this, to obey the truth, that is conversion. If you do not obey it, it is because you harden yourself against it; for it is an utter impossibility to be indifferent to the presentation of truth, and especially is it utterly impossible to maintain a blank indifference to the presentation of the great practical truths of Christianity. 2. Another reason why you should not harden your hearts is that you will not be converted if you do. In other words, if you resist the Spirit, God never forces you against your will. If He cannot persuade you to embrace the truth, He cannot save you by a physical act of omnipotence, as, for instance, He could create a world. You are a free moral agent, and He can save you only in His own way. In other words, if He cannot gain your own consent to be saved in His own way, He cannot possibly save you at all. 3. Another reason why you should not harden your hearts is that you may be given up! God may give you up to the hardness of your hearts. The Bible shows that this is not uncommon. Whole generations of the Jews were thus given up. Some think there is not so much danger of this now; but the fact is there is more, because there is more light. He gives them up because they resist the light of the truth with regard to His claims. IV. WHOSE "VOICE" IS HERE REFERRED TO? Is it the voice of a tyrant, who comes out with his omnipotent arm to crush you? "If you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." Whose voice is it? In the first place, it is the voice of God; but, more than this, it is the voice of your Father! But is it the voice of your Father, with the rod of correction, pursuing you, to subdue you by force? Oh, no! it is the voice of His mercy—of His deepest compassion. A few further remarks must close what I have to say; and the first remark is this: persons often mistake the true nature of hardness of heart. Supposing it to be involuntary, they lament it as a misfortune, rather than regret it as a crime. They suppose that the

state of apathy which results from the resistance of their will is hardness of heart. It is true that the mind apologises to itself for resistance to the claims of God, and, as a natural consequence, there is very little feeling in the mind, because it is under the necessity of making such a use of its powers as to cause great destitution of feeling. This is hardening the heart—that act of the mind in resisting the claims of God. For persons to excuse themselves by complaining that their hearts are hard is only to add insult to injury. I remark, once more, it is worthy of notice that the claims, commands, promises, and invitations of God are all in the present tense. Turn to the Bible, and from end to end you will find it is, "To-day" if ye will hear His voice. "Now" is the accepted time. God says nothing of to-morrow; He does not even guarantee that we shall live till then. Again: the plea of inability is one of the most paltry, abusive, and blasphemous of all. What! Are men not able to refrain from hardening themselves? I have already said, and you all know, that it is the nature of truth to influence the mind when it receives it; and, when the Spirit does convert a man, it is by so presenting the truth as to gain his consent. Now, if there was not something in the truth itself adapted to influence the mind, He might continue to present the truth for ever, without your ever being converted. It is because there is an adaptedness in truth—something in the very nature of it, which tends to influence the mind of man. Now, when persons complain of their inability to embrace the truth, what an infinite mistake! God approaches with offers of mercy, and with the cup of salvation in His hand, saying, "Sinner! I am coming! Beware not to harden yourself. Do not cavil. Do not hide behind professors of religion. Do not procrastinate! for I am coming to win you." Now, what does the sinner do? Why, he falls to hardening his heart, procrastinating, making all manner of excuses, and pleading his inability. Inability! What! Is not a man able to refrain from surrounding himself with considerations which make him stubborn? Once more: I said this is a most abusive way of treating God. Why, just think. Here is God endeavouring to gain the sinner's consent—to what? Not to be sent to hell. Oh, no! He is not trying to persuade you to do anything, or to consent to anything, that will injure you. Oh, no! He is not trying to persuade you to give up anything that is really good—the relinquishment of which will make you wretched or unhappy—to give up all joy and everything that is pleasant—to give up things that tend to peace—He is not endeavouring to persuade you to do any such thing as this. With regard to all such things, He is not only willing that you should have them, but would bring you into a state in which you could really enjoy them. (*C. G. Finney.*)

Ver. 8. **If Jesus [Joshua] had given them rest.**—*Disparity between Joshua and Jesus:*—1. The first is in this difference, that Joshua conquered Canaan not only for the people of Israel, but also for himself, that he might have his part and portion with them for him and his posterity (Josh. xviii. 49, 50). But our Lord Jesus hath purchased that heavenly Canaan only for our sakes, having had the possession of it before His incarnation Himself by the right of inheritance. He had a glory with God before the world was (John xvii. 5). 2. The second difference is, Joshua did not conquer Canaan by himself alone, but had all the tribes of Israel to assist as his auxiliaries in his conquest; but our Lord Jesus hath by Himself alone purchased that heavenly inheritance. He saith, "I have trodden the wine-press alone, and none were with Me" (Isa. lxiii. 3). 3. The third disparity is, the conquest of Canaan did not cost Joshua bloodshed or death; but our eternal inheritance cost Christ both His bloodshed and death (Heb. ix. 26; 1 Pet. i. 18, 19). 4. The fourth is, Joshua could not quite expel the Canaanites out of Canaan (Josh. xv. 63; xvi. 10, &c.). But our blessed Jesus hath perfectly subdued Satan, sin, and death to us, that nothing shall eternally harm us (John xvi. 33; 1 John v. 4: Rev. xii. 11). (*C. Ness.*) *Rest:*—We are told in a certain legend that one day Rabbi Judah and his brethren, the seven pillars of wisdom, sat in the Temple on a feast day, disputing about rest. One said that it was to have attained sufficient wealth, yet without sin. The second, that it was fame and praise of all men. The third, that it was the possession of power to rule the state. The fourth, that it consisted only in a happy home. The fifth, that it must be in the old age of one who is rich, powerful, famous, surrounded by children's children. The sixth said that all that were vain, unless a man kept all the ritual law of Moses. And Rabbi Judah, the venerable, the tallest of the brothers, said, "Ye have all spoken wisely, but one thing more is necessary: he can only find rest who to all these things addeth this, that he keepeth the tradition of the elders." There sat in the court a fair-haired boy,

playing with his lilies in his lap, and hearing the talk, dropped them with astonishment from his hands and looked up—that boy of twelve, and said, "Nay, nay, fathers, he only loveth rest who loves his brother as himself, and God with his whole heart and soul! He is greater than wealth and fame and power, happier than a happy home, happy without it, better than honoured age, he is a law to himself, and above all tradition." The doctors were astonished. They said, When Christ cometh, shall He tell us greater things? And they thanked God; for, they said, old men are not always wise; yet God be praised, that out of the mouth of this young suckling has His praise become perfect. (*T. Parker.*) *Wanting rest*:—There is a rebelliousness against himself in man—a disgust with himself. "We are weary: give us rest," said a tribe to one of their missionaries; and that tribe expresses the feeling of every human being.

Ver. 9. **There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.**—*The rest for God's people*:—I. THE PERSONS FOR WHOM THIS REST IS DESIGNED. "The people of God." 1. By their eternal election of the Father (Rom. xi. 5). 2. By complete and final redemption (John i. 29). 3. By perfect righteousness imputed (Isa. xlv. 24, 25). 4. By the renewing of the Holy Ghost (Col. iii. 10). II. THE MANIFESTED DIFFERENCE IN GOD'S PEOPLE FROM THE REPROBATE, AFTER THEY ARE CONVERTED TO GOD BY THE HOLY GHOST. 1. In a deep sense of divine things (1 Cor. ii. 10). 2. Of their miserable state as sinners (Luke v. 31). 3. Of creature-insufficiency (Isa. lxiv. 6). 4. Of Christ's fulness (Phil. iii. 8). 5. In a change of will and purpose (Cant. i. 4). 6. A cordial covenanting with Christ (Jer. l. 5). 7. Persevering grace (Mic. vii. 8). III. THE EXCELLENT NATURE OF THIS REST. Its excellency is beyond the power of language to describe. 1. Purchased rest (Eph. i. 14). 2. Gratuitous rest (Isa. lv. 1). 3. Peculiar rest (John xiv. 22). 4. Divine rest (Rev. xxi. 23). 5. Seasonable rest (Gal. vi. 9). 6. Suitable rest (John xiv. 2). 7. Perfect rest (Rev. xxi. 4). 8. Eternal rest (1 Pet. v. 10). 9. Of body and soul (1 Cor. xv. 57). It is a rest from pain, sorrow, disappointment, persecution, sin, lust, and infirmity; a rest of peace, joy, love, knowledge, freedom, and a rest in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. (*T. B. Baker.*) *Earnests of ultimate rest*:—The earnests of this rest which are given to the saints in the present dispensation. There is a threefold earnest—an earnest of joy, an earnest of holiness, and an earnest of power. This threefold earnest corresponds with the character of the inheritance itself—it is an inheritance of joy, an inheritance of holiness, and an inheritance of power, of dominion. The earnest corresponds with the blessings to be enjoyed; the earnest corresponds with the salvation to be enjoyed. Now, what is the salvation to be enjoyed? Salvation means the recovery of all we lost in Adam in a more glorious way than he had it. What did we lose in Adam? We lost the presence of God first; we lost the image of God secondly; and we lost the power of exercising dominion under God. These three things we lost in Adam; these three things we gain in Christ. We shall have the joy of God, going into His presence where there is fulness of joy. We shall have the likeness of God—we shall awake, and shall be satisfied when we awake in His likeness; we shall be conformed to Him who is the image of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile bodies, and fashion them after His own glorious body—we shall see Him as He is. We shall have dominion; for the saints shall reign with Christ; the bridegroom and the bride shall reign together. (*N. Armstrong.*) *The connection between the Sabbath of earth and the engagements of heaven*:—Heaven may be denominated a Sabbath, if the following reflections be seriously considered. 1. It may be so called for its repose. An eternal rest! Oh, happy thought, amidst the toils of the wilderness, amidst the fears with which we are now agitated, that we shall soon find rest; like the coming of eventide to the labourer, like the appearance of home to the traveller as he is advancing to repose amidst his household, so shall heaven be to the soul! 2. Heaven may well be called an eternal Sabbath for its sanctity. Holiness is its character, not holiness which arises merely from the absence of sin, but holiness which is inherent; that holiness whereby we are prepared in all we do, and all we enjoy, to possess more and more felicity, in proportion as we accomplish more and more the will of the great Creator, so that we are absolutely a living sacrifice to God throughout ceaseless ages. 3. Heaven may be denominated an eternal Sabbath for its services. 4. Heaven may be called an eternal Sabbath for its society. Never would the Church of Christ realise a fulness of fellowship but for the engagements of the Sabbath. 5. Heaven may be called an eternal Sabbath for its delights. 6. Heaven may be called an eternal Sabbath

because of the termination of all secular eras and events. Just as the Sabbath crowns and hallows the week, so heaven comes at the close of time to crown and hallow the whole. 7. Heaven may be called an eternal Sabbath for the perpetual commemoration of the history of all things. (*R. S. McAll, LL.D.*) *The rest of God's people* :—I. IT IS A FUTURE REST. It is not on this side the grave. This—it is emphatically said—this is not your rest. Ye have not yet come to the rest and to the inheritance which the Lord your God giveth you. We must go over Jordan—we must cross the river of death before we can reach our home. But till then, while we continue in the world, it is vain and fruitless to expect rest. There may be seasons of refreshment: pauses, like the Sabbath's pause, for recruiting our tired spirits; but these seasons and pauses are but for an instant. Work—work of one kind or other presses upon us, and we cannot, if we would, be long at rest. II. HEAVEN, whatever other notions we may have about it, WILL BE, BEFORE ALL THINGS, A PLACE TO REST. (*R. D. B. Rawnsley, M.A.*) *The rest of the saints* :—Scripture allows us to know so much of the future state as to satisfy us that it is a state of continual exalted employment. I. They rest FROM THE TOILS AND PURSUITS OF THE PRESENT LIFE. Toils and pursuits of various kinds, and in different degrees, necessarily occupy much of our attention. We are animated with a strong desire of preserving ourselves and those who depend upon us in life and comfort, hence much labour and exertion fall to the lot of the generality of mankind; it is also a part of the curse denounced against our apostate race: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread." Of the small proportion of men who do not procure their subsistence by bodily labour, exertion of another kind is required; they have to undergo the labours of the mind, study, and reflection, and extensive research in managing the religious and the civil concerns of their fellow-creatures. To those who exert themselves vigorously and conscientiously in the one or the other of these kinds of labour, it is no unpleasant view of heaven that it yields a relief from such toils and pursuits. II. In heaven there is rest FROM THE TROUBLES OF LIFE. These are inseparable from our present condition, being the natural and penal consequences of sin. "Although affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground, yet man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward." It arises from what we feel in ourselves, from disease, and pain, and weakness, and from "the fear of death"; it arises also from our connection with fellow-creatures: those with whom we are united by the most tender and endearing ties are subject, like ourselves, to a variety of distresses. How soothing in such situations the belief, the hope, and the prospect of that "rest which remaineth for the people of God"—a state where disease and pain are wholly unknown, or remembered as "former things which have passed away;" "a land, the inhabitants whereof shall no more say, I am sick"; and where those whom death had separated shall meet to part no more! III. "There remaineth a rest to the people of God" FROM SIN AND TEMPTATION. The former views which have been presented of this "rest" may engage the attention and please the imagination of all men, whatever be their state and character. It is natural to human beings to desire exemption from toil and from trouble. Too many, it is feared, wish for heaven chiefly or wholly on these accounts; they have little or no desire of heaven as a deliverance from sin and from temptations to sin; they are the justified and sanctified alone who delight chiefly in this view of a future state. Besides this painful contest with inward corruption, there is also a conflict to be maintained with Satan, the great spiritual adversary. The world also in which they live, both the men of the world and "the things that are in the world," present many powerful temptations; snares beset them on every side; prosperity and adversity have each their several dangers to Christians. It is, therefore, to them the most pleasing view of heaven that it is a rest from sin and from all temptations to sin. (*J. Burns, D.D.*) *Rest* :—Have we not all seen a Sunday which was a Sunday indeed—a day of calm and of cheerfulness, a day of thankful repose, a day of quiet devotion, a day in which God was present as the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort? Witness, you who have known such a day yourselves or seen it in another, what a look it wore! how bright it was with a light not of this world! how it seemed at once to refresh and to invigorate, to soothe without relaxing and to animate without exciting, every part of that complex being which man is! And then say to yourselves, "Such, even such, only tenfold more perfect and more glorious, is the rest which remaineth in heaven for the people of God!" No day of wearisome forms, of gloomy bondage and austere observance, of lifeless monotonous worship, or listless irksome vacancy, but one instinct with peace, with life, and with happiness. There remaineth a rest

—a rest like the most delightful of Sabbaths, even because it is long waited for, and because, when it comes, it is a day better than a thousand. I. A rest FROM what? 1. From our own works. Ye who have known what it was to have reached the end of a six days' or a six months' toil, and to awaken the next morning to the rest of an earthly Sabbath, where there was no duty before you for twelve hours but that of thanking and praising God, and enjoying to the full His gifts and His revelations—judge ye what that morning will be when you awake in heaven, never again to toil unto weariness! 2. But who has not felt that there is a weariness far greater than that of simple work, and, by consequence, a rest far more desirable than that from mere labour? In heaven there will be rest from all anxiety and care. 3. And shall I mention yet another weariness of life, one which besets in these days some of every condition and every rank of men? I speak of doubt—of religious doubt—doubt as to the reality of truth, or doubt as to its application to ourselves. Of all the joys of the first morning of heaven, to many souls in our generation, surely this will be the greatest—that doubt is no more; that Christ Himself is there, seen face to face, and the truth which was dim upon earth is there irradiated by His presence. 4. Lastly, the rest which remaineth is a rest from sin. "Grieved and wearied with the burden of our sins:" that is the account which we all give of ourselves when we kneel at Christ's holy table. Wherever Christ is sought in humble faith, the pilgrim's burden unties itself at the sight of the Cross, and falls off from him, to his great comfort. But old infirmities continue, and lead to new transgressions. Only in heaven will the power of sin be ended. II. Rest IN what? 1. In thankfulness. Dangers escaped—infirmities healed—sins forgiven—sorrows cheered on earth or explained in heaven—an arresting, controlling, guiding, and supporting hand, now believed and then seen to have been over us all our life long—the forbearance of God—the map of our pilgrimage, inward and outward, at last spread out before us, and the light of heaven thrown upon its windings and its wanderings; in all this there will be matter for an eternity of thankfulness. 2. In occupation. 3. In contemplation. The contemplation of God Himself. The understanding, as never before, of His works, of His ways, of His perfections. 4. In Christ's presence. This completes, this embraces all heaven. (*Dean Vaughan.*) *Heavenly rest:*—I. I shall try to EXHIBIT the rest of heaven; and in doing so I shall exhibit it, first by way of contrast, and then by way of comparison. 1. The rest of the righteous in glory is now to be contrasted with certain other things. (1) We will contrast it with the best estate of the worldling and the sinner. The worldling, when his corn and his wine are increased, has a glad eye and a joyous heart; but even then he has the direful thought that he may soon leave his wealth. Not so the righteous man: he has obtained an inheritance which is "undefiled, and that fadeth not away." (2) Now let me put it in more pleasing contrast. I shall contrast the rest of the believer above with the miserable estate of the believer sometimes here below. Christians have their sorrows. Suns have their spots, skies have their clouds, and Christians have their sorrows too. But oh! how different will the state of the righteous be up there, from the state of the believer here! Sheathed is the sword, the banner is furled, the fight is over, the victory won; and they rest from their labours. Here, too, the Christian is always sailing onward, he is always in motion, he feels that he has not yet attained. Like Paul, he can say, "Forgetting the things that are behind, I press forward to that which is before." But there his weary head shall be crowned with unfading light. There the ship that has been speeding onward shall furl its sails in the port of eternal bliss. Here, too, the believer is often the subject of doubt and fear. Hill Difficulty often affrights him; going down into the valley of humiliation is often troublesome work to him; but there, there are no hills to climb, no dragons to fight, no foes to conquer, no dangers to dread. Ready-to-halt, when he dies, will bury his crutches, and Feeble-mind will leave his feebleness behind him; Fearing will never fear again; poor Doubting-heart will learn confidently to believe. Oh, joy above all joys! Here, too, on earth, the Christian has to suffer; here he has the aching head and the pained body. Or if his body be sound, yet what suffering he has in his mind! Conflicts between depravity and gross temptations from the evil one, assaults of hell, perpetual attacks of divers kinds from the world, the flesh, and the devil. But there, no aching head, no weary heart; old age shall find itself endowed with perpetual youth; there the infirmities of the flesh shall be left behind, given to the worm and devoured by corruption. There, too, they shall be free from persecution. Here Sicilian Vespers, and St. Bartholomew, and Smithfield are well-known words; but

there shall be none to taunt them with a cruel word, or touch them with a cruel hand. There emperors and kings are not known, and those who had power to torture them cease to be. They are in the society of saints; they shall be free from all the idle converse of the wicked, and from their cruel jeers set free for ever. Alas! in this mortal state the child of God is also subject to sin; even he faileth in his duty and wandereth from his God; even he doth not walk in all the law of his God blameless, though he desireth to do it. And last of all, here, the child of God has to wet the cold ashes of his relatives with tears; here he has to bid adieu to all that is lovely and fair of mortal race. But there never once shall be heard the toll of the funeral bell. 2. And now I shall try very briefly to exhibit this contrast in the way of comparison. The Christian hath some rest here, but nothing compared with the rest which is to come. (1) There is the rest of the Church. The Church-member at the Lord's table has a sweet enjoyment of rest in fellowship with the saints; but ah! up there the rest of Church fellowship far surpasses anything that is known here; for there are no divisions there, no angry words, no harsh thoughts of one another, no bickerings about doctrine, no fightings about practice. (2) There is, again, a rest of faith which a Christian enjoys; a sweet rest. Many of us have known it. We have known what it is, when the billows of trouble have run high, to hide ourselves in the breast of Christ and feel secure. But the rest up there is better still, more unruffled, more sweet, more perfectly calm, more enduring, and more lasting than even the rest of faith. (3) And, again, the Christian sometimes has the blessed rest of communion. There are happy moments when he puts his head on the Saviour's breast—when, like John, he feels that he is close to the Saviour's heart, and there he sleeps. II. I am to endeavour to EXTOL this rest, as I have tried to EXHIBIT it. Oh! for the lip of angel to talk now of the bliss of the sanctified and of the rest of God's people! 1. It is a perfect rest. They are wholly at rest in heaven. 2. Again, it is a seasonable rest. 3. This rest ought to be extolled because it is eternal. 4. And then, lastly, this glorious rest is to be best of all commended for its certainty. "There remaineth a rest to the people of God." Doubting one, thou hast often said, "I fear I shall never enter heaven." Fear not; all the people of God shall enter there; there is no fear about it. I love the quaint saying of a dying man, who exclaimed, "I have no fear of going home; I have sent all before me; God's finger is on the latch of my door and I am ready for Him to enter." "But," said one, "are you not afraid lest you should miss your inheritance?" "Nay," said he, "nay; there is one crown in heaven that the angel Gabriel could not wear; it will fit no head but mine. There is one throne in heaven that Paul the apostle could not fill; it was made for me, and I shall have it. There is one dish at the banquet that I must eat, or else it will be untasted, for God has set it apart for me." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Divine rest*:—I. WHAT MAN SUPREMELY NEEDS IS NOT REST FROM WORK BUT REST FROM CARE. 1. What is care? It is the experience of the man who is bent on being his own providence; who takes on himself the whole responsibility, not of the conduct of life only, but of the conditions and results which are absolutely beyond his power of regulation, and which God keeps calmly under His own hand. 2. This rest from care has been the great aim and desire of man through all his generations. The problem of man's higher life has always been how to secure emancipation. 3. But the sad part of the matter is, that man does not and cannot rest in mere renunciations and denials. There is a question in the background which has its origin in every conscience. How, on this principle, can the world's business be carried on? No! there is no rest for the human spirit in this burying the head in the sand when troubles throng around. II. THE ONLY POSSIBLE REST FOR MAN IS THE REST THAT HE FINDS IN GOD. 1. The lowest, but by no means the least burdensome and distracting class of our cares concerns "the great bread-and-cheese question" and its surroundings. 2. A nobler form of care is that which has to do with persons, that which springs out of our affections, sympathies and loves. 3. The same faith lifts the burden from the heart of the Christian lover of mankind. In truth we are always calling for the twelve legions of angels to finish the work swiftly and usher in Messiah's reign. And God answers, "Patience," and points us to the redemptive purpose which stamped its impress on the first page of revelation and sets its seal on the last; and bids us wait His time. The man who trusts most perfectly, works most heartily. Christ, while He lifts the burdens, braces the energies, inspires the will, and parades all the faculties of man in their noblest form for service. The man who believes, understands perfectly that the most strenuous use of all the powers of his being is

one of the high conditions by which God is seeking to work out blessing for himself, for his dear ones, and for the great world. (*J. Baldwin Brown, B.A.*) *The true rest of heaven*:—Our notions of bodily rest rarely extend beyond mere cessation from muscular exertion. Our ideas also of mental rest are commonly limited to a similar period put to the labours of the mind. It is easy, and perhaps not always displeasing, to apply similar expectations to spiritual as well as bodily and mental relaxation, and to regard the promised Sabbath in heaven as a complete termination of every spiritual effort. Hope is a work; faith is a work; love we look upon as an emotion. The two former will not be called into action in the mansions of eternity. The latter, we are apt to conceive, will fill our breast with infused delight. There are indeed agreeable views of the saints' everlasting rest; but are they also in accordance with the revelations of Scripture? You will find not: you will see that the people of God in an after-state will truly rest from their pilgrimage through this weary world; but from the worship of God His saints will rest no more; with kindred spirits they will day and night for ever cry, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts, who wert, and art, and art to come." Now, while heaven is the abode of love, that love will have utterance; while the object of our love and gratitude and joy is before the glorified, the tongue of love and gratitude and joy will never fail. No rest for happiness; no rest for worship, no more than we should desire now a rest from breathing. And we have glimpses here of the true character of happy rest. Were the father of a family to return to his home after a tedious and toilsome journey and long absence, and instantly, without saluting wife or children, to cast himself upon his bed and fall asleep, this would be rest certainly, but of what a low, animal character! And were another father under like circumstances to embrace wife and children with fondest affections, and to assemble them around him to narrate the adventures he had met with, and ask of them a similar return, whether, think you, would be the preferable rest? I anticipate but one answer. But it may be said that extreme fatigue might overcome even the strongest regard, and that the most loving parent might be unable to enjoy the society of his household. Do you suppose that this, which is quite in accordance with earthly experience, could be so in heaven? Would God receive us into those blessed abodes, and leave us destitute of the faculty of enjoying them? You well know that that would be far from Him. No; they who are brought into that future world will be gifted with every capacity suitable to the most perfect use of it. And as this life is a training for the next—a probation wherein is practised the conduct and temper which shall endure for ever—does it not follow that you should now cultivate those habits and feelings which alone will find admittance there? (*J. S. Knox, M.A.*) *The rest of God's people in heaven*:—1. We shall rest from the labours of our calling, wherewith we are turmoiled. The husbandman shall follow the plough no longer, the weaver shall sit no longer in the cold in his loom, the clothier not ride up and down in the rain, frost and snow, about his wool and cloth; the preacher shall no longer be turning over books and taking pains in his study and pulpit; we shall ride no more to market to buy corn, to make provision for our houses; we shall no longer take thought for ourselves, our wives and children; we shall have all things provided to our hands, and eat of the hidden manna and of the tree of life in the paradise of God for ever. 2. We shall rest even from the works of religion, which are now chariots to carry us to heaven. We shall no longer be turning over the Bible in our houses, catechising and instructing of our families; no more go many a mile in the dirt and wind to the church, shall no more be praying with cries, sighs, and tears; thanksgiving shall remain in heaven. It shall be all our work to be praising of God, but petitions shall then cease; no need of the ship when we be in heaven. 3. We shall rest from the works of sin; here in many things we sin all. Noah is sometimes overtaken with wine, David falls into adultery and murder, Peter into the denial of Christ, Paul and Barnabas are at jars between themselves. "The good that we would do, that do we not, and the evil we would not, that do we." Sin makes us to cry out like tired porters, "O miserable men that we are," &c. Then we shall rest from all sin, and be like the angels in heaven for ever. 4. We shall rest from all the crosses and calamities of this life. 5. We shall rest from death. It is a work to die; it is a main enemy with whom we struggle. But then this last enemy shall be put under our feet, death shall be swallowed up into victory. O what an excellent rest is this! (*W. Jones, D.D.*) *The world not a fit place for rest*:—1. This world is not a fit place, nor this life a fit time to enjoy such a rest as is reserved in heaven. 2. Rest here

would glue our hearts too much to this world, and make us say, "It is good to be here" (Matt. xvii. 4). It would slack our longing desire after Christ in heaven. Death would be more irksome, and heaven the less welcome. 3. There would be no proof or trial of our spiritual armour, and of the several graces of God bestowed on us. 4. God's providence, prudence, power, mercy and other like properties could not be so well discerned if here we enjoyed that rest. (*W. Gouge.*) *Rest elsewhere:*—"Rest elsewhere," was the motto of Philip de Marnix, Lord Sainte-Aldegonde, one of the most efficient leaders in that great Netherlands revolt against despotism in the sixteenth century which supplied material for perhaps the most momentous chapter in the civil and religious history of the world. For a man such as he, living in such a time, no motto could well mean more. A friend of freedom and of truth, in that age, could never hope to find rest in this world. A good motto, also, is it for the Christian worker. When there is so much to be done, who would be inactive here? "Weary not in well doing." There is rest elsewhere. Retire not from your labour. Work on! There will be rest hereafter. *Rest in eternity:*—Arnauld's (of the Port Royal Society), remarkable reply to Nicolle, when they were hunted from place to place, can never be forgotten. Arnauld wished Nicolle to assist him in a new work, when the latter observed, "We are now old, is it not time to rest?" "Rest!" returned Arnauld; "have we not all eternity to rest in?" *The weariness of life:*—For the young, this is fresh, beautiful, sunlit life; to the old, it is often what Talleyrand found it, who in the journal of his eighty-third birthday wrote, "Life is a long fatigue." Weary eyes droop, weary shoulders bend, weary hands tremble, weary feet drag heavily along, weary brows burn, weary hearts faint everywhere. The primary cause of the universal weariness is universal sin. The needle forced from its centre is in a state of tremulous motion; man wandered from his God is in a state of weariness. Though now on the way back, he will never be perfectly at rest until finally at home. (*C. Stanford, D.D.*) *The final Sabbath:*—The final Sabbath will not, therefore, be realised till time is swallowed up of eternity, and mortality of life. It will be the eternal conclusion of the week of time, as seven is the numeric symbol of perfection and rest. (*F. Delitzsch.*) *Rest in heaven:*—Once I dreamed of being transported to heaven; and being surprised to find myself so calm and tranquil in the midst of my happiness, I inquired the cause. The reply was, "When you were on earth, you resembled a bottle but partly filled with water, which was agitated by the least motion,—now you are like the same bottle filled to the brim, which cannot be disturbed. (*E. Payson, D.D.*) *Image of heaven:*—A sorrowing mother, bending over her dying child, was trying to soothe it by talking about heaven. She spoke of the glory there, of the brightness, of the shining countenances of the angels; but a little voice stopped her, saying, "I should not like to be there, mother, for the light hurts my eyes." Then she changed her word-picture, and spoke of the songs above, of the harpers, of the voice of many waters, of the new song which they sang before the throne; but the child said, "Mother, I cannot bear any noise." Grieved and disappointed at her failure, she took the little one in her arms with all the tenderness of a mother's love. Then, as the little sufferer lay there, near to all it loved best in the world, conscious only of the nearness of love and care, the whisper came, "Mother, if heaven is like this, may Jesus take me there!" (*Baxendale's Anecdotes.*) *Heaven the place to rest in:*—The earth is our workhouse, but heaven is our storehouse. This is a place to run in, and that is a place to rest in. (*T. Secker.*) *The work over:*—Mr. Mead, an aged Christian, when asked how he did, answered, "I am going home as fast as I can, as every honest man ought to do when his day's work is over; and I bless God I have a good home to go to."

The people of God.—*The people of God:*—I. THE GREAT FACT WHICH IS HERE IMPLIED. That God has a people—a people who are peculiarly His own and devoted to His service. 1. Let us look into the past history of the Church. What illustrious examples of faith, and piety, and real devotedness to God do we discover! 2. In the present day there are many such. 3. If we look at prophecy, we shall find that the number of God's people are numerous indeed. II. SOME TRIALS IN THEIR CHARACTER. 1. The real servant of God, to whatever community or church he may belong, is deeply convinced of the value and importance of personal religion. 2. The true servant of God renounces self and all else as a ground of dependence in the sight of God, and depends entirely on the atonement, sacrifice, blood, and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. 3. He cultivates universal holiness of heart and life. III. THE FUTURE DELIGHTFUL AND GLORIOUS PROSPECTS OF THE

TRUE CHRISTIAN. Lessons: 1. The awful state of those who do not come up to this character. 2. How great are the obligations of real Christians to serve God. 3. How amiable is the character of the real Christian! (*D. Ruell, M.A.*) *The people of God*:—All nations in the world are His people by creation, but these are His people by adoption. 1. Every people is gathered together by some means or other; a people is a collection of many men. So we that are the people of God, are gathered together with the trumpet of the Word. 2. A people gathered together must have laws to rule them by, otherwise they will soon be out of order, otherwise they will range beyond limits, even so God's people have God's laws set down in His Word. 3. Every people must have a king or ruler. Even so the ruler of God's people is Jesus Christ. 4. A people must have some country to dwell in. So the country where this people dwell is the Church militant in this life, and triumphant in the life to come. 5. All people are distinguished by some outward habit and attire. So God's people have the sacraments to distinguish them. Baptism is Christ's mark, and the Holy Supper His seal. 6. People must live in obedience to the laws of their king. (*W. Jones, D.D.*)

Ver. 10. **He that is entered into His rest.**—*Entrance into God's rest*:—We lose much of the meaning of this passage by our superficial habit of transferring it to a future state. The ground of the mistake is in the misinterpretation of the word "remaineth"; which is taken to point to the "rest," after the sorrows of this life are all done with. Of course there is such a rest; but the truth taught here is that faith, and not death, is the gate to participation in Christ's rest; that the rest remained over after Moses and Judaism, but came into possession under and by Christ. I. THE DIVINE REST. It is the deep tranquillity of a nature self-sufficing in its infinite beauty, calm in its everlasting strength, placid in its deepest joy, still in its mightiest energy, loving without passion, willing without decision or change, acting without effort, quiet, and moving everything; making all things new, and itself everlasting; creating, and knowing no diminution by the act; annihilating, and knowing no loss though the universe were barren and unpeopled. God is, God is everywhere, God is everywhere the same, God is everywhere the same infinite, God is everywhere the same infinite love and the same infinite self-sufficiency; therefore His very Being is rest. And yet that image that rises before us, statuesque, still in its placid tranquillity, is not repellent nor cold, is no dead marble likeness of life. God is changeless and ever tranquil, and yet He loves—wills—acts. Mystery of mysteries, passing all understanding! Then there is the other thought which perhaps comes more markedly out in the passage before us—that of a rest which is God's tranquil ceasing from His work, because God has perfected His work. Still further: this Divine tranquillity—inseparable from the Divine nature, the token of the sufficiency and completeness of the Divine work—is also a rest that is full of work. God rests, and in His rest, up to the present hour and for ever, God works. And, in like manner, Christ's work of redemption, finished upon the Cross, is perpetually going on. Christ's glorious repose is full of energy for His people. He intercedes above. He works on them, He works through them, He works for them. II. THE REST OF GOD AND OF CHRIST IS THE PATTERN OF WHAT OUR EARTHLY LIFE MAY BECOME. We cannot possess that changeless tranquillity which knows no variations of purpose or of desire, but we can possess the stable repose of that fixed nature which knows one object, and one alone. We cannot possess that energy which, after all work, is fresh and unbroken; but we can possess that tranquillity which in all toil is not troubled, and after all work is ready for double service. We cannot possess that unwavering fire of a Divine nature which burns in love without flickering, which knows without learning, which wills without irresolution and without the act of decision; but we can come to love deeply, tranquilly, perpetually, we can come to know without questioning, without doubts, without darkness, in firm confidence of stable assurance, and so know with something like the knowledge of Him who knows things as they are; and we can come to will and resolve so strongly, so fixedly, so wisely, that there shall be no change of purpose, nor any vacillation of desire. In these ways, in shadow and copy, we can be like even the apparently incommunicable tranquillity which, like an atmosphere that knows no tempests, belongs to and encircles the throne of God. But, still further: Faith, which is the means of entering into rest, will—if only you cherish it—make your life no unworthy resemblance of His who, triumphant above, works for us, and, working for us, rests from all His toil. Trust Christ! is the teaching here. III. THIS DIVINE REST IS A PROPHECY OF WHAT OUR HEAVENLY

LIFE SHALL SURELY BE. There is a basis of likeness between the Christian life on earth and the Christian life in heaven, so great as that the blessings which are predicated of the one belong to the other. Only here they are in blossom, sickly, often, putting out very feeble shoots and tendrils; and yonder transplanted into their right soil, and in their native air with heaven's sun upon them, they burst into richer beauty, and bring forth fruits of immortal life. The heaven of all spiritual natures is not idleness. Man's delight is activity. The loving heart's delight is obedience. The saved heart's delight is grateful service. The joys of heaven are not the joys of passive contemplation, of dreamy remembrance, of perfect repose; but they are described thus, "They rest not day nor night." "His servants serve Him, and see His face." Yes, heaven is perfect "rest." God be thanked for all the depth of unspeakable sweetness which lies in that one little word, to the ears of all the weary and the heavy laden. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The Christian's rest*:—I. THE PERSONS—"The people of God." 1. He purchased them. 2. He has prepared them. 3. He has watched over and guarded them. 4. They have been enlightened. II. THE PROMISE—"There remaineth a rest." 1. Already in existence. 2. Not yet manifested. III. THE EXPECTATION—"Rest." 1. Chiefly negative. Denoting an absence of what is painful, laborious, disagreeable. 2. Not necessarily inaction. The brain-toiler rests in taking manual exercise. The muscle-worker rests in reading and writing. The teacher rests in games, such as cricket, &c. So the Christian shall not fear the toils of earth in the occupation of heaven. 3. Blessed. The absence of all evil will give opportunity for the exercise of all that is good. (*Homilist.*) *Rest in the rest of God*:—The one want of our nature is rest. We want it in each part of our nature. The body wants rest. Toil, toil of hand and foot and brain, demands alternations of rest, if it is not to kill. The mind wants rest. The thinking, understanding, reasoning, reflecting mind. And certainly the soul wants it. That wonderful, that immortal thing within each of us—which we can distinguish not only from the material body, but even from the thinking mind—that soul which comes straight to each man from his God, and (strange to add) must return straigbt out of this life to the God who gave it—the soul has its toils and its journeyings and its wearinesses—distinguishable easily from a mere earthly solicitude on the one side, and from a mere intellectual unrest on the other. The soul is worn and weary for want of some rest of its own in a strong, delightful, imperishable heart of Love! In their different ways all are seeking rest. Oh, it is a sorrowful thought, when you are thrown into the midst of a multitude, gathered for business, for amusement, even for worship, how few, how very few, of all these have yet found their rest! One is heaping up riches, ignorant who shall gather, knowing only this, that he can carry nothing away with him when he dieth! But he wants rest, and partly he puts out of sight the sordidness and the shortlivedness of this particular rest; and partly, with his eyes open, he says, Twenty years, or twenty hours, or even so base a rest, are better than none! And so he goes after this. Another, far higher and nobler in his aspiration, cannot live without affection. That, he sees, is rest, could he but have it—could he but know indeed what it is! And then, eluded and baffled, at last desperate, in this pursuit of his rest, he falls into evil courses, and would fain fill himself with such husks of love as swine scarcely eat! Rest in the rest of God. "My rest," God says in the 95th Psalm, and speaks of man entering it. This rest, the context tells us, is partly present, partly future. 1. There is a present rest in the rest of God. That can only be found in an entire, absolute trust in the atonement, made once for all upon the cross of Jesus. Once apprehend that, and then there will enter your soul a peace and a rest indeed passing all understanding. You will work afterwards as never before, because you will work from, not for acceptance, because in working you will be resting. You will count all your work as needing, yet having, forgiveness. 2. From this soul's rest there is but one step into the saint's rest—into that calm, that reposeful existence which lies beyond death for such as shall be counted worthy. Not entirely separate, as some would represent, from the life that is now, and from the stage of present action; for if we rest not now, in God's sense of resting, from sin, from self, from vanity, from feverish haste, from human praise, in the sense of our littleness and of God's might, of our sinfulness and of Christ's atonement, we shall never rest then where God is all in all: not entirely separate from earth—for, after all, heaven is but the Spirit's presence, is but the consciousness of God as our God, is but the love of Christ filling and constraining; and where these are below, there is heaven begun—not entirely separate, yet severed from the life that now is, even for the

chief of saints, by two definite differences—by the removal of this body of earth now enchaining the soul, and by the experience of that nearer, more direct communion, of which it is written that there they shall see God. (*Dean Vaughan.*)

Ceasing from self:—The writer makes a distinction between soul and spirit in ver. 12. Your soul is *you*, the part that thinks, wills, reasons, loves, forms plans, purposes, the age, the *I* life. Beyond that, deeper, deeper down, is the spirit, the part that holds fellowship with God. *God* consciousness. Good people, converted people, regenerated people, live too much from the *soul* centre, *self*-consciousness, and in proportion to our doing this we lose God's rest. As "I" comes in, rest goes out and restlessness enters. (*F. B. Meyer, B.A.*)

Ver. 11. **Let us labour therefore to enter.**—*Believers labouring for their reward*:—In these words there is, first, an exhortation; second, a motive pressing it. In the exhortation we may consider—1. The dependence of it upon what goes before, intimated in the particle "therefore;" showing that it is an inference from some preceding doctrine. In the latter part of the third chapter, he shows that unbelief kept the disobedient Israelites out of God's rest; both out of Canaan, and heaven typified thereby (chap. iv.). (1) He lets them see that they had an offer of that eternal rest as well as the Israelites in the wilderness had; because both had the gospel, only the Israelites in the wilderness did not believe it. (2) The great thing which we are to have in our eye, that rest, namely, of which David speaks (Psa. xcv. 11); that rest which remains (ver. 9). (3) What we are to aim at in reference to that rest; "to enter into it," that is, to be partakers of it. (4) The means to be used, in order to our entering, is labouring. Heaven will not fall down into our mouths while lying on the bed of sloth. (5) Observe the order of the labour and the rest. In the way of God's appointment, and of godly choice, the labour is first, then comes the rest. It is quite contrary with the wicked. They begin with a day of rest, and end with eternal toil; the godly begin with a night of toil, and end, or rather continue in eternal rest. Oh, that we may follow God's order! (6) Observe the end and design of this labour: it is rest. Men work in their young days, and lay up that they may rest in old age. So does the Christian. The wicked also labour that they may rest; but there is a vast difference both betwixt their labour and rest. Their labour is in sin, and their rest is there; but sought in vain, "for in the fulness of their sufficiency they are in straits." But the godly have their labour in grace, their rest in glory, and between these there is an infallible connection; who, then, would refuse that labour which ends in that rest. (7) The persons exhorted to labour; us, which includes the apostle and all the Hebrews, whom he exhorts to-day to hear God's voice, so that this exhortation belongs to all the visible Church, godly and ungodly. Some have entered the avenue leading to glory, some have not; both are called to labour to enter. 2. The motive pressing the exhortation. It is taken from the danger of not labouring. Consider here—(1) That of which people are in danger, and which will come upon them, if they labour not to enter, falling; that is, falling short of heaven, and missing salvation. (2) The great cause of ruin, that is, unbelief or unpersuasibleness. Unbelief is the great cause of the ruin of the hearers of the gospel, and that which cuts the sinews of true diligence, so as people under the power of it cannot labour. (3) A confirmation of the certainty of their ruin: "after the same example of unbelief." (4) The universality of the danger: "any man." I. IN WHAT THE CHRISTIAN'S LABOUR CONSISTS. 1. The mind must be intent on the business of salvation. This imports—(1) An impression of the weight of that matter upon the spirit. No wise man will labour for a trifle. (2) An habitual minding of that business. Religion is the believer's trade—hence his conversation is in heaven. (3) The heart's being set upon salvation (2 Cor. v. 9). The scattered affections of the soul are gathered together from off the variety of objects which the world affords us, and are fixed here (Psa. xxvii. 4). 2. In this labour there is painfulness and diligence. The man labours for salvation, as working for his life itself, for indeed he sees his all is at stake. No opposition will make him give over. There is such a faintness in all the endeavours of many for heaven, that with the fearful who have no heart, they are excluded (Rev. xxi. 8). 3. In this labour there is haste. Our work must be done speedily, for the time proposed for our labouring is but "to-day." There is an unbelieving haste, that will not wait God's time; but this true haste is not to let his time slip. 4. There is this labour carefulness and holy anxiety about salvation, in the managing of the work (Philip. ii. 12). Now this implies—(1) The turning of the soul from anxious cares about the world, to a holy

solicitude about the salvation of the soul. (2) A fear of falling short of heaven. (3) An earnest desire to be set and kept on the way to heaven. (4) A fear of mismanagement in his work. The labourer for heaven should work, and doth best work with a trembling hand. It was the fundamental maxim of the heathen moralists, Have confidence in yourself. But I may say the Christian maxim is, Have no confidence in yourself. He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool. II. FOR WHAT WE ARE TO LABOUR. To enter into the heavenly rest. This is that which we are to have in our eye, and to which our endeavours are to be directed. We are not called to work for nought; but as heaven is attainable, we are to labour that we may enter into it. 1. Show some Scriptural notions of heaven, to which this of entering doth agree. (1) Heaven is held out under the notion of a garden or paradise. (2) A house. (3) The temple typified by that at Jerusalem. (4) A city glorious for magnificence and beauty (Rev. xxi.). (5) A country; even a better country than the best here below (Heb. xi. 16). (6) A kingdom (Matt. xxv. 34); a kingdom that cannot be moved (Heb. xi. 28). 2. Show what it is to enter into the heavenly rest. (1) There is an entering into heaven by the covenant. The covenant of grace is the outer court of heaven. Of this everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure, David says, "this is all my salvation and all my desire." Surely, then, heaven was in it. (2) There is an entering by faith. (*a*) In so far as faith lays hold upon Christ, and unites us to Him (John vi. 54). (*b*) In so far as faith lays hold on the promise in which heaven is wrapped up. (3) There is an entering by hope (Rom. viii. 24). Faith goes out as a conqueror, and hope divides the spoil. (4) There is an entering by obedience. "I know," said Jesus, "that His commandment is life everlasting." There is a personal way to heaven, that is, Christ. "I am," saith He, "the Way." Also a real way to heaven, that is, the commands of God, called everlasting life, because they certainly land the soul in heaven, and there is an infallible connection betwixt true obedience and glory. (5) There is an entering into heaven by actual possession, which in respect of our souls is at death, and in respect of our bodies will be at the resurrection, which is the full and final entry, to which all the rest are subservient. This entrance is that solemn entering into the king's palace (Psa. xlv. 15), which shall also be most joyful. 3. Mention some steps in the way by which we must labour to enter. (1) We must labour to get grace; this is the first step. "Let us have grace," says Paul, "whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear." (2) We must labour to exercise grace in the gracious performance of duties. (3) Growing in grace. (4) Assurance of grace and glory. (5) Perseverance in grace to the end. 4. Consider this labouring to enter, as it has a respect to our preparation for that eternal rest in heaven. The man that is to go abroad is a busy man, putting all things in order for his voyage; and he that is making for his night's rest in bed, is not idle; and he that is to enter into the possession of eternal rest, has much work on his hand preparatory thereto. And thus to labour to enter into the heavenly rest implies—(1) The solid faith of eternal life, even of this truth, that "there remaineth a rest for the people of God." (2) A sincere desire to be partaker of that rest, after this troublesome life is over. (3) Resolute endeavours to enter there, by God's own way, which has already been described. (4) Frequent thoughts of that eternal rest. III. HOW WE SHOULD LABOUR. 1. We should labour willingly and cheerfully. 2. Diligently. 3. With all your might. 4. Resolutely. 5. Constantly. 6. With fear and trembling. 7. Quickly. 8. Refusing no piece of work God puts into your hands. 9. Evangelically. IV. THAT WE MUST LABOUR IN ORDER TO OUR ENTERING INTO THAT REST. 1. Consider the several notions under which the Christian's life and the way to heaven is held forth, all of them implying true pains and labours. It is a working, "Labour not for the meat that perisheth" (Greek, "work"), (John vi. 27). Here he that works not shall not eat. Yea, it is a working out of our own salvation; a bringing the work to perfection, otherwise what is done will be lost (2 John 8). It is compared to the work of the husbandman, which you know is not easy, ploughing, sowing, reaping (Hos. x. 12), especially considering that they are both the labourers, and the ground that is laboured. The Christian is a spiritual soldier, he must fight (2 Tim. iv. 7); yea, and overcome (Rev. iii. 21). Heaven has a strait gate by which to enter in, and therefore cannot be entered with ease. Men must press into it (Luke xvi. 16); and take it by storm; yea, put forth their utmost strength as they that are agonising. The apostle says (2 Cor. v. 9), "we labour"; the word signifies to labour most earnestly, as an ambitious man for honour; and what will not such do, to gain their point? 2. Consider how the way to heaven was typified under the Old

Testament. Canaan was a type of heaven, and to what labour were the Israelites put before they could reach that land, though it was promised to them. Another eminent type of it, was the ascent into the temple, which was seated upon a hill, even Mount Moriah (1 Kings x. 5). Many a weary step had some of them ere they got to Jerusalem (Psa. lxxxiv. 6, 7); and when they came there, they had to ascend unto the hill of God (Psa. xxiv. 3), the mount of the Lord's house, a type of heaven. 3. Consider how the Scripture supposeth this labour (Rom. vii. 24; Gal. vi. 5). 4. Consider how the Scripture represents the sluggard and his temper to us, as most hateful to God, and as one that is lost by his sloth (Prov. xiii. 4, xx. 4, and xxi. 25). The sluggard is the unprofitable servant (Matt. 26–34). 5. Whom God intends for heaven, in them He puts an active principle of grace. It is as natural for grace to bring forth good works, as for a good fruit tree to bring forth good fruit. 6. To enter heaven without labour is a contradiction; and so impossible. Heaven is a reward, and necessarily pre-supposeth working. Moreover, it is a rest which is a relative term, and has necessarily labour pre-supposed to it. V. WHY WE MUST LABOUR IN THIS SPIRITUAL WORK, in order to our entering heaven. Negatively; not because by works we must merit heaven, for the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Our working is the way to the kingdom; not the cause of our reigning; Christ's working was that. But we must labour, because—1. It is the command of our great Lord and Master, whose command we are not to dispute, but to obey. 2. The glory of God requires it. 3. Because there is an infallible connection betwixt labouring and the rest. Labouring is the only way we can attain it. There is no reaching the treasure of glory without digging for it. 4. Because otherwise we pour contempt on the heavenly rest. It was the sin of the Israelites (Psa. cvi. 24, 25). 5. Because it is difficult work you have to do, and therefore we should set ourselves to labouring, for it is heart work. Motives: 1. Consider that in other things you do not refuse to labour. You are not such as live idle and at ease. Now God is putting a piece of work in your hands; will you labour for others, but not for Him? 2. Your profession and your vows call upon you to labour to enter. 3. Your time is short; ere long all of us shall be in an unalterable state. 4. Your time is uncertain, as well as short. 5. The devil is busy to keep you out of that rest. 6. You have weighty calls to this work and labour. Lessons: 1. You have the call of the Word and ordinances. Wherefore has the Lord sent you His gospel, but for this end. 2. You have the call of providence. 3. The call of conscience. 4. If you labour not, you will never see heaven. Now to make this labour easy to you, I would recommend—1. To keep the encouragements to the work in your eye; particularly such as these, the example of those that have gone before you, and have got safe to the journey's end. These have made it appear the work is possible, and the reward certain. 2. Live by faith. 3. Labour to get and keep up love to Christ. 4. Look upon that labouring as your interest as well as your duty. 5. Be constant in that labour. (*T. Boston, D.D.*) *Labour to enter into eternal rest:*—How calm and beautiful to the servant of God is the close of a Sabbath day! It has, if he has used it aright, helped to allay all his cares and soothe all his woes; to brighten earth by the reflection of heaven. How endearing and animating, then, the blessed link, that knits the passing Sabbath of earth with the interminable Sabbath of heaven!—that makes the best and brightest day in the seven, to be to the child of God at once the pledge and the antepast of the everlasting "rest that remaineth for the people of God!" I. "Let us labour to enter into that rest"; FOR LABOUR IS NEEDFUL, IF WE WOULD ENTER. Most true it is, that eternal life is from first to last "the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Death we win—it is the wages of our service; life we receive—it is the free boon of boundless grace. Purchased, but by the blood of God; given to us "without money and without price." But it is not less true, that though it be the gift of God, it is given to us in order to, and in connection with, toil, struggle, self-denial, self-subjugation, a warfare unremitting, a perpetual maintenance of "the good fight of faith, against the flesh, the world, and the devil." We see, in the history of God's saints in every age, that to enter the glorious "rest" was a task of stupendous difficulty—was a pursuit for unremitting earnestness and energy—and called for and cost them all their devoted powers. Says not the Scripture everywhere the same? "Strive," said the Saviour—agonise—"to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." II. We must "labour to enter into that rest," because IF WE FAIL OF THAT REST, WE FAIL OF ALL REST FOR EVER. III. "Let us labour to enter into that rest"; for IT IS WORTH OUR UTMOST LABOUR. It was beautifully said by a heathen wise man,

that the noblest thing on earth is a noble object nobly pursued. That man, in his sentiment, was "not far from the kingdom of God." Oh! had he possessed the lamp that lights us, to reveal to him the glories prepared for them that love God, he would have seen at once, that the only noble object for immortal, responsible, rational man—the only noble object to be nobly pursued, in faith, in love, in self-denial, in holiness, in obedience, in patience, in indomitable resolution—is the kingdom of God's dear Son. IV. "Let us labour, therefore, to enter into that rest"; for EVEN HERE HOW MUCH OF THIS REST MAY BE OURS, WHILE WE TOIL AND TRAVEL AND CONFLICT BELOW! The apostle beautifully says in the preceding context, "We which have believed do enter into rest." There are first-fruits brought from heaven to the wilderness, as there were first-fruits brought from Canaan to the desert. V. "Let us, therefore, labour to enter into that rest"; for OUR LABOUR IS "NOT IN VAIN IN THE LORD." In this race none fails through inveterate ignorance, if that ignorance be not of choice and of obstinacy; none comes short through want of talent or opportunity or advantage, if he makes the most of such as God gives him; none fails because of extremity of poverty or misery or desolation of earthly circumstances; none comes short because there was not mercy in God, there was not efficacy in the blood of Christ, there was not freeness and fulness in the Spirit of grace, there was not room in heaven, there was not amplitude in the gospel of peace. Every man that fails and comes short, "cannot enter in because of unbelief"; because he "would not come to Christ that he might have life," or, coming to Christ, he would not have life in the way of "working out his own salvation with fear and trembling, because it was God that worked in him to will and to do of His good pleasure." (*H. Stowell, M.A.*) *The need of labour before rest*:—We may properly regard this as an intimation that care and trouble are absolutely necessary on our part, in order to the procurement and enjoyment of those things "which God hath prepared for them that love Him." We should never fail to consider this life as a state of trial. In order to the attainment of human perfection, we perceive much labour to be necessary; there is no science, there is scarcely any art or employment in our several vocations in which we can arrive at eminence without industry and toil: exceptions there doubtless are, but this is the rule. We may further observe, that the greatest delight which we experience upon earth is frequently obtained by previous exertion or privation. As it is with the body, and with the attainment of natural blessings, so we have much greater reason to expect that it should be with the soul, with the attainment of those pure and spiritual blessings to which the natural man is averse. We could not expect them to be enjoyed without a previous discipline, without an anxious seeking, without a determined conflict. Not that such discipline and duty, on our part, are to be regarded as effectual in themselves; still less as entitling us to the benefits of the gospel on the ground of desert: we can have no such title but through the merits and for the sake of our blessed Redeemer. Whatever the labour might be—however severe, however unassisted and unrelieved—every wise man, every man who exercised a common judgment and prudence, would thankfully submit to it for a few years as the appointed means of a happy eternity; just upon the same principle as he would gladly submit to the trouble or toil of a day for the sake of procuring riches and comfort and honour during the remainder of his existence upon earth. But the work of the Christian, in the preparation of his soul for rest, is not a labour unassisted and unrelieved; not a gloomy period of service without the light of the sun. There is a heaven-born spirit, an all-sufficient grace, a holy energy and animation imparted, affording much more than a recompense even at present, and making the believer thankful that he has struggled and endured. Nevertheless, the mainstay of the children of God in their infirmities, the refreshment of their spirit in the vale below, is the promise of a heavenly rest at the end of their short pilgrimage, towards which they have the comfort of making a daily advancement: the promise of a final and blissful consummation. An aged Christian, now near this end, commonly says, at every striking of the clock upon his ear, thank God I am an hour nearer to my home and my rest. Such thankfulness may every one of us be able heartily to express! (*J. Slade, M.A.*) *Labour and study necessary for reaching heaven*:—We must not think to go to heaven without study, bare wishing will not serve the turn. It is not enough to say with Balaam, "Oh, that my soul might die the death of the righteous, and my last end be like his" (Numb. xxiii. 10). It is not sufficient to say, oh, that I were in heaven, but we must study to go to heaven. Now in all studying these things must concur. 1. There must be the party that studieth, and that is every Christian—high and

low, rich and poor, of what estate or condition soever. The king and the subject, the ministers and their people, the master and the servant, the father and the child, the husband and the wife, the merchant and the clothier, the gentleman and the yeoman, the divines, lawyers, physicians, husbandmen, &c., all must study to enter into this rest. 2. There must be a closet, or a place to study in, that is, the chamber of our own hearts. 3. There must be a book to study on. Every student must have his books. There can be no workman without his tools, nor a scholar without a library. Now the Lord will not trouble us with many books. As Christ said, one thing is necessary. So one book is necessary, the book of books—the Holy Scriptures. Let us study that thoroughly, and learn the way to heaven. 4. There must be a light to study by. No man can study in the dark; either he must have daylight or candlelight. The light whereby we study is the light of God's Spirit, who must enlighten our eyes that we may see the wonders of God's laws and direct us to this heavenly rest. 5. There must be diligence in study. Every student must be diligent. Learning is not gotten without pains. We must not study by fits, a start and away, but we must lie at it, if by any means we may come to this rest. 6. There must be a time to study in. Now this time is the term of our life. 7. And it is worth our study. (*W. Jones, D.D.*) *Heaven a place of rest*:—Heaven is a place, or state, of rest. What kind of rest? The rest of inactivity, of absence of occupation, of listlessness, dreams, and luxurious vacuity? Certainly not. This is evidently not the kind of happiness that dignifies, improves, satisfies, or suits man, even here; far less therefore can it harmonise with his exalted nature hereafter, which would only be cramped, imprisoned and dishonoured by such uncongenial inactivity. I. A REST FROM DISTRACTING DOUBT. Here there is much sophism which is hardly to be distinguished from truth; in heaven all is truth. Here there is a great battle between truth and error; in heaven the victory is decided, and peace is eternal. Here we know in part, and therefore we can prophesy but in part; there we shall know even as we are known. There we shall rest; rest from the tides and fluctuations of uncertainty, and find a calm shore and a secure haven. Nothing there can excite in us the least suspicion of the care, the justice, or the goodness of our Maker, for these will be the visible support of our immortal life. II. A REST FROM ANXIOUS CARES. In heaven these instruments of our earthly discipline will be laid aside. There will be no thorns in the pillow of that rest. III. A PLACE, OR STATE, OF REST FROM PAIN. IV. A REST FROM CONTENTION AND STRIFE. Discord, divisions, and fightings shall cease, and the confused noise of the warrior shall no more be heard there. Such things must not come where the Prince of Peace sits on the right hand of His Father. All rivalry and hate will be extinguished. "There no friend goes out, nor enemy comes in." V. A PLACE, OR STATE OF REST FROM SIN. (*F. W. P. Greenwood, D.D.*) *Labouring for rest*:—That is a singular paradox and bringing together of opposing ideas, is it not? Let us labour to enter into rest. The paradox is not so strong in the Greek as here; but it still is there. For the word translated "labour" carries with it the two ideas of earnestness and of diligence. And this is the condition on which alone we can secure the entrance, either into the full heaven above, or into the incipient heaven here. But note, we distinctly understand what sort of toil it is that is required to secure it, that settles the nature of the diligence. The main effort of every Christian life, in view of the possibilities of repose that are open to it here and now, and yonder in their perfection, ought to be directed to this one point of deepening and strengthening their faith and its consequent obedience. You can cultivate your faith, it is within your own power. You can make it strong or weak, operative through your life, or only partially, by fits and starts. And what is required is that Christian people should make a business of their godliness, and give themselves to it as carefully, and as consciously, and as constantly, as they give themselves to their daily pursuits. The men that are diligent in the Christian life, that exercise that commonplace, prosaic, pedestrian, homely virtue of earnest effort, are sure to succeed; and there is no other way to succeed. And how are we to cultivate our faith? By contemplating the great object which kindles it. By averting our eyes from the distracting competitors for our interest and attention, in so far as these might enfeeble our confidence. Do you do that? Diligence; that is the secret—a diligence which focusses our powers, and binds our vagrant wills into one strong, solid mass, and delivers us from languor and indolence, and stirs us up to seek the increase of faith, as well as of hope and charity. Then, too, obedience is to be cultivated. How do you cultivate obedience? By obeying—by contemplating the great motives that should sway and melt, and sweetly subdue the will, which are all shrined in that one saying, "Ye are not your

own; ye are bought with a price," and by rigidly confining our desires and wishes within the limits of God's appointment, and religiously referring all things to His supreme will. If thus we do, we shall enter into rest. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Diligence explained:*—Diligence comprises both the impulse of the bowstring that despatches the arrow, and the feather that keeps it true to its aim. *Diligio*, the Latin word from which diligence is derived, means I choose, select, or love. To be diligent, therefore, is to resemble an eager hunter, who selects the fattest of the herd, and, leaving the rest, pursues and captures that one. Napoleon the First won his victories chiefly by rapid concentration of his forces on one point of the enemy's line. A burning-glass is powerful because it focalises a mass of sunbeams on one point. So in all departments of activity, to have one thing to do, and then to do it, is the secret of success. *The need for diligence:*—God does not give thee the flower and the fruit of salvation, but the seed, the sunshine, and the rain. He does not give houses, nor yet beams and squared stones, but trees, and rocks, and limestone, and says: Now build thyself a house. Regard not God's work within thee as an anchor to hold thy bark firmly to the shore, but as a sail which shall carry it to its post. (*J. P. Lange.*) *Diligence:*—Its root meaning is to love, and hence it signifies attachment to work. The habits of literary men illustrate this. Lord Macaulay loved order, accuracy, and precision. He corrected his MS. remorselessly. So with his proof-sheets. "He could not rest till the lines were level to a hair's breadth, and the punctuation correct to a comma; until every paragraph concluded with a telling sentence, and every sentence flowed like running water." (*Thwing's Preacher's Cabinet.*) *Christianity requires doing as well as believing:*—The other day I met a friend noted for a fretful and anxious disposition; and seeing that his face was cheerful and his step elastic, I said, "Well, old friend, you look as if things were going pleasantly." He replied, "Oh yes; my relatives have bought an annuity for me in the —— Assurance office, and until I die I shall have £200 a year to live on. You see, my future is provided for, and I have no need to worry myself about it as I used to do!" Like that man, some people imagine that when they believe in Jesus, there is a something done which makes them safe for ever, without any further trouble to themselves. A man who buys a railway ticket, gets into the train, and feels he has nothing more to do except sit there comfortably until the train arrives at the journey's end. But the Christian life is much more difficult. It is true that through Jesus Christ is preached unto men the forgiveness of all their sins; but it is an error to preach that Christians have nothing to do except believe, Jesus demands a faith in Him which shall constrain us to do. (*W. Birch.*) *Labour till the last:*—Calvin, even in his dying illness, would not refrain from his labours; but when his friends endeavoured to persuade him to moderate his exertions, he replied, "What! shall my Lord come and find me idle?" *Labour necessary for our salvation:*—Never think that God is going to make a Christian out of you without effort of your own. When the lion crouches down before you, and his eyes glare upon you, and he is about to spring, you need not expect Providence to fire your gun for you; you must do it yourself or die. 'Tis kill or be killed with you then. God has already done His part in the work of your salvation. If you don't choose to do your part, you will perish. (*H. W. Beecher.*) **Fall after the same example of unbelief.**—*The use of examples of punishment:*—This implies—1. There is danger and an evil to be feared. 2. The evil is falling. 3. All and every one is in this danger—"Lest any fall." 4. Lest any should slight the danger, he instanceth in the Israelites, who fell by unbelief. To fall may be a sin or a punishment. If a sin, it is apostasy. If a punishment, it is exclusion out of God's rest, with all the miseries that accompany it. So it seems here to be taken. By this, as by many other places, we easily understand how we must conceive of examples, and what use we must make of them. If they be examples of punishments, we must account them as executions of God's laws, and especially of His comminations. The use that we must make of them is, to avoid those sins for which they were inflicted, and to be the more careful in this particular because by them we may easily know that God's laws are not only words and His threats only wind. It is not with God as it is often with men, who will threaten more than they will or can do. Thence the saying, "Threatened men live long." But here it is otherwise. God's word is His deed, and His punishments threatened against apostates are unavoidable. They are not made unadvisedly, and out of rash passion, but according to the eternal rules of wisdom and justice. And let every one know that that God that spareth neither men, nor angels, nor His own chosen and beloved people, will not spare us. Therefore, as we desire to escape this fearful punishment, let us labour to enter into that rest which God hath promised.

(*G. Lawson.*) *Disobedience and unbelief:*—Disobedience is the root of unbelief. Unbelief is the mother of further disobedience. Faith is submission, voluntary, within a man's own power. If it be not exercised the true cause lies deeper than all intellectual ones, lies in the moral aversion of his will and in the pride of independence which says, "Who is the Lord over us?" Why should we have to depend upon Jesus Christ? And as faith is obedience and submission, so faith breeds obedience, and unbelief leads on to higher-handed rebellion. The two interlock each other, foul mother and fouler child; and with dreadful reciprocity of influence the less a man trusts the more he disobeys; the more he disobeys the less he trusts. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Unbelief incompatible with salvation:*—People say that it is arbitrary to connect salvation with faith, and talk to us about the "injustice" of men being saved and damned because of their creeds. We are not saved for our faith, nor condemned for our unbelief, but we are saved in our faith, and condemned in our unbelief. Suppose a man did not believe that prussic acid was a poison, and took a spoonful of it and died. You might say that his opinion killed him, but that would only be a shorthand way of saying that his opinion led him to take the thing that did kill him. Suppose a man believes that a medicine will cure him, and takes it, and gets well. Is it the drug or his opinion that cures him? If a certain mental state tends to produce certain emotions, you cannot have the emotions if you will not have the state. Suppose you do not rely on the promised friendship and help of some one, you cannot have the joy of confidence or the gifts that you do not believe in and do not care for. And so faith is no arbitrary appointment, but the necessary condition, the only condition possible, in the nature of things, by which a man can enter into the rest of God. If we will not let Christ heal our wounds, they must keep on bleeding; if we will not let Him soothe our conscience, it must keep on pricking; if we will not have Him to bring us nigh, we must continue far off; if we will not open the door of our hearts to let him in, He must stop without. Faith is the condition of entrance; unbelief bars the door of heaven against us, because it bars the door of our hearts against Him who is in heaven. (*Ibid.*)

Vers. 12, 13. **The Word of God is quick and powerful.**—*The Word a sword:*—It may be most accurate to interpret this passage as relating both to the Word of God incarnate, and the Word of God inspired. Christ and His Word must go together. What is true of the Christ is here predicated both of Him and of His Word. I. First let me speak CONCERNING THE QUALITIES OF THE WORD OF GOD. It is "quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword." 1. The Word of God is said to be "quick." It is a living Book. Take up any other book except the Bible, and there may be a measure of power in it, but there is not that indescribable vitality in it which breathes, and speaks, and pleads, and conquers in the case of this sacred volume. It is a living and incorruptible seed. It moves, it stirs itself, it lives, it communes with living men as a living Word. That human system which was once vigorous may grow old, and lose all vitality; but the Word of God is always fresh, and new, and full of force. Here, in the Old and New Testaments, we have at once the oldest and the newest of books. 2. The Word is said to be "powerful," or "active." The Word of God is powerful for all sacred ends. How powerful it is to convince men of sin! How powerful it is for conversion! 3. Next, the apostle tells us that this Word is cutting. A sword with two edges has no blunt side: it cuts both this way and that. The revelation of God given us in Holy Scripture is edge all over. It is alive in every part, and in every part keen to cut the conscience, and wound the heart. Depend upon it, there is not a superfluous verse in the Bible, nor a chapter which is useless. Doctors say of certain drugs that they are inert—they have no effect upon the system one way or the other. Now, there is not an inert passage in the Scriptures; every line has its virtues. 4. It is piercing. While it has an edge like a sword, it has also a point like a rapier. The difficulty with some men's hearts is to get at them. In fact, there is no spiritually penetrating the heart of any natural man except by this piercing instrument, the Word of God. Into the very marrow of the man the sacred truth will pass, and find him out in a way in which he cannot even find himself out. 5. The Word of God is discriminating. It divides asunder soul and spirit. Nothing else could do that, for the division is difficult. 6. Once more, the Word of God is marvellously revealing to the inner self. It pierces between the joints and marrow, and marrow is a thing not to be got at very readily. The Word of God gets at the very marrow of our manhood; it lays bare the secret thoughts of the soul. II.

SOME LESSONS. 1. Let us greatly reverence the Word of God. 2. Let us, whenever we feel ourselves dead, and especially in prayer, get close to the Word, for the Word of God is alive. 3. Whenever we feel weak in our duties, let us go to the Word of God, and the Christ in the Word, for power; and this will be the best of power. 4. If you need as a minister, or a worker, anything that will cut your hearers to the heart, go to this Book for it. 5. If we want to discriminate at any time between the soul and the spirit, and the joints and marrow, let us go to the Word of God for discrimination. 6. And lastly, since this Book is meant to be a discerner or critic of the thoughts and intents of the heart, let the Book criticise us. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The power of the Word of God*:—I. ITS JUDGING POWER. 1. It is living and energetic. 2. It cuts both ways. (1) With the one edge it corrects and converts. (2) With the other it condemns and destroys adversaries. II. ITS DIVIDING POWER. 1. It divides the soul from the spirit, *i.e.*, the lower animal nature from the higher, spiritual and eternal. 2. It divides so closely as to lay bare everything in man's composite nature. III. ITS DISCERNING POWER. 1. It shows the moral nature of what is interior and hidden in mental operations. 2. It shows the moral nature of what is revolving in desire, and forming itself into volition and action. IV. REFLECTIONS. 1. The Word of God enters the conscience to convert or to smite. 2. It searches out what has hitherto lain buried in the heart, and uncovers the false and transient from what is true and eternal. 3. It opens a man to himself, so that he may know himself in his moral actions and accountability. 4. Since its powers are so peculiar, let us not resist the Word of God. 5. No one can for ever despise it with impunity. (*L. O. Thompson.*) *The self-evidencing power of the Bible*:—We may affirm of the Bible, that he who reads it with attention, will find his own portrait given with so much accuracy, his heart so dissected and laid bare for his inspection, that there will be nothing left for him but to confess that the Author of the Bible knew him better than he knew himself; knew him better than he would have been known by any being who could not read the thoughts and search the spirit. Is there any one of you who has read so little of the Bible, or read it with so little attention, that he has never found his own case described—described with so surprising an accuracy, that he felt as though he himself must have sat for the portrait? When Scripture insists on the radical corruption of the heart, on its native enmity to God, and on all its deceitfulness, is there any one of us who will fail to allow that the affirmations are every way just, supposing his own heart to be that of which the affirmations are made? And when over and above its more general statements the Bible descends, as it often does, into particulars; when it speaks of the proneness of man to prefer a transient good to an enduring; the objects in sight, however inconsiderable, to those of faith, however magnificent; when it mentions the subterfuges of those whose conscience has been disquieted; when it shows the vain hopes, the false theories, the lying visions with which men suffer themselves to be cheated, or, rather, with which they cheat themselves, who is there amongst us who will venture to deny that the representation tallies most nicely either with what he is, or with what he was—with what he is, if he have never repented and sought forgiveness of sin; with what he was if his nature has been renewed by the operations of God's Spirit? If there be anything like honesty in the mind of the student of Scripture, he must, we are persuaded, be continually startled in his pursuit, in finding his own thoughts and motives and designs set in order before him. And if this be true, then, as is very evident, there belongs to the Bible the character which is assigned to it in the words of our text. And though it may seem somewhat extraordinary that notwithstanding the confessed diversity in human character, we should thus make a simple description serve as the moral portrait of countless individuals, you will remember, that practically, all men are alike; the differences are only superficial, so that Solomon could affirm that—"as in water face answers to face, so the heart of man to man." The face in the water is not a more accurate copy of the face of the beholder, than is the heart of one man a copy of any other man's. And, therefore, with all the differences which there may be amongst men, differences in dispositions and tempers, partly from nature and partly from education, we still take the Scriptural characteristic as actually belonging to every one; and holding up this characteristic, we affirm that we hold up the perfect image or likeness of each man or each woman, without a solitary exception; and we boldly make our appeal to every hearer of the Word, and demand of him whether the preacher do not morally affect such an exhibition of him to himself, that that Word may most justly be described as—"a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart"? But, now, there remains a

most important question—how comes it to pass that if the Word of God possess this dissecting power, so that it lays man bare and exposes to his own eye all the secrecies of his soul—how comes it to pass that so little effect is actually produced? This is only because the hearers are utterly inattentive; because they give no heed whatever to the statements of the preacher; but go through the business of the sanctuary as a matter of form, in which they have no interest. It is no marvel if to such as these the Word of God should not be as a "sword." They may be said to clothe themselves in that thick armour, the armour of indifference, and though dissection may be going on all around, they ward off from themselves the knife of the anatomist. But there is another class of hearers on whom considerable impression is often made by the preaching of the gospel, who, while they remain in church, and are actually hearkening to the solemn truths of religion, feel an interest in what is said, feel its power, and wish to use it for their guidance; and in whom there seems the best moral promise presented of such an attempt at amendment of life, as would issue in genuine conversion. Are there not some who would be ready to own that sermons have occasionally had on them a mighty and almost overcoming effect; so that they have felt constrained to give full assent to the truths uttered in their hearing, though these truths have convicted them of heinous offences, and proved them placed in terrible danger. If the man thus exhibited to himself, startled with the moral deformity which he has been forced to behold, would strive at once to act on the disclosure, and set about procuring a renovation of his nature, he would be immeasurably advantaged by the spectacle of his own sinfulness—soul and spirit will have been divided by conviction of sin, only to the becoming united in the blessed hope of forgiveness through Christ. But if he contents himself with having heard, and do not immediately and intently strive to act on its requirements, what is to be looked for, but that he will speedily lose all those feelings which have been excited within him, as the process went forward of dissecting the inner man? And then there will be no conversion, though there have been conviction, and that, too, through his own listlessness, his own indifference, and not through any want of truth in this emphatic declaration—"The Word of God is quick and powerful," &c. Now, let us recur again to that very important and interesting matter, the self-evidencing power of the Bible. We send a missionary to a barbarous tribe; he settles down amongst the savages; but he can employ no miracle; he can work no wonders to fix the attention, and win the confidence of his wild auditory. You would think there was no chance of his making any way with these barbarians. He seems to have nothing at his disposal by which the pretensions of Christianity may be substantiated. If he could heal the sick; if he could hush the elements; if he could raise the dead; then, indeed, the wild denizens of the distant land might be expected to give ear to him as a messenger from heaven; but just standing as a defenceless stranger on their shores, what probability is there of success when he proceeds to denounce their ancestral superstitions, summoning them away from idols that they had invested with all the sacredness of Divine, and declaring as the alone Saviour of mankind, a Being who died centuries back as a malefactor? But experience is all against you when you would conclude that Christianity cannot make way without miracle. The simple preaching of the sinfulness of man, and of the sacrifice of Christ, has proved a mighty engine in the hands of the missionary; and though he have done nothing but faithfully deliver his message, making no attempt at supporting its authority by an appeal to external evidence, yet have converts flocked in from the mass of idolators, and a moral regeneration has gone out over the long degraded territory. And what account do we give of this phenomenon? Shall we say that Christianity has been admitted without proof? The matter of fact is, that the gospel of Christ carries with it its own credentials. Wherever it is preached, there is a conscience to act upon; amid all the derangements of humanity, a sense of right and wrong is never wholly extinguished, but even where that nature is most sunken, the principle is in action which applauds the cause of virtue and utters a protest against vice; and which, stirring up forebodings when the mind looks onward to death, witnesses powerfully to our living under a retributive government. Conscience is everywhere man's attribute; therefore Christianity has everywhere an evidence. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*)

The Word of God:—The Word of God may here mean the gospel revelation in all its fulness, especially as contrasted with that under the law; the grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ. 1. "The Word of God is quick." This is an ancient expression that signifies living: it occurs in our Creed and in our Advent Collect, "the quick and the dead." This use of the word is frequent in Scripture (see

John v. 21; vi. 63; Rom. viii. 11). Stephen, in Acts vii., describes the ancient Scriptures as "the lively (or living) oracles," those testimonies from God, by which at that time the means of life were communicated. We now inquire, what is the meaning of the Word of God giving life. And clearly it relates to an operation upon the soul of man, to some new state of being generated and produced. A new store of knowledge is brought to the understanding; a flood of light is poured in which arrays every object in a new colour; an influence works upon the affections by which they are refined and changed, made to delight in new purposes and pursuits, to flow in a new channel, and raised from earth to heaven. The Word and its accompanying grace, with its doctrines, and promises, and ordinances, with the manifold ministrations of the Spirit, brings the mind altogether into a new condition. And by the hearing of the Word, and the deep study of the Word, and by the willing and faithful acceptance of all that it reveals, this life of God in the soul is maintained; renewed as it languishes from its corrupt communication with earth, and daily carried on to further advancement and strength. The Word is "quick and powerful": energetic, active. It has the power because it has life. The life is such as to exert a perpetual energy within us: we might say, powerfully alive. It will move upon the mass of corruption; it will convince of sin; it will change the love of sin into the love of holiness; and will, if applied and carried out by the Church's wisdom, bring the wayward and ungodly affections into a state of self-denying discipline, into humble submission to the Divine will. 2. The text moreover declares that the Word "is sharper than any two-edged sword." This figure seems to be borrowed from the prophets (Isa. xlix. 2; Hos. vi. 5). St. Paul in Ephesians vi. speaks of "the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God." The Word of God has always been found, from the beginning, capable of penetrating deeply into the heart of a sinner; of producing a sudden and terrible alarm in the conscience, of striking conviction into the trembling frame, and lowering the rebel to the dust. To the humble, pious, faithful disciple also the Word of God is a sharp instructor, a penetrating sword; often bringing truths to remembrance, which in mortal weakness had been forgotten; often giving a new colour and force to truths already in the mind. And how quick, and mighty, and prevailing are the truths of the gospel for the furtherance of grace, and the increase of heavenly comfort in the soul; depths of wisdom newly discovered; rays of consolation beaming forth; lights of unearthly brightness successively rising to the eye of faith. (*J. Slade, M.A.*) *The sword of the Lord*:—I. THE QUALITIES OF THE WORD. 1. Divine. 2. Living. 3. Effectual. 4. Cutting. 5. Piercing. 6. Discriminating. 7. Revealing. II. THE LESSONS WHICH WE SHOULD LEARN THEREFROM. 1. That we do greatly reverence the Word, as truly spoken of God. 2. That we come to it for quickening for our own souls. 3. That we come to it for power when fighting the battles of truth. 4. That we come to it for cutting force to kill our own sins and to help us in destroying the evils of the day. 5. That we come to it for piercing force when men's consciences and hearts are hard to reach. 6. That we use it to the most obstinate, to arouse their consciences and convict them of sin. 7. That we discriminate by its means between truth and falsehood. 8. That we let it criticise us, and our opinions, and projects, and acts, and all about us. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The power of the Divine Word*:—I. THE MIGHTY EFFECTS OF THE DIVINE WORD AS THEY ARE HERE DESCRIBED. 1. The characteristics of the Divine Word, as "quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword," are illustrated by its effects upon the intellect of man. The carnal mind rebels against, and, by subtle sophistries, attempts to deny its truth; but it has a powerful influence upon the understanding, spiritualising that understanding, and enabling it to discern spiritual things. It carries with it undoubtable credence, and forces the reluctant will and judgment. Its doctrines, how heavenly! its precepts, how holy! 2. The effect of this Word upon the conscience, in convincing of sin and producing godly sorrow, is an illustration of the description in this passage. It is common to view sin, even when it is acknowledged and condemned by the transgressor, in the light simply of its effects on society, or the injury it inflicts on a man's own reputation, property, or health; but when the Divine Word penetrates the soul with a converting power, it is no longer regarded with reference only to its personal or temporal consequences, but as an atrocious violation of the law and an insult to the glory of God. "Against Thee, and Thee only, have I sinned and done this evil in Thy sight." Then again, with regard to the conscience, the Word of God is quick and powerful, for it annihilates the spirit of self-defence, extenuation, and apology, together with those self-righteous principles which exist in the unregenerate man. 3. The

characteristics of this Divine Word are manifested in the effects of it upon the heart, in producing sanctification. This, too, is a severe process, involving much struggle and self-denial. Hence the Word of God is not only a two edged sword in respect to conviction, but in respect to its operations in perfecting religion and preparing us for eternal glory. 4. The operation of truth is sometimes remarkably "quick" as well as "powerful." A remarkable instance of its quick and mighty operation is recorded in the conversion of Paul. 5. The potent influence of the Word is often for a long period concealed from the outward world in the depths of the soul. It is thus a "discerner of the thoughts." II. THE CONCLUSIONS TO BE DRAWN FROM THESE STATEMENTS. 1. The representation of the text ought to enhance our estimation of the Divine Word. It is doing what all the philosophy in the world could never do. How ought we then to estimate it? 2. We should be induced to employ the most zealous efforts for the circulation of the Divine Word by means of printed copies, and the support of Christian ministrations, both at home and abroad. 3. The characteristics of the Divine Word as given in the text, which we have endeavoured to illustrate, should induce the individual inquiry, What am I doing to obstruct or to sustain its influence in my own soul? You must by the very necessity of the case, having heard the Word, either receive or reject it. (*F. A. Cox, D.D.*) *The Word of God likened to a sword*:—The same illustration is used by St. Paul, by Philo, and in the Book of Wisdom, but with a different application in each case. St. Paul likens the Word of God to the sword of the warrior, used as a weapon of the faith (Eph. vi. 17); the Book of Wisdom compares the almighty Word of God to a sharp sword, but uses a different word for "sword," evidently designating the sword of the destroying angel, which executed God's mandate on the first-born of Egypt (Wisd. xviii. 16). Philo dwells on the searching and penetrative power of the Word as that which severs all things. In this passage the ideas of the two last authors are combined by way of warning to the disobedient; the Word of God is compared to the sword of the executioner, piercing with its double edge the very heart of the victim. Like the sword, it searches out evil and destroys it; but it is sharper than the sword, because it penetrates into the region of spiritual life, whereas the sword can only divide joints and marrow, and its power is limited to the animal life. The images are borrowed from a court of justice, where the guilty is brought before his judge, convicted, and executed. (*F. Rendall, M.A.*) *Quick and powerful*:—The latter word explains the former; for those things that are living are said to be active in opposition to such things which are dead, which have lost their power; and to be lively and very active are many times the same; and this signifies the efficacy and active power of this law. This active vigour and efficacy is illustrated by a similitude. For the law is compared to a two-edged sword, which, being used by a powerful and skilful hand, doth manifest how sharp and cutting it is; for it pierceth quickly into the inward parts, and divideth between soul and spirit, and the bones and marrow, which are most nearly united, and more hidden and secret in living bodies. So that in the similitude we have two acts of a sword, or any such cutting instrument. The first is, dividing things most nearly united. The second, discovering things most secret. There cannot be any more perfect division or discovery in any dissection or anatomy than is here expressed. (*G. Lawson.*) *The living Word of God*:—"The Word of God is living," because He who speaks the Word is the living God. It acts with mighty energy, like the silent laws of nature, which destroy or save alive, according as men obey or disobey them. It cuts like a sword whetted on each side of the blade, piercing through to the place where the natural life of the soul divides from, or passes into, the supernatural life of the spirit. For it is revelation that has made known to man his possession of the spiritual faculty. The word "spirit" is used by heathen writers. But in their books it means only the air we breathe. The very conception of the spiritual is enshrined in the bosom of God's Word. Further, the Word of God pierces to the joints that connect the natural and the supernatural. It does not ignore the former. On the contrary, it addresses itself to man's reason and conscience, in order to erect the supernatural upon nature. Where reason stops short, the Word of God appeals to the supernatural faculty of faith; and when conscience grows blunt, the Word makes conscience, like itself, sharper than any two-edged sword. Once more, the Word of God pierces to the marrow. It reveals to man the innermost meaning of his own nature and of the supernatural planted within him. The truest morality and the highest spirituality are both the direct product of God's revelation. But all this is true in its practical application to every man individually. The power of the Word of God to create

distinct dispensations and yet maintain their fundamental unity, to distinguish between masses of men and yet cause all the separate threads of human history to converge and at last meet, is the same power which judges the inmost thoughts and inmost purposes of the heart. These it surveys with critical judgment. If its eye is keen, its range of vision is also wide. No created thing but is seen and manifest. The surface is bared, and the depth within is opened up before it. As the upturned neck of the sacrificial beast lay bare to the eye of God, so are we exposed to the eye of Him to whom we have to give our account. (*T. C. Edwards, D.D.*) *God's Word to us, and our word to God*:—We are here at the end of a long argument. Close attention is required to follow the steps of it. But the general idea is simple. There is a rest of God which is the goal of the long race of the human creation. It has been so from the beginning. It was realised by the old patriarchs as their true city and country, while they lived the tent-life here. It was typified in the promise of Canaan—typified, but certainly not fulfilled—more certainly not exhausted. Long ages after the entrance of Israel into Canaan, a psalmist speaks (by clear implication) of God's rest as still open, still liable to be forfeited, therefore still capable of being attained. Nothing certainly has occurred since the psalmist's day which could be supposed to have cancelled promise by performance. The rest of God is still in reserve for His true people. Let us give diligence to enter into it. Let us not forfeit it, as one whole generation forfeited Canaan, by unbelief. Thus we reach the double text, which tells of the impossibility of eluding God's judgment by any differences of circumstance, or by any counterfeits of character. "The Word of God," His utterance in judging, His discernment of character, His estimate of conduct, is no dead or dormant thing; it is living and active; it is sharper than any two-edged sword; it divides and discriminates where man sees only the inseparable; "soul and spirit," the immaterial part of us in one aspect and the same immaterial part of us in another aspect, it can cleave in twain; thoughts and feelings, exercises of intellect and exercises of affection, it is apt and quick to distinguish between and to pronounce upon. No created being can wear mask or veil in that Presence; all things are bare and naked, all things are exposed and opened; the head that would bend and bow itself, in conscious guilt and shame, before the fierce light of the Presence, is lifted (such perhaps is the figure) and thrown back in full exposure before the eye of the Examiner and the Judge, "unto whom," so the sentence ends, "our word is"; "with whom"—according to the beautiful paraphrase which no later version will wish or dare to improve away—"with whom we have to do." I. "THE WORD OF GOD." There are many such words. There is a Word of God in Nature. Order diversified, which is a true description of Nature, tells of a power which is no brute force; in other words, of a mind at work in its exercise. There is a Word of God in Providence. Consequence modified, which is a true description of Providence, tells of a power working which is no mechanical agency; in other words, of a mind purposing, and realising that purpose in ceaseless processes of adaptation. There is not sound only, but voice in both these—a voice implying a personality, and a voice presupposing an auditor. The Epistle from which the texts come carries us beyond this vaguer and more general Divine utterance to another of which the very "differentia" is the personality. God, it says, having of old time spoken in the prophets—utterers of His truth in sundry modes and manifold particulars—spoke to us at the end of "these days"—at the dividing line, as it were, of present and future, of time and eternity—in One, of whom the title—the unique, incommunicable title—is "Son." "The Word of God," if not a person, is yet a personal communication, as much in the voice that utters as in the ear that hears. This Word was a voice before it was a Book. The living Life wrote itself upon other lives; they in their turn wrote it upon others. ere yet a page of Gospel Scripture was written—on purpose that the distinction between "letter" and "spirit" might be kept ever fresh and vital, on purpose that the characteristic of the new revelation might never fade or be lost sight of, how that it is God speaking in His Son, God speaking, and God bidding man to make reply. But where would the Word have been by this time, left to itself—left, I mean, to echo and tradition? It pleased God by His holy inspiration to move and to guide the pen of living men; and it pleased Him by His Providence wonderfully to watch over the thing written; and it pleased Him in days when there was neither scholarship to revise nor machinery to multiply the writing, to put such love into hearts for those perishable fugitive scrolls of rude, almost hieroglyphic, manuscript, that they were treasured up in cells and churches as the most precious of heirlooms; and it pleased Him at last to stimulate into a marvellous inventiveness His own

gift—grace we might well call it—of human reason, so that the completed volume of the once scattered "Biblia" was multiplied by the new miracle of the printing press into the myriad "Bibles," which are now sown broadcast over the surface of the inhabited globe. "There are," St. Paul says, "so many kinds of voices in the world"—say a hundred, say a thousand—"and no one of them is without signification." Even the Divine voices are many. There is a word of God in nature, and there is a word of God in providence; there is a word of God in science, and there is a word of God in history; there is a word of God in the Church, and there is a word of God in the Bible. And yet all these are external, as such, to the very "spirit of the man that is in him." The Word of God, which is the real speech and utterance of all these voices, comes at last to the man himself in conscience. I speak not now of that more limited sense of conscience in which it is the guiding and warning voice within, saying, "This is the way of duty, walk thou in it." The word of God in conscience is more, much more, than this. It is that of which our Lord said, in reference to the volume of His own evidences, "Yea, and why even of yourselves," without waiting for sign or portent, "judge ye not what is right?" You can discern the face of the earth and of the sky; you can infer from certain indications the approach of shower or heat. How is it that ye cannot infer Deity from the Divine—the Emmanuel presence from the Emmanuel character? The appeal was to conscience, not so much in its sensitiveness to right and wrong, as in its appreciativeness of the false and the true, of God speaking this and God not speaking that. Thus it is that the Word of God, as it at last reaches the spirit and soul of the man, is the net result of a thousand separate sayings, no one of which by itself is the absolute arbiter of the being. It cannot become this till it has made itself audible to the conscience. Till then it is suggestive, it is contributory, it is evidential, it is not the verdict, nor the judgment, nor the sentence, nor the "Word." There is no encouragement to the dallying, to the procrastinating, to the fastidiousness and the waywardness, which is characteristic of the generation. On the contrary, it is a trumpet call to decision. It says, there is a word of God somewhere. The Word of God is a personal word—it speaks to the personal being, as God made and as God sees him. We seem yet to lack one thing. The Word speaks in conscience—speaks to the consciousness—but who speaks it? The "Word" itself, to be audible as such, must have become the Spirit's voice; then it takes of the things of God and speaks them into the conscience, which is the consciousness of the man. II. THERE IS ALSO A WORD OF OURS TO GOD. "Unto Him our word is." The particular point in the view of the holy writer was that of accountability. God speaks in judgment, and we speak to give account. The first readers were on the eve of a terrible crisis. They had to choose between Christianity and Judaism, between religion and patriotism, almost therefore between duty and duty. It was reasonable to speak to them of the Word which is a two-edged sword in discriminating, and of the word which pleads guilty or not guilty at the bar of judgment. We also are passing through a great crisis. You will think that I speak of some political or national crisis. But I do not. I speak of a crisis greater even than these—greater (shall I dare the paradox?) because less great—greater because individual. The crisis of which I speak is that life-long trial, in which each one of us is standing before God's judgment-seat, and upon the decision of which depends for each one a future not to be measured by years, and not to be told in terms of human speech. The text says of this crisis, of this trial, that it is the interchange, so to speak, of two "words"—the dialogue, I had almost said, of two speakers—the word of God judging, and the word of the man making answer and giving account. "With whom we have to do." Our word of account is to God. Oh, if we could take the thought home, what an effect would it have upon the life! What an independence, what a dignity would it give to it! How would it put an end to that running to and fro to give in our account, which makes so many lives so servile and so contemptible? What pains do we take to please, to give satisfaction, to win applause, to be admired if it may be so, at all events to avoid censure one of another. What haste do we make to explain, to excuse, to apologise for, to daub with obtrusive whitewash, our little dubious acts, our little unfortunate speeches. What a forgetfulness do we see everywhere, and first of all in ourselves, of the great principle of the "Godward Word," of the "with whom we have to do" of this text. What a weight, what an influence, what a sanctity, what an inspiration, would be given to our common words, to our every-day remarks and comments upon men and things, if we carried about us that indefinable something, which says, in tones more persuasive in proportion as they are less obtrusive, "This man knows

and feels that he has to do with God!" And all this sets in strong light the duty of doing it. It shows us what is meant by self-examination, what is meant by confession. "With Him," directly and personally, "we have to do." Just to carry to God Himself, in the nightly confessional where we meet the one Judge, just the very thing itself which we did wrong, which we said wrong, just in so many words, that very day which is now being gathered to its parent days—that is the Christian evensong. So judging ourselves, we shall not be judged. The "Word" of account was the first thought of the text. But it is not the only one. It is not perhaps the most beautiful or the most attractive. The spirit of the man has other words besides this to utter in the ear with which it has to do. The speech of God is to me, and my speech is to Him. Might we but enter into this conception, what an elevation, what a grandeur would it give to the life! The speech of God is to thee—His discourse, His self-disclosure, His mind uttering itself, His Spirit breathing itself in converse. And my speech is to Him—my discourse, my self-disclosure, my uttered mind, my soul expressing itself in audible thought. What is this but to give to the life itself a new Christian name, at the font of a spiritual baptism, and to send it forth afresh into all the relationships and all the occupations of the being, having this for its title—Conversation with God? "As a man talketh with his friend," was God's own account of His communication with the hero-saint of Israel—then it was the privilege of the one or two, now it is the very birthright and citizenship of the promiscuous world of the redeemed. There is yet one condition more—we will end with it. The speech of the man to his God must presuppose and proceed upon the speech of God to the man. The two "words" of which the texts tell are not independent words. The conversation is not between two equals, either of whom must contribute his share to the instruction and enjoyment of the meeting. The incommensurableness, in nature and dignity, of the two speakers, while it forbids not freedom in the inferior, forbids presumption; nay, precludes it as a tone and a feeling which would jar upon, and jangle out of tune, the very melody and harmony of the converse. God speaks, and man makes reply. It is not that on equal terms and with equal rights God and the man meet together to think out and to talk out the thing that was, and that is, and that shall be. "The world by its wisdom knew not God." "Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." The Word of God came, and the word of man made reply on the strength of it. This consecrates for him the new and living way, by which, not in hesitation, not as a peradventure, but in calm faith and trust—not forgetting the realities of sin and the Fall, but seeing them at once recognised and overborne by a mightier revelation of love—the "word" of the man meets the "Word" of his God, on the strength of that "Word made flesh," which is the reconciler and the harmoniser of the two. (*Dean Vaughan.*) *The mighty power of the Word*:—Goliath's sword not like to this. David said of that, none to it; but none to this. Lord give it to us. This sword can hew in pieces the most stony heart in the world; to see what blindness in the understanding, what frowardness in the affections. It will lay the heart open, and bewray the secret filthiness, and all the sluttish corners of sin that be in it. When the preacher is speaking, the Word doth so pierce the hearts of the hearers, as that many in the church imagine that the preacher is acquainted with their sins. You shall find it to be a lively and mighty Word, one way or other, either to save you or to condemn you. It is lively and mighty in the godly, to kill sin within them, to raise them up unto newness of life. Was it not mighty in David, making him cry, "Peccavi"? in Josiah, making his heart to melt? in Manasseh, when, of the most horrible idolator that was ever heard of, it made him a zealous worshipper of the true God? in Zaccheus, when it made him to forsake his oppression and to restore fourfold? in Mary Magdalen, when it cast out seven devils out of her? in those three thousand souls, when, pricked in their hearts, they went to the apostles? in the city of Samaria, when it made them to abjure Simon Magus and to listen to St. Philip? Was it not mighty by twelve men, over all the world, when it subdued by their ministry all nations to Christ? There may be a dark and misty morning; the sun comes, scatters the mist, clears the air, and makes it a bright day. So the whole world was shadowed with the mist of blindness, and the fog of sin. The Word comes forth like the sun, and introduces the knowledge of Christ and of His gospel into all the world. O mighty Word! Let us all acknowledge the power of this wonderful Word. Who is able to stand before this mighty Word? It is lively and mighty too, even in the very reprobate. Sometimes they may be senseless, and have no feeling of the cutting of the Word, as those in Jeremiah; nay, they may

even scoff at the Word preached, as the Pharisees did (Luke xvi. 14); their consciences may be seared up, and feel not the sword when it cutteth; as they that be in a lethargy, they may inwardly fret and fume, be in a pelting chafe with the preacher for reproving sins, as Ahab with Micaiah, and Jezebel with Elias, yet but like mad dogs, that sit biting of the chain wherewith they are tied, but not break the chain. So they may snap at the preacher and the Word, but they themselves have the hurt; yet for all that, at one time or other, God will make them to feel the power of His Word and the strength of this mighty arm of His. (*W. Jones, D.D.*) *The Divine Word:*—We are familiar with the Word of God. Like Israel, we possess this treasure in our country, in our families. But, thankful as we ought to be for this great privilege, do we know also the majesty and the power of the Word of God? Do we know that, in possessing, reading, and knowing the Scripture, we are under a mighty, solemn, and decisive influence, and that this Word judges us now, and will judge us at the last day? The expressions which are used here of the Word of God are all applicable to Christ Himself; for He is living, He is the power of God, He came for judgment into the world, He is the Searcher of hearts, His eyes are like a flame of fire. But the reference is to the spoken and written Word. The Scripture, as the written Word, is according to Christ and of Christ; and by it Christ is heard, received, and formed in the soul. Of this written Word, of which Christ is centre and end, as well as author and method, which is inspired by the Holy Ghost and sent by God, the gospel message is the kernel. And hence it is this gospel which especially is called the Word. 1. The Word is living (Rev. i. 18, Greek; John v. 21, 24, 26; vi. 63, 68). God is called the Living One; and Christ the Lord calls Himself the Living One. He is the life, He has life in Himself, and He came to quicken and to give us life abundantly. And the Word which proceedeth out of the mouth and heart of God, the Word of which Christ is the substance, and which is given and watched over by the Spirit, is also living; for God's words are spirit and life. The Word is the seed, which appears insignificant, but which if received in good ground shows its vitality. Hence it is by this Word that souls are born again unto eternal life. 2. The living Word is powerful or energetic. It is compared to the seed which possesses vitality and power. We can see the power or energy of the Word when it fills those that hear and receive it with strong emotions, filling them with fear and terror, with grief and contrition; we can see its power in the sudden and striking changes it produces, when the thoughtless and worldly, the selfish and depraved, are arrested and quickened by its mighty power. But while the earthquake and the fire declare the approach of the Lord, it is in the still small voice that the Lord at last appears to take up His permanent abode. There are the hidden flowers of humility, of forgiving love, of patience and meekness; there are the unseen and unknown daily conflicts and victories; there is the crucifixion of the old man, and the constant renewal of the resurrection-life; and these are especially the triumphs of the power of the Word. 3. The Word cannot be living and energetic without being also a sword, dividing and separating, with piercing and often painful sharpness, that which in our natural state lies together mixed and confused. It comes not to flatter and to soothe; it comes not to encourage us with half-true, half-false encomiums; it does not call the flesh Spirit, but condemns it as flesh and enmity against God. It leads you into the lower Christian life (John iii. 30); it discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart, the hidden self-complacency, the hidden ambition and self-will; it enters into the very joints and marrow, the energies and sentiments, the motives and springs of our actions, the true character of our rejoicing and mourning, our elevations and depressions; and then you say with the apostle: I have no confidence in the flesh, in my old nature, in me, body, soul, and spirit, as I am of Adam. I dare not trust the sweetest frame. I cannot call my "holy things" holy, for they are full of sin. The Word of God enters into my inmost soul and heart-life, and as a judge both unveils and condemns; what hitherto was hidden, is uncovered; what was disguised, unveiled; what was falsely called good and spiritual, appears now in the bright light of God's countenance; the thoughts and intents of the hearts are discerned. Thus am I brought into God's presence, as when I first was convinced of my sin and my guilt; but I feel more abased, and with a deeper knowledge and sorrow I exclaim: I am vile, and abhor myself in dust and ashes. Oh, where is Christ? I wish to be found in Him. I wish Him to live in me. What is there in me pleasing to God? Oh that Christ would sing, pray, love, live in me! When the Word thus dwells in us, we give glory to God, and we are spiritually-minded. We live not on mere notions and impressions; we begin to apply our know-

ledge to our actual state and to our daily walk: we are delivered from hypocrisy, which is since the Fall the great disease of mankind. (*A. Saphir.*) *It finds me:*—It was Coleridge, if we remember aright, who, in giving one of the grand internal evidences of the inspiration of the Bible, as derived from his own experience, used the idiomatic and significant expression, "It finds me." *Effects of the Bible:*—A dealer in low publications taunted me about the Bible. I begged her to take a copy and read it. She said, "I shall sell it." "That is your affair," I replied. I lost sight of her for three weeks. When I returned to her kiosk all her immoral publications had disappeared. "Oh!" she cried, on seeing me, "I am delivered; this book has saved me from dishonour. No, no, I will not sell it. I and my husband now read it together, and with the children." This morning this dear old woman told me that in two neighbouring families the Holy Bible is read, "And," says she, "it has absolutely had the same effect with them as with us." (*Pasteur Hirsch.*) *The Word self-revealing:*—The Word will turn the inside of a sinner out, and let him see all that is in his heart. (*M. Henry.*) *Conviction by the Word:*—The Bechuanas are excellent patients. There is no wincing. In any operation even the women sit unmoved. I have been quite astonished, again and again, at their calmness. In cutting out a tumour, an inch in diameter, they sit and talk as if they felt nothing. "A man like me never cries," they say; "they are children that cry." And it is a fact that the men never cry. But when the Spirit of God works on their minds they cry most piteously. Sometimes in church they endeavoured to screen themselves from the eyes of the preacher by hiding under the forms, or covering their heads with their karosses, as a remedy against their convictions. And when they find that won't do they rush out of the church and run with all their might, crying as if the hand of death were behind them. (*D. Livingstone.*) *The Word of God:*—The Word of God is too sacred a thing, and preaching too solemn a work to be toyed and played with, as is the usage of some who make a sermon but matter of wit and fine oratory. If we mean to do good we must come unto men's hearts, not in word only, but with power. Satan moves not for a thousand squibs and wit-cracks of rhetoric. Draw, therefore, this sword out of your scabbard and strike with its naked edge; this you will find the only way to pierce your people's consciences and fetch blood of their sins. (*William Gurnall.*) **The eyes of Him with whom we have to do.**—*God over all:*—I. We have to do with God fundamently and pre-eminently as our CREATOR. Whence came we? How are we? What are we? Who made us? "He made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture." Now, if God made us, and not we ourselves, if the faculties of our mind, if the energies of our heart, if the wondrous proportions of our body, are all from Him, then can we ever be separate from God? can we ever cease to have that relationship to Him that the creature has to the Creator, the relationship that a child has to a parent? A parent has a claim upon a child as long as it lives. We have to do, then, with a God of love as our Creator. II. We have to do with God as our PRESERVER. Strange that men live on year after year and go up and down, sleeping and waking, toiling and resting, mourning and rejoicing, and yet they can forget how it is that they live and continue in life; how it is that reason still holds its seat; how it is that the heart still throbs; how it is that the harp strings are kept in tune; how it is they are not continually tormented with anguish, distemper, and distress: can any man account for this? If we did not make ourselves, if we did not string the harp, we cannot keep it attuned; if we did not form the mechanism we cannot keep it from decay and dissolution. There is no independent life but in the one Fountain of all life, and all other life is a life of dependence—a dependence of the creature on the Creator, of the thing made upon the Maker, of the thing living on Him that gave it life. We have to do with Him as our Creator; we must have to do with Him in sickness and health, in peril and in safety, in life and in death, in madness and in reason, in the lunatic asylum or the house of prayer; we must have to do with Him as our Creator. "Sir," said a poor maniac, that had escaped from bedlam, and was passing along the streets of London, to a gentleman he met at the angle of one of the streets, "did you ever thank God for reason?" The man stared, and said, "I cannot say that I ever did." "Then do so now, for I have lost mine!" said the poor man. And well I remember, when attending the deathbed of one who died of that most fearful disease, hydrophobia, as, in the agony of the spasms of disease, she grasped my hand until it ached, I repeated to her many of those beautiful prayers of ours, in one of which you have, or ought to have been joining, the thanksgiving, "We bless Thee for our creation, preservation"; and she said, with a shriek, "Oh

preservation, preservation, how we forget it; look at me, and let none who know it ever forget it again!" Yes, preservation. III. We have to do with Him as our bounteous BENEFACTOR, our gracious Attender, and the Fatherly Provider of all we have. Whether a man is racked with pain all his life, or disordered, as some are, from their mother's womb; whether he is blessed with health and a cheerful mind, or if he has anything that relieves him in this vale of tears, any flower that blooms in the desert, any star that brightens the dark sky of our fallen lot; is it not all from God? It is a terrible thought that men have to do with God in all that they have, and abuse, and prostrate to their own destruction; it is all from God, and they cannot say in one thing they have that it is not from Him. How this should make us reconciled, however He may deprive us; how we should be grateful for anything we have, for anything short of hell is the gift of his grace, to us who are deserving of hell; and, therefore, we ought to say, oh! how often, "Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name." IV. We have to do with God as our RULER AND GOVERNOR. Does any man suppose that, because we talk of laws, there is no lawgiver? What is law without the power of enforcing it? What is government without a governor? Without the Divine and mighty Ruler of all, what would take place? Universal anarchy, chaos, and desolation. V. Ah! we have to do with Him as our LAWGIVER. He has given a law; and all things—the sun, the moon, the planets, the stars—have laws; summer and winter, autumn and spring, have all their laws and appointed times—the clouds have their laws, and the light above—everything has its laws; and do you suppose the moral world hath no law, that the great God hath left the mind and spirit without anything to control or guide it? I tell you no. In man, at the first, there was a perfect law engraven on the tablet of his heart, and it is there still; and though shattered the tablet, and blotted is the writing, man knows far more than he fancies; he knows more what he ought to do, and what he ought not to do, than he will admit; he has a conscience within him, and this is from God. And then we Christians—professing Christians—we have the law of God written again, republished by the Divine Registrar; the law so plain and so simple that any man that has a heart can understand it, and so beautiful, and bountiful, and benevolent, and perfect, that no man with any right moral sense can find fault with it or deny it. It is diversified according to circumstances, but the whole is based upon this principle—love to God and love to man. VI. We have yet further to do with this great God as our JUDGE. A man may refuse to have to do with God in obedience and submission to His will; he may set it at nought and forget it; he may lose all sense of it, by imbruting his moral being and becoming seared as with a hot iron, but he cannot refuse to have to do with his Judge. And judgment is not all in a future world—it begins here; the conscience of a man passes a kind of judgment upon him as long as he reads it until he blots it out, or drowns it in mirth, in unbelief, in crime, in debauchery, in drunkenness, and so seals it. Not only so, judgment has begun in this world in present punishment, often in present comfort and joy and peace. VII. We have all of us to do with God as SAVIOUR—"a just God and a Saviour." I believe in the beautiful summary of our Creed, and in the scriptural voice of our Church, "first, I learn to believe in God the Father, who made me and all the world; secondly, in God the Son, who hath redeemed me, and all mankind; thirdly, in God the Holy Ghost, who sanctifieth me, and all the elect people of God." I believe, therefore, that God laid on His own Son "the iniquity of us all." He did not become simply the Son of man, but the Son of men—the Son of mankind. He did not take the nature of one race, or of one people, or of one colour, or of one clime; but He took upon Him the seed of Abraham: He took upon Him our nature and became the Son of man, so that none can claim Him exclusively, and say, "He did not die for you"; nor can any one say, "He died for me alone." He is the Saviour of all men, and especially of them that belong "to the household of faith." If any of you perish, you perish, not as heathen, but as professed and baptized Christians; and how this will turn into a source of remorse and "the worm that never dies," if you perish with the name of Christian, with the Cross of Christ, upon your brow! See to it, "for to whom much is given, of him shall be much required." VIII. We have to do with God, or, at least, we may have to do with Him—we have if we are wise, we have if we are saved—as OUR RECONCILED FATHER, "the Lord our Righteousness," in whom we are chosen, in whom we are sealed, in whom we are at peace with God. Oh! to have to do with God in peace, and reconciliation, and adoption; to have to do with God, not because we must, but because we would be "made willing in the day of His power,"

to have His love constraining us so that we yield ourselves to Him as "those that are alive from the dead, and our poor members as instruments of righteousness unto God." We have to do with Him, "groaning within ourselves, and waiting for the adoption: to wit, the redemption of our bodies"; and we are able to testify that it is through His grace that He has made us His children. IX. Then how sweet to have to do with Him as our SANCTIFIER—our portion for ever; our Sanctifier, restoring us from the ruins of our fallen race, and raising us again to be a temple meet for His own habitation; beautifying us with grace that shines in the Adam here, and that will shine more brightly in the Second Adam. We have to do with Him in anticipation, that we may be like Him for ever. (*H. Stowell, M.A.*) *Our relation to God*:—I. WITH GOD WE PRE-EMINENTLY "HAVE TO DO." We stand in a very intimate connection with Him. To the Being who, in Himself, is infinitely great and glorious, we bear a very close and momentous relation. He is our Creator, Proprietor, Governor, Benefactor, and Judge, and therefore has claims upon us manifold and mighty. In the services of religion, the common business of life, the mysteries of death, the solemnities of judgment, and the issues of eternity, we "have to do with" him. We must have to do with Him, whether we will or not. And oh, surely, we should transact with Him as a Saviour since we shall have to transact with Him as a Judge. II. THERE IS "NO CREATURE THAT IS NOT MANIFEST IN HIS SIGHT"; yea, "all things are naked and open to His eyes." Angels and men —saints and sinners—are alike the objects of His scrutiny. To Him the actions of all hands and the secrets of all souls are intimately known. The phrase "all things" indicates the universal range which the eye of Jehovah takes. The words "manifest," "naked," "opened," express the intensity and clearness of the vision which He exerts throughout the vast and varied sphere. With what reverence should we think of Him whose eyes are ever fixed on us, and with whom, far more than with father, husband, brother, bosom-friend, "we have to do!" With what vigilance should we guard our hearts! and with what circumspection should we regulate our lives! (*A. S. Patterson.*) *Watched by God*:—Can we indulge in sin since the eye of God is ever resting upon us? It was enough to cause the ancient Roman to be circumspect, if the words "Cato sees you" were whispered in his ear. It is said that when the Doges of Venice had degenerated into imperious and oppressive rulers, if only four of the inquisitors whom the State secretly employed were present at any of the great processions or festivals for which that city was famous, it was sufficient to overawe the mighty throng of people present. How much more guarded and serious should our deportment be, seeing that we are ever watched by Him whose eyes are like a flame of fire! (*C. Hewitt.*) *God knows all*:—"Mother," asked a child, "since nothing is ever lost, where do all thoughts go?" "To God," answered the mother, gravely, "who remembers them for ever." "For ever!" said the child; he leaned his head, and drawing closer to his mother, murmured, "I am frightened!" (*Gold Dust.*) *God with us*:—Horace Bushnell woke up in the night and said, "Oh, God is a wonderful Being!" And when his daughter replied, "Yes; is He with you?" the old man replied, "Yes, in a certain sense He is with me; and I have no doubt He is with me in a sense I do not imagine." (*Baxendale's Anecdotes.*) *Omniscience illustrated*:—A few years ago a gentleman in Ireland had a farm there, about a mile and a half from his house. It was situated on the side of a hill, and from his attic window he could get a view of every portion of the land. He would often go to this window with a powerful telescope, and about five minutes every day he would spend in this way, examining what his workpeople were doing, and whether the work of the farm was being carried on properly or not. The men happened to know this, and it often quickened them in their various duties to know that the master's eye from the little attic window might possibly at that very moment be resting upon them. Our Master's eye is always resting upon us. He sees and knows all we think or do or say, and yet how many people act as though God were both blind and deaf. (*Preacher's Promptuary of Anecdote.*) *God is present*:—The celebrated Linnæus always testified, in his conversations, writings, and actions, the greatest sense of God's omniscience; yea, he was so strongly impressed with the idea that he wrote over the door of his library, *Innocui vivite, Numen adest*—"Live innocently, God is present." (*K. Arvine.*) *God a Person*:—Do not preach about Providence; preach about God. There is no objection to the word "providence" when used in *connection* with God. But when a man says, "I am very thankful to Providence," "Providence has been very good to me," I always feel disposed to say, "You coward! why don't you say God? You know you mean God all the time." (*J. C. Miller, D.D.*) *The cry of the human heart for*

a personal God:—A leader of thought in Germany, famous as a poet, famous as a man of letters—who had through his long literary career fought against the idea of a personal God—when poor in purse, paralytic in body, and in his last week of life wrote thus to one of his old class-mates, and under its style of banter I detect a pathetic minor of earnest feeling. "A religious reaction has set in upon me for some time. God knows whether the morphine or the poultices have anything to do with it. It is so. I believe in a personal God. To this we come when we are sick to death and broken down. Do not make a crime of it. If the German people accept the personal King of Prussia in their need, why should not I accept a personal God? My friend, here is a great truth. When health is used up, money used up, and sound human senses used up, Christianity begins." (*C. Stanford, D.D.*) *An all-seeing God*:- If you believe that God is about your bed, and about your path, and spieth out all your ways, then take care not to do the least thing, nor to speak the least word, nor to indulge the least thought, which you have reason to think would offend Him. Suppose that a messenger of God, an angel, were now standing at your right hand and fixing his eyes upon you, would you not take care to abstain from every word or action that you knew would offend him? Yea, suppose one of your mortal fellow servants, suppose only a holy man stood by you, would you not be extremely anxious how you conducted yourself both in word and action? How much more cautious ought you to be when you know, not a holy man, not an angel of God, but God Himself, the Holy One, is inspecting your heart, your tongue, your hand, every moment, and that He Himself will surely call you to an account for all you think, speak, or act! (*J. Wesley.*) *God sees all*:—A man who was in the habit of going into a neighbour's corn-field to steal the ears, one day took his son with him, a boy of eight years of age. The father told him to hold the bag while he looked if any one was near to see him. After standing on the fence, and peeping through all the corn rows, he returned and took the bag from the child, and began his guilty work. "Father," said the boy, "you forgot to look somewhere else." The man dropped the bag in a fright, and said, "Which way, child?" supposing he had seen some one. "You forgot to look up to the sky to see if God was noticing you." The father felt this reproof of the child so much, that he left the corn, returned home, and never again ventured to steal, remembering the truth his child had taught him, that the eye of God always beholds us. *God seeing all things*:—When we perceive that a vast number of objects enter in at our eye by a very small passage, and yet are so little jumbled in that crowd that they open themselves regularly, though there is no great space for that either, and that they give us a distinct apprehension of many objects that lie before us, some even at a vast distance from us, both of their nature, colour, and size, and by a secret geometry, from the angles that they make in our eye, we judge of the distance of all objects, both from us and from one another—if to this we add the vast number of figures that we receive and retain long, and with great order, in our brains, which we easily fetch up either in our thoughts or in our discourses, we shall find it less difficult to apprehend how an Infinite Mind should have the universal view of all things ever present before it. (*W. Burnet.*)

Vers. 14–16. **A great High Priest.**—*Our great High Priest*:—I. PRACTICAL FEATURES OF OUR LORD'S PRIESTHOOD. 1. It is an argument for steadfastness in the Christian life. (1) The fact that Christ is our Priest (ver. 14). (2) That heaven is the sphere of the exercise of His priesthood. 2. It is an encouragement to the faith of the believer. (1) Because of the sympathy of our great High Priest (ver. 15). (2) Because of His personal experience of temptations. (3) Because of His sinlessness. (4) Believing prayer under such circumstances cannot be denied. II. OUR LORD'S PRIESTHOOD CONFORMED TO THE GENERAL LAWS OF PRIESTHOOD. 1. The priest must be taken from among men (chap. v. 1). 2. The priest was ordained to offer sacrifices to God. 3. The priest was ordained to be ready to sympathise with the unfortunate and wretched (chap. v. 2). 4. The priest was not self-appointed (chap. v. 4). 5. But the change in the order of priesthood in our Lord's case is most suggestive and significant. It implies—(1) Perfection (chap. vii. 11–19). 2) Perpetuity (chap. vii. 20–25). (3) That Christ alone could meet such requirements (chap. vii. 26). Lessons: 1. The priesthood of Christ implies Divine qualities. 2. The sphere of the priesthood of Christ ensures the finished work as Redeemer. 3. The priesthood of Christ guarantees all-sufficient sympathy, assistance, and ultimate salvation. (*D. C. Hughes, M.A.*) *Jesus Christ, the Mediator between God and man*:—I. THE NECESSITY THERE IS FOR A MEDIATOR BETWEEN GOD AND

MAN. 1. This is clear, if we consider the circumstances in which our first parents placed themselves. 2. It is implied in the Divine institution of sacrifices and of the order of priesthood. 3. It is expressly taught in Holy Scripture. 4. It is confirmed by the almost universal practice of heathen nations. II. THE SUFFICIENCY OF JESUS CHRIST TO SUSTAIN THIS IMPORTANT CHARACTER. 1. His greatness. 2. His goodness. III. THE PARTICULAR MANNER IN WHICH WE, AS INDIVIDUALS, ARE TO DERIVE THE BENEFITS DESIGNED TO BE CONVEYED BY THE MEDIATION OF OUR LORD. "Let us come to the throne"—in other words, let us come to God—to Him who sits upon the throne. This implies, of course, a previous conviction of our being separated from God, and of the necessity of our return. (*J. Crowther.*) *Encouragement to hold fast:*—1. He giveth them a direction for entering into their rest; to hold fast their profession; that is, in faith and love to avow the doctrine of Christ. (1) Then he that would enter into rest must be steadfast in maintaining and avowing the true religion of Christ. (2) He who quitteth the profession of the truth of Christ taketh courses to cut off himself from God's rest. For if we deny Christ He will deny us. 2. He commandeth to hold fast our profession. Then—(1) God will not be pleased with backsliding, or coldness, or indifference in matters of religion, because this is not to hold it fast; but to take a loose hold, which is the ready way to defection. (2) There is danger lest our adversaries pull the truth from us. (3) The more danger we foresee, the more strongly must we hold the truth. 3. The encouragement which He giveth to hold fast is, We have Christ a great High Priest, &c. Then—(1) As we have need of threatening, to drive us to enter into God's rest, so have we need of encouragements to draw us thereunto. (2) All our encouragement is from the help which we shall have in Christ, and that is sufficient. (3) Christ is always for us in His office, albeit we do not always feel Him sensibly in us. 4. He calleth Christ a great High Priest, to put difference betwixt the typical high priest and Him in whom the truth of the priesthood is found. Then what the typical high priest did in show for the people, that the great High Priest doth in substance for us; that is, reconcileth us to God perfectly, blesseth us with all blessings solidly, and intercedeth for us perpetually. 5. He affirmeth of Christ, that He is passed into heaven; to wit, in regard of His manhood, to take possession thereof in our name. Then—(1) Christ's corporal presence is in heaven only, and not on earth, from whence He is passed. (2) Christ's corporal presence in heaven, and absence from us in that respect, hindereth not our right unto Him, and spiritual having or possessing of Him. (3) Yea, it is our encouragement to seek entry into heaven, that He is there before us. 6. He calleth Him Jesus the Son of God; to lead us through His humanity unto His Godhead. Then no rest on the Mediator till we go to the rock of His Godhead, where is strength and satisfaction to faith. (*D. Dickson, M.A.*) *Our High Priest:*—We know how one man sometimes controls great masses of men. We know how the soldiers of Napoleon, not only in the day of battle, but to the end of their lives, carried in them a worshipping conception of that great hero of battles. We know that everywhere it is the habit of men to cling to some great nature and attempt to pattern their life after his life and to live by his power. Such is the genius of the New Testament. It holds up before the mind of the Jews the pattern which is most heroic to them—the high priest. It holds up Jesus Christ as the Exemplar, the Leader, the Deliverer, the God imminent to their imagination, and attempts to draw men not only through all those endeavours which they make to grow, but through all those experiences which befall them as residents of this lower sphere, without diminishing their faith, their hope, their joy, their courage, or their strength. This is the way in which Christ is presented to men. It is quite possible for an army to be enthusiastic for their king; but then, he is a different sort of being from themselves; and they mutter, "He is a king, and has a good time. He does not know what it is to be wet, and half starved, and wearied with marching through the mud. He has no idea of what we poor privates have to endure." But if the general of an army has been a private soldier, and has gone through weary, dragging marches, and has been hungry and sick, and if he remembers it all, and if when his men go into camp he makes his round, and sits down by the side of one and another, the soldiers say, "Though our general is regarded as the best general in Europe, yet he is not above thinking of us and feeling for us poor fellows in the ranks; he has been situated just as we are, and he has sympathy for us"—what an inconceivable power that sympathy shown to those soldiers gives to that general! Now, the Lord Jesus Christ identifies Himself with the whole universe in such a way that we are sure that He knows us, and every

possible experience that we can go through. Then He is lifted up, and is declared to be at the head of power in the universe. And both of these things—the humiliation by which He gets hold of our confidence and the elevation by which we are filled with enthusiasm for Him—makes Him one who is our inspiration and our encouragement. Now this conception of the Lord Jesus Christ is unfolded in many different ways, as if there were not enough syllables in the world to describe it! Now there is a double connection between men and their Leader, Jesus Christ. In the first place, He is united to us by that which we need and lack. That which brings a physician to the side of the afflicted man's bed in his disease, his wounds, his putrefying sores. And we are in some respects in the same way related to Christ. He looks upon our sins as things to be healed. He looks upon us, in our unfortunate condition, as objects to be sorrowed over, and to be saved. We have, then, a ground for concluding that it is possible for us to live upon a higher plane than that which we find ourselves upon. All men cannot rise to the attainments of some. And, generally speaking, there is, I think, an element of discouragement among men in attempting to form a high religious life in themselves. "It is of no use," they say. "The temptations and the besetments are too many." But one is hopeful and courageous who has a conception of being folded in and guided by the watchful care and love of Jesus, who is at the source and centre of power, and who works, not on the principle of justice and equity, but on the principle of love, doing not that which we deserve to have done, but that which will rescue us, relieve us, build us up, instituting new measures instead of those which prevail in courts of justice. If a man wants to be a Christian; if he wants to be Godlike in his character and conduct; if he wants to practice benevolence and self-denial; if he wants to cultivate humility and gentleness; then he has encouragement in the life and power of the Lord Jesus Christ, who has been through the experiences of this life, and who knows what trials men are beset with here, who knows what inward strivings we have, and who, notwithstanding his knowledge of these things, loves us, and is willing to watch over us from day to day in order to build us up in spiritual things. With that inspiration, I think a man may well enter with courage and confidence upon the Christian life—a courage and a confidence which he could not feel if there were not this thought of his God, his Saviour, his Leader, who has given a concrete, practical example which he can follow, and following which he can attain to the Christian character upon a higher plane. Then, consider the experiences which men are obliged to go through in this life on account of the inequalities of condition. Men do not walk abreast. They are scattered up and down through the earth with every conceivable variation of circumstance and opportunity. Some men are rich, and some men are poor. Some men are educated, and some men wake up in mid-life to see what education would have been to them, but to find that it is too late for them to acquire it. If a man looks about and compares himself with those who are around him, if he compares his condition, his felicities or infelicities, with theirs, he may easily become discouraged and fall into complainings. Hear what the Master says when He speaks on that subject: "The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord." Is there one single privation known to human life that your Leader has not experienced? Is there one single circumstance of position, of hindrance, which you have been subject to that your Lord has not felt in its full weight? The disciple ought not to complain of treatment which he sees his own Master bear with equanimity and meekness. What if every ill-fortune be yours? What if you are emptied of everything? What if you are overthrown? What if your health is broken down in mid-life? What if your affections are blighted? What if your name is traduced? So then, in the midst of the great deficiencies of life, its alterations, its trials, you have the leadership of this personal Christ, who is your Friend, your Guide, who is your Inspiration to patience, and who is your Joy and Triumph in the midst of sorrow and defeat. You cannot tell, by the way a cup looks when it goes into the furnace, what it will look like when it comes out. When, in the pottery, the colours are laid on, they do not appear as they will after they have gone through the burning process. Many a cup whose rim shines with gold after it comes out, goes in black as a negro's face, such is the nature of the gold when it is prepared for the furnace. Even when it comes out it is but little changed in appearance; and yet the colour is the same that it was when it went in. It is burnt in now, however, while then it was simply laid on. But there is another process that it goes through. By and by it is burnished; and the moment attrition is brought to bear on it, that moment the black begins to fall off, and the gold begins to come out in its

perfect colour. Many a man says, "I have endured and suffered year after year, and I am willing to be painted, and to go into the furnace, if I can come out anything comely and beautiful; but I am as black and homely as ever." Yes; but time is going to reveal what you have become. You do not know what you are. You do not know how much of what appears on the surface is cineration or charcoal which will fall away in death. You do not know what effects are being wrought by the strifes that are going on in the inner chamber of your soul. But God knows; and you should have faith that all will be well at last. He is dealing with you, and He says to you, "You do not know what I am doing, but you shall know hereafter." No man is just what he seems to be. Everybody is being changed. God is preparing us for a higher state of existence. By the things which we suffer or endure, by yokes and burdens, by wounds and sickness, by failures, by all manner of overwhelmings in this life, He is working out in us that stature which shall yet appear in glory. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Christ a great High Priest:*—I. THE PRIESTLY DIGNITY OF JESUS. "Seeing, then, that we have a great High Priest." 1. Christ is a Priest. The term signifies one who ministers in holy things. The priests under the law were distinguished as follows—(1) They were appointed of God. (2) Separated to their office and work at a peculiar time. (3) Consecrated with the washing of water and anointing oil. (4) Had peculiar apparel and ornaments; the robe, the mitre, and the breast-plate. (5) They taught the people. (6) Offered sacrifices. (7) And burned incense before the Lord. It will easily be seen how strikingly all these exhibited the character and work of Jesus. 2. Christ is a High Priest. Now the high priest was distinguished from the other priests—(1) As he was appealed to on all important occasions, and decided all controversies. (2) He offered the great annual sacrifice. (3) He only entered into the holiest of all once a year. (4) He offered the annual intercessory prayer, and came forth and blessed the people in the name of the Lord. 3. Christ is the Great High Priest. Now Jesus is infinitely greater than the high priests of old. (1) In the dignity of His person. He is the Son of God, Heir of all things, Lord of all. (2) In the purity of His nature. "Holy, harmless, and separate from sinners." "Without spot." (3) In the value and efficacy of His sacrifice. An equivalent for the world's guilt. Only once offered, and for all sins. (4) In the unchangeable perpetuity of His office. "A priest for ever." "An unchangeable priesthood" (chap. vii. 24). He had no direct predecessor, and He shall have no successor. "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." II. HIS HIGH EXALTATION. "Who is passed into the heavens." 1. The place into which He is exalted. "The heavens." Represented of old by the holiest of all. Described by Jesus as His Father's house. 2. The manner of His exaltation. "He passed into the heavens." (1) According to His own predictions. (2) While in the act of blessing His disciples. (3) Visibly, and with great splendour. 3. The great end of His exaltation. (1) To enjoy the rewards of His sufferings and toils (Phil. ii. 6, 8, 9). (2) To appear before God as the intercessor of His Church. (3) To carry on His mediatorial designs. Hence He is to subdue His foes, prolong His days, see His seed, and witness the travail of His soul until He is satisfied. (4) To abide as the Mediator between God and men to the end of the Christian state. Now God only treats with us by and through Jesus. And He is the only way of access to the Father (John xiv. 6; Heb. ix. 28). III. THE PRACTICAL INFLUENCE THIS SUBJECT SHOULD HAVE UPON US. "Let us hold fast our profession." 1. The profession referred to. It is a profession of faith and hope in Christ, and of love and obedience to Him. 2. This profession must be maintained. Held fast, not abandoned. We shall be tempted, tried, persecuted. Our profession may cost us our property, liberty, lives. This profession must be held fast by the exercise of vigorous faith, constant love, and cheerful obedience. (1) For Christ's sake. Whose we are, and whom we serve. (2) For the profession's sake; that Christ's cause may not be injured, and His people cast down. (3) Especially for our own sake. It is only thus we can retain Divine acceptance, peace, joy, and the sure prospect of eternal life. Application: 1. Christ's example is the model of our steadfastness. 2. Christ's exaltation should be the exciting attraction to steadfastness. 3. Christ's intercession will always provide the grace necessary to "our holding fast our profession." (*J. Burns, D.D.*) *Christ the Reconciler:*—This book presents an ideal of Christ as a reconciler. Of what? It has been said that man was reconciled to God. That is correct. Men are reconciled to the law of God, but that is vagueness itself. Christ is a reconciler by revealing to us what is the real interior nature of perfectness, and what bearing it has upon imperfectness. The experience of noble souls is that discord prevails, and that with the struggle there can be no peace. There may be peace by lowering the

ideal of our range of attainment, or by indifference and discouragement, but not by vital stress and strife can men have peace, when they are obliged every day to see that they come short, not of the law in its entirety and purity, but in their own conceptions in regard to single lines of conduct. Men all around are resolving to do the right and are eternally coming short of it, and then they say: "How under the sun am I going to face God! I cannot face my neighbour." The reason is, that your neighbour is not God. There is a view of God that while it intensifies the motives for righteousness, encourages men who are unrighteous, and brings about a reconciliation between these constantly antagonising experiences in the human bosom. It is to such that this experience of Christ is presented. Jesus Christ is the spotless High Priest who offered Himself once for all mankind. He came forth and lived among men, and He knows what their tears and struggles are, what their temptations and difficulties. Every faculty that is found in a human being was found in Christ, and yet He was without sin. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Do not come to a man who is conscious of his own infirmities, for he would not help you; but come to that Being who is conscious of absolute purity, and from whom you will get higher sympathy and a quicker succour. The moral perfectness of Christ develops sympathy for the sinful. It needed something like this in that age when the better men were the worst men, men whose righteousness was finished off by an enamel of selfishness, the men whose temperance made them hate drunkards, the men whose honesty made them hate men of slippery fingers, the men whose dried up passions made them scorn the harlot, the men who had money enough and abominated the tax-gatherers. Christ does not set Himself up on a throne apart, and say, "I am pure," but says that because He is perfect He has an infinite sympathy with and compassion for the sinful and fallen. The supreme truth that we need to know is that God is determined to bring the human race on and up out of animalism and the lowest forms of barbarism to the highest degree of intellectual and spiritual development. That is the eternal purpose of God, and in that great work He will deal with the human family with such tenderness and gentleness that He will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax, nor blow out the wick which He has just kindled, and He will not stop until He brings forth judgment unto victory. I think sometimes that the greatest attribute of God is patience, and one of the greatest illustrations of patience of the same kind in men is that of the music teacher, who takes a boy to teach him the violin, and hears him and bears with him through days, and through weeks, and through months and through years, and then has to take another and go right on the same way again. Or the artist who sees his pupil smudging a canvas, and tries to teach him the whole theory of colour, and tries to develop his ideality. Any parent, teacher, musician, artist, or any one else is obliged to go upon the theory God acts on—namely, that the higher you are the more you owe, and can give, to those who are lower; and if you are going to be instrumental in bringing them up, you have got to carry their burthens and their sorrows and to wait for them, and be patient with them. It is the law of creation, and if it is the law of creation in all its minor and ruder developments among mankind, its supreme strength and scope for beauty is in the nature of Himself. Look at the sun, the symbol of God. It carries in itself all trees and all bushes, and all vines, and all orchards, and all gardens. It sows the seed and brings the summer; and the outpouring of the vital light and heat of the sun makes it the father of all husbandmen and all pomologists. And yet God's nature is greater than that. He is the life of life; He is the heart of hearts; He is the soul of souls; and the grandeur of His endowments is the life of mankind. Cast away all the old mediæval notions of reconciliation, the mechanical scheme of atonement and plan of salvation, and all those lower forms. They stand between you and the bright light of the God revealed in Jesus Christ, a God who has patience with sin because He is sinless, who has patience with infirmity because He has no infirmities, who has patience with weakness and ignorance because He is supremely wise and supremely strong. Our hope is in God, and our life ought to be godly. Though we be faint or feeble, He will revive our courage and will give us His strength, and it will not be in vain that we endeavour to serve the Lord. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Our great High Priest:*—The first important word is the epithet "great" prefixed to the title High Priest. It is introduced to make the priestly office of Christ assume due importance in the minds of the Hebrews. As an author writing a treatise on an important theme writes the title of the theme in letters fitted to attract notice, so this writer

places at the head of the ensuing portion this title, "Jesus the Son of God the Great High Priest," insinuating thereby that He of whom he speaks is the greatest of all priests, the only real priest, the very ideal of priesthood realised. The expression "passed through the heavens" is also very suggestive. It hints at the right construction to be put upon Christ's departure from the earth. There is an obvious allusion to the entering of the high priest of Israel within the veil on the great day of atonement; and the idea suggested is, that the ascension of Christ was the passing of the great High Priest through the veil into the celestial sanctuary, as our representative and in our interest. The name given to the great High Priest, "Jesus the Son of God," contributes to the argument. Jesus is the historical person, the tempted Man; and this part of the name lays the foundation for what is to be said in the following sentence concerning His power to sympathise. The title, "Son of God," on the other hand, justifies what has been already said of the High Priest of our confession. If our High Priest be the Son of God, He may well be called the *Great*, and moreover there can be no doubt whither He has gone. Whither but to His native abode, His Father's house? Having thus by brief, pregnant phrase hinted the thoughts he means to prove, our author proceeds to address to his readers an exhortation, which is repeated at the close of the long discussion on the priesthood of Christ to which these sentences are the prelude (chap. x. 19–23). In doing so he gives prominence to that feature of Christ's priestly character of which alone he has as yet spoken explicitly: His power to sympathise, acquired and guaranteed by His experience of temptation (chap. ii. 17, 18). It is noteworthy that the doctrine of Christ's sympathy is here stated in a defensive, apologetic manner, "We have not a High Priest who cannot be touched," as if there were some one maintaining the contrary. This defensive attitude may be conceived of as assumed over against two possible objections to the reality of Christ's sympathy, one drawn from His dignity as the Son of God, the other from His sinlessness. Both objections are dealt with in the only way open to one who addresses weak faith—viz., not by elaborate or philosophical argument, but by strong assertion. As the Psalmist said to the desponding, "Wait, I say, on the Lord," and as Jesus said to disciples doubting the utility of prayer, "I say unto you, Ask, and ye shall receive," so our author says to dispirited Christians, "We have not a High Priest who cannot be touched with sympathy"—this part of his assertion disposing of doubt engendered by Christ's dignity—"but one who has been tempted in all respects as we are, apart from sin"—this part of the assertion meeting doubt based on Christ's sinlessness. To this strong assertion of Christ's power to sympathise is fitly appended the final exhortation. Specially noteworthy are the words, "Let us approach confidently." They have more than practical import: they are of theoretic significance; they strike the doctrinal keynote of the Epistle: Christianity the religion of free access. There is a latent contrast between Christianity and Leviticalism. The contrast is none the less real that the expression "to draw near" was applied to acts of worship under the Levitical system. Every act of worship in any religion whatever may be called an approach to Deity. Nevertheless religions may be wide apart as the poles in respect to the measure in which they draw near to God. In one religion the approach may be ceremonial only, while the spirit stands afar off in fear. In another, the approach may be spiritual, with mind and heart, in intelligence, trust, and love, and with the confidence which these inspire. Such an approach alone is real, and deserves to be called a drawing near to God. Such an approach was first made possible by Christ, and on this account it is that the religion which bears His name is the perfect, final, perennial religion. (*A. B. Bruce, D.D.*) **Hold fast our profession.**—*Holding fast the Christian profession*:—I. THE NATURE OF THE CHRISTIAN PROFESSION. 1. A cordial assent to the whole of Scripture truth, and especially the testimony which God has given of His Son Christ Jesus. 2. A profession of practical conformity to the whole of God's revealed will. 3. The hope of eternal life and glory in heaven. II. WHAT IS IMPLIED IN HOLDING FAST OUR PROFESSION? 1. That we actually have this profession. 2. A just sense of its high value. 3. That we may be tempted to forsake it. 4. That we are called to the regular, uniform, constant exercise of it. 5. Perseverance to the end. III. THE MOTIVES TO THIS DUTY. 1. The person and character of Him who is its object. 2. Christ's office and relation to us. 3. The security afforded against our own weakness, and the malice of spiritual foes. (*H. Hunter.*) *Holding fast our profession*:—I. WHAT IS OUR PROFESSION? 1. Attachment to the person of Christ. 2. Dependence on the work of Christ. 3. Devotedness to the service of Christ. II. HOW IS THIS TO BE DONE? 1. By avowing in God's

ordinances your attachment to the person, reliance on the work, and devotedness to the service of Christ. 2. By a consistent life. (*W. Cadman, M.A.*) *Exhortation to steadfastness*:—I. THE EXHORTATION TO STEADFASTNESS IN OUR CHRISTIAN PROFESSION. By "our profession" we are sometimes to understand that which we profess, or the subject of our profession. In chap. iii. 1, the term evidently means the holy religion which we profess. But the term applies to the act also. This is its import in that other passage, "let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering." There are in what is called "the Christian world" two kinds of professors. 1. All nominal Christians. All who say that they are disciples of Christ; all who wish it to be understood that they have embraced the faith. Such persons may with propriety be exhorted to hold their profession fast: it is worthy of being held fast. And yet, if we do venture to remind such persons of the obligation arising from the very name they bear; if we point out any inconsistency in their conduct, the accusation is repelled with indignation, and they tell us they make no profession of religion. Now this—(1) Is singularly impudent and wicked. What would you think if the expression were applied to social life, to the duties which belong to a parent, a husband, a child, a subject, an honest man? (2) It is in most cases not true. They themselves, at other times, deny it; and they would be highly affronted if they thought any one supposed that they deny the Lord who bought them. They do call themselves Christians, and hence they ought to be careful to live and act as such. But there are in the world—2. Those who profess to be Christians indeed. Now the profession of real Christians is distinguished from that which is nominal by these three marks. (1) It is Scriptural. He founds his belief on having discovered that it is the infallible Word of God; and he receives nothing but what in his conscience he believes to have this sanction, "Thus saith the Lord." (2) It is experimental. I mean to say that every Christian has, in his own experience, an evidence of the truth of the gospel. He has put its truths to the test: he has tried them in his own case, and found them to be sanctifying and saving. (3) It is practical. That is, the truth professed is not belied, but is borne out and appealed to by their conduct. Put these things together, and you will see how a real profession is distinguished from that which is merely nominal. It is scriptural, experimental, and practical: it is manifested by cheerfully doing, and patiently suffering the will of God. Such a profession as this we are commanded to "hold fast." 3. This command implies that we are in danger of renouncing our profession. And this danger arises from various causes. Satan, the great foe of God and the gospel, "goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." Infidels and their associates having apostatised from the faith are aiming to seduce others to their guilt. The world too is a foe: by its smiles it would often allure, by its frowns it would often deter from steadfastness. Last, but not least, are the foes of our own household; a heart that is deceitful, and which is not fully renewed, will betray us into the hands of our outward enemies, so that we shall lose our peace at the last. 4. "Let us hold fast our profession," says the apostle. Be valiant for the truth. (1) Hold fast the simplicity of evangelical doctrine. Stand fast in one spirit, "earnestly contending for the faith once delivered to the saints." (2) Hold it fast in an evangelical experience of its blessings. (3) Hold it fast by the practice of all that is true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report. (4) Hold fast by a public profession of the gospel, the truths in which you thus believe—the privileges you thus profess to enjoy—the duties you profess to exemplify. Thus give to every man "a reason of the hope that is in you." II. THE MOTIVE TO THIS DERIVED FROM THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST. "We have a great High Priest," greater than any under the law. Many grounds of superiority to any who went before Him might be adduced. 1. Because of the place in which He ministers. He is at the right hand of the Majesty on high. He who is our Friend, the best Friend we ever had, who has given us such tokens of His love and kindness; is in that place where best of all He can serve our cause! Our High Priest can never be at a loss for a place in which to minister; He can never be at a loss for want of access to His Father and our Father, to His God and our God. He ever liveth to make intercession where He can make it with the greatest certainty of success. 2. Because of the more substantial benefits derived from the exercise of His office. Aaron was God's high priest, but he was not a Saviour; his successors were God's high priests, but they were not Jesus; they could not save from sin. But Jesus our great High Priest can redeem from all iniquity; and "He is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him." Greater—3. Because of the superior dignity of His original nature and character, "The Son of God." As the Son of God He was sinless.

There was no guilty spot upon His soul, though He was made a sacrifice for sin. He, therefore, is all our own; He was cut off for us, to finish our transgression, to make reconciliation for our iniquity. As the Son of God He is also necessarily immortal. Death could never have had any claim on Him after He took our nature into conjunction with the Divine, but by His own consent; He willingly laid it down, as an act of infinite benevolence to that world, whose cause He sustained. As the Son of God He can die no more, but liveth for ever. And oh, what a mercy in such a dying world as this, where so many are taken away from us, to be able to lift up our eyes to heaven, and be able to commit our concerns to this immortal and never-dying Redeemer! But wherein consists the force of all this as a motive to steadfastness in the Christian profession? Why—(1) For this reason we ought to hold fast the profession of Christianity. It is the priesthood of Christ that confers the crowning excellence on Christianity. (2) But perhaps you say you have no intention to relinquish it; your only fear is that you shall not be able to hold it fast. You feel such powerful temptations, you are surrounded by so many adversaries, that you fear that in some dark and cloudy day you shall become their prey. And so you would if you were left to yourselves, if you depended on your own power. But you are not left to yourselves, the Gospel tells you that you have a great High Priest. You can hold fast your profession: the priesthood of Christ renders this practicable. (*J. Bunting, M.A.*) *Let us hold fast our profession*:—Our High Priest is a mighty one, able to punish us if we shrink from our profession, and of power to protect us from all our enemies if we stick to Him; therefore let us hold fast our profession. The doctrine professed by us; let no enemies drive us from our profession, neither Satan, nor any of his instruments. The Pharisees held fast the traditions of their elders and would not be removed from them (Mark vii. 3). The Turks are wonderfully addicted to Mahomet. he is a great prophet among them, they will not let him go. And shall not we hold the profession of the Lord Jesus? They hold errors fast, and shall not we the truth? The subject of their profession, counterfeit things, mere inventions of men, lies and fables. The subject of our profession is Jesus Christ the Son of God. Therefore let us hold it fast; let neither the syrenical songs of heretics and schismatics in the time of peace, nor the blustering wind of persecution in the time of war pull us from our confession. Let us be faithful to the death as the martyrs were; let house and land, wives and children, liberty and country—yea, our lives—go before our profession. But this is a hard matter; we have no strength of ourselves to hold it against so many strong and mighty enemies. Therefore let us all fear ourselves and fly to God for strength, that it would please Him so to strengthen us by His Holy Spirit, that we may hold fast the profession of Christ and His gospel to the end: "Hold that which thou hast, lest another take thy crown." We will hold our money fast though it be to good uses, we will not part with that; but as for religion, a number are at this pass, they care not what becomes of it; let that go whither it will, so we may sleep in a whole skin and keep that which we have; let come what religion there will, we can be of any religion. Such turncoats and timeservers shall never set a foot in the kingdom of heaven. If we hold not our profession fast we shall miss of the crown of eternal life. (*W. Jones, D.D.*)

Ver. 15. **Touched with the feeling of our infirmities.**—*The sympathetic Saviour*:—I. CHRIST'S POWER OF SYMPATHY ASSERTED. Differences of position and circumstances among men materially affect their power to sympathise with one another. It is a difficult matter, for instance, for those born in palaces and nurtured in affluence to enter into the difficulties and understand the hardships endured by those to whom life is a perpetual struggle for the barest necessaries; or for those who are hale and strong to sympathise with those whose very existence, by reason of their bodily infirmities, is a burden to them. It was not unnatural, then, that persons who, judged by human analogies, should suppose that He who was the Son of God and had passed into the heavens would be indisposed to sympathise with wretched, sin-benighted men on earth. The text assures us of the contrary. Christ exchanged earth for heaven, the weakness and infirmities of an earthly existence for the everlasting vigour of a heavenly state, degradation for exaltation, the Cross and the thorns for a throne and a crown; but He never exchanged His power of warm, glowing sympathy for men for coldness and indifference. Sympathy was the heritage which earth gave Him to enrich His heavenly state. II. THE CONDITIONS GUARANTEEING THIS POWER. 1. His exposure to temptation. Just as the light becomes tinged with the hues of the glass

it passes through, so the unfathomable love of the Son of God becomes sympathetic towards men as it passes to them through the human heart, steeped in sorrow and agonised with suffering, of the Son of Man. Egypt has its two great watercourses, its river and its sweet-water canal. The canal conveys the sweet waters of the river where the river itself cannot take them. The human heart of Jesus is the canal which conducts the sweet waters of the Divine love in streams of sympathy to the parched souls of men. 2. The other condition of His power of sympathy was His freedom from sin, notwithstanding His exposure to its temptations. Flame will not pass through wire gauze of a certain texture. This is the principle of the safety-lamp. This useful and ingenious contrivance is unaffected by any amount of explosive gases external to it. Under ordinary circumstances, the flame of the lamp would set any atmosphere, strongly charged with explosive gases, into a devouring blaze, but, protected by the wire gauze, the lamp-flame merely glows within a little more brilliantly. Such was Christ as He lived among men. The moral atmosphere in which He lived, surcharged as it was with explosive temptations and provocations to sin, did not penetrate the amiability of His sinless nature and cause it to shoot forth into consuming resentment. It merely caused it to burn with a livelier glow of holy anger against hypocrisy and false pretence. Just as the rays of the sun pass over the foulest paths and among heaps of filth untainted, so He passed along the ways and paths of human life untouched by the foulness that surrounded him on all sides. It is a belief with the people of the district that the River Dee passes through the whole length of Bala Lake without mingling with its waters. Its current, they affirm, can be clearly traced, marked off by its clearer, brighter waters. So Christ's life, passing through the lake, so to speak, of earthly existence, is clearly defined. It is one bright, holy, spotless stream from its beginning to its end—a life without sin. Now, this freedom from sin is no hindrance to His power of sympathy; in fact, it is an additional qualification to Him in this respect. Temptation yielded to makes the heart callous and cruel, and dries up the fountains of feeling. Temptation resisted and overcome mellows the feelings, and quickens their sensitiveness towards the tried and tempted. III. CHRIST'S POWER OF SYMPATHY USED AS AN ENCOURAGEMENT TO SEEK THE BLESSINGS PROVIDED FOR US. 1. The blessings we are urged to seek. Mercy represents the new life; grace, all that may be needed to sustain and nourish it until its consummation in everlasting glory. And here we may note the bearing of this promise of "grace to help in time of need" upon the case of a certain class of persons whom we believe to be Christians, true disciples of the Redeemer, but who stand aloof from the fellowship of His people, and shrink from a public avowal of their discipleship. Their reluctance in this direction, they tell us, arises from the sense of their infirmities, and their dread of bringing dishonour on Christ's Church. But such a plea is essentially unbelief. It arises from a failure to apprehend God's power to keep from falling those whom He has graciously converted. They forget that He promises to His children "grace to help in time of need." It is as reasonable to suppose that God will preserve the new life He has quickened in the heart of His people, as that the mother will do all in her power to strengthen the infant that owes its life to her. 2. The place whence these blessings are dispensed. Christ occupies the throne—the place of power and authority. That He is a King as well as a Priest is one of the great truths of this Epistle. And His kingly office becomes the instrument of His priestly sympathies and functions. 3. The spirit of confidence in which, in view of the assurance furnished to us of Christ's power of sympathy, these blessings should be sought. The word rendered "boldly" here may, with equal propriety, be rendered "joyfully." The very fact that such blessings as mercy and grace, blessings so inexpressibly precious to sinful men awakened to a sense of their guilt, are procurable, should fill the seeker with the joy of gratitude. To seek them in this spirit is to carry out the prophetic injunction, "Therefore, with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation." The allusion, no doubt, is to the desert traveller, after days of wanderings in the arid waste, coming parched with thirst upon a well. We can well imagine with what grateful joy he would draw therefrom the refreshing element to quench his consuming thirst. With some such joy, yea, with much deeper and intenser joy, should the Christian man come to the throne of grace to draw the grace which is to quench his soul-consuming thirst, and sustain the Divine life quickened by the Divine mercy in his soul. (*A. J. Parry.*) *Christ touched with the feeling of our infirmities*:—The compassion of the Son of God was a subject of joyful contemplation to the holy men of old, who saw His day afar off,

and were glad. With delight they celebrated the comfort which He should bring to the mourners in Zion; the care which He should take of the lambs of His flock; His sympathy with the afflicted; His condescension to the weak; and the concern with which He should bring them through their difficulties to safety and peace, and everlasting gladness. Hence it is, also, that in their sacred hymns and songs of triumph they delight to present Him under all those images which are fitted to convey ideas of the gentlest and most engaging order. The design for which the Son of God appeared on earth, and which He voluntarily undertook to accomplish, was a design of the highest compassion. And as the design on which He came was that of unutterable love, so the tenderest compassion distinguished the fulfilment of every part of His great undertaking. He went about doing good, and His Divine power was ever exercised in works of mercy. And with these manifestations of Divine power, how mild and gentle is His demeanour to the humble and the weak! How tender and condescending His addresses to the poor and the contrite! Observe also His sympathy with His disciples in the season of affliction, and the anxiety with which He seeks to give them comfort. But to seek and to save that which was lost Christ came into the world, and all His discourses are full of earnest desire for the welfare of men—of pity for sinners, and of consolation for the miserable. His compassion was manifested even to those who rejected Him. But a view of compassion yet remains to be noticed, which in vain our ideas attempt to reach, or language to describe. He pays the price of human guilt, and gives His life a ransom for many. Having thus directed our attention to the compassion of that great High Priest, who is passed into the heaven—Jesus, the Son of God, let us apply these views to our condition, and consider the encouragement which they are fitted to afford when we approach to the throne of grace. The gracious office which Christ sustains, and the compassion of His character, are fitted to give to us encouragement in all our services, and through the whole of life. But there are special seasons which the apostle describes as "the time of need," in which we are particularly called, in the exercise of hope and trust, to come to the throne of grace. I. AMONG THESE WE ARE NATURALLY DIRECTED IN THE FIRST PLACE TO THAT OF A SINNER UNDER DEEP CONVICTIONS OF GUILT. How suited is the gospel of Christ to bring back to God and give peace to the troubled soul! And how admirably does the view of such a High Priest, touched with the feeling of our infirmities, harmonise with every part of the gracious plan for our recovery and salvation! In Him we see every quality which is calculated to insure the confidence, and to dissipate the fears of the humble and the contrite, and through Him, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, they seek the offered mercy, and find the promised rest. II. AND ARE NOT THE SAME VIEWS CALCULATED TO ENCOURAGE US TO APPROACH THE THRONE OF GRACE, UNDER A SENSE OF OUR WEAKNESS, AND OF OUR DANGERS FROM A WORLD LYING IN WICKEDNESS? In a state so surrounded with dangers, and especially in those seasons when we are made to feel how weak we are, or when wearied with the struggles and difficulties which we encounter on the path of duty, we are tempted to retire from the contest, and to leave the post assigned us, hopeless of success—how fitted to inspire us with courage and perseverance is the view of that provision which the Father of mercies hath made for our support and direction, in the mediation of Him who loved us and gave Himself for us. He is the same Divine Master who has passed before us through the scene of suffering and temptation, and has shown Himself to be so unspeakably our Friend. He knows the difficulties with which we have to struggle, and by proofs the most affecting He has taught us to place confidence in His care. III. AND AS THE COMPASSION OF OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST GIVES COURAGE AND SUPPORT AMIDST THE DANGERS AND TRIALS OF LIFE, SO IT GIVES US COMFORT AND PEACE AT THE APPROACH OF DEATH. The Son of God changes the darkness into light. The glory of that state He hath prepared for us, sheds far its light, and illumines every prospect, and the voice of the Saviour is heard conducting and welcoming us to the mansions of His Father. How suited to the fallen state of man is the dispensation of the gospel! (*S. MacGill, D.D.*) *The sympathy of Christ*:—1. In attempting to describe the human sympathy of this Divine Being, I will first refer to His wonderful keenness of feeling. Intensely sensitive to nature, and drinking in illustration of highest truth from her homeliest appearances, He felt most keenly anything that could touch the feelings of His fellow-men. Unlike many people who, because they do not feel their own trials very keenly, nor crave for much sympathy amidst them, cannot understand the sufferings and cravings of more sensitive natures, Jesus was so touched by His own troubles, and had such a longing for the Divine and human

sympathy in the midst of them, that He is marvellously quick to understand, and ready to sympathise with the most insignificant sorrows of the most sensitive souls. 2. But the sympathy of Jesus is as wide as it is ready. He whose exquisitely sensitive soul was thrilled by the beauty of a lily, and moved by the fall of a wounded sparrow, is keenly touched by whatever can touch a human heart, whether high or low, good or bad, a friend or an enemy. No man can be beyond the reach of His all-comprehending sympathy, because no man can be beyond the embrace of His all-comprehending love. 3. And His sympathy is as deep and tender as it is ready and comprehensive. And the reason of this is two-fold. He has been tempted in all points like as we are; and yet He is without sin. He can sympathise with the poor because He has been poor; with the weary and heavy laden, because He has been tired and worn; with the lonely, misrepresented, and persecuted, because He has been in their position. And because He was also tried, tried in mind as well as heart, by fear, by sad surprise, by mental perplexity, with the hard conflict with evil, and great spiritual depression, He is able to feel to the uttermost for those keenest sorrows of our earthly lot. And then this tried One was without sin. That was what enabled Him to drink in sympathy, and nothing but sympathy from all His sorrows. That is why He received all the sweetness from His sorrows and none of the bitterness, so that He is able out of the pure and exhaustless treasures of His sympathy to sweeten all our bitter cups. 4. For let us also remember that His sympathy is as practical as it is ready, deep, and comprehensive. Sympathising with the fond feeling which led the mothers to bring their children to Him, He at once took the little ones up in His arms, and blessed them; feeling for the hungry multitude He delayed not to spread a table for them in the wilderness. His compassionate soul melted with tenderness when He saw the widow weeping beside the bier; but at that very moment He stopped the bier and restored her only son to his mother's arms. How deep the sympathy which caused Him to burst into tears among the weeping ones He loved, before the grave of Lazarus; but how prompt the power to help which caused the dead man to come forth. It is the knowledge that now as then He is ready and able to help us as He is to feel for us, that emboldens us to come with all assurance to the throne of grace, and confide to Him our every trouble. And if His sympathy is to be to us anything more than a beautiful dream, we must there come into personal contact with Him amidst our own sorrows, and sound the depths of His sympathy by proving the fulness of His help. (*P. J. Rollo.*) *Touched with the feeling of our infirmities*:—There is no warmer Bible phrase than this. We might have never so many mishaps, the Government at Washington would not hear of them; and there are multitudes in Britain whose troubles Victoria never knows; but there is a throne against which strike our most insignificant perplexities. What touches us touches Christ. What robs us robs Christ. He is the great nerve-centre to which thrill all sensations which touch us who are His members. I. He is touched with our PHYSICAL infirmities. II. He is touched with the infirmities of our PRAYERS. He will pick out the one earnest petition from the rubbish, and answer it. III. He is touched with the infirmity of our TEMPER. IV. He sympathises with our POOR EFFORTS AT DOING GOOD. (*Christian at Work.*) *The tenderness of Jesus*:—I. HE HAS ASSUMED A VERY TENDER OFFICE. A king may render great aid to the unhappy; but, on the other hand, he is a terror to evil-doers: a high priest is in the highest sense "ordained for men," and he is the friend and succourer of the most wretched. 1. It was intended, first, that by the high priest God should commune with men. That needs a person of great tenderness. A mind that is capable of listening to God, and understanding, in a measure, what He teaches, had need be very tender, so as to interpret the lofty sense into the lowly language of humanity. 2. But a high priest took the other side also: he was to communicate with God from men. Here, also, he needed the tenderest spirit to rule his faculties and to move his affections. But if I understand the high priest's office aright, he had many things to do which come under this general description, but which might not suggest themselves, if you did not have the items set before you. 3. The high priest was one who had to deal with sin and judgment for the people. We have a High Priest into whose ear we may pour all the confessions of our penitence without fear. It is a wonderful easement to the mind to tell Jesus all. No doubt the high priest was resorted to, that he might console the sorrowful. Go to Jesus, if a sharp grief is gnawing at your heart. 4. The high priest would hear, also, the desires and wishes of the people. When men in Israel had some great longing, some overwhelming desire, they not only prayed in private, but they would make a journey up to the temple to ask the high priest to present their

petitions before the Lord. You may have some very peculiar, delicate desire as to spiritual things that only God and your own soul may know; but fear not to mention it to your tender High Priest, who will know your meaning, and deal graciously with you. 5. It was the high priest's business to instruct and to reprove the people. To instruct is delightful; but to reprove is difficult. Only a tender spirit can wisely utter rebuke. Our Lord Jesus Christ tells us our faults in tones of love. His rebukes never break the heart. II. HE HAS A TENDER FEELING. It is not merely true that He is apprised of our infirmities, since the Lord has said, "I know their sorows"; but He "is touched with the feeling of our infirmities." The sense of feeling is more intense, vivid, and acute than the sense of sight. It is one thing to see pain, but another thing to be touched with the feeling of it. Treasure up this view of your Lord's sympathy, for it may be a great support in the hour of agony, and a grand restorative in the day of weakness. Note again, "The feeling of our infirmities." Whose infirmities? Does not "our" mean yours and mine? Note well that word "infirmities"—"touched with the feeling of our infirmities." He sympathises with those of you who are no heroes, but can only plead, "the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." As the mother feels with the weakness of her babe, so does Jesus feel with the poorest, saddest, and weakest of His chosen. How comes this about? 1. Let us think of it a while! Our Lord has a tender nature. His innate tenderness brought Him from the throne to the manger, from the manger to the Cross. 2. Our Lord is not only tender of nature, but quick of understanding as to the infirmities of men. III. HE HAD A TENDER TRAINING. 1. He was tried as we are—in body, mind, spirit. 2. But the text says, "tempted," and that bears a darker meaning than "tried." Our Lord could never have fallen the victim of temptation, but through life He was the object of it. IV. HE HAS A TENDER PERFECTNESS. Do not imagine that if the Lord Jesus had sinned He would have been any more tender toward you; for sin is always of a hardening nature. If the Christ of God could have sinned, He would have lost the perfection of His sympathetic nature. It needs perfectness of heart to lay self all aside, and to be touched with a feeling of the infirmities of others. Hearken again: do you not think that sympathy in sin would be a poisonous sweet? A child, for instance, has done wrong, and he has been wisely chastened by his father; I have known cases in which a foolish mother has sympathised with the child. This may seem affectionate, but it is wickedly injurious to the child. Such conduct would lead the child to love the evil which it is needful he should hate. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The sympathy of Christ*:—The word "tempted" here includes, of course, all trials of soul and body, such as sorrow, pain, anguish, as well as what we commonly call temptation; but it is to this last that we will now confine ourselves. We can readily understand how our Lord's perfect humanity should sympathise with ours, because both are of one nature; but how He who is sinless should sympathise with us sinners—this is the difficulty. How, it may be asked, can He sympathise in repentance, deserved shame, and guilt of conscience? It may be said, that this difficulty carries its own answer; for His sympathy with penitents is perfect, because He is sinless; its perfection is the consequence of His perfect holiness. And for these reasons: 1. First, because we find, even among men, that sympathy is more or less perfect, as the holiness of the person is more or less so. The living compassion, with which the holiest men have ever dealt with the sinful, is a proof that in proportion as sin loses its power over them, their sympathy with those that are afflicted by its oppressive yoke becomes more perfect. 2. And from this our thoughts ascend to Him who is all-perfect; who being from everlasting very God, was for our sakes made very Man, that He might unite us wholly to Himself. Above and beyond all sympathy is that of our High Priest. None hate sin but those who are holy, and that in the measure of their holiness; and therefore in the Person of our blessed Lord there must exist the two great conditions of perfect sympathy: first, He has suffered all the sorrows which are consequent upon sin and distinct from it; next, He has, because of His perfect holiness, a perfect hatred of evil. And these properties of His human nature unite themselves to the pity, omniscience, and love, which are the perfections of His Divine. Now we may see in what it is that our Lord, by the experience of humiliation in our flesh, has learned to sympathise with us. Not in any motion of evil in the affections or thoughts of the heart; not in any inclination of the will: not, if we dare so much as utter it, in any taint or soil upon the soul. Upon all such as are destroying themselves in wilful commerce with evil, He looks down with a Divine pity; but they have withdrawn themselves from the range of His sympathy. This can only

be with those who are in sorrow under sin; that is, with penitents. It is in the suffering of those that would be cleansed and made holy that He partakes. I. WE MAY PLEAD WITH HIM ON HIS OWN EXPERIENCE OF THE WEAKNESS OF OUR HUMANITY. None knows it better than He, not only as our Maker, who "knoweth our frame, and remembereth that we are but dust," but as Man, who made full trial of our nature "in the days of His flesh." He knows its fearful susceptibility of temptation—how, in its most perfect state, as in His own person, it may be solicited by the allurements of the evil one. And if in Him it could be tempted to sin, how much more in us! When we confess our sins before Him, we may lay open all. Things we hardly dare to speak to any man, to any imperfect being, we do not shrink from confessing before Him—things which men would not believe, inward struggles, distinctions in intention, extenuating causes, errors of belief—all the manifold working of the inward life which goes before a fall. With all His awful holiness, there is something that draws us to Him. Though His eyes be "as a flame of fire," and the act of laying ourselves open to Him is terrible, yet He is "meek and lowly of heart," knowing all our case, "touched with the feeling of our infirmities." II. WE MAY APPEAL TO HIS EXPERIENCE OF THE SORROW AND SHAME WHICH COME BY SIN UPON MANKIND. He suffered both as keenly and as fully as it was possible for one that was without sin (see Psa. xxii. 1, 2, 6–8, 14, 15; Isa. liii. 3, 4; Psa. lxix. 1–3, 7, 10–12, 20, 21; lxxxviii. 1, 2, 5–9, 14–16; Lam. i. 12, 13). All that sin could inflict on the guiltless He endured; and to that experience of shame and sorrow we guilty may appeal. Though we suffer indeed justly, yet can He feel with us though He did nothing amiss. Though in the bitterness of soul which flows from consciousness of guilt He has no part, yet when we take revenge upon ourselves in humiliation, and offer ourselves to suffer all He wills for our abasement, He pities us while He permits the chastisement to break us down at His feet. "When our heart is smitten down within us, and withered like grass, so that we forget to eat our bread," it is a thought full of consolation, "that we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities." Therefore let us ask for consolation from no other. Let us not go, I will not say to the world, and its fair words, smooth persuasions, shallow comforts, for to these no man whose repentance has any depth or reality in it can bear to go; they are miserable, falsifying stimulants, which beat and bewilder the heart, and leave it open to terrible recoils of sorrow; but let us not go to books or to employment; no, nor even to the consolation and tender love of friend, brother, wife, husband, spiritual guide; no, nor to the most perfect saint and nearest to Himself; but to Him for whose sake all these must be forsaken, in whom are all the fresh springs of solace which distil in scanty drops through the tenderest and fondest hearts. Let us go at once to Him. There is nothing can separate us from His sympathy but our own wilful sins. Let us fear and hate these, as for all other reasons, so above all for this, that they cut off the streams of His pure and pitiful consolation, and leave our souls to wither up in their own drought and darkness. So long as we are fully in His sympathy, let our sorrows, shame, trials, temptations, be what they may, we are safe. He is purifying us by them; teaching us to die to the world and to ourselves, that He only may live in us, and that our life may be "hid with Christ in God." And again, that we may so shelter ourselves in Him, let us make to Him a confession, detailed, particular, and unsparing, of all our sins. And lastly, let us so live as not to forfeit His sympathy. It is ours only so long as we strive and pray to be made like Him. If we turn again to evil, or to the world, we sever ourselves from Him. (*Archdeacon Manning.*)

The sympathy of Christ:—Our subject is the priestly sympathies of Christ. But we make three preliminary observations. The perfection of Christ's humanity implies that He was possessed of a human soul as well as a human body. Accordingly in the life of Christ we find two distinct classes of feeling. When He hungered in the wilderness—when He thirsted on the Cross—when He was weary by the well at Sychar—He experienced sensations which belong to the bodily department of human nature. But when out of twelve He selected one to be His bosom friend; when He looked round upon the crowd in anger; when the tears streamed down His cheeks at Bethany; and when He recoiled from the thought of approaching dissolution; these—grief, friendship, fear—were not the sensations of the body, much less were they the attributes of Godhead. They were the affections of an acutely sensitive human soul, alive to all the tenderness, and hopes, and anguish with which human life is filled, qualifying Him to be tempted in all points like as we are. The second thought which presents itself is that the Redeemer not only

was but is Man. He was tempted in all points like us. He is a high priest which can be touched. The present manhood of Christ conveys this deeply important truth, that the Divine heart is human in its sympathies. The third observation upon these verses is, that there is a connection between what Jesus was and what Jesus is. He can be touched now because He was tempted then. His past experience has left certain effects durable in His nature as it is now. It has endued Him with certain qualifications and certain susceptibilities, which He would not have had but for that experience. Just as the results remained upon His body, the prints of the nails in His palms, and the spear-gash in His side, so do the results remain upon His soul, enduing Him with a certain susceptibility, for "He can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities"; with certain qualifications, for "He is able to show mercy, and to impart grace to help in time of need." To turn now to the subject itself. It has two branches. 1. The Redeemer's preparation for His priesthood. 2. The Redeemer's priestly qualifications. 1. HIS PREPARATION. The preparation consisted in being tempted. But here a difficulty arises. Temptation, as applied to a Being perfectly free from tendencies to evil, is not easy to understand. See what the difficulty is. Temptation has two senses, it means test or probation; it means also trial, involving the idea of pain or danger. A weight hung from a bar of iron only tests its strength; the same, depending from a human arm, is a trial, involving it may be the risk of pain or fracture. Now trial placed before a sinless being is intelligible enough in the sense of probation; it is a test of excellence; but it is not easy to see how it can be temptation in the sense of pain, if there be no inclination to do wrong. However, Scripture plainly asserts this as the character of Christ's temptation. Not merely test, but trial. First you have passages declaring the immaculate nature of His mind; as here, "without sin." Again, He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." But then we find another class of passages, such as this: "He suffered, being tempted." There was not merely test in the temptation, but there was also painfulness in the victory. How could this be without any tendency to evil? To answer this, let us analyse sin. In every act of sin there are two distinct steps. There is the rising of a desire which is natural, and, being natural, is not wrong—there is the indulgence of that desire in forbidden circumstances, and that is sin. Sin is not a real thing. It is rather the absence of a something, the will to do right. It is not a disease or taint, an actual substance projected into the constitution. It is the absence of the spirit which orders and harmonises the whole; so that what we mean when we say the natural man must sin inevitably, is this, that he has strong natural appetites, and that he has no bias from above to counteract those appetites; exactly as if a ship were deserted by her crew, and left on the bosom of the Atlantic with every sail set and the wind blowing. No one forces her to destruction—yet on the rocks she will surely go, just because there is no pilot at the helm. Such is the state of ordinary men. Temptation leads to fall. The gusts of instincts, which rightly guided, would have carried safely into port, dash them on the rocks. No one forces them to sin; but the spirit-pilot has left the helm. Sin, therefore, is not in the appetites, but in the absence of a controlling will. Now contrast this state with the state of Christ. There were in Him all the natural appetites of mind and body. Relaxation and friendship were dear to Him—so were sunlight and life. Hunger, pain, death, He could feel all, and shrunk from them. Conceive then a case in which the gratification of any one of these inclinations was inconsistent with His Father's will. At one moment it was unlawful to eat, though hungry; and without one tendency to disobey, did fasting cease to be severe? It was demanded that He should endure anguish; and, willingly as He subdued Himself, did pain cease to be pain? Could the spirit of obedience reverse every feeling in human nature? It seems to have been in this way that the temptation of Christ caused suffering. He suffered from the force of desire. Though there was no hesitation whether to obey or not, no strife in the will, in the act of mastery there was pain. There was self-denial—there was obedience at the expense of tortured natural feeling. II. The second point we take is THE REDEEMER'S PRIESTHOOD. Priesthood is that office by which He is the medium of union between man and God. The capacity for this has been indelibly engraven on His nature by His experience here. All this capacity is based on His sympathy —He can be "touched with the feeling of our infirmities." Till we have reflected on it, we are scarcely aware how much the sum of human happiness in the world is indebted to this one feeling—sympathy. The child's smile and laugh are mighty powers in this world. When bereavement has left you desolate, what substantial benefit is there which makes condolence acceptable? It cannot replace the loved

ones you have lost. It can bestow upon you nothing permanent. But a warm hand has touched yours, and its thrill told you that there was a living response there to your emotion. One look—one human sigh has done more for you than the costliest present could convey. And it is for want of remarking this, that the effect of public charity falls often so far short of the expectations of those who give. Love is not bought by money, but by love. There has been all the machinery of a public distribution; but there has been no exhibition of individual, personal interest. Again, when the electric touch of sympathetic feeling has gone among a mass of men, it communicates itself, and is reflected back from every individual in the crowd, with a force exactly proportioned to their numbers. It is on record that the hard heart of an oriental conqueror was unmanned by the sight of a dense mass of living millions engaged in one enterprise. He accounted for it by saying, that it suggested to him that within a single century not one of those millions would be alive. But the hard-hearted bosom of the tyrant mistook its own emotions; his tears came from no such far-fetched inference of reflection; they rose spontaneously, as they will rise in a dense crowd, you cannot tell why. It is the thrilling thought of numbers engaged in the same object. It is the idea of our own feelings reciprocated back to us, and reflected from many hearts. And again, it seems partly to avail itself of this tendency within us, that such stress is laid on the injunction of united prayer. Solitary prayer is feeble in comparison with that which rises before the throne echoed by the hearts of hundreds, and strengthened by the feeling that other aspirations are mingling with our own. And whether it be the chanted litany, or the more simple read service, or the anthem producing one emotion at the same moment in many bosoms, the value and the power of public prayer seem chiefly to depend on this mysterious affection of our nature—sympathy. And now, having endeavoured to illustrate this power of sympathy, it is for us to remember that of this in its fulness He is susceptible. Observe how He is touched by our infirmities—with a separate, special, discriminating love. There is not a single throb, in a single human bosom, that does not thrill at once with more than electric speed up to the mighty heart of God. You have not shed a tear or sighed a sigh, that did not come back to you exalted and purified by having passed through the Eternal bosom. 1. We may boldly expect mercy from Him who has learned to sympathise. He learned sympathy by being tempted; but it is by being tempted, yet without sin, that He is specially able to show mercy. 2. The other priestly power is the grace of showing "help in time of need." We must not make too much of sympathy, as mere feeling. We do in things spiritual as we do with the hothouse plants. The feeble exotic, beautiful to look at, but useless, has costly sums spent on it. The hardy oak, a nation's strength, is permitted to grow, scarcely observed, in the fence and copses. We prize feeling and praise its possessor. But feeling is only a sickly exotic in itself—a passive quality, having in it nothing moral, no temptation and no victory. A man is no more a good man for having feeling, than he is for having a delicate ear for music, or a far-seeing optic nerve. The Son of Man had feeling—He could be "touched." The tear would start from His eyes at the sight of human sorrow. But that sympathy was no exotic in His soul, beautiful to look at, too delicate for use. Feeling with Him led to this, "He went about doing good." Sympathy with Him was this, "Grace to help in time of need." And this is the blessing of the thought of Divine sympathy. By the sympathy of man, after all, the wound is not healed; it is only stanched for a time. It can make the tear flow less bitterly, it cannot dry it up. So far as permanent good goes, who has not felt the deep truth which Job taught his friends—"Miserable comforters are ye all"? The sympathy of the Divine Human! He knows what strength is needed. He gives grace to help. From this subject I draw, in concluding, two inferences. 1. He who would sympathise must be content to be tried and tempted. There is a hard and boisterous rudeness in our hearts by nature, which requires to be softened down. Therefore, if you aspire to be a son of consolation—if you would partake of the priestly gift of sympathy—if you would pour something beyond common-place consolation into a tempted heart—if you would pass through the intercourse of daily life, with the delicate tact which never inflicts pain—if to that most acute of human ailments, mental doubt, you are ever to give effectual succour, you must be content to pay the price of the costly education. Like Him, you must suffer—being tempted. But remember, it is being tempted in all points, yet without sin, that makes sympathy real, manly, perfect, instead of a mere sentimental tenderness. Sin will teach you to feel for trials. It will not enable you to judge them; to be merciful to them—nor to help them in time of need with any certainty. 2. It is this same human

sympathy which qualifies Christ for judgment. It is written that the Father hath committed all judgment to Him, because He is the Son of Man. The sympathy of Christ extends to the frailties of human nature; not to its hardened guilt: He is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities." There is nothing in His bosom which can harmonise with malice—He cannot feel for envy—He has no fellow-feeling for cruelty, oppression, hypocrisy, bitter censorious judgments. Remember, He could look round about Him with anger. The sympathy of Christ is a comforting subject. It is besides a tremendous subject; for on sympathy the awards of heaven and hell are built. "Except a man be born again"—not he shall not, but—"he cannot enter into heaven." There is nothing in him which has affinity to anything in the Judge's bosom. (*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*) *The sympathy of Christ:*—I. IN ITS NATURE. The words "touched," &c., mean "to have compassion," "to condole with." It is something more than pity. Sympathy cannot properly belong to God, the perfection of His nature raises Him above it. But it is different with Christ. Being man He had all the real affection of human nature. II. IN ITS OBJECTS. These are all His people on earth, and it is manifested more particularly in their infirmities and afflictions. III. IN ITS REALITY. The sympathy of Christ is no ideal thing. It is no mere intellectual or ideal supposition. It is one which has been put to a most serious and solemn test. He took away with Him all the meekness, holiness, compassion, and love, which He had when on earth. It is further manifest from the relationship which exists between Him and His people. Again, it is manifest from the offices which He retains in heaven. Can an High Priest whose love was stronger than death be unmindful of those whom He has redeemed? It urges—1. Affection towards our Redeemer. Shall we sympathise with one another in the common calamities of life, and not be affected by the sufferings of Jesus for us? 2. It incites encouragement to repentance. Repentance is going to Christ. Surely His sympathetic nature and gracious disposition should be sufficient inducement to draw us to His arms. 3. It should make us willing patiently to live for God and employ ourselves in His service. If we suffer, or if we toil, He knows our condition, and is acquainted with our needs. 4. It ought to cause Christians to sympathise one with another. We need sympathy ourselves; we cannot justly withhold it from others. 5. How can any man go on day after day sinning against love and compassion so great? (*The Preacher's Analyst.*) *Christ's sympathy with the infirm:*—There is much to wonder at here. We wonder that He should care for us at all, but still more that that care should be for those of our experiences apparently least likely to move Him. Men are interested in our successes, in those points where we are strong and brave, for the most part they care little for our weakness. The dull child, who for all his trying makes no progress, has not a tithe of the kindly thought lavished on another. In society the timid and nervous are overlooked and fall into the background; the strong, the self-reliant, the well-to-do have friends, but the weak are passed by. Now it is just these, it is just those points where we are low—our infirmities—that our Lord thinks about, and feels for, and longs to help. And in this He who is farther off than any comes closer than any. Human friends can understand sickness, and suffering, and loss, and care, but how little they understand mere infirmity! They think we could be cheerful if we would, or that infirmity at the worst is not hard to bear, and they do not attach much weight to it, and know not its sore need of thoughtfulness, or of how much it deprives us. But, says the text, Christ does. He comes nearer to us than man, He is the friend "closer than a brother," "He knoweth our frame." Nor does that exhaust the wonder of His sympathy, for many of our infirmities are more or less due to sin. Yet He does not scorn us, or say it serves us right; but is sorry for us, and would help us, and make us what we should have been. I. First, then, consider THE FACT OF THIS SYMPATHY OF THE LORD JESUS. 1. It is assured by His personal human experience. 2. And this sympathy is assured by His perfect knowledge and love. 3. But is there not, I had almost said, a still stronger assurance of our Lord's sympathy in His union with His people? For that union is not merely one of love, nor of similarity of taste; it is that of a common life. II. CONSIDER THIS SYMPATHY IN ITS CONNECTION WITH HIS HIGH-PRIESTLY WORK. He is the medium by which we can approach God with our sin and need, and by which God can approach us with His blessings. Now it is easy to see how priceless is the assurance that this Mediator "is touched with the feeling of our infirmities," that He feels for us and is drawn to us by most tender sympathy. 1. As High Priest He has direct intercourse with us. The glory of God places Him at an infinite distance, but He has appointed Christ as His representative to us, and ours to Him. If a king appoints

one to represent him to a prisoner who is not worthy to approach him, or to a poor man who is afraid, it is part of that representative's work to come into close intercourse with them; whoever else is barred from that prisoner's cell, or free to keep away from that poor man's house, that representative is not. So the Lord Jesus, in accepting His high-priesthood, undertook thus to come close to us, and He fulfils what He undertakes. 2. As High Priest He prays for the supply of our need. What they want is ever profoundly sure to His people since His prayer for them is influenced by His sympathy, and "Him the father heareth always." 3. As High Priest He brings us to the Father. We read of "those who come unto God by Him"; He said "no man cometh unto the Father but by Me." Does that only mean that His sacrifice is the ground on which God receives us and refer to those who go to Him trusting that for acceptance, and not also that His is the help by which we tread the new and living way He is! Yes, Jesus brings us to God both by the merits of His sacrifice and by the aid of His Spirit. III. Then consider, THIS SYMPATHY WITH INFIRMITY THE PATTERN FOR HIS PEOPLE. Christ-likeness includes sympathy. 1. Thus our Lord's sympathy rebukes our hardness. 2. His sympathy shows one of the great needs of the world. It is part of His saving work as His atonement is; it is to save that He sympathises. What saving power was in His kindness on earth! And that is what the world wants still for its regeneration. (*C. New.*) *The sympathy of Christ*:—It has been well said, "Though the lower animals have feeling, they have no fellow-feeling, it only belongs to man to weep with them that weep, and, by sympathy, to divide another's sorrows and double another's joys." I have read that the wounded stag sheds tears as its life blood flows fast upon the purple heather, but never that its pangs and agonies drew tears from its fellows in the herd. That finer touch of nature belongs to man alone. Sympathy is the echo that a heart gives to another's cry of anguish. But a few weeks since I was in the land of mountains, crags, and rocks, and there, at different well-selected spots, I heard the blast of the Swiss horn. Grand were the echoes as they rolled among the mountain gorges, giving every snowy peak a voice, and every pine-clad hill a tongue. Marvellous was it to have the sound that first came from our very feet flung back upon our ears from distant ranges, that looked the very embodiment of silence. But more musical by far, because more heavenly, is the response given by a heart touched with the feeling of another's grief, and that grief, the grief of one who has no legal claim upon its sympathy. But be it remembered, the best of human sympathy is but human sympathy at best. To see it in all its exquisite perfections of tenderness, we have to turn from man to his Maker—from the saint to his Saviour—from earth to heaven. I. THE SYMPATHY OF JESUS FLOWS THROUGH KNOWLEDGE. Ten thousand springs of earthly sympathy are sealed through ignorance. Child of God, the sympathy of your Saviour is never lacking through want of knowledge. There is no wall of separation, however thin, that hides from His eyes the sorrow and the misery within. Jesus knows the every care of every saint. Poor troubled one, thou mayest venture nigh. Thou canst not tell Him that He knew not long before. Are you trying to carry your cares in your own bosom? Like the Spartan youth who stole a fox and hid it in his coat; are you letting it eat its way into your very vitals rather than it should be discovered? For pity's sake forbear. Go cast yourselves upon the sympathy of Him who not only reads the sorrow of the face, but the deeper anguish of the heart. II. THE SYMPATHY OF JESUS IS PROMPTED BY HIS NATURE. With Jesus to know is to be touched. If His knowledge cuts the channel, His nature at the same moment fills it with the stream of compassionate love. Would you know what Jesus is? Then you have but to find out what Jesus was. III. THE SYMPATHY OF JESUS IS DEEPENED BY EXPERIENCE. This is very beautifully taught in the closing sentence of the verse, "But was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." There can after all be but little true sympathy, however loving the heart, where there has been no similar experience. It is the widow who knows best how to speak words of comfort to the one from whose side an affectionate husband has been torn. It is the man who has himself passed through the agonies of a financial difficulty that knows best how to cheer the one who, after every desperate effort to retrieve his fortune, yet finds himself going to the wall step by step. It is in the school of experience that the language of sympathy is best taught. Christ's knowledge of our trials is not a theoretical but an experimental one. He knows what the weight of a burden is by having carried it. (*A. G. Brown.*) *The sympathy of the Saviour*:—The doctrine of my text is, Able to save is also able to feel. I. Take the wonderful consolation of the text. Look at the expressive

word "TOUCHED"; but is it not a weak, poor, or cold word? No! touched! That is, His sympathy does not overwhelm His power. Too great sympathy is death to power; the Saviour knows, helps, heals. Touched! He is not possessed by our infirmities. He always possessed them. As He said, "I have power to lay down My life, and I have power to take it again." Walk with me through an infirmary; let us step from bed to bed—we are able to see, not to save—alas, what spectacles are here! Can you walk from bed to bed? can you feel for all that and this? Then, would your hand be strong enough to minister the skill of the surgeon and the tenderness of the nurse? It is difficult to walk through this, and to be touched with tenderness, and not lose the skilfulness. Hence it is said of our Lord, "He was touched"; that is, He holds our infirmities; on the contrary they hold us—our infirmities do not overwhelm His power. "Touched by the feeling of our infirmities," He was untouched by the power of our infirmities. It was the last lesson necessary "to make Him a merciful and faithful High Priest"; it only proved His human ability to feel, and gives us confidence in His infinite ability to save. II. EXTEND THIS ILLUSTRATION INTO DOCTRINE. And now from this shall we, after thus dwelling on the sympathy of the Saviour, proceed to see how it illustrates the principle of Divine Providence. The suffering of the world is the great mystery of the world; but what is the suffering of the world, compared with the greater mystery of the suffering of Christ? Can pure being know pain? Can God condition Himself in infirmity? Can eternity be touched by time? Well, Christ says, I cannot save you from suffering, but I can suffer for you; nay, I can attest Myself to your hearts as perpetually suffering with you. III. LET US NARROW THE TEXT TO THE APPLICATION. I repeat, the doctrine of the text is, Able to save is able to feel. We find even among men that sympathy is more or less perfect as the holiness of the person is more or less so. There is no real sympathy among men of sensual, worldly, unspiritual life, unless we are to call the mere operations of natural instinct sympathy; it is not natural pity, it is consciousness, it differs little from our fellow-perception of heat and cold. Sin kills sympathy; as a man becomes infected with the power of evil, he ceases to sympathise with others, all his feelings centre in himself. Sin is self-centring; sinners put all worst constructions on each other's words and acts—they have no consideration, no forbearance. Sanctity and charity are one; gentleness, compassion, tenderness, ripens—personal holiness grows more and more mature, and sympathy becomes more perfect as repentance becomes more perfect. May I venture a word on thoughts beyond our probation? They only have true sympathy who are dead to themselves, they must most truly sympathise who are most free from the taints of evil. Now, does not this give light to the nature of His sympathy who was God of very God, was made Man that He might unite us wholly to Himself? Above and beyond all sympathy is that of our High Priest. (*E. Paxton Hood.*) *Christ touched with a feeling of our infirmities*:—For the explaining of this let me show—1. What it is to be our High Priest. 2. What those infirmities are, with the feeling of which He is touched. 3. What it is to be touched with the feeling of them. 1. For the first, His office, as High Priest, may be best known by the acts of it. The acts of His office are principally two. (1) Sacrificing for us to make reconciliation (chap. ii. 17). (2) By interceding. 2. What those infirmities are, with the feeling of which He is touched. Infirmities here are whatever our frail condition makes us subject to suffer by. 3. What is it to be touched with the feeling of our infirmities? (1) He knows all our infirmities. None of them escape His notice. (2) He knows them experimentally. Has Himself been exercised with them. (3) He is affected with our infirmities, He feels them, He is touched with the feeling of them. He has a sense thereof which touches His soul, and makes some impression on it; as one who not only has suffered what others feel, but suffers with them in what they feel. As when one member is under some grievance, not only the other members suffer with it, but the soul is affected with grief arising out of love, attended with desire to give or get relief, and anger and indignation against that which brought the grievance, or continues it, and hinders relief. In like manner is Christ affected with the infirmities of His people. (*a*) He pities, has compassion on them. (*b*) And this pity and compassion is not without the motions and acts of love. Indeed, this is the rise of it. It is out of such a love as made Him willing to humble Himself so low as to take our weaknesses and infirmities upon Him. (*c*) This is attended with desire, accompanied with an inclination to succour, relieve such, whose condition is to be pitied; to do that which is best for them in such a condition. That which wants this is no pity indeed. It is that which is most

advantageous and desirable in this affection; it is all that we must understand by compassion, when the Scripture ascribes it to the Lord; and when we conceive it to be in Christ as God, in the Divine nature, it is not in Him a troublesome or passionate grief. That is an imperfection not to be ascribed to Him; nor would it be any advantage to us if He were liable to it. But it is a willingness in Him to help and succour those whose state calls for pity or commiseration. (*d*) This is accompanied with zeal and anger, or indignation, against those who occasion the grievance, or would make it worse and heavier. (4) He is affected with our infirmities as a man. As He has a human nature, so He has human affections. (5) He is affected with our infirmities as one concerned in us very much and nearly. As a friend (John xv. 14, 15); as a brother (Heb. xii. 11, 12); as a father, with the grievances of His children (Heb. ii. 13); as a husband, with the wants or sufferings of the wife of His own bosom (2 Cor. xi. 2); as one united to us, as counting Himself one with us (Eph. i. 22, 23). (6) He is affected with them really and to purpose. He has a more effectual sense of them than any other, men or angels, yea, or we ourselves have; for He has such a sense thereof as will assuredly bring relief, which neither we ourselves, nor men or angels for us, can do in many cases. (7) It is an extensive sympathy, it reaches all our infirmities. He has compassion on us in all our weaknesses, all that we suffer by, in all that has anything of misery or activeness in it. This is plain by the latter end of this verse: He "was in all points tempted," &c. Oh but, it may be said, this exception does exclude the greatest part of our infirmities from this sympathy, and us from the comfort and advantage of it, in those points too which stand in most need of it: for those infirmities which proceed from sin, or are mixed with it, and sin itself especially, are our greatest misery, make our present state most lamentable, and so stand in most need of pity and relief. If Christ be not touched with the feeling of these (which are worst of all), so as to have compassion on us, and be ready to succour us, we are to seek in our greatest pressures and grievances, where we have most necessity of relief and pity; as *e.g.*, (*a*) In those infirmities which are from sin, the effects of sin, which are many and great, is He not touched with the feeling, &c.? I answer, Yes, He is touched, &c. These are not excluded by the expression. He Himself laboured under these; for such infirmities as are from sin may be sinless, though they be the effects of sin, yet they may be innocent in themselves, and without sin; and all that are without sin He Himself was exercised with. He was tempted in all points, exercised with all infirmities, even those which are the effects of sin, as we are; only they were in Him without sin, as they are not in us. For He took the nature of fallen man, as it was bruised and rendered infirm by the fall; He took our nature as weakened by sin, though not as defiled by it; there was no sin in His human nature, but there were those weaknesses and infirmities which were the sad issues of sin. These He laboured under, and so knows how to pity and sympathise effectually with those that are yet under them. (*b*) But in sinful infirmities, what relief is there hereby for them? Christ was not touched with any that were sinful, and how can He be touched with the feeling of them? *e.g.*, the people of Christ have much ignorance and darkness, and many spiritual wants; they are sinfully defective, both in knowledge and holiness; and these are in themselves, and to those that are duly sensible of them, greater miseries than poverty, or sickness, or other outward afflictions and sufferings. I answer, Christ had something of these, though nothing of the sinfulness of them; so much of these, as that He can sympathise with His people under them. He wanted much knowledge of many things; He wanted some spiritual gifts, yea, and some exercise of grace, in some parts of His life, while He was upon earth. He came not to perfection in these, but by degrees, and till then was under some defect and imperfection, though not any that was sinful. For He wanted none that He ought to have had, or that His present state was capable of; yet, wants, defects, and inward weaknesses, without sin, He was really under (Luke ii. 40, 52). Hereby it seems plain, that He had not at first that measure of knowledge, and of the Holy Ghost, as afterwards. He knew not so much, nor had that exercise of grace in His infancy or childhood, as at perfect age. His faculties were not capable of full perfection herein till they came to full maturity. So that He knows by experience what it is to be under defects and wants, and so knows how to pity those who labour under them. In this the comparison holds betwixt Him and the Levitical high priest (chap. v. 2). (*c*) Oh, but He was never touched with sin (chap. i. 16), and this is our greatest misery, the sting of all grievances, that which makes all other to be heavy and grievous. If He be not touched with the feeling of our sin, we are at a loss where we have

most need. I answer, There are four things considerable about sin, the offence, temptation to it, guilt of it, punishment for it. Now there are none of these but Christ was touched with them, but the first only. So that He had a greater sense of sin than any of His people ever had. We may hear Him cry out under the weight of it (Lam. i. 12). The whole penalty and curse was upon Him, part of which made His soul heavy unto death. So that, though He was without sin, yet He was touched, or rather oppressed with such a sense of sin, as is enough abundantly to move Him to all compassionateness to any of His people under the burden. It is an extensive sympathy; such as reaches not only infirmities that have no respect to sin, but those that are from sin, as its effects, and those that are sinful formally, yea, sin itself; He is touched with the feeling of all. (8) It is a proportionable sympathy; a compassion which is exactly answerable to the nature and quality of every infirmity; fully commensurable to it, whatever it be. As it is not more than it needs, so it is not less than it requires, how much compassion and relief soever it calls for. (9) A constant and perpetual sympathy. It continues without any intermission so long as He is High Priest, or so long as our infirmities continue; so long as we are under any weakness, inward or outward; so long as we are in any danger or peril; so long as we are exposed to any trouble or suffering. This is one thing wherein the faithful discharge of His priestly office consists. And He is a priest for ever (Psa. cx. 4), repeated often in this Epistle (chap. v. 6, and vii. 17, 21). Use I. For instruction. This truth leads the people of Christ to many duties, and strongly obliges to the performance of them. 1. To admire Christ; to employ your minds in high, adoring, admiring thoughts of Christ, in His person, natures, offices, and the execution of them; but especially wonderful in this, that He would be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. 2. To love Christ. There is no greater attractive of love to an ingenious temper than love. Now in that Christ is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, you have a most evident demonstration that He loves you. For hereby it is very clear what His love to you is. (1) A great love, and most extensive; that can reach all conditions and circumstances which you are or may be in, even such as the love of others will not touch, will not come near: a love that will show itself in all cases, even where it could be least expected; a love that will surmount and overflow all discouragements. (2) A free love. This is an evidence He can love freely; He can love those who are all made up of defects and imperfections. (3) A lasting, a constant love, such as all the waters cannot quench, nor the floods drown. It cannot be nonplussed, it abides the sorest trials. (4) A peerless love. It cannot be matched. There is no such thing to be found in heaven or earth, but in Christ only. Now, as He is High Priest, He is both God and man; and so His love to us is both the love of God and also the love of man in one person. No instance of such a love can be given in the whole world. (5) It is a cordial love, not in show or appearance only, not in outward acts and expressions, but such as springs from His heart and affects that. He is touched, *i.e.*, His heart is touched with the concerns of His people. (6) An all-sufficient love. II. For comfort to the people of Christ. Here is ground of great consolation in every condition; in the worst, the most grievous circumstances that you can be compassed with in this world. (*D. Clarkson, B.D.*) *Our sympathising and sinless High Priest*:—I. WE HAVE AN HIGH PRIEST. It is in no figurative sense that Christ is called a High Priest. II. WE HAVE A SYMPATHISING HIGH PRIEST. 1. His nature secures us of His sympathy. And this sympathy is of that intimate and tender kind of which He may be supposed capable who was in all respects like His brethren—that is, in all things requisite to constitute a perfect human nature. If, indeed, we make a distinction between sinless and sinful infirmities, we must also make a distinction between the kinds of feeling with which our High Priest can be touched. He is capable of feeling for both, but not certainly in the same manner. Those infirmities which we call sinless, and which are rather the painful consequences of sin than in themselves sinful, He felt Himself, as being inseparable now from human nature; and, consequently, He feels a sympathy of love for these unmingled with any emotions of disapprobation. But those infirmities, again, which are sinful, He could not Himself be conscious of; nay, they must have been, however palliated by circumstances, the subjects of His disapprobation. And yet as an High Priest or Mediator would not be required but on account of sin; and as it is in the work of receiving the confessions, preferring the supplications, and offering the gifts of sinners, through the merits of His atoning sacrifice, that He is expressly engaged, He must also feel the sympathy of compassion for those who are erring and out of the way, however much it be

mingled with displeasure and pain. 2. But, lest any distressing doubts should still remain in your minds that, although a partaker of our nature, He may yet never have had our experience, without which He might still be regarded as not capable of being touched with a feeling of our infirmities, the apostle to this negative adds a positive assertion—He "was in all respects tempted as we are." His experience, as well as His constitution, fits Him for our compassionate High Priest, and assures us of His sympathy. Human life is a state of suffering, and a period of temptation. All ranks and conditions of men have their peculiar trials; but to the human family many afflictions are common; and both the peculiar and the general sorrows of our race the Saviour knew by experience. Thus, with good intentions, He was subjected to trials by God. But He was also solicited to sin, for the worst of purposes, both by unprincipled men and malignant fiends. III. WE HAVE A SINLESS HIGH PRIEST. It is a curious speculation in the science of mind, and it has been made a dangerous one in that of divinity, how far solicitation to sin could assail the mind of the Holy One without His becoming sinful; and how an infallible, impeccable being, could possibly be subjected to real temptations. It is perhaps safe to establish no dogmas upon such subjects, and safer altogether to avoid their agitation. It is sufficient for religious ends, at least, to know, that the angels who kept not their first estate, Adam and Eve who lost paradise, and Christ Jesus who regained it, were all tempted by the solicitations of sin while yet in innocence. It is still more delightful to know that this untainted Saviour, having come out of the fiery furnace of temptation victorious, is able, in consequence of His subjection to trials, more feelingly and effectually to succour those who are tempted. (*James Jarvie.*) *Priestly sympathy for fellow-sufferers*:—I. THE FOUNDATION OF THE SYMPATHY OF CHRIST JESUS—WHAT IS IT? 1. The similarity of His circumstances. "In all points tempted like as we are." As we, Jesus Christ was tried in the body, tried by toil, exhaustion, hunger, thirst, pain, and death. As we, Jesus Christ was tried in His estate or condition, tried by poverty, persecution, contempt, misrepresentation, desertion, tried by friendlessness, and tried by solitude. As we, Jesus Christ was tried in mind, by fear, perplexity, and sorrow. And as we, Jesus Christ was tried by the presentation of seducements to evil. Now in all this we see a similarity of condition. 2. But now, mark, the dissimilarity of character. "He was tried in all points as we, but without sin." He never transgressed any law. He left nothing undone that he ought to have done. No defilement of sin ever entered His spirit. We would here remark that "without sin," Jesus Christ would be more sensitive towards all kinds of suffering. It is true that He never could experience remorse. But all such feelings as sadness and fear would be stronger in Him than in us, because He was without sin. Sin hardens the soul. Holiness keeps every pore of the spirit open. "Without sin," Christ Jesus would, in a world of sin, suffer that which no sinner in such a world could endure. "Without sin," Jesus Christ would see forms of moral temptation more quickly and completely. II. THE SPHERE IN WHICH THE SYMPATHY OF CHRIST IS HERE SAID TO BE DISPLAYED. He appears in the presence of God for us as our great High Priest, and in the presence of God for us, appearing as our great High Priest, He is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities." As He represents us with all our infirmities, He is "touched with the feeling of those infirmities." He offers, as our great High Priest, in the sense of application, the sacrifice for sin. So far as the provision of the atonement was concerned, that was finished when He gave up the ghost. He does not, in that sense, offer Himself often, but so far as the application of His sacrifice is concerned, this is perpetual. And thus offering, in the sense of the application, His own sacrifice for sin, as He does this, He is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities." Then, as our Priest, He cleanses us and purifies us. This is one of the functions of the priesthood, to sprinkle clean water upon us that we may be clean; and as He purifies us, He is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities." It is also part of His work, in the name of Jehovah to bless us, to say to us, as the priest of old, "Jehovah bless thee, and keep thee." And as He pronounces upon us this Divine benediction "He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities." It is also His to make intercession for us. And as He mentions our name, and records our circumstances, He is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities," "touched with the feeling of our infirmities" as we exhibit them. Some of our infirmities may be down in the dark depths of our spiritual nature, but when we present ourselves, we present even these infirmities to His eye, and as we exhibit them He is "touched" by them. As we become conscious of them He is "touched" with His

fellow-feeling—hence He does not deal with them with rough, but gentle hand. He is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities," as in various ways He recognises them; "touched" because of His goodness, because as God He is love, and "touched" because of His past experience. But what shall we do with this fact? "Let us, therefore, come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Some are inclined to stay away from the throne of grace because of their sorrows. This sacred writer forbids our keeping at a distance from the throne of grace, because of these infirmities and troubles, and in the name of God he bids us come just as we are. The greater your sorrows, the greater need is there for your coming. The more fierce your temptations, the greater necessity is there for your coming. And, I may say, the more you need to have done for you, the more welcome you will be. (*S. Martin, D.D.*) *Christ's sympathy*:—They tell us that, in some trackless lands, when one friend passes through the pathless forests, he breaks a twig ever and anon as he goes, that those who come after may see the traces of his having been there, and may know that they are not out of the road. Oh, when we are journeying through the murky night and the dark woods of affliction and sorrow, it is something to find here and there a spray broken or a leafy stem bent down with the tread of Christ's foot and the brush of His hand as He passed, and to remember that the path He trod He has hallowed, and that there are lingering fragrances and hidden strengths in the remembrance, "in all points tempted as we are," bearing grief for us, bearing grief with us, bearing grief like us. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Touched with the feeling*:—Don't you sometimes find it very hard to make even your doctor understand *what* the pain is like? Words don't seem to convey it. And after you have explained the trying and wearying sensation as best you can, you are convinced those who have not felt it do not understand it. Now, think of Jesus not merely entering into the fact, but into the feeling of what you are going through. "Touched with the *feeling*"—how deep that goes! (*F. R. Havergal.*) *Faithfulness born of sympathy*:—Mr. Howells tells of a cab-driver in Florence, in whose cab at nightfall he sent home a child to the hotel from a distance. Being persistent in securing the driver's number, the cabman began to divine his reason, and so he replied to Mr. Howells, "Oh! rest easy, I, too, am a father!" (*H. O. Mackey.*) *Christ's sympathy*:—Our gracious Queen, during her long and chequered reign, has been permitted to send many a letter of condolence to crowned heads in foreign lands, when they have been called, in the providence of God, to exchange their crowns and coronets for tokens of mourning. Amongst them all there never was one that carried with it and in it such a deep, sweet grace of tenderness as that which she wrote with her own hand some time since to the widow of the late President of the great republic of America. And why did it bring such a depth of comfort? Because its pages were stained with the tears of a kindred widowhood. (*Bp. of Algoma.*) *Sympathy with the tempted*:—Having been tempted—or pierced through, Luther was a piercing preacher, and met with every man's temptation; and being once demanded how he could do so? "Mine own manifold temptations," said he, "and experiences are the cause thereof"; for from his tender years he was much beaten and exercised with spiritual conflicts. (*J. Trapp.*) *Christ's abiding sympathy*:—Trajan, the Emperor, being blamed by his friends for being too gentle towards all, answered that being an Emperor he would now be such toward private men, as he once, when he was a private man, wished that the Emperor should be towards him. Christ hath lost nothing of His wonted pity by His exaltation in heaven. (*Ibid.*) *Christ's temptation like ours*:—Christ was "tempted like as we are." Are we tempted through the senses? So was He. Are we tempted by opportunities of carnal honour and carnal power? So was He. Are we tempted through our human affections? So was He. Are we tempted to deflection from the path of obedience by the infirmities of the good, or the crafty questioning of the worldly wise? So was He. Every testing process to which we are subjected He went through. Satan omitted no conceivable mode, and withheld no possible intensity of trial from the holy soul of Immanuel. All the magic prospects and all the soothing illusions that externalism could give, all its joyful or mournful influences, all its power of tenderness or terror, he employed to enchant or to assail the Son of Man. So He was tempted in all points as we are, as to the instruments of temptation, though He had not all our susceptibilities to their touch. In all points in which He could innocently, He did actually resemble us. He was ever tempted as we are; though ever victorious, as we are not. (*C. Stanford, D.D.*) *Christ tempted in all the faculties of humanity*:—A geographer may be a competent repre-

sentative of the land through which he travels, without having stood on every single foot of ground which he describes. Robinson did not need to tread every square inch of the streets of Jerusalem in order to understand the topography of that city, and represent it accurately to us. It was not necessary that Christ should pass through every shade and every inflection of human experience in order to understand them. For all experience issues from certain definite foundations of faculty; and it is enough if every faculty which works in us was proved, pained, tempted, and tried in Him, and tried up to this measure, that no man should thereafter live who should have any temptation or trial that should make against any given faculty such a pressure as was made against our Saviour. Pride—is it tempted among men? All that I require is, that Christ should have felt a temptation of pride that should more than equal it; that should swell immeasurably above and overmatch any trial that befals His followers below—in other words, enough put to proof in that particular faculty of the human soul, to understand what that faculty can suffer; how it can be tempted; what course is needed to sustain one under such temptation. It is not needful, therefore, that Christ should sustain the relationship of husband, for He never was in wedlock; or of father. It only requires that He should sustain such a relation to universal human nature or life that there should be no faculty, no passion, no sentiment that is tempted in us, that should not also be tempted in Him; and that there should be no such pressure brought to bear upon us that our temptation should ever be greater than His knowledge of temptation through His own suffering. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The tempted High Priest:*—I. WE HAVE TO STUDY THE APOSTLE'S ASSERTION. 1. "He was tempted." "God is not tempted of evil"; but the Saviour was. It is obvious that temptation can be a possibility only to a created spirit. On this account the Hebrews felt the idea of a tempted Saviour to be one most discordant to their tastes, repulsive to their pride. But Paul in this letter, which was written for the very purpose of confirming their faith, makes no attempt to soften or qualify that truth which so much tried it; he advances considerations which prove that what seemed to be the shame of the gospel was its glory, and that what seemed to be its weakness was one of the secrets of its power. He reiterates the statement that Christ was in reality tempted. 2. Yes, not only was He tempted, but the apostle adds, He was tempted in all points like as we are. He was tempted by all the powers, all the arts, all the devices, and all the instruments which are brought to bear upon us. In all points in which He could innocently, He did actually resemble us: He was ever tempted as we are, though ever victorious as we are not. 3. When the sacred writer has said of Jesus, "He was in all points tempted as we are," he adds the remarkable qualification—"yet without sin." That is, the tempter found Him without sin, and left Him without sin. Imagine a father, in some dreary days of poverty, having the chance of taking, undetected, gold belonging to another man. He is without the sin of dishonesty, but the thought of his starving child, and the possibility by this one secret act of saving it from death will surely be a real trial; and, though he shakes off the thought like fire, does he not feel the temptation? Imagine some saint sentenced to perish at the stake for Christ. The authorities say, "Recant and live, or confess and die!" He is without the sin of spiritual disloyalty, but as he looks through the prison-bars on the green of the spring, and the blue glory of the sky, as in contrast to all this comes the thought, that if he should be constant to his Saviour he must shiver in the shaded cell through months of weariness and only be brought forth at last into the glare of day to die; although he may say, "O Jesus, though all men should deny Thee, yet will not I!"—do not all these things combine to make that offer of dear life a temptation hard to overcome? It is therefore conceivable that although Christ was without sin, He was not without the susceptibility of being tempted. He appropriated our nature with all its weakness. II. Let us now with profound reverence endeavour to ascertain THE ENDS OF THE SAVIOUR'S TEMPTATIONS. 1. He was tempted that He might be perfected. The Divine nature could not be perfected; that, indeed, was perfect already, for that which is not always perfect is not always God. But human nature is born weak and undeveloped; it has to grow in mind and in body; one of its essential laws is its capability of improvement. Thus it was that even Jesus had to be educated. He did not start into full stature in the flash of a moment. True, the Saviour was always perfect even as to His human nature, but perfection is a relative thing; the perfection of a child is something lower than the perfection of a man—as negative excellence differs from positive excellence, and as the perfect bud is inferior to "the bright

consummate flower." 2. He was tempted that He might destroy the dominion of the tempter. 3. He was tempted that His peculiar and characteristic experience of temptation might lead His followers also to expect the same. 4. He was tempted that He might teach us by His example how to meet and sustain temptation. He was "led" not by the action of His own choice, but "by the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil"; and in all subsequent instances you may trace the rule of the same principle. If you dwell in the jungle you are likely to take the jungle fever. If you "dally with the crested worm," you are likely to be smitten with his deadly fang; and so, if you pitch your tent in Vanity Fair, you are likely to catch the vain spirit of the scene. "To grapple with temptation is a venture; to fly from it is a victory." 5. He was tempted, to afford His tempted people the assurance of His sympathy. Even under ordinary circumstances we yearn for sympathy. Without it the heart will contract and droop, and shut like a flower in an unkindly atmosphere, but will open again amidst the sound of frankness and the scenes of love. When we are in trouble, this want is in proportion still more pressing; and for the sorrowful heart to feel alone is a grief greater than nature can sustain. A glance of sympathy seems to help it more than the gift of untold riches. Let it be remembered that it is suffering, and not necessarily similarity in other respects, that gives the power of sympathy. And did not Jesus "suffer, being tempted"? His infinitely holy nature, brought in contact with sin by temptation, must have passed through depths of shame and sorrow that we, the sinful, can never sound. 6. He was tempted that we might be encouraged to boldness in prayer for help. The dispensation of help is lodged in the hands of Jesus. We may infer, therefore, with what wisdom, delicacy, and promptitude it will be brought to us when we seek it. (*C. Stanford, D.D.*) *The temptation of our Lord*:—In reflecting on our Lord's temptations, and on the sympathy which He now feels for those who are tempted, it is very necessary to remember the difference between temptation and sin, or the propensity to sin. Many persons cannot comprehend how any one can be tempted to sin who has no sinful propensity. It seems to these persons that an object presented to such an one with a view to temptation can, in fact, be no temptation at all; and that it can exert as little influence on his mind as it can upon a rock or a tree. Hence, as Christ was tempted in all points like as we are; as He is our example in resisting temptations; and as He sympathises with us in all our temptations, they think that He must have had a sinful tendency in His human nature. In order that we may not confound temptation with sin, or with a sinful tendency, let us consider what sin is and what temptation is. We cannot have a better definition of sin than that which the Apostle John gives us, "Sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John iii. 4). Man is the subject of numerous desires and affections which are essential to human nature. All man's natural desires—I mean his desires as man, not as fallen man—were intended to be gratified and were implanted for that very purpose. But they were intended to be gratified only in a certain way; only in that way which God should appoint, and which should be conducive to His glory and to the welfare and happiness of all His holy creatures. And this way He traced out in His law, and delineated upon the hearts and consciences of His creatures. Sin, then, as the apostle tells us, is the transgression of the law. It is the wish or attempt to gratify these natural desires, indifferent in themselves, in a way which God has forbidden. Next, what is temptation? Temptation is trial. Temptation is that which serves to show us what we are, and what is in us. It brings to light the strength or weakness of our faith, our love to God, and our regard to His law. There are two ways in which a man may be tempted, or tried, or examined. First —When search is made into his heart and conduct by simple inquiry. In this way we are commanded to tempt or examine ourselves. Secondly—A man is tempted when he is exposed to the influence of some object of natural desire, or fear, or aversion, whose tendency, if it were not regulated by the fear of God, would be to draw or drive him out of the path of duty. God, we are told, did tempt Abraham thus, when He commanded him to offer up Isaac. This is the mode of trial which we usually understand by the word temptation. In this mode it is the prerogative of God alone to tempt us, or to lead us into temptation. It is of temptation in this latter sense only that I at present speak. In order that there should be temptation it is necessary that there should be a certain natural adaptation or affinity in the mind to the object of temptation; but if higher principles so rule and govern the soul that they entirely neutralise that affinity, so that not the slightest inclination or desire for sinful gratification is excited, then there is neither sin nor propensity

to sin. So far is there from being any propensity to sin, that the very temptation proves that there is the strongest propensity towards holiness. It puts to the test and proves the existence and strength of the positively holy principles which regulate all the motions of the mind and of the heart. Two substances, suppose, are chemically combined by a mutual affinity or attraction. The strength of this affinity is tested by introducing another substance which has an affinity to one and not to the other of the substances in combination. If one of these substances has a stronger affinity for the test than it has for the substance with which it is combined, it will disengage itself and unite with the test. But if its affinity for the substance with which it is combined be stronger it will remain as before. And if the most powerful tests are applied without producing any change, this proves that the affinity of the two substances in combination is too strong to be overcome by any other which is known to exist. Thus, in a perfectly holy being, the principle of love to God and His law is an affinity too powerful to be overcome by the most powerful of all desires, or the most painful of all sufferings. No temptation can excite even a single momentary inclination to disobey God and to sacrifice the principles of eternal righteousness and truth. Our Lord was perfect Man, and possessed all those affections which naturally belong to a perfect man. Had He not possessed them He could not have been the subject of temptation. But not only so, He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with griefs. He was made subject to all the trials, sorrows, and sufferings which belong to man in his fallen state, save and except those which are inseparably connected with the ignorance, the alienation from God, and the habits of sin, which adhere to every other child of Adam. He always perfectly knew His Father's character and will, and was always, even from the womb, perfectly inclined to obedience, and filled with a perfect abhorrence of sin. He, therefore, could have no ignorance to mislead Him; no alienation of heart from God to overcome; no force of evil habit to subdue. In Him the love of God reigned supreme, and was in constant and uninterrupted exercise. No tendency to sin ever existed in His holy mind. He experienced none of that warfare between the flesh and the spirit which exists in us, because in Him the love of God was perfect, and the Spirit dwelt in Him without measure. Yet His temptations infinitely exceeded ours, both in power, variety, and number; and therefore He is able to sympathise with us in all our temptations far more perfectly, and to enter far more fully into all the difficulties and trials of each individual among us, than it is possible for any other human being to do. He does not, indeed, sympathise with us from experience in the warfare between the flesh and the spirit, for that were to sympathise with us in our sin, in our want of love to God, and in the weakness of our faith. And God forbid that we should ever desire any one to sympathise with us in sin. Yet though He does not sympathise with us in this warfare, yet He has compassion on us, and is ever ready to look with a pitying eye on our weakness. (*J. Rate, M.A.*) *Christ the strength of the tempted*:—The first thought is suggested by the position of the words. They come just after the most solemn warnings and threatenings to be found in the Bible. If they listened only to the warnings from the disastrous history of their forefathers, who perished in the wilderness as the penalty of their backsliding from God, they would be driven to despair lest they should fall after the same example of unbelief; but he points them to the Saviour, who is stronger than all their enemies, and to the love and grace that can redeem them from all their sins. The Bible revelation of God is a combination throughout of these contrasted elements of the Divine nature. Righteousness and mercy, justice and love, are the revelations of God's character in Christ. Our characters as Christians must lay hold of, and grow upon these foundations. Our faith in its fulness is like the tree whose roots grapple the rocks, and twine themselves around the foundations of the hills far below the surface in the hidden recesses; but the branches wave in the breezes, and clothe themselves in the beauty of foliage, and echo with the glad song of birds, and climb up ever towards the light and the sky. So our faith must have roots in the conviction of sin and the justice of God, but it must climb up to the light of God's forgiveness and love in Christ. It must be strong and tender—a combination of awe and childlike trust. Now let us try to understand the meaning of the text itself. Jesus Christ is touched with a feeling of all our infirmities, because He was tempted as we are. He was without sin, and therefore He was not tempted by evil designs. He was not tempted by the hereditary proclivities. But temptations may come from perfectly sinless desires. The motive to violate a law may come from the noblest affections of the human soul. During

the late war, thousands of men deserted from the army on both sides, from cowardice, and from ignoble treachery to the cause in which they were enlisted. There was one soldier who entered the army at twenty-three, leaving a young wife at home. His record as a soldier had no stain upon it. He had borne the colours of his regiment in a hundred battles. In the last terrible days of suffering in the winter around Petersburg, he stood to his post without flinching for a moment. A letter comes to him from his home. A poor neighbour writes to him that his wife is dying and his children are starving. He applies for a furlough, but it cannot be granted. Again a pitiful appeal comes from the same hand. He goes to his home, buries his dead wife, cares for his children, comes back to the army, and is arrested for desertion in the face of the enemy. Before the court-martial that tries him, he has nothing to say why the sentence should not be passed upon him. He knew it was death and he was ready to take it; but he asks them, as a favour to him, to read a letter, that they might know he was not a coward. The judge advocate begins to read the letter aloud, but his voice trembles and breaks. It is handed from one to the other and read in silence; and not a man in court could keep back the tears of sympathy for a brave comrade. The sentence is passed with a recommendation for pardon, and the pardon is given by the commanding general. He was tempted to violate his duty as a soldier by fidelity to his wife and children. We can be tempted by the noblest impulses of which the human heart is capable. A good man suffers more in the presence of temptation than the bad man. The good man resists; and the resistance involves a struggle which strains every nerve, and puts every principle to the test. A distinguished writer illustrates this psychological principle. There are two men in business: one is conscientious and honourable; the other, a trickster ready for any sharp practice. Both are under the pressure of financial difficulties. An opportunity is offered to each to make a fortune by fraud. The conscientious man has seen disaster coming. His wife was reared in affluence; she has parted with her luxuries, and is doing the work of servants. He says to himself, "I might take the care and the burden from her, and save the children from poverty by this single stroke. But no, so help me God, I will see them starve before I sell my honour and conscience." The trickster, on the other hand, welcomes the opportunity. He argues, "Others do it, why may not I?" With him there is no moral struggle. His weakened conscience offers no barrier against which the temptation frets and rages. He and the tempter are of one mind. The wicked fall into temptation, the good resist it. But the resistance involves suffering as the price of the victory. We are told that Christ suffered, being tempted. The difference between our temptation and that of the Saviour is this: the will of His flesh was pure and innocent; the will of our flesh is impure and sinful; and these render us more liable to fall, but they do not increase the pain of the conflict, but rather diminish it. Christ suffered, being tempted, and His suffering was greater in proportion to His moral antagonism to evil. This principle takes His temptation out of the region of unreality and appearance, and unites Him to us in a living bond of human brotherhood. Human sympathy is too dull to comprehend the deeper struggles of a sensitive conscience with hidden temptation. But He who was tempted in all points as we are knows it all, and can give you grace for your hour of need. You may confess all these sins to Him. He triumphed over them, and you have yielded to them. Yet He has measured the strength of each of these temptations; and that experience has qualified Him to redeem you from their power, and to save you by His grace. (*Bp. A. M. Randolph.*)

Yet without sin.—*Of Christ being without sin:*—Christ was pure, without sin, upon these grounds: 1. That His human nature might be fit to be united to the Divine nature. 2. That He might be a sufficient Saviour of others. "For such an High Priest became us, who is holy, undefiled, separate from sinners" (chap. vii. 26). 3. That we might be made the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. v. 21). 4. That we might be saved, and yet the law not frustrated (Rom. viii. 3, x. 4). 5. That Satan might have nothing to object against Him. 6. That death, grave, and devil might lose their power by seizing on Him that was without sin. (1) The aforesaid purity of Christ, to be without sin, puts a difference betwixt Christ and other priests, who "offered for themselves and for the errors of the people" (chap. ix. 7). (2) It hence appeareth that no other man could have been a sufficient priest; for "there is none righteous; no, not one." "All have sinned" (Rom. iii. 10, 23). (3) This affordeth much comfort to us against our manifold sins; for when we appear before God He beholds us in our Surety. God's eye is especially cast upon

Him who is without sin. (4) This may be a good incitement unto us to cleanse ourselves from all sin as far as possibly we can, that we may be like unto Him (1 John iii. 3). (*W. Gouge.*) *Sin no aid to sympathy*:—It might be supposed that to sinful men a high priest who had known sin would be fuller of sympathy. But the apostle is not writing to men as sinners, to men who have fallen, but to men in danger of falling. And to the condition of such men Christ's history appeals with power. He knew all temptation, and can sympathise with those tempted; He overcame it, and this gives Him skill and power in opening up a way of escape. And even of sin a sinner is an ill judge; he will either regard it with undue abhorrence, or with mawkish sentiment, or with a callousness that comes of thinking it a matter of course among men. A clear, uncoloured view of it, and of those liable to it, can only be found in the mind tempted but unfallen. (*A. B. Davidson, LL.D.*) **Come boldly unto the throne of grace.**—*Boldness at the throne*:—I. HERE IS OUR GREAT RESORT DESCRIBED: "The throne of grace." In drawing near to God in prayer we come—1. To God as a King, with reverence, confidence, and submission. 2. To one who gives as a King; therefore we ask largely and expectantly. 3. To one who sits upon a throne "of grace" on purpose to dispense grace. 4. To one who in hearing prayer is enthroned and glorified. 5. To one who even in hearing prayer acts as a sovereign, but whose sovereignty is all of grace. II. HERE IS A LOVING EXHORTATION: "Let us come." It is the voice of one who goes with us. It is an invitation—1. From Paul, a man like ourselves, but an experienced believer who had much tried the power of prayer. 2. From the whole Church speaking in him. 3. From the Holy Spirit. III. HERE IS A QUALIFYING ADVERB: "Boldly." 1. Constantly, at all times. 2. Unreservedly, with all sorts of petitions. 3. Freely, with simple words. 4. Hopefully, with full confidence of being heard. 5. Fervently, with importunity of pleading. IV. HERE IS A REASON GIVEN FOR BOLDNESS. "Therefore." 1. "That we may obtain mercy, and find grace"; not that we may utter good words, but may actually obtain blessings. (1) We may come when we need great mercy because of our sin. (2) We may come when we have little grace. (3) We may come when we are in need of more grace. 2. There are many other reasons for coming at once, and boldly. (1) Our character may urge us. We are invited to come for "mercy," and therefore undeserving sinners may come. (2) The character of God encourages us to be bold. (3) Our relation to Him as children gives us great freedom. (4) The Holy Spirit's guidance draws us near the throne. (5) The promises invite us by their greatness, freeness, sureness, &c. (6) Christ is already given to us, and therefore God will deny us nothing. (7) Our former successes at the throne give us solid confidence. 3. The great reason of all for bold approach is in Jesus. (1) He once was slain, and the mercy-seat is sprinkled with His blood. (2) He is risen, and has justified us by His righteousness. (3) He has ascended and taken possession of all covenant blessings on our behalf. Let us ask for that which is our own. (4) He is sympathetic, tender, and careful for us; we must be heard. Conclusion: 1. Let us come to the throne, when we are sinful, to find mercy. 2. Let us come to the throne, when we are weak, to find help. 3. Let us come to the throne, when we are tempted, to find grace. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *On coming boldly to the throne of grace*:—1. LET US SEE WHAT IT DECLARES THE LORD TO BE IN HIMSELF. His throne of grace signifies—1. That He is a God of glory, of a glorious majesty. Here was the most glorious and majestic appearance of God amongst His people of old. Upon the mercy-seat He appeared in glory. The ark, whereof this very mercy-seat was a part, the most rich and splendid part, is called His glory (Psa. lxxviii. 61). Here He vouchsafed His special presence, as upon His throne. 2. That He is a God of dominion and sovereignty, that He rules and reigns and is supreme governor (Psa. xcix. 1, 2). He reigns; that appears by His throne. He sits between the cherubims. As so represented, the mercy-seat was His throne. Upon this account greatness, supremacy is ascribed to Him (ver. 2), and from hence Hezekiah declares His sovereignty over all kingdoms (2 Kings xix. 15). 3. That He is a God of power and might, of almighty power. When He is spoken of as upon His throne, the mercy-seat, He is called the Lord of hosts, one who has all the power in the world (1 Sam. iv. 4, 2 Sam. vi. 2); and the ark, whereof the mercy-seat was a principal part, is called the strength of God (Psa. lxxviii. 61, cxxxii. 8), because, as it was a testimony of His presence, so a symbol of His strength and power, ready to be engaged for His people. 4. That He is a God of holiness (Psa. xcix. 5). To worship at His footstool is to worship towards the mercy-seat (ver. 1), between the cherubim. There He resided as a God of holiness. And upon that account every part of the

temple, yea, the hill where it was seated, was counted holy (ver. 9). But above all, that part where the mercy-seat was, that was the most holy place, or, as it is in Hebrew, the holiness of holinesses (Exod. xxvii. 23). The mercy-seat was the throne of His holiness (Psa. xlvii. 8); and giving oracles from thence, it is called the oracle of holiness (Psa. xxviii. 2). 5. That He is a God of wisdom, who sees and knows all things, to whom nothing is hid, or obscure, or difficult. From the mercy-seat He gave oracles; He made discoveries to His people of such things which otherwise they could not come to the knowledge of. 6. In fine, the mention of the throne of grace minds us of the wisdom of God, that we should draw near Him as one who knows our state, yea, our hearts, and understands all the ways and means how to help us and do us good. II. WHAT THE THRONE OF GRACE DECLARES THE LORD TO BE UNTO US. 1. A God in Christ. The throne of grace is "the throne of God and of the Lamb" (Rev. xxii. 3). The throne of God alone is not to be approached by us; but the throne of God and the Lamb is the seat of mercy, the throne of grace. He not only gives law to His people, but makes provision for them, that their souls may have plenty (ver. 1 with Ezek. xlvii.), and He protects His subjects too. As the wings of the cherubims (parts of the mercy-seat) overshadowed and covered the holy things, so does He cover and overshadow His holy ones. 2. A God reconciled. It signifies that His justice is satisfied, His wrath appeased; not now incensed against His people, but well pleased and propitious. The name of the mercy-seat declares this. It is ἱλαστήριον, a propitiatory. 3. A God of forgiveness. As graciously pardoning the sins of His people. When He is represented to us upon the mercy-seat, He is set forth as a God that has found out a way to hide our sins out of His sight. 4. A God in covenant (Numb. x. 33; chap. ix. 4). 5. A God that will have communion with His people; one who will admit dust and ashes to have fellowship with Him. He offers there to meet them, to commune with them, to discover and communicate Himself to them. He admits His servants to communion with Him when He vouchsafes to meet them. And the mercy-seat was the place of meeting which the Lord appointed for Moses (Exod. xxx. 36). He will meet with him as we meet with a friend whom we desire and delight to converse with. He would meet His servants there to discover Himself to them. The LXX render it, "I will be known to thee from thence." He did make known Himself as a man to his friend. There He did commune with them (Exod. xxv. 22). 6. A God that hears prayer, and will answer the petitions and supplications of His people. The Lord gave answers from the mercy-seat; and this may be the reason why their posture of old in worshipping and praying was towards the mercy-seat (Psa. xxviii. 2). That was the place where the mercy-seat was. Called the oracle, because the Lord from the mercy-seat gave answers; and so it is rendered by some "the answering place" (so Psa. v. 7). 7. A God that is present with His people. More particularly this denotes—(1) An intimate presence. He is in the midst of His people. So He was while He was on the mercy-seat, so He will be while that remains, which this did but typify; while the throne of grace, while the mediation of Christ continues, who is King and Priest for ever. (2) A special, a gracious presence. He was not present here only as He is in the rest of the world, but in a more special way, as upon a mercy-seat, from which others were far removed, so as they could have no access to the propitiatory, no advantages by it. (3) A glorious presence. As the mercy-seat upon which the Lord appears is a throne of grace, so is it a throne of glory (Jer. xvii. 12, xiv. 21). (4) An all-sufficient presence—sufficient to secure them from all things dreadful and to supply them with all things desirable. This is the security of His people (Psa. xlvi. 5). (5) A continuing presence. He is said to dwell on the mercy-seat. In reference thereto is His promise (1 Kings vi. 13). The throne of grace denotes no less (Rev. vii. 15). Here He is, and here He abides. We need never suffer through His absence. Have recourse to Him on the throne of grace, and we need never be at a loss. 8. A God that will show Himself merciful and gracious to His people, that will deal mercifully and graciously with them. Now, when He thus represents Himself, they may find grace and mercy. *(D. Clarkson, B.D.)* *The Christian at the throne of grace:*—I. THE CHRISTIAN'S WANTS. 1. Pardon. 2. Strength. II. THE CHRISTIAN'S PRIVILEGE. We may obtain all we require. 1. We may approach the throne of grace. 2. Boldly, not with a feeling of terror, but as unto a loving God, a reconciled Father. III. THE CHRISTIAN'S ENCOURAGEMENTS. We need an advocate—Christ is the sinner's Advocate. We need an experienced advocate—Jesus was a tempted and experienced Saviour. We need a compassionate advocate—Jesus was an experienced, and therefore a compassionate Advocate. *(H. M. Villiers,*

M.A.) *The throne of grace*:—I. It will be well—nay, it is all-important—that we understand THE MEANING of the apostle when he bids us "come boldly to the throne of grace." We are not, then, to approach the throne of grace doubting; we are not to draw near as if we thought that we should not be received there gladly; we are not to come as though we expected to be sent away without being heard, for then the weakness of our faith in Christ is at once made manifest. In short, to draw near with the persuasion that God will not hear our prayer is to insult rather than to respect and honour Him. We must guard likewise against a rash, presumptuous approach, because, as sinners guilty and polluted, it is impossible that we can have anything wherewith to appear before the Lord. Such boldness as this can never become those who come to obtain mercy and grace. The boldness which we are authorised to use is that which arises from a knowledge of our own vileness and the sufficiency there is in Christ to His people's wants. Here is our confidence, here is our hope; in Christ and in Him crucified we find both power and willingness to help. II. THE REASONS why we are to come to the throne of grace are two, namely, that we may obtain mercy, and grace to help in time of need. And oh! what need have we to pray for mercy! Let us for one moment call to mind the many and grievous sins which we have committed against a pure and holy God. Let us remember also that we must very shortly give an account to God for every word we have spoken, every thought we have conceived, every deed we have done. Let us think for one moment of these things, and surely we shall not delay to cry for mercy; surely we shall earnestly and at once cry out with the publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner." We are to come also for "grace to help in time of need." Although salvation is not of debt but of grace, although it is the free gift of God through Christ Jesus, nevertheless we must be made meet to receive it. Holiness, be it remembered, will not entitle us to heaven; it will only make us like those who are accounted worthy of it. Every moment, therefore, of our lives must be under the guidance of Divine grace. III. And now let me remind you of a few SEASONS WHEN WE GREATLY STAND IN NEED OF GOD'S ASSISTANCE. 1. The time of prosperity is a "time of need." When the world smiles upon us we are in a situation of great difficulty and danger. We are then apt to put our confidence more in the creature and less in the Creator. 2. The time of adversity is a "time of need." When the hand of God presses heavy upon us, how ready are we to question His loving-kindness! how disposed are we to give way to despair and to indulge in immoderate grief! to doubt those gracious words, "All things shall work together for good to them that love God"! 3. The time of death is a "time of need." It is an awful thing to contend with the prince of this world for the last time. It is an awful thing to know that we are about to enter upon eternity and to appear in the presence of the living God. (*John Wright, M.A.*) *The throne of grace*:—We are here directed to a throne with its character: it is said to be a throne of grace. We are here led to contemplate our Redeemer in His most exalted character; we are here called to view Him as a Priest upon a throne. Priests are seldom advanced to a throne, or have the opportunity of exercising influence around them without evil to themselves and mischief to society. We have here, however, a Priest on a throne—from whom we have everything to hope and nothing to fear. 1. Some thrones, you know, are hereditary; and so is this, for He that occupieth it is the Son, the only-begotten Son of God, the Firstborn of every creature, the brightness of His Father's glory and the express image of His person—the Heir of all things, and consequently the Heir of this throne. 2. Some thrones, you know, have been secured by conquest; and so has this. He came up from the conflict, His garments dyed in His own blood and the blood of His enemies; and through the ranks of fiends and death He pushed His triumphant course to the possession of that kingdom, and gained the glorious victory. 3. Some thrones are elective; so is this also. "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou at My right hand until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool." "Him hath God exalted at His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour." But it is termed "*the* throne of grace"—not *a* throne of grace, as we often hear talked about, as though there were a great many of that character: no such thing; there is only one. 1. "The throne of grace"—to distinguish it from that throne of the Redeemer on which He sits as the Ruler of the universe, the Governor of earth and heaven and hell. 2. It is distinguished, again, from that throne of equity on which He sits as the Moral Governor of the world; in which capacity He exercises a judicial influence which extends to all minds and to all consciences. 3. Then, again, it is distinguished from the throne of judgment, on which He will sit by and by. This

is "the throne of grace." Here we are called to view the Redeemer as sitting on the mercy-seat, between the cherubim, as He did when He gave audience to the high priest and issued His commands. Here He opens an audience-chamber to His people; here He receives the applications made in prayer by the needy, humble, desiring children of God. Here He listens to their diversified cases and necessities, and imparts suitable, sustaining, and abundant assistance. 1. It is the "throne of grace," because grace, unmerited love and goodness, designed and erected it. We had neither claim nor right to any such privilege. It is grace continues it; and it is very difficult to say whether grace abounds most in erecting this throne, or in continuing it to the children of men. 2. It is the "throne of grace," because grace is here given. Here He gives grace to instruct the ignorant, to direct the doubting, to enliven the mild spirit, to sustain the feeble heart, to strengthen its weaknesses, to comfort its distresses, to supply its needs. Here He gives grace to save to the uttermost; for every good and perfect gift which comes from the Father of light is here dispensed. 3. Now, to this "throne of grace" we have all errands. In the first place, we have errands because we need mercy. We need the mercy of God to forgive our every offence and to remit the punishment to which we are exposed. 4. We not only need mercy, but we need an assurance that God has given us mercy. We know and feel that we are guilty; why may we not know and feel that we are pardoned? A consciousness of guilt brings alarm, and while this is the case there can be no comfort, no peace, till such time as the guilt is removed and taken away. And what a mercy is this! What a heaven of bliss to be pardoned and to know it! But we are unprofitable, short-coming creatures. We need mercy to bear with us like the barren fig-tree. Our precious time, for instance, has not always been profitably improved; our talents have not always been usefully employed; our duties to God, in gratitude, in faith, in affection—our duties to men, in kindness, charity, and love—have not been strictly discharged. We need God's mercy to pardon all this; we need the mercy of God to bear with us and forgive us all our transgressions. We are necessitous pensioners on the Divine bounty, and need supplies of grace. We are every moment dependent upon God, and we can only live through that dependence; we can live only so long as His bounty is exercised. We are dependent upon Him for life, which is perpetually exposed to danger; we are dependent upon Him for help, which is only to be obtained from His hand. We are dependent upon Him for temporal supplies—day by day for our daily bread. We are dependent upon Him for delivering our souls from the power of sin, the world, the flesh, and the devil. In short, we need the mercy of God in every period of life, in the article of death, and even at the day of judgment: we shall need to "look for the mercy of God unto eternal life." We have errands at this throne that we may obtain mercy. 5. But we not only need mercy to pardon our sins, to bear with our unprofitableness, and to supply our need, but we need grace to renew us. We need renewing grace—grace to enlighten our minds, grace to renew our hearts, grace to regenerate our heart's nature, grace to conform our will to the will of God—grace that we may approve, desire, and relish spiritual enjoyment, and thus be prepared for all the service of God. 6. We need also grace to keep us in this renewed state. The life of God imparted to human nature placed in circumstances like these would be like dropping a spark of fire upon an ocean of ice. How it should be kept alive, how it should burst into a flame, how it should illuminate with its light the darkness and melt the hardness of the world, can only be by receiving grace. And though God has promised to impart this life, and is delighted to impart it, yet He will not give it without being inquired of: we must go for grace to the throne of grace. 7. But we need grace inasmuch as we have duties to perform. Our duties are numerous; they pertain to God, to man, and to ourselves. The text adverts to a special season, which the apostle calls "time of need": "that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Speaking generally, every time is a "time of need"; for when is it that no enemy, like a cunning, wily beast of prey, is not watching for a moment of unguardedness to seize and to devour? Yet there are certain ascertained seasons which may more emphatically be called a "time of need." We are living in a state of uncertainty; we know not at all what is before us. I am aware that it may be said that if we have grace to live to God now, suffering grace will be given for suffering times; and if we have grace to live to God now, when God changes the work from doing to suffering, from living to dying, He will change the grace too. Yes, He will; but only in answer to prayer: He will be "inquired of." What is the use that we may make of this subject? 1. The apostle says, "Come boldly to the throne of grace"—

not irreverently. We should never forget the justice, holiness, dignity, and mystery of Him whom we address: we should have grace to "serve Him with reverence and godly fear; for our God is a consuming fire." 2. When it is said, "Come boldly unto the throne of grace," the apostle does not mean you are to come presumptuously, as if you would command God. 3. When the apostle says, "Come boldly to the throne of grace," we understand that we are to come readily. We are to have a knowledge of our state, to feel our wants, to entertain desires after holiness. We are not to pore over our unworthiness; we are not to parley with the enemy; we are not to wait till we are better; we are not to expect a more convenient season. 4. When it is said, "Come boldly to the throne of grace," we understand that we are to come near. It is not enough to catch God's eye at a distance, but to get His heart, and the very fulness of His heart. "Come boldly to the throne of grace," and expect to find Him near to save. 5. "Come boldly to the throne of grace"; come cheerfully. And in order to do this we should contemplate God in all the encouraging aspects of His character. When we come to the throne we should look on Him in all the friendly, brotherly, Scriptural relations in which He has discovered Himself to us. 6. "Come boldly to the throne of grace"—come with liberty; not straitened in your own souls, not contracted in your desires, not limited in your aspirations. 7. "Come boldly to the throne of grace"—come confidently, with the confidence that you shall receive. 8. "Come boldly to the throne of grace"—come frequently. The path leading to this throne should be trampled, well used, such a beaten path as to be as bare as the street. 9. We should come importunately—like Jacob when he grasped the angel and said, "I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me"; like the Canaanitish woman when she said, "Is it meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to the dogs?" like the widow who, by her continued coming to the unjust judge, wearied him; like the person who applied to his neighbour at night for the loan of bread to entertain his friend, and would take no denial. 10. The apostle suggests encouragement. We are encouraged to come because we have a High Priest who is great in all the attributes of mercy and love, who hath finished His work to His Father's satisfaction, and hath entered within the veil. "Seeing that we have such a High Priest." When you come to the throne, He takes you by the hand, and introduces you to God; He takes your prayers, and perfumes them with the incense of His merit, and urges your feeble requests. (*W. Atherton.*) *Timely succour:*—I. THERE IS, THERE WILL BE, A SEASON, MANY A SEASON, IN THE COURSE OF OUR PROFESSION AND WALKING BEFORE GOD, WHEREIN WE DO OR SHALL STAND IN NEED OF ESPECIAL AID AND ASSISTANCE. This is included in the last words, "help in time of need"—help that is suitable and seasonable for and unto such a condition wherein we are found earnestly to cry out for it. 1. A time of affliction is such a season. God is an help (Psa. xlvi. 1) in all sorts of straits and afflictions. 2. A time of persecution is such a season; yea, it may be the principal season here intended (see chap. x.). And this is the greatest trial that in general God exerciseth His Church withal. In such a season some seed quite decayeth, some stars fall from heaven, some prove fearful and unbelieving, to their eternal ruin; and few there are but that where persecution is urgent, it hath some impression upon them to their disadvantage. Carnal fears, with carnal wisdom and counsels, are apt to be at work in such a season; and all the fruit that comes from those evil roots is bitter. 3. A time of temptation is such a season. St. Paul found it so when he had the messenger of Satan sent to buffet him. 4. A time of spiritual desertion is such a season. When God in any way withdraws Himself from us, we shall stand in need of special assistance. 5. A time wherein we are called unto the performance of any great and signal duty is such a season also. So was it with Abraham when he was called first to leave his country and afterwards to sacrifice his son. Such was the call of Joshua to enter into Canaan, proposed to our example (chap. xiii. 5), and of the apostles to preach the gospel when they were sent out as sheep among wolves. 6. Times of changes and the difficulties wherewith they are attended introduce such a season. "Changes and war," saith Job, "are against me" (Job x. 17). There is in all changes a war against us, wherein we may be foiled if we are not the more watchful and have not the better assistance. 7. The time of death is such a season. To let go all hold of present things and present hopes, to give up a departing soul, entering into the invisible world, and an unchangeable eternity therein, into the hands of a sovereign Lord, is a thing which requires a strength above our own for the right and comfortable performance of. II. THAT THERE IS WITH GOD IN CHRIST, GOD ON HIS THRONE OF GRACE, A SPRING OF SUITABLE AND SEASONABLE HELP FOR ALL TIMES AND

OCCASIONS OF DIFFICULTY. He is the God of all grace, and a fountain of living waters is with Him for the refreshment of every weary and thirsty soul. III. ALL HELP, SUCCOUR, OR SPIRITUAL ASSISTANCE IN OUR STRAITS AND DIFFICULTIES PROCEEDS FROM MERE MERCY AND GRACE, OR THE GOODNESS, KINDNESS, AND BENIGNITY OF GOD IN CHRIST. IV. WHEN WE HAVE THROUGH CHRIST OBTAINED MERCY AND GRACE FOR OUR PERSONS, WE NEED NOT FEAR BUT THAT WE SHALL HAVE SUITABLE AND SEASONABLE HELP FOR OUR DUTIES. If we find mercy and obtain grace, we shall have help. V. THE WAY TO OBTAIN HELP FROM GOD IS BY A DUE GOSPEL-APPLICATION OF OUR SOULS FOR IT TO THE THRONE OF GRACE. VI. GREAT DISCOURAGEMENTS OFTEN INTERPOSE THEMSELVES IN OUR MINDS, AND AGAINST OUR FAITH, WHEN WE STAND IN NEED OF ESPECIAL HELP FROM GOD AND WOULD MAKE OUR APPLICATION UNTO HIM FOR RELIEF. It is included in the exhortation to come with boldness; that is, to cast off and conquer all those discouragements, and to use confidence of acceptance and liberty of speech before Him. VII. FAITH'S CONSIDERATION OF THE INTERPOSITION OF CHRIST IN OUR BEHALF, AS OUR HIGH PRIEST, IS THE ONLY WAY TO REMOVE DISCOURAGEMENTS AND TO GIVE US BOLDNESS IN OUR ACCESS TO GOD. Let us come, therefore, with boldness; that is, on the account of the care, love, and faithfulness of Christ as our High Priest, before discoursed on. VIII. IN ALL OUR APPROACHES UNTO GOD WE ARE TO CONSIDER HIM AS ON A THRONE. Though it be a throne of grace, yet it is still a throne, the consideration whereof should influence our minds with reverence and godly fear in all things wherein we have to do with Him. (*John Owen, D.D.*) *The sinner at the throne of grace*:—I. THE THRONE OF GRACE. 1. It is set up for those who have been ruined by sin. 2. None will come to it but those who feel sin to be a burden. 3. It is also a kind of holy retirement, where the true followers of Jesus may meet their Lord. II. WHAT GIVES THE SINNER HIS BOLDNESS WHEN HE COMES WITH HIS PETITIONS TO THIS THRONE? 1. His entire reliance on Christ. 2. His experimental knowledge of the eternal priesthood of Christ. 3. His own experience. III. THE FITTEST SEASON FOR DRAWING NEAR TO THE THRONE OF GRACE. 1. A time of national lukewarmness is a time of need. 2. The time when the Lord is arming Himself with judgment is a time of need. 3. A time of prosperity is a time of need. 4. A time of spiritual warfare is a time of need. (*F. G. Crossman.*) *The throne of grace*:—I. THE SEAT OF POWER. 1. A throne—the symbol of dominion—where God manifests His glory (Isa. vi. 1; Rev. xix. 4; Matt. vi. 13). 2. Power may be taken in two senses—authority and ability. Christ possesses both (chap. viii. 1). 3. He has authority to pardon, to bestow the gift of sonship, to exercise supreme control (Matt. ix. 6; John i. 12, xvii. 2). 4. The secret of our power over evil lies in our being under Christ's control (Luke vii. 8; Eccles. viii. 4). II. THE PLACE OF WORSHIP. 1. The distinction between the Cross and the throne. 2. The place of atonement and the place of worship (Exod. xxv. 22). 3. The provisions for worship in Christ. Access (Eph. ii. 18, iii. 12; chap. x. 19, 20). Pardon and acceptance (chap. x. 23). III. THE SOURCE OF SUPPLY. 1. To meet our unworthiness. "Mercy." 2. To meet our insufficiency. "Grace." "My grace"—"for thee" (2 Cor. xii. 9). 3. A river proceeding out of the throne (Rev. xxii. 1). 4. The exhortation: "Let us come boldly." "Let us draw near"—"with a true heart"—"in full assurance of faith" (chap. x. 22). (*E. H. Hopkins.*) *Boldness at the throne of grace*:—I. WHAT THIS BOLDNESS IS. It is not audacity, rudeness or trifling freedom. Prayer and insolence ill accord together. This boldness arises from nothing in ourselves, but purely from the goodness of the Being we address: and it consists principally in a persuasion that we are freely authorised to come, and may confidently hope to succeed. II. THE PURPOSES FOR WHICH WE ARE TO COME TO THE THRONE OF GRACE. To "obtain mercy" and to "find grace." The blessings are wisely connected together by the apostle, because there are too many people who try to separate them. They would be saved from hell, but not from sin. They wished to be pardoned, but not renewed. They would have mercy, but not grace. But be not deceived. Whom God forgives He sanctifies and prepares for His service. And both these blessings are equally important and necessary to our salvation. Let us therefore pray for both. 1. Pray for mercy. And pray like those who know they greatly need it. You are very guilty. 2. Pray for "grace to help in time of need." But is not every time a time of need with us? It is. And there is not a moment in our existence in which we can live as we ought, independently of Divine grace. We need this grace, to mortify our corruptions; to sanctify our affections; to resist temptations: to overcome the world. But there are some seasons in which we peculiarly require the aid of Divine grace. Now if we are to pray "that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need,'

does it not follow, as a fair inference, that a prayerless person is destitute both of the mercy and grace of God? 1. Have you come to this throne? You are fond of hearing sermons—but while you so often hear from God, does God ever hear from you? 2. Do you design to come? or have you resolved to "restrain prayer before Him"? Do you imagine you can acquire these blessings in any other way than by prayer? Or do you imagine these blessings are not worthy of your pursuit? If you could gain a fortune by prayer—would you not pray? Or health—would you not pray? But what are these to mercy and grace? Or do you imagine they are not to be gained? There is no ground for such despair: He "waiteth to be gracious; and is exalted to have mercy." (*W. Jay.*) *The throne of grace*:—I. Our text speaks of a THRONE,—"The Throne of Grace." God is to be viewed in prayer as our Father; that is the aspect which is dearest to us; but still we are not to regard Him as though He were such as we are; for our Saviour has qualified the expression "Our Father," with the words "who art in heaven." In order to remind us that our Father is still infinitely greater than ourselves, He has bidden us say, "Hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come"; so that our Father is still to be regarded as a King, and in prayer we come, not only to our Father's feet, but we come also to the throne of the Great Monarch of the universe. If prayer should always be regarded by us as an entrance into the courts of the royalty of heaven; if we are to behave ourselves as courtiers should in the presence of an illustrious majesty, then we are not at a loss to know the right spirit in which to pray. 1. If in prayer we come to a throne, it is clear that our spirit should, in the first place, be one of lowly reverence. It is expected that the subject in approaching to the king should pay him homage and honour. 2. A throne, and, therefore, to be approached with devout joyfulness. If I find myself favoured by Divine grace to stand amongst those favoured ones who frequent His courts, shall I not feel glad? 3. It is a throne, and therefore, whenever it is approached, it should be with complete submission. We do not pray to God to instruct Him as to what He ought to do, neither for a moment must we presume to dictate the line of the Divine procedure. 4. If it be a throne, it ought to be approached with enlarged expectations. 5. The right spirit in which to approach the throne of grace is that of unstaggering confidence. Who shall doubt the King? Who dares impugn the Imperial word? 6. If prayer be a coming before the throne of God, it ought always to be conducted with the deepest sincerity, and in the spirit which makes everything real. If you are disloyal enough to despise the King, at least, for your own sake, do not mock Him to His face, and when He is upon His throne. If anywhere you dare repeat holy words without heart, let it not be in Jehovah's palace. II. Lest the glow and brilliance of the word "throne" should be too much for mortal vision, our text now presents us with the soft, gentle radiance of that delightful word—"GRACE." We are called to the throne of grace, not to the throne of law. It is a throne set up on purpose for the dispensation of grace; a throne from which every utterance is an utterance of grace; the sceptre that is stretched out from it is the silver sceptre of grace: the decrees proclaimed from it are purposes of grace; the gifts that are scattered adown its golden steps are gifts of grace; and He that sits upon the throne is grace itself. 1. If in prayer I come before a throne of grace, then the faults of my prayer will be overlooked. 2. Inasmuch as it is a throne of grace, the faults of the petitioner himself shall not prevent the success of his prayer. 3. If it be a throne of grace, then the desires of the pleader will be interpreted. If I cannot find words in which to utter my desires, God in His grace will read my desires without the words. 4. If it be a throne of grace, then all the wants of those who come to it will be supplied. 5. And so all the petitioner's miseries shall be compassionated. III. But now regarding the text as a whole, it conveys to us the idea of GRACE ENTHRONED. It is a throne, and who sits on it? It is grace personified that is here installed in dignity. And, truly, to-day grace is on a throne. In the gospel of Jesus Christ grace is the most predominant attribute of God. How comes it to be so exalted? 1. We reply, well, grace has a throne by conquest. 2. Grace, moreover, sits on the throne because it has established itself there by right. There is no injustice in the grace of God. 3. Grace is enthroned because Christ has finished His work and gone into the heavens. It is enthroned in power. IV. Lastly, our text, if rightly read, has in it SOVEREIGNTY RESPLENDENT IN GLORY—THE GLORY OF GRACE. The mercy seat is a throne; though grace is there, it is still a throne. Grace does not displace sovereignty. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The throne of grace*:—I. THE BLESSINGS SPOKEN OF. 1. Mercy, pardoning mercy, reconciling mercy, saving mercy. The brightest saint needs it, as well as the greatest

sinner. We need it every hour of our life, and in every action of our life. 2. Grace: supporting, helping grace, "grace to help in time of need." It is grace only that can subdue our corruptions, resist temptation, warm our hearts, and bring strength, comfort, and hope to our troubled souls. II. WHERE THIS MERCY AND THIS HELPING GRACE ARE TO BE OBTAINED. 1. The apostle tells us to seek them at a throne: he sends us therefore to a God of majesty. A throne implies also that He is a God of infinite, almighty power, in the universe over which He reigns. 2. Yet it is a throne of grace. He who sits upon it has removed out of the way all impediments that He can now be gracious to a world of sinners in a way consistent with His honour, and show Himself a God of mercy without tarnishing the glory of His other perfections. III. HOW ARE WE TO SEEK OF HIM MERCY AND GRACE? "Let us come boldly unto the throne of grace." 1. It is plain that if God is seated on a throne as a God of majesty and power, this boldness must be altogether different from fearless presumption or irreverent freedom. 2. The boldness of which the apostle speaks is opposed to self-will, and must consequently include in it submission to the will of God. 3. This boldness is opposed to restraint in prayer, and implies an humble and holy freedom in our addresses to God. If we are habitually living in His faith and fear, we may come to His throne, not as strangers and foreigners, but as those who are of His household. 4. This boldness is opposed to distrust and unbelief, and includes a persuasion that God has grace to bestow and is willing to bestow it, and that we are authorised to ask for and expect it. It is the boldness of faith which the apostle recommends; a confidence, not in our own merits but in sovereign mercy: a faith in the Lord Jesus, and such a faith in Him as triumphs over fears and suspicions, and rises to the confidence of hope. This confidence is quite consistent with that humility which becomes us as sinners; indeed it is closely connected with it. (*C. Bradley, M.A.*) *The throne of grace*:—I. WHERE WE ARE TO COME. "Unto the throne of grace." Not the throne of terror, but the throne of grace; not enshrouded in the gloomy darkness of repulsion, but radiant with the sunshine of invitation: not sending forth lightnings and thunders to alarm, but extending the olive-branch of peace; and from that throne of grace are heard the sweet tones of mercy, beseeching sinners to be reconciled unto God. Do you ask where you are to come? We tell you that wherever is found a penitent and contrite heart, broken on account of its sins, the throne of grace is there; wherever is found a praying soul, the throne of grace is there. In your closets; when you offer your daily sacrifice of prayer and praise beneath the domestic roof at the family altar; when you come to the house of God as sincere worshippers, in the hallowed services of the Church, in the sacraments of Christ's holy institution, the throne of grace is here! And to this throne of grace you are ever welcome. But observe, we must come each one for ourselves. II. HOW WE ARE TO COME. "Boldly." Fear not, thou trembling soul; give despondency to the winds. Is your heart sincere? Then come with confidence to the throne of grace. III. WHY WE ARE TO COME. "That we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Your only sure refuge is the throne of grace. Here you may find at all times the seasonable help you need, a balm for every wound, counsel for every difficulty, comfort for every sorrow. But the word used by the apostle has even a deeper signification than this. It means help rendered in answer to a call for assistance. If we would have God's help, we must ask Him for it with importunate earnestness, as those who feel their destitute need. (*W. J. Brock, B.A.*) *The throne of grace*:—I. THE MAGNIFICENT OBJECT TO WHICH OUR ATTENTION IS DIRECTED. II. THE MANNER OF APPROACH SPECIFIED. 1. With liberty of access. 2. With freedom of speech. Need not be overawed by the greatness of the Being we address. We may freely and fully state our case, and make known our need. 3. With assurance of success. Need not fear a repulse. 4. With frequency of application. Original mercy-seat could only be approached annually. 5. We must come just as we are. No ceremony is required. Now we may thus come boldly, because (1) This is the way expressly laid down. (2) Because all ancient saints came in this way. (3) God's great goodness and graciousness should induce us thus to come. (4) The intercession of Christ for us, and the Spirit within us, should encourage us thus to draw near. III. THE GREAT ENDS TO BE KEPT IN VIEW IN COMING TO THE THRONE OF GRACE. 1. That we may obtain mercy. (1) Mercy to pardon our guilt. (2) Sparing mercy. (3) Daily mercy. 2. To find grace to help in time of need. Grace includes all the blessings of the Divine favour. All we need for body, soul, time, and eternity. Grace to "help" us. (1) To pray and serve God. (2) To labour in His cause. (3) To suffer for His

sake. (4) And to triumph over our foes. Application: 1. Learn to what we come in prayer. 2. How we should come. 3. What we should seek—mercy, &c. (*J. Burns, D.D.*) *The throne of grace (a sermon to children)*:—Suppose you were with me in one of the palaces at the west end of the town—St. James's Palace, or Buckingham Palace. We ascend in Buckingham Palace a noble staircase, as white as snow, made of white marble. Then we are admitted by servants in royal livery to a large gallery; and you say, "What a beautiful place! I never saw the like of this before. Oh! what lovely pictures! Oh! what wonderful chairs and tables, sparkling with gold!" Then I take you into another apartment, and I say, "What is that in the upper part of this great grand room, this large gallery? Do you see it?" "Oh! yes," you say; "that appears to me to be a seat." Yes, it is a seat; but it is a throne. That is where the Queen sits sometimes. That is Britain's throne—the most wonderful throne on the face of the earth. But I have to tell you of a throne to-day, the like of which was never seen by mortal eyes. Angels never saw it. What is the name of it? "The throne of grace." I. THE THRONE. 1. What is the throne of grace? The mercy of God in Christ Jesus. 2. Why is it called the throne of grace? (1) Grace contrived the throne (Psa. lxxxix. 2). (2) Grace shines upon the throne (Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7). (3) Grace is given from the throne. Pardon. Purity. Healing. 3. The excellencies of this throne. (1) It is a costly throne. (2) It is a lovely throne. (3) It is a throne of great height (Psa. ciii. 9). (4) It is a throne near at hand. (5) It is a free throne. II. THE KING WHO IS SEATED ON THIS THRONE. 1. King of grace. 2. King of kings. 3. King of glory. III. OUR DUTY AND PRIVILEGE TO COME TO THE THRONE. (*J. Fletcher, D.D.*) *Come boldly to the throne of grace*:—Gather up what you see of tenderness and great-heartedness and generousness of men, and imagine them to be grouped into the character of a perfect being, and put it in the sphere of almightiness, and give it the sweep of eternity, and call it God, or the Son of God, as you please; and then you have a conception of the Lord Jesus Christ, standing over the poor in this world, and saying to them, in a voice that never dies till the last human soul is redeemed, "Come to Me, and obtain help in time of need." Well, what kind of help? No matter what kind. At what time of need? At any time of need. If it is bodily ailment, may one go to God with it? Certainly; because He supplies the wants of the body. If you have domestic trouble, or trouble in your secular affairs, or dispositional trouble in its lower forms, go to Him with it. If you may go to Him for higher things, you may for the lower. A man says, "Here are thousand dollar bills; take as many as you please." "But," say I, "there are hundreds, and fifties, and tens, and fives, and ones; may I take them instead of the thousands?" If he says I may have the thousands, he will not refuse to give me the ones. If he gives me the larger, he will not refuse to give me the smaller. Now, God has given His own Son to us; He hath given Himself to us; He has made overtures of personal friendship to us; He has said, "I am your Father, and ye are My sons"; He has granted us the blessing of direct communion with Himself; and since He has given us higher and larger things, is there anything that we need, all the way down to the very sandals with which we tread the earth, that He will not give us? In praying to God we begin by saying, "Give us this day our daily bread"; but, ah, there are different sorts of bread. There is one kind of bread for the body, and God will give that; but there is also another kind of bread for the mind—for taste, and benevolence, and conscience, and veneration, and love—and He will give that. God Himself is the bread of life by which the many mouths of the soul are supplied. He gives us in rich abundance all the things that we need. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Boldness in prayer*:—A holy boldness, a chastened familiarity, is the true spirit of right prayer. It was said of Luther that, when he prayed, it was with as much reverence as if he were praying to an infinite God, and with as much familiarity as if he were speaking to his nearest friend. (*G. S. Bowes.*) *Unrestraint in prayer*:—This word "boldly" signifies liberty without restraint. You may be free, for you are welcome. You may use freedom of speech. The word is so used (Acts ii. 29; iv. 13). You have liberty to speak your minds freely; to speak all your heart, your ails, and wants, and fears, and grievances. As others may not fetter you in speaking to God by prescribing what words you should use; so you need not restrain yourselves, but freely speak all that your condition requires. (*D. Clarkson, B.D.*) *Fearlessness in prayer*:—A petitioner once approached Augustus with so much fear and trembling that the emperor cried, "What, man! do you think you are giving a sop to an elephant?" He did not

care to be thought a hard and cruel ruler. When men pray with a slavish bondage upon them, with cold, set phrases, and a crouching solemnity, the free Spirit of the Lord may well rebuke them. Art thou coming to a tyrant? Holy boldness, or at least a childlike hope, is most becoming in a Christian. *Access to God in prayer*:—The Aediles among the Romans had their doors always standing open, that all who had petitions might have free access to them. The door of heaven is always open for the prayers of God's people. (*T. Watson.*) *All may come*:—"Seeing that we have a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens; let us *therefore* come boldly to the throne." So that the "us" of our text is just as broad as the "we" in the fourteenth verse. Do we ask how broad that is? We shall soon see. The reference here evidently is to the great day of atonement, when the high priest entered into the holy place with the blood of atonement. When that great event took place, whom did the priest represent? The priests, or the elders, or the God-fearing part of the Israelites? Certainly not; but every Jew. There wasn't one of the vast multitude but could say, He is gone in as my representative, and I am accepted in him. Now the apostle says Christ is a *great* High Priest, of whom the other was but the type. Whom, then, did He represent? The answer of the Book is, all mankind. If you want to measure the "us" whom Christ represents, you can easily do it! His favourite name was not, "I the Jew," but "I the Son of Man." (*C. Garrett.*) *The infinite Friend before the throne*:—During the cotton famine I went to many a man in need, and said, "Why don't you go to the committee and get what you require?" and the reply was, "I can't, I have never asked for help in my life. It has been my joy to give and not to get. If I were to try to speak for myself I should be choked; I can't do it, I'll starve first." And I have said, "I don't want you to speak; I only want you to come, I will do all the talking." And at the appointed time he has come and I have said, "This is the person of whom I spoke"; and they at once relieved his wants, and sent him home rejoicing. And so, poor sinner, it shall be with thee. Thou art saying, "I am such a guilty wretch. My sins have been so many, and so aggravated that I dare not speak to God"; and I point to One who "ever liveth to make intercession" for thee, and who is waiting this moment to plead for thee. (*Ibid.*) *Whither invited*:—It is not to the throne of judgment, but the throne of grace. When the cotton famine visited Lancashire, and the generosity of the people of this land was shown as it never had been shown before, and the railways were burdened with the generous gifts of all classes, we didn't leave these treasures in the streets for any passer-by to take. Large warehouses were procured, and committees appointed to see that they were given to the proper persons. Now, suppose I had gone into the street at Preston, and met a poor operative looking thin, and poorly clad, and had asked him if he was out of work, and he had replied, "Yes, sir; and have been for two years." I say, "Then I suppose your resources are exhausted, and you can hardly find food for your family?" He answers, "No; I have neither clothes nor food for myself or them, and I don't know what to do." I say, "Why don't you go to the depôt and get what you want? There is abundance there." He says, "Ah! but, sir, I haven't a farthing left." I answer, "I know it; and if you had, there are a hundred shops in Preston that would be glad to see you; but this is a place opened for those who have no money, and there is nobody in the world more welcome to the treasures there than yourself." And so with thee, poor sinner. This place is opened on purpose for thee. (*Ibid.*) *The transcendent worth of pardon*:—Go to-night to poor E—— who lies under sentence of death. Enter his cell, and tell him you have brought him good news. How eagerly he turns to you and asks, "What?" You reply, "Baron Rothschild is dead, and has left you heir to all his vast wealth." Oh, with what disappointment he turns away! You tell him that in addition to this you are come to give him the highest of earth's honours. He heeds you not. He says, "What is all this to me, when I have to die on Thursday?" You say, "Man, do you turn away from boundless wealth, from broad acres, from glittering gems and jewels? What do you want?" And with eager, bloodshot eyes, he turns to you, and hisses from his clenched teeth, "Pardon! Give me that and I'll bless you: without that, all the rest is but mockery." (*Ibid.*) *Appeal for mercy*:—A woman arraigned before Alexander the Great, and condemned, said, "I appeal from thee, O king!" Alexander said, "Thou art a mad woman! Dost thou not know that every appeal is from a lower judge to a higher? But who is above me?" She answered, "I know thee to be above thy laws, and that thou mayest give pardon; and therefore I appeal from justice to mercy, and for my

faults crave pardon." So must sinners do. (*Cawdray.*) *Encouragement to come boldly:*—When our prince brought his fair bride to England, they arrived at Portsmouth too late in the evening to land. Her heart was throbbing with many bewildering emotions. What would be the reception she should have? Would her husband's people welcome a stranger? and a host of other questions. As she couldn't sleep, she went out on the deck of the vessel she was in; and turning her eyes towards the shore, saw at every masthead in letters of light, "Welcome! Welcome to Alexandra! Welcome to our princess!" And who can wonder that, as she looked her fears fled away, and her eyes filled with tears of joy. There was no room for a single doubt as to the character of her reception. And so with thee, poor sinner. Bowed down under a sense of thy enormous guilt, thou art afraid to lift thy eyes towards heaven, or to think of God. But I bring thee glad tidings of great joy. There is mercy for thee. God invites thee to His throne. Lift thy eyes, and where thou didst expect to see the blackness of darkness, thou shalt see a thousand stars of promise cheering thee on. Look! There is one, "Come." There is another, "Whosoever." There is another, "Nowise." See how they come out, like stars at eventide, brighter and yet brighter, and every one has a message of mercy for thee. (*C. Garrett.*) *The throne of grace:*—When God enacts laws, He is on a throne of legislation: when He administers these laws, He is on a throne of government: when He tries His creatures by these laws, He is on a throne of judgment: but when He receives petitions, and dispenses favours, He is on a throne of grace. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The distinction between mercy and grace:*—The distinction between the two words "mercy" and "grace," in the place before us, seems to consist in this—that the former describes the emotion of kindness and compassion with which the application for assistance is met, while the latter describes the actual communications of celestial influence with which, in answer to prayer, He replenishes the soul for the time of need—a distinction with which the original terms are very consistent, and which seems farther countenanced by the different verbs with which they are conjoined in the expressions, "find mercy," and "obtain grace." In the hour of your necessity, therefore, you are here assured that, on making due application, you shall be received with paternal pity and regard, nor merely with compassion and regard—a compassion that may soothe but cannot help—a regard that is the source more of sentimental refreshment than of practical and availing strength, but also with the promptest and most benignant readiness to open to you all the treasures of His grace—to pour out upon you all the sevenfold graces of His Almighty Spirit—to "lift up the hands which hang down, and to confirm the feeble knees"—that "as your day is, so your strength" may be, and that, when called to glorify Him, and vindicate your Christian profession, whether by the resistance of temptation, or the conquest of difficulty, or the endurance of affliction, or the defeat of "the last enemy," His grace may be sufficient for you, His strength may be perfected in your weakness, and over all temptations, difficulties, afflictions, deaths, ye may be made "more than conquerors through Him that loved" you. (*J. B. Patterson, M.A.*) *First mercy, then grace:*—Obtaining mercy comes first; then finding grace to help in time of need. You cannot reverse God's order. You will not find grace to help in time of need till you have sought and found mercy to save. You have no right to reckon on God's help and protection and guidance, and all the other splendid privileges which He promises to "the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ," until you have this first blessing, the mercy of God in Christ Jesus; for it is "in" Jesus Christ that all the promises of God are Yea and Amen. (*F. R. Havergal.*) **Help in time of need.**—*Help in time of need:*—The other day, during the fierce storm which raged on the west coast of England, I saw a schooner driven on the sands near Waterloo. In a short time, a steam-tug came to her assistance; but the heavily-laden ship was fast in the sand-bank, and it was found impossible to drag her into deeper water. They waited a few hours until the tide came in, and, then, when the deeper water about the schooner had lifted a portion of her hull from the bank, the steam-tug again came near, and the ship was towed into the safe water of the channel to Liverpool. Like the schooner, which had drifted on the sand-bank, many of us have drifted in the storms of life on the sands of trouble, where we have lain helpless. At such times, friends may have drawn near to try to bring us back to our old power peace and hope; but we were too firmly held by our trouble for any human being to help us. It was only when the tide of God's love came flowing into our heart that there was any chance of cheering away our despair. Until we felt His love

shed abroad in our heart, it was impossible for anybody to lift us from the miry clay of our despair. We were like the heavily-laden ship on the sand-bank; we had to wait for the flowing of God's love; and when that came, we were lifted from the grip which held us. When, like the overflowing tide, the Lord moves in and about us, giving our heavily-laden heart the support and comfort of His love, the grasp of the hand and the cheering words of a friend are then powerful to help us. If, therefore, this be your time of need, I pray that the Holy Spirit may first fill your heart with His presence. The text clearly reveals that our God is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. Like a leaf in autumn, blown hither and thither at the mercy of the wind, so there are times when a storm of sorrow separates us from the branch on which we flourish, and we become the sport of fear and unbelief. The text shows that the weary soul, which is like that helpless leaf, may find help at the throne of grace. As a shuttle-cock, in the midst of a crowd of children, is continually knocked into the air, never resting a moment except when it turns to fall, so there are many who are continually buffeted by adversity. The failure of their hope gives them a blow, sickness another, bereavement strikes hard, and the vicissitudes of an up-hill life worry them when they would rest. Is your soul one that suffers like that toy? If so, the text shows that God is touched with your griefs, and that He wishes to give you grace to help in your time of need. I happened to be walking along a country lane, near Dunham, and stopped to rest on the bank of the hedge, when a bird, with a scream of fear, flew from above my head. Feeling sure that its nest must be in the hedge behind me, I hoped the poor bird would soon return, and sat still watching for it. In a few minutes the bird flew towards a tree opposite to me, when my dog made a bound after it. I called him back, and held him securely by his neck. I suppose the bird saw that I was friendly, for in another minute it came nearer, and perched on the hedge in front of me. In a short time, it flew towards me, but at the same instant turned back to the hedge. Though it yearned to return to its little ones in the nest, yet, no doubt, its heart beat with fear; because it might not be certain that I was a friend; and then, though I held the dog, his sharp eyes kept up a keen look on that sweet bird, and it may have thought, "If I go nearer, the dog may pounce on me!" While I watched, I wished heartily for power to speak to the bird, to tell it that I would not allow the dog to stir an inch to injure it. The dog might look, but it should not harm. Perhaps the bird saw what I meant, for growing more bold, it flew over my head into the hedge behind me; and while I held the dog with a firmer grasp, it made the water come into my eyes, to think how our heavenly Father held trouble from hurting the souls of His people. Like the bird, we are often afraid, and with good reason too; but everything that can hurt us is held in the firm grasp of our God. I remember standing on the pier-head at Douglas, Isle of Man, when I saw an old friend of mine, who appeared very miserable. As the sun shone brightly, and there was sufficient wind to make the waves leap up and dash against the pier, sending golden spray in our faces, I thought everybody ought to be glad; and clapping my friend on the back exclaimed, "What is to do? Why, you look as if you were going to drown yourself!" He replied, "You would not be so cheerful if you had my troubles. See; you observe that cork, there, which is being pitched about by the waves! Well, I am like that cork." To his surprise, I laughed and exclaimed, "Well; I am very glad to hear that you are like that cork!" He turned on me a look of reproach, as if I were mocking him. I said again, "It is true; I am very glad you are like that cork!" Then, with an injured air he turned, saying, "Why are you glad?" I replied, "Just because the cork does not sink! It is true that the waves knock it about; but, see, it does not sink!" Then, he grasped my hand saying, "Thank God, though I am in a terrible mess, yet, like that cork, I have not been allowed to sink!" Do not get down-hearted; and though the future may appear black, do not let despair enter your soul. A doctor once said to me, "I am so nervous as to be much afraid when my coachman is driving me through the streets, and often shut my eyes or try to read the newspaper, to hide what is in front from my view." The doctor added, "I know it is foolish; for my man is a most careful driver, and I ought to feel safe; but it is my weak nerves!" Perhaps your spiritual nerves are unstrung, and you are afraid of a something happening, which will hurt you. If so, you need help from the throne of grace in this your time of need. Come boldly; for God is touched with your fear and anxiety, and He can help you. The text tells us that Christ is our High Priest. The high priest of the Jews was an official personage, who

prayed for them on the annual day of atonement, and appeared on their behalf before God. He did this officially, and may not have felt extreme sorrow on account of the sins of the people, as if those sins had been his own. He did it as an official act. But when Jesus Christ, the High Priest of humanity, made atonement for our sins, He felt the sorrow of the agony of death. You may engage counsel to take up the case of a friend of yours who is to be tried for his life; and he may do it officially without throwing his heart into the case; but if the barrister look upon the prisoner and see him with a face of agony; if he notice tears of sorrow and shame trickle down his cheeks; if he see his body trembling in the agitation of terror, the advocate shall be touched with sympathy with the prisoner, and will plead as if his own life depended on his efforts. Likewise, Jesus was so touched with the feeling in Himself of the sins, sorrows, and afflictions of mankind, that when He represented them on the Cross of Calvary, His heart broke! Can you keep at a distance from such a God? The other night I sheltered from the rain for a few minutes in a doorway. A little bare-footed girl came up, and seating herself on the doorstep began to cry. I thought she had been sent there to raise my compassion, but found afterwards that this was not the case. Soon a hulking boy came up, saying, "Polly, what's up?" The little girl replied, "I can't sell my papers—I haven't sold one!" The boy bent down upon her; I could barely see his face, but, from the gentleness of his words, fancied his look must have expressed much sympathy. He said—"Here; give me thy papers; I'll sell 'em for thee!" Then he drew them from the girl, and the lad went up and down offering them for sale. I suppose I could not have been there more than three or four minutes before he came running with five pence for the papers, saying, "Here, one of 'em gave me a threepenny bit, and thou shalt have it!" Poor little lass! She was faint-hearted because of the rain; and as she had not the courage to go up to people to offer them papers, she sat there with her little heart breaking, until the noble lad came forward to help her. He was touched with the feeling of her helplessness, and did what he could to cheer her. Likewise, Jesus is touched with your disappointment, and does all that He can to help you. He comes to you saying, "Be of good cheer; I am with you; don't be downhearted! I will give you patience to bear it, and courage to overcome it." About six or seven years ago an Indian prince was riding in a carriage in the streets of London, when he saw a ragged Indian standing at the kerbstone with a brush in his hand: he was a crossing-sweeper. The prince immediately ordered the carriage to stop, and then beckoned to the man. Finding that he was of his own country, the prince opened the door of the carriage saying, "My countryman, come up." The ragged Indian thought he must be in a dream and stood back; but the prince said, "Come, come up to me, my countryman"; and the poor fellow then sat beside the prince, and was taken into his service. The prince was "touched" when he saw his poor countryman standing in his rags, and helped him. Jesus is the Prince of troubled souls, and every man is bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh. He is touched with your friendlessness and sorrow. When you were on a steamboat, and a child fell overboard, did you not wring your hands in an agony? What did you say? Why, you exclaimed, "Oh, that I could swim, that I might leap in and rescue the drowning child!" And when a brave sailor leaped into the sea and saved the child, did you not weep and shout for joy? Perhaps, now, you may be drowning in the depths of sin, you may be suffering in the floods of sorrow, or may be overwhelmed by an ocean of trouble; but Jesus is touched. Like a man who cannot swim, I may feel for, though I cannot help you; but Jesus not only feels for you, but He is like the brave sailor who leaps into the depths to save you. (*W. Birch.*) *The reality and the symbol:*—I think it may be demonstrated from human experience that the human race can never ascend toward civilisation, and that it can still less ascend toward the higher ranges of civilisation, which include moral and spiritual development, without the real or fancied help of a superior intelligence in the invisible world. What we need is a priest, and a high priest, that is sensibly, intimately affected and concerned with our—what? virtues? dignities? attainments? No, with our "infirmities." Our virtues, dignities, and attainments, such as they are, get along very well; but our infirmities and transgressions need succour. We need a God whose attributes and dispositions lead Him to be helpful just at the time of our need—not a God that simply acts according to His own will abstractly, as He is represented to do, thinking of things according to His pleasure as it is said in the old formulas. To be a good teacher, one must come

down to the level of the scholar, and know his difficulties. He must adapt his training to the hardness of the task and the limitations of the faculties of the scholar. And what we need is the conception of a God who is personal in the same sense in which our father and our mother were personal to us—namely, in adapting themselves to our want, that by and by we might be raised up to them, conforming to the universal law of education. There are great difficulties in this conception, and there are some hindrances to it. It is intrinsically a thing of not a little perplexity for men to form a definite idea of invisible spiritual existence. We do it by transferring, through the influence of the imagination and the reason, the familiar facts of our mental experience to the Being whom we call God. There are two great difficulties in this matter. One is, that we have been trained so largely to use our senses that when we undertake to move in the higher realm of life we find it hard to fashion ideas that are not sensuous—that are impalpable and immeasurable. The other is, that goodness and fineness in us are so small, that magnanimity in us is so difficult to be distinguished from minanimity, that we are so little sensitive to the various excellences of moral character, that life requires knives with such a hard and cutting edge, and that our training is such that we are not apt to have the material out of which to create our God, unless we return to the mother, the father, the brother and the sister in our own households. It is mainly to expound these difficulties that I have selected this subject. I shall find it difficult to make a statement of the matter which shall not lead to misconception, but I shall not on that account any the less endeavour to state it. First, there has been an unfortunate substitute for a personal God of theologic ideas which just as effectually takes away personality from Him in the conceptions of men as pantheistic doctrines. The use of symbols has been such, they have been so unwisely or ignorantly employed, that they have led people into substantial idolatry. In books and sermons and exhortations innumerable men are urged to "come to the Cross"; to "hold on to the Cross"; "to forget not the Cross," to "weep at the foot of the Cross." What idolatry! Is there no Jesus Christ that is a living God? Do we now, after two thousand years, need to have Him interpreted by a symbol of two thousand years ago? Is not the thing signified a hundred times more desirable than any symbol of it? In ancient times, right under the eaves of the crucifixion, it had a function that cannot be overestimated; but it has performed that function; and by the use of the Cross men interpret to the world the thing that it was set to interpret: and I say that to attempt to represent the Lord Jesus Christ any longer by that symbol is unwise in the preacher, and bewildering and misleading to the hearer. Instead of bringing us to a personal God, a present Help in time of need, it hinders our access to Him, and we find ourselves wandering on Calvary when we have a living Saviour in the New Jerusalem. Another thing that hinders the access of men to a living, personal God is the presentation that is continually made of the atonement of Christ. I do not undertake to rail at the doctrine of the atonement, nor to say that it is an unnecessary doctrine; but I resist vehemently the substitution of a "plan of salvation," as it is sometimes called, or the term "atonement," for the phrase, "the Lord Jesus Christ"—for, really, in preaching, men are urged to accept Christ's atonement, instead of accepting Christ. They are asked to be saved through the atonement, instead of being asked to be saved by the loving power and loving influence of Christ. What the sick man wants to know is, not how the pill which he takes was compounded, but whether, taking it, the chills and fever will stop. If they do, he does not care what is in it; and if they do not, he does not care what is in it. What mankind want is salvation; and it is brought to them through the presentation of Jesus Christ, who attempts to save them, not by buoying them up by a system of physical laws and mechanical observances, or by abstract conceptions of right and duty, but by bringing them on to a new ground of personal liberty. The Lord stands to you and to me as a living Saviour. He is your personal Saviour and my personal Saviour; He is your Redeemer and my Redeemer; He is your Brother and my Brother. I do not come to Him any longer through the atonement; that is His look-out. I do not come to Him by the way of the Cross; that is history's business. I come directly to Him. I come to Him because every throb of my nature tells me that I need elevation and spiritualisation, and because I have faith that these are to be found in Him. I come to Him because I am impelled to by the whole volume of my wants. I come to Him because I am drawn toward Him by all the ardour of my confidence and love. There is one more point which is even more exceptionable. I refer to the use of blood. There was a time when that

symbol was needed. In the Old Testament dispensation blood was significant of moral qualities. But what possible use, in modern association, has blood? Here and there a man sheds his blood for his country, in which case blood represents his willingness to sacrifice himself for his country. It may be necessary under certain circumstances to take blood as an emblem of self-denial, heroism and suffering as they exist in God, in order to give a conception of them to low-minded people; but when it has been employed for a certain time, and these conceptions have been involved and enfolded to a given point, they become stronger than the symbol: and the symbol, instead of benefiting them, stands in their way, and constantly tends to draw them back from the spiritual truth to the carnal representation of it. If these criticisms are valid, the question naturally comes back, How would you proceed? What would you do? In the first place, I will say that I do not believe you could collect an audience so ignorant and degraded as to be incompetent to understand the revelation of God in Christ Jesus as a personal Saviour. The thing itself is simpler than any figure by which you can represent it. And the great want of the Church to-day, it seems to me, is such a presentation of Christ to men as that every man and every woman shall feel that they have a living Friend in heaven who thinks of them, who knows them by name, and who understands their birth, their parentage, their education, their liabilities, the various influences which operate upon them, but which they are not responsible for, their culture, their surroundings, everything that belongs to them; that they have a Brother who has gone there to take all power into His hands and exercise it in their behalf. What every person needs is the sense of a living Jesus Christ, to whom in trial or in want he can turn and be conscious that He hears, and is present to help. In time of need, when your expectations are disappointed, when your plans are broken up, when your life seems a wreck, and when despair has taken possession of you, and you know not which way to turn for succour—then you need to have a faith that there is One in heaven who knows you, who loves you, and who will stand by you, and will stand by you to the end, whatever may befall you. Such a Saviour you have in Christ Jesus; and nothing shall separate you from His love. And he who has such a Saviour as that need not ask philosophers anything. He will have written in his own soul the philosophy of his own experience; and buoyed up by the joy and gladness which are ministered to him, he will have the wherewith to draw other men upward, saying, "This has Christ been to me, and this will Christ be to you if you will accept Him." I beseech of you now—and above all in times of depression and trouble—see to it that you have a hold upon the living Christ: not upon a doctrine, not upon a symbol, but upon a Person, throbbing, vital, near, and overflowing with generous love. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Times of need:*—If God is a merciful High Priest to all, in all circumstances, and according to the law of humanity, then He must needs have sympathy and tender regard for man, not in those sufferings alone which are brought upon them without their own fault, but in that vast flow of daily follies, and sins, and prejudices, and stumblings, and slidings, that go to make up human life. Divine sympathy for mere misfortune we have, and it is a great mercy; and if there were no other sympathy than that, it would still be a great mercy; but it would go only a little way towards alleviating human suffering. The want of the heart does not lie chiefly in the things that are brought upon us without any agency of our own. Hence, sympathy, to be efficacious, and to meet the wants of human life, must take man in his sinful nature, and in his actual experience. That which Christ came to do was to seek and to save the lost; not those simply that were lost by others' fault, but those that were lost by their own fault. God in Christ is a Father with plenary paternal attributes and feelings. Consider what a parent—a being infinitely lower, less sensitive, and less capable of moral greatness—will do for a child. How much he will bear! how much he will forget! how much he will forgive! And shall God be thought to be less than a man? Shall He who is greater than man in the direction of goodness, of patience, of glorious lovingkindness, be capable of less forbearance towards His children than an earthly father manifests towards his? God's tender thought, and His compassionate sympathy, are a refuge into which every man may run—and then most when most he needs some refuge and some strength. Let us select a few occasions that shall bring us to God. In general, it may be said that all emergencies in which the heart can find no rest and comfort in the use of the ordinary instruments of consolation are among those occasions. There are times of great physical suffering, in which men are justified in appropriating this promise and this exhortation, and going directly for help to God. There is a cold physical philosophy, a stoical

indifference, or stoical strength, upon which one may lean in suffering; but this is not to be compared with that glowing faith which one may have, that God, although for wise purposes of His own He does not remove pain, yet looks upon us, and understands our wants, feels with us and for us, and works in us submission, and patience, and fortitude. Physical suffering, long continued, ordinarily tends to degradation; but where it is accepted in the right spirit, it builds men up in qualities that are godly—and through suffering many men have become heroic. Times of great perplexity, in which there are doubts and uncertainties that prey like wolves upon the fears of men; which bring pressure, and care, and soul-suffering—these are times of need that justify you in going to God for sympathy. You have His thought and His regard; and why should you not take the comfort of it? You would carry your fears to a friend's bosom; why will you not carry them to the bosom of the best of friends? Times of religious depression are peculiarly times of need, in which men are justified in going to God, where they arise from a doubt of any one's own piety, or from what is even more painful—scepticism of the whole nature and web of the truth itself, which, as it were, unsettles and sets adrift the whole religious nature. There are two kinds of sceptics. Some are sceptical from the force of malign passions, which lead them to seek to destroy, that they may have a larger license, and be wicked with impunity. Others are sceptical from the force of moral feelings. They have their thought-doubts and their heart-doubts; and it is the best part of their nature, oftentimes, that strives within them, seeking to solve many of these insoluble questions; seeking to appease many aspirations and hungers of the soul; seeking to put partial truths into their full light. Hunger and thirst they do for faith. They long for it with an unutterable longing. And where, not because they seek to, and not because they wish to, men dishonour God, and separate themselves from right conduct; where they do this, notwithstanding they endeavour to conform their life to the ethical principles of the gospel, do you say that they ought to be shut up to themselves, and ought not to go to any friend for sympathy and medicament? And, above all, should they not go to God? And may they not suppose that, in such times of need as theirs, God will sympathise with them? There are times of need, too, when men are led to suffering from the development in them of philanthropic tendencies. There be many persons who look out upon human life with most melancholy feelings. The condition of society at large; the state of mankind that is everywhere apparent; the laws that are at work among men; the problems of the destiny of the race—these things, to a thoughtful and generous nature, are productive, frequently, of exceeding great pain. An indifferent, unsympathising, selfish nature will look upon them without the least trouble; but there are many who are made sad by pondering upon such insoluble mysteries. And those times of sadness that they experience are times of need in which they are justified in laying their anxieties and solicitudes at the feet of Christ, and finding rest in Him. Against all these views, the atheistic tendencies of the heart will often rise up. Men know the truth; but often in these times of exigency they have a consciousness of their own unworthiness, and they dare not leave their fate to Jehovah or to Jesus; and their remorse and sense of guilt keep them from acting. There are very many persons who will not go to God just when they need Him, but who undertake first to do a work of righteousness, and so to make a preparation. When they shall have overcome their temptation or sin, or when they shall have brought some degree of peace and complacency into their heart, then they mean to go to God for a ratification, as it were, of the work that is accomplished in them. But this is not wise. It is when most you feel the dart that Satan casts; it is when most you feel the poison that rankles in the soul; it is when most you feel the pang which the heart suffers—it is then that you most need God. Do not wait till you feel willing. Do not wait till you are conscious that all fear is gone. Take your fear, your guilt, your remorse, and go with these, because you are in need. There is no other argument like this, "Lord, save, or I perish." There is another difficulty which leads men not to use these views when presented; and that is the unresponsiveness of God. Well, you have a High Priest that was tempted in all points as you are, and yet without sin. Your own Christ, who calls you to Him, suffered in just precisely the way in which you complain of suffering. And the time when you experience an inability to go to God is itself one of the times of need that should bring you to Him. You have a God that has had the same experience in His earthly and limited condition. He, too, was brought into these emergencies that try you, and He pities

you, and sorrows with you, on account of them. There is no time of need in which you cannot find a preparation in the heart of Christ for you. You will ask, perhaps, "How, then, under such circumstances, will God give us help in such times of need?" I do not know. It is not written. But this I know: that He has the control of all natural forces, of all physical laws, of all social and moral influences. I know that He is the Governor of the universe, and that all things shall work together in due time for the good of those that love and trust Him. And because I do not know of the secrets by which He succours men, shall I, therefore, not trust in Him? (*Ibid.*)

CHAPTER V.

VERS. 1-3. **Every high priest taken from among men.**—*The high priesthood of Christ:*—I. CHRIST'S PARTICIPATION OF OUR NATURE, AS NECESSARY TO HIM FOR DISCHARGING OF THE OFFICE OF A HIGH PRIEST ON OUR BEHALF, IS A GREAT GROUND OF CONSOLATION UNTO BELIEVERS, A MANIFEST EVIDENCE THAT HE IS, AND WILL BE, TENDER AND COMPASSIONATE TOWARDS THEM. II. IT WAS THE ENTRANCE OF SIN THAT MADE THE OFFICE OF THE PRIESTHOOD NECESSARY. III. IT WAS OF INFINITE GRACE THAT SUCH AN APPOINTMENT WAS MADE. Without it all holy intercourse between God and man must have ceased. For neither—1. Were the persons of sinners meet to approach unto God; nor—2. Was any service which they could perform, or were instructed how to perform, suited unto the great end which man was now to look after; namely, peace with God. For the persons of all men being defiled, and obnoxious unto the curse of the law, how should they appear in the presence of the righteous and holy God (Isa. xxxiii. 14; Micah vi. 8). IV. THE PRIEST IS DESCRIBED BY THE ESPECIAL DISCHARGE OF HIS DUTY, OR EXERCISE OF HIS OFFICE; WHICH IS HIS OFFERING BOTH GIFTS AND SACRIFICES FOR SIN. V. WHERE THERE IS NO PROPER PROPITIATORY SACRIFICE THERE IS NO PROPER PRIEST. Every priest is to offer sacrifices for sin; that is, to make atonement. VI. JESUS CHRIST ALONE IS THE HIGH PRIEST OF HIS PEOPLE. For He alone could offer a sacrifice for our sins to make atonement. VII. IT WAS A GREAT PRIVILEGE WHICH THE CHURCH ENJOYED OF OLD, IN THE REPRESENTATION WHICH IT HAD BY GOD'S APPOINTMENT, OF THE PRIESTHOOD AND SACRIFICE OF CHRIST, IN THEIR OWN TYPICAL PRIESTS AND SACRIFICES. VIII. MUCH MORE GLORIOUS IS OUR PRIVILEGE UNDER THE GOSPEL SINCE OUR LORD JESUS HATH TAKEN UPON HIM, AND ACTUALLY DISCHARGED THIS PART OF HIS OFFICE, IN OFFERING AN ABSOLUTELY PERFECT AND COMPLETE SACRIFICE FOR SIN. Here is the foundation laid of all our peace and happiness. IX. WHAT IS TO BE DONE WITH GOD ON THE ACCOUNT OF SIN, THAT IT MAY BE EXPIATED AND PARDONED, AND THAT THE PEOPLE OF GOD WHO HAVE SINNED MAY BE ACCEPTED WITH HIM AND BLESSED, IS ALL ACTUALLY DONE FOR THEM BY JESUS CHRIST THEIR HIGH PRIEST, IN THE SACRIFICE FOR SIN WHICH HE OFFERED ON THEIR BEHALF. (*John Owen, D.D.*) **Compassion on the ignorant.**—*Divine compassion:*—There was no person in the Hebrew economy that was so revered as their high priest. He became more corrupt in the political times preceding Christ; but the name high priest, as interpreted by the whole history of the Hebrew people, was one that was not only reverenced, but loved. He was ordained, it is said, to have compassion; he was their highest ideal of purity; he stood in the grandeur of a supposed inspiration; he represented God, or, still better, he represented the people to God; he was their advocate; he stood in their place officially, and in every way helped to bring men up without any oppression; he was a minister of mercy to them; and you could not have struck a bell that would roll through the air with such melodious sound as by saying that Jesus Christ stood as a high priest to the people, and that compassion was the great attribute of Jesus; that He not only represented the people in their wants, but that He was a forthcomer of the very God Himself, and represented God to mankind as far as men obscured by the flesh are capable of understanding God. You cannot measure the infinite wisdom, and you cannot measure the eternal glow and glory of love, and you cannot in the infirmities of human life in all its relationships have any satisfying representation of the richness and infinite element of the Divine nature. So, in searching for some emblem the apostle strikes through to the centre, and says that Jesus Christ is a High Priest to represent—what? On the one side to represent the infirmities of men. He is

clothed with them Himself; He is touched with a feeling of our infirmities; He knows the height, and depth, and length and breadth of human experience and human need, and He is gone up to stand before God, our High Priest there; and not only to represent the wants of mankind, but in doing that He represents to us what is the interior character of God Himself, and what is the economy of the Divine love. In the earlier periods of the world's history God was revealed in those aspects that would be most powerful to restrain animalism. The revelation of God's motive power was toward the part that the man could understand; it was a physical manifestation of God as a God that governs the material world, which has certain fixed laws that cannot be broken without penalty immediate or remote; and so He was represented in the earlier periods of the world as the all-compelling Governor of the world. Pain in this world and suffering are God's merciful ministers to keep men in the road. "So," says God, "I will by no means count it a matter of indifference whether a man lives right or wrong. He shall live right or he shall suffer, because I am a God of mercy and love." So the Old Testament had a sublime conception of God, but when you come down to the prophets, when lust immeasurable threatened to overwhelm society, when the great curse of idolatry was licentiousness, then God says: "I will not relax one particle of My eternal law; I will wait till the crooked grows straight, till the inferior is exalted, I will have compassion on men; when they are transgressing their own nature and My moral law and all things pure and holy, I will still have patience, that I may bring them back again." There is the ideal of the Old Testament. But, coming down to a later period, when men were brutal they needed a little thunder, and the prophets gave it to them. They developed the regent character of God. "I abhor wickedness and My fury shall burn to the lowest hell, I will not tolerate it; I have not built the world for this: wicked men and devils shall not desecrate it; I will put forth a hand of strength, and I will clothe Myself in garments of blood! I will walk forth so that the land shall tremble in My indignation; wickedness shall *not* prevail; purity in manhood and Divine excellence *shall* prevail." And so the thunder of God's justice and the threatenings of God's law were sounded out continually because men were on so low a plane that they needed just that development of the Divine nature. But that has given a disproportionate idea of God's character. Men have been taught that He is the implacable thunderer. Another reason is that it is easier for us to thunder than it is to love. But it was not until the sun rose at the Advent that there came a morning outburst that gave us sight, not of the administration of God's government among men, but of the heart of God Himself in Jesus Christ. There we see the inside of God; and what was that? If Calvary does not teach it, if His walk among the poor and needy does not teach it, if all the acts of mercy do not inspire you with the knowledge, if you need it shaped into a doctrine, then hear it here. He represents that the inner nature of God, as represented by Jesus Christ acting in place of the high priest, was one that could "have compassion on the ignorant and on those that are out of the way"—all error, all stumbling, all sin, all violation of the ideal of duty. The infinite bounty of Divine love is not savage nor partial, it is universal, it is intense beyond description. What is infinite? That beyond which the thought of man cannot go; that that has, to our thought, no boundary, extent beyond ending. What is infinite compassion? That that would wrap this globe round and round a thousand times, like the folds of a garment round the body, with Divine thoughtfulness, Divine mercy, Divine love. What is infinite love? What is a mother's love? The purest and tenderest thing that is known on earth is the overhanging heart of a mother upon the cradle that has in it that little nothing which we call a babe, that can give nothing back, that receives everything and returns nothing. Yet the love of the mother is but one drop of the ocean as compared with the love of the great Father of mankind—infinite, infinite! (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Compassion on the ignorant:*—I. COMPASSION AND FORBEARANCE ARE TWO THINGS WHICH ANY MAN WHO WOULD DO GOOD TO HIS FELLOW-MEN OUGHT TO POSSESS TO A VERY LARGE DEGREE. 1. You will have plenty of use for all the compassion and all the tenderness that you can possibly command, for this will help to draw around you those who are ignorant and out of the way. Love is the queen bee, and where she is you will find the centre of the hive. 2. By this same spell you will hold those whom you gather, for men will not long remain with an unloving leader, even little children in our classes will not long listen to an unsympathetic teacher. The earth is held together by the force of attraction, and to the men upon it that same power is exercised by love and compassion. 3. Compassion in your heart will be greatly useful in moving sinners

to care for themselves. Mr. Knill at one time was distributing tracts at Chester, and went out where there was a company of soldiers. Many received the tracts, but one man tore the little book in pieces before the good man's eyes; and on another occasion the same individual said to the soldiers, "Now make a ring round him." The men stood round the preacher, and then the wicked fellow cursed him in such a frightful manner that Mr. Knill burst into tears to hear such awful sounds. The sight of Knill's tears broke the heart of the blasphemer: nothing else could have touched him, but he could not bear to see a strong man who was at least his equal, and, probably, his superior, weeping over him. Years after he came forward to own that the tender emotion displayed by Mr. Knill had touched his inmost soul, and led him to repentance. 4. You want great compassion to insure your own perseverance, for if you do not love the children of your class, if you do not love the people whom you try to benefit as you go from house to house, if you have no compassion on the dying sinners around you, you will soon give up your mission, or go about it in a merely formal manner. 5. Compassion of heart can alone teach you how to speak to others. 6. Now, there are many reasons why we should have a great deal of compassion and forbearance. Think what patience God had with you, all those years before your conversion, and multitudes of times since; and if He has had patience with *you*, should not you have patience with your fellow sinner even to the end? There is one reflection which may help you. Remember that these poor souls who sin as they do should be looked upon by you as persons who are deranged, for sin is madness. And do recollect this—if you do not have compassion you cannot do them good. If you become weary of them, and speak sharply, you cannot bless them; and, perhaps, if *you* are not the means of blessing them, nobody else may be. Ah, is it your own husband? Wife, win him. Do not drive him from bad to worse by scolding. Sister, is it your brother? Woo him and win him to Christ. Do not vex him by becoming acid and sour. II. COMPASSION AND FORBEARANCE PRE-EMINENTLY DWELL IN JESUS CHRIST. 1. He has compassion on the ignorant. Very many persons are wilfully ignorant of Christ. Is not this enough to move the Lord to anger? And yet His patience continues. Come to Him just as you are, and confess your wilful blindness, and He will put it away, and enable you to understand the things which make for your peace. Some are ignorant, however, because they have been cast where they could not well know; they were born in an ungodly family, or, what is much the same, among those who have only a mere formal religion. They do not know the truth, but they can scarcely be blamed for it. Well, Christ is able to teach you. Come and sit at His feet, for He will have compassion on your ignorance. 2. He will have compassion upon those that are out of the way. Who are these people? Some are out of the way because they never were in it and never knew it. Many are in a very emphatic sense out-of-the-way sinners. They have gone to such extravagances that they are out of the way of common morality, and quite startle their careless comrades. Well, my Lord Jesus will have compassion on you out-of-the-way sinners. However far you have gone, only turn to Him, for pardon is freely published. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The human sympathies of Christianity*:—Every religion professes to reveal to us the supernatural; every philosophy professes to teach us moral duty; but Christianity alone has, together with these, approached man with tender and helpful sympathy. Even Judaism did not. Assuredly infidelity does not; it may be very philosophical, it may inculcate a very pretentious morality, but it has no tenderness and sympathy; it has nothing like the Christian ideas of human brotherhood, and Divine Fatherhood. And yet, is not this precisely what we need? Not stern injunctions to be good, but sympathy and help in trying to be good. What is it, think you, that makes your destitute neighbour, who lives in a garret, and dines upon a crust, and shivers in the cold, and writhes in his pain, talk calmly of his condition, uttering no word of complaint, looking rather at the alleviations of his sorrow, than at his sorrow itself; speaking of mercies even where you can hardly discover them. Is it religious cant, think you? If it be, this cant is a very wonderful thing. It can do what nothing else save Christianity can do: it can make a suffering and poverty-stricken man patient through long weary years. What is it, again, that enables the tradesman when misfortune comes upon him, or the husband, when the mother of his children is smitten down, and his house is darkened, to kneel down before God with a breaking heart, and to rise up calm and comforted; what is it, but this very Christianity teaching him, not only that his sins are forgiven, but that God, even while he lives on earth, is his Heavenly Father; watching over his life, and appointing every experience of it, solely intent upon doing him the greatest possible

good? Let us look a little, then, at these human sympathies of Christ and Christianity. You will see from the chapter that the apostle is speaking of the necessary qualifications of a high priest; and he says that one of these is, that he should be full of human sympathies—"Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way." And these requisites, he goes on to say, are very eminently found in Christ. Here, then, we encounter "the great mystery of godliness," the great fundamental fact of Christianity, upon which all its cardinal doctrines rest, that "God was manifest in the flesh"; that He was essentially Divine, became also properly human—the "Emmanuel, God with us." I call this the most wonderful, the most practical, and the most powerful thought that the world has ever conceived. Why did He become Incarnate? The general answer is—that by "compassing Himself with infirmity He might have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way." Let me show you this in three things. We are ignorant of God's righteousness, and out of the way through our guilt. We are ignorant of God's holiness, and out of the way through our sinfulness. We are ignorant of God's happiness, and out of the way through our misery. And to have compassion on us in each of these respects, Christ became incarnate—compassed Himself with infirmities; for our pardon, for our purity, and for our peace. And these are our three great human necessities. 1. First, the apostle tells that He became incarnate to procure our pardon. "He was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death"—that He might be capable, that is, of suffering death. A wonderful thought that—the express purpose for which the Divine Son took our nature was that He might die for us! "Herein is love." "In this the love of God is manifested." Other persons come into the world to live; Jesus Christ came into the world to die. In the very midst of His transfiguration glory "He spake of the decease which He was to accomplish at Jerusalem." In the very midst of His resurrection triumph, He told His disciples that "thus it was written, and thus it behoved Him to suffer." And so perfectly were they filled with the idea of His death, that they described themselves as preachers, not of Christ's teaching, although He "spake as never man spake"—not of Christ's life, although He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners"—but of Christ's death: "We preach Christ crucified." And why this strange and exclusive theme of preaching? Plato's disciples preach his doctrine—Moses' followers preached his laws. Why do Christian preachers preach only Christ's death?—glory in a cross? Why, just because we are "ignorant and out of the way," and this Cross precisely meets our first great need as transgressors; it is Christ's first great proof of redeeming compassion, the first great reason for which He compassed Himself with human infirmity—that He might have compassion upon our guilt. It was not merely that He humbled Himself, but that He humbled Himself in this manner, did for us by taking our nature what He could not have done in any other way, and laid down His life for us. 2. And then Christ, as our merciful High Priest, has compassion upon us in our impurity, and takes upon Him our nature that He may set us an example of holiness. Here is a second great reason for His being "compassed with infirmities"—a man like ourselves. He shows us how pure, and perfect, and obedient, and patient a human life may be. "He learned obedience by the things that He suffered." "He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." He did not permit either temptation or suffering to sway Him in His obedience: He would fast in the wilderness rather than sin; He would endure the bitter anguish of Gethsemane rather than oppose His Father's will. And having such experience of duty and temptation and suffering, He learned how arduous human virtue is—how much grace and strength it requires. Do you not see, then, how great and precious a purpose of His incarnation this is, to set us a perfect human example? He does not enjoin holiness merely, or describe it in a book—He embodies it in His life; He comes into our sinful world and homes, not as a holy God, but a holy Man; so that if *we* would be holy, we have only to "consider Him," to "walk even as He walked," to "follow His steps." We learn duty from His obedience; love from His tenderness. We clasp His hand, we walk by His side, we witness His life, the beautiful and perfect exhibition in Him of the moral possibilities of a sanctified manhood. 3. He can have compassion upon us in our sorrows. And for this again He was "compassed with infirmities." It is not without deep significance that He is called "the Man of sorrows," and said to be "acquainted with grief," as if grief were His familiar acquaintance. Emphatically is He "the Man Christ Jesus," "bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh"; "both He that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of one, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them

brethren." In all His earthly experience of duty, and temptation and sorrow He is never less, He is never more than a proper Man, "A Brother born for the day of adversity." Oh! how wonderful this is, and yet how precious, that He "the Creator of the ends of the earth, who fainteth not neither is weary," should incarnate Himself in the weakness of a little child and in the woes of a sorrowful man! And yet this is precisely what we needed; it is an assurance that comes home to our deepest hearts. Do you not often feel the unspeakable worth of a friend who understands your trials and difficulties and sorrows, who can lovingly enter into all your experiences, and give you counsel and sympathy? Then must it not be infinitely more precious to go to One, who, while on the human side of His nature He can thus be "touched with the feeling of our infirmities, because in all points tempted as we are," is also on the Divine side Almighty to help, and loving to pity? (*H. Allon, D.D.*) *Our compassionate High Priest*:—Often, when we are trying to do good to others, we get more good ourselves. When I was here one day this week, seeing friends who came to join the church, there came among the rest a very diffident, tender-hearted woman, who said many sweet things to me about her Lord, though she did not think that they were any good, I know. She was afraid that I should not have patience with her and her poor talk; but she said one thing which I specially remember: "I have to-day put four things together, from which I have derived a great deal of comfort," she told me. "And what are they, my sister?" I asked. "Well," she said, "they are those four classes—'the unthankful and the evil, the ignorant and those that are out of the way.' Jesus 'is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil,' and 'He can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way,' and I think that I can get in through those four descriptions. Though I am a great sinner, I believe that He will be kind to me, and have compassion upon me." I stored that up; for I thought that one of these days I might want it myself; I tell it to you, for if you do not want it now, you may need it one of these days; you may yet have to think that you have been unthankful and evil, ignorant and out of the way, and it will give you comfort to remember that our Lord Jesus is kind to the unthankful and to the evil, and that He "can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way." I. THE SORT OF SINNERS FOR WHOM OUR HIGH PRIEST IS CONCERNED. 1. The people who claim Christ's aid are generally those who have a very low opinion of themselves. The proud and self-satisfied cannot know His love; but the poor and distressed may ever find in Him comfort and joy, because of His nature, and by means of His intercession. 2. As with the high priest of old, amongst those who come to our High Priest are many whose fear and distress arise from ignorance. (1) There is a universal ignorance. As compared with the light of God, we are in the dim twilight. He that seeth best only seeth men as trees walking. (2) But, in addition to the ignorance that is universal, there is also a comparative ignorance on the part of some; and because of this, the compassion of Christ flows forth to them. There are, first, the recent converts—young people whose years are few, and who probably think that they know more than they do; but who, if they are wise, will recognise that their senses have not been fully exercised to discern between good and evil. Others there are who are ignorant because of their little opportunity of getting instruction. Upon these our great High Priest has compassion, and often with their slight knowledge they show more of the fruits of the Spirit than some of us produce even with our more abundant light. There are many that are of a very feeble mind. They could never explain how they were saved; but they *are* saved. (3) There is also a sinful ignorance. Now comes another description of the sort of sinners for whom our High Priest is concerned. There are many whose fears arise from being out of the way. The Lord "can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way." I remember that, when I felt myself to be a very great sinner, these words were very, very much blessed to me. I read them, "and on them that are out of the way"; and I knew that I was an out-of-the-way sinner. I was then, and I am afraid that I am now, somewhat like a lot out of the catalogue, an odd person who must go by himself. Very well; our High Priest can have compassion on those that are odd, and on those that are out of the way, on those who do not seem to be in the common run of people, but who must be dealt with individually, and by themselves. He can have compassion upon such. But now let us look at the more exact meaning of the text. (1) To be out of the way is, in the case of all men, their natural state. (2) In addition to that, men have gone out of their way by their own personal folly. We had enough original sin; but we have added to that another kind of originality in evil. (3) Some are out of the way

because of their seduction from the way by others. False teachers have taught them, and they have taken up with the error brought before them by a stronger mind than their own. In some cases persons of evil life have had a fascination over them. (4) Many are out of the way because of their backslidings after grace has come to them. (5) Others are out of the way because of their consciousness of special sin. Come to this compassionate High Priest, and trust your case in His hands; they were pierced because of your sin. II. THE SORT OF HIGH PRIEST WITH WHOM SINNERS HAVE TO DEAL. 1. He is One who can bear with ignorance, forgetfulness, and provocation. 2. He is One who can feel for grief, because He has felt the same. 3. He is One who lays Himself out tenderly to help such as come to Him. 4. He is One who never repelled a single person. III. Now, I want to speak to those of you who are the people of God. I want to remind you that there may be a blessing even in your weakness; and that this may be the more clearly seen we will look, in the third place, at the SORT OF INFIRMITY WHICH MAY BE SANCTIFIED AND MADE USEFUL. The high priest of old was compassed with infirmities, and this was part of his qualification. "Yes," says one, "but he was compassed with sinful infirmities; but our Lord Jesus had no sin." That is quite true, but remember that this does not make Christ less tender, but more so. Anything that is sinful hardens; and inasmuch as He was without sin, He was without the hardening influence that sin would bring to bear upon a man. He was all the more tender when compassed with infirmities, because sin was excluded from the list. We will not, then, reckon sin in any form as an infirmity likely to be turned to a great use, even though the grace of God abounds over the sin; but let me speak to some of you who wish to do good, and set forth some of the things which were sore to bear at the time, and yet have been rich in blessing since. 1. First think of our struggles in finding mercy. If you have not had a certain experience, you cannot so well help others who have; but if you were compassed with infirmity at your first coming to Christ, you may use that in helping others to come to Him. 2. Again, our grievous temptations may be infirmities which shall be largely used in our service. You cannot be unto others a helper unless you have been compassed with infirmities. Therefore accept the temptations which trouble you so much, as a part of your education to make you useful to others. 3. Our sickness may turn out to be in the same category. 4. Our trials, too, may thus be sanctified. 5. Our depressions may also tend to our fruitfulness. A heart bowed down with despair is a dreadful thing. "A wounded spirit who can bear?" But if you have never had such an experience you will not be worth a pin as a preacher. You cannot help others who are depressed unless you have been down in the depths yourself. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The compassionate High Priest:*—I. COMPASSION AND FORBEARANCE, WITH MEEKNESS, IN THOSE FROM WHOM WE EXPECT HELP AND BELIEF, IS THE GREAT MOTIVE AND ENCOURAGEMENT UNTO FAITH, AFFIANCE, AND EXPECTATION OF THEM. II. We live, THE LIFE OF OUR SOULS IS PRINCIPALLY MAINTAINED, UPON THIS COMPASSIONATENESS OF OUR HIGH PRIEST; namely, that He is able to bear with us in our provocations, and to pity us in our weaknesses and distresses. To this purpose is the promise concerning Him (Isa. xl. 11). There are three things that are apt to give great provocations unto them that are concerned in us. 1. Frequency in offending. 2. Greatness of offences. 3. Instability in promises and engagements. These are things apt to give provocations, beyond what ordinary moderation and meekness can bear withal; especially where they are accompanied with a disregard of the greatest love and kindness. And all these are found in believers, some in one, and some in another, and some in all. III. Though every sin hath in it the whole nature of sin, rendering the sinners obnoxious unto the curse of the law; yet as there are several kinds of sins, SO THERE ARE SEVERAL DEGREES OF SIN, some being accompanied with a greater guilt than others. 1. There is a distinction of sins with respect unto the persons that commit them. But this distinction ariseth from the event, and not from the nature of the sin itself intended. Regenerate persons will, through the grace of God, certainly use the means of faith and repentance for the obtaining of pardon, which the other will not; and if they are assisted also so to do, even they in like manner shall obtain forgiveness. No man therefore can take a relief against the guilt of sin from his state and condition, which may be an aggravation, and can be no alleviation of it. 2. There are degrees of sin amongst men unregenerate, who live in a course of sin all their days. All do not sin equally, nor shall all be equally punished. 3. In the sins of believers there are different degrees, both in divers, and in the same persons. And although they shall be all pardoned, yet have they different effects; with respect—(1) Unto peace of conscience. (2) Sense of the love of God. (3) Growth in grace and holiness.

(4) Usefulness or scandal in the Church or the world. (5) Temporal afflictions. (6) A quiet or troublesome departure out of this world; but in all, a reserve is still to be made for the sovereignty of God and His grace. IV. OUR IGNORANCE IS BOTH OUR CALAMITY, OUR SIN, AND AN OCCASION OF MANY SINS UNTO US. V. SIN IS A WANDERING FROM THE WAY. VI. NO SORT OF SINNERS ARE EXCLUDED FROM AN INTEREST IN THE CARE AND LOVE OF OUR COMPASSIONATE HIGH PRIEST, BUT ONLY THOSE WHO EXCLUDE THEMSELVES BY THEIR UNBELIEF. VII. IT WAS WELL FOR US, AND ENOUGH FOR US, THAT THE LORD CHRIST WAS ENCOMPASSED WITH THE SINLESS INFIRMITIES OF OUR NATURE. VIII. GOD CAN TEACH A SANCTIFIED USE OF SINFUL INFIRMITIES, AS HE DID IN AND TO THE PRIESTS UNDER THE LAW. (*John Owen, D.D.*) *Tenderness*:—Our relation to the things under us is the most certain touchstone of our character. Here we display quite freely what we are. We embody, on a small scale, as it may be, the spirit of fathers or the spirit of despot. We employ our superiority of power, whatever it is, either to bring to a clearer light the signs of God's counsel in external nature which wait for our interpretation, or to assert ourselves in the impotence of caprice as able to preserve, or to deface, or to destroy that which is, indeed, God's work. We either use that which is at our disposal arbitrarily for our own pleasure, or we deal with it as representing some fragment of a complicated order of life. We depress our dependents and our subordinates, the weaker men who come within our influence, that we may be isolated in the splendour of a lonely tyranny, or we strive to lift them little by little towards our own level, that in the great day of revelation we may be seen standing by the throne in the midst of many brethren; for, when we speak of the things under us, we must give to the phrase a much larger meaning than we commonly attach to it. It reaches far beyond the men who are under us. The revelation which has been made to us of the Divine plan of creation shows that we are placed in a world over the whole of which we have to exercise dominion, charged, as the true ruler must be charged, with a responsibility towards every part of it. We have from the first a responsibility towards the material fabric of the world, no less than towards the hosts of sentient beings by which this material fabric is peopled. And then, as the ages go forward, our responsibility increases. The feebler races which fall bebind in the development of life become subject to the stronger, and the feebler men to those who in any respect have been endowed with the prerogative of command. Thus the sphere of the responsibility of those to whom power is given becomes indefinitely varied, but in each case the position of authority brings with it the burden of noble cares. We all must and do exercise dominion for good or for evil, and we all need the spirit of tenderness that our dominion may be a blessing. Tenderness is for dominion what sympathy is for fellowship. Tenderness pierces through the surface to the heart of things. It is true of tenderness, in every application of the pregnant figure, that it "will not break the bruised reed or quench the smoking flax." It discerns the element of strength in that which is most frail, and the element of life in that which is darkest. It sees in forms transitory and common Divine gifts to be handled reverently. It sees in simple and subject types of life memories, as it were, the promises of a great plan slowly fulfilled from stage to stage. It sees in the rudest human mind a mirror for reflecting, however imperfectly, the image of a Father in heaven; and, as we trust the varied vision, new thoughts pass into our own souls, and we become conscious of hidden forces about us which are able to still the sorrowful impatience of our eager desires. Tenderness in each direction quickens our spiritual sensibility, and under inspired teaching, nature and creaturely life and even man's failures disclose mysteries of hope. It springs out of our Christian faith. It is the obvious expression of our Christian faith in regard to the things under us. There is, I say, a tenderness towards material things which belongs to the Christian character. And this tenderness, born from the recognition of God in His creatures, shows itself both in use and in contemplation. There is something of touching solemnity in the form of the Jewish thanksgiving over bread and wine, which may go back even to the apostolic age, "Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe." The words remind us that the least and commonest comes from Him who sways the whole. He Himself is seen in His gifts, and in that presence there can be no wastefulness, no carelessness, no ungrateful discontent. Even light and food may be dishonoured by reckless indifference; and we may miss, by blind prodigality, the teachings which come through trivial acts to tender souls. It is, perhaps, yet more obvious how tenderness finds a place in the contemplation of material things. To the hard and the impatient there is no sanctity in the purple mountain-side, no beauty born of murmuring sounds, no majesty in the light of

setting suns. The silence that is in the starry sky, the sleep that is among the lonely hills, have for them no articular message; but, none the less, sanctity, beauty, majesty, tidings of great truths are there, and the quiet eye can gather the spiritual harvest. Thus we can see how tenderness has its scope and blessing in mute, insensate things; but perhaps it is most called for in our dealings with animals. These lie in our power in a peculiar sense, and we need to school ourselves that we may fulfil our duty towards them, for we have a duty towards them. They are not only for our service or for our amusement, they are committed by God to our sovereignty, and we owe to them a considerate regard for their rights. Our responsibility in this respect is easily forgotten. We have all felt, I fancy, something of that irrational pleasure in the capricious use of power which Browning has analysed in his portraiture of Caliban. The boy strikes down the butterfly, the man shoots the swallow on the wing, simply because he can and because he chooses. But these wanton acts are not indifferent. They tend to reveal and to mould character. They break the righteous conditions of our sovereignty. The thought has a wide and a pleasant application, for, looking at the question from this light, I do not see how the pursuit of amusement can justify the slaughter of animals, or how the pursuit of knowledge can justify their torture. Neither amusement nor knowledge is an end for man. Both must be followed in full view of the supreme aim of life, and in remembrance of the abiding character on which each action leaves its mark. But it may be said we shall gain an insight into the hidden causes of disease, and a mastery over them, through the sufferings which we deliberately inflict on the creatures which are within our control. So far as I can ascertain, the expectation has not been justified by facts, nor can I discover the least reasonable ground for supposing that we shall learn any secrets of life which it is good for us to know by the way of calculated cruelty. If the world were the work of an evil power, or if it were the result of a chance interaction of force and matter, it would be at least possible that we might have gained results physically beneficial to ourselves by the unsparing sacrifice of lower lives. But if He who made us made all other creatures also—if they find a place in His providential plan—if His tender mercies reach to them—and this we Christians most certainly believe—then I find it absolutely inconceivable that He should have so arranged the avenues of knowledge that we can attain to truths which it is His will that we should master only through the unutterable agonies of beings which trust in us. If we have guarded the spirit of tenderness in our bearing towards the material world and the animal world, we shall be prepared to apply it also towards weaker races and weaker men who are in a greater or less degree brought within our influence. Every one holds a position of superiority as parent or employer, as richer than others in experience or knowledge, as endowed with authority by years or position; and every one knows the daily vexations which come through the thoughtlessness, or ignorance, or indifference, as it seems to us, of those whom we wish to help in the fulfilment of their duty. Every one, again, has suffered from the temptation which bids the stronger assert his will by his strength, and overbear what he thinks to be an unintelligent opposition, and claim deference as an unquestionable right. At such times we are on our trial, and sympathetic tenderness alone will save us from falling; for tenderness will trace back the wayward act to some trait of natural character which gentle discipline can mould to good. It will discern that involuntary ignorance is to be dealt with as a form of intellectual distress. It will win respect before it claims deference for the authority with which it is entrusted. It will, in a word, turn stumbling-blocks into stepping-stones, and find, by them, the way into many hearts. But it is in dealing with the poorest that tenderness will help us most; and when I speak of the poorest, I mean those who are poorest in thought, in feeling, in aspiration even more than those who are poorest in earthly things. The poor man needs relief—the poor in virtue no less than the poor in money. The bankrupt in noble thoughts is set up again only when he sees the good for which he was made, and sees that it is still within his reach. This prospect tenderness can disclose to him—a tenderness which in view of the saddest spectacles of human failure, kindles in the believer a fire of piety, a light of natural affection, and reveals in the brother for whom Christ died the possibility and the hope of service; for tenderness, no less than reverence and sympathy, flows from Christ only as an inexhaustible source. (*Bishop Westcott.*)

Compassion qualifies for helpful service amongst men:—The following beautiful tradition about Moses is handed down to posterity:—He led the flock of his father-in-law. One day while he was contemplating his flock in the desert, he saw a lamb leave the herd, and run further and further away. The tender shepherd not only

followed it with his eyes, but went after it. The lamb quickened his step, hopped over hill, sprang over ditches, hastening through valley and plain; the shepherd unweariedly followed its track. At last the lamb stopped by a spring at which it eagerly quenched its thirst. Moses hastened to the spot, looked sadly at the drinking lamb, and said: "It was thirst, then, my poor beast, which tormented thee, and drove thee from me, and I didn't understand; now thou art faint and weary from the long, hard way, thy powers are exhausted; how then couldst thou return to thy comrades?" After the lamb had quenched his thirst and seemed undecided what course to take, Moses lifted it to his shoulder, and, bending under the heavy burden, strode back to the flock. Then he heard the voice of God calling to him, saying: "Thou hast a tender heart for My creatures, thou art a kind, gentle shepherd to the flocks of man—thou art now called to feed the flocks of God." (*Jewish Messenger.*)

Our Lord's sympathy:—Human sympathy, we must remember, may, and in many cases does, from its very fulness become weakness. The sympathy of a mother for a child will too often prevent her from inflicting necessary punishment. The sympathy of the benevolent for the poor and suffering may, without caution, tend to the encouragement of vice. Sympathy is essentially a woman's virtue, but the quickness of feeling which overpowers judgment is also a woman's infirmity. There is, in fact, no virtue which more powerfully demands law and limitation before it can safely be yielded to. But the dignity of our blessed Lord's sympathy is as remarkable as its depth. He sympathised with the shame of the sinner whom He pardoned, but He never excused the offence. "Thy sins are forgiven thee; go, and sin no more," are the words which have touched the human heart, and worked repentance and amendment of life in thousands since the days when they were first spoken; but no one could ever claim them as an encouragement to sin. The dignity of our Lord's sympathy was, in fact, shown by His obedience to the law which bade Him exhibit God's perfection. He never allowed one virtue to interfere with another. Mercy and truth might meet together, righteousness and peace might kiss each other, but the one never entrenched upon the province of the other; if it had there would have been no perfection. And if we, like Christ, would rightly sympathise; if we would in our degree bear the griefs of our fellow-creatures, without any weakness of judgment or absence of due proportion, we must view those sorrows as Christ viewed them, and soothe them in His spirit. To relieve all anguish, to remove all pain, that is not to be our object. If it were, we might well in sorrow close our doors to the suffering, and, shutting out their misery from our view, give ourselves up to our own enjoyment. For sympathy is pain. When we feel with and for another, we must in a measure suffer; and, looking at the sad amount of wretchedness in this fallen world, we may, perhaps, at first sight be pardoned if we deem it better to be without sympathy—neither to require it for ourselves, nor to offer it to others. The loss on the one side may, we may well think, be counterbalanced by the gain on the other. *Compassion on the ignorant*:—Men who are ignorant should not be met with scorn, nor fault-finding, nor neglect, for they need compassion. We should lay ourselves out to bear with such for their good. A disciple who has been taught all that he knows by a gracious Saviour should have compassion on "the ignorant." A wanderer who has been restored should have compassion on "them that are out of the way." A priest should have compassion on the people with whom he is one flesh and blood, and assuredly our Lord, who is our great High Priest, has abundant compassion upon the ignorant. I. WHAT IS THIS IGNORANCE? It is moral and spiritual, and deals with eternal things. 1. It is fearfully common among all ranks. 2. It leaves them strangers to themselves. (1) They know not their own ignorance. (2) They are unaware of the heart's depravity. (3) They are unconscious of the heinousness of their actual sin. (4) They dream not of their present and eternal danger. (5) They have not discovered their inability for all that is good. 3. It leaves them unacquainted with the way of salvation. (1) They choose other ways. (2) They have a mixed and injurious notion of the one way. (3) They often question and cavil at this one and only way. 4. It leaves them without the knowledge of Jesus. They know not His person, offices, work, character, ability, readiness to save. 5. It leaves them strangers to the Holy Spirit. (1) They perceive not His inward strivings. (2) They are ignorant of regeneration. (3) They cannot comprehend the truth which He teaches. (4) They cannot receive His sanctification. 6. It is most ruinous in its consequences. (1) It keeps men out of Christ. (2) It does not excuse them when it is wilful, as it usually is. II. WHAT IS THERE IN THIS IGNORANCE WHICH IS LIABLE TO PROVOKE US, AND THEREFORE DEMANDS COMPASSION?

1. Its folly. Wisdom is worried with the absurdities of ignorance. 2. Its pride. Anger is excited by the vanity of self-conceit. 3. Its prejudice. It will not hear nor learn; and this is vexatious. 4. Its obstinacy. It refuses reason; and this is very exasperating. 5. Its opposition. It contends against plain truth; and this is trying. 6. Its density. It cannot be enlightened; it is profoundly foolish. 7. Its unbelief. Witnesses to Divine truth are denied credence. 8. Its wilfulness. It chooses not to know. It is hard teaching such. 9. Its relapses. It returns to folly, forgets and refuses wisdom, and this is a sore affliction to true love. III. How OUR LORD'S COMPASSION TOWARDS THE IGNORANT IS SHOWN. 1. By offering to teach them. 2. By actually receiving them as disciples. 3. By instructing them little by little, most condescendingly. 4. By teaching them the same things over again, patiently. 5. By never despising them notwithstanding their dulness. 6. By never casting them off through weariness of their stupidity. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Ignorance:*—It is a sad thing for the blind man who has to read the raised type when the tips of his fingers harden, for then he cannot read the thoughts of men which stand out upon the page; but it is far worse to lose sensibility of soul, for then you cannot peruse the book of human nature, but must remain untaught in the sacred literature of the heart. You have heard of the "iron duke," but an iron Christian would be a very terrible person: a heart of flesh is the gift of Divine grace, and one of its sure results is the power to be very pitiful, tender, and full of compassion. (*Ibid.*) Ignorance is the devil's college. (*Christmas Evans.*) *The sin of ignorance:*—In that the ignorant are here brought in as an instance of such sinners as were to have sacrifices offered up for their sins, the apostle giveth us to understand, that ignorance is a sin. It is expressly said, "That if any soul sin through ignorance, he shall bring a sin-offering" (Numb. xv. 27, 28). 1. Ignorance is a transgression of the law of God, for it is contrary to that knowledge which the law requireth: but every transgression is sin (1 John iii. 4). 2. Ignorance is a defect of that image of God, after which God at first created man; for knowledge was a part of that image (Col. iii. 10). 3. Ignorance is an especial branch of that natural corruption which seized upon the principal part of man, namely, his understanding. 4. Ignorance is the cause of many other sins (Gal. iv. 8; 1 Tim. i. 13). Therefore it must needs be a sin itself. 5. Judgments are denounced against ignorance, as against a sin (Hos. iv. 6; 2 Thess. i. 8). 6. Ignorance is a punishment of other sins (Isa. vi. 10; John xii. 40). Though ignorance be a sin, yet ignorant persons are here brought in as a fit object of compassion. Christ renders this ground of His praying for the Jews that had a hand in crucifying Him (Luke xxiii. 34). And Peter allegeth it as a ground of His tendering mercy unto them (Acts iii. 17). Ignorance is a spiritual blindness, so as they see not the dangerous course wherein they walk, and in that respect are the more to be pitied. (*W. Gouge.*) *Ignorance causes neglect of religion:*—It's ignorance of the price of pearls that makes the idiot slight them. It's ignorance of the worth of diamonds that makes the fool choose a pebble before them. It's ignorance of the satisfaction learning affords that makes the peasant despise and laugh at it; and we very ordinarily see how men tread and trample on those plants which are the greatest restoratives, because they know not the virtue of them; and the same may justly be affirmed of religion, the reason why men meddle no more with it is—because they are not acquainted with the pleasantness of it. (*Anthony Horneck.*) *Ministers must remember the ignorant:*—When I preach I sink myself deep down. I regard neither doctors nor magistrates, of whom are here in this church above forty; but I have an eye to the multitude of young people, children, and servants, of whom are more than two thousand. I preach to those, directing myself to them that have need thereof. Will not the rest hear me? The door stands open unto them; they may begone. (*M. Luther.*) **Offer for sins.**—*The great sacrifice:*—I. THE ABSOLUTE HOLINESS AND SPOTLESS INNOCENCE OF THE LORD CHRIST, IN HIS OFFERING OF HIMSELF, HAD A SIGNAL INFLUENCE UNTO THE EFFICACY OF HIS SACRIFICE, AND IS A GREAT ENCOURAGEMENT UNTO OUR FAITH AND CONSOLATION. No other sort of high priest could have done what was to be done for us. Had He had any sin of His own He could never have taken all sin from us. From hence it was that what He did was so acceptable with God, and that what He suffered was justly imputed unto us, seeing there was no cause in Himself why He should suffer at all. And we may see herein—1. Pure unmixed love and grace. He had not the least concern in what He did or suffered herein for Himself. This was the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that being rich, for our sakes He became poor. And will He not pursue the same love unto the end? 2. The efficacy and merit of

His oblation, that was animated by the life and quintessence of obedience. There was in it the highest sufferings, and the most absolute innocency, knit together by an act of most inexpressible obedience. 3. The perfection of the example that is set before us (1 Pet. ii. 21, 22). II. WHOSOEVER DEALETH WITH GOD OR MAN ABOUT THE SINS OF OTHERS, SHOULD LOOK WELL IN THE FIRST PLACE UNTO HIS OWN. There are four ways whereby some may act with respect unto the sins of others, and not one of them wherein they can discharge their duty aright, if in the same kind they take not care of themselves in the first place. 1. It is the duty of some to endeavour the conversion of others from a state of sin. How can they press that on others, which they neither know what it is, nor whether it be or not, any otherwise than as blind men know there are colours? By such persons are the souls of men ruined, who undertake the dispensation of the gospel unto them, for their conversion unto God, knowing nothing of it themselves. 2. It is our duty to keep those in whom we are concerned, as much as in us lieth, from sinning, or from actual sin. With what confidence, with what conscience can we endeavour this towards others, if we do not first take the highest care herein of ourselves? 3. To direct and assist others in the obtaining pardon for sin is also the duty of some. And this they may do two ways—(1) By directing them in their application unto God by Jesus Christ for grace and mercy. (2) By earnest supplications with them and for them. And what will they do, what can they do, in these things sincerely for others, who make not use of them for themselves? 4. To administer consolation under sinning, or surprisals with sin, unto such as God would have to be comforted, is another duty of the like kind. And how shall this be done by such as were never cast down for sin themselves, nor ever spiritually comforted of God? III. NO DIGNITY OF PERSON OR PLACE, NO DUTY, NO MERIT, CAN DELIVER SINNERS FROM STANDING IN NEED OF A SACRIFICE FOR SIN. THE HIGH PRIEST, BEING A SINNER, WAS TO OFFER HIMSELF. IV. IT WAS A PART OF THE DARKNESS AND BONDAGE OF THE CHURCH UNDER THE OLD TESTAMENT, THAT THEIR HIGH PRIESTS HAD NEED TO OFFER SACRIFICES FOR THEMSELVES AND THEIR OWN SINS. It is a relief to sinners that the word of reconciliation is administered unto them, and the sacrifice of Christ proposed, by men subject unto the like infirmities with themselves. For there is a testimony therein, how that they also may find acceptance with God, seeing He deals with them by those who are sinners also. But these are not the persons who procure the remission, or have made the atonement which they declare. Were it so, who could with any confidence acquiesce therein? But this is the holy way of God. Those who are sinners declare the atonement which was made by Him who had no sin. (*John Owen, D.D.*)

Vers. 4–6. **No man taketh this honour unto himself.** *The ministerial calling from God*:—A calling is most requisite in all things we take in hand, especially in the ministry. Who will meddle with the sheep of a man unless he be called to it? and shall we meddle with Christ's sheep without a calling? As for our calling. 1. It is of God. We have God's seal to our calling, because He hath furnished us in some measure with gifts for it. 2. We are called by the Church, which, by imposition of hands representing God's hand, hath separated us to this office. Let every one be assured of his calling. A lamentable thing to consider, what a number of intruders there be that have thrust themselves into this holy calling. In Jeroboam's time every one that would consecrate himself became one of the priests of the high places. Shall we have them to make cloth that have no skill in clothing? Will any make him his shepherd that knows not what belongs to sheep? And wilt thou deliver Christ's sheep into the hands of a blind and ignorant shepherd? Wilt thou have him to build thy house that hath no skill in building? Wilt thou make him the schoolmaster of thy child that hath no learning? But any is good enough for the ministry. If men did look as well to the charge as to the dignity of the office; if Onus were as well considered as Bonus, men would not make such haste to it as they do. They watch over the souls of the people, as they that must give an account. The day of taking in our profits is sweet, but the counting day will be terrible, when Christ will require every lost sheep at our hands. Therefore let none take this honour to himself, but see that he be called of God, as Aaron was. (*W. Jones, D.D.*) *Order in ecclesiastical institution*:—In human doings and human productions we see everywhere manifestations of order. Well-ordered stones make architecture; well-ordered social regulations make a constitution and a police; well-ordered ideas make good logic; well-ordered words make good writing; well-ordered imaginations and emotions make good poetry; well-ordered

facts make science. Disorder, on the other hand, makes nothing at all, but unmakes everything. Stones in disorder produce ruins; an ill-ordered social condition is decline, revolution, or anarchy; ill-ordered ideas are absurdity; ill-ordered words are neither sense nor grammar; ill-ordered imaginations and emotions are madness; ill-ordered facts are chaos. (*J. S. Blackie.*) *The ministerial office*:—I. Here let us first learn THAT BOTH IT IS UNLAWFUL FOR ANY MAN WITHOUT A CALLING TO TAKE UPON HIM THE MINISTRY; NEITHER YET ANY CALLING OUGHT TO BE, WHICH IS NOT ACCORDING TO THE WILL OF GOD: for, seeing the ministry is honourable, and he is justly honoured that executeth it faithfully, how can I exalt myself, but of right I ought again to be brought low, and instead of glory, have shame? For what do I in this but rob Christ of His glory, who is Head of His Church, and appointeth ministers whom He will, who ruleth in the house of Jacob, and ordaineth officers at His own pleasure? If in an earthly kingdom subjects would presume to take offices at their own choice, were it not extreme confusion, utter reproach and shame unto the prince? How much more to bring this confusion into the Church of Christ? II. THE SECOND THING TO BE LEARNED IN THESE WORDS IS THAT WE HAVE ALL SUCH A CALLING AS WE MAY BE SURE IT IS OF GOD; FOR WE MUST BE CALLED OF GOD, AS AARON WAS. No minister ought to be called in the Church but he whose calling may be known to be of God. Hereof I may first conclude, touching the person of the minister: that because in all places, by the prophets, by the apostles, by our Saviour Christ, God always requireth that His ministers be of good report, well grounded in faith, able to teach His people; therefore if ignorant men, and not able to teach, be chosen unto this office, I dare boldly affirm it, their calling is not allowed of God. Now, touching the office whereunto God appointeth the ministers of His gospel, is it not this: to preach His Word, and minister Sacraments? Other governors of His Church, are they not for the people's obedience unto this Word, and for provision of the poor? (*E. Deering, B.D.*) *Of the honour and function of the high priest*:—It here declareth that the high priest's function was an honourable function, which is thus manifested. 1. The solemn manner of inaugurating, or setting them apart thereto (Exod. xxix. 1). 2. His glorious apparel (Exod. xxviii.). 3. The great retinue that attended him: as all sorts of Levites, together with sundry inferior priests (Numb. iii. 9, viii. 19). 4. The liberal provision made for him out of the meat-offerings, sacrifices, firstfruits, tenths, and other oblations (Lev. ii. 3, v. 13, vii. 6; Deut. xviii. 3). 5. The difficult cases that were referred to him. 6. The obedience that was to be yielded to him. 7. The punishment to be inflicted on such as rebelled against him (Deut. xvii. 8–10, &c.). 8. The sacred services which they performed, as to be for men in things pertaining to God: to offer up what was brought to God (ver. 1), and to do other particulars set down (chap. ii. 11). In such honourable esteem were high priests, as kings thought them fit matches for their daughters (2 Chron. xxii. 11). 9. The most principal honour intended under this word was that the high priest, by virtue of his calling, was a kind of mediator between God and man. For he declared the answer of the Lord to man, and offered up sacrifices to God for man. (*W. Gouge.*) *Of the honour of the ministerial calling*:—1. Their Master is the great Lord of heaven and of earth. If it be an honour to be an especial minister of a mortal king, what is it to be the minister of such a Lord? 2. Their place is to be in the room of God, even in His stead—ambassadors for Him (2 Cor. v. 20). 3. Their work is to declare God's counsel (Acts xx. 17). 4. Their end is to perfect the saints (Eph. iv. 12). 5. Their reward is greater than of others (Dan. xii. 3). Thus hath the Lord honoured this function that it might be the better respected, and prove more profitable. Ministers in regard of their persons are as other men, of like passions with them, and subject to manifold infirmities, which would cause disrespect were it not for the honour of their function. (*Ibid.*) *Divine designation*:—I. IT IS AN ACT OF SOVEREIGNTY IN GOD, TO CALL WHOM HE PLEASETH UNTO HIS WORK AND ESPECIAL SERVICE; AND EMINENTLY SO WHEN IT IS UNTO ANY PLACE OF HONOUR AND DIGNITY IN HIS HOUSE. 1. Because every call is accompanied with choice and distinction. 2. Because, antecedently unto their call, there is nothing of merit in any to be so called, nor of ability in the most, for the work whereunto they are called. What merit was there, what previous disposition unto their work, in a few fishermen about the Lake of Tiberias, or Sea of Galilee, that our Lord Jesus Christ should call them to be His apostles, disposing them into that state and condition, wherein they sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel? So was it ever with all that God called in an extraordinary manner (see Exod. iv. 10, 11; Jer. i. 6; Amos. vii. 15, 16). In His ordinary calls there is

the same sovereignty, though somewhat otherwise exercised. For in such a call there are three things—(1) A providential designation of such a person to such an office, work, or employment. (2) It is a part of this call of God when He blesseth the endeavours of men to prepare themselves with those previous dispositions and qualifications which are necessary unto the actual call and susception of this office. And hereof also there are three parts—(*a*) An inclination of their hearts, in compliance with His designation of them unto their office. (*b*) An especial blessing of their endeavours for the due improvement of their natural faculties and abilities, in study and learning, for the necessary aids and instruments of knowledge and wisdom. (*c*) The communications of peculiar gifts unto them, rendering them meet and able unto the discharge of the duty of their office, which in an ordinary call is indispensably required as previous to an actual separation unto the office itself. 3. He ordereth things so as that a person whom He will employ in the service of His house shall have an outward call, according unto rule, for his admission thereinto. And in all these things God acts according to His own sovereign will and pleasure. And many things might hence be insisted on. As—(1) That we should have an awful reverence of, and a holy readiness to comply with, the call of God; not to run away from it, or the work called unto, as did Jonah, nor to be weary of it because of difficulty and opposition which we meet withal in the discharge of our duty, as it sundry times was ready to befall Jeremiah (Jer. xv. 10, xx. 7–9), much less to desert or give it over, on any earthly account whatever; seeing that he who sets his hand to this plough and takes it back again is unworthy of the kingdom of heaven. (2) That we should not envy nor repine at one another, whatever God is pleased to call any unto. (3) That we engage into no work wherein the name of God is concerned without His call; which gives a second observation, namely, that—II. THE HIGHEST EXCELLENCY AND UTMOST NECESSITY OF ANY WORK TO BE DONE FOR GOD IN THIS WORLD WILL NOT WARRANT OUR UNDERTAKING OF IT, OR ENGAGING IN IT, UNLESS WE ARE CALLED THEREUNTO. III. THE MORE EXCELLENT ANY WORK OF GOD IS, THE MORE EXPRESS OUGHT OUR CALL UNTO IT TO BE. IV. IT IS A GREAT DIGNITY AND HONOUR TO BE DULY CALLED UNTO ANY WORK, SERVICE, OR OFFICE IN THE HOUSE OF GOD. (*John Owen, D.D.*) **Christ glorified not Himself to be made an High Priest.**—*Christ, as Son of Man, called and perfected to be our High Priest* :—Twice already the apostle has referred to Christ as our High Priest, and he now enters on the development of the central theme of his Epistle—Christ a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. But in order to explain the priesthood on which Christ entered after His death and resurrection, and of which not Aaron but Melchizedek was the type, it is necessary for him to show how the Lord Jesus fulfilled all that was typified of Him in the Levitical dispensation, and possessed in perfection all the requirements which, according to Divine appointment, were needed in the high priest, and which could not be possessed in perfection by sinful men like the Aaronic priests. In the first place, the priests were as sinful as the people whom they represented. It was on account of sin that Israel felt the need of a mediator. But Aaron and the priests were only officially holy; they were not in reality spotless and pure. Hence they had to offer sacrifices for their own sins and infirmities, as well as for those of the people. Secondly, the mediator ought not merely to be perfect and sinless man, he ought also to be Divine, in perfect and full communion with God, so that he can impart Divine forgiveness and blessing. Only in the Lord Jesus, therefore, is the true mediation. He who loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, hath made us kings and priests unto God. The two qualifications of the Aaronic high priest, that he was from among men and that he was appointed by God, were fulfilled in a perfect manner in the Lord Jesus. But in considering these two points, we are struck not merely by the resemblance between the type and the fulfilment, but also by the contrast. 1. Aaron was chosen from among men to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. Jesus was true man, born of a woman and made under the law; He became in all things like unto His brethren. But whereas the Jewish high priest had to offer for himself, as he was a sinner, the Lord was harmless and undefiled, pure and spotless. His mediation was therefore perfect. The Aaronic high priest was able to have compassion on the ignorant and on them that were out of the way, knowing and feeling his own infirmities and transgressions, and knowing also the love of God, who desireth not the death of the sinner, but that he should turn and live. But this compassionate regard for the sinner can exist in perfection only in a sinless one. This appears at first sight paradoxical; for we expect the perfect man to be the severest judge. And with regard to sin, this is doubtless true God

chargeth even His angels with folly. He beholds sin where we do not discover it. He setteth our secret sins in the light of His countenance. And Jesus, the Holy One of Israel, like the Father, has eyes like a flame of fire, and discerns everything that is contrary to God's mind and will. But with regard to the sinner, Jesus, by virtue of His perfect holiness, is the most merciful, compassionate, and considerate Judge. Beholding the sinful heart in all, estimating sin according to the Divine standard, according to its real inward character, and not the human, conventional, and outward measure, Jesus, infinitely holy and sensitive as He was, saw often less to shock and pain Him in the drunkard and profligate than in the respectable, selfish, and ungodly religionists. Again, He had come to heal the sick, to restore the erring, to bring the sinner to repentance. He looked upon sin as the greatest and most fearful evil, but on the sinner as poor, suffering, lost, and helpless. He felt as the Shepherd towards the erring. Again, He fastened in a moment on any indications of the Father's drawing the heart, of the Spirit's work. 2. The high priest is appointed by God. No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. The high priesthood of Christ is identified here with His glory. "Christ glorified not Himself to be made an High Priest." Blessed truth, that the glory of Christ and our salvation are so intimately connected, that Christ regards it as His glory to be our Mediator and Intercessor! This is Christ's glory, even as it is the reward of His suffering, that in Him we draw near to the Father, and that from Him we receive the blessings of the everlasting covenant. He rejoices to be our High Priest. God called Him to the priesthood. The calling of Jesus to the high priestly dignity is based on His Sonship. Because Jesus is Son, He is the Prophet, perfectly revealing God; because He is Son, He is the true Sacrifice and Priest; for only the blood of the Son of God can cleanse from all sin, and bring us nigh unto God; and only through Christ crucified and exalted can the Father's love and the Spirit's power descend into our hearts. Here the comparison and contrast between the Lord and Aaron ends. The apostle now enters on that which is peculiar to our Saviour Jesus. The types and figures of the old covenant could not be perfect and adequate; for that which is united in Christ had necessarily to be severed and set forth by a variety of figures. The priests offered not themselves, but animals. Now the obedience, the conflict, the faith, the offering of the will as the true, real, and effective Sacrifice could not possibly be symbolised. Nor could any single symbol represent how Jesus, by being first the Sacrifice, became thereby the perfect, compassionate, and merciful High Priest. Christ was the victim on the Cross. The Son of God, according to the eternal counsel, came into the world to be obedient even unto death. "Lo, I come to do Thy will." His obedience was characterised throughout by such continuity, liberty, and inward delight, that we are apt to forget that aspect of His life on which the apostle dwells when he says, that though Christ was a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered. Real and great were His difficulties, temptations, and sorrows; and from the prayers and complaints ascribed to Messiah in the psalms and prophets, we can understand somewhat of the burden which weighed on His loving and sensitive heart, and the constant dependence with which He leaned on the Father, and obtained from Him light and strength. Jesus believed; He lived not merely before, but by the Father. Thus is Jesus the Author and Finisher of faith. He went before the sheep. He is the forerunner. He has experienced every difficulty, and tasted every sorrow. He knows the path in all its narrowness. (*A. Saphir.*) *Christ glorified not Himself:*—As the Pope doth, who will needs be styled *Pontifex Maximus*, the greatest high priest. Pope Hildebrand especially, whom, when no man would advance to Peter's chair, he gat up himself. Said he, "Who can better judge of me than myself?" (*J. Trapp.*) *The difference between the priesthood and the high priesthood of Christ:*—I. The priest and the high priest did not minister in the same PLACE. As a priest, Christ ministered on earth; as high priest, He ministers in heaven. II. The priest and the high priest did not perform the same WORK. 1. As priest, Christ sacrificed Himself. 2. As high priest, He (1) entered heaven by His own blood; (2) intercedes on our behalf with the Father. III. The priest and the high priest did not appear in the same DRESS. Christ as a priest was made like unto His brethren: wore the simple dress of humanity. Christ as high priest of eternity is clothed with all the glories of immortal life. IV. The priest and the high priest did not occupy the same POSITION. The one was a sub-officer, the other the supreme judge of the land and the president of the Sanhedrin. Christ as High Priest is the highest officer in the kingdom of God. (*H. Harries.*) *Christ not a self-elected, but a God-appointed priest:* At

length the priesthood of Christ, already three times alluded to, is taken up in earnest, and made the subject of an elaborate discussion, extending from this point to chap. x. 18. The writer begins at the beginning, setting forth first of all that Christ is a legitimate priest, not a usurper; one solemnly called to the office by God, not self-elected. The chief thing in his mind here is the call or appointment; the sympathy is referred to, in connection with its source, personal infirmity, as explaining the need for a call, so as to suggest the question, Who, conscious of the infirmity which is the secret of sacerdotal mildness, would dream of undertaking such an office without a Divine call? Jesus assuredly undertook the office only as called of God. He was called to the priesthood before His incarnation. He came to the world under a Divine call. And during the days of His earthly life His behaviour was such as utterly to exclude the idea of His being a usurper of sacerdotal honours. All through His incarnate experiences, and especially in those of the closing scene, He was simply submitting to God's will that He should be a priest. And when He returned to heaven He was saluted High Priest in recognition of His loyalty. Thus from first to last He was emphatically One called of God. What is said of the sympathy that becomes a high priest, though subordinate to the statement concerning his call, is important and interesting. First, a description is given of the office which in every clause suggests the reflection, How congruous sympathy to the sacerdotal character! The high priest is described as taken from among men, and the suggestion is that, being a man of like nature with those for whom he transacts, he may be expected to have fellow-feeling with them. Then he is further described as ordained for men in things pertaining to God, the implied thought being that he cannot acquit himself satisfactorily in that capacity unless he sympathise with those whom he represents before God. Lastly, it is declared to be his special duty to offer sacrifices of various sorts for sin, the latent idea being that it is impossible for any one to perform that duty with any earnestness or efficiency who has not genuine compassion for the sinful. Very remarkable is the word employed to describe priestly compassion. It does not signify to feel with another, but rather to abstain from feeling against him; to be able to restrain antipathy. It is carefully selected to represent the spirit which becomes a high priest as a mean between two extremes. On the one hand, he should be able to control the passions provoked by error and ignorance, anger, impatience, disgust, contempt. On the other hand, he must not be so amiable as not even to be tempted to give way to these passions. Ignorance and misconduct he must not regard with unruffled equanimity. It is plainly implied that it is possible to be too sympathetic, and so to become the slave or tool of men's ignorance or prejudices, and even partaker of their sins—a possibility illustrated by the histories of Aaron and of Eli, two high priests of Israel. The model high priest is not like either. He hates ignorance and sin, but he pities the ignorant and sinful. The ignorant for him are persons to be taught, the erring sheep to be brought back to the fold. He remembers that sin is not only an evil thing in God's sight, but also a bitter thing for the offender; realises the misery of an accusing conscience, the shame and fear which are the ghostly shadows of guilt. The character thus drawn is obviously congenial to the priestly office. The priest's duty is to offer gifts and sacrifices for sin. The performance of this duty habituates the priestly mind to a certain way of viewing sin: as an offence deserving punishment, yet pardonable on the presentation of the appropriate offering. The priest's relation to the offender is also such as demands a sympathetic spirit. He is not a legislator, enacting laws with rigid penalties attached. Neither is he a judge, but rather an advocate pleading for his client at the bar. Neither is he a prophet, giving utterances in vehement language to the Divine displeasure against transgression, but rather an intercessor imploring mercy, appeasing anger, striving to awaken Divine pity. But the special source to which sacerdotal sympathy is traced is the consciousness of personal infirmity. "For that he himself also is compassed with infirmity." The explanation seems to labour under the defect of too great generality. A high priest is no more human in his nature and experience than other men—why, then, should he be exceptionally humane? Two reasons suggest themselves. The high priest was officially a very holy person, begirt on all sides with the emblems of holiness, copiously anointed with oil, whose exquisite aroma typified the odour of sanctity, arrayed in gorgeous robes, significant of the beauty of holiness, required to be so devoted to his sacred calling and so dead to the world that he might not mourn for the death of his nearest kin. How oppressive the burden of this official sanctity must have been to a thoughtful, humble man, conscious of personal infirmity, and

knowing himself to be of like passions and sinful tendencies with his fellow-worshippers! Another source of priestly benignity was, I imagine, habitual converse in the discharge of duty with the erring and the ignorant. The high priest had officially much to do with men, and that not with picked samples, but with men in the mass; the greater number probably being inferior specimens of humanity, and all presenting to his view their weak side. He learned in the discharge of his functions to take a kindly interest in all sorts of people, even the most erratic, and to bear with inconsistency even in the best. The account given of priestly sympathy prepares us for appreciating the statement which follows concerning the need for a Divine call to the priestly office (ver. 4). No one, duly impressed with his own infirmities, would ever think of taking unto himself so sacred an office. A need for a Divine call is felt by all devout men in connection with all sacred offices involving a ministry on men's behalf in things pertaining to God. The tendency is to shrink from such offices, rather than to covet and ambitiously appropriate them. Having stated the general principle that a Divine call is necessary as an inducement to the assumption of the priestly office, the writer passes to the case of Jesus Christ, whom he emphatically declares to have been utterly free from the spirit of ambition, and to have been made a high priest, not by self-election, but by Divine appointment. It is difficult to understand, at first, why the text from the second Psalm, "My Son art Thou," is introduced here at all, the thing to be proved being, not that Messiah was made by God a Son, but that He was made a Priest. But on reflection we perceive that it is a preliminary hint as to what sort of priesthood is signified by the order of Melchizedec, a first attempt to insinuate into the minds of readers the idea of a priesthood belonging to Christ altogether distinct in character from the Levitical, yet the highest possible, that of one at once a Divine Son and a Divine King. On further consideration, it dawns on us that a still deeper truth is meant to be taught; that Christ's priesthood is coeval with His sonship, and inherent in it. From the pre-incarnate state, to which the quotations from the Psalter refer, the writer proceeds to speak of Christ's earthly history: "Who, in the days of His flesh." He here conceives, as in a later part of the Epistle he expressly represents, the Christ as coming into the world under a Divine call to be a priest, and conscious of His vocation. He represents Christ as under training for the priesthood, but training implies previous destination; as an obedient learner, but obedience implies consciousness of His calling. In the verses which follow (7, 8) his purpose is to exhibit the behaviour of Jesus during His life on earth in such a light that the idea of usurpation shall appear an absurdity. The general import is: "Jesus ever loyal, but never ambitious; so far from arrogating, rather shrinking from priestly office, at most simply submitting to God's will, and enabled to do that by special grace in answer to prayer." Reference is made to Christ's Sonship to enhance the impression of difficulty. Though He was a Son full of love and devotion to His Father, intensely, enthusiastically loyal to the Divine interest, ever accounting it His meat and drink to do His Father's will, yet even for Him so minded it was a matter of arduous learning to comply with the Father's will in connection with His priestly vocation. For it must be understood that the obedience here spoken of has that specific reference. The aim is not to state didactically that in His earthly life Jesus was a learner in the virtue of obedience all round, but especially to predicate of Him learning obedience in connection with His priestly calling—obedience to God's will that He should be a priest. But why should obedience be so difficult in this connection? The full answer comes later on, but it is hinted at even here. It is because priesthood involves for the priest death (ver. 7), mortal suffering (ver. 8); because the priest is at the same time victim. And it is in the light of this fact that we clearly see how impossible it was that the spirit of ambition should come into play with reference to the priestly office in the case of Christ. Self-glorification was excluded by the nature of the service. The verses which follow (9, 10) show the other side of the picture: how He who glorified not Himself to be made a priest was glorified by God; became a priest indeed, efficient in the highest degree, acknowledged as such by His Father, whose will He had loyally obeyed. "Being perfected," how? In obedience, and by obedience even unto death, perfected for the office of priest, death being the final stage in His training, through which He became a *Pontifex consummatus*. Being made perfect in and through death, Jesus became *ipso facto* author of eternal salvation, the final experience of suffering, by which His training for the priestly office was completed, being at the same time His great priestly achievement. The statement that through death Jesus became *ipso facto* author

of salvation, is not falsified by the fact that the essential point in a sacrifice was its presentation before God in the sanctuary, which in the Levitical system took place subsequently to the slaughtering of the victim, when the priest took the blood within the tabernacle and sprinkled it on the altar of incense or on the mercy-seat. The death of our High Priest is to be conceived of as including all the steps of the sacrificial process within itself. Lapse of time or change of place is not necessary to the accomplishment of the work. The death of the victim, the presentation of the sacrificial blood—all was performed when Christ cried Τετέλεσται. Translated into abstract language, ver. 10 supplies the *rationale* of the fact stated in ver. 9. Its effect is to tell us that Christ became author of eternal salvation because He was a true High Priest after the order of Melchizedec: author of salvation in virtue of His being a priest, author of eternal salvation because His priesthood was of the Melchizedec type—never ending. (*A. B. Bruce, D.D.*)

Vers. 7–11. **With strong crying and tears.**—*The exercise of the Son of God in His agony*:—I. In the first place we shall illustrate the definition of THE SEASON OF THE AGONY OF THE SON OF GOD in these words: "The days of His flesh." In general, it may be observed that the application of the term "flesh" to the mystery of His incarnation is remarkable. By the application of this term something more is expressed than the subsistence of our nature in His person. 1. The beginning of these days is at His birth. In His birth the Son of God entered into the infirmities of our flesh, and, for our sakes, exposed Himself not only to sufferings attending ordinary births, but unto hardships peculiar to the circumstances of His own extraordinary birth. 2. These days ended at His resurrection. The human nature subsisting in the person of the Son of God, was the same nature after His resurrection that it had been before His death. But the likeness, or appearance, was different. Before His death it had "the likeness of sinful flesh"; after His resurrection it appeared in the original glory of human nature subsisting still in His person. 3. The number of these days is not exactly known. The Author of revelation is the Judge of what is proper to appear in the witness which He hath testified of His Son, and what is proper to be concealed. 4. These were the days of His sufferings and temptations. At their beginning, the Son of God entered into His sufferings, and suffered every day until their end. 5. Toward the close of these days He suffered an agony. Day after day, all the days of His flesh, He waded deeper and deeper in the ocean of sorrow, and toward the last the waves rose high and broke over Him in the fury and vengeance of the curse. 6. These were the days of His supplication, prayers, and tears. II. But in regard our text refers unto THE PRAYERS AND SUPPLICATIONS WHICH IN THE CLOSE OF THE DAYS OF HIS FLESH HE OFFERED UP, under His agony, we proceed to the second head of our general method, and shall illustrate these words of the text: "When He had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto Him who was able to save Him from death." 1. "Offering up prayers and supplications" is the action of the Son of God under His agony in the close of the days of His flesh. In our nature, He is "the High Priest of our profession"; and His suffering and dying for our sins are represented in many texts of Scripture as actions of a priest offering sacrifice, and making atonement and reconciliation for sins. 2. "To Him who was able to save Him from death," is the description of the object unto whom the Son of God, under His agony, in the days of His flesh, offered up prayers and supplications. In our nature, and in that station wherein the Son of God stood, He considered His righteous and holy Father as possessing sovereign power over Him with respect to life and death, and executing the curse upon Him according to the penalty of the law; He considered Him as able, not to deliver Him from dying—this is not the object of His prayers—but to uphold His suffering nature in conflicting with the pangs and sorrows of death, and to save Him from the mouth of the lion, and from the horns of the unicorn, or from being overcome by the prince of this world who had the power of death; and He considered Him as able to loose the cords and pains of death, and, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, to bring Him again from the dead by a glorious resurrection on the third day. 3. "Strong crying and tears" are expressions of the fervency with which the Son of God, under His agony, in the close of the days of His flesh, offered up prayers and supplications to His righteous Father, who was able to save Him from death. III. We proceed to illustrate HIS ACCEPTANCE, which is affirmed by the apostle in the latter part of our text: "Heard in that He feared." 1. The nature of that fear, which is ascribed to the Son of God under His agony, is to be ascertained. The term used

by the apostle, and translated "fear," signifies godly fear, accompanied with weakness and feelings in the present frame of our nature. Impressions of the holiness of His Father, together with sensations of His displeasure, sunk deep into His soul, and affected every member of His body, exciting that fear which is the sum of obedience and the essence of adoration, and which, in His state, was accompanied with infirmities and feelings of flesh and blood. Obedience and adoration were in His prayer; and His agony itself, in one consideration, was suffering affliction, and, in another, subjection to the will and obedience to the commandment of His Father. 2. We shall collect several principles which gave force to the operation of fear in the Son of God under His agony in the days of His flesh. (1) His apprehensions of the glory and majesty of His Father were clear and sublime. (2) His burden was heavy and pressed His suffering nature to the ground. (3) His sensations of the wrath and curse of God were deep and piercing. (4) His temptations were violent and extraordinary. (5) The sorrows of death drew up and stood before Him in battle array. But while His soul was offering for sin, and sorrowing even unto death, every desponding and gloomy apprehension which attacked His faith was resisted and broken, and full assurance of His hope of a resurrection by the glory of the Father held firm unto the end. Thy right hand, triumphant Sufferer, doth ever valiantly! 3. The sense in which the Son of God under His agony, in the days of His flesh, was heard is to be ascertained and illustrated. (1) The prayers and supplications, which in the days of His flesh the Son of God offered up unto Him who was able to save Him from death, were answered. (2) His fatigued and dying nature was strengthened. (3) His sacrifice was accepted; and, in the odour of perfection, came up before His Father with a sweet-smelling savour. (4) His body was raised from the dead and saw no corruption. (5) He was received up into heaven, crowned with glory and honour, and made Captain of salvation, to bring unto glory the multitude of sons. IV. After illustrating the several parts of our text, SOME APPLICATIONS are proper for reproof, correction, and instruction, unto the peculiar people who are in the fellowship of God's dear Son in the first place; and, in the second, unto the children of disobedience who will not enter into this holy fellowship. 1. "Holy brethren, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession." Consider His infirmities, consider His temptations, consider His conflict, consider His example, consider His acceptance, and consider His divinity. 2. After these considerations which have been addressed unto the peculiar people who are in the fellowship of the mystery of godliness, we would have the children of disobedience to consider the existence and holiness of God; the provocation which they have given Him; the necessity of reconciliation; the access to the benefit of the reconciliation which the merciful and faithful High Priest of our profession made for the sins of the people; and the penal and certain consequences of refusing the benefit of this reconciliation. (*Alex. Shanks.*) *The mental sadness of Christ*:—I. HIS MIND WAS THE SUBJECT OF INTENSE EMOTIONS. II. A DREAD OF DEATH SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN ONE OF HIS MOST DISTRESSING EMOTIONS. III. UNDER THIS MOST INTENSE EMOTION HE SOUGHT BELIEF IN PRAYER. IV. HIS PRAYERS WERE ANSWERED IN CONSEQUENCE OF HIS PIETY. The dread was taken away and strength given to bear it. (*Homilist.*) *The benefit arising to Christ from His own sufferings*:—I. HIS CONDUCT UNDER HIS SUFFERINGS. Never were the sufferings of any creature comparable with those of Christ. His bodily sufferings perhaps were less than many of His followers have been called to endure—but those of His soul were infinitely beyond our conception (Psa. xxii. 14, 15; Matt. xxvi. 38; Luke xxii. 44). Under them He poured out His heart in prayer unto His heavenly Father. He never lost sight of God as His Father, but addressed Him with the greater earnestness under that endearing title (Mark xiv. 36). Not that He repented of the work He had undertaken; but only desired such a mitigation of His sufferings as might consist with His Father's glory and the salvation of men. Nor did He desist from prayer till He had obtained His request. Him the Father always heard; nor was an answer now denied Him. Though the cup was not removed, He was not suffered to faint in drinking it. His sufferings indeed could not be dispensed with; but they were amply recompensed by—II. THE BENEFIT HE DERIVED FROM THEM. 1. Personal. It was necessary for Him, as our High Priest, to experience everything which His people are called to endure in their conflicts with sin and Satan (chap. ii. 17). Now the difficulty of abiding faithful to God in arduous circumstances is exceeding great. This is a trial which all His people are called to sustain. Though as the Son of God He knew all things in a speculative manner, yet He could not know this experimentally, but by being reduced to a suffering condition.

This therefore was one benefit which He derived from His sufferings. He learned by them more tenderly to sympathise with His afflicted people, and more speedily to succour them when imploring His help with strong crying and tears (ver. 18). 2. Official. As the priests were consecrated to their office by the blood of their sacrifices, so was Jesus by His own blood. From that time He had a right to impart salvation. III. LEARN—1. What we should do under sufferings, or a dread of God's displeasure. We should not hastily conclude that we are not His children (chap. xii. 6). We should rather go with humble boldness to God as our Father (Luke xv. 17, 18). We should plead His gracious promises (Psa. l. 15). 2. Whither to go for salvation. The Father was "able to save His Son from death." And doubtless He can save us also. But He has exalted His Son to be a Prince and a Saviour (Acts v. 31). To Christ therefore we are to go, and to the Father through Christ (Eph. ii. 18). In this way we shall find Him to be the author of eternal salvation to us (chap. vii. 25). 3. What is to be our conduct when He has saved us? Jesus died "to purchase to Himself a peculiar people zealous of good works." We must therefore obey Him, and that too as willingly in seasons of severe trial as in times of peace. We must be content to be conformed to the likeness of our Lord and Master. Let us be faithful unto death (Rev. ii. 10). (*Theological Sketch-Book.*) *Our sympathising High Priest:*—I. First, that we may see the suitability of our Lord to deal with us in our cares and sorrows, we shall view Him as A SUPPLIANT. 1. The text begins with a word which reveals His weakness: "Who in the days of His flesh." Our blessed Lord was in such a condition that He pleaded out of weakness with the God who was able to save. When our Lord was compassed with the weakness of flesh He was much in prayer. 2. In the days of His flesh our Divine Lord felt His necessities. The words, "He offered up prayers and supplications," proved that He had many needs. Men do not pray and supplicate unless they have greater need than this world can satisfy. The Saviour offered no petitions by way of mere form; His supplications arose out of an urgent sense of His need of heavenly aid. 3. Further, let us see how like the Son of God was to us in His intensity of prayer. The intensity of His prayer was such that our Lord expressed Himself in "crying and tears." Since from His lips you hear strong crying, and from His eyes you see showers of tears, you may well feel that His is a sympathetic spirit, to whom you may run in the hour of danger, even as the chicks seek the wings of the hen. 4. We have seen our Lord's needs and the intensity of His prayer; now note His understanding in prayer. He prayed "unto Him that was able to save Him from death." The expression is startling; the Saviour prayed to be saved. In His direst woe He prayed thoughtfully, and with a clear apprehension of the character of Him to whom He prayed. It is a great help in devotion to pray intelligently, knowing well the character of God to whom you are speaking. Jesus was about to die, and therefore the aspect under which He viewed the great Father was as "Him that was able to save Him from death." This passage may be read in two ways: it may mean that He would be saved from actually dying if it could be done consistently with the glorifying of the Father; or it may mean that He pleaded to be saved out of death, though He actually descended into it. The word may be rendered either from or out of. The Saviour viewed the great Father as able to preserve Him in death from the power of death, so that He should triumph on the Cross; and also as able to bring Him up again from among the dead. 5. It will further help you if I now call your attention to His fear. I believe our old Bibles give us a correct translation, much better than the Revised Version, although much can be said for the latter, "With strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared." That is to say, He had a fear, a natural and not a sinful fear; and from this fear He was delivered by the strength brought to Him from heaven by the angel. God has implanted in all of us the love of life, and we cannot part from it without a pang: our Lord felt a natural dread of death. 6. But then notice another thing in the text, namely, His success in prayer, which also brings Him near to us. He was heard "in that He feared." O my soul! to think that it should be said of thy Lord that He was heard, even as thou, a poor suppliant, art heard. Yet the cup did not pass from Him, neither was the bitterness thereof in the least abated. II. Behold our Lord as A SON. His prayers and pleadings were those of a son with a father. 1. The Sonship of our Saviour is well attested. The Lord declared this in the second Psalm: "Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee." Thrice did the voice out of the excellent glory proclaim this truth, and He was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead."

So, when you are put to great grief, do not doubt your sonship. 2. Being a Son, the text goes on to tell us that He had to learn obedience. How near this brings our Lord to us, that He should be a Son and should have to learn! We go to school to Christ and with Christ, and so we feel His fitness to be our compassionate High Priest. 3. Jesus must needs learn by suffering. As swimming is only to be learned in the water, so is obedience only learned by actually doing and suffering the Divine will. 4. The Lord Jesus Christ learned this obedience to perfection. 5. Our Lord learned by suffering mixed with prayer and supplication. His was no unsanctified sorrow, His griefs were baptised in prayer. It cost Him cries and tears to learn the lesson of His sufferings. He never suffered without prayer, nor prayed without suffering. III. Behold the Lord Jesus as A SAVIOUR. 1. As a Saviour He is perfect. Nothing is lacking in Him in any one point. However difficult your case may seem, He is equal to it. Made perfect by suffering, He is able to meet the intricacies of your trials, and to deliver you in the most complicated emergency. 2. Henceforth He is the author of salvation. Author! How expressive! He is the cause of salvation; the originator, the worker, the producer of salvation. Salvation begins with Christ; salvation is carried on by Christ; salvation is completed by Christ. He has finished it, and you cannot add to it; it only remains for you to receive it. 3. Observe that it is eternal salvation: "the author of eternal salvation." Jesus does not save us to-day and leave us to perish to-morrow; He knows what is in man, and so He has prepared nothing less than eternal salvation for man. 4. Furthermore, inasmuch as He has learned obedience and become a perfect High Priest, His salvation is wide in its range, for it is unto "all them that obey Him." 5. Note, that He is all this for ever, for He is "a priest for ever." If you could have seen Him when He came from Gethsemane, you think you could have trusted Him. Oh! trust Him to-day, for He is "called of God to be an High Priest after the order of Melchizedec," and that order of Melchizedec is an everlasting and perpetual priesthood. He is able to-day to plead for you, able to-day to put away your sins. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Christ in the infirmity of the flesh:—I. THE LORD JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF HAD A TIME OF INFIRMITY IN THIS WORLD. It is true His infirmities were all sinless, but all troublesome and grievous. By them was He exposed unto all sorts of temptations and sufferings, which are the two springs of all that is evil and dolorous unto our nature. And thus it was with Him not a few days, nor a short season only, but during His whole course in this world. 1. It was out of infinite condescension and love unto our souls, that Christ took on Himself this condition (Phil. ii. 6–8). 2. As He had other ends herein, for these things were indispensably required unto the discharge of the sacerdotal office, so He designed to set us an example, that we should not faint under our infirmities and sufferings on their account (Heb. xii. 2, 3; 1 Pet. iv. 1). (1) His patience, unconquerable and unmovable in all things that befell Him in the days of His flesh (Isa. xlii. 2). Whatever befell Him, He bore it quietly and patiently. (2) His trust in God. By this testimony that it is said of Him, "I will put My trust in God," doth our apostle prove that He had the same nature with us, subject to the same weakness and infirmities (chap. ii. 13). And this we are taught thereby, that there is no management of our human nature, as now beset with infirmities, but by a constant trust in God. (3) His earnest, fervent prayers and supplications, which are here expressed by our apostle, and accommodated unto the days of His flesh. II. A LIFE OF GLORY MAY ENSUE AFTER A LIFE OF INFIRMITY. We see that it hath done so with Jesus Christ. His season of infirmity issued in eternal glory. And nothing but unbelief and sin can hinder ours from doing so also. III. THE LORD CHRIST IS NO MORE NOW IN A STATE OF WEAKNESS AND TEMPTATION; THE DAYS OF HIS FLESH ARE PAST AND GONE. With His death, ended the days of His flesh. His revival or return unto life, was into absolute, eternal, unchangeable glory. IV. THE LORD CHRIST FILLED UP EVERY SEASON WITH DUTY, WITH THE PROPER DUTY OF IT. The days of His flesh, were the only season wherein He could offer to God; and He missed it not, He did so accordingly. It is true, in His glorified state, He continually represents in heaven, the offering that He made of Himself on the earth, in an effectual application of it unto the advantage of the elect. But the offering itself was in the days of His flesh. Then was His body capable of pain, His soul of sorrow, His nature of dissolution, all which were necessary unto this duty. V. THE LORD CHRIST, IN HIS OFFERING UP HIMSELF FOR US, LABOURED AND TRAVAILED IN SOUL, TO BRING THE WORK UNTO A GOOD AND HOLY ISSUE. A hard labour it was, and as such, it is here expressed. He went through it with fears, sorrows, tears, outcries, prayers, and humble supplications. 1. All

the holy, natural affections of His soul were filled, taken up, and extended to the utmost capacity, in acting and suffering. 2. All His graces, the gracious qualifications of His mind and affections were, in a like manner, in the height of their exercise. Both those whose immediate object was God Himself, and those which respected the Church, were all of them excited, drawn forth, and engaged. As—(1) Faith and trust in God. These Himself expresseth, in His greatest trial, as those which He betook Himself unto (Isa. l. 7, 8; Psa. xxii. 9, 10; Heb. ii. 13). These graces in Him were now tried to the utmost. All their strength, all their efficacy was exercised and proved. (2) Love to mankind. As this in His Divine nature was the peculiar spring of that infinite condescension, whereby He took our nature on Him, for the work of mediation (Phil. ii. 6–8); so it wrought mightily and effectually in His human nature, in the whole course of His obedience, but especially in the offering of Himself unto God for us. (3) Zeal to the glory of God. This was committed unto Him, and concerning this, He took care that it might not miscarry. (4) He was now in the highest exercise of obedience unto God, and that in such a peculiar manner as before He had no occasion for. 3. He did so also with respect to that confluence of calamities, distresses, pains, and miseries, which was upon His whole nature. And that in these consisted no small part of His trials, wherein He underwent and suffered the utmost which human nature is capable to undergo, is evident from the description given of His dolorous sufferings both in prophecy (Psa. xxii.; Isa. liii.), and in the story of what befell Him in the evangelists. And in this manner of His death, there were sundry things concurring. (1) A natural sign of His readiness to embrace all sinners that should come unto Him, His arms being, as it were, stretched out to receive them (Isa. xlv. 22, xlv. 1). (2) A moral token of His condition, being left as one rejected of all between heaven and earth for a season; but in Himself interposing between heaven and earth for the justice of God and sins of men, to make reconciliation and peace (Eph. ii. 16, 17). (3) The accomplishment of sundry types; as—(*a*) Of that of him who was hanged on a tree, as cursed of the Lord (Deut. xxi. 22). (*b*) Of the brazen serpent which was lifted up in the wilderness (John ii. 14), with respect whereunto He says, that when He is lifted up, He would draw all men to Him (John xii. 32). (*c*) Of the wave-offering, which was moved, shaken, and turned several ways, to declare that the Lord Christ in this offering of Himself, should have respect unto all parts of the world, and all sorts of men (Exod. xxix. 26). (4) The conflict He had with Satan, and all the powers of darkness, was another part of His travail. And herein He laboured for that victory and success which in the issue He did obtain (Col. ii. 13, 14; Heb. ii. 14; 1 John iii. 18). (5) His inward conflict, in the making His soul an offering for sin, in His apprehensions, and undergoing of the wrath of God due unto sin, hath been already spoken unto, so far as is necessary unto our present purpose. (6) In, and during all these things, there was in His eye continually that unspeakable glory that was set before Him, of being the repairer of the breaches of the creation, the recoverer of mankind, the captain of salvation unto all that obey Him, the destruction of Satan, with his kingdom of sin and darkness, and in all the great restorer of Divine glory, to the eternal praise of God. Whilst all these things were in the height of their transaction, is it any wonder if the Lord Christ laboured and travailed in soul, according to the description here given of Him? VI. THE LORD CHRIST, IN THE TIME OF HIS OFFERING AND SUFFERING, CONSIDERING GOD WITH WHOM HE HAD TO DO, AS THE SOVEREIGN LORD OF LIFE AND DEATH, AS THE SUPREME RECTOR AND JUDGE OF ALL, CASTS HIMSELF BEFORE HIM WITH MOST FERVENT PRAYERS FOR DELIVERANCE, FROM THE SENTENCE OF DEATH AND THE CURSE OF THE LAW. 1. How great a matter it was, to make peace with God for sinners, to make atonement and reconciliation for sin. This is the life and spirit of our religion, the centre wherein all the lines of it do meet (Phil. iii. 8–10; 1 Cor. ii. 2; Gal. vi. 14). 2. A sight and sense of the wrath of God due unto sin, will be full of dread and terror for the souls of men, and will put them to a great conflict with wrestling for deliverance. VII. IN ALL THE PRESSURES THAT WERE ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, IN ALL THE DISTRESSES HE HAD TO CONFLICT WITHAL IN HIS SUFFERING, HIS FAITH FOR DELIVERANCE AND SUCCESS WAS FIRM AND UNCONQUERABLE. This was the ground He stood upon in all His prayers and supplications. VIII. THE SUCCESS OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, IN HIS TRIALS, AS OUR HEAD AND SURETY, IS A PLEDGE AND ASSURANCE OF SUCCESS UNTO US IN ALL OUR SPIRITUAL CONFLICTS. (*John Owen, D.D.*) *Christ's sufferings*:—In this one sentence there is more for us to learn than either eye hath seen or ear hath heard or all flesh in this life shall attain unto: it is the depth of the glorious gospel which the angels do desire to behold. I. We have to learn by the example of

our Saviour Christ in this place, THAT IN ALL TEMPTATIONS WE SHOULD APPROACH UNTO OUR GOD, and make our complaints unto Him, who is only able and ready for to help us. In all miseries we are not sunken so deep in sorrow as He that for our sakes made prayers and supplications, with strong cryings and with tears, and was delivered from His fear. II. The second point that we have here to learn in this example of our Saviour Christ is, TO KNOW UNTO WHOM WE SHOULD MAKE OUR PRAYERS IN THE DAY OF TROUBLE, which the apostle testifieth in these words: that Christ made His prayers unto Him that was able to deliver Him from death. It followeth in the text: with great crying and with tears. III. Here we have to note, IN WHAT MEASURE OUR SAVIOUR CHRIST WAS AFFLICTED, even so far, that He cried out in the bitterness of His soul. Who hath been ever so full of woe, and who hath been brought so low into the dust of death? His virtues were unspeakable, and righteous above all measure, yet was He accounted among the wicked. And if these were the causes that Christ had to complain, then think not that His cryings were above His sorrow; to see so near unto His heart, even in His own person, innocence blamed, virtue defaced, righteousness trodden down, holiness profaned, love despised, glory contemned, honour reviled, all goodness ashamed, faith oppugned, and life wounded to death; how could He yet abstain from strong crying and tears, when the malice of Satan had gotten so great a conquest? His grief was exceeding to see all virtue and godliness so trodden under feet and Satan to prevail against man, to his everlasting condemnation. No creature could ever bear such a perfect image of a man of sorrow. But the height and depth of all miseries was yet behind: the sin that He hated He must take it upon His own body, and bear the wrath of His Father, that was poured out against it. This is the fulness of all pain that compassed Him round about, which no tongue is able to utter, and no heart can conceive. IV. But let us now see what the apostle further teacheth us, and while our Saviour Christ is in these great extremities, WHAT FRUIT OF WELL-DOING HE HATH LEARNED BY IT. It followeth, and although He were the Son, yet learned He obedience by the things He suffered. Lo, this was no little profit of all His troubles; He learned thereby, how and what it was to obey His Father; He might have great boldness that His obedience was perfect. The shame of the world, the afflictions of the flesh, the vexations of the mind, the pains of hell, when these could make Him utter no other words but, "Father, as Thou wilt, so let it be done," what hope, what faith did He surely build on, that His obedience was precious in the sight of His Father? This example is our instruction. We know then best how we love the Lord, when we feel by experience what we will suffer for His sake. So faint not in your mournings, but endure patiently; you know not the happiness of that which seemeth your misery; let this be the first cause why we should be glad of temptations. Lo, these are the healthful counsels of the Lord toward us, that we should be made like unto His Son Christ in many afflictions, that at the last we might be also like Him in eternal glory. Thus far we have heard two special causes why we ought to rejoice in all temptations: the one, that so we learn true obedience; the other, that by them we be made like unto Christ. The third cause at this time which I will touch, is this: God sendeth us sundry chastisements, and especially that which is most grievous of all other, the anguish of spirit, and affliction of the soul; for this purpose, that we should be warned in time how to turn unto Him and be free from the plague when it cometh. It followeth in the apostle: "And being consecrate, He was made the author of salvation to all them that obey Him." V. In these words we are taught, WHAT FRUIT AND COMMODITY WE HAVE THROUGH THESE BITTER SUFFERINGS OF OUR SAVIOUR CHRIST, AND ALSO BY WHAT MEANS WE ARE MADE PARTAKERS OF IT. The fruit is eternal salvation, the means to go unto it is obedience. In the first we learn that all promise and hope of life is in Christ alone; He hath alone the words of life, and he that dwelleth not in Him, shall see no life: but the wrath of God abideth on him. Take hold of Christ, and take hold of life; reach forth thine hand to any other thing, and thou reachest unto vanity which cannot help. (*E. Deering, B.D.*) *Distractions in prayer*:—Such is the pattern which He, who is our pattern, gives us of acceptable effectual prayer. What are our prayers? Heavy, for the most part, and earthly; often we are unwilling to begin them, readily falling in with some plea, why we should not pray now, readily ceasing. And well may we have no pleasure in prayers such as we too often offer. Or of those who really desire to pray, how many have their minds so little controlled at other times, or so thronged with the things of this life, that the thoughts of the world pour in upon them, when they would pray. Step by step, we sunk amid the distractions of the world, and step by

step only may we hope that our Father will raise us out of the mire wherein we plunged ourselves. But our first step, the very beginning and condition of our restoration, is to unlearn the distractions whereby we have been beset. In seeking to remedy our distractions, our first labour must be to amend ourselves. Such as we are at other times, such will our prayers be. A person cannot be full of cares, and riches, and pleasures, and enjoyments, and vanities of this life, up to the very moment when he falls down at God's footstool, and leave these companions of his other hours behind him, so that they will not thrust themselves in with him into the holy presence. We cannot keep our thoughts disengaged at prayer, if they are through the day engaged; we cannot keep out vain thoughts then, if at other times we yield to them. We must live more to God, if we would pray more to God; we must be less engrossed with the world, if we would not have the world thrust itself in upon our prayers and stifle them. But still further, even when we would serve God, or do our duty in this life, we must see that we do our very duties calmly. There is a religious, as well as a worldly, distraction. We may mix up self in doing duty, as well as when we make self our end. Religious excitement, or excitement about things of religion, may as effectually bar our praying as eagerness about worldly things. We may be engaged about the things of God, yet our mind may all the while centre in these things, not in God. Holy Scripture joins these two together, calmness or sobriety and prayer; "Be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer." Peace is the beginning and end of prayer; its condition and its reward. Resign yourselves, that ye may pray, and God will guard your thoughts, and hold them to Himself. If, also, you would guard against wandering in prayer, you must practise yourself in keeping a check upon your thoughts at other times. In this busy age, in which every one would know about everything, and, like the Athenians, our occupation seems to be to know some new thing, and what conveys news is thought the instrument of knowledge, and knowledge of every sort is thought a good, it is not a light matter, but one to which we must take great heed; what we hear, and admit into our minds. Our minds are holy things: they are the temples of God; and so, for His honour's sake who has so hallowed them, we should be on our guard what we allow to enter there. Be not curious about things which concern you not: what happens in the street, or passes by you, or befalls a neighbour, unless charity requires it of you. These things waste the mind more than you can well think. Rather recollect that your concern is not with the world; your home, your hopes, your abiding-place, is not here, but in God; your citizenship is not on earth, but in the heavens; your places here shall shortly know you no more; the earth shall contain no more of you than the dust of your bodies, in keeping for you against the resurrection. Then, on the other hand, as we seek, during the day, to weaken the hold which the world has upon us and our thoughts, so must we by His grace to strengthen our own capacity of turning to God. Away from the world and to God! Commit to Him thoughts, words, and works, to be "ordered by His governance, to do that is righteous in His sight"; to be "begun, continued, and ended" in Him. So when you come to your fuller and more set devotions, you may hope that He, whom you serve continually, will keep you then also, and will vouchsafe Himself to visit you, and be in your thoughts, which you would fain make His, and will shut out the world by filling your thoughts with Himself. It is the infrequency of prayer which makes prayer so difficult. It is not a great effort now and then, which makes the things even of this life easy to us; it is their being the habit of our bodies or our minds. It was by continued exercise which we were not aware of, that our bodies, as children, were strengthened; it was by continued practice that we learnt anything. By continued gazing at far-off objects, the eye sees further than others; by continued practice the hand becomes steadied and obeys the motions of our mind. So and much more must the mind, by continual exercise, be steadied, to fix itself on Him whom it cannot grasp, and look up to Him whom it cannot see. Yea, so much the more exceedingly must it with strong effort fix itself by His grace on Him, because we cannot see Him or approach to Him, but by His revealing Himself and coming down to us, and giving us eyes to see and hearts to comprehend; and this He will do only to the earnest and persevering, and to us severally, as we are such. They then will pray best, who, praying truly, pray oftenest. This, also, is one great blessing of the practice of ejaculatory prayer, that is, prayer which is darted up from the mind in the little intervals which occur, whatever we are doing. Nothing goes on without breaks, to leave us space to turn to God. Amid conversation there is silence; in the busiest life there are moments, if we would mark them, when we

must remain idle. We are kept waiting, or we must bear what is wearisome; let prayer take the place of impatience. In preparing for business, let prayer take the place of eagerness; in closing it, of self-satisfaction. Are we weary? be it our refreshment! Are we strong? let us hallow our strength by thanksgiving! The very preparation or close of any business brings with it of necessity a pause, teaching us by this very respite to begin and end with prayer; with prayer beforehand for His help, or at the end thanksgiving to Him who carried us through it, or for pardon for what has been amiss in it. Such are some of the more distant preparations for prayer, such as it should be, fixed and earnest; to strive to make God, not the world, the end of our lives; not to be taken up even with our duties in the world, but amid them to seek Him; to subdue self, and put a restraint upon our senses at other times, that we may have the control over them then; to lift our thoughts to Him at other times, so will they rise more readily then. These are, in their very nature, slowly learnt. Yet as, if wholly learnt, it were heaven itself, so is each step, a step heavenwards. Yet there are many more immediate helps, at the very time of prayer. Neglect nothing which can produce reverence. Pass not at once from the things of this world to prayer, but collect thyself. Think what thou art, what God is; thyself a child, and God thy Father; but also thyself dust and ashes, God, a consuming fire, before whom angels hide their faces: thyself unholy, God holy; thyself a sinner, God thy Judge. Then forget not that of thyself thou canst not pray. We come before Him, as helpless creatures, who need to be taught what to ask for, and knowing, to be enabled to ask, and asking, to be enabled to persevere to ask. Then watch thyself, what helps or hinders thee to fix thy mind on God. Then as to the words of our prayer: we should beware how we pass hastily over any of our prayers. It is not how much we say, but what we pray, which is of real moment. Then, the best models of prayer consist of brief petitions, as suited to men in need; for when they really feel their need, they use not many words. "Lord, save us, we perish," is the cry of need. And so the petitions of the pattern of all prayer, our Lord's, are very short, but each containing manifold prayers. So are the Psalms in prayer or praise: "Blot out all mine iniquities," "Create in me a new heart," "Cast me not away from Thy presence," "Save me by Thy Name." In this way we may collect our strength and attention for each petition, and so pray on, step by step, through the whole, resting at each step on Him, who alone can carry us to the end, and if, by human frailty, we be distracted, sum up briefly with one strong concentrated effort what we have lost by wandering. In public prayer the case is different. For here, if we wander, the prayers meanwhile go on, and we find that we have lost a portion of our daily bread; that God's Church on earth has been praising with angels and archangels and the Church in heaven, while we have been bringing our sheep and our oxen and our money-changing, the things of this life, into God's presence and the court of heaven. Yet the remedies are the same, and we have even greater helps. The majesty of the place may well awe us with devotion, and will aid us to it, if we waste not its impressiveness by our negligence or frivolity. Come we then calmly to this holy place, not thinking or speaking, up to its very threshold, of things of earth, but as men bent on a great service, where much is at stake; coming to a holy presence, from whom depends our all. Pray we, as we enter it, that God would guard our thoughts and compose our minds and fix them on Him. Employ we any leisure before the service begins, in thought or private prayer; guard we our eyes from straying to those around us; listen we reverently to His holy word; use the pause before each prayer to ask God to enable us to pray this prayer also; and so pray each separate prayer, as far as we can, relying on His gracious aid. Yet we are not to think that by these or any other remedies distraction is to be cured at once. We cannot undo at once the habit, it may be, of years. Distraction will come through weakness, ill-health, fatigue: only pray, guard, strive against it; humble yourselves under it, and for the past negligences, of which it is mostly the sad fruit; rely less upon yourself, cast yourself more upon God, hang more wholly upon Him, and long the more for that blessed time, when the redeemed of the Lord shall serve Him day and night without distraction. (*E. B. Pusey, D.D.*) *Begging prayers*:—A little boy, one of the Sunday-school children in Jamaica, called upon the missionary and stated that he had lately been very ill, and in his sickness often wished his minister had been present to pray with him. "But Thomas," said the missionary, "I hope you prayed." "Oh yes, sir." "Well, how did you pray?" "Why, sir, I begged." (*Henry T. Williams.*) *The grace of tears*:—"Lord Jesus, give me the grace of tears." (*Augustine.*) *Tears a safety-valve*:—The safety-valve of the heart

when too much pressure is laid on. (*Albert Smith.*) **Yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered.** *Suffering the school of obedience:*—I. GOD HAS LAID EVEN UPON SORROW THE DESTINY OF FULFILLING HIS PURPOSES OF MERCY. In the beginning, sorrow was the wages of sin, penal and working death; by the law of Christ's redemption, it is become a discipline of cleansing and perfection. To the impenitent, and such as will not obey the truth, it is still, as ever, a dark and crushing penalty; to the contrite and obedient it is as the refiner's fire, keen and searching, purging out the soils, and perfecting the renewal of our spiritual nature. It is the discipline of saints, and the safest, though the austerest, school of sanctity; and that because suffering, or, as we are wont to say, trial, turns our knowledge into reality. There is laid upon us a mighty hand, from whose shadow we cannot flee. All general truths teem with a particular meaning, and speak to us with a piercing emphasis. Equally true this is, also, of all bright and blessed truths: they also are quickened with a living energy. The promises of heaven, and the times of refreshing, and the rest of the saints, and the love of God, and the presence of Christ, which we have so long thought of, and talked about, and felt after, and yet never seemed to grasp—all these likewise become realities. They seem to gather round us, and shed sensible influences of peace upon our suffering hearts; and this is what we mean when we say, "I have long *known* these things to be true, but now I *feel* them to be true." II. And, in the next place, SUFFERINGS SO PUT OUR FAITH ON TRIAL AS TO STRENGTHEN AND CONFIRM IT. They develop what was lying hid in us, unknown even to ourselves. And therefore we often see persons, who have shown no very great tokens of high devotion, come out, under the pressure of trials, into a more elevated bearing. This is especially true of sickness and affliction. Not only are persons of a holy life made to shine with a more radiant brightness, but common Christians, of no note or visibleness, are changed to a saintly character. They wrestle with their trial, as the patriarch with his unknown companion, and will not let it go without a blessing; and thereby the gifts which lie enwrapped in a regenerate nature are unfolded into life and energy. III. Once more: NOTHING SO LIKENS US TO THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST AS SUFFERING. All that suffer are not therefore saints; alas! far from it, for many suffer without the fruits of sanctity; but all saints at some time, and in some way and measure, have entered into the mystery of suffering. And this throws light on a very perplexing thought in which we sometimes entangle ourselves; I mean, on the wonderful fact that oftentimes the same persons are as visibly marked by sorrows as by sanctity. They seem never to pass out of the shadow of affliction; they seem to be a mark for all the storms and arrows of adversity, the world esteems them to be "stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted"; even religious people are perplexed at their trials. When we see eminently holy persons suddenly bereaved, or suffering sharp bodily anguish, and their trials long drawn out, or multiplied by succession, we often say, How strange and dark is this dispensation! Who would have thought that one so poor, so patient, and resigned, should have been so visited and overwhelmed by strokes? And yet all this shows how shallow and blind our faith is, for we know little even of those we know best; we readily overrate their character, at all events they are far otherwise in the esteem of God than in our judgment; our thoughts are not His thoughts: we set up a poor, dim, depressed standard of perfection and we should miserably defraud even those we love most if it were in our power to mete out their trials by our measures; we little know what God is doing, and how can we know the way? And we often think that the sorrows of the saints are sent for their punishment, when they are sent for their perfection. We forget that Christ suffered, and why; and how He learned obedience, and what that obedience was. He was made "perfect" by sufferings, and that "perfection," whatsoever it be, has an ineffable depth of meaning. It was not only a sacerdotal perfection by consecration to the priesthood of Melchisedec, but something of which that was the formal expression and manifestation of a great spiritual reality, a perfection of holiness, knowledge, obedience, sympathy, and will. And of this perfection, after the measures of a creature, and the proportions of our mere manhood, are the saints made to partake; they are purified, that they may be made perfect. (*Archdeacon H. E. Manning.*) *Learning obedience:*—"Though He was a Son, He learned." Though a Son, *i.e.*, though He was so exalted a being, not a mere servant like the angels, but One whom the angels worship. Not a servant like Moses or like Aaron, but the Son by whom God made the worlds, yet even He had something to learn, and learned it in the days

of His flesh. There is a mystery here, yet if we are content to inquire instead of speculate we shall find sufficient answer. There is light in the word "obedience." He learned not the art and wisdom of commanding, this belonged to His Eternal Nature. But obedience is an art which belongs of right to lower ranks of being. The Highest cannot, as the Highest, obey, for there is no authority above His own. Obedience may be taught from a throne, but it cannot be learned by one who occupies it. Thus, even the Son of God might learn obedience if He saw fit to empty Himself of Divine prerogative and take upon Him the form of a servant, wearing our human nature and accepting our duties and temptations. Therefore because obedience is so foreign to the Divine nature, it is a thing which the Son of God could learn by becoming incarnate, and could only learn by stooping to share our discipline and bear the Divine will as a yoke instead of wield it as a sceptre. Viewing the Sonship of Christ under another aspect, it might have been thought that a perfect Son would have needed no more teaching, and that when found in fashion as man, His filial spirit, His perfect readiness to obey would have sufficed. But this is denied. Having become a servant, having come down under the yoke of commandments, it is insisted that the Son went right through the actual course of human discipline, evading nothing, missing nothing, until He crowned His obedience by submission, even unto death. Though a Son He learnt obedience by suffering. Could He not learn it otherwise? We know that suffering is needful in our case because our spirits are so faulty, because we are so prone to err and go astray. But a Son, a perfect Son! surely such an One having no share in our defects might have learnt obedience without pain! Can we be wrong in such a view? Perhaps not. If a faultless Son began life in a faultless world, if He were born into a sinless family, or were created in a paradise where no fall had taken place, He might possibly have learned obedience by a painless and unfailing life of conformity to the Father's will. But whatever might have been possible in heaven or in paradise, painless obedience was not possible in the moral wilderness. In a world where sin abounded Christ had constantly to choose between affliction and iniquity. Without using miraculous powers to screen Himself from the natural consequences of His actions, He was obliged to suffer. The suffering was at once the measure and test of His obedience, and thus it was He passed through pain to perfectness as a learner in the school of human life. This must be so, yet still our hearts cry out in pity for One so holy and true—surely it was not needful for Him to suffer so much! Could not the Father have spared His well-beloved Son such extreme agonies while obedience was being learned? The answer is clear. This might have been possible under some circumstances. An easier life might have been laid out for Jesus as it is laid out for most of us. He might have lived obediently in the midst of plenty. Why then should the Father be pleased to set His well-beloved Son such agonising tasks, why be pleased to bruise and put to grief the Son who always did His will? That is a question which admits of many answers. It is one which none but the Father Himself can answer altogether, yet part of His answer shines before us here. The Son of God came not to learn obedience for Himself, but for our sakes. He came not merely to become perfect as a man before God who reads the heart, but to be visibly perfect before men who can only read actions. He came to be made thus visibly perfect not only as a man, but as a Saviour and as the Author of obedience in us. Look at a few reasons why death, the death of the Cross, was needful to this end. Christ came to set us an example. He came to do much more than this, but that was one great object of His incarnation. But if He had stopped short of obedience unto death, He would have left no example how we ought to act when shut up to the dilemma of being obliged to either sin or die. Christ came to magnify Divine law, to make it venerable in our sight, and to declare the entire rightness of God's will. While God's will appoints us a path of flowers, and while duty brings honour and reward, gratitude and trust are easy. But when duty runs straight into a Red Sea! When it leads to a fiery furnace! When the soul, intent on doing right, finds itself alone, misunderstood, and persecuted, then is the time when the enemy finds a listening ear for his slander, "God is careless," "God is cruel," "God is unfaithful to those who are most faithful to Himself." Where then would be the value of Christ's testimony to the goodness of God's will when most in danger of being doubted, if He Himself had been spared this terrible temptation? "Be thou faithful unto death"; we can hear that from Christ. Christ came to reveal the Divine sympathy with us in all our afflictions, but that revelation would have been very partial if destitute of any kindly light to shed on

dying eyes. We are not all called to martyrdom, but we have all to die. But where could we have seen the sympathy of Christ with ourselves as mortal, if He had left the world by a private door of rapture? Wherefore to be our sympathetic Friend in the dark valley, Jesus was obedient even unto death. Christ came to preach the forgiveness of sins, to declare the righteousness of God in the act of forgiveness, to commend the love of God to all men, including the very chief of sinners and the most malignant of His foes; and in all these things He must have failed had His obedience stopped short of death. Wherefore Jesus was obedient unto death. Christ came to bring life and immortality to light, and for this end it was needful He should die and rise again. The mere continuance of His life would have had no revelation of a future life to us. But an emptied grave visibly spoils death, breaks the bars of Hades, preaches resurrection to us, who have to die, and reveals Jesus as the first-fruits of them that slept. Wherefore that He might be the Author of an eternal salvation and bring life and immortality to light, the Son was obedient unto death. (*T. V. Tymms.*) *Christ a learner*:—I. THE DIVINE EXALTATION OF THE CHARACTER OF HIM WHO IS THE REDEEMER OF MEN. A Son. "Though He were a Son," "The Son of God," as in the previous context. We understand this expression as in the first place presenting the Redeemer in the nature, and with the attributes of Deity. II. HIS GRACIOUS CONDESCENSION. "Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience," &c. Here we behold the Son of God, He who was infinite in excellency and in working, condescending to become a learner, placing Himself in circumstances in which He might receive instruction. No doubt the Spirit of God that was in Him taught Him better than the scribe, or priest, or ruler, or parent could; but the child Jesus, growing up to manhood, learned, received the wisdom, the counsel, the instruction that is from God. But, "though He were a Son," He learned something more than knowledge. He learned how to obey. What affections were involved in obedience! What satisfaction resulted to the obedient mind! What intimate and fervent communion existed between Him that was obeyed and Him that did obey! But the lowliest condescension that we mark is, that He learned obedience by suffering. There are many who are willing to obey, and who find pleasure in obedience, when there is only joy, when there is the reward of obedience; but to go through the deep flood, to pass under the dark cloud, to penetrate the fiery furnace, and to endure all that could be heaped in the shape of sorrows, and woes, and to do this that He might "learn obedience"—this was Christ's condescension. Ah! but He suffered more than this. "The contradiction of sinners against Himself" He suffered. He "learned obedience" by suffering ingratitude from those to whom He showed mercy. He suffered contumely and reproach, He entered into our sorrows. He Himself "took our griefs and carried our sorrows." Still farther, and even more painful, was His humiliation. We know what it is to be convinced of sin; we know what it is to be overwhelmed with shame for sin. I know that Jesus knew no sin; but oh, in this I see the poignancy of His grief, when all our sins were made to meet on Him. And He was "made perfect"—He condescended to be made perfect "by the things which He suffered," that He should be a perfectly righteous person in the midst of the most trying circumstances—that He should love even unto death, though death was heaped upon Him for His love. III. THE END TO BE ACCOMPLISHED BY HIS HUMILIATION. "That He might become the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him." How much there is in those words! There would have been no salvation for guilty men if Jesus had not come to die. It is in Christ's excellencies originally; it is in Christ as the perfect Saviour that we can alone have confidence towards God. He is the author of salvation, inasmuch as He has "taken away sin by the sacrifice of Himself"; He is the author of salvation, inasmuch as He has endured the curse of the broken law, and delivered us from the sentence of condemnation; He is the author of salvation, inasmuch as He has received from His Father the promised Spirit, by which poor guilty sinners are regenerated, and faith wrought in them, to trust in Jesus and His finished work; He is the author of salvation, inasmuch as He has gone to heaven to carry on the work, and He ever lives to make intercession for His people, and is "able to save to the very uttermost all that come unto God by Him." He is the author of salvation, for it is the gospel that produces the happy change, that translates from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light and glory. But it is "eternal salvation." It is a salvation that, having been begun, will never be interrupted; it is a salvation that will be unto the end; it is a salva-

tion that will be found, in its consummation, in the presence of God, where "there is fulness of joy," and at His right hand, where "there are pleasures for evermore." "Unto all them that obey Him." You will mark what the obedience is which Christ requires. If He be a Son, He has authority. In His character of Son He is "set at the right hand of the Majesty on high." Now, to obey Christ is to fulfil that which He has enjoined: in the first place, to accept of Him as He is offered; in the next place, to come to Him as He invites; in the third place, to trust in Him as He warrants; in the fourth place, to plead His finished work, and to seek the enjoyment of forgiveness through His continual intercession. Bowing to His sceptre, taking up His cross, uniting ourselves to His people, giving ourselves, first to the Lord, and then to one another, according to His will. All those that thus obey Him have the assurance that He is "the author of eternal salvation unto them." Not by works of righteousness that they have done, but they are saved for His sake, and the work is wrought in them for His glory, and they are obedient to Him, having been "made willing in the day of His power." (*J. W. Massie, D.D.*) *The suffering Son*:—I. INFINITE LOVE PREVAILED WITH THE SON OF GOD, TO LAY ASIDE THE PRIVILEGE OF HIS INFINITE DIGNITY, THAT HE MIGHT SUFFER FOR US AND OUR REDEMPTION. "Although He was a Son, yet He learned," &c. 1. The name of "Son" carrieth with it infinite dignity, as our apostle proves at large (chap. i. 3, 4, &c.). 2. He voluntarily laid aside the consideration, advantage, and exercise of it, that He might suffer for us. This our apostle fully expresseth (Phil. ii. 5–8). Concerning which we must observe, that the Son of God could not absolutely and really part with His eternal glory. Whatever He did, He was the Son of God, and God still. But He is said to empty Himself of His Divine glory—(1) With respect to the infinite condescension of His person. (2) With respect to the manifestations of it in this world. II. IN HIS SUFFERINGS, AND NOTWITHSTANDING THEM ALL, THE LORD CHRIST WAS THE SON STILL, THE SON OF GOD. He was so both as to real relation and as to suitable affection. He had in them all the state of a Son, and the love of a Son. III. A PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE OF OBEDIENCE TO GOD IN SOME CASES WILL COST US DEAR. We cannot learn it but through the suffering of those things which will assuredly befall us on the account thereof. So was it with the Lord Christ. I intend not here the difficulties we meet withal in mortifying the internal lusts and corruptions of nature, for these had no place in the example here proposed to us. Those only are respected which come on us from without. And it is an especial kind of obedience also, namely, that which holds some conformity to the obedience of Christ, that is intended. Wherefore—1. It must be singular; it must have somewhat in it, that may, in an especial manner, turn the eyes of others towards it. 2. It is required that this obedience be universal. Sufferings will attend it. They that live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. For this kind of obedience will be observed in the world. It cannot escape observation, because it is singular; and it provokes the world, because it will admit of no compliance with it. And where the world is first awakened and then enraged, suffering of one kind or another will ensue. If it do not bite and tear, it will bark and rage. IV. SUFFERINGS UNDERGONE ACCORDING TO THE WILL OF GOD ARE HIGHLY INSTRUCTIVE. Even Christ Himself learned by the things which He suffered, and much more may we who have so much more to learn. God designs our sufferings to this end, and to this end He blesseth them. V. IN ALL THESE THINGS, BOTH AS TO SUFFERING, AND LEARNING, OR PROFITING THEREBY, WE HAVE A GREAT EXAMPLE IN OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. As such is He proposed unto us in all His course of obedience, especially in His sufferings (1 Pet. ii. 21). For He would leave nothing undone which was any way needful, that His great work of sanctifying and saving His church to the utmost might be perfect. VI. THE LOVE OF GOD TOWARDS ANY, THE RELATION OF ANY UNTO GOD, HINDERS NOT BUT THAT THEY MAY UNDERGO GREAT SUFFERINGS AND TRIALS. The Lord Christ did so, "although He were a Son." And this instance irrefragably confirms our position. For the love of God to Jesus Christ was singular and supereminent. And yet His sufferings and trials were singular also. And in the whole course of the Scripture we may observe that the nearer any have been unto God, the greater have been their trials. For—1. There is not in such trials and exercises anything that is absolutely evil, but they are all such as may be rendered good, useful, honourable to the sufferers. 2. The love of God and the gracious emanations of it can, and do, abundantly compensate the temporary evils which any do undergo according to His will. 3. The glory of God, which is the end designed unto, and which shall infallibly ensue upon all the sufferings of the people of God, and that so much the greater as any

of them, on any account, are nearer than others unto Him, is such a good unto them which suffer, as that their sufferings neither are, nor are esteemed by them to be evil. (*John Owen, D.D.*) *The education of sons of God*:—I. SONSHIP DOES NOT EXEMPT FROM SUFFERING. 1. Not even Jesus, as a Son, escaped suffering. 2. No honour put upon sons of God will exempt them from suffering. 3. No holiness of character, nor completeness of obedience, can exempt the children of God from the school of suffering. 4. No prayer of God's sons, however earnest, will remove every thorn in the flesh from them. 5. No love in God's child, however fervent, will prevent his being tried. II. SUFFERING DOES NOT MAR SONSHIP. The case of our Lord is set forth as a model for all the sons of God. 1. His poverty did not disprove His Sonship (Luke ii. 12). 2. His temptations did not shake His Sonship (Matt. iv. 3). 3. His endurance of slander did not jeopardise it (John x. 36). 4. His fear and sorrow did not put it in dispute (Matt. xxvi. 39). 5. His desertion by men did not invalidate it (John xvi. 32). 6. His being forsaken of God did not alter it (Luke xxiii. 46). 7. His death cast no doubt thereon (Mark xv. 39). He rose again, and thus proved His Father's pleasure in Him (John xx. 17). III. OBEDIENCE HAS TO BE LEARNED EVEN BY SONS. 1. It must be learned experimentally. 2. It must be learned by suffering. 3. It must be learned for use in earth and in heaven. (1) On earth by sympathy with others. (2) In heaven by perfect praise to God growing out of experience. IV. SUFFERING HAS A PECULIAR POWER TO TEACH TRUE SONS. It is a better tutor than all else, because—1. It touches the man's self; his bone, his flesh, his heart. 2. It tests his graces, and sweeps away those shams which are not proofs of obedience, but pretences of self-will. 3. It goes to the root, and tests the truth of our new nature. It shows whether repentance, faith, prayer, &c., are mere importations, or home-grown fruits. 4. It tests our endurance, and makes us see how far we are established in the obedience which we think we possess. Can we say, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him"? (1) The anxious question—Am I a son? (2) The aspiring desire—Let me learn obedience. (3) The accepted discipline—I submit to suffer. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Instructed by suffering*:—I bear my willing witness that I owe more to the fire, and the hammer, and the file, than to anything else in my Lord's workshop. I sometimes question whether I have ever learned anything except through the rod. When my school-room is darkened, I see most. (*Ibid.*) *Suffering a good teacher of divinity*:—A minister was recovering from a dangerous illness, when one of his friends addressed him thus, "Sir, though God seems to be bringing you up from the gates of death, yet it will be a long time before you will sufficiently retrieve your strength, and regain vigour enough of mind to preach as usual." The good man answered, "You are mistaken, my friend: for this six weeks' illness has taught me more divinity than all my past studies and all my ten years' ministry put together." *Christ's experience of obedience*:—Obedience belongs to a servant, but accordance, concurrence, co-operation, are the characteristics of a son. In His eternal union with God there was no distinction of will and work between Him and His Father; as the Father's life was the Son's life, and the Father's glory the Son's also, so the Son was the very Word and Wisdom of the Father, His Power and Co-equal Minister in all things, the same and not the same as He Himself. But in the days of His flesh, when He had humbled Himself to "the form of a servant," taking on Himself a separate will and a separate work, and the toil and sufferings incident to a creature, then what had been mere concurrence became obedience. This, then, is the force of the words, "Though He was a Son, yet had He experience of obedience." He took on Him a lower nature, and wrought in it towards a Will higher and more perfect than it. Further, "He learned obedience amid suffering," and therefore amid temptation. Before He came on earth He was infinitely above joy and grief, fear and anger, pain and heaviness; but afterwards all these properties and many more were His as fully as they are ours. Before He came on earth He had but the perfections of God, but afterwards He had also the virtues of a creature, such as faith, meekness, self-denial. Before He came on earth He could not be tempted of evil, but afterwards He had a man's heart, a man's tears, and a man's wants and infirmities. His Divine nature indeed pervaded His manhood, so that every deed and word of His in the flesh savoured of eternity and infinity; but, on the other hand, from the time He was born of the Virgin Mary, He had a natural fear of danger, a natural shrinking from pain, though ever subject to the ruling influence of that Holy and Eternal Essence which was in Him. Thus He possessed at once a double assemblage of attributes, Divine and human. Still He was all-powerful, though in the form of a servant; still He was all-knowing,

though seemingly ignorant; still incapable of temptation, though exposed to it. (*J. H. Newman, D.D.*) **Made perfect.**—*The perfect Son*:—I. THE PERFECTION OF THE CHARACTER OF CHRIST. Of the manner of His life before He assumed the office of a public teacher we know almost nothing, except that He was not addicted to studious retirement, nor to the acquisition of human science, which have been employed by teachers of false religions to dazzle the ignorant; but that, living in the common intercourse of society, He laboured in the occupation of His reputed father, increasing in mind as in stature. When He appeared as the Messenger of Heaven He was already complete in the graces which His high character demanded, and that knowledge which was requisite for a teacher of righteousness. His pure life is the best illustration of His moral precepts. His doctrines were, literally, tidings of joy, for He disclosed the mercy and grace of the Divine nature towards penitent offenders, which all the efforts of the human understanding could never perfectly ascertain. He disclosed the high destination of man; He brought life and immortality clearly to light through His gospel. His precepts, also, were good tidings; He spake wholesome words, prescribing a doctrine according to godliness; His aim was to purify the heart and mind, and to teach us to live soberly, righteously, and godly, to qualify us for the glory and immortality which He had unfolded. In His temper and manners Christ exhibited a perfect model of all that can adorn and dignify human nature; "He did no sin, nor was guile found in His mouth." But it was not innocence nor purity only that were found in His character; the highest virtues of our nature were peculiarly His; He exhibited a life, not only of strict justice, but of overflowing benignity and mercy, of the most tender compassion, and the most ardent piety. These virtues were so mingled, tempered, and contrasted, as to render the whole assemblage delightful, graceful, and perfect. The whole life of Christ was a pattern of the sanctity and beauty which He portrayed in His discourses. Christ was perfect in His manner of communicating and enjoining His instructions; He spake with authority, yet with an admirable modesty and simplicity, beautifully calculated to inform and to impress the mind and the heart; He inculcates the most important lessons with simplicity and plainness adapted to human capacity; preferring use to the glare of ornament, no quaint play of words weakens the force of His emphatic language; all is chaste and pure alike—full of energy and of grace. Considered, then, even as a man, the character of Christ is perfect—nowhere can we find another so resplendent and so pleasing—so amiable and so venerable—one which presents so much for our admiration and our love; its beauties are peculiar, its awful greatness and dignity are relieved by the most conciliating tenderness. "Christ was made perfect." This expression, besides the meaning in which we have hitherto taken it, has a special reference to the subject which is described in this chapter; that subject is the priesthood and the sacrifice of Christ. Christ was made perfect by possessing the natural qualifications of the High Priest. He was able to have compassion on the ignorant, the sinning, the weak, and the afflicted, because He Himself was compassed with infirmity. In proof of this the apostle appeals to facts well known in the days of His flesh. He offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears. If sympathy arises from the experience of suffering, and fellowship in affliction, we may well rely on the fellow feeling of the High Priest, who was made perfect through suffering. Whether, then, we view Christ as a teacher of righteousness, or as a High Priest of good things to come, the perfection of His nature is evident. II. THE COMPLETE SALVATION OF WHICH HE IS THE AUTHOR. III. THE CHARACTER OF THOSE TO WHOM THIS SALVATION IS IMPARTED. When we consider the high benefits procured for us by Christ, our hearts are naturally animated with the most grateful affection; and the natural expression of that affection is obedience to the will of our benefactor. What a good and ingenuous mind naturally dictates as our right conduct on such occasions is the very conduct which our Redeemer requires—that we may be made meet to be partakers of the blessings He hath purchased. 1. What you have heard now affords a most delightful subject of contemplation. What can be more pleasant to the human mind than to consider the mercy of our Heavenly Father, who hath sent His Son into the world to save us—the unsullied purity of the Redeemer's character—the glorious privileges which He has conferred on this state of being, and the unfading joys He hath promised in the world to come? 2. It affords a subject of devout gratitude. What can warm the heart with lively and pious affection more than the display of that love of God, who sent His Son to die for us while we were yet sinners? 3. It affords a subject for watchful attention. While the pardon of sin has been purchased by Christ, and the hope of heaven offered to

our view, we are not released from the obligations to duty. (*L. Adamson, D.D.*) *Jesus, the model of perfection:*—I. In the first place, we see the perfection of Jesus as our Saviour—in the PERFECT EXAMPLE He sets us. He is an example not of one point of character only, but of every point. And He is perfect in them all. He never failed in any of them. A young man had a situation as clerk in a mercantile house in one of our large cities. In writing home to his mother one day he said, "I have been connected in business, at different times, with a number of merchants, all of them members of Christian churches; but I must say that Mr. Johnson, with whom I am now employed, is the best of them all, in the way in which he governs himself by his religion, in all his business affairs. I take great pleasure in watching how faithfully he does this. I must say of him that he is a Christian all over." It was a great honour to this good merchant that one of his clerks should feel obliged to speak thus of him. Now let us remember these last two illustrations; and let us all try to follow the example which Jesus sets us, in such a way that we may be Christians in little things—and Christians all over. II. Jesus is a perfect Saviour, in the second place, because He gives us PERFECT HELP. There are three things about Jesus which make Him a perfect Helper. 1. He is—a near helper. Many persons, when they are in need of help, can think of their friends at home, who would be glad to help them. But they are far away, and it is impossible for them to do anything in the way of helping. But how different it is with Jesus! He is in every place. He is always near. "He is a God"—a helper—"at hand, and not afar off." And this is one thing that makes Him a perfect Helper. 2. He is—able to help. It sometimes happens that though our friends are near us in our trouble, yet they are not able to help us. But it is not so with Jesus. Nothing is impossible with Him. His ability to help is perfect. St. Paul tells us that—"He is able to save," and to help—"unto the uttermost." "He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think." 3. He is willing to help. As one of our beautiful collects says, "He is more ready to hear than we to pray, and is wont to give more than either we desire or deserve." III. But, in the third place, He is a perfect Saviour, because He prepares for His people a PERFECT HOME in heaven. He will make their bodies perfect, after the pattern of His own glorious body, as it appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration. He will make their souls perfect. They will be entirely free from sin for ever. He will put them in a perfect home. (*R. Newton, D.D.*) **The author of eternal salvation.**—*Eternal salvation in Christ:*—In what respects is He called "the author of eternal salvation"? I answer, He is the author of it, first in this sense, He rendered it possible for the justice, the holiness, and the truth of God, to bestow salvation on whom these attributes could not bestow it, and would not suffer it to be bestowed on other terms—that is, inconsistently with the glory and the honour of God. He could not save but by suffering; He could not ransom us at a less price than His death; and rather than see a world perish, He would not save Himself from being perfected by suffering, that we might be saved from irretrievable perdition. Again, He is the author of salvation in this sense, that He bestows it. He is exalted, "a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance and remission of sins." Moreover, Christ is the sole author of eternal salvation to all them that obey Him. He says to you, "Take all the benefit, and the only tribute I exact is a tribute which honours me and does not impoverish you—the tribute of praise and thanksgiving;" in heart, in lip, in life. Having seen the exclusiveness of His work, and the exclusiveness of His jurisdiction and of His claims to the glory and honour, let us now inquire what salvation is, and what salvation means. He is the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey Him. His greatest glory is, not that He made the universe, nor yet that He rules the universe, but that He has redeemed a lost world; lost, not by His oversight, but by our sin; and by His Cross has brought it back to Himself a redeemed, a reinstated, and a renovated orb. What is this salvation which is so precious? It is a twofold thing, very easily explained and understood. Two great calamities have struck us from the Fall; namely, that we have lost a right to heaven by having justly forfeited it, and that if we had the right we have lost all fitness for it and desire for it by having become polluted, unholy, impure, corrupt. What will be to us salvation must be a provision that will put us right in both respects. The gospel does so, or rather our great High Priest does so. He gives us, first of all, by His sacrifice, His death, a recovery from the curse which we had earned; and by His obedience or righteousness, imputed to us, He entitles us to the inheritance which we had forfeited; and by the gift of His Holy Spirit, "whom," He says, "I will send unto you," He regenerates

our hearts, gives us new tastes, new sympathies, new thoughts, new life—in short, a new nature. And then one single epithet bestowed upon this salvation marks its character; it is "*eternal* salvation." Now Adam's standing was not eternal; it was liable to forfeiture. But our recovered standing in heaven is eternal, and never liable to any forfeiture. Having seen this, let me notice, in the next place, the character of them for whom it is provided. He became by His consecration the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey Him. First, I observe here there is no national monopoly. It is not said to the Jews, and not to the Gentiles, but it is "to all them that obey Him." In other words, Christianity is not the peculiarity of an age, not the monopoly of a nation, nor the restriction of a sect; it is not only offered to the election, but it is for all them that obey Him. But, you ask, in the next place, and very justly, What do you mean by obeying? My answer is, that the word "obey" is not the just expression. The Greek word means, first, "to listen," "to hear," "to hearken"; secondly, to submit to, to acquiesce; and thirdly, not its strict meaning, but its intrinsic meaning, to obey, or render obedience to. Salvation is not like a gleam of sunshine that falls upon the evil and the good, but something that is given only to them that intelligently accept it, submit to it—receive it just as Christ reveals it to them. The patient only that takes the prescription makes a step towards recovery from his illness. In order to be benefited by the gospel you must take it just as it is offered, not upon your own terms, but upon the terms of the offerer, and thus alone do you receive eternal salvation. (*J. Cumming, D.D.*) *The Saviour you need:*—I. THE UNDOUBTED WILLINGNESS OF JESUS CHRIST TO SAVE. "Being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation." Now, if we find that He was willing to undergo the process which made Him completely fit for the office of a Saviour, we may certainly conclude that He is willing enough to exercise the qualifications which He has obtained. II. THE PERFECT FITNESS OF THE SAVIOUR FOR HIS WORK. We will view the fitness both Godward and manward. 1. View it Godward. Sinner, if any one is to deal with God for you so as to avail on your behalf, he must be one of God's choosing, for "no man taketh this honour upon himself, but he that was called of God, as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not Himself to be made an high priest, but He that said unto Him, Thou art My Son, to-day have I begotten Thee." What God appoints it must be safe for us to accept. In order that Jesus Christ, being appointed, should be fit for His office, it was necessary that He should become man. Surely it is the sin of sins if we reject a Saviour who has made such a stoop in order to be perfectly qualified to save. "Being found in fashion as a man," it was necessary towards God that Jesus should fulfil the law, and work out a perfect obedience. The High Priest who is to intercede for us must wear upon his forehead "Holiness unto the Lord"; and truly such a High Priest we have, for Jesus is "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." Nor was this all towards God. The High Priest who should save us must be able to offer a sufficient sacrifice, efficacious to make atonement, so as to vindicate eternal justice and make an end of sin. 2. Christ Jesus, as our High Priest, needed to be perfected manward. O sinner, consider His perfections as they concern yourself. That He might save us He must have power to pardon, and to renew our hearts; these He has to the full, for all power is given unto Him in heaven and in earth; He both gives repentance and remission. There is one delightful thing in Christ's perfect qualification to save, namely, that He "ever liveth to make intercession for us." If Jesus Christ were dead and had left us the boon of salvation that we might freely help ourselves to it, we should have much to praise Him for; but He is not dead, He is alive. He left us a legacy, but many a legacy is left which never gets to the legatee: lo, the great Maker of the will is alive to carry out His own intentions. He died, and so made the legacy good; He rose again and lives to see that none shall rob any one of His beloved of the portion He has left. What think you of Christ pleading in heaven? Have you ever estimated the power of that plea? III. THE HIGH POSITION WHICH OUR LORD JESUS TAKES IN REFERENCE TO SALVATION. According to the text, "He became the author of eternal salvation." He is the designer, creator, worker, and cause of salvation. IV. THE REMARKABLE CHARACTER OF THE SALVATION WHICH CHRIST HAS WROUGHT OUT. He is the author of eternal salvation. Oh, how I love that word "eternal"! "Eternal salvation!" 1. It is an eternal salvation as opposed to every other kind of deliverance. 2. It is eternal salvation in this sense, that it rescues from eternal condemnation and everlasting punishment. 3. It is eternal salvation as opposed to the risk of falling away and perishing. 4. It will ripen into eternal bliss. V. THE PERSONS CON-

CERNED IN THIS SALVATION. "To all them that obey Him." The word "obey" signifies "obedience upon hearing," and this indicates faith. To obey Christ is in its very essence to trust Him; and we might read our text as if it said, "The author of eternal salvation to all them that believe in Him." If you would be saved your first act of obedience must be to trust Jesus wholly, simply, heartily, and alone. Recline your soul wholly on Jesus and you are saved now. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Jesus Christ the author of eternal salvation*:—I. THE OFFICE OF CHRIST. "He is the author of eternal salvation." He has undertaken to give back to us a title to heaven and a fitness for it. He has undertaken to save us from the dominion of sin, from the power of the devil, from the pains of hell. He has undertaken to make us the children of God, and heirs of eternal glory. II. HIS FITNESS FOR DISCHARGING THIS OFFICE. 1. He was appointed of God to be our High Priest. This appointment was absolutely necessary to make Him duly fitted for the discharge of His office. Without it we could have had no certainty that God would accept His mediation. 2. He had wherewith to offer for the sins of the people. He was able "to make reconciliation for iniquity"; to offer such a sacrifice for sin as would take it away; and to deliver sinners from the punishment due to them by taking it upon Himself. Thus was "the Captain of our salvation made perfect through suffering." 3. Christ is able effectually to intercede for His people. First, in that "He ever liveth to make intercession for us." Secondly, in that He has something available to plead in our behalf, even the infinite merits of His own sufferings. 4. He is not only a priest, but a king. "The government is upon His shoulders." Whatever happens in nature and in providence is under His control. The gift of the Spirit itself is at His disposal. He is "King of kings, and Lord of lords"; and "shall reign" as Mediator, "till He hath put all enemies under His feet." III. THE PERSONS TO WHOM THE BENEFIT OF HIS MEDIATION WILL REACH. Christ "died for all." He "tasted death for every man." His mediation is sufficient for all. All are invited to share the benefits of it. Christ is "the author of eternal salvation to all them," but to them only "who obey Him." This obedience has respect to His whole mediatorial office. Those who would be saved by Him must obey Him as their Priest and as their King. As their Priest they must humbly trust in His sacrifice and intercession, and place all their spiritual concerns in His hands. As their King they must submit to His government, and keep His commandments. (*E. Cooper, M.A.*) *Christ the author, and obedience the condition, of salvation*:—I. HOW AND BY WHAT MEANS CHRIST IS THE AUTHOR OF OUR SALVATION; and this is contained in these words, "Being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation"; that is, having finished His course, which was accomplished in His last sufferings; and having received the reward of them, being exalted at the right hand of God, "He became the author of eternal salvation" to us; so that, by all He did and suffered for us, in the days of His flesh, and in the state of His humiliation, and by all that He still continues to do for us now that He is in heaven at the right hand of God; He hath effected and brought about the great work of our salvation. 1. By the holiness and purity of His doctrine, whereby we are perfectly instructed in the will of God and our duty, and powerfully excited and persuaded to the practice of it. 2. The example of our Saviour's life is likewise another excellent means to this end. The law lays an obligation upon us; but a pattern gives life and encouragement, and renders our duty more easy, and practicable, and familiar to us; for here we see obedience to the Divine law practised in our own nature, and performed by a man like ourselves, "in all things like unto us, sin only excepted." 3. He is "the author of eternal salvation," as He hath purchased it for us, by the "merit of His obedience and sufferings," by which He hath obtained eternal redemption for us; not only deliverance from the wrath to come, but eternal life and happiness. 4. Christ is said to be the author of our salvation, in respect of His powerful and perpetual intercession for us at the right hand of God. And this seems to be more especially intimated and intended, in that expression here in the text, that "being made perfect He became the author of eternal salvation to them that obey Him." II. WHAT OBEDIENCE THE GOSPEL REQUIRES AS A CONDITION, AND IS PLEASED TO ACCEPT AS A QUALIFICATION, IN THOSE WHO HOPE FOR ETERNAL SALVATION. 1. Negatively. It is not a mere outward profession of the Christian religion, and owning of Christ for our Lord and lawgiver, that will be accepted in this case. 2. Positively. That which God requires as a condition and will accept as a qualification, in those who hope for eternal life, is faith in Christ and a sincere and universal obedience to the precepts of His holy gospel. 1. There

is a virtual and there is an actual obedience to the laws of God. By an actual obedience I mean the practice of the several graces of Christianity in the course of a holy life; when "out of a good conversation men do show forth their works"; and, by the outward actions of their lives, do give real testimony of their piety, justice, sobriety, humility, meekness, and charity, and all other Christian graces and virtues, as occasion is ministered for the exercise of them. By a virtual obedience I mean a sincere belief of the gospel, of the holiness and equity of its precepts, of the truth of its promises, and the terror of its threatenings, and a true repentance for all our sins. This is obedience in the root and principle; for he who sincerely believes the gospel, and does truly repent of the errors and miscarriages of his life, is firmly resolved to obey the commandments of God, and to walk before Him in holiness and righteousness all the days of his life; so that there is nothing that prevents or hinders this man's actual obedience to the laws of God, in the course of a holy and good life, but only the want of time and opportunity for it. 2. There is a perfect, and there is a sincere obedience. Perfect obedience consists in the exact conformity of our hearts and lives to the law of God, without the least imperfection, and without failing in any point or degree of our duty. And this obedience, as it is not consistent with the frailty of corrupt nature, and the imperfection of our present state, so neither doth God require it of us as a necessary condition of eternal life. We are, indeed, commanded to be "perfect, as our Father which is in heaven is perfect." But the plain meaning of this precept is that we should imitate those Divine perfections of goodness, and mercy, and patience, and purity, and endeavour to be as like God in all these as we can, and be still aspiring after a nearer resemblance of Him, as may be evident to any one who considers the connection and occasion of these words. By a sincere obedience I mean such a conformity of our lives and actions to the law of God, as to the general course and tenor of them, that we do not live in the habitual practice of any known sin, or in the customary neglect of any material or considerable part of our known duty; and that we be not wilfully and deliberately guilty of the single act of notorious sins. And this obedience, even in the best of men, is mixed with great frailty and imperfection; but yet, because it is the utmost that we can do in this state of infirmity and imperfection, the terms of the gospel are so merciful and gracious, as that God is pleased, for the sake of the meritorious obedience and sufferings of our blessed Saviour, to accept this sincere though imperfect obedience, and to reward it with eternal life. (*Archbishop Tillotson.*) *Author of eternal salvation*:—1. By salvation is meant deliverance from sin and all the consequences thereof, so as the party saved is made ever happy. There be both bodily and spiritual, temporal and eternal dangers whereunto man by sin is liable; and this salvation is a deliverance from all. There is deliverance as from some evils, and not all; so deliverance only for a time, and not for ever; but this salvation is a total deliverance from all evil, and that for ever. Eternal peace, safety, felicity, is the issue and consequence thereof. 2. This salvation being so noble and glorious an effect, must have some cause, some author and efficient; and this efficient was Christ; yet Christ as perfected and consecrated. For by His blood and purest sacrifice of Himself (1) He satisfied Divine justice and merited this salvation. (2) Being upon His resurrection constituted and made an High Priest and King, and fit to minister and officiate as a priest and reign as king in heaven, He ascends into that glorious temple and palace, and is set at the right hand of God. (3) Being there established, He begins as King to send down the Holy Ghost, reveal the gospel, and by both to work faith in the hearts of men, and qualify them for justification and salvation. (4) When men are once qualified and prepared so as to sue for pardon in His name before the throne of God, He, as Priest, begins His intercession, and by the plea of His own blood for them procures their pardon and eternal salvation; so that, as consecrated and perfect, He becomes the great efficient cause of this salvation, by way of merit, intercession, and actual communication. 3. If it be communicated from and by Him, it must be received in some subject; and if in Him there be an eternal saving virtue, and He exercise it, there must be some subject and persons in whom this saving power shall produce this effect, so as that they shall be saved. And though this power be able to save all, yet only they and all who obey Him shall be saved: efficient causes work most effectually in subjects united and disposed aright. And so it is in this case; for though the mercies of God, merited by Christ, may be so far communicable to all, as that all may become savable, which is a great and universal benefit, yet they are

not actually communicated to all, because all are not obedient. His laws require sincere submission and obedience in renouncing all others, and a total dependence upon Him, and Him alone, in repenting of our sins and believing upon Him. And this sincere faith is the fundamental virtue, and potentially all obedience. (*G. Lawson.*) *Salvation in Christ*:—Having Christ we have salvation also, while without receiving Christ Himself we cannot have the salvation. Having the fountain, we have its issuing streams. Cut off from the fountain the streams will not flow to us. Christ offers Himself to be the Bridegroom of the soul. He offers to endow His bride with all the riches of His own inheritance in the heirship of His Father. Taking Him as our Bridegroom, and giving ourselves to Him as the bride espouses her husband, with Him we have all He has as well as all He is, while without Him we can have neither. The mistake is that of seeking the salvation instead of seeking the Saviour. Just the same mistake that the affianced would make if she should seek to have the possessions of him to whom she was engaged made over to her from him, without their union in wedlock, instead of accepting his offer of himself, and having the hymeneal bond completed by which he and all he has would become hers. (*W. E. Boardman.*) *Salvation, not compulsion*:—"Well, then," said a sceptic to me on one occasion, "why is the world not saved?" "My friend," said I, "you misconceive the *power* required to convert souls." There was a little boy in the room; and I illustrated my meaning by saying, "Suppose I *will* that that little boy leave the room. There are two ways in which I could give effect to that will. I could take him in my arms, and by superior muscular force remove him; or I could take him on my knee, speak lovingly and persuasively to him in order to induce him to leave the room himself. If I adopted the former, I should merely have removed his body: his volition would be against me, and he would feel that I had done him violence. If I succeed in the latter, I should have influenced his mind; and he himself would use his own limbs, and with a happy smile depart." (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) **Unto all them that obey Him.**—*Obedience due to Christ*:—Let us examine our obedience. Christ wills us to avoid sins that cause His gospel to be ill spoken of, by good works to adorn it, to stop the mouths of the adversaries, &c. Do we so? Doth not drunkenness, covetousness, pride, malice, and uncleanness abound? As they said and promised to Joshua, so let us to Christ—"Whatsoever Thou commandest us we will do, and whithersoever Thou sendest us we will go." How must we obey Him? 1. Fully. The young man in the gospel most proudly vaunted that he had kept all the commandments from his youth; let us endeavour that we may say so in truth and sincere heart, and as Zacharias and Elisabeth, "let us walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless." 2. Cheerfully. God loves a cheerful giver. "I was glad," says the Psalm, "when they said, Let us go up into the house of the Lord" (Psa. cxxii. 1). 3. Constantly. A runner hath not the prize till he come to the goal. A tailor hath not his wages till the garment be finished. A traveller hath not his money till he come to his journey's end. Here we are as children (1 Cor. xiii.), growing higher and higher in knowledge, faith, love, obedience, &c. (*W. Jones, D.D.*) *The possibility and necessity of gospel obedience, and its consistence with free grace*:—I. THE POSSIBILITY OF OUR PERFORMING THIS CONDITION. 1. We are not sufficient of ourselves, and by any power in us, to perform the conditions of the gospel. The grace of God doth clearly appear in the whole business of our salvation: "By grace ye are saved," says the apostle, "and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." Faith is the gift of God, and so is repentance. 2. The grace of God is ready to assist and enable us to the performance of these conditions; that is, to faith and repentance, and all the purposes of obedience and a holy life; if we be not wanting to ourselves, and do not reject or neglect to make use of that grace which God offers us, and is ready to afford us in a very plentiful manner. 3. What the grace of God is ready to enable us to do, if we be not wanting to ourselves, may properly be said to be possible to us, and in some sense in our power. II. THE NECESSITY OF THIS OBEDIENCE IN ORDER TO OUR OBTAINING OF ETERNAL LIFE AND HAPPINESS. "Christ is the author of eternal salvation to them that obey Him"; that is, to such, and only to such, as live in obedience to the precepts of His holy gospel, to them who frame the general course of their lives according to His laws. Now the necessity of obedience, in order to eternal life and happiness, relies upon these three grounds: 1. The constitution and appointment of God. 2. The general reason of rewards. 3. The particular nature of that reward which God will confer upon us for our obedience. III. THIS METHOD AND MEANS OF OUR SALVATION IS NO PREJU-

DICE TO THE LAW OF FAITH, AND TO THE FREE GRACE AND MERCY OF GOD DECLARED IN THE GOSPEL. For so long as these three things are but asserted and secured—1. That faith is the root and principle of obedience and a holy life, and that without it "it is impossible to please God." 2. That we stand continually in need of the Divine grace and assistance to enable us to perform that obedience which the gospel requires of us, and is pleased to accept in order to eternal life. And—3. That the forgiveness of our sins, and the reward of eternal life, are founded in the free grace and mercy of God, conferring these blessings upon us, not for the merit of our obedience, but only for the merit and satisfaction of the obedience and sufferings of our blessed Saviour and Redeemer; I say, so long as we assert these three things, we give all that the gospel anywhere ascribes to faith, and to the grace of God revealed in the gospel. Inferences: 1. To convince us that an empty profession of the Christian religion, how specious and glorious soever it be, if it be destitute of the fruits of obedience and a holy life, will by no means avail to bring us to heaven. 2. The consideration of what hath been said should stir us up to a thankful acknowledgment of what the author of our salvation hath done for us; and there is great reason for thankfulness whether we consider the greatness of the benefit conferred upon us, or the way and manner in which it was purchased, or the easy and reasonable terms upon which it may be obtained. 3. Here is abundant encouragement given to our obedience; we have the Divine assistance promised to us, to enable us to the performance of the most difficult parts of our duty; we have the Holy Spirit of God to help our infirmities, to excite us to that which is good, and to help and strengthen us in the doing of it. For our further encouragement we are assured of the Divine acceptance in case of our sincere obedience, notwithstanding the manifold failings and imperfections of it, for the sake of the perfect righteousness and obedience and the meritorious sufferings of our blessed Saviour. 4. The consideration of what hath been said upon this argument may serve severely to rebuke the groundless presumption of those who rely with so much confidence upon Christ for eternal salvation, without any conscience or care to keep His commandments; as if salvation lay upon His hands, and He knew not how to dispose of it, and were glad of any one that would come and take it off upon any terms. No, "He came to save us from our sins, to redeem us from all iniquity, and to purify to Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." (*Archbishop Tillotson.*)

Gospel obedience:—It is reported of the old kings of Peru, that they were wont to use a tassel, or fringe, made of red wool, which they wore upon their heads, and when they sent any governor to rule as viceroy in any part of their country, they delivered unto him one of the threads of their tassel, and, for one of those simple threads, he was as much obeyed as if he had been the king himself—yea, it hath so happened that the king hath sent a governor only with this thread to slay men and women of a whole province, without any further commission; for of such power and authority was the king's tassel with them, that they willingly submitted thereunto, even at the sight of one thread of it. Now, it is to be hoped that, if one thread shall be so forcible to draw heathen obedience, there will be no need of cart-ropes to haul on that which is Christian. Exemplary was that obedience of the Romans which was said to have come abroad to all men. And certainly gospel obedience is a grace of much worth, and of great force upon the whole man; for when it is once wrought in the heart, it worketh a conformity to all God's will. Be it for life or death, one word from God will command the whole soul as soon as obedience hath found admittance into the heart. (*J. Spencer.*) *Faith and works:*—'Twas an unhappy division that has been made between faith and works. Though in my intellect I may divide them, just as in the candle I know there is both light and heat, but yet put out the candle, and they are both gone; one remains not without the other; so it is betwixt faith and works. Nay, in a right conception *fides est opus:* if I believe a thing because I am commanded, that is *opus.* (*John Selden.*)

Vers. 10, 12. **Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered.**—*Difficult truths:*—I. There are revealed in the Scripture SUNDRY DEEP AND MYSTERIOUS TRUTHS WHICH REQUIRE A PECULIAR DILIGENCE IN OUR ATTENDANCE UNTO THEIR DECLARATION, that we may rightly understand them, or receive them in a due manner. 1. There are some things or truths revealed in the Scripture which have a peculiar remark put upon them, as those which are deep and mysterious (see 1 Tim. iii. 16; Eph. v. 32; 1 Cor. ii. 6-8; xv. 51; Eph. iii. 4, 5). 2. The doctrines concerning these things are not dark and obscure, but clear, evident, and perspicuous. There are two practices about these things that are equally pernicious. (1) A pretence of things mysterious

that are not clearly revealed. This the apostle calls a curious prying or intruding into things which we have not seen; they who do so are "vainly puffed up by their fleshly mind" (Col. ii. 18), and which he cautioneth us against (Rom. xii. 3). (2) A neglect and contempt of clear open revelations, because the things revealed are mysterious. 3. The depths and mystery of the things intended, lie in themselves and their own nature. They are effects of Divine wisdom, yea, the greatest which ever God will either work or declare. Hence the doctrine of them is called "His wisdom" (1 Cor. ii. 7), "His manifold wisdom" (Eph. iii. 10), as having put the most eminent characters of infinite wisdom upon them. 4. The principal of these mysteries concern the person, offices, and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. So as to His person, it is declared by our apostle (1 Tim. iii. 16; as to His work and office, Phil. ii. 7–10; and as to His grace, Eph. iii. 8–11). 5. Of all things which we are to learn in the dispensation of the Word, these are we with most diligence to attend unto (Phil. iii. 8–10), as those wherein the glory of God and our own obedience are most concerned. II. IT IS NECESSARY FOR THE MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL SOMETIMES TO INSIST ON THE MOST ABSTRUSE AND DIFFICULT TRUTHS THAT ARE REVEALED FOR OUR EDIFICATION. 1. It ought to be the design of every faithful minister in the course of his ministry to withhold nothing from those committed unto his charge that belongs unto their edification, as do all things that are written in the Scripture, but to declare unto them the whole counsel of God, so far as he himself hath attained. 2. His duty is, as much as in him lieth, to carry on his hearers unto perfection (chap. vi. 1). 3. Whereas the greatest part of our congregations, it may be, frequently are such as stand in need of milk, and are not skilful, as yet, in the word of righteousness, it is our duty also to insist on those plainer truths which are suited unto their edification. 4. Those who are called by the state of their flocks to engage sometimes in the exposition of abstruse and mysterious passages of Scripture, may do well to observe the ensuing rules, all which may be evidently gathered from the way and manner of our apostle's treating concerning Melchisedec and his office. (1) That their interpretations be openly and evidently conformable to the analogy of faith. (2) That the exposition of them be necessary from present circumstances, which are principally two. (*a*) That the things contained in them do belong unto some important truth which is plainly declared for the substance of it in other places, although from them it may receive light and illustration. (*b*) When they offer themselves in the course of our work or ministry, where God gives light into the sense of the Holy Ghost in them, they are not to be waived, as we would be esteemed faithful in our work. (3) Always to remember, that what is so abstrusely expressed, is so on purpose, for the exercise as of our faith, humility, and subjection of mind unto the authority of the Holy Ghost speaking in the Scripture; so of our diligence and dependence on Him for instruction, which calls for an especial frame of spirit in the work we undertake. (4) That the difficulty and necessity of treating concerning such things be intimated unto them who are to be instructed, that so they may be prepared to attend with diligence, and judge with sobriety of what is delivered. III. THERE IS A GLORIOUS LIGHT AND EVIDENCE IN ALL DIVINE TRUTHS, BUT BY REASON OF OUR DARKNESS AND WEAKNESS WE ARE NOT ALWAYS ABLE TO COMPREHEND THEM. OUR WANT OF THAT ACQUAINTANCE WITH THEM, WHICH IT IS OUR DUTY TO HAVE, AND WHICH IS NEEDFUL UNTO OUR EDIFICATION, IS FROM OURSELVES ALONE, AND FOR THE MOST PART FROM OUR SINFUL NEGLECT OF WHAT IS REQUIRED THEREUNTO. IV. MANY WHO RECEIVE THE WORD AT FIRST WITH SOME READINESS, DO YET AFTERWARDS MAKE BUT SLOW PROGRESS EITHER IN KNOWLEDGE OR GRACE. V. IT IS MEN'S SLOTHFULNESS IN HEARING THAT IS THE SOLE CAUSE OF THEIR NOT IMPROVING THE MEANS OF GRACE, OR NOT THRIVING UNDER THE DISPENSATION OF THE WORD. OR, ALL OUR MISCARRIAGES, WITH RESPECT UNTO THE GOSPEL, ARE TO BE RESOLVED INTO OUR OWN SLOTH, NEGLIGENCE, AND DEPRAVED AFFECTIONS. (*John Owen, D.D.*) **Ye are dull of hearing.**—*Dull of hearing*:—It is a metaphor taken from lazy travellers that go slowly. As men are slow in going, so are you in hearing the Word of God. And by hearing is not meant the external hearing alone, but the internal. Slow in conceiving and learning, as is expounded in the next verse. Hearing is put for learning, because knowledge is conveyed by the sense of hearing. There be many things that procure this dulness and slowness. 1. Carelessness or want of diligence (Matt. xiii. 19). 2. A mind possessed with other things, which keep the gospel out of the doors, as these were with an high opinion of the ceremonial law and Levitical priesthood. A barrel full of corrupt water cannot receive wine. 3. Want of meditation. 4. Want of

reading and conferring (Acts xvii.). 5. Want of prayer. We are apt scholars for the world, swift to hear news and tales, but slow and dull in hearing of the Word of God. So that we may justly suffer that check of our Saviour's (Luke xxiv. 25). (*W. Jones, D.D.*) *Dull of hearing*:—The meaning is not that they were deaf either in whole or part, or that such amongst them as were learned could not read them, if written, or understand the language; but by hearing is meant understanding. There are outward ears, and outward hearing of the body; inward ears, and inward hearing of the soul: the former they had, the latter they had not, so as to be capable of such things as he had to say of this priest and priesthood. This was no obscurity in the matter, but an indisposition in the soul to receive this doctrine. Dulness was this indisposition, which in general is a defect of active power; in particular, in this place, of the intellective faculty, as not able to perceive, discern, apprehend, and judge of this higher doctrine. It is opposed to that we call acumen, the sharpness, quickness, and piercing power of the wit and intellect; yet here this dulness is restrained to a certain object, for in other things they might be apprehensive and judicious enough. By reason of this defect it is that much excellent and Divine doctrine is lost, or at least useless to the greatest part of the people, who are no whit moved with doctrine, though excellent, if above their capacity. For this cause the meanest teachers are most popular; though it is true that all wise men must have respect unto the capacity of their hearers, and condescend unto them, yet men should not be always babes and dunces in God's school. (*G. Lawson.*) *Dull hearers*:—There is a difficulty in the things themselves (the matter of preaching), and there may be a weakness in the ministers of the gospel to speak clearly about these things; but generally the fault is in the hearers. Dull hearers make the preaching of the gospel a difficult thing: and even those that have some faith may be dull hearers, dull of understanding, and slow to believe; the understanding is weak and does not apprehend these spiritual things; the memory is weak and does not retain them. The apostle insists upon the faultiness of this infirmity of theirs. It was not a mere natural infirmity, but it was a sinful infirmity, and more in them than others, by reason of the singular advantages they had enjoyed for improving in the knowledge of Christ (ver. 12). (*M. Henry.*)

Vers. 12–14. **Ye ought to be teachers.**—*The duty of teaching*:—I. You ought to have KNOWN enough of the truth of the gospel to ENABLE you to be teachers. II. You ought to have enough INTEREST in others to IMPEL you to be teachers. III. You ought to have enough LOYALTY to Christ to CONSTRAIN you to be teachers. Whether or no He would have us to be teachers, we may gather from—1. His commands, "Go, teach," &c. 2. His spirit. Ever communicative. 3. His example. "Went about doing good." (*U. R. Thomas.*) *Improvement in knowledge*:—I. THAT ALL WHO ARE FAVOURED WITH THE LIGHT OF THE GOSPEL SHALL BE UTTERLY INEXCUSABLE IF THEIR IMPROVEMENTS IN KNOWLEDGE DO NOT BEAR A PROPORTION TO THE TIME THEY HAVE CONTINUED TO ENJOY IT. II. THAT THOSE WHO ARE NOT CAREFUL TO ADD TO THEIR KNOWLEDGE, WILL BE IN GREAT DANGER OF LOSING WHAT THEY HAVE FORMERLY ACQUIRED. III. THAT WITHOUT A PROPER ACQUAINTANCE WITH THE FIRST PLAIN PRINCIPLES OF RELIGION, MEN ARE UNFIT TO RECEIVE DOCTRINES OF A HIGHER AND MORE SPECULATIVE NATURE. (*R. Walker.*) *Religious teachers*:—None should take upon them to be teachers of others but those who have made a good improvement in spiritual knowledge themselves. (*M. Henry.*) *Blameworthy backwardness*:—Small progress under great privileges is a grievous fault. The scholar who has time, and books, and excellent instructors, and yet learns nothing, is soon given up as incorrigible. He soon loses caste, is degraded, is censured by his friends, and is condemned by all. The man of business who, by negligence or prodigality, loses his customers, and so suffers his business to run down, is despised, and when the pinching hand of poverty seizes him, is unpitied. (*Geo. Peck, D.D.*) *Christian growth*:—They are blamed for being babes, and not "of full age," or perfect. In the Church of Christ there are little children, there are men, there are fathers. It is evident that the apostle refers in our passage to the wisdom of the heart and of life. Christians differ in their measure of understanding and strength, as well as in the gifts of grace, which by the Spirit and according to their natural endowments and providential position are bestowed on them. Those who have only recently been brought into the fold cannot possess the experience and the wisdom of the elder. The Lord, who is the Head of the Church, distributes also gifts and talents according to His good and wise will. Some members of the Church are called to be teachers, lights, and guides, sons of consolation and fathers in the

gospel; whereas others will, perhaps, always remain weak, and in need of constant help and guidance. Now the Lord, who Himself is full of tenderness, exhorts the Church to be gentle, patient toward the young and the inexperienced. They that are strong ought not merely to bear the infirmities of the weak, but exercise self-denial in accommodating themselves to their less enlightened brethren. We must exercise a wise and patient discretion, even as Jesus had many things to say to His disciples, but remembered that they could not bear them. 1. The comparison between a newly-converted man and a babe is, like all comparisons, imperfect. For in one sense a Christian is born by the Holy Ghost full-grown; as Adam came into the world a perfect man, full of light and insight, who gave names to all the living creatures, who understood and spake. The newly-converted man is born into the spiritual world, and from the first moment he sees and knows Christ, and has the mind of Christ, the Spirit, so that he can immediately understand all spiritual things. The milk of the Word, as contrasted with strong meat, does not refer to any real and inherent difference between the gospel first preached and afterwards taught. From first to last we present the same truth, the same circle of truths, the whole truth. The babe in Christ (I mean he who is a babe naturally, and not unnaturally through his own worldliness and indolence), full of love to Jesus, and impressed with the importance and blessedness of heavenly things, learns very easily and very rapidly. He delights in the Word; he is humble and tender; he does not resist truths which condemn the flesh and correct our waywardness; he is unworldly, heavenly-minded, and nine-tenths of the Bible becomes clear, when we are willing to deny ourselves, and take our cross and follow Jesus. Yes, we run well at the commencement. It is apathy, worldliness, conceit, which afterwards render Christians slow of heart to understand all that is written. The lukewarm church must needs be an ignorant church. The divided heart must needs be confused and dim-sighted. It is for this reason that the apostle blames the Hebrews for not having progressed in knowledge. Their senses had not been exercised; that is, they had not walked closely with God. They had not conscientiously applied the knowledge which they had, but allowed it to remain dead and unused. 2. It is not that there is a higher truth or life for the older Christians. All our progress consists in learning more fully the doctrine which at first is preached unto us. Let us beware of entertaining erroneous views as to what is meant by milk and meat. "Milk" designates gospel truth preached simply, so that thereby true nourishment is given, and faith is both called forth, and the new spiritual life strengthened and increased. Hence there is nothing in the term meant to depreciate, but, on the contrary, to exalt the first declaration of saving truth in Christ. The strong meat, the doctrine of Christ's high priesthood in heaven, is also milk, pure and nourishing, simple, and only received by the child-like heart; whereas pride and ambition often call speculative and unprofitable discussions strong meat, though they are of no use to the spiritual man, but minister only unto strife and the exaltation of the flesh. The Hebrews had become as babes. Hence the word, which elsewhere is the sweetest expression of Divine love and favour, is a term of reproach when it indicates an unnatural and dangerous condition of spiritual weakness, the result of a culpable and habitual inertness. It had not always been thus with the Hebrew Christians. For we read that when they were first enlightened they endured a great fight of affliction. Then, although they had many and grievous sufferings, they were strong, and rejoiced in Christ; and why? Because they were heavenly-minded. Then, though young in the faith, they were more fervent, and therefore more spiritual, possessed of clearer knowledge and perception. And therefore the apostle is so anxious to lead them on to perfection, that is, to fix their thoughts on Christ in heaven. Their earthly-mindedness constitutes both the necessity and the difficulty of his task. For the perfection unto which the apostle desires to go is not an esoteric doctrine or method of holiness peculiar to an imaginary second stage of faith. It has nothing to do directly with anything in our heart and conduct. It refers, on the contrary, to heaven, to the High Priest above, to our position in Him who is seated at the right hand of God. It is to know that we are priests, worshippers in spirit and in truth, that, being reconciled to God by the death of Christ, we have now been brought nigh to the Father; and our citizenship, the source of our life and strength, the things which we seek, the blessings with which we are enriched, are no longer on earth, but in heaven. (*A. Saphir.*) **Ye have need that one teach you.**—*The need of catechising*:—I. WEIGHTY REASONS MAY BE GIVEN FOR THE NECESSITY OF CATECHISING. 1. By catechising a good and sure foundation is laid. Now it is necessary that in all buildings

a good foundation be laid, lest for want of it the building come to ruin (Matt. vii. 26, 27). 2. By catechising people are by degrees made capable of deeper mysteries; as children by learning letters and syllables, and to spell them, are brought on to read distinctly. The most intelligent hearers are such as have been well instructed in the principles of religion. 3. By catechising such as profess the faith are enabled to render a reason of the hope that is in them (1 Pet. iii. 15). For a catechism well compiled contains the sum and substance of all that a Christian is to believe. 4. By catechising, pastors may know their people's capacity and understanding; and this is requisite in two respects—(1) That he may the better know whom to admit to the Lord's table. (2) That he may the better discern how to order his preaching both for matter and manner. 5. The fruits of catechising have ever been observed to be many and great. Thereby have families been made seminaries for the Church. II. If the question be demanded WHEREIN THE DIFFERENCE LIETH BETWIXT CATECHISING AND PREACHING, I answer, in these particulars especially. 1. By catechising, a foundation is laid (chap. vi. 1). By preaching, the building is farther reared up, beautified and perfected. 2. By catechising, many and large points are contracted into brief sums, as in the Ten Commandments, Creed, and Lord's Prayer. By preaching, sundry points are amplified, enlarged, and sundry ways applied. 3. By catechising, weak and ignorant ones are fed, as with milk. By preaching, the strong are further nourished with strong meat. For in catechising the most necessary principles are plainly laid down; but in preaching all sorts of points, the difficult as well as easy, use to be handled; yea, and contrary errors refuted. 4. By catechising, a particular account is taken of the learners, which is not so done by preaching. For catechising is by question and answer; so as the catechised give an account of their proficiency. But preaching is only by a minister's declaring his mind. 5. Catechising is for such as are newly entered into the Church; and that for a time till they may be fitted for the sacrament. But preaching is for all, of all sorts, so long as they live. For though a man had all knowledge, yet is preaching requisite to work upon their affections, and to bring to their mind and memory such things as they know. Preaching is profitable to all those uses that are mentioned (2 Tim. iii. 16). (*W. Gouge.*) *The lesson of ripeness*:—As in the family, the child, from being taught, gradually grows into a position of authority, from being directed by others, becomes self-determining, and has a voice and an influence in the counsels of men; so, in the great family of God, Christian maturity and its accompaniments are recognised facts—attainments which the gospel treats not merely as privileges, but as obligations. There is a Christian manhood, in short, which is expected and required of the child of God, in which, from being a recipient of gospel influences, he is to become their defender, their illustrator, and their propagator. This is the truth for our consideration. It is embodied in these words of the text, addressed to those who had been for a good while under gospel training: "Ye ought to be teachers." I. YE, AS FOLLOWERS AND DISCIPLES OF CHRIST, OUGHT TO BE TEACHERS. One reason why Christ found it expedient to go away in person from the world, was that the number of teaching-centres might be multiplied. As plainly as words could speak, He laid the burden of diffusing the gospel upon His Church. "Ye," He said to His disciples, "ye are the salt of the earth. Ye are the light of the world." Men are taught by the gospel that their responsibility does not cease with their own salvation; that they cannot live out their Christian lives simply with reference to God and to themselves; that from the fact of their being members of society, they exert power for good or for evil over other lives; that they cannot be Christians and not teach. II. BUT THIS DUTY IS HERE URGED BY ONE CONSIDERATION MERELY, TO WHICH WE MAY CONFINE OURSELVES. The familiar rendering, "for the time ye ought to be teachers," entirely obscures the force of the passage. The meaning is, rather, "by reason of the time"; that is, because you have been for a long time under Christian influence, listening to Christian doctrine, versed in Christian experience: by reason of the time which has passed since you became Christian disciples, you ought to be teachers. We do not expect the apprenticed mechanic to be always an apprentice or an underling. Time is needed to teach him how to handle tools, and to make him acquainted with the capacity of materials: but, with the time, we expect to see him a master-workman; we look for him to develop new resources out of his material, and new methods of treating it, and thus to become a teacher to his craft. The man who through all his years is merely acquiring knowledge, and does not come in process of time to give it out, may be a prodigy of learning, but he is also a prodigy of uselessness, no better than so much lumber. And the same principle

runs up into the moral and spiritual realm, and prevails there. We have a right to expect, as the result of years, larger and clearer views of truth, better defined conviction, more self-mastery, more practical efficiency, and more consistency of life. It is a sad thing when a man has been before the world for long years as a professed disciple of Christ, and when all he has to show for it is that he is very old. Length of days, be it remembered, is in the right hand of wisdom. III. And now let us look at a few of the points in which, by reason of time, a Christian ought to be a teacher. 1. He ought to be a teacher by reason of a matured faith, and that under three aspects—(1) In respect of his own assurance of Christian truth. The instructive power of the gospel resides very largely in the lives which it shapes and pervades and propels. The life is the light of men. Ye ought to be teachers, but ye will not be if the gospel is still an open question to you. Ye will not be if your attitude towards its foundation-truths is that of suspense. (2) Again, time ought to develop faith in the sense of spiritual discernment—clearer perception of the things of the unseen world. It is not strange if a young Christian simply believes in the things which are not seen. It is strange if the older Christian does not feel the power of the world to come. It is one thing to assent to the truth that "the things which are not seen are eternal"; it is another thing to apprehend that truth, and to take it into life as a working principle; to realise that the things on which heaven stamps a value—love and faith and purity and truth and good conscience—are the paramount things, and to make everything give way to these. That kind of spiritual seeing has a teaching power. It is of the very essence of all teaching that the man who sees what we do not see, brings us to his feet to learn. When we want to know about the stars we go to the scholar who has the telescope. And the life which one lives by faith in the unseen, teaches. It does what all true teaching must do—it excites attention, it awakens inquiry, it communicates enthusiasm. (3) And time ought to have ripened faith in the sense of restfulness. We count it strange if natural manhood does not bring with it increased composure, tranquillity, balance. Shall we count it any less strange if, with the lapse of time, Christian manhood does not become better poised, more restful and quiet, less easily thrown off its balance? 2. By reason of the time a Christian ought to have been confirmed in the habit of communion with God. Prayer is a subject of discipline. No man learns all its resources at once. I have somewhere seen a little story of a king who had employed some people to weave for him, had supplied them the materials and the patterns, and had told them, that if they were ever in trouble about their work, they were to come to him without fear. Among those at the looms was a child; and one day, when all the rest were distressed at the sight of the tangles in their yarn, they gathered round the child, and asked, "Why are you so happy at your work? These constant tangles are more than we can bear." "Why do you not tell the king?" said the little weaver. "He told us to, and that he would help us." "We do," replied they, "at night and at morning." "Ah!" said the child, "I send directly whenever I have a tangle." We ought to have reached that point by reason of time—that habit of referring everything at once and directly to God; just as, when we are walking with a friend, we naturally refer to him every matter of interest as it comes up. That habit of communion with heaven sets its mark on the life and invests it with a teaching-power. 3. By reason of time a Christian should have become a teacher in the matter of habitual consistency of life, obedience, and docility. It is strange, something is wrong, if we are still committing and repenting of the same old sins which we began to fight long ago. As the lines of that living epistle which we began writing when we entered Christ's service creep farther down the page, they ought to be more fairly and evenly written. In short, though we shall never be perfect men and women, though the nearer we get to Christ, the less we shall be pleased with ourselves—yet we ought to be better men and women by reason of the time, and, by our better living of the gospel, be teachers to those about us. 4. And, by reason of the time, we ought to be broader in our charity. Our own experience ought to have given us an insight into our own weakness and fallibility, and to have made us correspondingly tolerant of the weakness and fallibility of our brother men. (*M. R. Vincent, D.D.*) *The growth of the spiritual sense:*—Philo had already emphasised the distinction between the child in knowledge and the man of full age and mature judgment. St. Paul had said more than once that such a distinction holds among Christians. Many are carnal; some are spiritual. In his writings the difference is not an external one, nor is the line between the two classes broad and clear. The one shades into the other. But, though we may not be able to determine

where the one begins and the other ends, both are tendencies, and move in opposite directions. In the Epistle to the Hebrews the distinction resembles the old doctrine of habit taught by Aristotle. Our organs of sense are trained by use to distinguish forms and colours. In like manner, there are inner organs of the spirit, which distinguish good from evil, not by mathematical demonstration, but by long-continued exercise in hating evil and in loving holiness. The growth of this spiritual sense is connected by our author with the power to understand the higher doctrine. He only who discerns, by force of spiritual insight, what is good and what is evil, can also understand spiritual truths. The difference between good and evil is not identical with "the word of righteousness." But the moral elevation of character that clearly discerns the former is the condition of understanding also the latter. (*T. C. Edwards, D.D.*)

The oracles of God.—*The oracles of God*:—An oracle is, strictly speaking, an instrument, a mouthpiece of a mighty person who prefers to remain unknown. By oracles future events were declared, perplexities cleared, and doubts solved. Oracles, therefore, or those taken as such, abounded in the world, they especially played a prominent part in Greek society. Celebrated above all the rest, in the very centre of Greece, was the renowned one of Delphi, whither from far and near questioners betook themselves, and went away with perfect faith that they had indeed received answers from a god, to whom the place was sacred, and at whose shrine they laid offerings of worship and gratitude. What then the heathen fondly flattered themselves to have, the Jews really possessed. If the great work of man here is to know God and do His will, the Jews were indeed blessed above all others, since alone of all the inhabitants of the earth they were acquainted with a revelation from the Creator to creatures of His hand, of which no power on earth could rob them. When the ark was gone for ever, and when not one stone upon another of the Temple was left, when the glory was departed from Israel, the Jewish children could still read the Old Testament stories, the Jewish men and women could still learn to do God justice by His Word. Nothing could touch this priceless treasure they had retained unhurt through perils of wars; it would have taught them still as of old, if they themselves had not misused it, and so lost, by their own fault, the blessing which no outward influence was ever able to take away. Thus are all God's gifts to man abused. He chooses to place Himself at such disadvantage, that man may scorn what He is pleased to send. Nor are the Jews, alas! the only people who have done so. Their fate may well cause us anxiety. We have been speaking so highly of the Jewish privileges, of people who had but part,—what of us who have the whole truth and revelation? (*L. T. Lochée, M.A.*) *The oracles of God*:—"The oracles of God" is a very arresting and illustrious name. And yet it accurately indicates the real character of what prophets and apostles teach. Heaven's inspiration was poured upon their minds, and guided, as well as animated, their voices and their pens. What they declare Jehovah speaks. Oh with what reverence, and attention, and faith, and obedience, and grateful praises, should we receive and study the heavenly message! and how seriously and vividly, as both a motive and a check in dealing with the Scriptures, should we realise the thought: these are "the oracles of God"! They are, moreover, "the word of righteousness." The Bible clearly, comprehensively, and authoritatively propounds the principles, and prescribes the rules of piety and virtue; and, in the hands of the Holy Spirit, it is the instrument of producing these great attainments in the heart and character of men. What a noble distinction of "the oracles of God"! and how important faithfully to use them in this practical relation! If the knowledge and attainment of "righteousness" be momentous and valuable things, oh, let us highly esteem, and diligently use, what is here significantly called "the word of righteousness." It is suggested in this passage that there is great inequality among professing Christians to whom "the oracles of God" have come. Some, it is here said, are "babes," and others, men; some, such as can digest "strong meat," others, such as "have need of milk"; some, "unskilful in the word of righteousness," others, "by reason of use having their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." In other words, some are comparatively ignorant, inexperienced, and unsettled in religion, while others are comparatively intelligent, vigorous, and accomplished; and while the latter can understand, and appreciate, and apply the more difficult and abstruse doctrines of revelation, the former are more exclusively dependent, for the sustentation and improvement of their souls, on the simpler elements of religious truth. It is suggested still further, that "the oracles of God" have appliances appropriate for both classes. Revelation, as some one has graphically said, "has fords which a

lamb can wade and depths which an elephant can swim." (*A. S. Patterson.*) **Unskilful in the Word.**—*Unskilful in the use of Scripture*:—I. THE CHARACTER OF THE GOSPEL. "The Word of righteousness." 1. This shows the quality of it. 2. The subject of which it treats. II. THE FAULT LAMENTED. 1. Some are unskilful in—(1) Finding, (2) Quoting, (3) Defending, (4) Applying, (5) Perusing the Scriptures. 2. They use Scripture unskilfully, when they do not use it—(1) Harmoniously, (2) Impartially, (3) Practically. Lessons: 1. Be thankful that you have this Word of righteousness. 2. Pity those who are destitute of it, and be concerned to supply them. (*W. Jay.*) *The best thing badly used*:—I. THE BEST THING ON EARTH. The gospel is called "the word of righteousness" because it reveals—1. The true standard of righteousness. God's character is the foundation; God's will the rule. 2. The highest exemplar of righteousness—Christ. 3. The true way to righteousness—following Christ. II. THE BEST THING ON EARTH BADLY USED. The word is "unskilfully" used when used—1. Controversially. Fighting for dogmas. 2. Sectarianly. Fighting for sects. 3. Mercenarily. Fighting for money and position. 4. Unlovingly. Lacking the unbounded love and exquisite tenderness of the system. (*Homilist.*) **He is a babe.**—*Spiritual babyhood*:—We have the likenesses of our boys taken on every birthday, and twelve of the annual portraits are now framed in one picture, so that we see them at a glance from their babyhood to their youth. Suppose such photographic memorials of our own spiritual life had been taken and preserved, would there be a regular advance, as in these boys, or should we still have been exhibited in the perambulator? Have not some grown awhile, and then suddenly dwarfed? Have not others gone back to babyhood? (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) **Strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age.**—*The need of diversified food*:—There are persons, even in Europe, to whom a mutton-chop would be poisonous. Cases are known where animal food has been poisonous to people. Some persons cannot take coffee without vomiting; others are thrown into a general inflammation if they eat cherries or gooseberries. Many persons are unable to eat eggs, and cakes or puddings having eggs in their composition produce serious disturbances in such persons; if they are induced to eat them under false assurances of no eggs having been employed, they are soon undeceived by the unmistakable effects. Only gross ignorance of physiology, an ignorance unhappily too widely spread, can argue that because a certain article is wholesome to many it must necessarily be wholesome to all. Each individual organism is specially different from every other. However much it may resemble others, it necessarily in some points differs from them, and the amount of these differences is often considerable. If the same wave of air striking upon the tympanum of two different men will produce sounds to the one which to the other are inappreciable; if the same wave of light will affect the vision of one man as that of red colour, while to the vision of another it is no colour at all, how unreasonable is it to expect that the same substance will bear precisely the same relation to the alimentary system of one man as to that of another! Experience tells us that it is not so. (*Scientific Illustrations and Symbols.*) *"The simple gospel"*:—I believe that if many Christian people of the present day had lived 1800 years ago, and an apostle had told them that he wanted to speak to them about Melchisedec, but found it hard to present the truth in a form sufficiently clear to be quite intelligible, they would have said that they would greatly prefer that he should leave the whole subject untouched; that they liked the simple gospel—the simpler the better; that what they wanted was "milk"; that they had no taste for different questions; that they liked to have their hearts moved; that this doctrinal teaching of which, unfortunately, he and some of his brethren seemed so fond, was quite above them, and did them no good; that there were many things in his sermons "hard to be understood"; that they wished he would be more "obvious"; and that a Christian teacher was bound to be constantly repeating the elementary facts and truths of the Christian faith. (*R. W. Dale, LL.D.*) *Meat for men*:—The importance of cultivating a profound knowledge of the highest and deepest truths may be brought home to us by the following considerations—1. It is a sin to neglect any part of God's oracles. To select portions for study and obedience is to be disobedient, as it is setting up of our individual private judgment against the wisdom and the will of the infinite Heavenly Father. It furthermore argues a want of love for truth. This love for truth it is indispensable to cultivate. It is really more important than a nervous carefulness to be exact in all our statements, and accurate in the use of our words. 2. Profound spiritual knowledge is necessary, in order to teach others. Every man is a teacher, whether he will be or not; but

every man ought to feel the importance and privilege of being able to give his fellow-man some help, however small, out of the darkness into the light. 3. It is necessary to keep us in times when false doctrines are influential. It does not require great acquisitions of worldly learning to become profoundly versed in spiritual things. A simple, obedient, trusting heart, going unaffectedly to the Eternal Spirit of truth, will be led to such knowledge of the key-truth as will enable him to unlock all the caskets as he comes to them. 4. The profounder one's knowledge of the greatest Divine truths, the greater one's humility. If all a man knows of the Bible is the original tongues in which it was written, its history, its chronology, its literature, he may be a self-conceited sciolist; but when he comes to know Him for whom were all things and by whom are all things, he falls naturally into his place, and the things that are seen and temporal will yield in his estimation to the things which are unseen and eternal, and he becomes simple in his love for the truth, especially of the commanding truth of the universe. 5. This profound knowledge of Divine truth increases the lovingness of a man's nature. Knowledge and love are twins. It was a pagan idea that love should be a blind god. No eyes quicker than the eyes of love to see all that is good and sweet in the beloved. 6. Sectarianism owes its existence to a want of knowledge of the highest central truths. Deep knowledge of the highest spiritual things is to all Christians a law of gravitation, keeping them in their orbit. 7. The oracles of God are the instruments of our personal sanctification. We are, through the Spirit, to learn the truth; and this truth will show us what is righteousness, the right; and we are to purify our spirits, not by some supposed act of consecration in a moment of enthusiasm, however honest and good that enthusiasm may be, but by constant obedience to the truth, by the aid of the Spirit of God. 8. Our surest present enjoyment, and our happiest views of the future of the Church, depend on our knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. The more a Christian knows of the greatness, and goodness, and wisdom, and love of Jesus, of all the grace that is to come to him in this world, and all the glory that is to come to him in the eternal world, through Jesus, the more his happiness deepens. (*C. F. Deems, D.D.*) *Wherein it is a grace or disgrace to be like children*:—I. THE FORMER RESPECTS ARE THESE—1. Simplicity, honesty, plainness, truth. These graces are implied to be in children (Isa. xi. 8). We have a proverb that children will tell truth. 2. Humility and meekness. Herein doth Christ set forth children as a pattern (Matt. xviii. 4). So doth the Psalmist (Psa. cxxxi. 2). 3. Freedom from rancour, malice, envy, and such like violent and evil passions (1 Cor. xiv. 20). 4. Desire of milk whereby they are nourished (1 Pet. ii. 2). 5. Growing and increasing (1 Pet. ii. 2). Childhood is a growing age. When men come to man-age they use to stand at a stay. 6. Taking notice of their parents, and depending on them. Lambs, calves, and other young ones know their own dams, and will quickly find them out in a great flock or herd. The prophet showeth that the ox and ass, the most brutish of brutes, know where they are fed (Isa. i. 3). "Your Heavenly Father knoweth that you have need of these things" (Matt. vi. 31). Will you not then depend on Him? 7. Subjection to their parents' will, which is a law to children (1 Pet. i. 14), and seeking their parents' honour (Mal. i. 6). Christ hath made Himself a pattern herein (Luke ii. 51). 8. Care to imitate their parents, and seeking to be like them (John viii. 39; Rom. iv. 12; 1 Pet. i. 16, 17; Eph. v. 1; Matt. v. 48). 9. Retaining a childlike affection to their parents, and reverencing them, though they correct them (chap. xii. 9). 10. Returning to them after they have offended them (Luke xv. 18). That affection which a child conceiveth to be in his parents towards him, will be in him towards his parents. II. THE RESPECTS WHEREIN IT IS DISCOMMENDABLE AND DISGRACEFUL TO BE AS CHILDREN, are such as these—1. Ignorance and want of capacity (1 Cor. xiv. 20). 2. Vanity and delighting in toys, as painted pears, rattles, and such like. "When I became a man I put away childish things" (1 Cor. xiii. 11). 3. Levity, inconstancy (Eph. iv. 14). We say of a child that it is won with a nut, and lost with the shell. 4. Disability to manage weighty affairs (Eccles. x. 16; Isa. iii. 4; Jer. i. 6). 5. Non-proficiency, and a small measure of knowledge, faith, and other graces. In this respect children are here opposed to men well grown; and babes are counted carnal, and opposed to such as are spiritual. This last respect is here especially meant. (*W. Gouge.*) *Strong meat*:—In most large houses we shall find humanity in all its stages. We shall see the infant in its cradle, children laughing in their play, young men working with vigour, and the old man resting in peace. In such a mansion, if a careful Martha be in charge, provision will be made for all the different ages. Now in our Father's great house

His family is always so large that you will always find believers in all stages of growth. Now it were unfitting to give the milk to the man of full age, and equally improper to present the strong meat to those who are but infants; our Lord has, therefore, been pleased to dictate directions as to the persons for whom the various provisions of His table are intended. I. Let us, first of all, BRING FORTH SOME OF THIS STRONG MEAT AND SET IT UPON THE TABLE BEFORE YOU. 1. A careful examination of the context will inform you that one form of strong meat which is only fit for full-grown Christians is the allegorical exposition of Scriptural history. I believe that every book of Scripture has some special lesson beyond its historical import; and perhaps when the history of the world shall have been fully wrought out, we shall see that the books of the Bible were like a prophetic roll sealed to us, but yet fulfilled to the letter. 2. I feel persuaded that the apostle also more particularly referred to those mysterious truths which have respect to the relationships of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to His complex person. The very simplest believer understands that Christ is God and man, that Christ stood as the sinner's surety and paid his debt. But His complex person suggests a thousand thoughts, all of which are too high for comprehension or even consideration until our senses have been exercised. 3. The doctrines of grace are also generally esteemed to be very strong meat. Only they who do business upon the great waters, and have learned the need of solid food, can usually feed on these things with satisfaction. 4. Scarcely need I mention that other dish—the more advanced and inwrought forms of Christian experience. II. Secondly, let me INVITE THE QUALIFIED PERSONS TO COME TO THE FEAST. Who are they? They are here described as being persons of full age. Understand that there is no reference here at all to the age of a person as to human life. Growth in grace does not run side by side with growth in years. As old Master Brooks says, "There are some few believers who seem to be born with beards"; they are ripe Christians at a very early stage of their spiritual existence; and there are some who, if they tarry at Jericho till their beards be grown, will be long in seeing the King's face. They are always babes, needing the spoon and the rocking-chair, even in old age. The expression in the text, then, has no reference to age, but is used in a spiritual and metaphorical sense But what is meant by men that are full-grown? Well, you know, a babe has the same parts as a man. The babe is perfect in its measure, but it is not perfectly perfect. Those limbs must expand; the little hand must get a wider grasp; the trembling feet must become strong pillars for ripening manhood; the man must swell, and grow, and expand, and enlarge, and be consolidated. Now when we are born to God we have all the parts of the advanced Christian. Faith, hope, love, patience—they are all there, but they are all little, and they must all grow; and he is of full age whose faith is vigorous, whose love is inflamed, whose patience is constant, whose hope is bright, who has every grace, in full fashion. Nor is it only development. The full-grown man is stronger than the babe. His sinews are knit; his bones have become more full of solid material; they are no longer soft and cartilaginous, there is more solid matter in them. So with the advanced Christian; he is no longer to be bent about and twisted; his bones are as iron, and his muscles as steel; he moveth himself in stately paces, neither needeth he any upon whom to lean. He can plough the soil, or reap the corn; deeds that were impossible to infancy are simplicities to the full-grown man. But then our text tells us that they have had their senses exercised. The soul has senses as well as the body. Men who have had their senses exercised know how to choose between good and evil. Now, what are these senses? Well, there are our spiritual eyes. Travellers, who go to Switzerland for the first time, soon discover that they have not had their eyes exercised. You think that you can reach the peak of yonder mountain in half-an-hour. There is the top of yonder rock; you dream that a boy might fly his kite to the summit, but it shall take you hours to climb there, and weary limbs alone can bear you to the dizzy height. At a distance, young travellers scarcely know which is mountain and which is cloud. All this is the result of not having the eyes exercised upon such glorious objects. It is just precisely so in spiritual things, unless Christians have their eyes exercised. I hope you know what it is to see Christ; your eyes, by faith, have looked upon the King in His beauty. You know what it is, too, to see self; you have looked into the depravity of your own heart, and have been amazed. Your eyes have seen the rising and the falling of many deceptions. Your eyes have been tried in waiting for God in many a dark night, or in beholding Him in the midst of many a bright Providence. Thus your eyes have been exercised. Now, when a doctrine is put before you, a strong doctrine, you look at it and say—"Ah! yes; my eye of faith tells me from what I

have seen before that that is healthy food upon which I may feed." But if you detect something in it that is too high, or too low, you at once say—"No, that won't do for me," and you put it by. Hence it is that the man, the eye of whose faith has been tried with bright visions and dark revelations, is qualified to discern between good and evil in those great mysteries which would be too high for unexercised believers. Then there is the ear, &c. III. I think our apostle meant the text to be a GENTLE REBUKE TO THOSE WHO ARE NOT FULL-GROWN MEN. The apostle says that the Hebrew saints ought to have been teachers, but that they still remained infants. It is very pleasant to see the infant in the house. What joy there is in its tender cry. But suppose that our children were always to remain infants, that would be no happiness to the parent. How long have you been converted to God? Why, I have known some converts that have been in long clothes for thirty years after they were converted, and are babies still. If you asked them to speak for Christ, they could only say a word or two of mere babble; and as for their confession of faith, it was not a reason; they did declare the hope that was in them, but they did not give a reason for it, for they could not give one. Then there are some who grow so slowly that their faith is just as weak now as it was twenty years ago. They go tottering along, and cannot run alone yet. Have I not seen some who ought to have been as patient as Job by this time, as fretful as they can well be. Why not begin to search the Scriptures? Why not try to live nearer to God? Why not pant after a greater conformity to Christ's image? Why, what a Christian you might then be! (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The perfection of Christian knowledge:*—I. It is evident from the nature of Christianity that YOU CAN NEITHER SEE ITS BEAUTIES, NOR REAP ITS BENEFITS, WHILE YOU ATTEND ONLY TO SOME LOOSE PRINCIPLES, AND DO NOT CONSIDER THE WHOLE SYSTEM: for the truths of religion form a system, a body of coherent doctrines, closely connected, and in perfect harmony. I am aware that this grand characteristic of Christianity hath occasioned many mistakes among mankind. Under pretence that a religion proceeding from God must harmonise in its component parts, men have licentiously contrived a chain of propositions to please themselves. They have substituted a phantom of their own imagination, for that body of doctrine which God hath given us in the Holy Scriptures. Hence so much obstinacy in maintaining, after so much rashness and presumption in advancing such phantoms. For of all obstinate people, none excel more in their dreadful kind than those who are prejudiced in favour of certain systems. But if infatuation with systems hath occasioned so many disorders in the Church, the opposite disposition, I mean, the obstinate rejection of all, or the careless composition of some, hath been equally hurtful; for it is no less dangerous, in a system of religion, to omit what really belongs to it, than to incorporate anything foreign from it. Let us be more explicit. There are two sorts of truths in religion: truths of speculation, and truths of practice. Each truth is connected not only with other truths in its own class, but truths of the first class are connected with those of the second, and of these parts thus united is composed that admirable body of doctrine which forms the system of religion. There are in religion some truths of speculation, there is a chain of doctrines. God is holy: this is the first truth. A holy God can have no intimate communion with unholy creatures: this is a second truth which follows from the first. God, who can have no communion with unholy creatures, can have no communion with men who are unholy creatures: this is a third truth which follows from the second. Thus follow the thread of Jesus Christ's theology, and you will find, as I said, each part that composeth it depending on another, and every one giving another the hand. For, from the loving and merciful inclination of God to relieve a multitude of His creatures from a threatening abyss of the deepest miseries, follows the mission of Jesus Christ; because it was fit that the remedy chosen of God to relieve the miseries of men should bear a proportion to the causes which produced it. From the doctrine of Jesus Christ's mission follows the necessity of the Spirit of God: because it would have been impossible for men to have discovered by their own speculations the way of salvation, unless they had been assisted by a supernatural revelation. From the doctrines of the mission of the Son of God, and of the gift of the Holy Spirit, follows this most comfortable truth, that we are the objects of the love of God, even of love the most vehement and sincere that can be imagined. In like manner there is a connection between practical truths. The class of practical truths is connected with the class of speculative truths, and each practical truth is connected with another practical truth. The class of practical truths is connected with the class of speculative truths. As soon as ever we are convinced of the truth of the doctrines just now mentioned,

we shall be thereby convinced that we are under an indispensable necessity to devote ourselves to holiness. All virtues mutually support each other, and there is no invalidating one part of our morality without, on that very account, invalidating the whole. To illustrate this we may compare spiritual with natural things. The more art and ingenuity there is in a machine composed of divers wheels, the more necessary it is to consider it in its whole, and in all its arrangements, and the more does its beauty escape our observation when we confine our attention to a single wheel: because the more art there is in a machine the more essential is the minutest part to its perfection. Now deprive a machine of an essential part and you deface and destroy it. Apply this to spiritual things. In a compact system, in a coherent body of doctrine, there is nothing useless, nothing which ought not to occupy the very place that the genius who composed the whole hath given it. What will become of religion if ye consider any of its doctrines separately? What becomes of religion if ye consider the holiness of God without His justice, or His justice without His mercy? II. Let us then proceed to inquire WHY SO MANY OF US CONFINE OURSELVES TO A SMALL NUMBER OF RELIGIOUS TRUTHS, AND INCAPACITATE OURSELVES FOR EXAMINING THE WHOLE SYSTEM. 1. The first cause is a party-spirit. This is a disposition that cannot be easily defined, and it would be difficult to include in a definition of it even its genus and species. It is a monstrous composition of all bad genuses and of all bad species. It is an hydra that reproduceth while it seemeth to destroy itself, and which, when one head hath been cut off, instantly produceth a thousand more. This spirit must naturally incapacitate a man for considering the whole of religion; it must naturally incline him to take it only by bits and shreds. On the one hand, it contracts the mind: for how can a soul that harboureth and cherisheth all the phantoms which a party-spirit produceth, study and meditate as religion requires? On the other hand, a party-spirit depraves the heart and eradicates the desire of knowing religion. A man animated with the spirit of party directeth all his attention to such propositions of religion as seem to favour his erroneous opinions, and irregular passions, and diverts it from all that oppose them; his system includes only what strengthens his party, it is exclusive of everything that weakens or opposes it. 2. The second cause of the evil that we would remove is the choice of teachers. In general, we have three sorts of teachers. The first are catechists, who teach our children the principles of religion. The second are ministers. The third prepare the minds of young people for the ministry itself. The carelessness that prevails in the choice of the first sort of teachers cannot be sufficiently lamented. The care of instructing our children is committed to people more fit for disciples than masters, and the meanest talents are thought more than sufficient to teach the first principles of religion. And yet what capacity does it not require to lay the first foundations of the edifice of salvation! What address to take the different forms necessary to insinuate into the minds of catechumens, and to conciliate their attention and love! What dexterity to proportion instruction to the different ages and characters of learners! The pastors of our churches are our second class of teachers. What precaution, and, in some sort, what dread ought to prevail in the choice of an office, which so greatly influences the salvation of those among whom it is exercised! There needs only the bad system of a pastor to produce and preserve thousands of false notions of religion in the people's minds, notions which fifty years' labour of a more wise and sensible ministry will scarcely be able to eradicate. What hath been said on the choice of pastors still more particularly regards the election of tutors, who are employed to form pastors themselves. Universities are public springs, whence rivulets flow into all the Church. On the contrary, place men of evil character at the head of our universities, and they will send out impoisoned ministers, who will diffuse through the whole Church the fatal venom which themselves have imbibed. 3. The third cause, which we have assigned, of the infancy and novitiate of most Christians in religious knowledge, is the multitude of their secular affairs. Far be it from us to aim at inspiring you with superstitious maxims. We do not mean that they who fill eminent posts in society should devote that time to devotion which the good of the community requires. Amidst the most turbulent solicitudes of life, a Christian, desirous of being saved, will devote some time to his salvation. 4. The last cause of the incapacity of so many Christians for seeing the whole of religion in its connection and harmony; the last cause of their taking it only by bits and shreds, is their love of sensual pleasure. We do not speak here of those gross pleasures at which heathens would have blushed, and which are incompatible with Christianity. We attack pleasures more refined, maxims for which reasonable persons become sometimes apologists;

persons who, on more accounts than one, are worthy of being proposed as examples; persons who would seem to be the salt of the earth, the flower of society, and whom we cannot justly accuse of not loving religion. Recollect here that general notion of religion which we have laid down: it contains truths of speculation, and truths of practice. Such sensual pleasures, as we have just now mentioned, form invincible obstacles to the knowledge of both. (1) To the knowledge of speculative truths. How is it possible for a man to obtain a complete system of the doctrines of the gospel while he is a slave to sensual pleasures? To obtain a complete system of the doctrines of the gospel there must be a certain habit of thinking and meditating. This habit cannot be acquired without exercise, it is unattainable without serious attention and profound application. But how can people devoted to pleasure acquire such a habit? To counterbalance the difficulty of meditation and study there must be a relish for it. But nothing is more capable of disgusting us with the spiritual pleasures of study and meditation than the love of sensual pleasures. To acquire a complete knowledge of religious truths, it is not enough to study them in the closet, in retirement and silence; we must converse with others who study them too. But the love of sensual pleasure indisposes us for such conversations. (2) But, secondly, if the love of sensual pleasure raises such great obstacles to the knowledge of speculative truths, it raiseth incomparably greater still to the truths of practice. There are some Scripture maxims which are never thought of by the persons in question, except it be to destroy them, at least they make no part of their system of morality. In your system of morality, what becomes of this Scripture maxim, "Evil communications corrupt good manners"? Nothing forms connections more intimate, and, at the same time, more extravagant, than an immoderate love of pleasure. In your system of morality, what becomes of those maxims of Scripture which say that we must "confess Jesus Christ before men," that "whosoever shall be ashamed of Him before men, of him will He be ashamed when He cometh in the glory of His Father"? In your system of morality, what become of those Scripture maxims which threaten those with the greatest punishments who injure others? The love of sensual pleasure causeth offences of the most odious kind; I mean, it betrays your partners in pleasure into vice. Ye do not injure your families; but do ye not occasion other men to injure theirs? Ye are guilty of no fraud; but do ye not tempt others to be fraudulent? What become, in your moral system, of those maxims of Scripture that require us to contribute to the excision of "all wicked doers from the city of the Lord" (Psa. ci. 8); to discountenance those who commit a crime as well as to renounce it ourselves? The love of sensual pleasure makes us countenance people of the most irregular conduct. In your system of morality what become of those maxims of Scripture which expostulate with us, when the Lord chastiseth us, to "be afflicted and mourn," to "humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God"; to "enter into our chambers, and shut the door about us, to hide ourselves until the indignation be overpast"; to "examine ourselves before the decree bring forth"; to "prepare ourselves to meet our God"; to "hear the rod and who hath appointed it"; to mourn in sackcloth and ashes; and, while we feel present miseries, to remember those that are past, tremble for those that are to come, and endeavour by extraordinary efforts to avert the anger of Heaven? The love of sensual pleasure turns away people's attention from all these maxims, and represents those who preach them as wild visionaries or dry declaimers. In your system of morality, what become of Scripture exhortations to redeem the time, to know the time of our visitation, to do all that our hands find to do, because there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither we go? The love of pleasure inclines mortals, who have so short a time to live and so great a task to perform, to waste a considerable part of this fleeting life in amusements, that obliterate both the shortness of life and the necessity of death. (*J. Saurin.*) *The food that makes strong men*:—The essence of Bible makes moral and spiritual bone. I saw an advertisement the other day—"Thirty tons of bones wanted"—and I said to myself, "Yes, mostly backbones." Bibline is the nutriment which makes backbone, muscle, and, above all, heart. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) **Senses exercised to discern both good and evil.**—*The growth of the conscience*:—This verse, like another well-known verse in the same Epistle, seems to contain in few words the solution of a difficulty which accompanies us throughout the writings of St. Paul. For all through St. Paul's teaching a prominent doctrine is what we now call liberty of conscience. The inner principle is always recognised by him as supreme over the man. Now, it is not difficult to see why the apostle thus puts the inner voice

above all outer voices whatever. For the inner voice, and that voice alone, speaks personally and individually to the soul. A man's conscience may be mistaken; but if so, obedience to it is a mistake and not a sin, and we know that mistakes are very different from sins. If our conscience be mistaken because we have not taken due trouble to enlighten it, then for that neglect of cultivating our conscience we are responsible. But even then the conscience claims our obedience, and if to obey is a mistake, to disobey is a sin. Mistaken or not, the conscience must rule the life. To do right in disobedience to conscience would be (if it could ever be done) more fatal to the character by far than to do wrong in obedience to it. But nevertheless the apostle feels, and every one must feel in reading what he says, that surely here is a serious difficulty. The difference between making conscience supreme, and making any outer law or authority supreme, depends in fact on this. Which is it that God would have here on earth, good actions or good men? Does His gospel propose to redeem and sanctify men's deeds or their souls? Does He desire to see a series of good acts—acts, that is, regulated in their outward form by His holy Law? or does He desire to see a number of His servants striving to obey His will? If you want a number of right acts, then your business is to lay down a number of fixed rules and get men to obey them. But if you desire to have a number of good men, then it is tolerably plain that you must awake within them a power that shall guide their lives independently of mere rules. The acts of such men may not be quite as good as those of the men who are compelled to walk in a more defined path. But the men are men, and not machines, and as such are truer servants of God. To procure such men, the voice within themselves must be entrusted with the absolute dominion over all their lives. The difficulty is, how far this principle is to apply. Are all consciences in a state to claim this liberty? What will justify a man in relying unreservedly on his conscience? The answer is supplied by the verse in the Epistle to the Hebrews with which I began. Those who, by reason of use, have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil, are fitted to use strong meat. They may trust themselves to decide on their own conduct, to choose their own opinions; not certainly in confidence that they cannot make mistakes, but that their mistakes will not be ruinous to their character, and will, on the contrary, contain ever more good than evil. The conscience, like the other faculties that God gives, is not implanted perfect all at once. It has its infancy, its age of weakness; and it ought to have and can have its age of maturity. When it is full grown, it may and must be trusted unreservedly. This is its claim when it has grown to its full strength. And how, then, does it grow? Will it grow entirely of itself, or does it depend entirely on our own exertions? Its growth is like the growth of all our other faculties, the result of a combination of what is without with what is within. It will grow partly, on the one hand, by the experience of our lives, by the intercourse of our fellows, by the truth that we learn in our studies, by the new thoughts that flash upon us unbidden we know not whence, by the mere lapse of time and growth of our whole framework, both of body and soul, but, above all and through all, by the constant use of God's Holy Word, without which it would hardly be the same faculty; partly, on the other hand, by our own greater or less co-operation, by the bent which we have given to our wills, by the purposes which we have cherished as the hope of our future days, by the passions and impulses that we have fostered in our secret hearts. On the one hand, every day will probably enable us to see more distinctly the consequences and the bearings of every separate act, the extent and limits of every rule of life, the true meaning of every precept in the Bible, the application of our Lord's commands, the various doctrines of the gospel of God. And this, to a great extent, without any co-operation on our part at all; simply because we are older and more experienced, and our intellects have attained to greater power. But, on the other hand, the power of the gospel, the true nature of sin, the hatefulness of evil in God's sight, the love of Christ which passeth knowledge,—these, and truths like these are quite invisible, except to the soul, which opens to receive the grace that flows into it from on high, and rises to meet the blessings that God is ever giving. The true condition of the growth of the conscience is to live in it. To obey it is not enough, if, by obedience, is meant simply doing what it bids. What is wanted is to live in its spirit. That voice is ever calling us to Him who gave it; to God the Father who created it; to Christ whose gospel redeemed it, purifies it, fills it with power; to the Holy Spirit speaking in the Word of God, and revealing the everlasting truth. The constant habit of referring our lives to the will of Christ, the habit of living in the thought of His presence, of trusting entirely to His love, of feeling an absolute confidence

in His protection and care, of doing His will, as far as we know it, cheerfully and resolutely, of opening our hearts for Him to see, of filling our intellects with the lessons which He has written for our learning—this is the life which exercises the senses to discern both good and evil. (*Bp. Temple.*) *Reason in religion*:—This is a chiding for want of intelligence. It is a reproach for an indolent use, or rather for the disuse, of reason in the province of duty. The sacred Scripture stands almost alone as a book of religious directions in exhortiug to a full, free, and constant use of the reason. The Word of God is an enlightener; and wherever it has been a free Bible, and its influence has really entered into the lives and hearts of men, there intelligence has prevailed, and there the human understanding has unfolded its best works, and developed its best efforts. So that the Word of God is not a tyrant book. It imposes no manacles and no restraints, except those which belong to the nature of the human mind, and the nature of the subjects which the human mind is called to investigate. So, then, it is indispensably necessary that men should think, and that they should think for themselves. It is necessary, in repeated instances, that they should make their own deductions and conclusions, and follow in the lines of conduct which flow from them. But, on the other hand, men cannot, in all things, think for themselves. It is right, it is wise, to accept the thoughts of others. We give and take. In one place a man thinks for you, and in another place you think for him. There is this interchange of knowledge on the great principle of the faith of man in man. When, therefore, men insist upon it that to be in the full exercise of reason one must throw off the past and lift up his head into an independent sphere, where no man before has been, and think out all things, to him may be applied the words of the proverb: "Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? There is more hope of a fool than of him." Not philosophy, but folly, inheres there. Let us look a little, then, at the elements and the proofs of that reason which men talk so much about, and know so little of. First and lowest, is that which we possess with the whole range of the lower animals—perceptive reason—that part of the human understanding which takes cognisance of physical facts and events that are exterior to ourselves—which perceives the existence of things and their various qualities—which recognises whatever belongs to the framework or physical structure of the globe. Now, if any man supposes that there is certainty in this realm, he has given very little consideration to it. Men say, "Do you not believe the sight of your own eyes?" I have nothing better, I admit, by which to see things. But are these instruments so perfect that men may rely upon them implicitly? No. Every court of justice shows that the same event, being looked at by two, by four, by six different men, is not, although they are honest, and mean to state the truth, seen by any two of them alike. The sense of seeing in each one acts imperfectly, and each sees differently from the others, and makes a different report from theirs. The same is true of the sense of hearing. Men do not hear half that is going on, to begin with. Let the leader of a choir or a band hear a semi-tone of discord, and his ear will detect it instantly. Mine does not. That belongs only to the musician, and comes only by education. Hearing is not very accurate as between one man and another. In some it is far better than in others. It is not very accurate as between one period of a man's life and another. Different statements are given where men listen carefully and report truly what they have heard. The same is true in respect to the sense of touch. The five senses, with the perceptive intellect back of them, are alike in this respect. The sense of colour, the sense of shape, the sense of quality, all the senses, when you apply the test to them, and measure their accuracy, are found to be very unreliable. Nothing is more inaccurate than the reports of a man's perceptive intellect. The genius of knowing even the lowest form of truth is a rare genius; and in respect to the great mass of men the senses are fallible. Though they answer a certain rough use of life, and afford a basis for general confidence, yet, after all, when the question is one of exactitude, there is nothing less to be trusted than the senses, until they have been trained. And there are not many men who are capable of being trained so that their senses shall be irreproachable. This is one of the grounds and signs of the scepticism of science. Men who are scientific investigators apply to truth the tests of physical investigation. They perceive the mistakes which are made by others and themselves, and they come to have a realising sense, as the old ministers used to say, of the fallibility of man's perceptive reason. When they hear a man reasoning from the Bible, and forming judgments and drawing deductions therefrom, they hold these judgments and deductions in suspicion, and say, "That man is not using his understanding

accurately." If you go still higher, to the reflective reason, it is that which recognises the relations of things to the relations of truths. Ordinarily we call the use of this reason philosophy. Where it exists in certain forms, and considers everything in the most abstract way, we call it metaphysics. Now, when we look at the reliableness of this superior reason, has it proved to be a safe ground for trust? Men have been for ages reasoning, drilling, training, accumulating; and, after all, the consciousness of mankind is that the reflective reason, while it has vast advantages, while it supplies a human want and a human necessity, is as far from being infallible as anything can be. No man can afford to lean his whole weight upon it without suspicion, without test, without trial. It partakes of the fallibility of human nature. Nor does it follow because a great many different minds, in different directions, come together on a truth, that it is more true than it would otherwise be. The fact that things have been accepted from the days of the patriarchs may create a presumption or probability that they are true, but it is not absolute evidence of their truth; for many things have been believed from the days of the patriarchs that have proved not to be true, and been taken out of the category of truths. When, then, you come to judge of the action of the understandings of men—their perceptive reason and their reflective reason—you will find, that though they have practical serviceableness, they are so crude, so untrained, and so disturbed by the emotions of the mind, that they are not infallible, nor absolute, nor to be depended upon. There is another sphere of the reason—that one in which truths are apprehended in their social and moral relations. We come into the knowledge of truths of fact and matter by the mediation of our senses; but there is a higher realm than that of fact and matter. There is an invisible realm where emotion, where sentiment, where spirituality reside. We come into communion with that realm by the understanding, through the mediation of our personal emotions and feelings. I will illustrate it. Take a little air, or strain, which an organist may give you. It shall be some familiar tune, like "Dundee," or some old carol. Let him, by-and-by, after playing it on one or two small stops, introduce another stop—a hautbois or wood-flute, for instance; and you will see that while the air remains, there is a new quality in it. Now, it is so with the human mind. The intellect is looking at things; and if all the emotions were shut off, and were not allowed to colour them, how barren, how unrich they would be! But you draw one emotion, and instantly the things perceived through the intellect are affected by that emotion. As in playing a tune, every additional stop that is introduced adds a new quality to the sound, so the understanding is modified, changed, enriched, by this or that emotion which is let on. When the intellect is thus electrified, magnetised, polarised, it comes to a recognition of the greater truths of affection and sentiment. Take a man who has no conscience naturally, and let him stand in the midst of actions and presentations, whatever they are, and he will perceive no sense of equity; he will have no fine appreciation of honour, no intense feeling of what is right or wrong; he will be entirely without any such emotion; but others, standing right by him, and highly constituted in their moral nature, will be sensible to what is right, and true, and noble, and just. Take the emotion of ideality, which we call imagination, fancy, aspiration, yearning, and what not. Where that joins itself to the understanding it makes the orator, the poet, the mystic, the dreamer. It makes men that see truths in regions where they do not outwardly appear. In all such cases the understanding is magnetised by that feeling which brings them in relation to things invisible—to superior truths. Throughout the world the sentiment of benevolence, the sentiment of hope, the sentiment of faith, the sentiment of conscience, the sentiment of love, bring us into relation to spheres of truth which are infinite, Divine, transcendent. When, then, you come to look at what are called moral intuitions in men, what are they but the results of such a highly-organised, sensitive state of mind, that feeling, flashing upon the understanding, brings into the form of knowledge or perception all the truths that belong to the emotion which has coloured, or magnetised, or polarised the understanding? Now, in this realm what style and degree of certainty is there? I think, generally speaking, it may be said that those intuitions which are against nature—using nature in a qualified sense—are more apt to be true than those which are with nature. In other words, the spontaneous feelings which a man has in the direction of the animal sphere—anger, pride, cruelty, and the like—are, generally speaking, more erroneous than those intuitions which go out toward the generous, the noble, the pure, the self-denying. It is more natural for a man to act with those immense swells of feeling which work toward the

animal, than to act with those emotions which work toward the spiritual, and yet in that direction he most often acts wrongly. It is only by long practice with reason and feeling that we have learned to discern the right from the wrong—the good from the bad. It requires education—that is to say, the introduction of the element of habit upon this joint action of the reason and the emotions—to enable us to make just moral distinctions. So far, then, as to the fallibility of men's reason. It would seem, at first thought, in looking over this subject, as though there was a strong argument in favour of having the Church think for men, and tell them what is right and what is wrong; but there is always this fallacy, that where the Church thinks out a truth, and tells it to me, I have to think of it before I can understand it. I meet the same liabilities to error in accepting from the Church what it says as infallible that I do in the exercise of my own thought independent of the Church. The very act of receiving truths from other persons, or from bodies of persons, is attended with as many risks as the act of searching for truths unaided by others. I am liable, in accepting what comes to me from others, to no less limitations and mistakes than I would be if I went forth and gathered my own materials and made my own deductions. Moreover, we have had the experience of ages, which shows us that the truths which are handed down to us by corporate bodies are not any more true than those which are developed by our own individual experiences. Take the household. The father and the mother can think for the children until they are fifteen, or eighteen, or twenty years of age; but then they must think for themselves. Why? Because no child is like its father and mother. All truth is relative to the person by whom it is applied. Then, next, let me speak of the arrogance of those who are throwing aside or attempting to disesteem or to disown all the deductions of the spiritual sense; all the results of the action of the upper understanding. Shall I disown the sounds that fill the air, because, applying my eye to them, I cannot see them? Shall I disown all odours, because, putting my ear to the flower, I cannot smell them? Shall men disown truths because they cannot taste them when they are discoverable, only through the joint action of passion or affection or spiritual emotion, and the higher understanding? Shall men apply the crucible, or the mathematical rule, or any outward measure to things that, if perceived at all, must be perceived through the channel of higher thoughts and feelings, and disown them because they cannot stand the test of the lower reason? The lower reason has its tests, the superior unspiritualised reason has its tests, and the spiritualised reason has its tests; and each must rest on its own ground. One other point. In view of the carefulness required in the investigation of truth; in view of the time and training and discipline that are required; in view of the nature of the mind and the skill required to judge of its actions rightly, I say to all those who are speaking lightly of the faith of their fathers, and of the manners and customs of their childhood; I say to all those who, without any special knowledge, are talking of progress and emancipation, and of the glorious era of reason; I say to all those who are curveting in physical philosophy, as against the higher modes of arriving at the truth, "You are going too fast and too far. No man is wise who leaves his head behind him; and you are travelling faster than your brain can go." To bring new thought to the balancing of truth; to put thoughts to thoughts, and to make them march in ranks and train together to form systematic facts and co-operating truths—this is a slow, a cautious, and a difficult process. Knowledge, virtue, morality, spirituality, manhood, can only be acquired by long effort and practice. Men gradually find new elements of truth, or larger proportions of old truths. Be willing to receive new light; but until you have something substantial and clear as crystal to take the place of the old, hold on to what you already have. Nothing is so bad as for a man to be afloat; nothing is so bad as for a man to lose faith in everything. Put in a skiff, in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, a babe that knows neither the stars, nor the sea, nor storms, nor sail, nor compass, nor rudder, and what such a child is, that is the young man who drifts through life, contemning all faith, all knowledge of the past, yet without having acquired any knowledge of the present, or gained any intuitions of the future. (*H. W. Beecher.*)

The nature of conscience:—It is clearly implied in the context that ignorance confines men to very imperfect guides in life, and that a true religion ought to develop growth in knowledge, not only, but skill in using knowledge as a means of rectitude; and still more clearly in the closing verse is it declared that the conscience of men requires education, in order that it may, "by reason of use," "discern both good and evil." Using, exercising, disciplining a man's conscience, according to the conception of this passage, is the method by which it may be made to discern good and

evil. First as to the nature of conscience. It is a moral sentiment or emotion subject to all the conditions of all other emotions in the mind of man. It does not differ in that regard from any sentiment or any emotion. All the great moral desires or sentiments are dependent for opportunity and for incitement upon the foregoing action of the intellect. The intellect thinks and perceives for the conscience just as much as it does for hope, for fear, for veneration, or for love. It is the precursor of these elements. Therefore the desires or sentiments are not, in and of themselves, intelligent. There is not a sentiment of hope with a little intellect of hope in it. There is not a sentiment of veneration with a little thinking power in it. There is not a sentiment of conscience with a little thinking mind belonging to it. The intellect belongs to all sentiments. Every sentiment draws its knowledge, and therefore its opportunity and incitement for action, from the common understanding that overspreads all the sentiments. They are dependent upon the reason for light. No man discerns the rightness or the wrongness of anything through his conscience. It is the intellect that sees the agreement or disagreement of conduct with the rule of life. It is conscience that experiences pain or pleasure in itself at this disagreement or agreement. The action of conscience, therefore, is partnership action. What some term "the moral sense" is the co-operative action of the intellect and the sentiment of conscience. No mind, no intelligent conscience. The reason, therefore, stands related to all sentiments—to conscience and the rest—as the keys on the keyboard do to the pipes in an organ. All the pipes have the potentiality of certain sounds, differing one from another; but they do not sound themselves. They never open their throat to speak until the keys are pressed. We open them with our hands. The whole issuing range of harmony from the instrument is determined at the key-board and not behind it. We touch the keys first, and the response comes afterward. So reason is the key-board of the mind; and when it pronounces any course of conduct, or any action, to be right, the conscience approves it—that is, it gives forth the sentiment of pleasure to itself; and when the reason condemns any course of conduct or action, then the conscience gives back to itself the sentiment of pain. But while on the one side it is true that the conscience does not itself think, nor perceive, nor discern, it would be wrong to suppose that it has nothing to do with thinking, perceiving, and discerning. Indirectly it has much to do with them, for, while the emotions of the soul have incitement and opportunity from the intellect, the intellect is not unaffected by them. Strong emotions inspire the intellect with a sensibility peculiar to the truths which belong to those emotions that are acting. Or, if I may so say, figuratively, a feeling gives its colour to the intellect, and makes it susceptible of the kinds of truth which it otherwise would not discern. For example, every kind of sorrow produces in the intellect a sensibility to the peculiar class of truths which are concerned in sorrow. If one be overladen with sorrow, everything he sees becomes sad, and everything he thinks of has a colour of sadness in it. But if the sorrow be cleared away, and mirth come in the place of it, the intellect no longer sees the shades, nor the low tones or tints of truth. It sees, dancing on every side, all the variable elements of the truths that belong to mirth. There is, then, a co-operative or interchangeable action of the intellect upon the emotions; so that a perfect education of either one requires the education of the other. They work together; and a proportion and balance between thought and feeling is indispensable to thought and indispensable to feeling. Therefore, so far from the intellect, devoid of emotion, being the discerner in regard to the greatest sphere of truth, it is precisely the opposite; the intellect is utterly unable to discern what is true in these higher realms except by the force of underlying feeling, which does not see, but which inspires the intellect with a quality that enables it to see, the truths which belong to these several departments. Secondly, consider the function and scope of conscience. Its function relates, properly, to reason, or intellect; to sensibility, and to truths of rectitude. It inspires the reason with that sensibility by which it discerns all truth, in so far as it relates to the moral conduct of mankind. When right is done, the conscience gives forth pleasurable emotions. When wrong is done, the conscience gives back pain. Thus it approves or condemns. It presides in all the spheres of men—in the household, in the market, in the forum, in government—and makes itself felt in universal law. At the same time it leavens every feeling of the soul, inspiring in each one a sense of truth and righteousness and rectitude in his own sphere. And it is a restraint upon unregulated and extravagant thought and emotion. Thus in all things it brings itself into human experience, whether it be in the form of feeling, or whether it be in the form of action. With this founda-

tion. I remark, first, that we discern in the action of conscience, practically, in a very great number of instances, the variety and intensity of our own judgment. Thousands of men are said to be conscientious simply because in the respects in which they have a sense of right and wrong they are intense, though they are not intelligent. Men who have a profound conscience toward God, toward His Book, toward His Church, toward His ministering servants, and toward truths that have in them something of the element of eternity—those men often have almost no conscience in regard to elements which relate to the welfare of mankind. So you shall see an Italian bandit who goes to bed with remorse because he did not pay his vows to the statue of the Virgin Mary, nor say the prayers that he had vowed, but who will wipe the dagger with which he had stabbed a man in the back with a sense of having performed a virtuous action! In anything which relates to religion many men are very conscientious; and such men are said to be very religious; but in the things which relate to worldly affairs these same men often have no conscience. Envy, jealousy, anger, hatred, rivalry, supersession, all such things they indulge in innocently, without the least idea that conscience has anything to do with them. They have not a conscience for truth everywhere, but they have a conscience for truth in spots, and of a certain kind. They have a conscience for truth toward the supernatural, for truth toward the supernal, but not for truth toward the human. Multitudes of persons there are who have a conscience about pins, but not about crowbars. They have a conscience about nettles, but not about serpents' teeth. That is to say, they exalt the bottom until it is as high as the top, and the top can be no higher. On the other hand, there are those who, not by feebleness of intellect but by an over-refined process or habit of searching and researching into metaphysical threads and films and gossamers, are perpetually bringing about them insoluble matters and tormenting themselves and their friends with questions in life which have no practical issue, but exist in the bowels of their brain and are being spun out. They weary themselves by excessive addiction to a subtle conscientiousness which works in such channels. Then, next, come mechanical consciences, or consciences that act entirely by rule and custom, and not by determining right or wrong through the reason. A mechanical conscience can only act in reference to cases which have been already determined; for it is a conscience which acts according to precedent or rule. Now, rules are the indispensable eyes of ignorance, as principles are the indispensable eyes of intelligence. They are the resultants of practical experiments in right and wrong through ages, and are not likely to be set aside for any one. It is far more likely that generations of men, as the result of continuous trial, will be right in practical affairs than that any single man will. Where, therefore, we are prone to ignore a custom because we are at liberty to act from original considerations we shall be very likely to substitute conceit for wisdom. For the great mass of mankind, then, conscience must determine right and wrong. That is, their intellect must ask, "What is custom?" "What is rule?" And they must go by that. Yet it is not the best guide. It is the very thing that is condemned in this passage. Wider civilisation and a higher life are full of things that must of necessity be outside of customs and rules, and for which no precedent can be established; and these must be determined by the application of principles. Hence you will find that the Word of God constantly recognises the propriety of a man determining right and wrong by referring to his original moral feelings. Many a man has trained his conscience to an interpretation of sensibility—that is to say, conscience and the understanding together, which form the moral sense, has been trained in such a way that they interpret right and wrong precisely as musicians interpret right and wrong in music, not as the result of any experience by which they say, "One, two, and three make a discord"; but as the result of feeling. A discord hurts the ear of one who is cultivated in music. Now, there is such a training of a man's moral sense that whatever is dishonourable, whatever is coarse, whatever is wrong in one way or another, hurts him. First comes the feeling of pain, and he has to determine the cause of it afterwards. The intellect and conscience working together are so sensitised that that which is at variance with or unlike moral principles, with truth, with simplicity, with fairness, with honour, with any virtue, is offensive to them. They have been so drilled in things right that the first appearance of a thing that is wrong strikes oppugnance into them. On the other hand, you will find men who are strict Sabbath-keepers, who are strict in the letter of honesty, who are strict in a thousand conventional elements of right and wrong, but who in business spheres, in the development of a campaign, in an enterprise where there is rivalry, where

there is some end to be gained by combination, or where there is pressure in one direction or another, are overreaching, and do not hesitate to do wrong, and violate the principles of humanity. They were never in such a case before; they have had no training of conscience which makes them feel that they are transgressing the law of right; and their want of integrity does not trouble them. But there are some men who shrink back instinctively from things that are wrong, and do not themselves know why they are shocked at them. There are many things that we are familiar with, but that we are unconscious of. There are many things that we know without thinking of them. I know the surface of the ground on which I walk without knowing it. I know a hill or a level without knowing it. My foot knows more than my head in these matters. It has been trained respecting them. We get up and sit down, we go backwards and forwards, we do a great many things where the body is concerned automatically. We have come to that point where instantaneity is the law of operation in many physical things. Higher than that, men may come to that state of mind in which, without any conscious intellectual operation, by instinct or moral insight, they shall abhor that which is evil, and in which they shall instinctively seek that which is good. This is the highest form of conscience. I must add one or two remarks. First, I think our times need training in judicial ethics far more than in intensity of spirituality. It is morality that develops spirituality, and not spirituality that develops morality. You cannot put on your roof until you have built your foundation. The lack of training in the principles of honesty and integrity is the weakness of our times. This training, like all real training, should be first in the household. I only add that perhaps more than any other single thing in the training of children, in the family, in the school, and in the preliminary stages of their life, are needed, first, training in what is right and wrong, and second, the development of an instantaneous subjection of thought and action to that which is determined to be right and wrong, and a habit of doing that which is duty instantly without questioning. (*Ibid.*) *Necessity of discrimination*:—A set of half-witted people went to the sea to gather precious stones. Not being well able to discriminate between true and false stones, they took for precious a lot of common pebbles, thinking they must be good because they were of bright colour and heavy. The really precious stones, being of uncertain colour and light weight, they rejected as worthless. (*J. Gilmour, M.A.*) *Knowledge by use*:—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, that shall ride upon these clouds, and triumph over their present imperfections, till 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.*)

CHAPTER VI.

VERS. 1-3. **Leaving the principles.**—*Foundation-stones*:—I. HERE IS A STATEMENT MADE WITH REGARD TO THE FIRST PRINCIPLES OF THE RELIGION WE PROFESS. He tells where they are revealed, and what they are. And, first, he would have his readers to understand that the principles of the doctrine of Christ are the "first principles of the oracles of God"; he uses the two expressions interchangeably, as if they both meant the same thing. His immediate object was to assert that the "doctrine of Christ," at which the Hebrews stumbled, was in reality no fresh revelation, but that all its rudiments had been taught in their own Mosaic Scriptures. A deep truth was contained in the saying of the ancient Church, "There were Christians on earth before there were Jews." Even from Paradise to Patmos, "the principles of the doctrine of Christ" have been taught with increasing gradations of development, as "the first principles of the oracles of God"—old, as well

as new. This being established, Paul proceeds to enumerate these principles; and he appears to state them miscellaneously, without reference to their natural station or logical order. 1. And, first, "Repentance from dead works." Dead works are works performed by one whose life is separated from the life of God. Thus separated, men may have the quality of manliness, but not of godliness; towards one another there may be melting love, heroic daring, unbending justice, most magnificent generosity; but whatever they may be with regard to men, with regard to God they are dead. Alienated from His life, even good works are dead works; dead while they live; dead as the dead leaves on the dead bough, parted from its parent stem. It is the doctrine of a merely human religion, that while we should repent of our evil works, we should trust in our righteous works for heaven. But it is the doctrine of Christ that we should repent of all the works wrought while our souls were dead in sin; and when we feel the quickening thrills of a new life, this repentance will take place. 2. But, secondly, turning from sin implies turning to God. We shall have no disposition to renounce our dead works until, united to the living God by faith, we are partakers of His life. Faith towards God, therefore, is another elementary principle of the oracles. To have "faith towards God" is to feel able to say, "I think, I will, I speak, I act as I do, because I have faith towards God"; it is to feel His Spirit touch us, to have the most affecting sense of His society, to act as under His inspection, to be alive to His presence as the most intense of all realities, giving the zest to every pleasure, the light to every beauty, the soul to every scene; to trust Him for the food, and raiment, and home, both of our mortal and immortal nature; to make Him the confidant of every weakness, and want, and woe; to revive beneath the sun-burst of His smile, and to mourn at the hiding of His face. 3. But we shall never have faith towards God, or approach Him in the way that has been just described, until our infected spirits have applied to a fountain of cleansing. So another essential principle is "the doctrine of baptisms." Those baptisms told not only of sin, but of a fountain opened for sin; and we know where that precious fountain flows. Rejoice to think that it is a fountain, and not a scanty supply. 4. But the doctrine, or the true meaning of the laying on of hands, was another principle of the doctrine of Christ. It conveyed a doctrine, and the doctrine was that he who would be saved must, by his own personal act and deed appropriate the work of Him who is our Saviour by being our substitute. 5. The resurrection of the dead is another essential article of faith, and one, like the rest, peculiar to inspired revelation. Nature does not teach it. It never dawned on the proud thoughts of philosophy. Even those beautiful mysteries of the spring, which are sometimes thought to teach, inferentially, the doctrine of a resurrection, convey no teaching sufficiently defined to still the agonies of doubt or sorrow. The changes they witness and the charms they show are revivals, not resurrections. But in the oracles of God all the great problems that affect the destiny of man receive a full solution, and all the questions that come from his breaking heart meet with a distinct response. The resurrection of the dead is a "doctrine of Christ." The Emperor Theodosius having, on a great occasion, opened all the prisons and released his prisoners, is reported to have said, "And now, would to God I could open all the tombs and give life to the dead!" But there is no limit to the mighty power and royal grace of Jesus. He opens the prisons of justice and the prisons of death with equal and infinite ease: He redeems not the soul only, but the body. From the hour of the "laying on of hands," the entire man has been saved. 6. But, once more: the eternal judgment has ever been a primary article of revelation. Though analogy, intuition, and universal opinion may have furnished grounds to justify belief in it as a probable event, only the "oracles of God" could unfold its principles, or announce its absolute certainty. This they have ever done. He, through whose sacrifice our souls have received a "baptism"—He who has become our substitute by "the laying on of hands," bearing all the pressure of our responsibility, and binding Himself to be answerable for us at the judgment-day—will be Himself our Judge. But there are some of you who have no right to these anticipations. You have not made provision for the great hereafter. By that tremendous phrase, "eternal judgment," consider your ways and be wise! II. And now, passing from the doctrinal statement, let us give attention to THE PRACTICAL APPEAL. 1. "Not laying again the foundation." The teacher, in this phrase, at once indicates the course he intends to adopt in his own instructions, and the conduct he would prescribe to those who study them. "Not laying again the foundation." God will not lay it again in His purposes; you are not to be for ever laying it again in your mind and memory; as it is settled in the heavens, so let it be settled here.

"Not laying again the foundation." You are not to forget it, so as to have to learn it again; you are not to doubt it, so as to need to be convinced of it again; you are not to forsake it, so as to have to return to it again. "Not laying again the foundation." You are not to be like an insane or unskilful builder, who excavates the foundation of his work, tears it from its place, and takes it to pieces, being doubtful of its materials, or uncertain of its sufficiency to sustain the superincumbent weight; and who, always engaged in destroying the foundation, and laying it again, makes no progress with his building. 2. "Leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ." At first sight the meaning of this clause is not obvious, and it seems to clash with those connected with it. There are different ways of leaving an object. We may leave it as the spendthrift son leaves his father's house, never to return; we may leave it as the deserter leaves the shield which he has "vilely cast away"; we may leave it as education and refinement leave ignorance and rusticity; but not so are we to leave these first principles of our faith. We are to leave them as the scholar leaves the letters of the alphabet—leaving them only to use them; leaving them that he may bring out all their powers, and employ them in startling combinations, as the instrument for acquiring or diffusing thought. We are to leave them as the plant leaves its root, when it towers into a majestic tree, leaving it only that it may the more depend upon it; and, day by day, drawing from it those fresh supplies of vital sap which it pours into the fresh leaves, fresh boughs, ever fresh and ever beautiful formations of that life which refreshes the hungry with its clusters, or the weary with its shade. We are to leave them as the builder leaves his foundation, that he may carry up the building, stone above stone, story above story, tower above tower, from the dusky basement to the sun-lit pinnacle; always leaving the foundation, yet always on it, and on it with the most massive pressure, and the most complete dependence, when most he leaves it. 3. "Let us go on unto perfection." It is obvious that there can be no reference, in this word "perfection," to the justifying work of Christ on our behalf. That is perfect from the first moment we believe. At once we receive perfect forgiveness, and a perfect title to the "inheritance in light." But, although justification is complete, sanctification has yet to be carried on. To borrow the idea of a transatlantic writer: "A perfect title to a piece of property puts a man in possession of it just as absolutely on the first day when it was given as twenty years after. When a man gives a flower, it is a perfect gift; but the gift of grace is rather the gift of a flower seed." It contains within it all the Divine germs necessary for growth. And we are asked to cherish it, that it may go on unto perfection, as the seed goes on to the perfection of a full-blown flower. 4. The word employed to indicate the manner of arriving at this end is richly significant. "Let us go on to perfection," should rather be rendered, "Let us be carried on." "The word is emphatical, intimating such a kind of progress as a ship makes when it is under sail. 'Let us be carried on' with the full bent of our minds and affections, with the utmost endeavours of our whole souls. We have abode long enough by the shore; let us now hoist our sails, and launch into the deep." Perhaps we feel discouraged by the labour, and alarmed by the very glory of our calling. The one may seem too much for us to exercise, and the other too great for us to hope for. Almost despairing of our ability to go forward, we may even now be thinking of going back. But if we are unable to go on, we are surely able to be carried on to perfection. And the Eternal Almightiness is even now at our side. (*C. Stanford, D.D.*) *Leaving first principles*:—We must leave these first principles as the pupil leaves the alphabet when he is brought to the process of combining letters into syllables, and syllables into words, and of words constructing sentences, and of sentences making a discourse. We must leave them as the architect leaves the foundation, and proceeds to erect upon it his superstructure. We must leave them as the mathematician leaves his axioms, and proceeds to the construction of his demonstration. To what purpose would the pupil have learned the elements of language if he should rest in them? Where the use of continuing to con them over without proceeding any further? What benefit would result from the labour and expense of laying the best foundation if it remain unappropriated—if no building be reared upon it? How long might the mathematician occupy himself in ascertaining the axioms of the science without coming at a single valuable result? And what advantage will accrue to us, or the world, from our acquiring the mere elements of Christianity without reducing them to practice, pushing them out to their ulterior results, and connecting them with the higher principles of a spiritual life? (*Geo. Peck, D.D.*) *Passing from elementary principles*:—How? Not casting it for ever behind our

backs: suffering it quite to slip out of our memories. We must remember even the principles of religion to our dying day; but we must not insist in those, and set down our staff here, but as good travellers go on forward. As if one should say to a grammar scholar, "Leave thy grammar, and go to logic, rhetoric, philosophy, to more profound points of learning," his meaning is not that he should leave his grammar quite, and never think of it any more, but that he should pass from that to greater matters. As if one should say to a traveller going to London, that sits eating and drinking at Colchester, "Leave Colchester, and go on to London," so leave this doctrine of the beginning of Christianity, leave your A B C, be not always beginners, but proceed till ye come to some maturity. (*W. Jones, D.D.*) **Let us go on.**—*Forward!*—I. THE NECESSITY FOR THIS EXHORTATION. Do not old habits, which Christian earnestness should have obliterated, begin to creep into the light again? Do not sins and temptations, which you thought you had mastered, rise up and gain power over you once more? II. THE MEANING OF THIS EXHORTATION. Having taken Christ, we must not merely receive His pardon, but we must live upon Him. III. THE CONSEQUENCES OF NEGLECTING THIS EXHORTATION. If we do not yield up all to Christ, we shall easily drift away from Him. We must go forward, or we shall fall farther away, till we sink into irremediable ruin. The awful solemnity of this passage (vers. 4–6) we cannot possibly exaggerate. (*H. Phillips, B.A.*) *Progress in Divine knowledge*:—Progression marks all God's works. In nature there is no perfect rest. There is change in everything—change which partakes of the character of progress; for even that which we regard as decay is but part of a new creative process. This universal law of progression holds good in the realm of truth; there is a going on, a climbing higher and yet higher in knowledge even of the divinest kind. Indeed we may say that, the more exalted the subject, the more absolute is the necessity that knowledge should ever be progressive—the more impossible it is that we can quickly and at once attain to the fulness of perfect wisdom. I. THERE ARE MANY THINGS CONNECTED WITH CHRIST AND HIS TRUTH WHICH ARE NOT COMMUNICATED TO THE SOUL IN CONVERSION, BUT WHICH MUST BE ACQUIRED FROM TIME TO TIME THROUGHOUT OUR CHRISTIAN LIFE. Great truths always come one by one. They are not discovered but by those who diligently search for them, and they are often the product of laborious toil. The apostolic injunction bids us do something more than "strike out blindly." It bids us intelligently and deliberately leave the elements of wisdom, and "strike out" towards the perfection of knowledge. It bids us break away, as it were, from our state of pupilage, and go on to the fulness of the knowledge of Christ. It lifts a corner of the veil which hides from us the infinitude of Divine wisdom, and urges us to press onward until our whole soul is filled with His love and grace. II. In this "going on unto perfection" it is desirable that we should clearly recognise the fact that GOD IS A TEACHER WHO USES MANY BOOKS. To the observing eye and to the teachable heart God is manifested everywhere. In complying, then, with this counsel to the Hebrews, let us seek for the fuller revelation of spiritual truths wherever God has written them. Let us regard the Bible, not merely as a fruitful field where we can quickly thrust in the sickle and reap upon the surface, but also as a rich mine, in whose deep recesses lie hidden many a costly gem, which our labour and our study, under the Divine blessing, may bring to the light. Let us look at the letter as the case which encloses the spirit—remembering that while "the letter killeth, it is the Spirit that giveth life." Let us also look for and discover truths of deep spiritual meaning in the incidents of daily human experience. III. It should also be duly borne in mind that ALL TRUTHS POSSESS A MUTUAL RELATIONSHIP, and that each has its influence in the work of perfecting the Christian character. Truth is one, though it may possess many branches. Walking by a wide river, bearing on its bosom the mightiest navies of the earth, it would be interesting to speculate concerning the numerous rills and brooklets which, miles away, in different counties, contributed to that expanse of water. From mountain, moor, and glen those waters have been flowing day after day, meeting and mingling with others, ever growing and gathering strength, until the result is that which we see at our feet. So are truths gathered from different sources, mingling their powers to influence the soul and bear it to the ocean of perfect wisdom and eternal love. IV. THIS PROGRESS IN DIVINE KNOWLEDGE IS SOMETHING QUITE DISTINCT FROM CHANGEABLENESS IN DOCTRINE. To leave the principles, or first elements, of the doctrine of Christ is not to depart from the soundness of the faith. It is to leave the first few miles of the road behind as we press forward towards the end of our journey. It is to leave the foundation which has been laid firmly in the ground, in

order that the building may rise higher and higher in beauty and majesty, until the topmost stone is laid in its place. It is to lay aside the alphabet of the language that we may devote ourselves to the riches of its literature, and add to our supply of knowledge from the ample stores of learning of which that alphabet is the key. V. PROGRESS IN DIVINE KNOWLEDGE IS ESSENTIAL TO THE FULL ENJOYMENT OF THE PRIVILEGES OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. In other words, spiritual knowledge is essential to spiritual health. Digging deep into the riches of spiritual truth, we discover that which not only stays the anxious throbbing of the heart, but which lifts the soul nearer and nearer to the Source of truth—to God Himself. As among men the possession of knowledge operates for the most part so as to elevate and refine the tastes, so to drink deeper at the stream of heavenly wisdom is to become in spirit more heavenly, and in character more Divine. It is said of Christ, that "in Him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," and that He was "the express image of the Father's person." What Jesus was in an infinite degree, the Christian who is full of Divine wisdom and rich in knowledge is also in his degree. He, too, reflects the image of the heavenly. He, too, gives forth rays of reflected but Divine light. The life that is in the soul of him who is going on unto perfection is Divine in its influence as well as its nature. It is of that man the world takes knowledge that he has been with Jesus, and that he has sat at His feet and been taught in His school. (*F. Wagstaff.*) *The soul's true progress*:—I. THE STARTING-PLACE. 1. Evangelical repentance. 2. Godward faith. 3. Spiritual cleansing. 4. Reliance on Christ. 5. A future state. 6. Eternal retribution. II. THE RESTING-PLACE. "Perfection." 1. Accuracy of Divine knowledge. 2. Conformity to the Divine will, so far as known. 3. The prospects of an ever-brightening future. (*Homilist.*) *Ever onward*:—It is an interesting thing to watch an ocean ship get out from London docks. How helpless she is! She cannot use her machinery. Her sails are furled. She is pushed forward and backward. She is pulled along by puffing tugs. She stops to let other vessels pass. She waits through weary hours. She moves on again. But she is hindered and limited and retarded. But some progress is rewarding her perseverance. She is getting more room. She begins to ply her engines. But she must go slowly. She must be cautious. Then there is more liberty; there are fewer obstructions and fewer conditions. The river is wider. The city is being left behind, with its din and its sin. The fresh air revives the sailor. He unfurls his canvas. He moves steadily on to the line where river fades into sea. He hears the music of the surf beating upon the sand. He sees the white-caps marching across the blue prairies of ocean. And at last the gallant ship, emancipated, seems to stretch herself and expand herself, and swell and sway and bow in ecstasy, as she speeds her way over the billowy fields of her native heath and boundless home. Thus it is with the soul that is escaping from the trammels of the flesh, and the limitations and the conditions imposed upon it by the world. How slow its progress is at first! How it is pushed forward and falls backward! How crippled is the soul's splendid machinery! How awkward its movements! Its sails are furled. It must submit to be helped by things smaller than itself—by trivial rules and puerile helps. It stops; it waits. It stands to for obstructions. But it moves on. It makes a little progress. The channel is getting wider. The shores of earth are getting further away. There is more room, more freedom. The engines move. The sails are thrown out. The fresh air of grace gladdens the sailor, and tells him that the city of sin is fading in the distance. The ocean of liberty is reached at last. The Lord takes the helm. The Spirit of God fills the sails, and then, emancipated and free, unloosed from the devil's imprisonment, unshackled from the habits and slavery of flesh, unlimited and unconditioned by the world's conventionalities, the glad soul rejoices on the bosom of God, which is the soul's ocean, which is the soul's home. (*R. S. Barrett.*) *A "Dissatisfaction Meeting"*:—At Chicago Mr. Moody held a "Dissatisfaction Meeting" for pastors and their flocks who were not satisfied with their spiritual condition. It was said to be overshadowed with the presence of God as few assemblies have been since the day of Pentecost. (*King's Highway.*)

Perfection.—*On apostolic perfection*:—Here we may see the germ of what afterwards became at Alexandria and elsewhere the catechetical system of the primitive Church. Wherever converts to Christianity were the rule, it was necessary to protect the sacrament of baptism against unworthy reception by a graduated system of preparation and teaching, each stage of which represented an advance in moral and intellectual truth. Hence the several classes of catechumens or hearers, who were allowed to listen to the Scriptures and to sermons in church; kneelers who might

stay and join in certain parts of the divine service; and the elected or enlightened who were taught the Lord's prayer, the language of the regenerate, and the creed, the sacred trust committed to the regenerate saints. They were now on the point of being admitted by baptism into the body of Christ. Then at last as the τελειοι or the Perfect they entered on the full privileges of believers, they learned in all their bearings the great doctrines of the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Atonement, the Eucharist. They were thus placed in possession of the truths and motives which shaped most powerfully Christian thought and life. The Christians who are receiving elementary instruction are termed babes. They cannot understand, much less can they utter, the discourse of righteousness. The Christians who have received the higher instruction are perfect. They can digest the solid food of Christian doctrine. Their spiritual senses have been trained by habit to appreciate the distinction between the good and the evil, which in this connection are other names for the true and the false. Therefore leaving the principles or the first discourse about Christ, let us go or be borne on unto perfection. "Perfection." What does he mean by it? Certainly not here moral perfection, the attainment in general character and conduct of conformity to the will of God, for this would be no such contrast to the first principles of the doctrine of Christ as the sentence of itself implies. The perfection itself must be in some sense doctrinal perfection; in other words, the attainment of the complete or perfect truth about Christ, as distinct from its first principles: of these first or foundation principles six are enumerated, and they are selected it would seem for the practical reason that they were especially needed by candidates for baptism: the two sides of the great inward change implied in conversion to Christ, repentance from dead works—dead, because destitute of religious motive—and faith resting upon God as revealed in His Son; the two roads whereby the converted soul enters upon the privilege of full communion with Christ, the doctrine about baptism, which distinguishes the Christian sacrament from the mere symbols of purification insisted upon for proselytes by the Baptist and by the law, and the laying on of hands which we now call confirmation; and finally the two tremendous motives which from the first cast their shadow across the light of the believer—the coming resurrection, and the judgment, whose issues are eternal. These three pairs of truths are precisely what the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews meant by the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, and therefore by perfection he must have meant something beyond these truths. He meant, no doubt, a great deal else, but specifically and in particular he meant the doctrine of Christ's Melchisedekian priesthood, in its majestic contrast to the temporal and relatively inefficient priesthood of Aaron, and with its vast issues in the mediatorial work, whether of atonement or of sanctification as carried out, the latter to the very end of time, by the great High Priest of Christendom. Now the point on which the text insists is the going forward from the first principles to the truths beyond. The apostolic writer does not say, "Let us go on unto perfection." He does say, "Let us be borne on"—*φερώμεθα*. He does not say, "Be courageous, be logical, push your premisses well till you have reached their conclusions." He does say, "Let us all"—teachers and taught—"let us all yield ourselves to the impulse of such truth as we already hold"—*φερώμεθα*. It will carry us on, as we try to make it really our own, it will lead us to fresh truths which extend, which expand, which support it. We cannot select one bit of this organic whole, baptize it by some such names as "primary," or "fundamental," and then say, "This, and this only, shall be my creed." If the metaphor be permitted, the trunk, all of whose limbs are cut off thus arbitrarily, will bleed to death. Where everything depends upon spiritual activity, *non progredi est regredi*. They who shrink from apostolic perfection will forfeit their hold sooner or later on apostolic first principles. Let us trace this somewhat more in detail. We have seen what were the first principles insisted upon among the first readers of the Epistle to the Hebrews. They belong to a disciplinary system of the Apostolical Church. They were selected on practical rather than on theological grounds. But what would probably be the first principles of an inquirer feeling his way upwards towards the light, under the circumstances of our own day? What would be the truths that would greet him on the threshold of faith, as the catechumen of our times, whom conscience and thought are training with hope for the full inheritance of the believer? They would be, in all probability, first, belief in a moral God. It is something, no doubt, to believe in a Cause who is the cause of all besides Himself; it is more to believe in an Intelligence who is the parent of all created intelligences. But religion, properly speaking, begins when man bows down in his secret heart

before One who, being boundless in power and infinite in wisdom, is also justice, sanctity, love. And thus, perhaps, simultaneously, the modern catechumen would be arrested by the character of Jesus Christ as it lies on the surface of the Gospels. These, we will suppose, are the catechumen's two first principles. They are now beyond controversy, at least for him. They seem to be all that he needs, and he says to himself that a simple faith like this is also a working faith. He can at least limit, or try to limit, and leave the spheres of abstract and metaphysical discussion to those who will explore them, but after all this, a time will come when he finds that he must go forward, if he is not to fall back. For he observes, first of all, that this world, the scene of so much wickedness and so much suffering, is hard indeed to reconcile with the idea of a God all-goodness and all-powerful, if, indeed, He has left, or is leaving, it to itself. If He is all-good, He surely will unveil Himself further to His reasonable creatures. Nay, He will do something more. His revelation will be, in some sort of sense, an efficacious cure. Exactly proportioned to the belief in the morality of God is the felt strength of this presumption in favour of a divine intervention of some kind, and the modern catechumen asks himself if the Epicurean deities themselves would not do almost as well as some moral God, who yet, in the plenitude of His power, should leave creatures framed by Himself to think and to struggle, without the light, without the aid, they so sorely need. This is the first observation, and the second is that the character of Jesus Christ, if attentively studied, implies that His life cannot be supposed to fall entirely within the limits, or under the laws, of what we call "Nature." For if anything is certain about Him, this is certain, that He invited men to love Him, to trust Him, to obey Him, even to death; and in terms which would be intolerable if, after all, He were merely human. Had He been crucified and then had rotted in an undistinguished or in a celebrated grave, the human conscience would have known what to say of Him. It would have traced over His sepulchre the legend, "Failure." It would have forthwith struck a significant balance between the attractive elements of His character, and the utterly unwarranted exaggeration of His pretensions. But our modern catechumen's reflections should not end here, for the character of God, and of Jesus Christ, in the Gospels is, in one respect, like the old Mosaic Law, which provokes a sense of guilt in man by its revelation of what righteousness really is. The more we really know about God and His Son, the less can we be satisfied with ourselves. It is not possible for a man whose moral sense is not dead, to admire Jesus Christ, as if He were some exquisite creation of human art—a painting in a gallery, or a statue in a museum of antiquities—and without the thought, "What do His perfections say to me?" For Jesus Christ shows us what human nature has been, what it might be, and in showing us this, He reveals us as none other, He reveals us individually to ourselves. Of His character, we may say what St. Paul says of the law, that "it is the schoolmaster to bring us to Himself," for it makes us profoundly dissatisfied with self—if anything can possibly do so—it forces us to recognise the worthlessness and the poverty of our natural resources, it throws a true, though it may be an unwelcome, light upon the history of our past existence, and thus it disposes us to listen anxiously and attentively for any fresh disclosures of the Divine mind that may be still in store for us, or already within our reach. And thus it is that the first principles which we have been attributing to our catechumen prepare him for the truths beyond these, that Divine goodness, those perfections of the character of Christ, which bear the soul onwards and upwards, towards acceptance of Christ's true Divinity, and, as a consequence, of the atoning virtue of His death upon the Cross. These momentous realities rest, indeed, on other bases, but they bring satisfaction, repose, and relief to souls who have attentively considered what is involved in the truths which were at first accepted. They proclaim that God has not left man to Himself, that God does not despise the work of His own hands, they unfold His heart of tenderness for man, they justify by the language which Jesus Christ used about Himself and about His claims, the faith and the obedience of mankind, and they enable us to bear the revelation of personal sin in which His character makes within each separate conscience that understands it, because we now know that "He was made to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." But does the advance towards perfection stop at this point? Surely not. Where so much has been done, there is a presumption in favour of something more, if more be needed. The Divine Christ has died upon the Cross, the victim for the sins of men. What is He doing now? The past has been forgiven, but has no provision been made for the future? May not recovery itself be almost a dubious boon if it be followed by an

almost inevitable relapse? And thus it is that the soul makes a further stage in its advance to perfection. The work of the Holy Spirit in conveying to men the gift of the new humanity exhibited by the perfect Christ, and this, mainly through the Christian sacraments, opens at this point before the believer's eye. It is by a sequence as natural as that from Christ's character to His divinity and atonement, that we pass on from His atonement to the sacramental aspect of His mediatorial work. The new life which He gives in baptism, "As many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ"—the new life which He strengthens in the Eucharist, "He that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me"—these great gifts are but an expansion of what is already latent in the recognised perfection of His human character; and the apostolic ministry, the channel and the guarantee of their reality, is not less a part of that perfection of truth to which intelligent faith conducts the soul. And the Christian creed has not said its last word to the soul of man until, besides assuring his reconciliation and peace with God, it has satisfied his desire for union with the Source of life. Who—let me say it once more—who does not see that our Lord's human character can only be described as perfect, if His right to draw the attention of men in terms which befit only a superhuman person, be frankly conceded? Who does not know that the existence of a moral God, the Maker and Ruler of this universe, is more clearly and forcibly contested by a large class of influential writers than any subordinate or derived truths whatever—that whatever may have been the case in the last century, atheism is even more earnest in rejecting, in our own day, the specific doctrines and the creed which comes from Jesus Christ? Surely, then, it is our wisdom, as Christian believers, while the day of life lasts, to make the most, and not the least, of such religious truths as we know. What must not He, who is their object, think—and surely He is thinking on the subject now—what must He not think of those many magnificent intellects which He has endowed so richly, unto which He has granted such opportunities of exercise and development, who yet know almost as little about Him as the children in our national schools, and who make no effort to know more; but have studied, with eager enthusiasm, all forms of created life, all the resources of nature, all the intricacies of the laws of human thought, while He, the Author of all, He, who is the Infinite and the Everlasting, is, as it would seem, forgotten. It is not much to ask of a serious Christian to endeavour to make his own, each day, some little portion of that knowledge which will one day seem incomparably more precious than any other. Half an hour a day costs something in a busy life; but it will not be held to have involved a very great sacrifice when hereafter we are face to face with the unchanging realities, and know in very deed what is meant by perfection. (*Canon Liddon.*) *Christian perfection*:—We have two things here alluded to—progress and attainment. The progress is a walk, a journey, a contest. The attainment is a complete state of Christian character. This is to be our ideal at which we are to aim. I. THE NATURE OF THE PERFECTION HERE ALLUDED TO. 1. The elements of the Christian life are not to absorb our attention and interest. The alphabet of Christianity is all very beautiful and necessary. If a professing Christian were to leave off at faith, he would be but a poor Christian indeed. 2. The higher elements of Christian virtue are to be assiduously cultivated. We know that these are not natural to the human mind. Complete control over the evil passion of the heart, holiness of life, restrained temper, perfect forgiveness, perfect love to man and God, are not easy to be acquired. II. SOME PARTICULARS OF THE STEPS TO BE TAKEN IN ATTAINING THIS CONDITION. 1. An increase of faith. 2. An accession of light. Without more light, there is no possibility of progress. 3. An increase of knowledge. III. NOW, TO ARRIVE AT THIS STATE OF PROGRESSION, THERE MUST BE—1. An unwearied practice of the details of Divine truth. 2. A constant dependence on the Holy Spirit. 3. An unceasing study of the character of Christ. 4. Continuous prayer. (*Preacher's Analyst.*) *On progress to perfection*:—Man is endowed with a capacity of intellectual, religious, moral improvement; and to cultivate knowledge, piety, and virtue is the chief end of his being. In each stage of the awful mysterious career of human existence every Christian may conceive his Creator addressing him as He did an ancient patriarch, "I am the Almighty God: walk before Me, and be thou perfect." Progress towards perfection, it is next to be noticed, will conduce much to our honour and our happiness. Reflect, Christians, how favourable your lot is to improvement, compared with that of those who lived in days of pagan darkness, or at a period less remote. On you the glorious light of revelation shines. Are you desirous to exalt your views, to elevate your affections, to ennoble your characters? Respect and attend the public

institutions of religion, for they are powerful means of human improvement. Further, let us make progress in virtue. Flourishing like the palm-tree, human nature, in its career of intellectual, religious, and moral improvement, adorns the terrestrial globe. "Sin is a reproach to any people, while righteousness exalteth a nation." Christians, "let us go on to perfection"; for it is highly conducive to our delight as well as to our dignity. Does not every one feel himself happier as he grows wiser and better? A passion for knowledge has added much indeed to the felicity of many a life spent in security, far from the bustle of the world, and with little solicitude about literary fame. The love of virtue is no less productive of happiness. "Blessed are they who do His commandments." Again, to prompt you to rise by progressive steps to higher and higher degrees of virtue, think frequently of those venerable men who persevered in the paths of rectitude, and have now received a crown of life. When we recollect the graces of the faithful, let us study also to act a consistent part, and give the enemies of the gospel no cause to remark, that though our principles may be orthodox, our conduct is wrong; that we glow with benevolence when nothing is to be given, and are only captivated with virtue when at a distance from temptation. Further, to animate our progress towards perfection, let us think of them who are to succeed us in the scene of life. Will not posterity record with delight those characters which excellence adorned? Therefore let them never see guilt like a malignant demon, sitting in triumph over the ruins of their fathers' virtues. As an additional motive to comply with the exhortation which the text contains, reflect that the spirits in glory will mark your progress with gladness and applause. "Never did refined Athens exult more in diffusing learning and the liberal arts through a savage world, never did generous Rome please herself more with the view of order established by her victorious arms," than the hosts of heaven will rejoice at the improvement of men. Finally, I beseech you to make progress, for behold the angel of death is approaching to strike the blow which shall terminate your days. (*T. Laurie, D.D.*) *Go on unto perfection*:—I. FORM A JUST NOTION OF THE TRUE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER. View it as delineated by the inspired writers, and learn from them what the Christian ought to be. They speak of him as the child of God; not only as "born of God," but as "bearing the image of his heavenly Father." But not confining themselves to these general representations, the inspired writers descend to enumerate the various excellences in temper and conduct, which combine to form the character of the Christian. He is one who has "laid aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings." He has "put on bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering"; he is filled with the fruits of the Spirit, which are "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." II. GUARD AGAINST LOSING ANY ATTAINMENTS YOU MAY HAVE ALREADY MADE. Sinful habits once laid aside, and again resumed, adhere more closely than ever, and will baffle all ordinary efforts to throw them off. If you now exercise any grace, or practise any duty in which you were formerly deficient, let no consideration tempt you to relinquish it. III. TAKE EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO EXERCISE THE GRACES AND VIRTUES WHICH YOU DO IN ANY DEGREE POSSESS. Are you conscious of devout and reverential feelings towards God? Cherish and strengthen these feelings by habituating yourselves to these exercises of devotion. In your dealings with mankind are you just and honest? Do men fail in what is their duty towards you? Let that be your opportunity of cultivating the meek and quiet spirit, and of practising patience and gentleness towards them. IV. FREQUENTLY REVIEW YOUR CHARACTER, AND EXAMINE WHAT PROGRESS YOU ARE MAKING IN THE GRACES OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. 1. For our aid and direction in acquiring these graces we have set before us the character of God, the conduct of Jesus Christ, the laws and precepts of the gospel. 2. It will be of great use to compare your character as it now is with what you recollect it formerly to have been. V. Let all your efforts after moral improvement be made in HUMBLE DEPENDENCE UPON GOD, ACCOMPANIED WITH PRAYER TO HIM, AND A CONSCIENTIOUS ATTENDANCE ON THE ORDINANCES OF RELIGION. These exercises tend in the most direct manner to cherish the pious and Divine affections of love, of gratitude, of faith, of hope. (*R. Boog, D.D.*) *Perfection*:—We count those things perfect which want nothing requisite for the end whereunto they were instituted. (*J. Hooker.*) *The instinct of perfection*:—We see this in everything. We see it in the little pastimes of children playing in the market-place—practising their baby games, and never resting till they can catch upon their battledore their fifty or their hundred. We see it in the cricket-field and on the rifle-ground—we see it in the hunt and at the billiard table: what

time, what toil, what patience, what disappointment, is grudged, if at last there may be perfection? We see it in the young scholar's devotion to his reading, to his composition. Some may study, some may compete, for the sake of the prize or the emolument, for the fame or the advancement. But we do a great injustice if we doubt that hundreds of the nobler youth of England would toil equally, and struggle equally, for the mere sake of knowing and of being. What is it which makes the great advocate, the eloquent orator, always tremble before speaking, and oftentimes lash himself afterwards? This, too, is not all of vanity and greed of praise; this is not all of eagerness to display self and mortification if the display be unsuccessful; much more is it, in real men, because there lives and glows in them, like a consuming fire, the ambition of perfection—a perfection which they never feel themselves to attain, just because nothing short of perfection will satisfy them. So it is with every painter, sculptor, writer, poet, who has in him that spark of genius by which art works and thought breathes. (*C. J. Vaughan, D.D.*) *The impulse of perfection*:—What else is it which gives its impulse to trade, and makes all the difference in that occupation of the million, between success and failure, between eminence and stagnation? The bad tradesman—you may know him by it—sees nothing insufferable in imperfection, and thinks his customer unreasonable if he looks for the absolute. "It will do," is his motto: it will do if the colour almost matches, if the dress nearly fits, if the dropped stitch, if the accidental flaw, can scarcely be noticed. You know that that workman cannot rise, will always be outstripped, must come to want—why? because he has no instinct of perfection, and therefore he lacks the first requisite of attainment. On the other hand, so strong is this motive in the body of human life, that you will find men engaged in large transactions willing to pay almost any price for a scarcely appreciable improvement in the screw of an engine or the catch of a machine, just because it is an approach, next to imperceptible, towards a perfection which real men of business never despise, and which therefore the ingenious never find unremunerative. (*Ibid.*) *Low aims*:—It is a low and unworthy strain in some to labour after no more grace than will keep life and soul together, that is, hell and soul asunder. (*J. Trapp.*) *Spiritual dwarfs*:—There was onee in London a club of small men, whose qualification for membership lay in their not exceeding five feet in height; these dwarfs held, or pretended to hold, the opinion that they were nearer the perfection of manhood than others, for they argued that primeval men had been far more gigantic than the present race, and consequently that the way of progress was to grow less and less, and that the human race as it perfected itself would become as diminutive as themselves. Such a club of Christians might be established in most cities, and without any difficulty might attain to an enormously numerous membership; for the notion is common that our dwarfish Christianity is, after all, the standard, and may even imagine that nobler Christians are enthusiasts, fanatical and hot-blooded, while they themselves are cool because they are wise, and indifferent because they are intelligent. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Is perfection attainable?*—When God tells us that we are to be "holy," "perfect," "without blemish," we are bound to believe that His command can be obeyed, and we ought not to be satisfied until we make the command an actuality. Could there be a sadder hindrance than that teachers of Divine things should lead men to suppose that God's purpose cannot be accomplished—that these words are mere figures of speech? Does God enjoin on us what is impossible? Convince a man that anything is impossible and he will not attempt it. A strong swimmer may plunge into the English Channel to cross to France, but where is the bravest swimmer who would plunge into the Atlantic to swim to America? Brave explorers do track the Greenland snows to explore the North Pole, but do we attempt to explore the North Star? Convince a man that the thing is possible, and sacrifice will be as meat to the noble soul, but impossibility dashes all effort to the ground. (*R. F. Horton, M.A.*) *Forward*:—Brave soldiers die with their face to the foe. Looking back never conquered a city, nor achieved a work of art, nor wrote a book, nor amassed a fortune. The silent inward cry of the world's great men has ever been: On, my soul, right on. *Perfection gradual*:—The acorn does not become an oak in a day. The ripened scholar was not made such by a single lesson. The well-trained soldier was not a raw recruit yesterday. It is not one touch of the artist's pencil that produces a finished painting. There are always months between seed-time and harvest. Even so the path of the just is like the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day. (*R. B. Nichol.*) *Perfection aids perfec-*

tion:—We may not only say, in general terms, that there may be a growth in perfection, but may assert further, that the thing which is most perfect, if it be susceptible of growth at all, will have the most sure and rapid growth. Which grows most and in the best manner—the flower which is whole and perfect in its incipient state, or that which has a canker in it, or is otherwise injured or defective in some of its parts? Which will grow the most rapidly and symmetrically—the child which is perfect in its infancy, or one which is afflicted with some malformation? Illustrations and facts of this kind seem to make it clear that the spiritually renovated state of mind, which is variously called holiness, assurance of faith, perfect love, and sanctification, may be susceptible of growth or increase. It is not only evident that there is no natural or physical impossibility in it, but, as has been intimated, we may go farther, and lay it down as a general truth that perfection in the nature of a thing is requisite to perfection in degree. And accordingly, although it is possible for a person who is partially holy to grow in holiness, a person who is entirely holy, although he may be assailed by unfavourable influences outwardly, will grow much more. (*J. Upham.*) **Not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works.**—*Of the fundamentals of Christianity*:—**1.** The first, in order of nature, is faith towards God. For this must evidently be the first principle of all religion, the beginning and corner-stone even of the foundation itself (chap. xi. 6). This is the first principle, not of the doctrine of Christ only, but also of the law of Moses, of the institution of the patriarchs, of the precepts of Noah, of the religion of nature itself, even among those who never had the benefit of Divine revelation. This truth is found written in the most legible characters, not in the inspired Scriptures only, but in the writings of the philosophers, in the discourses of the learned, in the consciences of the unlearned, in the hearts of all reasonable men, in the instincts of animals, in the motions and proportions even of the inanimate world itself. And is it not a shame that men, that men endued with reason and understanding, who enjoy moreover the light of the gospel revelation, should need to have this foundation laid for them any more? Which is the same folly as if a man should deny there was any light in the world, while he himself walked in the brightness of the sun shining in his strength; or like the foolish philosopher of old, who pretended to dispute against the being of motion, while he himself was on all sides surrounded with its visible and perpetual effects. 2. The next principle in order of nature, though first mentioned by the apostle in the text, is repentance from dead works. And this is a natural consequence of having faith towards God. For he who believes in God must consequently believe that obedience is necessary to be paid to His commands. And then they who perform not that obedience must be confessed to deserve the severest punishment. Which punishment there is no possible means for the offender to avoid, but by a timely repentance; and the only satisfactory evidence of the truth of that repentance is a departure from dead works to serve the living God. This, therefore, is the second principle of religion, or of the doctrine of Christ: a principle absolutely necessary to be laid as the foundation of all virtue, the lowest degree whereof is the forsaking of vice; and yet it is such a foundation as, if it always be laying, it is evident men can never go on to any perfection. It is equally necessary, therefore, that Christians should repent, and yet that they should not stand in need of being always repenting. Always repenting; not of daily infirmities, which are unavoidable, but of new and great crimes continually repeated. Of repentance from these, I say, the Scripture never supposes a Christian to stand frequently in need. 3. The next fundamental principle of Christian religion here mentioned by the apostle is the doctrine of baptisms and of laying on of hands. Repentance is the indispensable duty of all sinners, and the original mercy of God affords ground of hope, even to natural reason, that such repentance will be accepted. Yet since hope, in the nature of the thing itself, differs necessarily from the certainty of knowledge, therefore it has pleased God to confirm this natural hope by the certainty of an express revelation in Christ that He will accept the repentance of sinners. And this assurance He has commanded to be sensibly conveyed to us by a very significant rite in the sacrament of baptism, which sacrament is for that reason styled in Scripture the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. To this the apostle adds as a constant appendage the laying on of hands, because by that rite newly baptized persons were in the apostle's times endued with the Holy Ghost. 4. The last principle of the doctrine of Christ mentioned here by the apostle as the foundation of all religion is the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment. I mention these two together as but one, because in the nature

of things they are necessarily connected with each other. For the resurrection of the dead is only in order to judgment, and eternal judgment is a certain and necessary consequence of the resurrection from the dead. (*S. Clarke, D.D.*) *Repentance*:—The grace of evangelical repentance does not break the heart and leave every bit of the broken parts still stone, but it melts the heart and changes every principle of it. If you break a flint stone every portion of the stone is still flint, but if you melt it in the fire every particle of it becomes changed. So it is with the heart of man: the Lord does not break it, but by the fire of Divine love He gloriously changes the heart, and it becomes entirely new. (*Rowland Hill.*) *Repentance*:—Repentance is neither base nor bitter. It is good rising up out of evil. It is the resurrection of your thoughts out of graves of lust. Repentance is the turning of the soul from the way of midnight to the point of the coming sun. Darkness drops from the face, and silver light dawns upon it. Do not live, day by day, trying to repent, but fearing the struggle and the suffering. Manly regret for wrong never weakens, but always strengthens the heart. As some plants of the bitterest root have the whitest and sweetest blossoms, so the bitterest wrong has the sweetest repentance, which, indeed, is only the soul blossoming back to its better nature. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Dead works*:—When anything is separated from its source there must be death. Separate the stream from its fountain and there is death. Separate the branch from the tree and there is death. Separate the body from the soul and there is death. Separate the soul from God and there is death. There may be natural life, but there is spiritual death. The intellect lives, the will lives, the heart lives, the conscience lives, the instrumental faculties of action are all alive, but all the works to the production of which they combine, not being instinct with the love of God, are dead works. (*C. Stanford, D.D.*) **The doctrine of baptisms.**—*The doctrine of baptisms*:—If the sons of Aaron, before they were invested with the priestly garments, or entered upon the functions of their sacred office, plunged in ceremonial waters; if the proselyte from heathenism, before he took his station amongst the Temple worshippers, or was naturalised amongst the holy tribes, always did the same; if the Israelite who had contracted legal impurity from the stroke of leprosy, the touch of death, or from contact with any other unhallowed thing, always did the same; if on the occasion for the performance of those ceremonies which sealed the recovered leper's right to be received into society again, the priest dipped the mystic dove in water, then flung it up into the air to soar away on glistening wing to the rocky covert or the shady grove, symbol of the ransomed spirit in its flight to heaven; if these and other baptisms were administered under the Mosaic economy, all these baptisms held a doctrine, and the first part of the doctrine they taught was, that our nature, and the whole of our nature, needs cleansing to fit it for the presence of God. (*Ibid.*) *Mercy in cleansing*:—"The doctrine of baptisms," however, was not merely that man is vile, but that God is merciful. Those baptisms told not only of sin, but of a fountain opened for sin, and we know where that precious fountain flows. It was opened on Calvary, and from that hour to the present, baptism there—the baptism of the soul—has been the only essential baptism, the only act by which, through the eternal Spirit, the penalties of sin are all remitted, and all its pollutions finally cleansed away. (*Ibid.*) **Laying on of hands.**—*Confirmation*:—Here you see we have some truth or other—some first principle or other—respecting the "laying on of hands," following close upon some "doctrine of baptisms." Now the only laying on of hands that we read of in the rest of the New Testament is that which took place in the instances of the Samaritans and of the twelve upon whom St. Paul laid his hands, except the laying on of hands when ministers are ordained to their office. Now I do not think that this latter is only alluded to here, and for this reason: the writer of my text is evidently speaking of six matters or principles, or foundations, as he calls them, which concern all men equally, so that all men who profess Christ's doctrines should realise their importance, and be grounded in all needful truth respecting them. All men are to repent—all to believe in God—all to be baptized—all will rise again—all will be judged. Now, associated with these five other first principles, which all men undeniably have to realise, we have this "laying on of hands." It seems to me, then, that it must allude primarily to (or at least that it cannot exclude) that laying on of hands by the chief ministers of the Church, of which, in those early times, all the baptized partook. We now come to consider the question, Was it discontinued after the apostles' time? So far from this, we have the testimony of two very early writers of the Christian Church—one living about 200 years after Christ, the other about 250—that each baptized person living

in their time was confirmed. The first of these, Tertullian, after describing the ceremonies in use at baptism, goes on to say, "Next to this the hand is laid upon us, calling upon and inviting the Holy Spirit through the blessing." Cyprian, about fifty years after a martyr for the truth of Christ's gospel, bears similar testimony to the practice throughout the Church in his day. These are his words: "Which custom has also descended to us, that they who are baptized may be brought by the rulers of the Church, and by our prayer, and by the laying on of hands, may obtain the Holy Ghost, and be consummated with the Lord's signature." It is quite clear, from the testimony of these writers, that in their days every baptized Christian had the hands of the chief pastor laid upon him, as a sort of supplement to his baptism, and as a means whereby he might receive a further gift of God's Spirit. It has, however, been sometimes said that we cannot argue from the example of the apostles in favour of confirmation at the hands of our present bishops, because, when the apostles laid their hands on the early converts, the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost were given; and we now lead those who come in prayer and faith to expect only those ordinary gifts of God's grace whereby they may be strengthened to maintain the conflict common to all sincere followers of Christ. This reasoning appears to me both shallow and faithless. The Spirit which God gives is one, though the manifestations of His power are various. In order that the heathen might know assuredly that the doctrine of the despised and persecuted sect of the Christians was from God, the early followers of Jesus were empowered to work miracles, and to speak with other tongues; but when the need for the exercise of such gifts was over, the gifts were withdrawn. God intended His Church to walk by faith, not by sight; and if He had kept up the miraculous gifts as they were in the first ages, it would have walked by sight. But, though God withdrew certain manifestations of the Spirit's presence, He did not withdraw the Spirit Himself. And the rite of laying on of hands was to give the Spirit, who would manifest Himself, according to His own will and wisdom, in the person who received Him. Here, then, was a rite ordained for the communication of the Spirit, who would manifest His presence according to the needs of the individual who received Him, and of the Church of which that individual was a member. Because, then, we do not expect in confirmation all His gifts, are we not, therefore, to expect gifts or manifestations suitable for us and our times? If we really, and without reserve or equivocation, accept the Bible as our guide; and if we believe, as we must, that the greatest gift that God can now bestow upon us is that of His Spirit; then we must necessarily seek that Spirit in every way in which God gives us reason to think that He is communicated. The needs of our nature—our fallen, and weak, and corrupt nature—should make us eagerly embrace the use of any means, however inadequate they may outwardly appear. And then, too, we may be morally certain, that if the Holy Spirit had intended that after the apostles were removed by death this rite should be discontinued, He would have strictly enjoined upon the Church its discontinuance. You honour God in this ordinance when you believe that He has ordained it as a means in which to bless you; and when you believe that He has not deserted His Church, but that He is as effectually present with the Church now as He was with the Church in the apostles' time; so that such a rite as this is as profitable to the prayerful and believing soul now as in the times of St. Peter and St. John. If God's Word is true, then you have a life-long fight before you—a fight with the world and its allurements, and the flesh and its craving lusts, and the devil with his spiritual temptations to unbelief in God's mercy upon the one hand, or else to presumption upon God's mercy, that Christ will save you in your sins, on the other. To maintain your conflict with such adversaries you will require all God's grace and strength. Add to your other daily prayers, then, some hearty and distinct petition that in the approaching solemn rite you may receive a particular strength suited to your need. (*M. F. Sadler, M.A.*) *Laying on of hands*:—It was prescribed in the old Hebrew service-book that when a person brought his sacrifice to the altar, he should lay his hand upon its head, and lean upon it with all his weight. While thus standing, with his hand laid upon the victim, and his face directed to the Temple, he repeated this formula: "O Lord, I have sinned, I have done perversely; I have done thus and thus" (here naming, either mentally or audibly, the specific sins of which he had recently been guilty, and for which he now sought pardon), "I have done thus, and thus, but I return by repentance to Thee, and let this be my expiation." If several persons united in one presentation, each one in succession placed his hand upon the victim, and in turn offered this prayer. On the great day of atonement the high

priest did the same thing in the name of all the people whom he officially represented. He placed both his hands upon the various victims that were to be offered in sacrifice, and more especially upon the "Azazel," the mystical goat, which, as if bearing the sins which had been confessed over it, was then led away from the crowd of watchers, past the last dwelling, past the last tree, until both goat and leader disappeared in the glow of the great white wilderness, that lay like the land of the curse beyond. This laying on of hands was not a mere ceremony, but a sermon. It conveyed a doctrine, and the doctrine was that he who would be saved must, by his own personal act and deed, appropriate the work of Him who is our Saviour by being our Substitute. (*C. Stanford, D.D.*)

Vers. 4–6. **The powers of the world to come.**—*The powers of the world to come:*—That is to say, belonging to, and operating from, that world which, as to us, is "to come," though now existing. And by "powers," we easily understand forces, energies, agencies, influences, virtues, and these in action upon their proper subjects. Now, we are subjects to be acted upon. Our nature has almost its whole exercise, we might almost say the verification of its existence—in being acted upon, by influences and impressions, from things extraneous to it. "The powers of the world to come." There is one pure, salutary, beneficent order of influences, tending to work the absolute, supreme, eternal good of our nature. But it confounds the mind to reflect what proportion this class of influences bears to others, in the actual operation on mankind. This world, too, has "powers," which it exerts, we do not say in rivalry with the "powers" of the other, but with a fearful preponderance of efficacy. Is it not as evident to our view as the very face and colour of the earth, that incomparably a greater proportion of human spirit and character is conformed to this world than to the other? That "world to come" comprehends the sum, the perfection of everything, the sublimest, the best, the happiest. But what is it all to me? I feel no congeniality nor attraction. But is not this a lamentable and fearful state for the soul to be in? But what is to be done? What but to implore that "the powers of the world to come" may be brought upon us with irresistible force? and that we should make earnest efforts, if we may express it so, to place ourselves exposed to them? This is to be done in the way of directing the serious attention of the mind to that world. Let us fairly make the trial—what agency, what influences, that world can convey upon us. The proof of its influential power has been displayed on very many, in effects the most salutary and noble. One of these effects is, that it causes the unseen to predominate in our minds over what is seen; the future over the present; and these are great and admirable effects. From that world come the influences to fix and keep us in one great sovereign purpose of life, and that a purpose high above all the mere interests of this world. From that world comes the enlightening and active principle which at once exposes the nature of sin, and renders and keeps it odious to the soul. From that world comes the supporting, animating power for endurance of the ills of life, and for overcoming the fear of death. They are "powers" of influence which all the best beings conspire to send. For even the departed saints are placed, as it were, in combination with God, the Mediator, and the angels, in sending a beneficent influence on us below—by their memory—by their examples—by their being displayed to our faith as in a blissful state above—and (we may believe) by their kind regard and wishes for those below. And good and wise men have thought it not irrational to suppose that they may sometimes even be employed in real, actual ministries here on earth. These "powers" of the other world we are regarding chiefly under the character of influences, proceeding at the will of God, and conceived as exclusive of personal agency. But far oftener than we suspect there may be the interventions, though invisible, of such an agency. All these "powers," these forces of influence, are sent, through the medium, and in virtue of the work, of the Mediator, and bear in them a peculiar character derived from Him. (*J. Foster.*) *The powers of the world to come:*—One of the popular names for Messiah among the Jews was, "The coming one." "He that should come" we have rendered it in our version. In like manner, the entire order of things, here and hereafter, which the Messiah was to introduce, they called "The world to come." "The powers of the world to come" were the Divine energies, truths, and influences brought into operation by the Lord Jesus Christ. I. SINLESSNESS IS ONE OF "THE POWERS OF THE WORLD TO COME." None of the woe of evil is there. Above, purity is unimpeded and its joy suffers no eclipse. II. AN UNSUFFERING AND DEATHLESS FUTURE IS ONE OF "THE

POWERS OF THE WORLD TO COME." Before we reach that world, the burdens of this will have been laid down. There activity will no more fatigue. None shall sit down and brood over anxious thought and wearing toil which have left only failure and wreck behind. III. ETERNITY IS ONE OF "THE POWERS OF THE WORLD TO COME." 1. Eternity is the name for all that is great. Eternity is the realm of all things vast and wonderful. So, whatever a godly man does for eternity, must be great. Whatever in the Christian life pertains to eternity, partakes of its grandeur and sublimity. The Son of God filled earthly duties with heavenly motives, and linked the fleeting moment and the transitory deed to the grandeur of eternity. 2. But to the eternal world, as well, we ascribe stability. It is the realm where all things abide. No abandoned palaces are there, no prostrate temples. No flower weeps upon a grave, no verdure fringes the rents of gaping tombs. 3. Eternity is not only inseparable from greatness and stability, but it is the theatre of progress. There souls ever grow. Intellect, heart, character, knowledge, love, power, never halt. IV. GOD IS THE GREAT "POWER OF THE WORLD TO COME." What has been the most ardent aspiration of the righteous in every age? Has it not always been, to see God? to stand in His presence? to realise His contact with the soul? Lessons:—1. You must have strong faith in "the world to come," if its realities are to be "powers" to your souls. It is not an easy attainment. It demands industrious culture. 2. One great end of the life, sufferings, resurrection, and ascension of our blessed Lord, was to make the verities of "the world to come" "powers" to the mind and conduct of men. All the tender memories of Gethsemane and Calvary centre in His risen and living person, to allure the affections and uplift the aspirations of the holy to the skies. 3. Oh, ye who are heated in the chase for riches and honour, worldly fame and earthly enjoyment, walk out to the hallowed lights of eternity, as men at eventide cool their feverish pulses beneath the heavens when the hot sun has gone down and the stars shine forth. Act with an awakened consciousness of your immortality, live for eternity, realise the everlasting years which stretch before you. Among the ruins of Petra there are temples and mansions excavated in the faces of the rocks. Some, massive in their proportions and elaborate in embellishment, are unfinished. What an exquisite perfection the artificer would have given to his work, if informed beforehand that the monuments of his skill would survive all these long centuries, and be numbered among the wonders of the world! Christian men and women, let your souls be aglow with the inspiration and ardour of working for eternity, and, when toil is over and the hour of rest shall come, going home to meet the approbation of your God. (*H. Batchelor, B.A.*) *The influence of futurity*:—There can be no doubt that the apostle here marks out as a possible thing, the making great apparent progress in religion, and then of so offending, as to be finally excluded from the mercies of the gospel. The parties, of whom the apostle speaks, are such you see as have "tasted the good Word of God, and the powers of the world to come." There is no difficulty as to the meaning of "Tasting the good Word of God." You all understand the words to denote an appreciation of the beauty and excellence of the gospel, and, therefore, the feeling its suitableness, and receiving it with delight in the soul. We are very much struck with this expression, and greatly wish to make you conscious of its energy. We desire, if it be possible, that you should all understand how the invisible world comes out, as it were, from its impenetrable secrecy, and operates on those who feel themselves strangers upon the earth; and we desire yet further, that every one of you should learn that there is such a thing as anticipating the future; ay, and that there may be experienced on this side of the grave so much of the wretchedness, as well as of the gladness, which shall enter into everlasting portions, as justifies the assertion that the powers of eternity are already brought to bear on mankind. Take two cases—consider, in the first place, how the powers of the world to come are tasted by a man in the season of conversion; in the second place, how they may be tasted in the continued experience whether of the godly or of the wicked. It is surprisingly strange, and would be wholly inexplicable if we did not know how man's powers were disordered by the fall, that beings who have a thorough persuasion of their deathliness, can go on, day after day, and year after year, as though certain that the soul would die with the body. This is, perhaps, the strongest of all demonstrations, that our powers have been shattered and perverted through some great moral catastrophe; for in this it is that man offers a direct insult to himself as a rational being, acting with a fatuity and short-sightedness that could only have been expected from the inferior creation. And hence the chief matter, in working upon men as the recipients of moral impressions, is to

rouse them to the feeling themselves immortal. The world which now is, exerts incessant power over all of us: persuading us, by the objects which it presents, and the duties which it imposes, to give our toil and our industry to certain pursuits and occupations. And the world which is to come will exert the very same kind of power if it can only gain our belief and attention, so that it may set forth its objects with the duties which their attainment demands. The man, therefore, who is in earnest as to the saving of the soul, is not a man within whom has been implanted a new principle of action; he is rather one in whom a principle of action, vigorous from the first, but contracted in its range, has received a fresh direction, so that in place of limiting itself to the brief stage of human existence, it expatiates over the whole, providing for the distant as well as for the near. Here, then, it is that you have the general case of the putting forth of the powers of the world to come. You observe one man, and you perceive that he is giving his whole energy to the things of time and sense; you observe another man, and you perceive that, though not neglectful of providing for the present, his main labour is employed on securing his welfare in an invisible but everlasting state. The difference between these men is, therefore, the one has received his impulse from the world which is; the other, from the world which is to come. The one has submitted himself to no powers but those wielded by things which are seen and temporal, whereas the other is obedient to the powers put forth by the things that are unseen and eternal; the one has no consciousness of belonging to more than one world; the other is practically persuaded that he is a citizen of two worlds. Ay, there hath risen before the man who is gathering eternity within range of his anxieties, the image of himself as inextinguishable by death; but thrown without a shred and without a hope on scenes whence he cannot escape, and for which he cannot then provide, and this has roused him. But the force of this expression, "tasting the powers of the world to come," will be far more apparent if you consider the men as acted on by the communications of the gospel. We are sure of any one of you who has been translated out of darkness into marvellous light, that he must have had at times a sense of God's wrath, and of the condemnation beneath which the human race lies, such as has almost overwhelmed him, and made him feel as though the future were upon him in its terrors. He has risen as though the avenger of blood were just crossing his threshold, he has not tarried, he has not turned either to the right hand or to the left, but has gone straightway to the one Mediator between God and man, and cried for mercy passionately, as a condemned criminal would plead for his life. And whence this energy? Why, when every other beneath the same roof, or in the same neighbourhood, is utterly indifferent, moved with no anxiety as to death and judgment—why has this solitary individual who has no greater stake than all his fellows in futurity, started up with irresistible vehemence of purpose, and given himself no rest till he has sought and found acceptance with God? We reply at once, that he has been made to "taste the powers of the world to come." The world which now is arraying before him its fascinations; the world which is to come arraying before him its punishments. The one put forth its influence in the objects of sense; the other put forth its influence through the objects of faith. The one solicited him by the wealth and the revel; but the other threatened him with the fire and the shame. The one used its power of ministering to carnal passions; the other asserted its power of making those passions our tormentors; and the future has carried it over the present. Nor is this all. We should convey a most erroneous impression in regard to the process of conversion, if we represented it as carried on exclusively through a terrifying instrumentality. If one man is driven, so to speak, to God, another may be drawn; the promises of the gospel being more prominently employed than the threatenings. For we may rather say, in the majority of cases, and perhaps in all, conversion is brought about through a combination of agency; the coming wrath being used to produce fear and repentance, and the provided mercy to allay anxiety, encourage hope, and confirm in holiness. We cannot imagine a converted man who has never dreaded the being lost; neither can we imagine one who has never exulted in the prospect of heaven. And though fear or joy may predominate according to circumstances, which we need not attempt to define, we may venture to speak of conversion as a process through which man is alike made to feel that he is a fallen creature doomed to destruction, and a redeemed creature admissible into glory. He is as much acted on by promises as by threatenings; he does not take half the Bible, but places as much faith in declarations which speak of honour and peace and triumph made accessible to man, as in others which set forth the fact, "that the wicked shall be

turned into hell, and all the people that forget God." And is it not then certain that the world to come brings to bear upon him its instruments of happiness as well as its instruments of vengeance—that the future in struggling into the present, is equally energetic and equally influential, if regarded as the scene in which the good shall be rewarded, or considered as charged with the overthrow of the reprobate? And if therefore you can say of the converted individual, surveying him merely as one who is moved by great and impending destruction, that he manifests the having imbibed the influences of another state of being, will you not make a like statement when you regard him as animated by the hope of pleasures stored up at the right hand of God? And what is this, inasmuch as in the invisible world are the magazines of Divine retribution, so that the powers with which it is replete, are those of exacting the penalty of crime, and rewarding the efforts of obedience? what, I ask you, is this but saying of an individual—"He hath tasted the powers of the world to come"? And now let us consider how the powers of the world to come may be tasted in the continued experience, whether of the godly or of the wicked. For we may be persuaded, that through not endeavouring to bring the future into close connection with the present, or rather through not regarding the future as in every sense the continuation of the present, men strip the realities of another state of much of that influence which they must otherwise have. We put it to yourselves to decide, whether you are not accustomed to place, as it were, a great gulf between the two states of being, to regard the invisible as having few or no points in common with the visible? When heaven is mentioned, there is ordinarily altogether an indefiniteness in your apprehension of its delights; and when hell is mentioned, there is the like indefiniteness in your apprehension of its torments. You consider, in short, that little or nothing can be ascertained in regard to the nature of future joy and misery; they differ so widely from what now bear the names, that they must be felt before they can be understood. But we hold it of great importance that men should be reminded that whatever the changes effected by death and the resurrection, they will be identically the same beings, with the same organs, the same capacities, the same in nature, though, we doubt not, marvellously quickened and mightily enlarged. And if the grave shall give us up, the same, except in the degree in which we can admit either happiness or misery, it is quite evident that both heaven and hell may begin on this side eternity. There may be the commencement, however vastly we come short of the consummation. It is in thorough consistency with this view that the apostle speaks of men "tasting the powers of the world to come." It is not necessary that they should die, and actually enter another world, before they can know anything of the powers of that world. In their sojourning upon earth ere there hath passed on them aught of that mysterious change through which the corruptible shall put on incorruption, they may have acquired a degree of acquaintance with those powers—the power of making happy, the power of making wretched. The evil man may have the commencement of an anguish, which shall be the same in kind, though not to be compared in intenseness to that by which he shall be racked if he die in impenitence. The righteous man may enjoy a peace and be elevated by a rapture which shall be as an introduction to the deep tranquility and lofty ecstasy of the land in which the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *The effect of realising "the powers of the world to come":*—I. THERE WILL BE A REGULATING INFLUENCE UPON OUR PRESENT LIFE. 1. The inward life will become increasingly pure and holy. 2. The outward life will become increasingly human, just, unselfish. II. THERE WILL BE A SUSTAINING INFLUENCE. In times of despondency, sadness, loss, and temptation, we shall bravely bear all, and wait for the "eternal years." III. THERE WILL BE A RESTRAINING INFLUENCE. 1. Thoughts, motives, professions, deeds, will be kept in the right direction. 2. There will be no apostasy of heart or life. (*James Foster, B.A.*) *The world to come:*—The world to come. Is there indeed such a world? Is man to exist beyond the present life? No one comes back from that future to tell us of it, and open to us its experience. To the natural eye man's life goes as does that of the beast; neither his life nor his death speaks anything more. Is this all? Is there no more to man and no more for man than there is to and for the brute creation around him? 1. Our intuitions give us answer. The Creator has given a voice to our soul. It tells us of immortality. It creates the conviction of a "world to come." 2. Also, man's attributes give answer to these questions. Though in some things he is like the brutes that perish, in many things he is most unlike them. In the wonderful gift of speech, in the endowment of reason, in the possession of conscience, in the intelligent and holy emotion of love,

he belongs to another domain of being from that in which mere animals have their existence. He is a moral being, and amenable to the bar of right and wrong. Can it be that a being of such capabilities is the mere creature of a day? My whole being revolts at such a conclusion. 3. But finally the Scriptures give answer to these questions. 4. This world to come is very near to us; to some of us oh how near! "The world to come"—can we to-day make this real? Can we open our hearts and enfold the truth that this "world to come" is a "world to come" to you and to me? Let us bring it near, let us make it personal. The Christian should be glad to do so; it will strengthen his faith, it will confirm his hope, it will quicken his zeal, it will purify his love, it will wean him from this world, it will lift up his life to nobler and holier experiences. (*C. P. Sheldon, D.D.*)

If they shall fall away.—*Spiritual declension and recovery*:—I. WHAT PERSONS HAS THE APOSTLE HERE IN VIEW? He enumerates respecting them a variety of marks, which certainly belong to real Christians. 1. The first of these is, that they have been enlightened. As there are various kinds of enlightening in visible nature, as by the sun, by the moon, and by lamps, so are there various kinds of enlightening relative to the human soul. There are many persons who certainly know what is the one thing needful, and what are the several stages on the road to heaven; but they know it only from human instruction, and have their light at second or third hand. Theirs is a moonlight, which neither warms nor fructifies; neither makes that which is dead, alive, nor that which is withered, green. Such enlightening we may have, and yet be as far from the kingdom of God as the most unenlightened heathen. There are others who show that they partake of a better enlightening, and even of a kind of warmth accompanying it. But they are excitable persons, who are easily moved at hearing of Christ, and the experiences of His saving grace, and become, perhaps, irresistibly convinced that such things are true. But should any of their lamps have burned down, or their oil have been spent, so as to yield a fainter light, or those who carry brighter lamps happen to have withdrawn, then are those persons as much in darkness again as ever; and this because they have not cherished the true light in themselves. Now, neither this, nor the former class of persons, does the Scripture call enlightened. It gives this name, not to those who receive their light at second or third hand, but only to those who cherish within them a light which is received immediately from Christ Himself; to those of whom it is written, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." And this light pervades the soul and spirit, "piercing even to the dividing asunder of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart"; that is, it is a light which discovers to the sinner his misery, and makes him feel it. And if we have been thus enlightened, then doubtless we are children of God, and born of the Spirit. 2. The apostle further says, they "have tasted of the heavenly gift"; which is another exclusive characteristic of true Israelites. This heavenly gift is no other than that spoken of by our Saviour to the woman of Samaria. 3. Another mark attributed to them is, that they have been "made partakers of the Holy Ghost"; and this surely will not allow us to remain uncertain what sort of persons the apostle has in view. Who can doubt that they are children of God? 4. And that we might know that they have received the Spirit of God as an earnest of their salvation, it is added, that they "have tasted the good Word of God." This expression clearly intimates that they have experienced the Word of God in themselves as a good word; as a word which takes the most kind and sympathetic part in whatever happens to us, or oppresses us; as a word that has upon all occasions counsel and deliverance for us, and stands by us in the most gracious manner with its light and healing balm. 5. And now for the last mark: they "have tasted the powers of the world to come." Understand by this expression whatever you can: think of it as implying those outpourings of grace which enable us to overcome the world and death; or, as implying a lively foretaste of eternal joy, a powerful assurance of the final consummation, and of our being "ever with the Lord"; or, as signifying our present triumphant elevation upon the wings of faith above time, above all afflictions and crosses, above death, judgment, sin, and hell; or, understand whatever as believers you please by these words—this you must allow, that St. Paul could have had only children of God in his eye when he declares of them, that they "have tasted the powers of the world to come." II. THE SPIRITUAL DECLENSION OF WHICH THE CHILDREN OF GOD ARE CAPABLE. St. Paul then, speaking of children of God, and even of such as have gone on for a considerable time in the

way of salvation, and have attained maturity of growth and decision of character, says, "If they shall fall away." In strict language, every fall is a falling away; for it is a temporary forgetfulness and turning aside from Him who hath said, "Abide in Me." But the Scripture evidently makes a distinction between falling and falling away. In the 4th verse of the 5th chapter of his Epistle to the Galatians we meet with persons who had fallen away. They had lost the lively sense of their unworthiness and inability; and, instead of abiding implicitly at the foot of the cross, so as to live upon grace and forgiveness alone, they had become bewildered with the unhappy notion of being their own saviours and intercessors. "Ye did run well; who hath hindered you that ye should no longer obey the truth?" This was a falling away; a departure from grace; it was an erring from the way of God's children into the way of self-righteous, natural men; a virtual renunciation of Christ; a tacit declaration that they no longer needed Him, and could do without Him. It was a depreciation of His precious blood; a contempt of His sacrifice, and a rejection of His person: so that St. Paul could utter that reproach with the utmost propriety and justice, Christ is again "crucified among you." But there is a falling away which is more fearful still. Not only a falling away from grace into legal bondage, but a falling away into lawlessness, or into a course without law altogether; a falling away from God to idols; from the kingdom of heaven to the world; from the way of light into the way of the flesh and of darkness. This would seem hardly credible, did not sad experience show it to be true. Look at David at one period of his life. But no, on David's crime, dreadful as it was, we will not insist; it was rather an awful fall than a falling away. Think then of Solomon, that precious man of God, that Jedidiah from his cradle: observe him in his career; and how can you help shuddering? Twice does the Lord appear to him, and give him a commandment not to walk after other gods (1 Kings iii. 14; 2 Chron. vii. 12–22); but he obeys it not; he continues in his departure from Jehovah the God of Israel; so that the Lord is obliged, at length, to come against him with the thunder and lightning of His judgments. And, oh! how many of the children of God have brought upon themselves, in like manner, His rebukes and visitations! How many, to whom the world had been already crucified, have gone back again to the world! III. THE WARNING GIVEN. Hearken to that awful thunder of the Divine oracle, which declares that "it is impossible for those who were once enlightened," &c. How terribly does this sound! almost like, "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." And, indeed, it is evident at once how difficult must be the restoration of those who, having taken root in a life of holiness, and having been blessed with sweet experiences of Divine love, could, after all, have fallen away! Whoever is conscious that he is guilty of this, may well tremble. The word "impossible" in our text is enough to fill him with horrible dread. And if so, "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall!" Let all of us watch and pray; let our abiding station be ever at the foot of the cross. There let us lie down and take our rest; there let us arise in the morning; there perform every duty of our daily life; there let us be formed, and fixed, and live; there wait for the Bridegroom; there breathe our last: so are we safe. (*F. W. Krummacher, D.D.*) *The danger of apostasy from Christianity*:—I. THERE ARE THREE THINGS WHICH DISTINGUISH THE SIN HERE SPOKEN OF IN THE TEXT FROM "THE SIN AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST" DESCRIBED BY OUR SAVIOUR. 1. The persons that are guilty of this sin here in the text are evidently such as had embraced Christianity, and had taken upon them the profession of it; whereas those whom our Saviour chargeth with "the sin against the Holy Ghost," are such as constantly opposed His doctrine, and resisted the evidence He offered for it. 2. The particular nature of "the sin against the Holy Ghost" consisted in blaspheming the Spirit whereby our Saviour wrought His miracles, and saying He did not those things by the Spirit of God, but by the assistance of the devil, in that malicious and unreasonable imputing of the plain effects of the Holy Ghost to the power of the devil, and consequently in an obstinate refusal to be convinced by the miracles that He wrought; but here is nothing of all this so much as intimated by the apostle in this place. 3. "The sin against the Holy Ghost" is declared to be absolutely "unpardonable both in this world and in that which is to come." II. That this sin here spoken of by the apostle IS NOT SAID TO BE ABSOLUTELY UNPARDONABLE. It is not "the sin against the Holy Ghost"; and, whatever else it be, it is not out of the compass of God's pardon and forgiveness. So our Saviour hath told us, "that all manner of sin whatsoever that men have committed is capable of pardon, excepting only the sin

against the Holy Ghost." And though the apostle here uses a very severe expression, that "if such persons fall away it is impossible to renew them again to repentance," yet there is no necessity of understanding this phrase in the strictest sense of the word impossible, but as it is elsewhere used for that which is extremely difficult. Nor, indeed, will our Saviour's declaration, which I mentioned before, that all sins whatsoever are pardonable, except "the sin against the Holy Ghost," suffer us to understand these words in the most rigorous sense. III. The sin here spoken of IS NOT A PARTIAL APOSTASY FROM THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION BY ANY PARTICULAR VICIOUS PRACTICE. Whosoever lives in the habitual practice of any sin plainly forbidden by the Christian law may be said so far to have apostatised from Christianity, but this is not the falling away which the apostle here speaks of. This may be bad enough; and the greater sins any man who professeth himself a Christian lives in, the more notoriously he contradicts his profession, and falls off from Christianity, and the nearer he approaches to the sin in the text, and the danger there threatened; but yet, for all that, this is not that which the apostle speaks of. IV. But IT IS A TOTAL APOSTASY FROM THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION, more especially to the heathen idolatry, the renouncing of the true God, and our Saviour, and the worship of false gods, which the apostle here speaks of. And I doubt not but this is the sin which St. John speaks of, and calls "the sin unto death," and does not require Christians "to pray for those who fall into it," with any assurance that it shall be forgiven (1 John v. 16). V. We will consider the reason of the DIFFICULTY OF RECOVERING SUCH PERSONS BY REPENTANCE. 1. Because of the greatness and heinousness of the sin, both in the nature and circumstances of it. It is downright apostasy from God, a direct renouncing of Him, and rejecting of His truth, after men have owned it, and been inwardly persuaded and convinced of it. It hath all the aggravations that a crime is capable of, being against the clearest light and knowledge, and the fullest conviction of a man's mind, concerning the truth and goodness of that religion which he renounceth; against the greatest obligations laid upon him by the grace and mercy of the gospel; after the free pardon of sins, and the grace and assistance of God's Spirit received, and a miraculous power conferred for a witness and testimony to themselves, of the undoubted truth of that religion which they have embraced. Now a sin of this heinous nature is apt naturally either to plunge men into hardness and impenitency, or to drive them to despair; and either of these conditions are effectual bars to their recovery. 2. Those who are guilty of this sin do renounce and cast off the means of their recovery, and therefore it becomes extremely difficult to renew them again to repentance. They reject the gospel, which affords the best arguments and means to repentance, and renounce the only way of pardon and forgiveness. 3. Those who are guilty of this sin provoke God in the highest manner to withdraw His grace and Holy Spirit from them, by the power and efficacy whereof they should be brought to repentance; so that it can hardly otherwise be expected but that God should leave those to themselves who have so unworthily forsaken Him, and wholly withdraw His grace and Spirit from such persons as have so notoriously offered despite to the Spirit of grace. I shall now draw some useful inferences from hence by way of application, that we may see how far this doth concern ourselves; and they shall be these. 1. From the supposition here in the text, that such persons as are there described (namely, those who have been baptized, and by baptism have received remission of sins, and did firmly believe the gospel, and the promises of it, and were endowed with miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost), that these may fall away—this should caution us all against confidence and security; when those that have gone thus far may fall, "Let him that standeth take heed." 2. This shows us how great an aggravation it is for men to sin against the means of knowledge which the gospel affords, and the mercies which it offers unto them. 3. The consideration of what hath been said is matter of comfort to those who, upon every failing and infirmity, are afraid they have committed "the unpardonable sin," and that it is impossible for them to be restored by repentance. 4. This should make men afraid of great and presumptuous sins, which come near apostasy from Christianity; such as deliberate murder, adultery, gross fraud and oppression, or notorious and habitual intemperance. For what great difference is there, whether men renounce Christianity, or, professing to believe it, do in their works deny it? 5. It may be useful for us upon this occasion to reflect a little upon the ancient discipline of the church, which in some places was so severe, as, in case of some great crimes after baptism, as apostasy to the heathen idolatry, murder, and adultery, never to admit those that were guilty of them to the peace

and communion of the church. This, perhaps, may be thought too great severity; but I am sure we are as much too remiss now as they were over-rigorous then; but were the ancient discipline of the church in any degree put in practice now, what case would the generality of Christians be in? 6. The consideration of what hath been said should confirm and establish us in the profession of our holy religion. (*Abp. Tillotson.*) *The Palestinian apostates, and the impossibility affirmed of renewing them again to repentance:*—Under a fierce, though—thanks to Roman supremacy—a bloodless persecution, the intensity of which no one at all familiar with Jewish hate will be at a loss to realise, members of the churches were falling away, first into backsliding, then into apostasy, to the extent of returning to their temple service; and the difficulty of reclaiming them from amid those environments prompts the apostle to impart to his warnings special potency and pungency. I. Notice THEIR PREVIOUS CHARACTER AND POSITION. The state that preceded their apostasy, if there be meaning in words, was that of actual conversion; and but for the exigencies of a vicious creed no other idea would have been entertained. They were "once enlightened"; and the same word is used of them in the tenth chapter under the rendering "illuminated." No stronger expression could be used to denote conversion. "Once ye were darkness, but ye are now light in the Lord." Again, they are here affirmed to have "tasted of the heavenly gift," which, however it may be explained, it would be arbitrary in the extreme to understand as falling short of salvation. The same remark applies to the next thing attributed to these apostates, "they were made partakers of the Holy Ghost." Full of the Holy Ghost we need not suppose them to have been; but none the less does the expression denote the saving fruits of faith as contrasted with the fruits of those that continue in the flesh. (Compare Gal. v. 19–25; Rom. v. 5.) On the same principle, consistency demands that we explain the attribution—"they have tasted the good Word of God," in the spirit of David in such places as Psalms xix. and cxix., or of Jeremiah when he sweetly says, "Thy Word was found of me, and I did eat it, and Thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." "To the above tastings," or spiritual experiences, the apostle adds that those apostates had "tasted the powers of the world to come"; or, as the expression means, "the age to come." This was the New Testament age, and had long been familiarly so denominated. The word "power" is the same as that rendered "miracles" in chap. ii. 4; and it is here intimated, therefore, that the spiritual evidences and influences so grandly characteristic of that period had previously operated their due effects on the minds and hearts of these apostates. II. We now pass to THEIR PRESENT STATE—that of men who have apostatised. 1. The fact of their apostasy is expressly affirmed. They had "fallen away." Their fall, as we shall see, would not be precipitate. The gradient of the downward path is at first exceedingly imperceptible; it is not till a further stage down that it becomes recklessly headlong. 2. Let us now pass from the fact to the nature of their apostasy. It was a lapse from all the Christian experiences above detailed, and that by a lapse from the source of these—namely, faith, and from all the means by which we are enabled to "stand fast in the faith." This lapse would be stealthy, and so in fact the word implies. It was probably no sudden flight, no leap, no bound, no run, or even deliberate walk, but a partially passive and insensible process of "falling away." Like the fleecy envelopment of air which, from its yielding nature, falls behind in the diurnal revolution of our globe (causing our trade and oblique winds) such retrogressors gradually yield to dragging influences and lag behind. First, the Bible is neglected, then prayer, then family duty, then Christian converse, then Christian zeal in every form, then the Sabbath, the sanctuary, and all the means of grace. At whose bidding? we need hardly ask, seeing the seducers are legion. It may have been at the prompting of Mammon, or of Belial, of vanity, or of pride. It may have been in the name of free thought, under the license of free speech, or under the baser dictation still of indolence and cowardice that shrink from encountering pain, and toil, and loss. Any way, the sphere of salvation in the soul contracts and grows dim; the fruits of the new life shrivel up; the heart, now "an evil heart of unbelief, departs from the living God," and day by day becomes "hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." III. Let us now endeavour to understand THE IMPOSSIBILITY HERE AFFIRMED of again renewing these recreants unto repentance. Be it noted in the outset, that vain is the attempt of those who would substitute for the word "impossible" some milder translation, such as "difficult," or the like. In the original, just as in our version, the word incontrovertibly and immovably stands "impossible." But then the question is still

left open to us—In what sense impossible? First, and surely plainly enough, no such thing as absolute impossibility is for a moment to be thought of, for we are here in a far other sphere than that of strict omnipotence. We are in the moral sphere; and in the moral sense only are we to understand the word impossible. And even in that sense the impossibility lies not on the side of God, but wholly on the side of man. How? Only in the moral sense; and in no such sense even of the moral kind as need doom any apostate to despair, though certainly such as ought to make his ears tingle and his knees tremble, and his frame shake and his heart quake. It was impossible to renew those men, merely in the sense of Christ's impossible, when He said, "How can ye believe, who receive honour one of another?"—this state of mind, while it lasted, being a moral bar to their believing: but then it had no need to last. It was impossible, in the sense in which we ourselves freely use the word every day; as when we say, It is impossible to love this man, or hate that man, or to respect or trust that other—that is, impossible only in the sense of being extremely hard or difficult by reason of moral dispositions or circumstances; which moral causes, however, it is all the time understood by us, it is quite in the power of the man concerned to alter or surmount, if he choose. IV. These MORAL CAUSES FOR THE IMPOSSIBLE, in the case of the apostates in my text, it only remains that, in the last place, I now briefly explain. For very special they were, and frightful in the extreme—amply sufficient, and more, to account for the very strong word "impossible" which the inspired writer here employs. These singular causes are briefly but expressively set forth in the appended reason, "seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame." They not only renounce Christ, they do it with every circumstance of contumelious indignation and scorn. They re-enact for "themselves" what they are now too late literally to join in—the crime and the jeering concomitants of the Saviour's crucifixion. This they do, not only in the arena of the inner spirit, but in open avowal, by shamelessly homologating and glorying in the deed. They say, "though for a time deceived, we now see that the deed was right." They thus gather into themselves the combined virulence of both Jew and Roman; for while with the Jew they cry, "Crucify Him," with the Roman they do in effect "crucify Him," so far as it is in them to re-enact the deed. And unlike that tumultuous rabble, who were stirred into frenzy by their rulers, and borne many of them they knew not whither, so that Christ affectingly said of them, praying, "They know not what they do," these apostates, on the contrary, re-enacted the crime deliberately, from amid the full flood of gospel light, and life, and power, and after they themselves had tasted the sweets of gospel love. This, the terrible attitude and its implications, were explanation enough of the word impossible, were we to say no more. But to stop here would leave unexplained the fact, otherwise incredible, how they could ever have been led to take such an attitude at all. This is the only thing further I have to explain, and then the shadow over the word "impossible" will have deepened into the most hopeless gloom. The explanation is to be found in the strongly marked peculiarities of the Jew, and in the then conditions of social and religious life in Palestine. These were such as to leave no neutral ground. A Jew's wrath, in religious matters, easily intensifies to frenzied rage. Hence their scorn of Jesus, their vindication of His death, their hate of all who bear His name, their practice by spitting, gesticulation, or terms of execration, of blaspheming and cursing the Holy One under the opprobrious name of "the Nazarene." In such a state of society, to renounce Christianity was not to lapse into negative indifference; for indifference or neutrality there was none. It meant positively a return to Judaism; and to Judaism aroused and armed in deadly antagonism to Christianity. The process would be this. Expelled the synagogue, put under the ban, disowned by their nearest, if they persisted in clinging to the hated Nazarene in spite of the entreaties, the tears, and ere long the curses of their kin, the Palestinian Christian would at first waver, then absent himself occasionally from the Christian assemblies. Urged by his relatives, the occasionally would become frequently, till, now fairly on the decline, he came to abandon them entirely. And now the entreaties, the blandishments, the impassioned warnings would be renewed. Let him only pass through the needful discipline and be welcomed anew into the synagogue and into the bosom of his home. He does so; and the die is cast. To quit the church for the synagogue was to pass from one hostile camp to another, with no intermediate resting place or ground even for parley. It was to quit all Christian ordinances and restoring influences, and to raise a brazen wall between. And it was to enter

the synagogue to join the anti-Nazarene crusade. The apostates, and with proverbially apostate zeal, now persecuted the faith they formerly preached. In conclusion, there result two vitally important lessons, which we briefly state in Scripture language. 1. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." 2. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts." (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) *The sin of rejecting the gospel*:—That we may understand this Scripture, and make it unto us a good comfort, which might seem otherwise a heavy threatening, let us consider in it these two things: first, the purpose of the apostle for which he speaketh it, then themselves what they signify. The apostle's purpose is to stir us up, desirously to hear, diligently to learn, wisely to increase in knowledge, and obediently to practise that we have learned: for this purpose it was first spoken, to this end it is now written. 1. The first mark of them is that they be lightened; that is, endued with the knowledge of God, not only by the heavens, which declare His glory, nor by the firmament, which showeth His work, nor by any of God's creatures in which His eternal power and Godhead doth appear and shine, and of which light all nations are made partakers, but they are also lightened with His holy Word, which is a lantern to their feet and a light unto their steps, and have heard His gospel preached unto them, unto the which they have agreed that it is the Word of Life. 2. The second note of them is, that they have tasted of the heavenly gift: the heavenly gift is the life and great salvation that is in Christ Jesus, by whom we are reconciled, which likewise our Saviour Christ calleth the gift of God, speaking to the woman of Samaria; and this is that knowledge into which they are lighted by the gospel, and this they not only know, but of this gift they have also tasted: which is, they have gladly some time received it, and rejoiced in it; like as our Saviour Christ describeth them by the parable of the stony ground, that incontinently with joy they receive the seed, and which also He noteth in the Pharisees, speaking of John Baptist, which was a shining lamp among them, and they for a season did rejoice in his light. 3. The third note of these men is, that they have been partakers of the Holy Ghost: which is, that many graces of the Spirit of God have been given unto them, as these two above named, that they are lightened with knowledge, and rejoice in their understanding, which is neither of flesh nor blood, nor of the will of man, but of the Holy Ghost. 4. The fourth note is, that they have tasted the good Word of God, not much differing from that He first spake of, that they were lightened, that is, that they had knowledge of God, not only by His creatures, but much more by His Word. But here naming the good Word of God, he noteth especially the gospel, by comparison with the law. 5. The fifth note here set forth is, that they know and confess that this gospel hath in the end eternal life: and Christ is a mighty Saviour, who will keep for ever those whom He hath purchased. And he nameth the world to come, because the Spirit hath lightened them to see the latter end of this corruptible world, and to know assuredly that here they have no dwelling city, but another habitation made for God's chosen, not with mortal hands, but everlasting in heaven, and calling it the powers, because it is made so strong in Christ Jesus, that it can never be assaulted; for all power is given unto Him in heaven and in earth, and He hath made that heavenly city glorious for His saints throughout all worlds. And thus far of the persons, what gifts they have received; wherein yet let us understand a great difference between these men which fall away and the gifts which are in God's elect that cannot perish, nor ever sin against the Holy Ghost. Now let us see the manner of rebellion, how far they fall away: first, we must observe what points the apostle hath before named. In the beginning of the chapter he mentioneth repentance from dead works, faith towards God, the doctrine of baptism, and laying on of hands, and resurrection from the dead, and eternal judgment, which here he calleth the beginning and foundation of Christian amity; then he speaketh of an apostasy or falling away from all these points here named, even from the foundation and first beginnings of the Christian faith, so that all the former light is quite put out, and the first understanding is all taken away; they laugh now at repentance, and the first faith they account it foolishness. (*E. Deering, B.D.*) *What relapses are inconsistent with grace?*—I. FOUR FALLS OF THE GODLY. 1. The first and lightest fall of the godly is that in their daily combat between flesh and spirit (Rom. vii; Gal. v. 17). Our duties are imperfect, graces defective, our gold and silver drossy, "our wine mixed with water." Sin deceiveth, surpriseth, captivateth, slayeth, yet reigneth not. These falls or slips are unavoidable and involuntary. There is no saint but complains of them, no duty but is stained with them. In our

clearest sunshine we see a world of such motes, which yet hinder not the light and comfort of our justification, and destroy not sanctification. True grace consists with these; yea, is not separated from the assaults and indwelling of such motions. "Will we, nill we," said Bernard, "we are pestered with swarms of these Egyptian flies, and have these frogs in our inmost chambers." This first fall is but like the fall of a mist in a winter morning: the sun gets up, and it is a fair day after. This is the first fall: the second is worse, which is—2. An actual and visible stumble as to offence of others, yet occasioned by some surreptitious surprise of temptation, for want of that due consideration which we should always have: this the apostle calls "a man's being overtaken with a fault," who is "to be restored with a spirit of meekness, considering we also may be tempted" (Gal. vi. 1). Such falls (or slips rather) all or most are subject to (Jas. iii. 2). We sometimes trip, or slip, or "miss our hold," and so down we come, but not out of choice. Thus did Peter slip or halt, when he did Judaise out of too much compliance with the Jews; whom therefore Paul did rebuke and restore (Gal. ii. 11, 14). 3. The third fall is much worse, "a fall from the third loft," whence, like Eutychus, they are "taken up dead" for the present; but they come to themselves again. These are falls into grosser and more scandalous sins which do "set the stacks or corn-fields of conscience on fire"; whereas the other two forenamed, especially the former, are such as Tertullian calls "of daily incursion." These are very dangerous, and befall not all professors: (they had not need!) but, now and then, one falls into some scandalous sin; but they not usually again into the same sin after sense and repentance of it. Thus fell David and Peter into foul flagitiousness, but not deliberately, nor totally, nor finally, nor reiteratedly. This fall is like the fall of the leaf in autumn. Life remains safe; a spring in due time follows, though many a cold blast first. 4. There is yet one worse fall than the former, incident to a child of God too—to be of the decaying kind, and to remit and lose his former fervour and liveliness. And it may be he never comes (as the second temple) up to the former pitch and glory (Ezra iii. 12). Thus Solomon's zeal and love were abated in his old age. This is like the fall of the hair in aged persons. Life yet remains; but strength, native heat, and radical moistness decay, and the hair never grows alike thick again. II. THE FOUR FALLS OF THE UNREGENERATE. 1. The first whereof is a final fall, but not a total at first, but insensible, by degrees, "gradually and without perceiving it," grow worse and worse; as the thorny ground, choked with cares, or drowned with the pleasures of the world. 2. Some fall totally and finally, but not premeditately and voluntarily at first; but are driven back by the lion of persecution, and tribulation in the way, and they retreat (Mark iv. 17; 1 Chron. xxviii. 9). This is like the fall of Sisera at the feet of Jael (Judg. v. 27). 3. Some, more fearfully, totally, finally, voluntarily, deliberately, but not yet maliciously. Thus Demas is supposed to fall, who, of a forward disciple or teacher, is said to have become after an idol priest at Thessalonica. Thus fell Saul (1 Sam. xvi. 14). 4. The fourth and last fall follows, which is like the opening of the fourth seal, and the fourth horse appears (Rev. vi. 8): when men fall totally, finally, voluntarily, and maliciously. Thus Simon Magus, Julian the apostate, Hymenæus, and Alexander, whose names are in God's black book. Here the gulf is fixed, and there is "no retracing of the steps" hence. These are not to be renewed by repentance. This fall is like that of Jericho's walls: they fell down flat with a curse annexed (Josh. vi. 26); or as Babylon's walls, with a vengeance (Jer. li. 58); both without hope of repairing: or like the fall of Lucifer the first apostate, without offer, or hope of offer, of grace any more for ever: or like the fall of Judas, who, "falling headlong, burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out" (Acts i. 18). III. THE MIXED FALL. There is also another kind of fall, of a mixed or middle nature; and to which side of the two (godly or reprobate) I should cast it, is not so easy to determine. Relapses into sin are like relapses into a disease after hopes and beginning of recovery. 1. This informs us that possible it is for men (yea, too ordinary) to fall from grace. We wonder not to see a house built on the sand to fall, or seed not having root wither, or trees in the parched wilderness decay (Jer. xvii. 6), or meteors vanish, or blazing stars fall, or clouds without rain blown about, or wells without springs dried up. So, for hypocrites to prove apostates is no strange thing, and utterly to fall away. 2. Even godly and gracious persons are subject to fall, and therefore must not be secure: they must "work out their salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. ii. 12). They are bidden to "fear lest they should fall short" (Heb. iv. 1): "stand fast" (1 Cor. xvi. 13): "take heed lest they fall" (1 Cor. x. 12): "look diligently lest any fail of," or "fall from" (so is the other reading)

"the grace of God" (Heb. xii. 15): "take the whole armour of God, that they may be able to stand" (Eph. vi. 13). 3. Yet a truly regenerate soul, a plant of God's planting by the waterside, a plant or graff grafted into Christ, and rooted in Christ, can never fall away totally or finally: Peter could not, when Christ prayed for him: the elect cannot (Matt. xxiv. 24). 1. This text is thunder and lightning against apostates.—Awake, you drowsy professors! There is no sin like apostasy: adulteries, manslaughter, theft, idolatries, &c., nothing to this. 2. This speaks terror to professors fallen, or lying in scandalous sins.—You cannot sin at so easy a rate as others. You know your Master's will, and do it not, therefore ye "shall be beaten with more stripes" (Luke xii. 47). You are as a city set on a hill. Your fault cannot be hid, no more than an eclipse of the sun. 3. Terror to such as, after conviction and engagements under affliction and distress, after some prayers, vows, and a begun or resolved reformation, return to former courses.—As they, after what they promised in their distress, returned when delivered, and started aside like a broken bow (Jer. xxxiv. 15, 16). The new broom of affliction swept the house clean for the present; but afterwards the unclean spirit returns, and this washed sow is wallowing in the mire again. 4. Terror to such as lapse and relapse into the same sin again.—As Pharaoh, Jeroboam, and those antichristian brood which repented not (Rev. ix. 20. 21). Notwithstanding all judgments, convictions, confessions, promises, they go from evil to worse, from affliction to sin; from sin to duty, and from duty to sin; repent and sin, sin and repent (Jer. ix. 3); and from repenting of sin in distress, go to repent of their repentance when delivered. Discrimination. 1. There are some who have fallen into foul sins; and they think their case desperate, because of the greatness of their sins. But their sin is not the sin against the Holy Ghost, because not committed after light, taste, partaking of the Holy Ghost, &c., but in the days of their ignorance, as Paul once. Some fall foully after conversion, as Peter, but not deliberately, maliciously; and both these may be the spots of children: they see "the plague" in their heart (1 Kings viii. 38), feel the smart. These have foul scabs; but they go to Jordan and wash, go to "the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness"; and then "though their sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though red like crimson, they shall be as white as wool" (Isa. i. 18). 2. There be some relapses through human infirmity, which are truly bewailed. This is not the sin against the Holy Ghost neither. 3. But there are others that make a trade of sin, "drink up iniquity like water," that "add drunkenness to thirst," and fall and rise, and rise and fall: they lapse and relapse, and slide away as water. Shall I say such shall have peace? No! What peace to such so long as their sins remain? I shall, to conclude, give a few short directions, to prevent falls and relapses, but cannot now enlarge upon them. 1. Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation (Matt. xxvi. 41).—Watch in prayer, watch after, watch when alone, watch when in company, especially against ill company and all occasions of sin. 2. Keep conscience tender, and shun the first motions and occasions of sin.—"If thou find thyself given to appetite, put a knife to thy throat," is the wise man's counsel; if to wine, "look not on the glass"; if to wantonness, "come not near her corner." 3. Take heed of having slight thoughts of sin.—As to say, "As long as it is no worse"; "It is the first time"; "It is but now and then, a great chance, when I meet with such company"; and many have such foolish pleas, and so play at the mouth of the cockatrice's den till they are stung to death. 4. Take heed of having light thoughts of God's mercy.—"When sin abounds, grace superabounds," &c. The Lord saith, He "will not spare" such, nor be merciful to them. 5. Take heed of reasoning from God's temporal forbearance, to eternal forgiveness. 6. Take heed of presuming of thy own strength: "I can, and I mean to repent; I can when I will, and I will when time serves. I trust I am not so bad, that God hath not given me over. Many have gone further than I: why may I not repent at my last hour?" 7. Take heed of a mock repentance, saying, "I cry God-mercy! God forgive me! I sin daily, and repent daily. When I have sworn or been drunk, I am heartily sorry. Is not this repentance?" I answer, No! Repentance is quite another thing. "The burnt child," we say, "dreads the fire." (*John Sheffield, M.A.*) *The terrible hypothesis; or, the irrecoverable fall:*—I. PERSONAL CHRISTIANITY IS A SPIRITUAL PARTICIPATION OF DIVINE REALITIES. 1. It is an idea. 2. It is a feeling. 3. It is a power. II. APOSTASY FROM PERSONAL CHRISTIANITY IS AN IMMENSE SIN. 1. The falling away here mentioned is that of total apostasy. 2. The apostasy here spoken of is stated purely as an hypothesis. 3. Although the apostasy is spoken of only as hypothetical, it is, nevertheless, possible. The man who parts with Christ

through the force of old prejudices, is the Caiaphas of the age; he who parts with Him for money, is the Judas; he who parts with Him for popular favour, is the Pilate. The tragedy of Golgatha has many actors; every generation every day reiterates these multiplied crucifixions. III. THE SIN OF SUCH AN APOSTASY WOULD ENTAIL THE MOST LAMENTABLE RESULTS. 1. The lamentable results of this sin would be irremediable. (1) Their first repentance could only have been produced by the whole force of the moral considerations contained in the gospel. (2) The supposed apostates have triumphed over the whole force of the most powerful considerations that can ever be addressed to them. 2. The lamentable results of this crime are consonant with character. Their doom answers to their state. 3. The lamentable results of this crime are terribly awful. The conscience in flames! 4. The lamentable results of this crime are ever just at hand. "Nigh unto cursing." (*Homilist.*) *Indefinite renewal impossible*:—The impossibility here asserted consists not in a single repentance, but in the indefinite renewal of the first vivid life of the Spirit in the case of Christians who are meanwhile continually crucifying to themselves the Son of God afresh: the spiritual impressions that were wrought once for all at their conversion must of necessity be weakened by repetition. The passage, as it stands in the text, is in thorough harmony with the previous context, which maintains the need for progressive teaching as the child grows into the man in Christ, and protests against the continual reiteration of truths which have lost their freshness; and with the subsequent context, which condemns spiritual barrenness under the figure of sterile soil which, season after season, in spite of fertilising rain and human tillage, produces only thorns and thistles. (*F. Rendall, M.A.*) *Final perseverance*:—If Christians can fall away, and cease to be Christians, they cannot be renewed again to repentance. "But," says one, "you say they cannot fall away." What is the use of putting this "if" in, like a bugbear to frighten children. If God has put it in, He has put it in for wise reasons. Let me show you why. 1. First, it is put in to keep thee from falling away. God preserves His children from falling away; but He keeps them by the use of means; and one of these is, the terrors of the law, showing them what would happen if they were to fall away. There is a deep precipice: what is the best way to keep any one from going down there? Why, to tell him that if he did he would inevitably be dashed to pieces. In some old castle there is a deep cellar, where there is a vast amount of fixed air and gas, which would kill anybody who went down. What does the guide say? "If you go down you will never come up alive." Who thinks of going down? The very fact of the guide telling us what the consequence would be keeps us from it. It leads the believer to greater dependence on God, to a holy caution, because he knows that if he were to fall away he could not be renewed. It is calculated to excite fear; and this holy fear keeps the Christian from falling. 2. It is to excite our gratitude. Suppose you say to your little boy, "Don't you know, Tommy, if I were not to give you your dinner and your supper you would die? There is nobody else to give Tommy dinner and supper." What then? The child does not think that you are not going to give him his dinner and supper; he knows you will, and he is grateful to you for them. The chemist tells us that if there were no oxygen mixed with the air animals would die. Do you suppose that there will be no oxygen, and, therefore, we shall die? No, he only teaches you the great wisdom of God, in having mixed the gases in their proper proportions. Says one of the old astronomers, "There is great wisdom in God, that He has put the sun exactly at a right distance—not so far away that we should be frozen to death, and not so near that we should be scorched." He says, "If the sun were a million miles nearer to us we should be scorched to death." Does the man suppose that the sun will be a million miles nearer, and, therefore, we shall be scorched to death? He says, "If the sun were a million miles farther off we should be frozen to death." Does he mean that the sun will be a million miles farther off, and, therefore, we shall be frozen to death? Not at all. Yet it is quite a rational way of speaking, to show us how grateful we should be to God. So says the apostle. Christian! if thou shouldst fall away, thou couldst never be renewed unto repentance. Thank thy Lord, then, that He keeps thee. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The moral condition in which renewal is impossible*:—When anything is said to be impossible, the natural question is, Impossible to whom? for it is plain that what may be possible to one being, may be impossible to another being. If I were called to attempt to lift a stone of a ton weight, I would naturally say, "No, I will not attempt it, for it is impossible,"—meaning, not that it is impossible that the stone should be lifted, but that it is impossible that I should lift it. The impossibility in the case before us may either be considered as existing

in reference to God, or in reference to man. If the restoration of these apostates to the state in which they once were be an impossibility in reference to God, it must be so either because it is inconsistent with His nature and perfections, or with His decree and purpose. In the first sense, "it is impossible for God to lie," or to "clear the guilty" without satisfaction. In the second sense, it was impossible that Saul and his posterity should continue on the throne of Israel. That the restoration of an apostate to his former state is an impossibility in either of these points of view, is more than we are warranted to assert. If we carefully examine the passage, I apprehend we will come to the conclusion that the impossibility is considered as existing not in reference to God, but in reference to man—that the apostle's assertion is, that it is impossible, by any renewed course of elementary instruction, to bring back such apostates to the acknowledgment of the truth. He had stated that many of the Hebrews had unlearned all that they had learned, and "had need of some one to teach them again the first principles of the oracles of God." Yet he declares his determination not to enter anew on a course of elementary instruction, but to go on to some of the higher branches of Christian knowledge; for this cause, that there was no reason to expect that such restatements would be of any use in reclaiming those who, after being instructed in the doctrines and evidences of Christianity, had apostatised; while, on the other band, there was every reason to hope that illustrations of the higher branches of Christian truth would be of the greatest use to those who "held fast" the "first principles," in establishing them in the faith and profession, in the comforts and obedience of the gospel; just as a farmer after making a fair trial of a piece of ground, and finding that, though everything has been done for it in the most favourable circumstances, it still continues barren, desists, saying, "It is impossible to make anything of that field," and turns his attention to rendering still more fertile those fields which have already given evidence of their capability of improvement. "It is not possible, by a renewed statement of Christian principles and their evidence, to bring back these apostates. Nothing can be stated but what has been already stated, which they seemed to understand, which they professed to believe, but which they now openly and contemptuously reject. No evidence, stronger than that which has been brought before their minds, and which they once seemed to feel the force of, can be presented to them. The meaning and evidence of Christian truth have been before their minds in as favourable circumstances as can be conceived." The apostle's assertion, then, appears to me to be just this—"Statement and argument would be entirely lost on such persons, and therefore we do not enter on them." (*John Brown, D.D.*) *Danger of falling away* :—A Christian said to a minister of his acquaintance, "I am told you are against the perseverance of the saints." "Not I, indeed," he replied; "it is the perseverance of sinners that I oppose." "But do you not think that a child of God can fall very low, and yet be restored?" "I think it would be very dangerous to make the experiment." *Nothing more can be done*:—If the mightiest arguments have been brought to bear on the conscience in vain; if after some slight response, which gave hopes of better things, it has relapsed into the insensibility of its former state, there remains nothing more to be done. There is nothing more potent than the wail of Calvary's broken heart and the peal from Sinai's brow, and if these have been tried in vain, no argument is left which can touch the conscience and arouse the heart. If these people had never been exposed to these appeals, there would have been some hope for them, but what hope can there be now, since, in having passed through them without permanent effect, they have become more hardened in the process than they were at first? Here is a man dragged from an ice-pond, and brought into the infirmary. Hot flannels are at once applied, the limbs are chafed, every means known to modern science for restoring life is employed. At first it seems as if these appliances will take effect, there are twitchings and convulsive movements; but, alas! they soon subside, and the surgeon gravely shakes his head. "Can you do nothing else?" "Nothing," he replies; "I have used every method I can devise, and if these fail, it is impossible to renew again to life." This passage has nothing to do with those who fear lest it condemns them. The presence of that anxiety, like the cry which betrayed the real mother in the days of Solomon, establishes beyond a doubt that you are not one that has fallen away beyond the possibility of renewal to repentance. If you are still touched by gospel sermons, and are anxious to repent, and are in godly fear lest you should be a castaway, take heart; these are signs that this passage has no bearing on you. Why make yourself ill with a sick man's medicine? But if you are growing callous and insensible under the preaching of the gospel, look into this

passage, and see your doom, unless you speedily arrest your steps. (*F. B. Meyer, B.A.*) *The recoil from good influences*:—Translated into a statement of tendency, the doctrine taught is this.—Every fall involves a risk of apostasy, and the higher the experience fallen from the greater the risk. The deeper religion has gone into a man at the commencement of his Christian course, the less hopeful his condition if he lapse. The nearer the initial stage to a thorough conversion the less likely is a second change, if the first turn out abortive; and so on, in ever-increasing degrees of improbability as lapses increase in number. The brighter the light in the soul, the deeper the darkness when the light is put out. The sweeter the manna of God's Word to the taste, the more loathsome it becomes when it has lost its relish. The fiercer the fire in the hearth while the fuel lasts, the more certain it is that when the fire goes out there will remain nothing but ashes. The livelier the hope of glory, the greater the aversion to all thoughts of the world to come when once a Christian has, like Atheist in the "Pilgrim's Progress," turned his back on the heavenly Jerusalem. Action and reaction are equal. The more forcibly you throw an elastic ball against a wall the greater the rebound; in like manner the more powerfully the human spirit is brought under celestial influences, the greater the recoil from all good, if there be a recoil at all. The gushing enthusiasts of to-day are the cynical sceptics of to-morrow. Have promoters of "revivals" laid these things duly to heart? (*A. B. Bruce, D.D.*) *Backsliding and apostasy*:—The difference between backsliding and apostasy is that between a body benumbed, stiffened, and all but deprived of life by the cold, and the same body petrified and hardened into stone. (*J. Leifchild, D.D.*) *Sinning against the light*:—He who sins against the light is hurt beyond hope of cure. (*Old Greek Saying.*) *Shutting out love*:—

> "He that shuts love out, in turn
> Shall be shut out by love,
> And on her threshold lie
> Howling in outer darkness." (*Tennyson.*)

Freezing after a thaw:—I have read that there is no ice that is harder to melt than ice that has been once melted and frozen the second time. So the soul that has begun to melt before the heart of Christ, and then refuses to lay its sins on the Lamb of God, that heart is the hardest and the most difficult to break again. (*Theo. Monod.*) *Process of backsliding*:—Two ministers, walking along the banks of a river, came to a tree which had been blown down in a recent gale. It was a mighty, noble tree, tall and substantial, with large outspreading roots and ample foliage. Approaching to examine it, they found it had been snapped off just above the roots; and, on looking still closer, found that there was only an outer shell of sound wood, and that the heart was rotten. Unnoticed, decay had been going on for years. So is it generally with the fall of professing Christians; the fall is but the result of evil that has been allowed to steadily gather strength within the heart. *The difficulty of the passage*:—Do you ask me whether it is possible for a Christian man to commit a crime, and to sink into a doom like this? I dare not obliterate the tremendous force of this passage by denying the possibility. Far better leave it as it is—an awful hypothesis—to warn us against the danger and the guilt, than venture by fine-drawn speculations, to diminish its practical power. If you ask me how I can reconcile the passage as it stands, with the merciful promises which assure us of God's keeping if we trust in Him, I answer that these promises are to those who trust, and continue to trust, in God, not to those who trusted once, but whose trust has now perished; and I answer farther, that I would rather be charged by a whole council of theologians, with introducing scientific inconsistency into a theological system, than dare to lessen the term of a divinely-inspired warning, the undiminished awfulness of which may be needed to save some soul from death. (*R. W. Dale, LL.D.*) *What is it to fall away?*—To fall away is to go back from the outward profession of Christianity—not temporarily, but finally; not as the result of some sudden sin, but because the first outward stimulus is exhausted, and there is no true life beating at the heart, to repair or reinvigorate the wasting devotion of the life. It is to resemble those wandering planets, which never shone with their own light, but only in the reflected light of some central sun; but which, having broken from its guiding leash, dash further and further into the blackness of darkness, without one spark of life, or heat, or light. It is to return as a dog to its vomit, and as a

sow to her filth; because the reformation was only outward and temporary, and the dog or sow natures were never changed through the gracious work of the Holy Spirit. It is to be another Judas; to commit the sin against the Holy Ghost; to lose all earnestness of feeling, all desire for better things, all power of tender emotion, and to become utterly callous and dead, as the pavement on which we walk, or the rusty armour hanging on the old castle's walls. (*F. B. Meyer, B.A.*) *A backslider a sad sight:*—"It is a miserable thing to be a backslider. Of all unhappy things that can befall a man," says Rylo, "I suppose it is the worst. A stranded ship, a broken-winged eagle, a garden overrun with weeds, a harp without strings, a church in ruins—all these are sad sights; but a backslider is a sadder sight still." *Misery of a backslider:*—Terrible is the falling away of any who make profession and act quite contrary to conviction. A lady here (Huddersfield) thus relates her own case. "Once Mr. —— and I were both in the right way. I drew him into the world again. I am now the most miserable of beings. When I lie down I fear I shall awake in hell. When I go out full dressed, and seem to have all the world can give me, I am ready to sink under the terrors of my own mind. What greatly increases my misery is the remembrance of the dying speech of my own sister, who told me she had stifled convictions and obstinately fought against light to enjoy the company of the world. "Sister," said she, "I die without hope. Beware this be not your case!" "But, indeed," said Mrs. ——, "I fear it will." (*C. Venn.*) **They crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh.**—*Crucifying the Son of God afresh:*—Various as have been God's dealings with the world, there is, after all, a terrible impartiality in His dispensations to His rational creatures. Wherever men possess reason and conscience, they possess, in some measure, the means of pleasing or displeasing Him; whenever they can, in the lowest degree, conceive His law, they are bound to obey it. The whole world is under a moral government, though we alone are in a written covenant; all live to God, though we alone have professed "the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus." The very temptations that dazzle the unevangelised world are, in innumerable instances, the same temptations that are trying us—anger, sensuality, ambition, avarice. We are their brethren in all things except in the revelation of the Divine mercy and the gift of the Divine Spirit. While the human nature of the Church is uniform, its trials must be nearly so. As the Lord of the Church is the same "yesterday and to-day and for ever," so the probation He enforces is distributed pretty evenly through all ages and classes. But of all the equalisations of evil in successive ages, of all the repetitions of trial from generation to generation, of all the instances evincing that, in the Church as in the world, "the thing that has been will be"—unquestionably that expressed in the text is the most startling and fearful. The Crucifixion of Christ, in its literal reality, stands alone in the history of man. It was the last and darkest depth of human criminality. The original fall, and the rejection of the Redeemer, are the two saddest pages in the story of our race. But mournful as is the former, it has never, probably, left the impression upon the heart which is at once produced by all those dread accompaniments that prepared and embittered the last sufferings of the meek and merciful Friend of man. Injustice, cruelty, false shame, unworthy indolence, covetousness, ambition, hypocrisy, envy, all were in different ways exhibited in this tremendous tragedy; all contributed in different ways to fix the catastrophe. No, never, surely, is man, in all the possibilities of futurity, destined again to consummate a wickedness like this. It must be for ever solitary in the world, an event placed beyond anticipation, repetition, or parallel; a lonely and terrible monument of unapproachable guilt. Not thus, however, speaks the voice of inspiration. Heaven has *not* spared us this trial. When Christ was about to die, He instituted a memorial sacrament of His passion, to show forth His death until He come. It would seem that there is, as it were, a fearful and Satanic sacrament too, of that same dread hour, by which it is still in man's power to reiterate and prolong His death until He come to judge the long succession of His crucifiers. St. Paul delivers to us the tremendous truth, that there is in man a continued capacity of "crucifying afresh the Son of God"; a power to act over again all the scene of His torture, to league with the malignant priests and the scoffing soldiers, to buffet the unresisting cheek, to bind the crown of thorns. Reflect on the frame and temper of mind, on the weakness and the wickedness, that made the chosen people of God the murderers of His Son, and try if you cannot catch some faint image of that treachery in your own hearts. But be true to yourselves if you would indeed detect the lurking evil, and think not that even among the best of us, in a world of oft-recurring temptation, it is useless to prosecute the scrutiny. Doubtless the accuracy

of the image will vary in degree: here, through the progressive sanctification, all but obliterated; here, through remaining worldliness, vivid and undeniable; here, through total rejection of Christ, all but complete. To estimate the resemblance we must turn to the original. When Christ was, in that day of mingled horror and glory, sacrificed on Calvary, few things were more remarkable in the accessories of the event than the feelings and motives of the people. Christ was unquestionably a favourite with the mass of the people; the great obstacle to the schemes of the priests was always that "they feared the people." His gracious bearing, and the mysterious anticipation that surrounded and dignified His singular life, had evidently caught and conciliated the popular mind. Nor was it unqualified malignity that made them His persecutors. Christ Himself had found a palliation for this crime in their ignorance, He besought forgiveness for them because "they knew not what they did." Yet, however it came to pass, this people, thus disposed, are found the unanimous destroyers of their Prophet, the tumultuous petitioners for His crucifixion, the fierce invokers of His blood on them and on their children? Strange as this appears, is there indeed nothing that resembles it in our own experience? Is no parallel to be found for it in the Christian world around us! Can we not, when we go abroad into the highways of daily life, find something in the general mind that reminds us of a people honouring Christ as long as He offers easy blessings, flocking round His standard with enthusiasm so long as He is made the standard-bearer of a party, professing boundless admiration, devotion, and love; yet when the true hour of trial comes, and the question can no longer be escaped,—Shall we surrender our pleasures or our Redeemer?—give up the favour of earthly superiors or the favour of the King of heaven?—abandon our cherished sins, or with our sins nail Jesus to the cross once more?—then, relinquishing their short-lived discipleship, following the instigation of blind and guilty guides, turning with the turning tide, and swelling the torrent of the persecutors of the body of Christ. Turn again to the record. Among the unhappy instruments of Satan, on that dread occasion, was one whose name, almost unknown in all else, his relation to this event has miserably immortalised—the wretched, wavering, timorous Pilate. Willing to save, but afraid to resist, anxious to do right as long as virtue cost no trouble,—has this crucifier of Christ no image among us? Are there no Pilates among our grave and reputable men of business?—none who could be models of consummate piety if there were no danger of its disturbing their tenure of wealth and influence?—who would gladly save the Son of God from degradation if they were not a little apprehensive of degrading themselves in the task,—and would allow Him supreme authority as long as their own was warranted secure? Not far removed from this is the case of those rulers who struggled against their very faith lest it should hazard their popularity (John xii. 43). Alas! these poor dependents on human fame stand not alone in the world; this weapon of the evil one has not been suffered to rust in disuse! It is not with open disavowal that the votary of fashionable worldliness disclaims the Lord of glory. A peril such as this might be met and warded off. But society does its work surely because slowly. Religion is not proved to be absurd, but assumed to be so; the world would not harshly ask us to disbelieve in Christ, but merely to forget Him. Principles are lost for ever before we have dreamed they were in danger, and the poor victim of the world's opinion has learned to "crucify afresh the Son of God," without relinquishing one outward characteristic of discipleship! But these, wretched and criminal as they are, are but the less daring forms of crime. Deeper guilt than this bore the suffering Lamb of God to His cross, and deeper guilt than this is not confined to His first crucifiers. Can we witness nothing that recalls the rebellious ambition of those who said, "This is the heir; come, let us kill Him, and the inheritance shall be ours"? The world at large—yea, the far immense of worlds—is the inalienable property of God; the inheritance is entailed upon that only-begotten Son, "whom," it is written, "He appointed Heir of all things." And when, refusing to hold as His lessees, spurning His rights of lordship, we would explode His claims for antiquated and fanciful, that we may enjoy His gift as though the fee were ours; in all this is there none of that spirit which once raged in those who, in angry impatience of His claims, "took counsel against Him for to put Him to death"? And when a paltry hope of gain or advancement can bribe us to forsake a gracious Master, to forget all He has done, and all He has borne; does he remain then alone in the world who "said unto the chief priests, What will ye give me, and I will deliver Him unto you"? Nay, at such an hour we are worse than Judas; for even Judas, the miserable suicide of remorse, we may believe, had another option

been his, would not have "crucified the Son of God afresh!" Can we descend yet deeper? Christ was crucified on the imputation of blasphemy. What was the "blasphemy"? He had called Himself the Son of God, and the Son of man, and in right of this transcendent union, the Judge to come "in the clouds of heaven," and "sitting at the right hand of power." If this was false, His crucifiers were justified; if this was false, in a theocratic government, He deserved His fate. There are those who pronounce that mysterious title false in any sense that could have ever made it "blasphemy" from human lips, who deny the Sonship of the Eternal any significance beyond what more or less belongs to all the virtuous revealers and interpreters of the will of heaven that have ever instructed man. Surely we cannot in justice refuse to such impugners the place they have chosen for themselves in the throng that circled the cross of Jesus! Still we have not sunk to the last level of the Jewish persecutors. Fallen as we are, we could not have borne to prefer Barabbas, the thief and murderer, to our pure and guiltless Redeemer. And who, then, are the darling idols of human applause? Who are the chosen of our race that poetry crowns with its halo of glory, and every young imagination bows to worship? Who, but the laurelled Barabbases of history, the chartered robbers and homicides that stain its pages with blood, and that, after eighteen hundred years of Christian discipline, the world has not yet risen to discountenancing? Remove the conventional discredit that attaches to the weaker thief, exalt him to the majesty of the military despot, and how many would vote for Barabbas, how many linger with the lowly Jesus? "Be it so, but our votes would at least be open and undisguised, we would not stoop to the meanness of hypocrisy. We would not, with those you are pleased to make our prototypes, 'put on Him the scarlet robe and the crown, and the sceptre,' that we might 'bow the knee and mock Him.' Of this, at least, we are incapable." Perhaps so. I pray God it may be so. And yet, recall but the hour that has just now floated past you into eternity, when you "bowed the knee" to this same Jesus who was crucified, when your lips uttered words of piercing sorrow, and besought His mercy and implored His aid, as erring and straying sheep, as miserable offenders, miserable sinners. Ask yourselves how many knees were bowed in the repentance the lips rehearsed, how many hearts were melted in the agony the tongue so readily expressed. And if conscience whisper an accusation, bethink you how differs this from the guilt of those who called Him King, and despised the royalty they ascribed; or was it more a crime to insult Him when He walked the earth in poverty and pain, than when He sits, as now, the recognised Monarch of the universe! (*Prof. Archer Butler.*) *The crucifixion of Christ, an ever-recurring crime*:—I. THE METHOD BY WHICH HEAVEN ESTIMATES THE CHARACTER OF MEN. The essence of a moral act lies, not in the muscular exertion, but in the mental volition. 1. This method of judging character commends itself to our sense of justice as obviously right. 2. This method of judging character urges the most vigorous discipline of the heart. 3. This method of judging character suggests unexpected revelations on the day of judgment. II. THE ENORMITIES WHICH CORRUPT MEN ARE AT ALL TIMES CAPABLE OF PERPETRATING. 1. The feelings which effected the crucifixion we may find everywhere in the hearts of depraved men. 2. Similar circumstances would probably lead to a similar development. Learn: 1. The propriety of a trembling modesty in denouncing the great criminals of history. In condemning them, let us take care that we do not foredoom ourselves. 2. The necessity of a heart-renovation for the real improvement of humanity. 3. The inestimable value of the gospel to mankind. (*Homilist.*) *The crucifixion of Christ modernised*:—To a nature morally sensitive the crucifixion of Jesus Christ is the crime of all crimes. Although eighteen hundred years have passed it is still the most realistic scene in all history. The strokes of the crucifical hammers are heard not only on the mountains of Palestine; they ring throughout the universe. The vividness of the cross comes, in part, from the way the story of Calvary is told. There is nothing elaborate. No attempt at fine writing. Only a few verses. The story is allowed to tell itself. But here is the secret: it is scenic from beginning to end; it speaks in pictures. God Himself emphasised the enormity of the crucifixion of His Son by means of the great wonders by which He marked the event, and by which He proclaimed that all nature was in a sympathetic agony with the agonising Christ. But mark the way God visits the crime of Christ's crucifixion with retribution if you would grasp its enormity. "The Hebrews had for centuries been dreaming of a Messiah, and at last their Messiah came. But how did they receive Him? They received Him with yells of 'Crucify.' At the Cross of Jesus, which consummated

their iniquity, the story of their nation ends." Some of those who shared in the scene of Christ's crucifixion, and myriads of their children, shared also in the long horror of the siege of Jerusalem by the Romans—a siege which, for its unutterable fearfulness, stands unparalleled in the story of mankind. They had forced the Romans to crucify their Christ, and they themselves were crucified in myriads by the Romans outside their walls, till room failed for the crosses and wood to make them with. This would be enough to spread before us the enormity of the crime of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ; but this is not all; retribution still follows the nation of His crucifiers. In this year the Jews are an ostracised race in the midst of humanity the world over. To see the enormity of the crucifixion of Christ put by the side of the appalling judgment which followed it an analysis of the crime. The crucifixion of Christ was not a single sin, it was a multifold sin; it was a moral compound. It was a culmination—a climax. A whole series of motives and a whole series of actions were behind it. When we remember this we see that the Cross stands for something upon the part of man. It is an exponent of humanity. It is the work of human nature unregenerated. It shows the extreme of sin to which man will dare to go; he will dare to crucify the Son of God. Is there a point in moral depravity beyond that? If so, what is it? Hundreds and hundreds of typical hands rear the Cross and ply the crucificial hammers and drive the cruel nails of death. I see the hand of the Pharisee; he was a formalist in religion, and could not endure the pure spirituality of Christ's religion. I see the hand of the Elder; he was a traditionalist, and he felt his religion reel before the practical common-sense questions which Christ fired through it, as the gun-boat fires its cannon-balls through a wooden ship. I see the hand of the Sadducee; he was an agnostic, and he hated Christ because He brought to bear against the tenets of his agnosticism the deadly parallelism of the Scriptures. The envy of the Churchmen; the avarice of Judas; the vacillation and cowardice of Pilate; the perjury of the false witnesses; the false shame of those who believed in Christ but who refused to confess Him for fear of the Pharisees; the desertion of His long-instructed followers; the brutality of the mob, who mocked Him as He died—all these were forces which combined to erect the Cross and nail Christ to it. And what had Christ done that He should thus be crucified and made an open shame? He had loved men; He had opened the massive prison doors of error and had given men the liberty of the truth; He had smitten haughty tyrannies and broken the oppressive grip which they had upon humanity; He had taken children into His arms and had blessed them; He had lived a holy life, in which no one could pick a single flaw; He had healed the sick; He had uttered the Sermon upon the Mount and the golden promises and the explanatory parables. That was all He had done. How the enormity of the crime of crucifying Him grows! We congratulate ourselves that we were not at Calvary and that we were spared the trial, the experience, and the doom of those who crucified Christ. My fellow-men of the nineteenth century, the text strikes us while we are right in the midst of our mistaken congratulations. It says in unmistakable language the crime of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, which is so enormous, is a crime that is continuous. In the realm of human disposition and feeling, in the thought-life of the world, there is a perpetual Calvary and a perpetual crucifixion. Christ is being crucified afresh, and the old guilt of the first century is not only being constantly incurred, but it is being constantly increased. The men of the first century, when they crucified Christ, knew not what they did—they sinned in darkness; but the men of the nineteenth century, when they crucify Christ, know what they are doing—they sin against light. What has Christ done that any man in the nineteenth century should crucify Him? He has filled the world with pure principles; He has reproduced Himself in the magnificent men and women of the Christian Church; He has built up the grand institutions of civil and religious liberty; He has shaped and moulded the leading nations of the earth; He has given the world the progress and the triumphs of a Christian civilisation. Do these things make Him worthy of crucifixion? The men of the first century who crucified Him saw only the deeds of a very few years; the men of the nineteenth century who crucify Him afresh see the deeds of 1800 years. They sin against all the centuries of the Christian era. There is no mistaking the text. It is in the present tense, and it speaks of a second act. It was addressed to men thirty years after Jesus had been enjoying the glories of the throne of heaven. He was beyond the reach of the physical touch of man. Paul did not consider the essence of a moral act to lie in the muscular exertion, but in the mental volition. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." This is heaven's idea of moral con-

duct. The heart-life is the true life. "The Lord looketh upon the heart." Our life includes the unexpressed wishes, the inarticulate longings, and the unwrought purposes of the heart. It includes our moral identifications with our fellow-men, and our sympathies with their actions. You have now before you the answer of the question, How is it possible to recrucify Christ? The answer is this: It is possible by means of moral identification with the men of Calvary. There is a brotherhood of soul with soul; by continuing in the brotherhood made up of the souls of the Pilates, and of the Pharisees, and of the Judases, and of their kindred, we endorse their deeds and are held by justice as alike criminal with them. When their spirit is incarnated in our acts we crucify Christ afresh. I tell you that not a single impulse or passion that played a part in the great tragedy has died out of the world. They are all pulsating to-day in the hearts of men. The nineteenth century is but a moral echo of the first century. If you are not morally one with the friends of Christ you will be classified with the crucifiers of Christ. That is the principle which the text enunciates. Jesus Himself enunciates the same principle in the woes which He pronounces against the Pharisees. Moral identification! That is the criterion of character! That is the basis upon which God deals with us in judgment. Moral identification is also the basis upon which man judges man. We saw the play of this principle of judgment during the civil war which tore and distracted our land. The war opened with the Confederates firing upon Fort Sumter. That first act was universally made to test all the North. The way a man looked upon that daring act was made the criterion of his standing, the index of his loyalty or disloyalty. The man who deplored it, and who lifted his hands in holy horror at the thought of American citizens firing upon American citizens, was identified with the men within the fort who stood by the guns of the nation loyally and courageously; but the man who let the joy of his soul shine out in his face, or embody itself in utterance, was identified with the men who aimed and fired the guns of treason, and who tattered the dear old Stars and Stripes, and trampled them in the dust. The latter man was compelled to leave the North and was treated as a traitor, which he was. The war was closed with the awful tragedy of assassination. The most dastardly act of all that black history was the firing of the assassin's fatal ball by J. Wilkes Booth through the noble frame of Abraham Lincoln. That act also was made a test. Here and there through the North there were men who applauded the act; but no sooner did the words "Good," "Served him right," fall from their lips than instantly they were riddled by the Minié balls of patriots, or swung out into the air from impromptu gallows. Why? Because everywhere the men of the North looked upon them as assassins, kindred Booths. Why? Because everywhere the men of the North looked upon soul identification with treason as treason, and sympathy with a traitor as making a man a traitor. Moral identification! That is the criterion of character. Both God and man declare it to be the true basis of righteous judgment. If this be so, then the duty of the hour, in view of the theme which occupies our minds, is to question ourselves with regard to our moral identification. Where do you stand with regard to Christ? That is the question. With whom are you classified? Do you crucify Christ afresh? If by your actions you are classified with Pilate you crucify Christ. The historical man Pilate is dead, but his principles have been modernised. Pilateism never dies. It affects friendship; it pays compliments; it shifts and transfers responsibility; it seeks to be on both sides; it makes an orthodox profession, but lives a heterodox life; it virtually acquits but actually executes. With whom are you classified? With Judas, the man who sold his Master? Why did Judas sell Christ? Because he got money. The sale of Christ by Judas was a pure matter of cash. If you sell conscience or principle for money you are a Judas and a crucifier of Christ. If you are untruthful and dishonest in your business you are a Judas and a crucifier of Christ. With whom are you identified? With the soldiers who robed Him in mock purple, and who platted a crown of thorns and put it upon His brow, and bowed the knee before Him in hypocrisy? If when conscience tells you to perform a certain duty you deliberately refuse to obey, what is that but bowing the knee in hypocrisy to Christ as the King of your life, and turning His crown into a crown of thorns, a thing to be jeered at? With whom are you classified? With the disciples who forsook Him and fled? If so, you play a part in Christ's crucifixion. To-day the silence and the backwardness and the desertion of Christians may be the cause of the reign of unbelief; the cause of indifference with regard to Christ; the cause also of much of the dishonour that is heaped upon Christ. It is our duty to assert more and claim more for Jesus. With whom are you classified? With the Phari-

sees, who kept men from espousing the cause of Christ? Do you hinder your friends from making a confession? With whom are you classified? With the Sanhedrin who passed the sentence of death upon Christ? Why did the members of the Sanhedrin sentence Him? Because He claimed to be God; because they said He was a blasphemer; because they denied His deity. Do you deny the deity of Jesus Christ? If so, then there is nothing left for you but to crucify Him. With whom are you identified? I hear a voice saying, "I am identified with no one." "I am neutral." "I neither choose Christ nor Barabbas." "I wash my hands clear of the whole business." That was what Pilate thought he would do; but did he? No; all such talk is the merest moral stuff. Neutrality! To you who have this day heard the gospel of Christ, there is no such thing as neutrality. The Master Himself says, "He that is not for Me is against Me." That settles it. He that is not morally identified with Christ as a follower and friend is morally identified with His enemies and crucifiers. Your attempted neutrality is a crime against light and against infinite love and against the eternity of your own soul. Why should you crucify the Son of God afresh? Why should you nail Him to the cross of indifference? Is there any difference between crucifying Christ upon the cross of indifference and crucifying Him upon the cross of criticism, or upon the cross of consent, or upon the cross of unbelief? He is crucified all the same. Do you ask me the way out of your sin? I reply, Seek a true knowledge of Christ. In speaking of the first crucifixion Paul tells the Corinthians that had the men of Jerusalem known Christ they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. Do you ask me the way out of your sin? I reply, If you would avoid the crucifixion of Christ join in the coronation of Christ. Crown Him with an ardent faith; with a loyal love; with a fearless, manly, constant, and open confession. (*David Gregg, D.D.*) *Christ crucified afresh*:—Bridaine was one of the most celebrated of the French preachers. Marmontel relates, that in his sermons he sometimes had recourse to the interesting method of parables, with a view the more forcibly to impress important truths on the minds of his hearers. Preaching on the passion of Jesus Christ, he expressed himself thus:—"A man, accused of a crime of which he was innocent, was condemned to death by the iniquity of his judges. He was led to punishment, but no gibbet was prepared, nor was there any executioner to perform the sentence. The people, moved with compassion, hoped that this sufferer would escape death. But one man raised his voice, and said, 'I am going to prepare a gibbet, and I will be the executioner.' You groan with indignation! Well, my brethren, in each of you I behold this cruel man. Here are no Jews to-day to crucify Jesus Christ; but you dare to rise up, and say, 'I will crucify Him.'" Marmontel adds, that he heard these words pronounced by the preacher, though very young, with all the dignity of an apostle, and with the most powerful emotion; and that such was the effect, that nothing was heard but the sobs of the auditory. (*Bazendale's Dictionary of Anecdotes.*) *Continuous crucifixion*:—Rather, "while crucifying," "crucifying as they are doing." Thus the words imply not only an absolute, but a continuous apostasy, for the participle is changed from the past into the present tense. A drop of water will, as the Rabbis said, suffice to purify a man who has accidentally touched a creeping thing, but an ocean will not suffice for his cleansing so long as he purposely keeps it held in his hand. There is such a thing as "doing despite unto the Spirit of grace" (x. 29). (*F. W. Farrar, D.D.*)

Vers. 7, 8. **The earth which drinketh in the rain.**—*Spiritual realities in material emblems*:—Nature is a parable. The seen adumbrates the unseen. Here we have the soul, truth, God, and character in emblem. I. THE SOUL. 1. Contains in itself the germs of all that it will ever manifest. 2. Only develops those germs as it turns itself towards the sun. II. TRUTH. 1. Like rain in variety. 2. Like rain in origin. 3. Like rain in preciousness. Congenial. Fertilising. III. GOD. The great Husbandman of souls. 1. Prepares soil. 2. Deposits seed. 3. Supplies cultivating influences. IV. CHARACTER. The fruit of a man's life. As gardens, landscapes, forests, grow out of the earth, moral character grows out of conduct. (*Homilist.*) *The dispensation of the gospel word*:—I. THE MINDS OF ALL MEN BY NATURE ARE UNIVERSALLY AND EQUALLY BARREN WITH RESPECT TO FRUITS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS MEET FOR AND ACCEPTABLE UNTO GOD. They are all as the earth under the curse. There is a natural difference among men as to their intellectual abilities. But as to the fruits of spiritual holiness, all men by nature are alike. For our nature, as unto a principle of living unto God is equally corrupted in all. Something is wanting, something must be done to this barren earth, to make it fruitful.

And this is done by rain. And that is described by—1. Its communication or application unto the earth—it falls upon it. 2. An especial adjunct thereof in its frequency—it falls often on it. 3. By that reception which the earth is naturally fitted and suited to give unto it—it drinketh it in. 1. The thing itself is rain. It is the administration of the Word that is intended. And in other places the doctrine of the Scripture is frequently compared unto rain and watering (Deut. xxxii. 2; Zech. xiv. 17). This is that whereby God watereth the barren souls of men, that whereby He communicates unto them all things that may enable them to be fruitful. 2. This rain is said to fall often on the earth. And this may be considered either with respect to the especial concern of these Hebrews or unto the ordinary dispensation of the gospel. In the first way it expresseth the frequent addresses made unto the Jews, in the ministry of the Word, for their recovery from those ways of ruin wherein they were engaged. And so it may include the ministry of the prophets, with the close put unto it by that of Christ Himself. Take it in the latter way for the dispensation of the Word in general, and the manner of it, with frequency and urgency, is included in this expression. Where the Lord Christ sends the gospel to be preached, it is His will that it should be so, instantly, in season and out of season, that it may come as abundant showers of rain on the earth. 3. This rain is said to be drunk in—the earth drinketh in the rain. There is no more intended in this expression but the outward hearing of the Word, a naked assent to it. For it is ascribed unto them who continue utterly barren, who are therefore left unto destruction. But as it is the natural property of the earth to receive in the water that is poured on it, so men do in some sense drink in the doctrine of the gospel when the natural faculties of their souls assent unto it, though it works not upon them, though it produces no effects in them. II. THE DISPENSATION OF THE WORD OF THE GOSPEL UNTO MEN IS AN EFFECT OF THE SOVEREIGN POWER AND PLEASURE OF GOD, AS IS THE GIVING OF RAIN UNTO THE EARTH. He sendeth His Word unto one people and not to another, to one city and not to another, at one time and not at another, and these are those matters of His whereof He giveth no account. 1. The principal end which He designeth in His disposal of the dispensation of the gospel in that great variety wherein we do behold it is the conversion, edification, and salvation of His elect. This is that which He aimeth to accomplish thereby, and therefore His will and purpose herein is that which gives rule and measure unto the actings of His providence concerning it. 2. He doth, according to His sovereign pleasure, call and send persons to the preaching of it to those to whom He will grant the privilege thereof. (1) By endowing them with spiritual gifts, enabling them unto that work and duty. The gospel is the ministration of the Spirit; nor is it to be administered but by virtue of the gifts of the Spirit. (2) This communication of gifts unto men is ordinarily accompanied with a powerful inclination of the minds of men to undertake the work against those discouragements which present themselves unto them in their undertaking. III. GOD SO ORDERED THINGS IN HIS SOVEREIGN UNSEARCHABLE PROVIDENCE THAT THE GOSPEL SHALL BE SENT UNTO, AND IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF IT SHALL FIND ADMITTANCE INTO, WHAT PLACES, AND AT WHAT TIMES, SEEMS GOOD UNTO HIMSELF, EVEN AS HE ORDERS THE RAIN TO FALL ON ONE PLACE AND NOT ON ANOTHER. IV. IT IS THE DUTY OF THOSE UNTO WHOM THE DISPENSATION OF THE WORD IS COMMITTED OF GOD TO BE DILIGENT, WATCHING, INSTANT IN THEIR WORK, THAT THEIR DOCTRINE MAY, AS IT WERE, CONTINUALLY DROP AND DISTIL UPON THEIR HEARERS THAT THE RAIN MAY FALL OFTEN ON THE EARTH. So hath God provided that "the ridges of it may be watered abundantly, to make it soft (or dissolve it) with showers, and so He blesseth the springing thereof" (Psa. lxv. 10). V. ATTENDANCE UNTO THE WORD PREACHED, HEARING OF IT WITH SOME DILIGENCE, AND GIVING OF IT SOME KIND OF RECEPTION, MADE NO GREAT DIFFERENCE AMONG MEN, FOR THIS IS COMMON UNTO THEM WHO NEVER BECOME FRUITFUL. VI. GOD IS PLEASED TO EXERCISE MUCH PATIENCE TOWARDS THOSE TO WHOM HE ONCE GRANTS THE MERCY AND THE PRIVILEGE OF HIS WORD. He doth not presently proceed against them for and on account of their barrenness, but stays until the rain hath often fallen on the ground. But there is an appointed season and period of time, beyond which He will not wait for them any more. VII. WHERE GOD GRANTS MEANS, THERE HE EXPECTS FRUIT. Few men consider what is the state of things with them whilst the gospel is preached to them. Some utterly disregard it any further than as it is suited to their carnal interests and advantages. His business by it is to make men holy, humble, self-denying, righteous, useful, upright, pure in heart and life, to abound in good works, or to be like Himself in all things. VIII. DUTIES OF GOSPEL

OBEDIENCE ARE FRUITS MEET FOR GOD, THINGS THAT HAVE A PROPER AND ESPECIAL TENDENCY UNTO HIS GLORY. As the precious fruits of the earth which the husbandman waiteth for are meet for his use, that is, such as supply his wants, satisfy his occasions, answer his labour, nourish and enrich him; so do these duties of gospel obedience answer all the ends of God's glory which He hath designed unto it in the world. "Hereby," saith our Saviour, "is My Father glorified, if ye bring forth much fruit." IX. WHEREVER THERE ARE ANY SINCERE FRUITS OF FAITH AND OBEDIENCE FOUND IN THE HEARTS AND LIVES OF PROFESSORS, GOD GRACIOUSLY ACCEPTS AND BLESSETH THEM. Nothing is so small but that, if it be sincere, He will accept; and nothing so great but He hath an overflowing reward for it. (*John Owen, D.D.*) *Moral tillage*:—The apostle is showing the effect of character on our power to understand truth. Neither soil is barren. Both lands drink in the rain that often comes upon them. But the fatness of the one field brings forth thorns and thistles, and this can only mean that the man's vigour of soul is itself an occasion of moral evil. The richness of the other land produces plants fit for use by men, who are the sole reason for its tillage. This, again, must mean that, in the case of some men, God blesses that natural strength which itself is neither good nor evil, and it becomes a source of goodness. We come now to the result in each case. The soil that brings forth useful herbs has its share of the Creator's first blessing. What the blessing consists in we are not here told, and it is not necessary to pursue this side of the illustration further. But the other soil, which gives its natural strength to the production of noxious weeds, falls under the Creator's primal curse and is nigh unto burning. The point of the parable evidently is that God blesses the one, that God destroys the other. In both cases the apostle recognises the Divine action, carrying into effect a Divine threat and a Divine promise. I. DRINKING IN THE RAIN THAT OFTEN COMES UPON THE LAND CORRESPONDS TO BEING ONCE ENLIGHTENED, tasting of the heavenly gift, being made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and tasting the good Word of God and the powers of the world to come. II. THE NEGATIVE RESULT OF NOT BRINGING FORTH ANY USEFUL HERBS CORRESPONDS TO FALLING AWAY. God has bestowed His gift of enlightenment, but there is no response of heart and will. The soul does not lay hold, but drifts away. III. THE POSITIVE RESULT OF BEARING THORNS AND THISTLES CORRESPONDS TO CRUCIFYING TO THEMSELVES THE SON OF GOD AFRESH AND PUTTING HIM TO AN OPEN SHAME. IV. To be nigh unto a curse and to be given in the end to be burned CORRESPONDS TO THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF RENEWAL. God renders men incapable of repentance, not because they have fallen away once or more than once, but because they scoff at the Son, through whom God has spoken unto us. The terrible impossibility of renewal here threatened applies, not to apostasy (as the early Church maintained), nor to the lapsed (as the Novatianists held), but to apostasy combined with a cynical, scoffing temper that persists in treading the Son of God under foot. It hardens the heart, because God is jealous of His Son's honour, and punishes the scoffer with the utter destruction of the spiritual faculty and with absolute inability to recover it. This is not the mere force of habit. It is God's retribution, and the apostle mentions it here because the text of the whole Epistle is that God has spoken unto us in His Son. (*T. C. Edwards, D.D.*) *A Divine herbal; or, garden of graces*:—Here be two kinds, a good and a bad soil; the one a garden, the other a desert: the former an enclosure of sweet herbs, excellent graces; the latter a wild forest of briers and thorns. For the better ground we will consider—1. The operative means or working cause of the fertility, "The rain that cometh often upon it." 2. The thankful returning of expected fruit, "It bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed." 3. The reward of mercy, "It receiveth blessing from God." All is an allegory. I. The earth is MAN. II. The rain, GOD'S WORD. III. The herbs are GRACES. And IV. The blessing is A SWEET RETRIBUTION OF MERCY. I. The earth is the best ground that lies betwixt heaven and earth, man; the noblest part of this world; the worthiest creature; the Creator's image. The blessed Deity (which hath in it a trinity of most equal and eternal Persons) is the first and best of all beings; the holy angels next; man next them. Let not all this make man proud. Even this word earth, though here used in a spiritual sense, puts him in mind that this excellent man is a mortal creature. Therefore I will say from the prophet, "O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord" (Jer. xxii. 29). Bestow not too much pains in adorning this perishable earth, thy flesh: the earth thou must be careful of, and which God here waters from heaven with His holy dews, is thy heart, thy conscience. I could willingly step out a little to chide those that, neglecting God's earth, the soul, fall to trimming with a curious superstition the earth's earth, clay

and loam: a body of corruption painted till it shine like a lily; rottenness hid under golden leaves. But the earth here meant is a divine, spiritual, immortal nature —called earth by a metaphor—incapable of suffering terrene fragility. This is God's earth, and that in a high and mystical sense, though proper enough. Indeed, "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof," saith the Psalmist. But He hath not such respect to the earth He made, as to this earth for whom He made it. This is earth that He hath sealed and sanctified for Himself, by setting His stamp upon it. Now, the good man's heart is compared to earth for divers reasons. 1. For humility. The earth is the lowest of all elements, and the centre of the world. 2. For patience. The earth is called *terra, quia teritur;* and this is the natural earth. For they distinguish it into three sorts: *terra quam terimus; terra quam gerimus; terra quam quærimus*, which is the glorious land of promise. That earth is cut and wounded with culters and shares, yet is patient to suffer it, and returns fruits to those that ploughed it. The good heart is thus rent with vexations and broken with sorrows, yet endureth all with a magnanimous patience, assured of that victory which comes by suffering. Neither is this all: it returns mercy for injury, prayers for persecutions, and blesseth them that cursed it. 3. For faithful constancy. The earth is called *solum*, because it stands alone, depending on nothing but the Maker's hand: "One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh; but the earth abideth for ever" (Eccles. i. 4). She often changeth her burden, without any sensible mutation of herself: "Thy faithfulness is to all generations; Thou hast established the earth, and it standeth" (Psa. cxix. 90). Such a constant solidity is in the faithful heart, that should it thunder bulls from Rome, and bolts from Rome, *impavidum ferient ruinæ*. So the first terror hath moved the ungodly, not removed them; they return to themselves, and rest in a resolved peace. Lord, do what Thou wilt: "if Thou kill me, I will trust in Thee." Let us hear it from him that had it from the Lord: "Surely he shall not be moved for ever: the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance. He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord. His heart is established," &c. (Psa. cxii. 6–8). Oh sweet description of a constant soul! 4. For charity. The earth brings forth food for all creatures that live on it. Green herb for the cattle; oil and wine for man. A good man is so full of charity, he relieves all, without improvidence to himself. He gives plentifully, that all may have some; not indiscreetly, that some have all. 5. For riches. The earth is but poor without: the surface of it, especially when squalid winter hath bemired it, seems poor and barren; but within it is full of rich mines, ores of gold, and quarries of precious minerals. The sanctified heart may seem poor to the world's eye, which only beholds the husk, and thinks there is no treasure in the cabinet, because it is covered with leather. But within he is full of golden mines and rich ores, the invisible graces of faith, fear, love, hope, patience, holiness; sweeter than the spices of the East Indies, and richer than the gold of the West. 6. Lastly, for fertility. The earth is fruitful: when the stars have given influence, the clouds showered down seasonable dews, and the sun bestowed his kindly heat, lo, the thankful earth returns fruits, and that in abundance. The Christian soul, having received such holy operations, inspirations, and sanctifying motions from above, is never found without a grateful fertility. Yea, as the earth to man, so man to God, returns a blessed usury: ten for one; nay, sometimes thirty, sometimes sixty, sometimes a hundred-fold. II. THE OPERATIVE CAUSE THAT WORKETH THE GOOD EARTH TO THIS FRUITFULNESS IS A HEAVENLY "rain that falleth upon it"; and the earth doth "drink it up." Wherein is observable that the rain doth come, that it is welcome; God sends it plenteously, and man entertains it lovingly. 1. God's Word is often compared to rain or dew. (1) It is the property of rain to cool heat. The burning heat of sin in us, and of God's anger for sin against us, is quenched by the gospel. It cools our intemperate heat of malice, anger, ambition, avarice, lust, which are burning sins. (2) Another effect of rain is thirst quenched. The Christian soul "thirsts after righteousness," is dry at heart till he can have the gospel: a shower of this mercy from heaven quencheth his thirst; he is satisfied (John iv. 14). (3) Rain doth allay the winds. When the potentates of the world storm against us, God quiets all our fears, secures us from all their terrors by a gracious rain, drops of mercy in the never-failing promises of the gospel. (4) Rain hath a powerful efficacy to cleanse the air. We know that too often filthy fumes of heresies surge up in a land, that the soul of faith is almost stifled, and the uncleanness of corrupt doctrine gets a predominant place: the Lord then drops His Word from heaven; the pure rain of His holy gospel cleanseth away this putrefaction, and gives new

life to the almost-smothered truth. (5) Rain hath yet another working: to mollify a hard matter. The parched and heat-hardened earth is made soft by the dews of heaven. Oh, how hard and obdurate is the heart of man till this rain falls on it! (6) Lastly, rain is one principal subordinate cause that all things fructify. This holy dew is the operative means, next to the grace of God in our Lord Jesus Christ, that the souls of Christians should bring forth the fruits of faith and obedience. I know God can save without it: we dispute not of His power, but of His work of ordinary, not extraordinary, operations. God usually worketh this in our hearts by His Word. 2. Thus far the matter; the manner is—(1) "It cometh." (2) "Often." (3) "Upon it." (1) "It cometh." It is not forced, nor fetched, but comes of His own mere mercy whose it is (Jas. i. 17). They that want it have no merit of congruity to draw it to them; they that have it have no merit of condignity to keep it with them. It is the mercy and gratuital favour of God that this gospel cometh to us. (2) "Often." God hath respect to our infirmities, and sends us a plentiful rain. One shower will not make us fruitful; it must come "oft upon us." The rain dints the hard stone, not by violence, but by oft-falling drops. Line must be added to line; "here a little, and there a little." God could pour a whole flood on us at once. If much were poured at once, a great deal would fall besides, and be spilt. Like children, we must be fed by spoonfuls, according to the capacity of our weak natures. It is not an abundant rain falling at once that makes the plants grow, but kindly and frequent showers. When Christ spake of the "bread of life," the transported disciples beseech Him, "Lord, evermore give us this bread" (John vi. 34). So pray we: Lord, evermore shower down upon us this rain! (3) "Upon it." God so directs this dew of His word that it shall fall on our hearts, not besides. A good shower may come on the earth, yet if a man house himself, or be shrouded under a thick bush, or burrowed in the ground, he will be dry still. God sends down His rain: one houseth himself in the darkness of security; another sits dallying with the delights of lust under a green bush; a third is burrowed in the ground, entrenching himself in the quest of riches. Alas, how should the dew of grace fall upon these! Thou wouldest not shelter the ground from the clouds, lest it grow barren: oh, then, keep not thy soul from the rain of heaven! III. You have heard how the rain is come; now hear HOW IT IS MADE WELCOME. The good ground drinks it; nay, drinks it in. The comparison stands thus: the thirsty land drinks up the rain greedily which the clouds pour upon it. You would wonder what becomes of it; you may find it in your fruits. When your vines hang full of clusters, your gardens stand thick with flowers, your meadows with grass, your fields with corn, you will say the earth hath been beholden to the heaven. That hath rained moisture, this hath drunk it in; we see it in our fruits. There is a blessed sort of drinkers which drink in this sweet rain of grace and mercy. They do not only taste it; so do the wicked: "They have tasted of the heavenly gift; they have tasted of the good Word of God, and of the powers of the world to come" (ver. 4). Nor drink it only to their throats, as carnal politicians and formal professors do. It shall never come into their stomachs, never near their hearts. But these drink it in, digest it in their consciences, take liberal draughts of it, and do indeed drink healths thereof. This is a hearty draught of the waters of life; the deeper the sweeter. The vessel of our heart being once thus filled with grace shall hereafter be replenished with glory. (*T. Adams.*) *The gospel rain*:—The blessing that good hearers receive is a further increase of all graces in this life: "To him that hath shall be given," &c. (Matt. xiii. 8); and eternal blessedness in the life to come. Blessed are they that hear the Word of God and keep it. 1. All people are as the ground that stand in need of the rain of the Word of God. The earth must have rain all the year long, more or less, else it drieth and withereth away; so do we if we want the rain of the Word. In what a miserable case were they in Israel when there fell no rain for the space of three years and six months; and in what a pitiful taking are those towns and countries, though they feel it not, which want the rain of the Word of God? You that have it be thankful to God for it, and learn to esteem more highly of this blessing than ye do. If it rain on your wheat and barley in the due time of the year, ye praise God for it; and will ye not bless Him for the heavenly rain that falleth on yourselves to make you fruitful to eternal life. 2. As this rain by the goodness of God falls on you, so let it not pass by you as water running from the rocks and stones, but drink it in, that it may cause you to increase in all virtue. If your hearts be as stone, hardened in sin, though ye have never such plenty of this rain, it will do you no good; there-

fore drink in the rain of the Word of God that falls on you at every sermon; let not the profitable instructions pass from you. If it be not a ground rain that goes into the bowels of the earth, it is to small purpose; and if the rain of the Word do not sink into the bottom of your hearts, if it go no further than your ears, you shall reap small benefit by it; therefore drink in this rain, that it may be fruitful to you all. 3. None can well drink but they that thirst after drink; if the ground be not thirsty it will not drink in the rain. If it be full already, the rain lieth aloft, and makes ponds that are noisome to men. Therefore bring thirsting souls to every sermon, when this rain is poured down on you, that ye may drink it in to the salvation of you all. 4. The more rain the ground hath, the more fruit it ought to yield; the oftener that any people hath had the rain of the Word of God falling on them, the more plentiful should they be in good works: "To whom much is given, of them much shall be required." You in this town have had much rain, therefore much is required of you. 5. As it hath the rain often, so it must bring forth fruit; the more dressing, the more fruit. As ye have this heavenly rain in most plentiful measure, so bring forth fruits answerable to it: leaves will not serve the turn. (*W. Jones, D.D.*) **Bringeth forth herbs.**—*The praise of fertility:*—1. "It brings forth." It is not barren, like a dead ground that yields neither herbs nor weeds. This is no idle heart that doth neither good nor harm. Here is no such stupid neutrality, nor infructuous deadness: "It brings forth." 2. They are not weeds it produceth, but "herbs." A man had as good do nothing as do naughty things. They that forbear idleness and fall to lewdness, mend the matter, as the devil, in the tale, mended his dame's leg: when he should have put it in joint, he broke it quite in pieces. It is not enough that this ground bring forth, but that it yield herbs. Of the two, the barren earth is not so evil as the wicked earth; that men pity, this they curse. "It brings forth herbs." 3. Neither is it a paucity of herbs this ground afforded, but an abundance; not one herb, but herbs; a plural and plentiful number. There is neither barrenness nor bareness in this ground; not no fruits, not few fruits, but many herbs. 4. Lastly, they are such herbs as are "meet for the dresser"; such as God expects of the garden, who planted it; such as he will accept, not in strict justice for their own worth, but in great mercy for Jesus Christ. "Meet for them by whom it is dressed." 1. Fertility: "It brings forth." Barrenness hath ever been held a curse, a reproach (Luke i. 25). When God will bring the gospel, and with it salvation to the Gentiles, He is said to take away their barrenness. So was it prophesied (Isa. liv. 1); so was it accomplished (Gal. iv. 27). The primordial praise of this good ground is that it is not barren. This fertility in the Christian heart doth—(1) Conclude thankfulness. (2) Exclude idleness. (*a*) For the former. God hath given him rain for this purpose, that he should bring forth fruit; if he should take the rain, and not answer the sender's hopes, he were unthankful. The good man considers the end why he received any blessing, and examines what God meant in conferring on him such a benefit. Hath God given him wisdom? Solomon hath taught him to "let his fountains be dispersed abroad, and his rivers of waters in the streets" (Prov. v. 16). As we must not be wise in ourselves, so nor only wise to ourselves. He that conceals his knowledge, cancels it, and shall at last turn fool. Do not enclose that for several which God hath meant common. The not employing will be the impairing of God's gifts. This is the fruit which the good ground must send forth, for all the seeds of grace sown in it. Neither doth this instruction bound itself with our spiritual, but extends also to our temporal gifts. Hast thou riches? When God scattered those blessings upon thee, in the seed-time of His bounty, He intended thou shouldst return Him a good crop at the harvest. Be thankful, then, in doing that with them for which God gave them. God meant them to promote and help forward thy journey to heaven; let them not retard thy course, or put thee quite out of the way. Be merciful, be charitable, be helpful. God did also mean that thyself should take comfort in these things. It is a part of that blessedness which the Psalmist promiseth to him that feareth the Lord: "Thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands; happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee" (Psa. cxxviii. 2). For God gave wine for this purpose, "to make glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face shine, and bread to strengthen his heart" (Psa. civ. 15). How doth man divert God's goodness, when he turns His blessing into a curse, and puts His good creatures from their intended uses! (*b*) This good ground lies not dead and barren, nor returns all heaven's rain with a naked and neutral acceptation: it brings forth. Idleness doth neither get nor save; there is nothing more empty of

good fruits, nor more abundantly pregnant with evil. That man doth ill that doth nothing, and he loseth whilst he gains not. Many beholding, with cowardly and carnal eyes, what a long and troublesome journey it is to heaven, sit them down and fall fast asleep. O barren ground! will ye bring forth nothing? Is difficulty made your hindrance, that should be a spur to your more eager contention? Know you not that the violent shall get the kingdom of heaven? If thy soul be watered with the dew of heaven, thou must needs bring forth. What? (2) "Herbs." There is fertility in goodness. The eldest daughter of idleness is to do nothing; the next-born to do something to no purpose. But the good man is not only doing, but well-doing (Matt. xxiv. 46). This so consists in doing *bonum* and *bene*; as the former verse may seem to intimate. He "gives them meat," there He doth good; "in due season," there he doth it well. The forbearance of wickedness is not enough to acquit the soul, but the performance of righteousness. The rich glutton is tormented in hell, not because he did hurt, but because he did not help, Lazarus. But if that ground be near unto cursing that brings not forth herbs, what shall we say to that which brings forth weeds? (3) Plenty—many herbs. The good ground is plentiful in fruits. It bears fruit, good fruit, much good fruit. Multiplicity of grace is requisite, though not perfection. What garden is only planted with one singular kind of herb? The Christian hath need of many graces, because he is to meet with many defects, to answer many temptations, to fight with many enemies (2 Pet. i. 5). Happy then is that ground which abounds with good herbs; the fruits of faith, patience, content, charity! Not our riches, but our "works shall follow us." Goodness shall only give *pulchrum sepulchrum*; and as we use to stick dead bodies with herbs, so these herbs, our fruitful good works, shall adorn and beautify our memorials, when "the name of the wicked shall rot." (4) "Meet for them by whom he is dressed." The word "by whom" may as well be translated "for whom." (*a*) By whom it is dressed. God is the Husbandman that dressed this ground, and causeth in it fertility. God begins the work; He makes the ground good, sanctifies the person. Here is *gratia co-operans*, God that begins, performs the work; He raineth upon, He dresseth the heart, and so causeth it to produce herbs. Here is *gratia salvans*, whereby He crowneth our will and work in the day of our Lord Jesus. "It receiveth blessing from God." The sap of grace which appears green and flourishing in the branches and fruit, comes from the root. God induceth the good to good by alacrity, not enforceth against their wills. God doth not work upon us as upon blocks and stones, in all and every respect passive; but converts our wills to will our own conversion. (*b*) Thus by whom; now for whom. Meet for them who dressed it. And is it possible that man should produce herbs meet for the acceptation of God? Hath He not pure eyes, which see uncleanness and imperfection in all our works? Is there any man so happy as to be justified in His sight? No; but it pleaseth Him to look upon our works in the crystal glass, Christ; and because they are the effects of a true faith in Him, to esteem them meet. (*T. Adams.*) *A contemplation of the herbs:*—I. That the herbs of our graces may be meet for the dresser—contentful to God, who hath planted, watered, husbanded the garden of our hearts—we will require in them four virtues: 1. Odour. 2. Taste. 3. Ornament. 4. Medicinal virtue. 1. That they have a good odour. God is delighted with the smell of our graces (Cant. vi. 2). The virtues of Christ are thus principally pleasant; and all our herbs only smell sweetly in His garden (Cant. i. 3). This savour is sweetly acceptable in the nostrils of God (Psa. xlv. 8). It is His righteousness that gives all our herbs a good odour; and in Him it pleaseth God to judge our works sweet. The way to make our herbs smell sweetly is first to purge our garden of weeds. For if sin be fostered in our hearts, all our works will be abominated. God heareth not the prayers of the wicked (Lev. xxvi. 31). But being adopted by grace in Christ, and sanctified to holiness, our good works smell sweetly (Phil. iv. 18). It seems God highly esteems the herb charity in our gardens. He that serveth the Lord shall smell as Lebanon (Hos. xiv. 6, 7). 2. That they taste well. Many a flower hath a sweet smell, but not so wholesome a taste. Your Pharisaical prayers and alms smelt sweetly in the vulgar nostrils; taste them, and they were but rue, or rather wormwood. Herbs have not only their savour, but their nutriment (Psa. civ. 14). Herbs then are food, and have an alimental virtue. So we may both with the herbs of charity feed men's bodies, and with the herbs of piety feed their souls. If thou wouldest make Christ good cheer in the parlour of thy conscience, bring Him the herbs of obedience. Wheresoever His Church is, there is He: exercise thy piety. Wheresoever His members

are, there is He : exercise thy charity. 3. That they be fit to adorn. Herbs and flowers have not only their use in pleasing the nostrils and the palate, but the eye also. They give delight to all those three senses. Good works are the beauty of a house, and a better sight than fresh herbs strewed in the windows. Good works are the best ornaments, the most lasting monuments. They become the house wherein thy soul dwelleth, whilst it dwells there; and bless thy memory, when those two are parted. Every good heart that knew thee is thy tomb, and every tongue writes happy epitaphs on thy memorial. Thus height up your souls with a treasure of good works. 4. That they be medicinable, and serve not only as antidotes to prevent, but as medicaments to cure the soul's infirmities. The poor man's physic lies in his garden; the good soul can fetch an herb from his heart, of God's planting there, that can help him. Pliny writes of a certain herb, which he calls *thelygonum;* we in English, "The grace of God." A happy herb, and worthy to stand in the first place as chief of the garden. For it is the principal, and, as it were, the genus of all the rest. We may say of it, as some write of the *carduus benedictus*, or holy thistle, that it is *herba omni morbo*—an herb of such virtue that it can cure all diseases. This may heal a man who is otherwise *nullis medicabilis herbis*. Wretched men, that are without this herb, the grace of God, in their gardens! Hyssop and humility.—Is a man tempted to pride—and that is a saucy sin, ever busy among good works, like a Judas among the apostles—let him look into his garden for hyssop, humility of spirit. Let him be taught by this herb to annihilate his own worth, and to cleave to the Rock whereout he grows, and whereof he is upholden, Jesus Christ. Or let him produce the camomile, which smells the sweeter the more it is trodden on. Humility is a gracious herb, and allays the wrath of God; whereas pride provokes it. But when dust and ashes humbles himself, and stands to his mercy, the wrath of God is soon appeased. This camomile or hyssop grows very low. Humbleness roots downward, yet no herb hath so high branches. *Bulapathum*, the herb patience.—Is a man, through multitudes of troubles, almost wrought to impatience, and to repine at the providence of God, that disposeth no more ease? Let him fetch an herb out of the garden to cure this malady—*bulapathum*, the herb patience. The adamant serves not for all seas; but patience is good for all estates. Heart's-ease and spiritual joy.—Doth sorrow and anguish cast down a man's heart, and may he complain that his "soul is disquieted within him"? (Psa. xlii.) Let him fetch an herb out of this garden, called heart's-ease, an inward joy which the Holy Ghost worketh in him. Though all "the days of the afflicted be evil, yet a merry heart is a continual feast" (Prov. xv. 5). This is heaven upon earth, "Peace of conscience and joy of the Holy Ghost" (Rom. xiv. 17). His conscience is assured of peace with God, of reconciliation in the blood of Jesus, and that his soul is wrapped up in the bundle of life. *Balsamum*, or faith.—Hath the heart got a green wound by committing some offence against God? for actual iniquity makes a gash in the soul. The good man runs for *balsamum*, and stancheth the blood—faith in the promises of Jesus Christ. He knows there is "balm at Gilead, and there are physicians there, and therefore the health of his soul may easily be recovered" (Jer. viii. 22). St. John's-wort, or charity.—Doth the world, through sweetness of gain that comes a little too fast upon a man, begin to carry away his heart to covetousness? Let him look in this garden for the herb called St. John's-wort, charity and brotherly love. It is called St. John's herb not improperly, for he spent a whole epistle in commending to us this grace, and often inculcated, "Little children, love one another." And he further teacheth that this love must be actual (1 John iii. 17). Penny-royal and content.—Doth poverty fasten her sharp teeth in a man's sides, and cannot all his good industry keep want from his family? Let him come to this garden for a little penny-royal, content. This will teach him to think that God who feeds the ravens, and clothes the lilies, will not suffer him to lack food and raiment. *Agnus castus* and continence.—Doth the rebellious flesh, upon a little indulgence, grow wanton, and would concupiscence enkindle the fire of lust? The good soul hath in this garden an herb called *agnus castus*, the chaste herb, and good store of lettuce, which physicians say cool this natural intemperate heat. His *agnus castus* and lettuce are prayer and fasting. Barley-water or cool-anger.—Doth the heat of anger boil in a man's heart, and enrageth him to some violent and precipitate courses? Let him extract from this garden the juice of many cooling herbs, and among the rest a drink of barley-water—a tysan of meekness to cool this fire. He that hath proceeded to anger is a man; he that hath not proceeded to sinful, harmful anger is a Christian. Parsley or frugality.—Declines a

man's estate in this world, as if his hand had scattered too lavishly, there is an herb in this garden; let him for a while feed on it—parsley, parsimony. Hereon he will abridge himself of some superfluities; and remember that moderate fare is better than a whole college of physicians. He will wear good clothes, and never better, knowing there is no degree beyond decency. The wise man knows it is better looking through a poor lattice-window than through an iron gate; and though he will lend what he may, he will not borrow till he must needs. Liver-wort, or peaceable love.—Is a man sick in his liver by accession of some distemperature? Doth his charity and love to some neighbours, for their malignancy against him, fail and faint in his heart? Then let him step to this garden for some *jecuraria;* we call it liver-wort. He asks of his heart for his old love, his wonted amity. Lily, or pureness of heart. Doth a man perceive his heart a little begilded with ostentation, and desires he to seem better than he is? And how easily is man won to answer his commenders' speculation! Let him fetch the lily—pureness of heart—which is a herb of grace, growing in the humble valley of a meek spirit, yet is white and lovely. *Enula campana*, or obedience. Perhaps evil example hath suddenly, and without provided consideration, led a man into evil. Let him run to this garden for *enula campana*. This herb is that Christ enjoined us: "Search the Scriptures"; add hereto the Word of the Lord. This shall give decision of all doubts, and teach thee what path to fly, what way to take. Heart-wort, or affiance in God's promises. It may be sorrow of heart for sin hath cast a man down, and he is swallowed up of too much heaviness. There is a herb to comfort him called heart-wort, affiance in the merciful promises of God passed to him by word, oath, seal, scriptures, sacraments, and therefore infallible. Hyacinth, or following Christ. Say that the Christian hath met with some gilded pill of corruption, some poisonous doctrine, yet plausible to flesh and blood. Let him search his garden for hyacinth, or *solsequium*, turnsol, an herb that duly and obediently follows the sun. Do thou follow the Sun of righteousness (Mal. iv. 2), and let His bright beams guide thy course, who hath promised to teach all those that with a humble heart and earnest prayer seek it at His hands. Care-away. If worldly troubles come too fast upon a man, he hath an herb called care-away. Not that he bequeathes himself to a supine negligence, as if God would fill his house with provision, while he sits and sings care away; but as he is free from idleness, so also from distrust. He considers the ravens and lilies, and knows that the Lord is the "Preserver of men" as well as of fowls; that He respects man above those, and His own above other men. Therefore he throws all his cares upon God, as if they were too heavy a load for himself. Solicitous thoughtfulness can give him no hurt, but this herb care-away shall easily cure it. Holy thistle, or good resolution. Yield that he is pressed with injuries; as "who will live godly in Christ, and shall not suffer persecution?" He is oppressed by force or fraud, might or subtlety, and cannot help himself. He hath a good herb in this garden, called *carduus benedictus*, holy thistle, a godly resolution, that through many miseries he must enter heaven. He rests himself on God, and rather wisheth his harmlessness should suffer than himself not to give passive and patient obedience to lawful authority (Dan. iii. 17). There are many other herbs in this garden; as if he be to deal with crafty adversaries, let him fetch some sage—honest policy—and such as may stand with an untrenched conscience. For Christ gave us this allowance, to be "wise as serpents"; though withal a cohibition that we be "harmless as doves" (Matt. x. 16). II. It receiveth blessing from God. The reward gives a happy conclusion to this good ground. So it pleaseth the Lord to accept our labours that He will reward them, not after our own merit, for that is not an atom, but after His own mercy, which exceeds heaven and earth. Receive this blessing with a thankful heart; thou hast not earned it. "It receiveth." Such is the immense goodness of God that He will add grace to grace, and when He hath shown mercy He will show more mercy. As if He expected no other argument of future bounty but his former bounty. "Blessing." This word is of a great latitude. What good is there which will not be brought within this compass? This blessing hath a double extent. There is *beatitudo viæ* and *beatitudo patriæ*—1. A blessing of the way, and—2. A blessing of the country; one of grace, the other of glory. (1) The former is either outward or inward. (*a*) Outward (Psa. cxxxii. 15; Deut. xxviii. 4). Which things do often come to the godly even on earth, and that in abundance. For as all have not riches that exceedingly love them, so many have them that do not much care for them. (*b*) Inward. The godly on earth is, as it were, in the suburbs of heaven, whose "kingdom consists

not in meat and drink, but righteousness, peace of conscience, and joy of the Holy Ghost" (Rom. xiv. 17). Could his life be as full of sorrows as ever Lazarus was full of sores, yet he is blessed. The sunshine of mercy is still upon him, and the blessing of God makes him rich. (2) This blessing hath yet a further extent to the blessedness of our country, when we shall hear, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. xxv. 34). No tongue can declare this blessing; happy heart that shall feel it! Well, this is God's blessing, and He will give it to the good ground. Labour we then to be fruitful gardens, and to abound with gracious herbs, that God may in this world shower upon us the dews of His mercy, and after this life transplant us to His heavenly paradise. (*T. Adams.*) *The diverse results of similar Christian privileges:*—When we compare this parable with any of our Lord's there is a great falling off in point of felicity and instructiveness. One purpose it doubtless serves, to make clear the matter of fact, that the same Christian privileges and experiences may issue in widely different ultimate results. The soil is supposed in either case to be well watered, not only rained upon, but often saturated with water, having drunk up the blessing of the clouds, and moreover to be carefully tilled. Yet in one case it yields a useful crop, in the other only a useless crop of thorns and thistles. But why? On this important question the parable throws no light. The land which bears the useless crop is not a barren rock; for it drinks in the rain, and it is considered worth ploughing. Nay, it is doubtful if the case supposed in the second alternative can occur in the natural world. Was there ever a land well tilled and watered that produced nothing but thorns and thistles? The writer describes a case in the natural world which can hardly happen to represent a case which may happen in the spiritual world, that viz., of men whose hearts have been sown with the seed of truth and watered with the rain of grace becoming so utterly degenerate and reprobate, as in the end to produce nothing but the thorns and thistles of unbelief and ungodliness. Mixture of metaphor and literal sense is indeed manifest throughout, the phrases "receiveth blessing," "reprobate" "nigh to a curse," "whose end is unto burning," expressing moral ideas rather than physical facts. This is particularly evident in the case of the last phrase. It plainly points to a judicial visitation of the severest kind, the appointed penalty of spiritual unfruitfulness. But in the natural sphere burning is remedial rather than punitive, to burn land which has become foul being a good method of restoring it to fertility. In yet another respect the comparison fails us. Supposing there were such a thing as burning unprofitable land by way of judicial visitation, as the land of Sodom was destroyed by fire and brimstone—an event which may have been present to the writer's thoughts—the fact might serve to symbolise the Divine judgment on apostasy. But the matter on which we most of all need light is the asserted impossibility of renewal. That the finally impenitent should be punished we understand, but what we want to know is, how men get into that state; what is the psychological history of irreconcilable apostasy? To refer to Divine agency in hardening human hearts does not help us, for God hardens by means naturally fitted and intended to soften and win. Neither can we take refuge in the supposition of insufficient initial grace, at least from the point of view of the writer of our Epistle; for he assumes that the fruitful and the unfruitful have been equally favoured. The rain falls not less liberally on the land that bears thorns and thistles than on the land that brings forth an abundant crop of grass or grain; and the rain represents the enlightenment, enjoyment, and power previously mentioned. In the parable of the sower the diversity in the results is traced to the nature of the soil. In each case the issue is exactly such as we should expect from the character of the ground. In the parable before us opposite results are supposed to be possible in the same soil. That is to say, the effect is conceived to depend on the will of each individual, on the use one makes of his privileges. The Hebrew Christians might have been teachers instead of childish learners, had they chosen to take the necessary pains; they might have been full-grown men, had they only properly exercised their spiritual senses in discerning between good and evil. (*A. B. Bruce, D.D.*) *Ideal fruitfulness:*—We know of certain church members who are so completely under the cold shade of the world that the half-dozen sour, dwarfish apples they yield are not worth any man's gathering. We know, too, of others so laden that you cannot touch the outermost limb without shaking down a golden pippin or a jargonelle. Such trees make a church or land beautiful. They are a joy to the pastor who walks through them. Every stooping bough and every purple cluster that hangs along the walls bespeaks the goodness of the soil, the moisture

of the Spirit's dews, and the abundance of God's sunshine. (*T. L. Cuyler, D.D.*) **That which beareth thorns and briers is rejected.**—*The bad heart*:—1. The thing signified in general is sinful man, and especially his heart. 2. The second protasis or proposition is concerning bad ground, which—(1) Appears to be bad by bearing thorns and briers. (2) Is used as bad ground. (*a*) By being rejected. (*b*) Nigh unto cursing. (*c*) In the end burned. This ground is a bad heart, which is manifested by the fruits, which are words and deeds, tending to the dishonour of God, and the hurt of man. And this sin is so much the greater because of the means of grace and workings of the Spirit over and above the light of nature, which God hath graciously afforded them. The punishment of this barrenness in all fruitfulness in sin followeth. (*G. Lawson.*) *The forest of thorns*:—1. The different word the apostle useth. For the good earth, he says, it is τίκτουσα βοτάνην, bringing forth herbs. For the evil it is ἐκφέρουσα, bearing, not bringing forth. Our proverb says, An evil weed grows apace. Herbs grow not without preparing the ground, planting, and watering them by seasonable dews and diligence. Weeds are common; it is hard to set the foot besides them. The basest things are ever most plentiful. Man, by a proclivity of his own natural inclination, is apt to produce thorns and briers; but ere he can bring forth herbs, graces, God must take pains with him. No husbandman so labours his ground as God doth our hearts. Happy earth, that yields Him an expected harvest! But that which beareth thorns is near to be cursed and burned. 2. Observe that a wicked man is compared to bad earth, and that fitly, in five respects: (1) For baseness. The earth is the heaviest of all elements, and doth naturally sink downwards, as if it had no rest but in the centre, which itself is. A wicked man is base-minded, and sinks with a dull and ponderous declination, not regarding the things above, but those below. All his affections have a low object, not of humility, but base dejection. His hope, desire, love, joy, are set on these inferior things. (2) For coldness. Experience teacheth that the earth is cold, and coldness is a natural quality pertaining to it, though accidentally there be bred in it fiery vapours. The wicked man hath a cold heart, frozen up in the dregs of iniquity, though there be an unnatural heat sometimes flaming in him, the fire of lust and malice tormenting his bowels; but this is no kindly heat to warm his conscience. That is derived from the fire of the temple, that never goes out, and only given by Jesus Christ, that "baptizeth with the Holy Ghost and with fire." (3) For foulness. (4) For obscurity and darkness. The earth is called a "place of black darkness, the land of forgetfulness." (5) The main resemblance between an evil ground and worse man consists in the ill fruits that they both produce—briers and thorns, and such not only unhelpful, but hurtful vices. This is the principal analogy which our apostle intends, the pith and marrow of this comparison. But before we come to a particular survey of this wood, some observable doctrines fall profitable to our instruction. (*a*) The Word of God will work some way. It falls not upon any ground in vain; but will produce herbs or weeds. It is such physic as will either cure or kill. (*b*) That thorns are produced, the fault is not in the good rain, but the ill ground. "What could I," saith God, "have done more to My vineyard?" (Isa. v. 4). Let not the mercy of God be blamed for this man's misery. God hath done enough to save him. (*c*) The ground is very unthankful which answers the kindness of heaven in raining on it, with briers and thorns. Wretched man, that receives so blessed dews from the fountain of mercy, and returns an ungrateful wickedness! Unthankful it is, as failing in both those essential parts of gratitude, acknowledging and requiting a benefit, and so guilty both of falsehood and injustice. (*d*) Wicked men prove commonly so much the worse as they might have been better, and divert the means of their conversion to their confusion. The more rain of the gospel they receive, the more abundantly they thrust forth the thorns of iniquities. The roots of these briers are earthed in their hearts, and do boil out at the warm dews of the Word. It fares with them as with a man of a surfeited stomach—the more good meat he eats the more he increaseth his corruption. The former crudities undigested, unegested, having the greater force, turn the good nutriment into themselves. It now remains to examine more narrowly the nature of the sins these ungodly hearts produce. They are called thorns and briers. Now let us consider what resemblances may be found betwixt those natural and these allegorical thorns and briers. 1. Where is abundance of thorns, there is most commonly a barren ground. For they hinder the happy influence of the heavens, the kindly heat of the sun, the dews of the clouds, and all those working causes of fertility. The very company of the wicked is harmful, for they are as

thorns to stifle any goodness. "The companion of fools shall be afflicted," saith Solomon. 2. Thorns and briers grow most commonly on heaps, and seldom are found single, or destitute of company of their own kind; and though they be troublesomely harmful to other trees, yet they fold and embrace one another without hurt. It is so usually seen that wicked men hold together, and sins grow in united clusters. There is a combinabion of the ungodly, even so far as to the very participation of their estates (Prov. i. 14). They are entangled in mutual amity, like beds of eels, nothing but thunder can break their knots. 3. Thorns and briers, by reason of their thickness and sharpness, are refuges for serpents, snakes, adders, and such other venomous beasts. Where the ungodly have a strong part, oppression, rapine, robbery, murder, and all those fatal serpents, are fostered. 4. Neither do the wicked, only with their thorns and briers, hinder others' passage, but even their own. No marvel if it be so difficult for an ungodly man to get to heaven, for he hedgeth up his own way. 5. Sins are fitly compared to thorns and briers, for their wounding, pricking, and such harmful offences. Therefore they are called *tribuli, à tribulando,* from their vexing, oppression, and tribulation they give those that touch them. These briers and thorns have such pricking and wounding effects in regard of three objects, whom they strike. For sins are like thorns—1. To men. 2. To Christ. 3. To the own consciences of the committers. (1) What say you to the usurer? Is he not a thorn amongst you? (2) What do you think of adultery? Is it not a thorn? Yes, a sharp thorn, wounding the purse, envenoming the body, condemning the soul. The ground that bears it is lust. (3) There are furious malecontents among us, a contemptible generation of thorns, that, because their hands are pinioned, prick only with their tongues. They are ever whining, and upon the least cause filling the world with importunate complaints. (4) There are briers, too, growing near the Church—too near it. (*T. Adams.*) *Barren soil* :—Some observe that the most barren grounds are nearest to the richest mines. It is too often true in a spiritual sense that those whom God hath made the most fruitful in estates are most barren in good works. (*T. Secker.*) **Whose end is to be burned**—*The end of thorns* :—1. That we labour our hearts betimes to a sensibleness of these thorns. A thorn swallowed into the flesh, if it be not looked to, rankles. Sin without repentance will fester in the soul, and is so much more perilous as it is less felt. 2. After sense of the smart, will follow a desire of remedy. The throbbing conscience would be at ease, and freed from the thorn that vexeth it. Take we heed that we despise not this medicine. The law was so far from drawing out these thorns, that it would drive them in further, and cause them to rankle in the heart, without any hope of ease. There is a threefold gradation in the penalty: rejection, malediction, combustion—"is rejected," "is nigh unto cursing," "and the end there of is to be burned." And it seems to have a relation to a threefold distinction of time. 1. For the present, "it is rejected." 2. For instance, or appropinquation, "it is nigh unto cursing." 3. For future certainty, "the end of it is to be burned." As men commonly deal with thorns: first, they cut them up with bills and mattocks; then they lay them by to wither; and, lastly, burn them in the furnace. 1. Rejection. This which we here translate "is rejected," is in the original, ἀδόκιμος, which may signify reprobus, or, reprobatus—so Beza hath it—is reproved, or disallowed of God. This ground shall have no ground in heaven, no part in God's inheritance. It is reprobate silver, not current with the Lord. 2. The second degree of the punishment is cursing; and this may seem to exceed the former. The whole vial of wrath is not poured on at once; but first there is a despising or rejection, to let the wicked see how hateful their vices are in God's sight. If this serve not, they are not suddenly cursed; but there is a merciful space between cursing and burning. So slowly doth God proceed to judgment. He is speedy to deliver, to save, to give His blessing; but He hath leaden feet when He comes to strike. 3. The last and sorest degree of the punishment is burning. I will not discourse whether the fire of that everlastingly hot furnace be material or spiritual. Surely it is strangely terrible; and we are blessed if we neither understand it nor undergo it. (1). This privation of blessedness may seem to be implied in the first degree here mentioned —rejection. The reprobate are cast away of God. Much like that form of the last sentence (Matt. xxv. 41). (2). This is not all. The privation of blessed joys is not enough: there must follow the position of cursed tormeuts. They rejected God, and He rejects them; they adhered to wickedness, and it shall adhere to their bones for ever, and bring them to burning. Their torments, which are here expressed by fire, have two fearful conditions—universality and eternity. (1). They

are universal, vexing every part of the body and power of the soul. (2). They are eternal. Let the commination of hell instruct us to prevent it, as the message of Nineveh's overthrow effected their safety. 1. Let us flee by a true faith into the arms of our Redeemer, that God reject us not. 2. Let us pour forth floods of repentant tears, that we be not nigh unto cursing. 3. And let us bring forth no more briers and thorns, that our end may not be to be burned. Faith, repentance, obedience; this same golden rule of three will teach us to work up our own salvation. This done, we shall not be rejected, but known to be elected; we shall be so far from cursing, that we shall presently receive the blessing; and our end shall be, not fire, but glory and peace (Psa. xxxvii. 37). (*T. Adams.*) *Are we herbs or briers?*—What solemn admonition does this latter part of the representation, and what sweet encouragement does the former part of it afford! Are we bringing forth the appropriate "herbs," or are we yielding the "thorns and briers"—we who have been so favourably tended—we among whom the seed has been so liberally cast, and on whom the rain has so copiously fallen? In answering this question, let us not be deceived by mere superficial appearances. Natural kindliness and outward decency are no sure evidences of "a field which the Lord hath blessed," and which the Lord approves. A pretty plant may spring beneath the shadow of the "brier." A pleasant flower may even blossom on the branches of the "thorn." Yet still, the thorn is but a thorn, the brier is but a brier, and the soil which they cover has run to waste, is lost to its higher uses, and is marked out for clearance and conflagration by the wise and cautious husbandman. (*A. S. Patterson.*)

Ver. 9. **We are persuaded better things of you.**—*Pastoral solicitude*:—I. THE BETTER THINGS. 1. Better things than to be moral dwarfs. 2. Better things than treating the Son disrespectfully. 3. Better things than to be withering for the flames. II. THE SAVING THINGS. 1. Inward change. 2. Love to God and the brethren. 3. Prayer. 4. Perseverance in spite of obstacles. (*A. Griffiths.*) *Judging in charity*:—Those of us who have read classic history may remember an incident in the history of the Macedonian emperor. A painter was commanded to sketch the monarch. In one of his great battles, he had been struck with the sword upon the forehead, and a very large scar had been left on the right temple. The painter, who was a master-hand in his art, sketched him leaning on his elbow, with his finger covering the scar on his forehead; and so the likeness of the king was taken, but without the scar. Let us put the finger of charity upon the scar of the Christian as we look at him, whatever it may be—the finger of a tender and forebearing charity, and see, in spite of it and under it, the image of Christ notwithstanding. (*J. Cumming, D.D.*) *A good persuasion*:—I. IT IS THE DUTY OF THE DISPENSERS OF THE GOSPEL TO SATISFY THEIR HEARERS IN AND OF THEIR LOVE IN JESUS CHRIST TO THEIR SOULS AND PERSONS. II. IT IS OUR DUTY TO COME UNTO THE BEST SATISFACTION WE MAY, IN THE SPIRITUAL CONDITION OF THEM WITH WHOM WE ARE TO HAVE SPIRITUAL COMMUNION. III. WE MAY, AS OCCASIONS REQUIRE, PUBLICLY TESTIFY THAT GOOD PERSUASION WHICH WE HAVE CONCERNING THE SPIRITUAL CONDITION OF OTHERS, AND THAT UNTO OURSELVES. IV. THE BEST PERSUASION WE CAN ARRIVE UNTO CONCERNING THE SPIRITUAL CONDITION OF ANY, LEAVES YET ROOM, YEA, MAKES WAY FOR THE GOSPEL THREATENINGS, WARNINGS, EXHORTATIONS, AND ENCOURAGEMENTS. V. AMONG PROFESSORS OF THE GOSPEL, SOME ARE PARTAKERS OF BETTER THINGS THAN OTHERS. 1. Spiritual gifts are of one kind. For although there are several sorts of them, yet they have all the same general nature, they are all gifts and no more. The difference therefore that is amongst them being not to be taken from their own especial nature, but their use and tendency unto the common end of them all, I take it only to be gradual. 2. There are spiritual things which differ in their whole kind and nature from other things, and are better than they as to their essence and being. Such is all saving grace, with all the fruits of it. All that eat outwardly in ordinances of the bread of life do not feed on the hidden manna. All that have their names enrolled in the Church's book, may not yet have them written in the Lamb's book. There are yet better things than gifts, profession, participation of ordinances, and whatever is of the like nature. And the use hereof in one word is to warn all sorts of persons, that they rest not in, that they take not up with an interest in, or participation of, the privileges of the Church, with a common profession, which may give them a name to live; seeing they may be dead or in a perishing condition in the meantime. VI. THERE ARE, ACCORDING TO THE TENOR OF THE COVENANT OF GRACE, SUCH THINGS BESTOWED ON SOME PERSONS, AS SALVATION DOTH INFALLIBLY ACCOMPANY AND ENSUE UPON—BETTER THINGS, AND SUCH

AS HAVE SALVATION ACCOMPANYING OF THEM. VII. IT IS THE DUTY OF ALL PROFESSORS STRICTLY TO EXAMINE THEMSELVES, CONCERNING THEIR PARTICIPATION OF THOSE BETTER THINGS WHICH ACCOMPANY SALVATION. Their condition is deplorable who under an outward profession do satisfy themselves with those common gifts, graces, and duties which are separable from salvation. (*John Owen, D.D.*) *Encouragement in the midst of warnings*:—Though the Church be persuaded of thee that thou art a wise man, witty, learned, that is to small purpose. So live, that both the preachers and all good people may be persuaded you have that in you, for the which they may judge you to be heirs of salvation. Here he prevents an objection that might be made. What, Paul, hast thou been so bitter towards us? Hast thou called us babes and novices in religion? Hast thou set before our eyes such a terrible example of backsliders, as if we were birds of the same feather, and now art thou well persuaded of us? Thou dost but flatter us, we can hardly think so. Oh yes, says St. Paul, assure yourselves, we have a good opinion of you; though we thus speak, these are but trumpets to waken you out of sin, the wounds of a lover to cure you withal; they be but spurs of fatherly admonitions to prick you forwards unto all goodness. We made mention of these men, not as if you were such, but to warn you that you be not such. Though the preacher be sometimes round and vehement, yet the people must not imagine that he is hardly conceited of them. A father loves his child when he chides him, a physician his patient, though he give him bitter pills; and we love you, though we be hot against the corruptions that reign among you. (*W. Jones, D.D.*) **Things that accompany salvation.**—*Things that accompany salvation*:—Picture to yourselves the march of some ancient monarch through his territory. We read stories of eastern monarchs in the olden time, that seem more like romance than reality; when they marched with thousands of flying banners, and with all kinds of riches borne with them. Now you are to take that as the basis of my figure, and suppose salvation to be the sacred treasure which is being carried through the world, with guards before and guards behind, to accompany it on its journey. I. First, then, IN THE MARCHES OF TROOPS AND ARMIES THERE ARE SOME THAT ARE OUT-RIDERS, AND GO FAR AHEAD OF THE OTHER TROOPS. So in the march of salvation there is a certain body of great and mighty "things that accompany salvation," which have far preceded it to clear the way. I will tell you the names of these stupendous Titans who have gone before. The first is Election; the second is Predestination; the third is Redemption; and the Covenant is the captain of them all. Now, this advance-guard is so far ahead that you and I cannot see them. These are true doctrines, but very mysterious; they are beyond our sight; and if we wish to see salvation, we must not stop until we see the vanguard, because they are so far off that only the eye of faith can reach them. Then Election is thine. Dost thou believe? Then Predestination is as surely thine as thou art alive. Dost thou trust alone in Jesus? Then fear not; Redemption was meant for thee. II. But mark, we are about to review THE ARMY THAT IMMEDIATELY PRECEDES SALVATION; and, first, in the forefront of these, there marches one whose name we must pronounce with sacred awe. It is God the Holy Spirit. Before anything can be done in our salvation, there must come that Third Person of the Sacred Trinity. Without Him, faith, repentance, humility, love, are things quite impossible. And now, close in the rear of the adorable Spirit follow the Thundering Legion. No sooner does God the Holy Ghost come into the soul, than He brings with Him what I have called the Thundering Legion; and those of you that have been saved will not be at a loss to understand what I mean. Some of the men in this Thundering Legion bear with them swords; with these swords they are to slay the sinner. For, before he can be made whole, he must be spiritually killed; the sword must pierce him, and must slay all his selfishness before he can be brought to the Lord Jesus. Then another body of them carry with them axes, with which they cut down the thick trees of our pride and abase the goodly cedars of our righteousness. There are with them those that fill up the wells with stones, and break up all the cisterns of our carnal sufficiency, until we are driven to despair, having all our hopes despoiled. My friend, has this Thundering Legion ever come to your house? Have they ever taken up their quarters in your heart? For, rest assured, these are some of the "things that accompany salvation." More or less of terrors every man must feel before he is converted. Oh, Thundering Legion, ye are gone; we hear their trumpets and the dying echoes still appal us. What see we in the rear of them? Close in the rear there follows a broken heart. Are you sorrowful at this very hour? Be of good cheer, salvation is not far behind. When there is once a broken

heart, there is mercy very near. God is looking on thee with love, and will have mercy upon thee. But who are those that follow in the rear? Another troop; but these are far different from the rest. The Silken Legion follow. No weapons of war in their hands; no thunders do they utter; but they speak kind words of pity, and their hands are full of benedictions. Shall I tell you who this Silken Legion are? There is a troop of them who take the poor wounded heart, and wash it first in blood; they sprinkle on it the sacred blood of the Atonement; and it is amazing how the poor broken heart, though faint and sick, revives at the first drop of the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. And oh, what a washing it is? The heart that was once black as the coals of hell, seems white as the snow of Lebanon. When it has once been bathed in the bath of the Saviour's blood and water, oh, how pure it becomes! Then follow those who pour oil and wine into the wounds of this poor broken heart, so that where it smarted before, the wounds begin to sing. The sacred oil and wine of the precious promise is poured into every wound. The whole heart sings for gladness; for God hath restored its strength and bound up all its wounds, according to His promise: "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds." And then, since the work is not quite done, there come those who carry the King's wardrobe; and with the things out of this rich storehouse they array the soul from head to foot; they clothe it with everything that for lustre and for glory could adorn it, and make it bright as the spirits before the throne. And then the King's jewellers come in and complete the whole; they array the soul with ornaments, and bedeck it with precious stones. And now we have not yet come to a full conviction of salvation. The silken legion are gone. What cometh next? Now come those that are the actual attendants upon salvation—or rather, that march in the rank immediately before it. There are four of these, called Repentance, Humility, Prayer, and a tender Conscience. Has Humility ever come to you? Has she ever abased your pride, and taught you to lie in the dust before God? Has Repentance ever watered the floor of your hearts with tears? Have you ever been led to weep in secret for your sins, and to bewail your iniquities? Has Prayer ever entered your spirit? Remember, a prayerless soul is a Christless soul. And, lastly, are you tender of Conscience, for unless your conscience is made tender, salvation has not met you, for these are the immediate attendants upon it. III. And now comes SALVATION IN ALL ITS FULNESS. And now comes the precious casket set with gems and jewels. It is of God-like workmanship; no hammer was ever lifted on it; it was smitten out and fashioned upon the anvil of Eternal Might, and cast in the mould of Everlasting Wisdom; but no human hand hath ever defiled it. And who are those that are close around it? There are three sweet sisters that always have the custody of the treasure—you know them; their names are common in Scripture—Faith, Hope, and Love, the three Divine sisters; these have salvation in their bowels and do carry it about with them in their loins. Faith, who layeth hold on Christ, and trusteth all in Him; that ventureth everything upon His blood and sacrifice, and hath no other trust. Hope, that with beaming eye looks up to Jesus Christ in glory, and expects Him soon to come: looks downward, and when she sees grim death in her way, expects that she shall pass through with victory. And then sweet Love, the sweetest of the three; she, whose words are music and whose eyes are stars; Love also looks to Christ and is enamoured of Him; loves Him in all His offices, adores His presence, reverences His words; and is prepared to bind her body to the stake and die for Him, who bound His body to the cross to die for her. IV. Now I MUST BRING UP THE REAR GUARD. It is impossible that with such a vanguard, grace should be unattended from behind. Now see those that follow salvation. The first is Gratitude—always singing, "Bless the Lord O my soul, and all that is within me bless His holy name." And then Gratitude lays hold upon its son's hand; the name of that son is Obedience. In company with this fair grace is one called Consecration—a pure white spirit that hath no earthliness; from its head to its foot it is all God's, and all gold. Linked to this bright one, is one with a face serene and solemn, called Knowledge. "Then shall ye know when ye follow on to know the Lord." Those that are saved understand mysteries, they know the love of Christ; they "know Him, whom to know is life eternal." Now, have you these four? They are rather the successors of salvation than the heralds of it. "Oh yes," the believer can say, "I trust I have Gratitude, Obedience, Consecration, and Knowledge." I will not weary you, but there are three shining ones that follow after these four, and I must not forget them, for they are the flower of them all. There is Zeal with eyes of fire, and heart of flame, a tongue that burneth, a hand that never wearies,

and limbs that never tire; Zeal, that flies round the world with wings swifter than the lightning's flash, and finds even then her wings too tardy for her wish. This Zeal always dwells near one that is called Communion. This, sure, is the goodliest of all the train; an angel spiritualised, an angel purified and made yet more angelic, is Communion. Communion calls in secret on its God; its God in secret sees. It is conformed to the image of Jesus; walks according to His footsteps. And as a necessary consequence, on the other side of Communion—which with one hand lays hold of Zeal, is Joy—joy in the Spirit. Joy, like the nightingale, sings in the dark, and can praise God in the tempest and shout His high praises in the storm. This is indeed a fitting cherub to be in the rear of salvation. Just in the rear is Perseverance, final, certain and sure. Then there follows complete Sanctification, whereby the soul is purged from every sin, and made as white and pure as God Himself. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Things that accompany salvation:*—This is the only place in this letter where the readers are addressed as "beloved." The especial tenderness of the appellation follows very beautifully and significantly upon one of the sternest and solemnest warnings which Scripture contains as to the impossibility of those who were first enlightened, "if they shall fall away," being renewed again to repentance, and as to the rejection, and cursing, and destruction of the barren and profitless ground. It is as if the writer had felt that after these dark and terrible thoughts he must soften his voice still more, and make haste not only to show how affection had dictated the warning, but also how joyful confidence in his brethren was present throughout it. The writer assumes, as understood and inspired by all to whom he is speaking, that what he calls "salvation" never comes into any man's hand or heart alone. This great gift never draws near singly. That precious stone is always set in a cluster of little stones around it. This angel of God never enters unattended by the virgins, her companions following her. There is ever a courtly dance of graces and fair figures that pass into the heart, and sweep in unison through the life which has received salvation. And what are these inseparable accompaniments; these continual companions of this central gift? The context distinctly bears the answer. They are all the things which the writer includes in the "herbs brought forth meet for the husbandman." All the things which he includes under another figure, in "your work and labour of love." That is to say, a fruitful Christian life of joyful obedience, of manifest issues, of a supreme love to God, which flashes out into all kinds of gentleness and amiabilities towards others, and has other regions, often nobler, in which it manifests itself. These are the companions, "the things which accompany salvation." All that lustrous beauty and radiant completeness of human character is treated here as being a secondary and a consequent thing. The queen is salvation; they that follow her are all these great and beautiful things. Which is just to say, if a man wants to be good let him begin by taking for his own God's great gift of forgiveness and acceptance in Jesus Christ. What would you think of a master who said he had found out a new way of architecture, and he was about to begin building a house at the chimneys? It would be about as wise as the man that seeks, by painful effort, which effort I would be the last to say a word to despise, to make his life full of these beauties of conduct and character without having laid the foundation with Christ, who is the only foundation. If you take and plant some aromatic shrubs, hitherto unknown, upon some bare and sandy down, a whole fleet of bees and butterflies will come, drawn to the blossoms, that never were seen there before. And so if, and only if, we have in our hearts by faith in Jesus Christ, that tree of immortal life and manifold fragrances, round it will buzz and hover, and from it will draw honey and sustenance, all manner of fair and flying things, else and otherwise strangers to our spirits. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The true order in salvation:*—In those days (Cornwall, 1851), when I was building my new church, and talking about the tower and spire we were going to erect, an elderly Christian lady who was sitting in her wheel-chair, calmly listening to our conversation, said, "Will you begin to build your spire from the top?" It was a strange question, but she evidently meant something, and looked for an answer. I gave it, saying, "No, madam, not from the top, but from the foundation." She replied, "That is right—that is right," and went on with her knitting. This question was not asked in jest or in ignorance; it was like a riddle. What did she mean? In a few years this lady passed away, but her enigmatic words remained. No doubt she thought to herself that I was beginning at the wrong end, while I went on talking of the choir, organ, happy worship, and all the things we were going to attempt in the new church; that I was aiming at sanctification,

without justification; intending to teach people to be holy before they were saved and pardoned. This is exactly what I was doing. I had planted the boards of my tabernacle of worship, not in silver sockets (the silver of which had been paid for redemption), but in the sand of the wilderness. In other words, I was teaching people to worship God, who is a Spirit, not for love of Him who gave His Son to die for them, but in the fervour and enthusiasm of human nature. (*W. Haslam, M.A.*)

Ver. 10. **God is not unrighteous to forget your work.**—*The guarantee of usefulness*:—I. GOD KNOWS OF EACH ITEM OF OUR CHRISTIAN SERVICE. Our deeds of love populate the Divine mind with immortal images. II. GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS IS AN ACTIVE FORCE IN HIS NATURE. It gives quality to all that He is, and thinks, and does. It is the guarantee of right becoming victorious; the pledge of the final supremacy of love; the rock on which faithful service may build its hopes. III. GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS RENDERS CERTAIN THE FINAL USEFULNESS OF ALL CHRISTIAN SERVICE. 1. His righteousness creates interest in our service. He looks on our deeds with pleasure. 2. His righteousness creates sympathy with us in what we do. Because the holy feeling that prompts us to deeds of love is akin to that which dwells in God, He feels towards our work the same as we do, He enters into our longing to bless others, He shares in our yearning to cheer and guide and save men. 3. His righteousness ensures the using up of our deeds of love in the line of His own purpose. There is not a true prayer uttered, not a holy wish cherished, not a kind word spoken, not a deed of mercy performed, not a single Christian act in the service we daily seek to render to our Lord, in public or in private, known of men or out of sight, but that He knows it, holds it before His mind, graciously delights in it, enters into its spirit, and, as a consequence, actually lays hold of it as a precious element of good, to blend it with His own volitions, and make it harmonise with, and give impetus to, all that He once did when, on earth in the person of His dear Son, He laid the foundation that is to be both blessed and everlasting. (*C. Chapman.*) *God's righteousness as an encouragement to Christian service*:—I. THE MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH. The work distributed amongst us may be very different in quality, in interest, in popularity, in result; yet God does not overlook any of it. He sees the mother talking of Jesus to her children at home, as well as the preacher who expounds Divine truth in the great congregation. The words which in weakness and fatigue are penned by a writer for the press, on the side of purity or national integrity, or peace among the nations, or fairness between the classes, are as much thought of by God as the society organised for the defence of theological truth. The medical man who heals the poor without reward, the employer who dares to give unto his servants what he knows to be just and equal, the merchant or tradesman who for the sake of the Lord he loves refuses to receive an advantage which his competitor would eagerly seek—all these, in time of disappointment, may remember the assurance, "God is not unrighteous to forget your work." And what of work more directly religious? Is not the Lord mindful of that? Even we think sometimes with sympathy of our brothers in distant lands, exposed to hostility from the heathen, and to perils by land and by sea, perils from malaria, accident, and privation; but the all-seeing God knows them, and cares for them far more than we, and He will not forget their work. And if your service is less public than theirs, it is none the less regarded by Him, whose wisdom not only built the mountains, but clothed the lilies of the field. We know but little of each other, but He knows us altogether, and He is as pleased with the child's prayer as with the martyr death of the bravest soldier in His army. II. THE FIDELITY OF THE LORD. The idea seems to be this; God will not overlook your work, so as to make no use of it; it will not be forgotten, but will find its place in the fulfilment of the Divine purpose. Man is unfaithful and forgetful in such matters. An editor may ask some one to write a paper, and when with toil and care it is finished, he may have forgotten all about it, and may issue his work without finding any place for the author's labour—men are often forgetful. The other day, in crossing a wild part of Dartmoor, I saw a magnificent block of stone, carefully and skilfully cut into a hexagon, and there it lay unheeded amid the heather, beaten by storms, bleached by sunshine—useless. Perhaps the builder had forgotten to fetch it, or perhaps he thought the block too heavy to carry over the rough roads; but, whatever the reason, some skilful stonemason had worked hard, but uselessly. Now, looking down upon our work in obscure homes, in out-of-the-way offices, in quiet spheres of service, this inspired man says: "God is not unfaithful to forget your

work." (*A. Rowland, LL.B.*) *The present and future rewards of charity* :—I. HOW ACCEPTABLE GOOD WORKS ARE TO GOD, AND WHAT REWARDS HE HATH PROMISED TO THOSE WHO SHALL BE FOUND ABOUNDING IN THEM. II. A PRINCIPLE OF CHRISTIAN LOVE AND CHARITY IS OF ALL OTHER THE MOST PREVALENT TO INDUCE MEN TO SUCH GOOD WORKS. III. BY THE EXPRESSION "LABOUR OF LOVE" IS PLAINLY SUGGESTED THAT GOOD WORKS ARE OFTEN ACCOMPANIED WITH MUCH TROUBLE AND DIFFICULTY. IV. MINISTERING TO THE WANTS AND NECESSITIES OF OUR CHRISTIAN BRETHREN IS SHOWING A REGARD TOWARDS THE NAME OF GOD. V. WE HAVE PERSEVERANCE IN THOSE DUTIES RECOMMENDED TO US, BY THE EXAMPLE OF THOSE HEBREWS, WHO ARE NOT ONLY MENTIONED AS FORMERLY MINISTERING TO THE NECESSITIES OF THEIR INDIGENT BRETHREN, BUT AS CONTINUING TO DO THE SAME. (*S. Knight, D.D.*) *The righteous reward* :—I. God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love; INASMUCH AS HIS DOING SO WOULD BE UNGENEROUS, UNGRACIOUS, UNKIND. Were He not to acknowledge it, He might seem to be damping your zeal. In this view the statement is fitted seasonably to encourage you. Few and faulty your best services may be; unsatisfying to yourselves; much more to your God. Well might He reject them all. But would He be justified in doing so? Would it be in harmony with what He has revealed to you of the riches of His glory, and what He has made you to taste of the fulness of His grace? No. He does not upbraid you with the value of His undeserved benefits to you. He will not upbraid you with the worthlessness of what you give to Him. All that He bestows, He bestows in good faith. All that you render, He will take in good part. II. God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love; INASMUCH AS HIS DOING SO WOULD BE INCONSISTENT WITH HIS FAITHFULNESS AND TRUTH. He is to be regarded as hiring you, and assigning to you your service. He does so in the exercise of His own unquestionable discretion, according to His own good pleasure, and the freedom of His own will. He does not leave it to you to devise a way in which you may, at your own discretion, manifest your loyalty. But He enlists you as His soldiers and subjects, under command. You are to offer service voluntarily. But when your offer is accepted, you are to obey orders. This consideration may seem, in one view, to detract from any claim on your part for any recompense of reward. It divests your work and labour of love, which you show to His name, of the character of a spontaneous or strictly self-prompted and self-directed offering. What you do or suffer is not at your own hand, but by His appointment. But, in another view, the certainty of your being amply recompensed is thus placed on the highest possible ground. I feel, indeed, that I have nothing which, as from myself, I can offer to my God. I am myself His property, His purchased possession; not my own. All the store of talents and resources out of which I can offer comes from Him, and is all His own. And I, His servant, must offer it, not as I choose, but as He desires and directs. But does that thought, I ask again, detract in the least from my confident persuasion that what I offer will be accepted and requited? Does it not, on the contrary, enhance my assurance tenfold? Would it be fair for a master enlisting servants in such a way, on such terms, under such obligations, to forget their work, to let it pass into oblivion unrequited? Be it that it is work or service to which they are indispensably bound, and which they have no discretionary liberty to accept or decline; for which, therefore, they have no title to stipulate for payment beforehand, or to demand payment afterwards. Be it even that they understand that condition of their engagement, and consent to it, that does not acquit the master, in his own judgment at least, whatever they may think. If he is honest, high-minded, he will not suffer his servants to entertain a moment's doubt of his intention to acknowledge their faithfulness, and make all the world know that he does so. And is God unrighteous? Is He who solemnly binds you in so strict a covenant of service to let it be supposed that He can act unfaithfully or unfairly? And is He unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love—the work and loving labour of His chosen and His redeemed? Surely it is no vain thing, but rather a very blessed thing, for you thus to serve the Lord, having such a simple, single-eyed, meek, and honourable confidence as this in the truth and faithfulness of Him whom you serve! III. There are other CONSIDERATIONS OF A GENERAL SORT that might be brought forward to strengthen this quiet assurance. For instance, here is one. If, in one view, God commits Himself to you; in another view He commits you and binds you to Himself. In the service of God, if loyal, you must make up your mind to relinquish not a few of those sources of pleasure which the world presents to you. And for whatever you may thus give up, He whom you serve may be expected, if He is to act worthily of Himself, to

provide some kind of equivalent. If you lose the favour of men, you have the favour of God. If you cease to have the peace which the world gives, when, with its refuges of lies, it soothes your conscience, you have the peace of God which passes understanding. If you have to cut off a right hand, to pluck out a right eye, maimed as you are and wounded, you enter into life. If the good things of earth are to be your treasure no more, you have better treasure in heaven, where no moth corrupts and no thief breaks through to steal. Thus far I have spoken of the recompense of the reward, God's not forgetting your work and labour of love, as simply righteous on His part. But, before leaving that topic, I must remind you that the righteousness is still always of grace. It is the righteousness, not of law, but of equity. It gives you no such claim or title as you might enforce in a court of justice by procedure of a legal sort. All your claim must rest upon the good faith or kind favour of the other party. This does not touch the certainty of your being rewarded. But it divests you of all title to reckon upon it as your due. How blessed a thing is it in this view, to disown all right of yours, and lean on the righteousness of God! Further, the righteousness in question is not that of express compact, but rather that of a fair and amiable understanding. It is not a case, as between debtor and creditor, to be adjusted upon a balance of business accounts and books. Your remuneration is rather an honourable acknowledgment of the spirit in which you work than an exact and formal discharge of the work itself. Hence this principle, while it leaves no room for presumption on your part, leaves abundant room for the most liberal discretion on the part of God. Lessons: 1. As God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, be not ye unrighteous to forget your duty to Him. As He is, so to speak, on honour with you, be you scrupulously and sensitively on honour with Him. Many motives should prompt this duty. Think on the way in which He receives you into His favour; on the amazing sacrifice of His Son, whom He gives to the death of the Cross, that He may reconcile you to Himself; receiving you graciously, and loving you freely. He opens His heart to you. Will you not give your hearts to Him? 2. If God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love towards His name, you need not care to remember it. You need not keep a record of your doings. Your record and theirs is on high. (*R. S. Candlish, D.D.*) *Good works not meritorious:*— I. IN WHAT SENSE GOD WOULD NOT BE UNRIGHTEOUS, THAT IS, UNJUST, THOUGH HE SHOULD FORGET OUR GOOD WORKS, that is, though He should not reward us with eternal life for them. 1. Whatsoever good action a man can perform, that he upon many accounts owes unto God, his Maker, his Preserver, his Benefactor. But no one, surely, who pays to another what he strictly owes him, can thereby oblige that other to bestow on him a reward, or can make him properly his debtor. 2. Even amongst equals no one is of right, and in strict justice, obliged to recompense the labour and pains of another, but he who hath voluntarily bound himself thereunto by some covenant, or who at least is enforced thereunto by the law of some superior. What consideration, therefore, can oblige God to bestow upon man eternal life but His own free and gracious promise, since He hath no superior; nor can any law be prescribed to Him but what He vouchsafes to prescribe to Himself, and to guide His own actions and dispensations by? 3. To this it may be farther added that all our good thoughts, words, and works proceed entirely from the grace of God, and are His free gifts bestowed upon us, out of His mere bounty and mercy. Should God, therefore, by bestowing on us one grace, be thereby in justice obliged, for that very reason, to bestow on us another? II. But now, lest to avoid one extreme, we should foolishly run into another; lest for fear of carrying the value of our good actions too high, we should on the other side sink their price too low; it will be proper to show that, notwithstanding what has been said hitherto by way of abatement of their pretended worth, THEY ARE STILL IN MANY RESPECTS HIGHLY VALUABLE BEFORE GOD; and that though they cannot by way of purchase procure for us, yet upon other considerations they will secure to us eternal happiness. Now the least that can be said concerning the value of good works proceeding from the love of God, and designed to His glory, is this: that though we should not be made partakers of eternal happiness merely because of them, yet neither can we be saved without them; though they are not the meritorious causes, yet they are the necessary conditions, of our salvation; though where they are found, they do not give a legal title to salvation; yet where they are not found, the persons destitute of them have not so much as an equitable title to eternal bliss from the mercy of God. For virtuous and religious actions are the way chalked out by God, by which we must arrive at the glories which shall be revealed; they are the means ordained

by Him, by which we may certainly and effectually, though not of right acquire, yet in fact obtain everlasting happiness. (*Bp. Smalridge.*) *God's righteousness as it implies faithfulness:*—By the argument of the apostle, as righteousness is put for faithfulness, it is manifest that God's righteousness is a prop to man's faith and hope. Man may and must believe and expect a reward of every good thing from the righteousness of God, even because He is righteous and will not fail to do what He hath promised. This righteousness of God assureth us of the continuance of His mercy. What grace moved Him to begin, righteousness will move Him to continue and finish. 1. This informs us in the wonderful great condescension of God to man; even so low as to bind Himself to man, and that so far as if He failed in what He had promised, He is willing to be accounted unrighteous (Psa. vii. 17). 2. This doth much aggravate the sin of infidelity, which is not only against the grace and mercy of God, but also against His truth and righteousness. 3. This teacheth us how to trust to God's mercy, even so as God may be just and righteous in showing mercy. (*W. Gouge.*) *Works of love:*—These Christians gave themselves to "work." Active and practical exertions, indeed, when the case admits of them, are essential to personal Christianity. Their "labour" is here attributed to "love"; and this soft and sacred principle is well fitted alike to prompt, to sustain, to sweeten, and to sanctify active efforts for the glory of God and the good of man. The love specified had been "shown towards God's name." God Himself was one special object towards whom it had been directed; and in loving believers, the persons spoken of had loved them for the Father's sake. Towards Him, then, they had exercised—towards Him, also, they had shown—this love; for it did not sleep invisible among the secrets of their soul—it raised itself up for effort, it aimed at practical results and performed a practical work, and not, indeed, by ostentatious display, but, by its exertions and its fruits, it showed itself. And in what did their love appear? to what particular enterprise did it address itself? These Christian Hebrews "had ministered," and still continued to "minister," to "saints"—to pious persons who required their pecuniary or active aid. The wants of other followers of Christ who were in humble circumstances, or by whom, in some way, their help was needed, secured their sympathy and received their succour. A meet field for Christian love to occupy! An appropriate work for Christian kindness to perform. (*A. S. Patterson.*) *Known unto God:*—One evening a gentleman was strolling along a street to pass the time. His attention was attracted by the remark of a little girl to a companion in front of a fruit store, "I wish I had an orange for ma." The gentleman saw that the children, though poorly dressed, were clean and neat, and calling them into the store, he loaded them with fruit and candies. "What's your name?" asked one of the girls. "Why do you want to know?" queried the gentleman. "I want to pray for you," was the reply. The gentleman turned to leave, scarcely daring to speak, when the little one added, "Well, it don't matter, I suppose; God will know you, anyhow." (*Baxendale's Anecdotes.*) *Encouragement for the less successful minister:*—Though God may grant more of spiritual ingathering to one minister than to another, this is no proof that the less successful minister is the less valuable with Him. Some surgical instruments are used constantly, others but occasionally; yet the latter may be as valuable as the former. If the falling of a tree require fifty strokes, and one man give three, another five and forty, and another finish the business with two strokes more, we do not debate which of these men did most to fell the tree, which of them ought to have most wages, or which, at least, know how much he has contributed to the work. Nor have we any more reason to be jealous about our own private importance in the great work of converting our fellow-sinners. (*J. A. Bengel.*) *A full reward expected:*—A military gentleman once said to an excellent old minister in the north of Scotland who was becoming infirm, "Why, if I had power over the pension list, I would actually have you put on half-pay for your long and faithful services." He replied, "Ah, my friend, your master may put you off with half-pay, but my Master will not serve me so meanly; He will give me full pay. Through grace I expect a full reward." (*Clerical Library.*) *Certain reward:*—Dionysius caused musicians to play before him, and promised them a great reward. When they came for their reward, he told them they had already had it in their hopes of it. God does not disappoint His servants. (*New Encyclopædia of Illustrations.*) *Small efforts recognised by God:*—A certain king would build a cathedral; and that the credit of it might be all his own, he forbade any from contributing to its erection in the least degree. A tablet was placed in the side of the building, and on it his name was carved as the builder. But that night he saw, in a dream, an angel, who

came down and erased his name, and the name of a poor widow appeared in its stead. This was three times repeated, when the enraged king summoned the woman before him, and demanded, "What have you been doing, and why have you broken my commandment?" The trembling widow replied, "I loved the Lord, and longed to do something for His name and for the building up of His church. I was forbidden to touch it in any way; so, in my poverty, I brought a wisp of hay for the horses that drew the stones." And the king saw that he had laboured for his own glory, but the widow for the glory of God; and he commanded that her name should be inscribed upon the tablet. (*Ralph Wells.*) *God rewards His servants:*—When Calvin was banished from ungrateful Geneva, he said, "Most assuredly if I had merely served man, this would have been a poor recompense; but it is my happiness that I have served Him who never fails to reward His servants to the full extent of His promise." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Vers. 11, 12. **Show the same diligence.**—*The attainment of heaven:*—I. THE MEANS BY WHICH THE HAPPINESS OF HEAVEN MAY BE ATTAINED. "Faith and patience." Faith describes the sound state of the understanding in the perception and application of religious truth; and patience denotes that calm fortitude of heart which enables us to resist every seduction, and, at the call of faith, to hold onward undaunted in the path which conscience prescribes. These virtues form, by their union, the perfection of the human character. II. THE ENCOURAGEMENT TO EXERTION IN PURSUIT OF IT. "Followers of them who . . . inherit the promises." Faith and patience, like all other blessings, descend from heaven. They are the gifts of God through Jesus Christ. But the use and improvement of them, from which alone they become blessings to us, are left dependent on ourselves. Many motives concur to excite our diligence in improving them; but there is a peculiar tenderness and force in that which is suggested by the text. Through them the saints who have gone before us are now inheriting the promises. This argument addresses at once our interest, our understanding, and the best affections of our heart. It raises our view to the recompense of reward; it places before us a visible proof that the attainment of this inheritance is not beyond the reach of men like us; it warms within us the sentiment of generous emulation; and it attracts us onward by ties that are dear as life to the virtuous soul—by the love of those whom death has consecrated in our imagination, and by the ravishing prospect of rejoining them in heaven. (*Jas. Finlayson, D.D.*) *Motives to diligence:*—Suppose every day a day of harvest; suppose it a market-day; suppose it a day wherein you are to work in a golden mine; suppose it a ring which you are to engrave and enamel with your actions, to be at night presented on God's altar. (*N. Caussin.*) *Spiritual diligence:*—I. THE CHARACTER OF THE PERSONS WHOM THE APOSTLE WAS AT THIS TIME ADDRESSING. They were converted characters. Christianity consists of three things—knowledge, experience, and practice. These three things the persons whom the apostle was now addressing evidently possessed. They were acquainted with the principles of religion, and had tasted the heavenly gift. II. THOSE BLESSINGS WHICH WERE HELD OUT TO THEIR ACCEPTANCE. "Let us go on unto perfection"—such a perfection as was commanded by Christ, and which formed the subject of the ministrations and preaching of the apostle. 1. I conceive this implies, comprehending as it does all the blessings of Christianity, a perfect knowledge of Christian doctrine, that we should no longer be tossed to and fro by every wave of the sea, but be settled in the faith of the Bible. 2. I conceive it implies also a perfect possession of all Christian graces, of which one is the full assurance of hope, as in the text—"Resting in full assurance of hope in Christ." I conceive it implies also that perfect love that casteth out all fear. 3. It implies also the perfect performance of Christian duty. 4. It implies also entire sanctification to the will of God. In the Old Testament dispensation, God promised that the day should come when He would sprinkle clean water on His inheritance and make it clean; when from all their filthiness and idols He would cleanse them; when He would take from them hearts of stone and give them hearts of flesh, and write upon the fleshly tables of their heart His law and commandments, that they might do them. 5. It implies the entire dedication of ourselves to God, doing all to the glory of God, looking for the glorious appearance of Jesus Christ unto eternal life. III. THE DILIGENCE WHICH IS REQUISITE IN ORDER TO THE ATTAINMENT OF THIS HIGH AND HAPPY STATE OF CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE. And here we shall have to answer a query: If this be Christianity, how is it that we see so little of it in the world? The answer is here: "Be not slothful, but fol-

lowers of them who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises." These blessings, of which I have been speaking, are not given to idlers. Spiritual sloth is incompatible with Christianity. Christianity is exhibited to us under the character—and a strong figure it is—of a warfare, of a race in which a candidate for the prize is to put forth all his energies. And what kind of diligence, then, is to be put forth on this occasion? 1. "That you do show the same diligence" as they had shown in the commencement. Oh, let the Christian continue to use the same diligence in his career which he did when he first became awakened! Oh, what zeal, what energy, is evinced in young converts! Oh, the sincerity, the loveliness, and the excellency of religious experience when they have perceived their danger, and fled from it to Christ, and experienced somewhat of the consolations of the Divine regard! 2. Thus, then, we are to use the same diligence—diligence proportioned to the end to be obtained. We profess to be Christians: what, then, is the object proposed to us by a profession of Christianity? Surely it is more than a name! Surely it is eternal life—it is to save the deathless, immortal soul! 3. It is to be proportioned, not only to the blessings to be obtained, but to the evil to be avoided. The evil to be avoided here is the everlasting loss of the soul, the punishment which awaits disobedience to God throughout eternity! 4. There must be diligence, again, proportioned to the time allotted to us. How long have you and I to live? How long will probation continue? 5. There must be diligence, again, proportionate to that which our enemies are using in seeking our destruction. Are you ignorant of Satan's devices? Does he ever slumber? Are not his temptations, as well as his emissaries, countless? 6. There must be diligence, again, proportionate to the means that God giveth us for this important end. God has given grace to every one of us; a measure of the Spirit is given to every one to profit withal. We have the influences of the Holy Ghost, the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the instituted ordinances of religion, and all the opportunities of drawing near to God to receive continual strength of grace. 7. There must be diligence proportioned to our daily mercies. Our whole life is one continued mercy. Our creation is a mercy. Then ought we not to be diligent in the service of God, seeing that the mercies of God are so inexhaustible? 8. There must be diligence proportioned to the price paid for our redemption. "We are not redeemed with silver and gold, and corruptible things, but we are bought with a price." Ought we not—considering how valuable we are in the sight of God, considering at what we have been estimated by Jehovah, who created us—to use diligence proportionate, that we rob not God? 9. There must be diligence, finally, in proportion to the relation in which we stand to God, who is our Master, our Father, and our God; and in proportion to the accountability which we must render up to Him in that awful and dreadful day to which we are hastening. (*John Hawtrey.*) *Diligence in seeking salvation*:—If in thought we compare the efforts of an excited crowd to enter some building, or to see some remarkable sight, or to get some freely offered advantage; if we compare their earnestness with what we observe to be the ordinary attitude of men concerning religion! How on the contrary we observe apathy and delay! There is no pressing forward to enter in, but rather an indolent lounging outside the gates, as though we could pass in whenever we liked, and there was no need for haste in the matter. Only a short time ago there came from America a curious account of the government throwing open to settlement a tract of country which had before been closed to white settlers. A certain day and hour was fixed on which emigrants might cross the boundary. Meanwhile "the cordon" was defended by a party of military. A motley multitude gathered on the bank of the dividing river. Rough "cow-boys" from the west, with their swift ponies, and waggons with oxen, and poorer emigrants, with their wives and children trudging by their side, hungry and weary, waited till the day and hour came, and hardly had the midday hour come when a strange scene ensued. Horsemen spurred their steeds into the river, heavy waggons plunged into the water at the ford, all pressed forward with the utmost speed and impetuosity to seize upon some portion of the new territory, and ere darkness came hundreds of tents had been set up, and even houses had been started. All this wild excitement and confusion; all this eagerness and energy, to gain a few acres of earthly possessions; whilst in the matter of laying hold of that kingdom, of which we have been made heirs by baptism, how little interest is taken to make sure an inheritance! But if it be asked, why this haste and unnecessary excitement? Does not God at all times "wait to be gracious"?—then we answer, True, "He doth devise means whereby his banished ones may be restored." True, "He willeth not the death of a sinner"; but yet remember

that though he invites us to enter His kingdom, He does not force men to be saved. He has laid this responsibility on us. Then, too, those dangerous enemies—the world, the flesh, and the devil—are thrusting back the souls that seek to enter in. Every one who goes in must be prepared for a struggle, and for the exertion of all his powers—"the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence." (*J. W. Hardman, LL.D.*)

Full assurance of hope unto the end.—*Full assurance of hope:*—I. THE ATTAINMENT INDICATED. "The full assurance of hope." II. THE COURSE PRESCRIBED. Being diligent in every religious exercise, as prayer, reading the Scriptures, the worship of God, &c. III. THE MODELS RECOMMENDED. "Those who through faith," &c. A long roll of such worthies is given in chapter eleven. Their earthly course was distinguished by—1. Believing obedience. "Faith." 2. Patient endurance. They patiently waited for good, and meekly suffered evil for God's sake. This is (1) A profitable virtue. "It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord." (2) A necessary virtue. "Ye have need of patience." (3) A rare virtue. There are few patient waiters for promised good, or passive endurers of present evil. IV. THE MOTIVE ADDUCED. Those whom we are urged to imitate now inherit the promises, and this is mentioned as a motive to stimulate us to the same diligence. They now inherit the promises which they embraced here, and which sustained them in all their trials. 1. Eternal immunity from (1) Physical, (2) Mental, (3) Moral evil. 2. Eternal possessions. (1) Moral dignities. (2) Social festivities. (3) Perennial enjoyments. (*J. Elstob.*) *The believer's assurance:*—1. THE PARTIES ADDRESSED. The apostle was writing to converts from Judaism to Christianity; persons, who by reason of the persecutions to which they were exposed and the strong persuasive efforts of the followers of Jewish customs and laws, were in danger of apostatising from the faith they had embraced. II. THE ATTAINMENT RECOMMENDED. "The full assurance of hope." Paul has referred in his epistles to three kinds of assurance. In writing to the Colossians he speaks of the "riches of the full assurance of understanding." In the Epistle from which our text is taken, he exhorts the Hebrew Christians to approach the throne of grace with "full assurance of faith." Whilst in the passage before us he recommends the "full assurance of hope." By the first, he means a clear lively knowledge of Divine truth; by the second an unwavering belief of the Gospel promises; and by the third, a firm conviction of the soul's union to Jesus and adoption into the family of the Most High. Though these three assurances are closely allied, yet each is different from the other. There are two reasons why we may speak of this assurance as a desirable attainment. 1. It will be profitable to ourselves. An old divine well said, "The greatest thing that we can desire, next to the glory of God, is our own salvation; and the sweetest thing we can desire is the assurance of our salvation. In this life we cannot get higher than to be assured of that which in the next life is to be enjoyed. All saints shall enjoy a heaven when they leave this earth; some saints enjoy a heaven while they are here on earth." The original word here rendered "full assurance" means full lading or full burden. It is a word which may be applied to a ship and her cargo. If, then, we are fully laden with the treasure of assurance, our sails being well filled by the gales of faith and love, we shall steer straight for the harbour of God. Full assurance shall keep us from being all our life, "through fear of death, subject to bondage." We shall not be like the empty vessel tossed to and fro by every wind and wave of doubt. Our full lading shall keep us stable in the sea of life, and we shall at last ride triumphantly into the regions of repose amid the applause of the heavenly host. The original word is likewise applied to the plenitude of fruit produced by a tree. Say, will it not be better for him to be fully laden with precious fruit, richly decked with luscious clusters, than to have expended all his time and strength in sending out useless tendrils for his support, fearing lest the roots, though firmly grounded, should not be able to sustain him? Depend on it, we shall find assurance a blessing of no mean order. It will make our devotional exercises doubly delightful, because we shall feel that the promises will be fulfilled, and the earnest prayer receive the attention of our Father. Aye, all our engagements shall have a tenfold interest and we shall have a double amount of decision in the discharge of our duties. Our peace shall flow as a river—steadily—evenly—uninterruptedly. 2. This full assurance of hope will be pleasurable to God. We all know how pleasant it is to discover that our friends and associates have firm faith in our integrity—truthfulness—love. The Eternal God is pleased with our confidence in Him. He wishes us to believe His Word. He is grieved by our doubts and fears. III. THE MEANS OF ACQUIRING THIS ASSURANCE. "Show the same diligence unto the end." 1. Watchfulness against all

sin is included in showing diligence. 2. Waiting at the feet of God is also included in "diligence." They who have walked in the light of God's countenance and felt the Spirit's clear witness within them, have been men of prayer; men, whose closets were oft-frequented spots: men who upon their knees fought their way through ranks of foes. So must it be with us. 3. Perseverance in all religious duties is likewise necessary. We must "give the same diligence unto the end." There must be "a patient continuance in well doing." Our sighing after assurance, to-day, will avail us little, if to-morrow all desires for the blessing are foreign to our souls, and our hearts are engrossed with earthly matters. Our purpose must be unwavering. (*J. H. Hitchens.*) *Sure and certain hope:*—Many of us have seen a picture in which the artist paints "Hope" as a pale, fragile figure, blind and bent, wistfully listening to the poor music which her own fingers draws from a broken one-stringed lyre. It is a profoundly true and pathetic confession. So sad, languid, blind, yearning, self-beguiled is Hope, as most men know her. Put side by side with that the figure which an unknown sculptor has carved on one of the capitals of the Ducal palace in Venice, where Hope lifts up praying hands, and a waiting, confident face, to a hand stretched out towards her from a glory of sunbeams. Who does not feel the contrast between the two conceptions? What makes the difference? The upward look. When Hope is directed heavenwards she is strong, assured, and glad. I. Let us look, first, at THE CERTAINTY of Christian hope. Universal experience tells us that hope means an anticipation which is less than sure. Hopes and fears are bracketed together in common language, as always united, like a double star, one black and the other brilliant, which revolve round a common axis, and are knit together by invisible bands. But if we avail ourselves of the possibilities in reference to the future, which Christianity puts into our hands, our hope may be no less certain than our memory; and even more sure than it. For the grounds on which Christian men may forecast their future as infinitely bright and blessed; as the possession of an inheritance incorruptible; an absolute and entire conformity to the likeness of God, which is peace and joy,—are triple, each of them affording certitude. 1. It rests upon the eternal God to whom all the future is certain and upon His faithful Word, which makes it as certain to us. 2. Our hope further rests on a past fact (1 Pet. i. 3). The one real proof that, when we paint heaven we are not painting mist and moonshine, is the fact that Jesus Christ rose again from the dead. There were many reasons for believing in America before Columbus came back and said "I have been there." And there are many reasons, no doubt, that may incline sanguine spirits and wearied spirits, and desiring spirits, and even sin-stricken and guilty spirits to anticipate a life beyond, which shall be a hope or a dread; but there is only one ground upon which men can say, "We know that it is not cloud-land, but solid earth"; and that is, that our Brother has come back from the bourne from which "no traveller returns"; that He thereby has shown us all, not by argumentation but by historical fact, that to die is not to cease to be; that to die draws after it the resurrection of the body. We lift our eyes to the heavens, and though "the cloud receive Him out of our sight" the hope, which is better than vision, pierces the cloud and travels straight on to the throne whilst He bends from His crowned glory and says, "Because I live ye shall live also." 3. The Christian hope is based, not only on these two strong pillars, but on a third—namely, on present experience. You can tell a cedar of Lebanon, though it is not yet bigger than a dandelion, and know what it is coming to. You can tell the infant prince. And the joy and peace of faith, feeble and interrupted as they may be in our present experience, have on them the stamp of supremacy and are manifestly destined for dominion over our whole nature. They are indeed experiences "whose very sweetness yieldeth proof that they were born for immortality." I have often seen in rich men's greenhouses some exotic plant grown right up to the roof, which had to be raised in order to let it go higher. The Christian life here is plainly an exotic, growing where it cannot attain its full height, and it presses against the fragile over-arching glass, yearning upwards to the open sky and the throne of God. So, because we can love so much and do love so little, because we can trust thus far and do trust no more, because we have some spark of the Divine life in us and that spark so contradicted and thwarted and oppressed, there must be somewhere a region which shall correspond to this our deepest nature, and the time must come, when the righteous, who here shone, but so dimly, shall "blaze forth like the sun in the kingdom of the Father." II. Now as to THE ASSURANCE of the Christian hope. Certainty is one thing, and assurance is another. A man may have the most firm conviction based upon the most

unsubstantial foundation. His expectation may have no roots to it, and yet the confidence with which he cherishes the expectation may be perfect. There may be entire assurance without any certainty; and there may be what people call objective certainty with a very tremulous and unworthy subjective assurance. But the only temper that corresponds to and is worthy of the absolute certainties, with which the Christian man has to deal, is the temper of unwavering and assured confidence. Do not disgrace the sure and steadfast anchor, by fastening a slim piece of packthread to it, that may snap at any moment. Do not build flimsy structures upon the rock, and put up canvas shanties that any puff of wind may sweep away, upon such a foundation. If you have a staff to lean upon which will neither give, nor warp, nor crack, whatever stress is put upon it, see that you lean on it, not with a tremulous finger, but with your whole hand. Let me remind you further, that this assured hope is permanent. "The full assurance unto the end," my text says, "Unto the end." How many a lighthouse that you and I once steered towards is behind us now! As we get older, how many of the aims and hopes that drew us on have sunk below the horizon! And how much less there is left for us people with grey hairs in our heads, and years on our backs to hope for, than we used to think there was! But, dear brethren, what does it matter though the sea be washing away the coast on one side the channel, if it is depositing fertile land on the other? What does it matter though the earthly hopes are becoming fewer and those few graver and sadder, if the one great hope is shining brighter? Winter nights are made brilliant by keener stars than the soft summer evenings, and the violet and red and green streamers that fill the northern heavens only come in the late year. So it is well and blessed for us if, when the leaves fall, we see a wider sky; and if as hope dies for earth, it revives and lives again for heaven. III. Lastly, note here THE CULTURE of this certitude of hope. My text is an exhortation to all Christian people "to show the same diligence" in order to such an assurance. The same diligence as what? The same diligence as they had shown "in their work and labour of love towards God's name." The fashionable type of a Christian to-day is a worker. By common consent theology seems put into the background, and by almost as common consent there is comparatively little said about what our fathers used to call "experimental religion," feelings, emotions, inward experiences, but everything is drive, drive; drive at getting people to work. God forbid that I should say one word against that. But "we desire that ye should show the same diligence" as in your mission halls and schools and various other benevolent operations, in cultivating the emotions and sentiments—yes, and the doctrinal beliefs of the Christian life, or else you will be lopsided Christians. Further, did it ever occur to you, Christian people, that your hope was a thing to be cultivated, that you ought to set yourselves to distinct and specific efforts for that purpose? Have you ever done so? How is it to be done? Get into the habit of meditating upon the objects towards which it is directed, and the grounds on which it is built. If you never lift your eyes to the goal, you will never be drawn towards it. If you never think about heaven it will have no attraction for you. If you never go over the bases of your hope, your hope will get dim, and there will be little realisation or lifting power in it. Let me say, lastly, in the matter of practical advice, that this cultivation of the assurance of hope is largely to be effected by pruning the wild luxuriance and earthward-stooping tendrils of our hope. If you want the tree to grow high, nip the side shoots and the leader will gain strength. If you desire that your hope should ever be vigorous you must be abstinent from, or temperate in earthly things. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Full assurance of hope:*—Some men may be assured of their good estate. St. Paul is so sure of it that he sings a triumph over all his enemies (Rom. viii. 33, 34), &c. Neither is it his song alone, but the song of all the faithful (Job xix. 25; 2 Cor. v. 1). How come we by this assurance? not by revelation from heaven, but by good works practised by us here on the earth (2 Pet. i. 10). When St. Paul was ready to depart out of the world, he was sure of the crown of life. How? Not by revelation, but by the godly life which he had led (2 Tim. iv. 8; ii. 19). Depart from sin, be sure of good works, as Dorcas was, and thou mayest have a full assurance of the kingdom of heaven. It is not a bare and naked faith that can assure thee of heaven, but such as worketh by love. Men in this age flatter themselves in a supposed faith, and cast away the care of good works. But how long must we be diligent? Not for a time, but to the end. It is a folly to run at all, unless we run to the end; a folly to fight at all, unless we fight to the end. Remember Lot's wife, she went out of Sodom, but because she looked back she was turned into a pillar of salt. Let not

us be diligent for a time, but to the end; we must be working to our lives end, so long as any breath is in our body; it is not enough to be young disciples, but we must be old disciples, as Mnason was. As we have been diligent in prayer, alms-deeds, in hearing of sermons, in crucifying of sin, so we must be diligent to the end. (*W. Jones, D.D.*) *False assurance*:—I would not give one straw for that assurance that sin will not damp. If David had come to me in his adultery, and had talked to me of his assurance, I should have despised his speech. (*John Newton.*) *Going on to full assurance*:—Indeed nothing else seems interesting enough—nothing to repay the labour, but the telling of my fellow-men about the one man who is the truth, and to know whom is the life. Even if there be no hereafter, I would live my time believing in a grand thing that ought to be true if it is not. No facts can take the place of truths, and if these be not truths, then is the loftiest part of our nature a waste. Let me hold by the better than the actual, and fall into nothingness off the same precipice with Jesus and John and Paul and a thousand more, who were lovely in their lives, and with their death make even the nothingness into which they have passed like the garden of the Lord. I will go further, Polwarth, and say, I would rather die for evermore believing as Jesus believed, than live for evermore believing as those that deny Him. If there be no God, I feel assured that existence is and could be but a chaos of contradictions, whence can emerge nothing worthy to be called a truth, nothing worth living for.—No, I will not give up my curacy. I will teach that which is good, even if there should be no God to make a fact of it, and I will spend my life on it, in the growing hope, which may become assurance, and there is indeed a perfect God, worthy of being the Father of Jesus Christ, and that it was because they are true, that these things were lovely to me and to so many men and women, of whom some have died for them, and some would be yet ready to die. I thank my God to hear you say so. Nor will you stand still there, said Polwarth. (*G. Macdonald's "Thomas Wingfold."*) *Fitful assurance*:—We hear, sometimes, a great deal said about possessing a full assurance of being a child of God; and then, every now and then, we hear of a doubt, a hope. As good Joseph Irons used to say, "They keep hope, hope, hoping—hop, hop, hopping—all their lives, because they can't walk." Little faith is always lame. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Assurance of hope*:—The celebrated Philip de Morney, prime minister to Henry IV. of France, one of the greatest statesmen, and the most exemplary Christians of his age, being asked, a little before his death, if he still retained the same assured hope of future bliss which he had enjoyed during his illness, he made this memorable reply, "I am as confident of it, from the incontestable evidence of the Spirit of God, as ever I was of any mathematical truth from all the demonstrations of Euclid." (*K. Arvine.*) *Inspiration of hope*:—Once on a time, certain strong labourers were sent forth by the great king to level a primeval forest, to plough it, to sow it, and to bring to him the harvest. They were stout-hearted and strong, and willing enough for labour, and much they needed all their strength and more. One stalwart labourer was named Industry—consecrated work was his. His brother Patience, with thews of steel, went with him, and tired not in the longest days under the heaviest labours. To help them they had Zeal, clothed with ardent and indomitable energy. Side by side there stood his kinsman Self-denial, and his friend Importunity. These went forth to their labour, and they took with them, to cheer their toils, their well-beloved sister Hope; and well it was they did, for they needed the music of her consolation ere the work was done, for the forest trees were huge, and demanded many sturdy blows of the axe ere they would fall prone upon the ground. One by one the giant forest kings were overthrown, but the labour was immense and incessant. At night when they went to their rest, the day's work always seemed so light, for as they crossed the threshold, Patience, wiping the sweat from his brow, would be encouraged, and Self-denial would be strengthened by hearing the sweet voice of Hope within singing, "God will bless us; God, even our own God, will bless us." They felled the lofty trees to the music of that strain; they cleared the acres one by one, they tore from their sockets the huge roots, they delved the soil, they sowed the corn, and waited for the harvest, often much discouraged, but still held to their work as by silver chains and golden fetters by the sweet sound of the voice which chanted so constantly, "God, even our own God, will bless us." They never could refrain from service, for Hope never could refrain from song. They were ashamed to be discouraged, they were shocked to be despairing, for still the voice rang clearly out at noon and eventide, "God will bless us; God, even our own God, will bless us." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Assurance desirable*:—A man can never be too sure of his going to heaven. If we purchase an inheritance on earth, we make it as sure, and

our tenure as strong as the brain of the law, or the brains of the lawyers, can devise. We have conveyances, and bonds, and fines, no strength too much. And shall we not be more curious in the settling our eternal inheritance in heaven? (*T. Adams.*) *How to realise full assurance*:—An old author (alas, they were more familiar with these things long ago than the moderns seem to be!) says epigrammatically, truthfully, and scripturally, that God gifts His acceptance, but He sells assurance. And His people buy assurance by a life of secret prayer, not prayer-meeting prayer, by crucifying the deepest lusts, by a sweet and holy life. The traffic for this great blessing goes on between God and the sinner; and the reward for gospel obedience comes in the shape of full assurance to his weak and trembling heart. (*A. Whyte, D.D.*) *Hope—an uncultivated grace*:—A Christian without love would be an anomaly; a Christian without faith, a self-contradiction; and yet Christians without hope are as common in the Church as empty shells on the sea-shore, and unlighted gas lamps in the city on dark nights when the almanac says the moon is shining. The three graces are reduced to two; and they mourn their sister dead and buried. Even Christian ministers forget that the Bible is a book of hope, and treat it as a book chiefly of warnings. Children learn to regard it as an awful book, and never quite recover from the misapprehension. The "God of hope" is converted into a "God of fear," and we are driven to duty by a rod instead of drawn to life by inspiring hope. The Christian repeats the experience of his prototype in the vision of Bunyan, and forgets that he has a key in his bosom which will let him out of Castle Doubting and the custody of Giant Despair. Hope is one of the threefold cords out of which Christian experience is woven. If a man has no hope, let him examine himself and see if he have any faith; let him beware lest love, unfed by its mother hope, die and leave him without either faith, hope, or charity. Men scoff at the optimistic spirit. It is fashionable to be cynical and mildly despairing. Dean Swift's spirit is contagious among men of Dean Swift's type; and his beatitude is accepted for substance of doctrine by many men who do not know of its existence: Blessed are they who do not expect much, for they shall not be disappointed. But what pessimist ever achieved anything for himself or for humanity? Hope is the inspiration of all noble activity. The world's leaders have all been men of great hope. (*Christian Union.*) *Hope*:—An assured hope is not like a mountain torrent, but like a stream flowing from a living fountain, and often so quietly that it is scarcely visible but for the verdure of its banks. (*G. Spring.*) *Development of hope*:—Hope takes fast hold of heaven itself. A Christian's hope is not like that of Pandora, which may fly out of the box, and bid the soul farewell, as the hope of the hypocrite does; no, it is like the morning light, the least beam of it shall go on into a complete sunshine; it shall shine forth brighter and brighter till the perfect day. (*T. Brooks.*) *Hope an active grace*:—Hope is an active grace; it is called a lively hope. Hope is like the spring in the watch, it sets all the wheels of the soul in motion; hope of a crop makes the husbandman sow his seed; hope of victory makes the soldier fight; and a true hope of glory makes a Christian vigorously pursue glory. Here is a spiritual touch-stone to try our hope by. (*T. Watson.*) **Not slothful.**—*An exhortation to diligence*:—I. THE EXHORTATION. "Be not slothful." 1. I should think you would not be if you thought of your Master. Good old Rutherford, when he lay in prison, said, "I wish all my brethren did but know what a Master I have served." If you thought more of your Master, methinks you would be inclined to say such a Master deserves your service. 2. Then your work: this is a service that may well call forth all your energies. Don't imagine that you have done all now you have begun to make a Christian profession. You have but just put on the sandals; you have the pilgrimage to go yet. There is a great work before thee to do; but He that hath called thee to fight will strengthen thee. What a precious thing when the soul is intent upon noble objects! Oh, young people, to give your youth to holy purposes; to take so noble an object as this of glorifying God and blessing your fellows as the object for which you are living—oh, what a grand thing is this, the giving of your youth to Him! it is like harnessing a steed of fire to some noble chariot. How much evil you will prevent, how much good you will do, how many tears you will wipe away, how many sad hearts you will make happy! May God give you a holy emulation in this matter. Think of your work. It was said of Dr. John Harris, of Oxford, who lived soon after the time of Cromwell, that when he came to die he called his friends and said this—"Of all the sins which I have ever committed, the sin of misspent time troubleth me most," and yet he had been a very busy man; but when he came to look at the past from his death-bed, he thought how little he had done. When

Leigh Richmond was dying, a minister came and sat by his bed-side, and he said to him, "Oh, if you could see the value of the golden moments now as you will see them when you stand at the rim of the grave, and look back, how earnest would be your work!" It was the prayer of Alline every morning—"Lord, Thou hast given me a new day; help me to make my crown brighter and to bless my fellows." What a blessed effect such a prayer woud have on each of our lives! It was said of Boston, when he came towards the close of his life, that he used to say—"Hold out, faith and patience, thou shalt soon be crowned, the battle shall not last much longer." Work while thou canst, there are many things thou canst not do in eternity. Many a good thing you can do now that you cannot do then. You cannot hold up a sinking head in heaven, for there is no sickness or sorrow there. Be not slothful—think of your Master, think of your work, think of your reward. Now I want to tell you why a great many of you become slothful. There are many slothful, because they are not sufficiently aware of those crises—times when special difficulties come in upon them. You may be very busy for the world and very slothful for God. John Bunyan describes two sleeping-places in his "Pilgrim's Progress," and he does it exceedingly wisely. When Christian was going up the hill Difficulty, and when half-way up the hill, he fell asleep in the arbour and lost his roll, and had a sore journey back again to recover it. The other sleeping-place was on the Enchanted Ground. The one was in the midst of difficulties, and the other where the sky was clear and the scenes were like fairyland; clusters hung from every tree, and the earth was carpeted with green and flowers. This is true religious experience. The two times of greatest danger to our spiritual vigilance are, special adversity and special prosperity. In times of the world's adversity, if you do not go to Him who layeth on the burden, for strength to bear it, you will go to sleep in spiritual things—you will be losing your roll. And if the sky is clear and everything go smoothly, you will be in the same danger. Sometimes when things look very smiling in this world we get wrong for the next. I have no doubt Israel were quite willing to go on when they were at the bitter waters of Marah; but when they came to Elim, with its fountains and palm-trees, they would have liked to have stopped a little longer. Let us take care that we hold nothing on earth so dear that we would make our rest here. Be not slothful. In order that you may not be so there must be self-culture, self-discipline, self-denial. Another reason for your slothfulness is, that you have not fixed upon any standard of Christian character. The Lord Jesus is the standard that you should set before you. II. THE EXAMPLE. "Followers of them," &c. Many a man admires the martyrs who does not mean to follow them. The noble army of martyrs were faithful to their duty and to truth. They were not fanatics. They did not seek after suffering out of a spirit of bravado. When holy Bradford lay in prison, and Queen Mary sent offers of mercy to him if he would give up his gospelling, what said the good man? "If I might have her Majesty's favour, without losing that of my Lord, gladly would I accept of it; but it is too dear a price to give God's favour for that of the Queen." Give me a man who really fears God, and I know he will fear nobody else. It is a grand thing for a man to have the presence of Jehovah. Those are striking words of St. Basil to an empress who tempted him to sin, and threatened punishment, because he would not comply with her—"How can you make me fear confiscation, who have long since learned that nothing I have is my own? or exile, when I know that the remotest province of your empire is no farther from heaven than Constantinople? Or how can you make me fear even death, when to me death would be the entrance to glory?" The martyrs were sustained by their faith. When Polycarp came to the stake, they wanted to fasten him with a chain. "You need not do that," said he, "for my Master, who brought me here, will keep me in the fire." Sometimes their peace, on such occasions, swelled into ecstasy, as when holy Bradford said, "What am I, and what is my father's house, that the Lord for me, as for Elijah, should send a chariot of fire?" and so he went up into the fiery chariot to heaven. These were men who through faith and patience inherit the promises. They showed their fidelity to the truth by sealing it with their blood. Oh, how many of our privileges do we owe to the faithfulness of such men! But notice further, you must be followers of those who showed their fidelity to the Word, by their diligent study of it. How much you owe to the translators of the Scriptures, who toiled at their work night and day! Think of the marvellous story of the venerable Bede, who died, just as he had finished the last word of the translation of the Scriptures, over which he had toiled in faith and patience for many years. Then you must be followers of those who keep on with their duty under all circum-

stances. What a beautiful description that is which John Bunyan gives of one Mr. By-ends, and he tells you he was related to one, Mr. Face-both-ways, and to one Mr. Fair-speak, and to some other people with strange and significant names. He tells you that By-ends had a great love for religion when she went in silver slippers, when the sun shone upon her and the people applauded; but he had no liking for being with her when the mob hooted and yelled; no liking for Christ when the mob cried, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" But that won't do; you must follow Christ at all times, if at all. You must be followers of those who did their duty when duty was costly. You must go where Christ would have you go, and do what Christ put you to do, and be willing to work for God in secret, and without the applause of the world. How blessedly many who have now received the promises showed their faith and patience! Think of Abraham waiting five-and-twenty years for the promise of Isaac. But though the time was so long, Abraham's heart never misgave him. The language of his heart was, "My Lord has said it, and I believe my Isaac will come." And the Lord fulfilled this promise. How long Monica, the mother of Augustine, waited for her son's conversion! He indulged in all manner of wickedness, and she went to Ambrose and told of her prayers and tears for her son. "Ah!" said Ambrose, "a child of so many tears and prayers shall not perish." At length Augustine was converted, and became the great luminary of the Western Church. When your prayers are long in being answered, do not give up. Sometimes the ship that is longest on its voyage brings home the richest freight. If the promise tarries, wait for it. A promise long waited for is very precious in its fulfilment. III. THE ENCOURAGEMENT. Those who endured—where are they now? Inheriting the promises. Those early martyrs—early Christians, those who were often in tears and troubles—as many of you will be—where are they now? Inheriting the promises. Oh, ye of little faith, look up and take comfort. There they stand. They used to fear just as you do; they thought, sometimes, they should never get there, just as you do. Now, if you be not slothful, just as they have triumphed you shall triumph, just as they are crowned you shall be crowned. (*S. Coley.*) *The warning against slothfulness:*—Slothfulness is the same as idleness. An idle person is one who neglects his duty, and who never can succeed in anything. Solomon says that "slothfulness"—or idleness—"will clothe a man with rags." We need not wonder therefore, to find among the warnings of the Bible, one against idleness, or slothfulness. And God, who gives us this warning, has set before us splendid examples of industry. See what an example of this we have in God Himself. When our Saviour was on earth, He said to the Jews—"My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." And then think of the angels of heaven. They wait before God continually to do His bidding. And the moment He tells them to go anywhere, or do anything, they fly away and do it. There is no slothfulness, or idleness among the angels. And then think of the sun. God made it, thousands of years ago, by its shining to light up our world, and the worlds around it. And since then it has kept on shining day and night, without ever stopping for a moment. And so it is with the moon, and the stars, and the seasons, and day and night. There is no slothfulness or idleness about any of them. I. The first reason why we ought to mind this warning is—FOR THE SAKE OF OUR EXAMPLE. About the year 1725, an American boy, nineteen years old, found himself in London, where he had to earn his own bread. He went one day to a printing office, and asked for employment. "Where are you from?" asked the foreman. "From America," was the answer. "Ah!" said the foreman, "from America! a lad from America seeking employment as a printer! Well, do you really understand the art of printing? Can you set type?" The young man stepped up to one of the type-cases, and in a short time set up the following passage, from St. John's Gospel, which he handed to the foreman—"Nathaniel said unto him, 'Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?' Philip saith unto him, 'Come and see.'" The foreman was so pleased with the readiness and smartness of this American youth, that he took him into his employ at once. He was very industrious, and soon gained the confidence and respect of all connected with the office. He was always in his place, and did his work well. He never would drink beer or strong drink. He saved his money, and after a while returned to his own country. Then he had a printing establishment of his own. He became an author, a publisher, the Postmaster-General of the country—a member of Congress—a signer of the Declaration of Independence, and an ambassador from his country to some of the royal courts of Europe, and finally he died in Philadelphia, on the 17th of April, 1790, at the age of eighty-four, full of years and honours. This was Benjamin Franklin. No one can tell the influence

which his example for industry has had upon thousands of the youth of our country. But we may form a pretty fair idea of this when we bear in mind that there are more than a hundred and fifty counties, towns, and villages that have been called Franklin, in honour of this industrious printer's boy. II. The second reason why we ought to mind this warning is—FOR OUR SUCCESS IN LIFE. A lady once asked Mr. Turner, the great English painter, what the secret of his success was? His reply was: "I have no secret, madam, but hard work." "The difference between one man and another," says Dr. Arnold, "is not so much in talent, as in industry." "Nothing," says Sir Joshua Reynolds, "is denied to well-directed labour, and nothing is to be attained without it." "Success," says Dr. Johnson, "may be won by patient industry, but it is not to be looked for in any other way." Solomon says—"The hand of the diligent maketh rich." Again he says, "Seest thou a man diligent in his business; he shall stand before kings, he shall not stand before mean men." Periander, one of the seven wise men of Greece, wrote a motto, which was inscribed on the walls of the celebrated temple of Delphos, in these words—"Nothing is impossible to industry." III. The third reason why we ought to mind it is—FOR OUR REWARD IN HEAVEN. If we get to heaven at all, we shall owe it entirely to the grace and love of Jesus. But what our place in heaven shall be, when we get there, will be decided according to the way in which we have served Jesus on earth. And this is a good reason why we should mind the warning against slothfulness. (*R. Newton, D.D.*)

Spiritual sluggishness:—Almost everywhere is the fact recognised that novelty has much to do with enthusiasm. Very few are prepared to judge of the value of a worker by what he is at the commencement of his work. "Wait a while," they say. "He is new to the duties as yet; when the charm of their freshness is over then we shall be able better to estimate what we may daily expect from him." Splendid enthusiasm to start with! If it were only kept up, the worker would soon have everything at his feet, but unfortunately, it is *not* kept up. Soon the inquiry has to be raised, "Who did hinder you?" The fine gold has become dim. The simple fact is that the novelty of the experience has gone, and taken the enthusiasm with it. Such was the great danger of these Hebrew Christians. Let us consider the sluggishness here referred to, and how it may be avoided. Spiritual sluggishness. The word is one which usually relates to a bodily condition, and we must therefore first gain a clear idea of it in that sense before we can understand its use by the writer in relation to the soul. It is a difficult matter to define health in a way that will satisfy a scientific mind, but generally speaking, it is that condition when "all the functions of the body are performed easily, naturally, and well." All of us, however, have passed through seasons when some one bodily organ was not capable of performing its function, and when, in consequence of some complaint or other, it caused us considerable pain. We had no difficulty in localising the matter; we could lay our finger upon the exact spot, and our ability to do so led to the use of remedies which, happily, soon restored us. All disorders, however, are not of this acute kind. Although sharp pain is the usual herald of a deviation from the standard of health, there are conditions in which the body is not as it should be, though there is no great suffering. There are other heralds besides pain, and sluggishness is one of them. In this case you cannot put your finger upon any one spot and say, "The pain is here!" No, there is a dulness, a lethargy which affects the whole body. Such was precisely the condition of these Hebrews in relation to spiritual things. There was no glaring sin to rebuke. They went to the same places as before, and performed the same acts; yet they were not the same men. The difference was here: formerly, whatever they did, they did zealously; *now*, whatever they did, they did sluggishly. The stream was confined within the same banks; but whereas once it rushed on, smiling in the sunlight, carrying away many a poisonous element, turning many a water-wheel—musical, purifying, useful—now it moved slowly—the music was gone, the poison was accumulating, and the wheels were still. The same stream? Yes; if you looked only at the old landmarks, but not the same stream by any means, if you looked at its flow and the purposes it served. To particularise: they still spoke of Christ as their Saviour, but there was no glow of affection on their faces or in their hearts. They prayed to Him still, but the old fervour was not there. They ministered to the needy, but the poor felt that the gift and the giver were separate. They had drifted into another zone, and they who in the warmer climate had been full of activity, now were almost torpid in the cold. Two other points in the analogy demand our attention, although I can only touch upon them lightly. In its milder

forms sluggishness is generally the result of the neglect of healthy exercise, and further, although it does not always imply organic disease, yet, if not remedied, it is likely to lead to it, and so shorten the days. There were certain exercises of the Christian life which these Hebrews had neglected. They had not forsaken their teachers, but they did not give them proper attention. The truth was explained, but they were not mentally on the alert, and so it found no lodgment within them. The neglect of that duty was yielding its baneful fruit. Disease was threatening them. Thorns and thistles spring up on neglected land, and the apostle feared that such growths would speedily appear in them. What had been a garden of the Lord was likely to become a fruitless tract, bearing growths only fit to be burned. Observe, it is not a mere matter of slowness or swiftness; rightly regarded, it is one of life or death. "Not sluggish," but "imitators of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises." Who can tell how much inspiration men have received by considering a noble end and noble human examples? Now, the writer calls his readers to that twofold contemplation. He reminds them first of the promises of God. Some of them had already been fulfilled, but many of them were still but promises—*i.e.*, they had relation to the future. The reference, of course, is to the heavenly life which he wished them to contemplate, so that they might patiently endure their present afflictions. God had in store for them a tranquility such as they had never yet known—a tranquility which should never be ruffled by the stormy winds of trial, and a service which should never be hindered by persecution, or in which they should ever tire or grow weary. In that higher life work and rest should sweetly blend. In their present circumstances they were sharply and painfully separated from each other; but then the twain, by a heavenly wedlock, should become one for ever. Did any of them, however, regard their difficulties and hindrances as insuperable? If so, the apostle corrects the error by reminding them that many had already inherited the promises. Was their case while on earth different in any essential respect from that of his readers? Nay, they inherited the promises "through faith and patience." (*W. S. Page.*) *Slothfulness*:—"Slothful"—a word which has quite passed out of common use. It is a strong old Saxon word, very little changed. The Saxon form is *slewdth*, from *slaw*, slow; and the idea of the word is tardiness, disinclination to action or labour. This slothfulness was the characteristic sin of the civilised and effeminate times of the Book of Proverbs. It is the great sin, in respect of religious things, of all highly civilised and luxurious ages and nations, and the great peril of all persons who are not placed under the stern necessity of working with hand or brain for their daily bread. But a more precise idea can be given to this term as it is used in this Epistle. Slothfulness is action which has in it no energy; nothing of that essential characteristic of manliness—energy. I. THE SIN OF SLOTHFULNESS IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. We know the sin and its ruinous consequences well enough in business life. We have often been wearied out with the kid-gloved young man, who counts business a bore, dawdles about, puts no soul into anything, drags through his day's work, and tries the patience of everybody that has to do with him. Can it possibly be that he represents the way in which, by our Christian slothfulness, we are wearying God and all good men? It must be a sin to live a listless, easeful Christian life: a sin like that of the soldier who hides among the stuff or feigns a sickness when the trumpet blast is summoning all heroic souls to the front. It must be sin in view of those all-absorbing claims of King Jesus under which we come. He demands body, soul, and spirit, life, time, powers, all. No man can be truly His without being wholly His. It must be sin in view of the consecration vow which we have made, yielding ourselves up as living sacrifices, like the whole burnt-offering, given over, body, and fat, and skin, and blood, and life, for a whole consuming on the Lord's altar. It must be sin in view of that great work in the world which has yet to be done ere Christ shall "see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied." It must be the sin of the most shameful ingratitude, when we remember how He bought us with His precious blood, giving Himself unto the death for us. II. THE TEMPTATIONS TO THE SIN OF CHRISTIAN SLOTHFULNESS IN MODERN LIFE. Certainly there is no temptation to slothfulness in modern business life. Intensity, haste, keenness, over-grasping, are the modern business sins. But this business life of ours in many ways brings temptation to a weak Christian living. Observe how it tends to exhaust energy, expending all the gathered stores of physical and mental strength, and leaving none to be given to Christian uses. Then, too, it brings wealth and the enervating influence of luxury—precisely the sin of old Sodom, old Jerusalem, and old Tyre, against which a prophet's voice is ever needed.

Other things besides business are seriously telling on the energy of religious life. To what an alarming extent personal Christian effort is excused by an arrangement for money payment; as if cold cash could ever do in the world for Christ what living souls can! The extravagant pursuit of mere pleasure, and interest in the excitingly sensational and weakly sentimental in literature. And then in other departments of life we have the open enthronement of intellect as the deity for modern worship. III. THE DISHONOUR WHICH CHRISTIAN SLOTHFULNESS PUTS UPON THOSE SAINTS AND HEROES WHO HAVE GONE BEFORE US, AND WHO SEEK TO LIVE AGAIN IN US. Oh, the glorious vision of the saints of God! Sainted fathers, mothers, pastors, heroes! They have inherited the promises, and now they rest. But how? Through "faith," which is but another name for energy—energy seen on another side; and through "patience," which enabled them, amid all their toils, and discouragements, and failures, to keep up their energy. They live again in us. What dishonour do we put upon them, if our Christian living is faitbless and weak, self-indulgent and restless and fretful! How we disgrace them, if we sink down as low as to make our lives a mere response to the questions, What shall we eat? What shall we drink? And wherewithal shall we be clothed? They live again in us. They were the Church of Christ for their time, and we are for ours. Would to God that in earnest, energetic, Christian lives we could be worthy of them. Nay, would to God that we might be worthy of Him whom they and we alike should imitate, who hath called us by His grace unto His kingdom and glory. (*R. Tuck, B.A.*) *The evil of sloth*:—Among the disciples of Hillel, the wise teacher of the sons of Israel, was one named Saboth, to whom every work was a great trouble, and who gave himself up to idleness and sloth. Hillel was grieved thereat for the youth, and resolved to cure him of his fault. To this end he took him out to the valley of Hinnom, by Jerusalem. There was a standing pool full of snakes and vermin, and covered with muddy weeds. When they reached this place, Hillel put down his staff, and said, "Let us rest here from our way." The youth was surprised, and said, "How, master, near this foul bog? Dost thou not perceive what poisonous vapours it exhales?" "Thou art right, my son," answered the master: "this bog is like the soul of a slothful man. Who would wish to be near it?" Then Hillel took the youth to a waste field, producing nothing but thistles and thorns, which choked the corn and the salutary herbs. Now, Hillel leaned on his staff, and said, "Behold this field has good soil to produce all that is useful and pleasant, but it is forgotten and neglected, therefore it brings forth thistles, and thorns, and poisonous weeds, beneath which lurk toads and serpents. A little while ago thou didst see the soul; now behold the life of an idle man." Then Saboth was full of shame and repentance, and said, "Master, why leadest thou me to these lonely and dreary spots? They are the reproachful picture of my soul and life!" Hillel answered, and said, "Thou wouldst not believe my words, therefore I tried whether the voice of Nature would penetrate to thy heart." Saboth pressed his master's hand, and said, "Thy endeavours shall not be in vain; thou wilt see that a new life has begun within me." And after this day Saboth became an active youth. Then Hillel took him to a fertile valley, by the side of a clear brook, which flowed meandering between fruitful trees, flowery meadows and shady shrubberies. "See here," said the old man to the rejoicing youth, "the picture of thy new, industrious life. Nature, which warned thee, will now reward thee. Her beauty and grace can only give joy to him who sees in her life a picture of his own." (*F. A. Krummacher.*) *Indolence*:—The soul's idling time is the devil's working time. **Followers of them who . . . inherit the promises.**—*Departed saints our examples*:—It must be owned, although it is a melancholy confession, that few comparatively set out in the road to heaven, and fewer still persevere unto the end. "Many of the disciples of Jesus turned back, and walked no more with Him." I. THE CAUTION against a sore evil in the Church of Christ. "We desire that ye be not slothful." Can he be slothful who has for long years felt the bitterness of bondage, but having shaken off, through the might of another, the bonds of misery, is now on his way to the land of liberty? Can he be slothful who has seen the wild storm gathering in the heavens, with destruction, and is on the road to the refuge set before him? Can he be slothful who flees, while sin and Satan and avenging justice are pursuing? Can the Christian ever need such an exhortation when he has so much to excite him to diligence? So prevalent is the evil, that no Christian should regard himself as not standing in need of caution here. Such, too, is its deceitful nature that it is often overlooked or mistaken for something else. It is a kind of negative vice; not so much the doing of what is directly wrong, as the omitting to

do what is obviously right. Depend upon it, if we omit a duty, we are on the highway to the perpetration of an actual crime. The great tempter knows this full well, and therefore strives thus to draw us aside rather than to drive us into evil. The citadel has come into the possession of the foe, not by the might, but by the stratagem of the enemy: it has been brought low, not by the strength of the assailants, but through the indifference of the defenders. But there is a class of persons whose strength seems paralysed, and who shrink from effort, because they see everything in an unfavourable light. They behold difficulties in the way, and regard them as unscaleable; they consider the exertions demanded as beyond their strength, and the self-denial required as more than they can bear. Such characters as those to which we have alluded *seek*, but do not *strive*. They do not set about the matter with all the heart and soul and strength; there is none of that combating with the habit of evil which will not rest until it is destroyed. Love with its note of tenderness, peace with its words of sweetness, joy by its language of rapture, zeal with its burning syllables, and faith by the accents of assurance—all urge us never to be slothful. Remember the nature of that duty which is laid upon you. You have a prize to win and a soul to save. Shall earthly competitors and worldly combatants put you to the blush? Think, again, of the character you bear and the profession you make. You are children of God, whose meat and drink should be to do their Father's will, to "count all things but loss for Christ." Can you, then, bear the thought of belying your character, of regarding spiritual things as little worth when earthly interests come in the way? II. A POWERFUL ENCOURAGEMENT to diligence, as enforced by the example of those who have preceded us in the road to heaven—"Be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises." There is something in this mode of exciting the Hebrew Christians to diligence, which by its suitableness recommends itself to us. It shows how practicable it is to accomplish that which sloth suggests is impossible; it puts to flight every false fear by giving instances of complete success, and assures us of what *may* be done by reminding us of what *has* been done. Think of the zeal of patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, the trials they endured, and the difficulties they overcame. Look at Abraham hoping against hope, obeying the Divine command regardless of the consequences. Look at Moses "choosing affliction with the people of God" in preference to all the riches of an Egyptian throne. Look at David waiting for the kingdom while year after year he was hunted for his life, serving the Lord diligently amid all the cares of royalty, and all the trials of the most troublous times. Look at the apostles or martyrs who "counted not their lives dear unto them" for the sake of Jesus. But how did the saints of God check every rising tendency to discouragement or indolence? How did they so walk as to arrive safely at their journey's end? By "faith and patience." These are graces peculiar to the Christian's state of probation. He is called to exercise faith in the Word of God, and to rely entirely upon Christ. It is by faith that we become interested in the promises; pardon and salvation are promised to faith—believing, we become children of God, and heirs of the promise of eternal life. But "patience must also have her perfect work"; the promises will be delayed, that this suffering grace may be called into exercise. This is the grace that checks the murmur. Nature might sometimes suggest, "Why are my conflicts prolonged?" But patience maintains the calmness of a heart not struck dumb by sullen desperation, but tranquilised by resignation and supported by hope. (*S. Bridge, M.A.*) *Christian examples*:—I. We must endeavour to ascertain OUR MODELS. Whom are we to follow? Them "who through faith and patience inherit the promises." Passing over successive generations, passing by princes, and heroes, and statesmen, and scholars, the apostle goes back to the very early ages of the new world, and points us to a small company of rustics and shepherds, distinguished only by their communion with God and their obedience to Him. The days are coming when men will be judged, not by their adventitiousness, but by their real worth, by their intellectual, moral, and religious character, when vile persons, however rich, shall be condemned, and we shall honour them that fear the Lord, however poor. For the righteous are the excellent of the earth. They are called, observe, "repairers of the breach, restorers of places to dwell in," and though they were destitute, tormented, and afflicted, the world was not worthy of them. II. Having ascertained our models, we must, in the second place, consider THEIR PRESENT CONDITION, which is the enjoyment of the inheritance. They "inherit the promises." Many advantages are derived from the promises; some even in time. Few of the promises of God, indeed, are ever completely accomplished in this world: they draw us, therefore, forward and upward. We are

saved by hope; heaven will perfect everything that concerns us. Now you will observe, also, that this inheritance is a present possession. They "inherit," not they "shall inherit." They inherit now the promises. They have done with sorrows and with sin: they are freed from all their infirmities and all their distractions: they are there for ever with the Lord, and waiting to receive you into everlasting communion. III. Let us now consider, thirdly, their PREVIOUS DISPOSITIONS. 1. Let us, then, observe their dependence and order. "Faith and patience." Patience does not precede faith, but follows it: so does everything. Faith is not the superstructure, but the foundation. 2. The nature of their service. One word here will explain this fully; it is the word "through"—"Through faith and patience," says the apostle, "they inherit the promises." What could you do without either of them? What could you do without faith? Take the most simple principle in religion: the creation of the world. The heathen philosophers commonly believed in the eternity of the world, or that it was produced by a casual concourse of atoms. And the apostle expressly tells us, that "through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God; so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." What wonder, therefore, that as to other things these should depend upon faith? What could you do without patience? Patience has two offices to perform; the one regards waiting for good, and the other the bearing of evil. IV. OUR DUTY IN REFERENCE TO THEM; which is, to be followers of them: "Be ye followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises." The injunction implies three things: 1. That there is nothing unattainable or impracticable in the examples of those who have gone before us. We may, we can, follow them. They were exercised by the very same temptations, and they had the very same passions with us. 2. That we should acquaint ourselves with them. You cannot follow what you are ignorant of. Imitation is something voluntary, something intentional, something that requires observation, and to have the thing much before the eye of the mind, in order to have the mind impressed. 3. And you should not be satisfied with anything short of resemblance and conformity. In this conformity allow me just to mention two things which are worthy of your regard. (1) You should distinguish what was peculiar in their situation to themselves, and what was common and general. (2) Then again, with regard to such things, in which they were exemplars, you should attend to these things chiefly as regards yourselves. V. Having ascertained our models, and having seen their present condition, and their previous disposition, and observed our duty with regard to them, let us finally remark, WHAT IS NECESSARY IN ORDER TO DISCHARGE IT; namely, that you fling away sloth. A philosopher was asked, "What is the sin most universal to all mankind?" and his answer was, and we are persuaded that he answered justly, "Idleness and sloth." See a child: with what difficulty can you obtain anything like continued serious attention to subjects you are attempting to teach it. It is like your endeavouring to tie it with a ball of mercury to the legs of a table. Look at man: in what state should we find the community now, of how many thousand things should we remain ignorant, if individuals were not urged by the most powerful considerations of want or advantage. But mental sloth is much greater than bodily sloth, and spiritual sloth is much greater than even mental. It seems very astonishing as well as unnatural; allowing that a man is on the bed of sloth, we should suppose that it would be impossible for him to remain there when he opens his eyes and looks about him in the light of revelation. Can he see such honours as these, and not feel something like ambition? Can he see such riches, and not feel something like avarice? Can he learn that the Judge standeth at the door and not be afraid? Can he see such a heaven and not agonise in order to enter it? Can he see hell moving to meet him and not tremble, and flee from the wrath to come? (*W. Jay.*)

In the footsteps of heroes:—The principle of imitation which is spoken of in our text (for the word "followers" ought to have been "imitators") has an imperial influence on man. It is almost impossible to define its range. Imitation begins in early childhood, long before either our moral perceptions or our reason have become developed; and the infant is often, though its parents may be unconscious of it, hearing and watching and making its little efforts to imitate their doings and sayings. It is imitation which is both the creative principle and the preserving bond of society. The moralists of every age have shown their deep insight into human nature and their just appreciation of the value of the principle of imitation by enforcing their precepts with suitable examples. Aristides has been cited and pressed upon the young as an example of justice; and Solon as an example of

wisdom; and Socrates as an example of goodness. Nor has the Word of God been less alive to the importance of a similar course. There is not a book in the whole compass of literature which has so extensively availed itself of examples as this; nor is there one which has such examples to present, whether of vice or virtue. And so our text exhorts us not to be slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. I. WHAT IS INHERITED? The promises. What promises? These must be the final promises which are embodied in the one word—heaven. Many promises are fulfilled to us on our way there; but these are promises whose fruition is postponed until death. What promises are fulfilled then in heaven? 1. This is one thing—freedom from sin. This at least. This, if there be nothing more; and this will be a great and glorious heaven in itself; for it will be a soul brought into harmony with itself, and with its God and Saviour. 2. Another promise assures us of the end of sorrow. End of sorrow? you may say. Can that be? Life begins with a cry and ends with a sigh, and suffering is sown like seed from cradle to grave. Can sorrow have an end? It seems incredible to the reason but not to faith, and it is to faith that these promises are made. Oh! what a gathering shall be there, when brother shall meet sister; husband, wife; parents, their children. They will dwell together in love; jealousy and envy will be alike unknown. Selfishness will not disturb the common interest by seeking its own. Holiness will produce peace, and peace will fill every breast with unutterable joy. 3. Knowledge. II. THE CONDITIONS upon which the inheritance is secured. "By faith and patience." By faith. This is the key which opens the door of salvation to every one of us. "Without faith it is impossible to please God." We begin to live when we begin to believe. The first act of faith is like the first throb of the heart, or the first heaving of the lungs; it shows that there is life. But if faith unlock the door of salvation, it is not to be thrown away when once the door is opened. It is not merely a key; it is a principle which must abide with us for ever. You may have sharp lessons given to you in Providence—lessons that may make you speak sorrowfully of the vanity of all things here. But you will still be unweaned from the world, unless your faith attach itself to higher powers, and surrender itself to more pure and enduring fascinations. There are times when the invisible seems nearest to us; when earthly interests sink back and we feel as if we dwelt amid the light of eternal things. Faith gets a view of the hills from whence cometh all her help. She sees the redeemed walking in the heavenly city, and then she can bear all things and endure all things. But faith must have as her companion patience. This we must have, for as yet the blessing tarries. But if we have faith, we can well afford to have patience; for the end on which our heart is set is sure. How patient the mariner can be amid storm and calm, if he knows that he will reach the haven at last! How patient the sufferer on his sick-bed, if he knows that recovery will come at the end of all his pangs! And the Christian has a certainty before him. And if he hopes for it, then doth he with patience wait for it. Be not slothful then, but followers. Let the devil's servants sleep, but sleep not, ye sons of God! (*E. Mellor, D.D.*) *Following the holy dead*:—I. THEY HAVE REACHED A POSITION WORTH STRUGGLING AFTER. They "inherit the promises." 1. A priceless possession. 2. A permanent possession. II. THEY HAVE REACHED THEIR POSITION BY MEANS AVAILABLE TO ALL. 1. Faith. 2. Patience. 3. Diligence. (*Homilist.*) *The holy dead*:—I. They have reached A VERY ELEVATED POSITION. 1. Vast possessions. 2. Sublime fellowships. 3. Perfect enjoyments. 4. Celestial royalties. II. They have reached an elevated position THROUGH A CERTAIN COURSE OF SPIRITUAL CONDUCT. 1. Faith—in Christ as the All-wise, All-loving, Almighty Saviour. 2. Patience—implying (1) Sensibility; (2) Suffering; (3) Waiting. III. The course of spiritual conduct by which they reached their exalted position IS BINDING ON ALL SURVIVORS. 1. We must imitate them. 2. With earnestness. (*Ibid.*) *The footsteps of the beatified*:—I. THE INHERITANCE. 1. The vision of God. 2. Assimilation to God. 3. To be filled with all the fulness of God. 4. To dwell for ever with God. II. THE MEANS BY WHICH THE INHERITANCE IS REACHED. 1. The way of faith. 2. The way of patience. (1) In the service of God. (2) In suffering affliction. (3) Patience is called for, from the delay of the anticipated rest and reward. 3. The way of diligence. III. THE MOTIVES BY WHICH IMITATION OF THE EXAMPLE LEFT US IS ENFORCED. 1. The glory of their inheritance. 2. The triumphant issue of their conflict. 3. The present peace and happiness realised. (*P. Morrison.*) *The path to heaven*:—I. WE ARE NOT TO BE SLOTHFUL. A man needs much spiritual discrimination in deciding what is

sloth, for men's physical powers are so different, their mental powers also are so different, their temperaments are so different, their dispositions are so different, their habits and their circumstances. Some, for instance, are all activity, arising from physical causes: they cannot be quiet. Some need to be urged to everything in the path of duty, they are so tardy. Some, again, burn with zeal, and so work far beyond their strength. Others, with much physical power, can scarcely be goaded up to their strength, they lack energy so much. Again, some who are capable of very much, do very little, either for their own souls, or in the ways of God; and others, with very little strength, do very much, they are altogether so earnest in the ways of the Lord. The great outward characteristics of a healthy Christian are diligence and progress, and spiritual sloth may be said to be that in us which we allow to oppose these characteristics; which we consciously allow to work within us so as to oppose our diligence in the ways of the Lord and our progress in godliness. Now, this spiritual sloth shows itself in a great variety of ways, which it would be impossible to particularise with anything like minuteness. I can only bring before you some broad features. For instance, it will show itself in coldness and formality in religion. Sloth, again, will show itself in making no effort to avert occasions which, as we think, justify the omission of known duties. Let us put this familiarly. A man is hurried by some pressure of business; he has to start, perhaps, by a very early train. Instead of making arrangements that his own soul be not damaged, family or private prayer is postponed, because time is so short. There is no self-denial in rising earlier, and adapting time to the welfare of the soul; but the care of the soul is postponed to the urgency of temporal circumstances. Again, a man must be said to be guilty of spiritual sloth when he neglects what he conscientiously believes to be due time for private prayer and for the maintenance of spirituality in his own soul—when he neglects the study of the Word of God, with an express intention to bring its principles to bear upon his daily life. Now, a man may be extremely slothful in the study of the Word of God, who nevertheless may be intently occupied in the perusal of it from morning till night. A man may be slothful with regard to the improvement of his own soul, not reading for that purpose, but reading, perhaps, with a different object altogether: to get a grasp on a certain subject or on a particular doctrine. But we are bound to study the Word of God in order that a certain effect may be produced in our own souls, the result of which may be seen in our daily walk and conversation. Again, too, a man may be said to be a sluggard when he is unwilling to use those opportunities by which he might escape temptation, when he runs needlessly in the way of temptation. Or again, when the man sinks down lazily under difficulties, instead of endeavouring by trust in God to overcome them. Or again, when, in conflict about duty, the scale is turned on the side of the flesh and unbelief. I may say again, too, that the love of personal ease, and the love of money, and the love of pleasure will continually make a man slothful in spiritual matters. II. Let us turn now to WHAT WE OUGHT TO BE—"followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises." These are no doubt the patriarchs. By "inheriting the promises" he means a real participation of the grace and blessedness which is promised, in the gift of Christ, with eternal glory. These they entered upon as fully as any who have died since our Lord Jesus Christ has come in the flesh. Now, we are to be "followers of them." We are to be "followers of them" as they clung to the promise of the Word of God and obeyed it; we are to be "followers of them" as they followed Christ: not otherwise. Christ is alone our perfect Example; but these patriarchs whom we are taught to follow so far as faith and patience were in real exercise, stand out, in many points of their character, as beacons which warn us of the rocks upon which we ourselves may split. But we are to be followers of them also in their principles, and especially in respect to the principles which are laid down in this verse—their "faith and patience." The faith which saves the soul as well as conducts a man to the inheritance, is not that which has respect merely to the truth of God in general, but that which respects Christ in particular. The word which is translated "patience," perhaps, means rather longsuffering; the same idea which is conveyed in "the longsuffering of God," the longsuffering of God with provoking sinners. So here; the "patience" used in the text means rather that which is exercised under provocations; without having our desire to do good entirely turned aside by the hindrances we encounter, by the outward annoyances to which we are exposed, or by the inward corruptions which we feel working within, but patiently enduring to the end. Well, we shall never

patiently endure to the end if our hearts are not warmed with love to the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. No abstract system of truth will ever carry a man through such circumstances as these. (*J. W. Reeve, M.A.*) *The young called to follow departed saints*:—I. Let us attend to the view which the apostle gives of THE HAPPINESS OF DEPARTED SAINTS. 1. The apostle intimates his persuasion that they were existing in a state of happiness. The statement of the text is directly opposite to the notion that the soul sleeps with the body from death till the resurrection. 2. This representation intimates that the happiness of heaven has been revealed in various promises, and that these promises have been fulfilled to departed saints. Who can conceive the extent of their knowledge, the sweetness of their pleasures, the brightness of their glory, the ardour of their love, and the sublimity of their praise? Not a wish shall be left ungratified, and not a hope deferred. 3. The language of the text intimates that this felicity belongs to them as the children of God. Among men, the inheritance is not possessed by the child till the death of the father, but the life of our heavenly Father is the source and the security of this happiness; and in the world of immortality God shall be all in all. 4. The expression intimates that this felicity is entirely of grace. 5. They possess this felicity for ever. Their happiness is sure in itself and in their persuasion. They feel that they are safe for eternity. II. Let us now consider THE MEANS BY WHICH DEPARTED SAINTS ATTAINED THIS HAPPINESS. 1. The saints may be said to have attained this felicity by faith, because by it they believed the various assurances of the gospel respecting the reality and the blessedness of this state. It is by faith, also, that the righteousness of Christ is received, which entitles us to the possession of heaven. Faith also animates good men to the cultivation of those graces and to the performance of those actions which prepare for glory. I only add on this topic, that it is through faith that the saints are kept by Divine power to salvation. 2. But these saints attained this felicity through patience. It was by this principle that they endured the afflictions through which they had to pass in their way to the kingdom. Patience also kept them waiting for this felicity till the period which God had fixed for their admission to heaven. III. I shall now recommend, by a few arguments, THE IMITATION OF DEPARTED SAINTS. 1. Consider that it is the command of God that you should follow them (James v. 10; Heb. xii. 1, 2). 2. Consider, also, that their excellences were exhibited before you to awaken in your hearts admiration of holiness and to excite you to labour to resemble them. If you act differently from these examples, your guilt will be aggravated by their being set before you. 3. Consider, too, that this is the only way by which you can be joined with them in their happiness. Exhortations: 1. Let us lament that this admirable precept has been so much abused. Under pretence of obedience to this precept, invocation of departed saints has been practised—the house of silence has been ransacked, and the bones of martyrs and confessors brought out and placed on shrines as objects of worship, or used for the performance of miraculous cures. 2. Let us leave such an example of faith and patience, that it may be the duty of the Church to make us the objects of remembrance and imitation. 3. Let this felicity which you have been contemplating cherish heavenly-mindedness in you. Say not of this world, "This is my home." 4. I would exhort the unconverted to seek a title to this happiness, and preparation for it. (*H. Belfrage.*) *There is light beyond*:—"When in Madeira," writes a traveller, "I set off one morning to reach the summit of a mountain, to gaze upon the distant scene and enjoy the balmy air. I had a guide with me, and we had with difficulty ascended some two thousand feet, when a thick mist was seen descending upon us, quite obscuring the whole face of the heavens. I thought I had no hope left but at once to retrace our steps or be lost; but as the cloud came nearer, and darkness overshadowed us, my guide ran on before me, penetrating the mist, and calling to me, ever and anon, saying: 'Press on, master—press on—there's light beyond!' I did press on. In a few minutes the mist was passed, and I gazed upon a scene of transcendent beauty. All was light and cloudless above, and beneath was the almost level mist, concealing the world below me, and glistening in the rays of the sun like a field of untrodden snow. There was nothing at that moment between me and the heavens." Oh, ye over whom the clouds are gathering, or who have sat beneath the shadows, be not dismayed if they rise before you! Press on—there is light beyond. (*A. J. Symington.*) *True and false imitation*:—We are to imitate the apostles; but the imitation is to be, not in doing what they did, but in doing, like them, that which is fit in every case. A doctor is called to prescribe for a fever, and he gives

a cooling draught. His young Esculapius, coming after him, is called to prescribe for congestive chills. He says, "My teacher gave a cooling draught, and I will give a cooling draught." He imitates his teacher exactly, like a fool. And there is no greater fool than a man who imitates just what the apostles did, instead of imitating the principle on which they did it. It is the inside which is to be followed, and not the outside. One of my boys comes in crying, and says, "Father, I ran against a lamp-post and bruised my face." I say, "My son, do not run against lamp-posts." The next day he comes in again with another bruise on his face, and says, "I did not run against a lamp-post; I ran against a tree." "Well," I say, "do not run against lamp-posts nor trees." The next day he comes in, having had another whack, and says, "I did not run against a lamp-post nor a tree; I ran against an iron railing." He had obeyed me, and yet he was hurt. But the spirit of my order was that he should not run against anything that would hurt him. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Good example*:—As they who deck themselves have the looking-glass before their eyes; so they who go about any worthy thing must have the example of worthy men in mind, and do it in that manner that others may not scorn to make them their example. (*Cawdray.*) *Persistency needed*:—When Hannibal had defeated the Romans upon the plains of Italy, nothing was wanted but a determined spirit of perseverance to give him the possession of Rome itself. But, flushed with their victory, the Carthaginians spent the time in rioting on the spoils which should have been employed in pushing their conquests. In the meantime the Romans collected their whole strength, and soon proved more than a match for their terrible invaders. Our foe is wily and powerful, and we can only maintain our ground against him by pushing forward our conquests. (*G. Peck, D.D.*) *Example an educator*:—But what are the great educators of the world—those who insensibly mould us, or to which we resort for influence upon our own or others' lives? Are they moral maxims, wise sayings, proverbs, and "saws"? Is it not rather example? These axioms and maxims, proverbs and precepts, are but the instruments by which we clench the truths which example has driven into the mind. They are the labels which we affix to the illustrated lessons—the pictures and the models. At all events, we none of us begin to live by principles. These may come afterwards to be our sufficient instructors, but I much doubt whether one in a hundred men has ever adopted a principle of life until some signal example of it has convinced him of its worth. (*G. W. Conder.*)

Ver. 14. **Blessing I will bless thee.**—*God's abundant blessing*:—The blessing is amplified by doubling the phrase, thus, "blessing I will bless." 1. The certainty of a thing (Exod. iii. 7). 2. Diligence and pains in a thing. 3. Celerity and speed in doing a thing: as where David saith, "It is better that escaping I should escape" (1 Sam. xxvii. 1). 4. Abundance in giving a thing. 5. Success in doing a thing, or a thorough doing of it, or doing it to purpose: as where Saul saith to David, "Doing thou shalt do, and prevailing thou shalt prevail" (1 Sam. xxvi. 25). 6. Finishing and perfecting a thing: as where Solomon saith to God, "Building I have built Thee an house" (1 Kings viii. 13). His meaning is, that he had perfectly finished it. 7. A wonderful increase of a thing, as in this phrase, "Multiplying I will multiply." 8. Long continuance as, "Waiting, I have waited" (Psa. xl. 1), that is, I have long waited. This phrase, "Blessing I will bless," gives us to understand that blessings appertaining to Abraham and to his seed are abundant blessings. God is no way scanty to the faithful. God proportioneth His blessings according to His own greatness. He setteth forth His magnificence in blessing children of men. Who would not depend upon such a Lord for blessing? How ought we to enlarge our hearts, and open our mouths in blessing God for so blessing us! (*W. Gouge.*)

Ver. 15. **After he had patiently endured, he obtained.**—*Endurance and reward*:—I. ENDURANCE. 1. Trials. 2. The frailties of human nature. 3. The Christian contest. II. PATIENCE. 1. Gives calmness. 2. Bestows strength. 3. Takes away the bitterness of the endurance. III. REWARD. Not anything actually tangible—a promise. Not the thing itself, but the shadow of the thing. This is to try our faith. But is not the promise really as sure as the reality? It was to Abraham. For there is no uncertainty with God. (*Homilist.*) *Patience and the promises*:—Good old Spurstow says that some of the promises are like the almond tree—they blossom hastily in the very earliest spring; but, saith he, there are others that resemble the mulberry—they are very slow in putting forth their leaves. Then

what is a man to do, if he has a mulberry tree promise which is late in blossoming? Why, he is to wait till it does. If the vision tarry, wait for it till it come, and the appointed time shall surely bring it. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Time necessary for development*:—O impatient ones! Did the leaves say nothing to you as they murmured when you came hither to-day? They were not created this spring, but months ago; and the summer, just begun, will fashion others for another year. At the bottom of every leaf-stem is a cradle, and in it is an infant germ; and the winds will rock it, and the birds will sing to it all summer long; and next season it will unfold. So God is working for you, and carrying forward to the perfect development all the processes of your lives. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Patience*:—Patience is but lying to, and riding out the gale. (*Ibid.*) *Pray and stay*:—Pray and stay are two blessed monosyllables. (*J. Donne.*) *Patience*:—The husbandman is fain to have much patience, before he have his corn into the barn: with great toil he ploughs his ground, harrows it, casts his seed into the earth; he knows not whether he shall see it any more, but rests patiently in God's providence. The merchant is fain to have much patience, before he can mount up to any wealth: many a storm he endures on the sea, often in danger of his life. The clothier must have much patience, in buying of his wool, in making of it out, in selling of his cloth, he is fain to stand to many casualties; yet hope of a convenient gain in the end, makes him with cheerfulness to pass through them all. They do it for earthly things, that are here to-day and gone to-morrow; and shall not we be patient for heavenly treasures, for a kingdom that cannot be shaken, but is eternal in the heavens? Be patient a while: pass through poverty, sickness, malevolent tongues, and all other calamities in this life, that we may at length be taken up into that place, where we shall have need of patience no more; for all tears shall be wiped away from our eyes. (*W. Jones, D.D.*)

Ver. 16. **An oath . . . the end of all strife.**—*The lawfulness and obligation of oaths*:—I. FOR THE NATURE OF AN OATH, AND THE KINDS OF IT. An oath is an invocation of God, or an appeal to Him as a witness of the truth of what we say. So that an oath is a sacred thing, as being an act of religion and an invocation of the name of God; and this, whether the name of God be expressly mentioned in it or not. There are two sorts of oaths, assertory and promissory. An assertory oath is when a man affirms or denies, upon oath, a matter of fact, past or present: when he swears that a thing was, or is so, or not so. A promissory oath is a promise confirmed by an oath, which always respects something that is future; and if the promise be made directly and immediately to God, then it is called a vow; if to men, an oath. II. THE GREAT USE AND EVEN NECESSITY OF OATHS, IN MANY CASES, WHICH IS SO GREAT, THAT HUMAN SOCIETY CAN VERY HARDLY, IF AT ALL, SUBSIST LONG WITHOUT THEM. Government would many times be very insecure, and for the faithful discharge of offices of great trust, in which the welfare of the public is nearly concerned, it is not possible to find any security equal to that of an oath; because the obligation of that reacheth to the most hidden practices of men, and takes hold of them, in many cases, where the penalty of no human law can have any awe or force upon them; and especially it is the "best means of ending controversies." And where men's estates or lives are concerned, no evidence, but what is assured by an oath, will be thought sufficient to decide the matter, so as to give full and general satisfaction to mankind. III. THE LAWFULNESS OF OATHS, WHERE THEY ARE NECESSARY. 1. I shall prove the lawfulness of oaths from the authority of this text, and the reasons plainly contained, or strongly implied in it.—Because the apostle doth not only speak of the use of oaths among men, without any manner of reproof, but as a commendable custom, and in many cases necessary for the confirmation of doubtful matters, and in order to the final decision of controversies and differences among men. 2. The insufficiency of the grounds of the contrary opinion, whether from reason or from Scripture. (1) From reason. They say the necessity of an oath is occasioned by the want of fidelity among men; and that every man ought to demean himself with that integrity as may give credit to his word; and then oaths will be needless. This pretence will be fully answered, if we consider these two things. (*a*) That in matters of great importance, no other obligation besides that of an oath hath been thought sufficient amongst the best and wisest of men, to assert their fidelity to one another. (*b*) This reason, which is alleged against oaths among men, is much stronger against God's confirming His promises to us by an oath. For He, who is truth itself, is surely of all other most to be credited upon His bare word, and His oath needless to give confirmation to it;

and yet He condescends to add His oath to His word; and therefore that reason is evidently of no force. (2) From Scripture. Our Saviour seems altogether to forbid swearing in any case (Matt. v. 33, 34). (*a*) That several circumstances of these words of our Saviour do manifestly show that they ought to be interpreted in a limited sense, as only forbidding swearing in common conversation; needless and heedless oaths, and in general all voluntary swearing, unless upon some weighty cause, in which the glory of God and the good of the souls of men is concerned. For that in such cases a voluntary oath may be lawful, I am induced to believe from the example of St. Paul, who useth it more than once upon such occasions. (*b*) It is very considerable to the explaining of this prohibition, that there are like general expressions in other Jewish authors concerning this very matter, which yet must of necessity be thus limited:—Maimonides, from the ancient rabbies, gives this rule, that "it is best not to swear at all": and Philo useth almost the same words. And Rabbi Jonathan comes very near our Saviour's expression when he says, "The just man will not swear at all; not so much as by the common names of God, nor by His attributes, nor by His works, as by heaven, or the angels, or by the law." Now it is not imaginable that these learned Jews should condemn oaths in all cases, when the law of Moses did in many cases expressly require them. And therefore they are to be understood of voluntary oaths in ordinary conversation. (*c*) This prohibition of our Saviour's cannot be understood to forbid all oaths, without a plain contradiction to the undoubted practice of the primitive Christians and of the apostles, and even of our Lord Himself. Origen and Tertullian tell us that the Christians refused to swear by the emperor's genius; not because it was an oath, but because they thought it to be idolatrous. But the same Tertullian says that the Christians were willing to swear "by the health and safety of the emperor." Athanasius being accused to Constantius, purged himself by oath, and desired that his accuser might be put to his oath, "by calling the truth to witness: by which form," says he, "we Christians are wont to swear." But, which is more than this, St. Paul, upon weighty occasions, does several times in his epistle call God to witness for the truth of what he says; which is the very formality of an oath (Rom. i. 9; 2 Cor. i. 18, 23; Gal. i. 20; Phil. i. 8; 2 Thess. ii. 5). These are all unquestionable oaths; which we cannot imagine St. Paul would have used had they been directly contrary to our Saviour's law. And whereas some defend this upon account of his extraordinary inspiration, I cannot possibly see how this mends the matter. For certainly it is very inconvenient to say that they who were to teach the precepts of Christ to others, did themselves break them by inspiration. But I go yet farther, and shall urge an example beyond all exception. Our Saviour Himself (who surely would not be the first example of breaking His own laws) did not refuse to answer upon oath, being called thereto at His trial. So we find Matt. xxvi. 60. IV. THE SACRED OBLIGATION OF AN OATH: BECAUSE IT IS A SOLEMN APPEAL TO GOD AS A WITNESS OF THE TRUTH OF WHAT WE SAY: to God, I say, from whose piercing and all-seeing eye, from whose perfect knowledge, nothing is or can be hid; so that there is not a thought in our heart but He sees it, nor a word in our tongue, but He discerns the truth or falsehood of it. Whenever we swear, we appeal to His knowledge, and refer ourselves to His just judgment, who is the powerful patron and protector of right, and the almighty judge and avenger of all falsehood and unrighteousness. So that it is not possible for men to lay a more sacred and solemn obligation upon their consciences than by the religion of an oath. (*Abp. Tillotson.*)

Vers. 17-20. **Heirs of promise.**—*Heirs of promise*:—I. CONSIDER WHEREIN THE PORTION OF BELIEVERS CONSISTS: THEY ARE "HEIRS OF PROMISE." Though they have little in possession, they have much in prospect; if not rich in enjoyment, they are rich in faith and hope. Amongst men, promises are often of little worth; but all the promises of God are yea and amen in Christ Jesus, unto the glory of God by us. 1. With regard to their subject matter, they include all things pertaining both to life and godliness; ensuring support in this world, and glory in the world to come. 2. There are promises made to the church in general, and others to individual believers; and both are the portion of the saints. Of the former it is said, "God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved; God shall help her, and that right early." Promises also are made to individuals, for their comfort and encouragement, and which are applicable to all the saints. "He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." "My grace is sufficient for thee; My strength is made perfect in weakness." "Fear not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I

am thy God." "As thy day is, so shall thy strength be." 3. The promises of God are either absolute or conditional. Some of the promises are absolute, not suspended on any act or endeavour of ours, or on any previous qualification; and such are all those which relate to the first bestowment of grace. "For who maketh thee to differ; and what hast thou that thou hast not received? It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth; but of God that showeth mercy." But there are promises conditional to grace received, and which are made only to those who believe. "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble. If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." 4. The Divine promises have various degrees of accomplishment. Some have already been fulfilled, either in whole or in part; as in the case with those relating to the coming of Christ, the establishment of His kingdom, and the universal spread of the gospel. Some are daily fulfilling, and others are yet to be fulfilled. II. WHO ARE THE "HEIRS" OF PROMISE, AND WHAT CHARACTER DO THEY BEAR? 1. They may be known by their perception of the promises themselves. They view them not only more distinctly and clearly, but in a light very different from that in which other persons either do or can consider them. They are represented as seeing them afar off, and being persuaded of them. Thus they see the suitableness and excellency of the promises, that they are the fruit of free and unmerited love, and are adapted to all cases and circumstances. As David saw the commandments, so they see the promises to be exceeding broad. 2. The heirs of promise may be known by the powerful application of the promises to their own hearts. 3. They may be known by the regard they bear towards them, and the desire they feel for their accomplishment. The promises contain all their salvation, and all their desire; they meditate therein both day and night, and view them with a satisfaction similar to that of a man who looks over the title-deeds of an estate which secures to him the possession of a large inheritance. 4. The practical effects which the promises produce in us are another means of showing who are the proper heirs; for "every man that hath this hope in Him, purifieth himself, even as Christ is pure." Improvement—1. If not heirs of the promise, what are we? Heirs of the curse—of that curse which cuts off on every side, and will one day enter into our bowels like water, and like oil into our bones. 2. If heirs of the promises, we are interested in all the blessings contained in them, relating both to this world and that which is to come. If the promises are ours, all things are ours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the words, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are ours, and we are Christ's and Christ is God's. 3. If heirs of the promises, we are heirs of God; all that He is and has, that is communicable, is made over to us in a way of covenanted mercy. 4. Being heirs of God, we are also joint heirs with Christ Jesus, to whom the birth-right blessing properly belongs. (*B. Beddome, M.A.*) *God's faithfulness to His promises*:—The Bible is a book of promises, as well as of revelations, or Divine statements. These promises are our heritage. Faith in the promises makes the future present, and the heirship possession. It is thus "the substance of things hoped for." Shall the promises fail? Is God unfaithful? Shall a Queen Elizabeth value her promise, as when she gave the first vacancy to one unfit? Shall a Chatham have a wall rebuilt, rather than seem to break a promise to his son? Shall a Napier refuse an invitation that he may keep a promise to a poor girl? And shall God refuse to honour drafts made on His promises in the name of His Son? Shall the promises fail? Is there inability or unwillingness to perform? (*John Gill.*) **The immutability of His counsel.**—*God's counsel in relation to His people*:—I. THAT THEIR SALVATION FROM SIN SHALL BE A COMPLETE AND PERFECT SALVATION. This is the avowed design of—1. All His purposes (Eph. i. 4; 2 Tim. i. 9; 1 Cor. i. 2; Heb. iii. 1; 1 Pet. i. 2; Rom. viii. 29; Eph. ii. 10). 2. All His promises (Isa. i. 18; Jer. xxxi. 31–34; Ezek. xi. 19, 20; 2 Cor. vii. 1; 2 Pet. i. 4; 1 John i. 9). 3. The earthly mission of His Son (Matt. i. 21; John i. 29; Col. i. 21–22; Tit. ii. 11–14; 1 John i. 7; Heb. ix. 26). 4. The constant operations of His Spirit (Eph. v. 9; 2 Thess. ii. 13). 5. The heaven which He has prepared for their eternal residence. Only the pure in heart shall see God. "Without holiness," &c. II. THAT THEIR COMPLETE AND PERFECT SALVATION FROM SIN SHALL BE EFFECTED BY THEIR OWN PERSEVERANCE. 1. What is the perseverance of the saints? (1) An increasing acquaintance with God's word, implying diligent examination, thoughtful investigation, careful comparison of part with part, and discriminating deductions from the whole. (2) An increasing confidence in God's promises; implying intelligent trust in Him for pardon of sin, sanctification of spirit for seasonable strength in temptation, support

in trouble, and victory in death. (3) An increasing conformity to the image of Christ; implying the embodiment of Christianity in our lives, making our practice agree with our profession, yielding to Christian impulses, cherishing Christian affections, displaying Christian tempers, speaking Christian words, practising Christian actions. 2. The proposition that God secures the complete salvation of His people by their own perseverance, is confirmed by—(1) The injunctions of Scripture. (2) The nature of the case. Can you teach a child to walk without its constant effort and perseverance? (3) The example of saints (Phil. iii. 13, 14). III. THAT THEIR PERSEVERANCE SHALL BE SECURED BY GOD'S OWN BLESSING. 1. It is God's counsel that the salvation of His people shall be a complete and perfect salvation. 2. It is also God's counsel that this shall be secured by their own perseverance. 3. It is also God's counsel that their perseverance shall be secured by His own blessing. (*B. Preece.*) **Confirmed it by an oath.**—*The oath of God:*—The Divine oath is one of the mysteries of revelation. To one duly considering the majesty of God, and His relation to His creatures, nothing can be well more awful than His swearing to us, and swearing by Himself. I. THE MEANING OF THE DIVINE OATH AND ITS GRACIOUSNESS FAIL TO BE CONSIDERED. 1. The Divine oath is represented as analogous to an oath among men, and yet different from it. The design in both is the same; it is for confirmation, whether of a fact or of a promise; and so for the ending of all strife and doubt (vers. 16, 17). There is a difference, however, between the two oaths, arising out of the difference between the parties swearing. Men swear by the greater (ver. 16). But this God cannot do; and therefore He swears by Himself (ver. 17). Still the appeal in both cases is virtually the same. What are the two immutable things which the oath of God, swearing by Himself, brings upon the field! What can they be but the Divine word and the Divine name or nature? Take first the Divine word. That is an immutable thing. The word or promise of God is always sure and trustworthy. But take in now the second of the two immutable things wherein it is impossible for God to lie; His name, His character, His nature, His being and continuing to be such as He is. What new security is thus given? Is it not in substance this:—That God discovers to us a ground or reason of what He designs to do farther back than the mere sovereign and discretionary *fiat* of His absolute will; deeply fixed and rooted in the very essence of His being? Is it not that He puts the certainty of that to which He swears, not only on the ground of His having intimated it beforehand, but on the ground of a stronger necessity, in the very nature of things, and in His own nature; lying far back and far down, in His being God, and being the God He is? The thing is to be so, not merely because God has said it shall be so, but also because it cannot but be so, God continuing to be, and to be the God He is. This is what, in swearing by Himself, He means to tell us. 2. The graciousness of the oath is as wonderful as its meaning. It is indeed more so. Even among men; if the heart is true, and the eye, even turned on empty space, beams keen with honour; there is a certain feeling of repugnance to being called to swear. And undoubtedly no one who possesses right feeling, as regards the sacredness of a spoken word, will volunteer an oath. It is on this principle that our Lord gives forth His utterance against not only false but promiscuous swearing, It is of evil that this practice of swearing, even when most right and fitting, cometh among men on earth; of the evil of men's deceitfulness, their proneness to prevaricate and lie. It is at the best a necessary evil. And is it anything else when it is God who swears from heaven? Of that oath also, of that oath pre-eminently, may it not be said that it cometh of evil? Not indeed of the evil of anything false or suspicious on the part of Him who swears; but of the evil heart of unbelief in those to whom He swears. II. THE USES TO WHICH IT IS APPLIED IN SCRIPTURE MAY SERVE STILL FARTHER TO ILLUSTRATE THE REAL IMPORT AND THE GRACIOUSNESS OF THE OATH. 1. We have an instance of the Divine oath in connection with the mediatorial priesthood of Christ. And what is very seasonable and providential, we have an ample inspired explanation of it, as viewed in that connection. I refer to the oracle in Psa. cx. 4, as expounded in Heb. vii. The priesthood of Christ is no mere arbitrary, discretionary ordinance, which, as being expedient to-day, God may institute by His sovereign authority in His word or law, and which, by the same sovereign authority, He may supersede to-morrow, as no longer needed and no longer useful. No; it is an office having its deep root in the very nature, the essential glory and perfection, of God Himself. It is therefore unchangeable, not merely as God's word, but as His very being, is unchangeable. The word of God is indeed immutable, under the conditions attached to it when it is uttered. But it may be, according to these conditions, the basis of what

is merely temporary, insufficient, and provisional. What is based on the absolute immutable nature of God must necessarily be both permanent and perfect. 2. Founded on this primary use, if I may so speak, of the Divine oath, as bearing on the constitution of the mediatorial economy in the person and work of the great High Priest, there are other instances of its use in Scripture, connected with the carrying out of that economy, to which it may be interesting and useful to advert. (1) The Divine oath may be viewed in its bearing on the gospel call. In that connection it occurs often virtually; and expressly it occurs in this at least among other passages: Ezek. xxxiii. 11. Thus viewed, the oath of God is peculiarly significant. It places the assurance which you may have, all of you, any of you, of God's perfect willingness, His earnest longing, to receive you back to Himself, on a footing such as, if you would but consider it, must make you feel that you dare not doubt, and cannot withstand, His affectionate importunity. (2) The oath of God stands connected with the doom of unbelief. This is one of the most impressive and awful of all its uses. It is indeed a terrible thought. For it means that God executes His threatened judgments, not because He delights in the infliction of evil; nor even because He is determined to verify His word; but because, being such as He is, even He has no alternative! 3. The Divine oath is all-important in its bearing on the security of the believer's hope. That indeed is its immediate application here. The question of your progress and perseverance to the end has been raised; by the reproof and exhortation and warning contained in the previous passage. Your only safety against backsliding and apostasy lies, as you are told, in getting out of the mere elements of the gospel viewed as a method of personal relief, and passing on to the perfection of insight and sympathy, as regards the higher aspects and bearings of it, in relation to the glorious name of God. But, alas! one may say, what confidence can I ever have in that line? The perfection to which I am to go on, alas! how distant. The sin into which I may relapse, alas! how near. What is to give me confidence? Is it my own diligence in following, not slothfully, the saints that have gone before? Or is it my own carefulness to depart from the iniquity that dogs my steps behind? No. Both of these conditions are indispensable, but neither of them is to be relied on as giving assurance. But thou art in the hands of a God whose name, and nature, and character thou knowest. And, to put an end to all debate in thy heart, He swears by Himself to thee. He points to His essential perfection. He bids thee consider, not only what He says, but what He is; what thou in Christ hast seen and found Him to be. And He tells thee that, as surely as He is what He is, as surely as He liveth, so surely He pledges Himself to thee, and must keep faith with thee. 4. One other application of the Divine oath I can but touch upon; it is the connection in which it stands with the ultimate triumph of the Lord's Church and cause in the world (Isa. xlv. 22, 23). The purpose of God to fill the earth with the knowledge of Himself and of His glory is a purpose founded, not upon His mere sovereign word, but upon His essential nature. It is no arbitrary decree, but an absolute necessity of His very being, which requires that the light which has come into the world shall ultimately dispel the world's darkness, and that the kingdom which the God of heaven has set up in the earth shall in the end make all other kingdoms its own. The time may seem long; the struggle arduous and doubtful. But as surely as God continues to be the God He is; as surely as the Lord liveth; so surely shall His gospel make way among the nations, till all the earth is filled with His glory. (*R. S. Candlish, D.D.*) **The end of God's oath.**—God doth not give it to make His word or promise sure and steadfast, but to give assurance and security to us of their accomplishment. Every word of God is sure and certain truth itself, because it is His; and He might justly require of us the belief of it, without any further attestation. But yet, knowing what great objections Satan and our own unbelieving hearts will raise against His promises, at least as to our own concern in them, to confirm our minds, and to take away all pretences of unbelief, He interposes His oath in this matter. What can remain of distrust in such a case? If there be a matter in doubt between men, and an oath be interposed in the confirmation of that which is called in question, it is to them, as the apostle tells us, an end of all strife (Heb. vi. 16). How much more ought it to be so on the part of God, when His oath is engaged? And the apostle declares this end of His oath, it is to show the immutability of His counsel (Heb. vi. 17). His counsel was declared before in the promise; but now some doubt or strife may arise, whether, on one occasion or other, God may not change His counsels; or whether He hath not charged it with such conditions as to render it useless to us. In what case soever it be, to remove all doubts

and suspicions of this nature, God adds His oath, manifesting the unquestionable immutability of His counsel and promises. What therefore is thus confirmed, is ascertained to the height of what anything is capable of. And not to believe it is the height of impiety. (*John Owen, D.D.*) **Two immutable things.**—*Immutable things:*—Now what are those "two immutable things" which cannot fail? Some have seen in them the two covenants—the covenant which God made with Abraham; and the covenant which God made with Christ. Some have understood it to mean, first, the promise of the fact made to the patriarchs; and then the great fulfilment of that promise revealed in the gospel. But it appears to me far better, and much more accordant with the whole line of thought, to take it as meaning, first, the nature and the character of God; and then God's "oath," or covenant, whereby He has made over that character to man, and pledged Himself to our salvation. Here, then, every believer finds his double rest. First, I have the being of God—all faithfulness, all love. That God is my Father. I am dearer to Him than I am to myself. It is His glory and His necessity to be kind to me. In that great "I AM" I find my argument. He revolves within Himself. And it is for His own glory that His own creature should be happy, holy, useful here; and with Him and like Him for ever. But, after all, everything else—the Bible, redemption itself, is only a platform to exhibit the character of God. But then, as if this were not enough, I have all those attributes, and all that nature, made over to me, as my own, in solemn compact, sealed with blood. His justice is pledged to accept my Substitute, and to release me. His word is committed to it, that, if I am Christ's, however unworthy I be, I shall be "accepted in the Beloved" One. And that nature and that oath are my "two immutable things." Can the eternal Jehovah change? Can God's truth fail? Can He deny Himself? Has not He "made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure?" So, as the "anchor" has its two cables, my hidden "hope" has its two strong confirmations. And nothing can divide them. It lies in its own adamantine, indissoluble power. And its twofold power is one that never can be broken. Therefore, well did St. Paul say, "Sure and stedfast." "Sure," in God's being; "stedfast," in God's covenant; and in both it is just what a poor, wretched sinner wants, in such a world as this—"a strong consolation to those who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before them." They say the ship "always drops to her anchor." So, by secret influences, the soul, which is held to Jesus, will continually, and almost insensibly, be getting nearer and nearer to Him every moment; nearer in converse; nearer in likeness; nearer in love. Nor will it rest till it is as near Him now as the circumstances of this present life allow—looking for the time when there shall be no hindrances; and we shall be near Him, and one with Him for ever. But, though the "anchor" be cast—and though the holdings be sure—and though the ship "drops to her anchor"—still the winds beat on, the waves may roll, and the vessel toss. Only, so long as the chain holds, she can never break off; and she can never become a castaway. There is no warrant, brethren, you are in Christ, that, therefore, you shall not be buffeted by storms; or that you should not feel the roughnesses of this world's troubles. Rather because you are bound to Him, you may strain the more, that you may ride in perfect peace. No fear that that "anchor" may slip. There may be trials, but there is no danger; distress, but not despair; and welcome even the tempest, in its fury, if it prove the firmness of the tenure by which you are held, and the goodness by which you are encouraged. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *The immutable grounds of a believer's confidence:*—I. God's single word is an immutable ground; having this, you have enough. And so it will appear if you consider the power and the certainty of it. 1. The power of God's word. His word is nothing else but the declaration of His powerful will; the force of it was discovered in creating the world. God created all things by His word (Psa. xxxiii. 9). All the works of God subsist by the force of His word (Heb. i. 3). Therefore if you have this immutable ground, if God hath deposited and plighted His word, you have enough to establish strong consolation, for it is powerful to all purposes whatsoever. 2. Consider the certainty of it. When the word is gone out of God's mouth it shall not be recalled. The Lord prizeth His faithfulness above all things. The Scripture must be fulfilled whatever inconveniences come of it. Mark the whole course of providence, and you will find that God is very tender of His word; He valueth it above all His works (Luke xxi. 33). II. The main thing is, what ground of consolation we have in God's oath. 1. For the reasons why God should give this oath. (1) To show us the certainty of our privileges in Christ. (2) God

sweareth, as for the confirmation of His grace in Christ, and to show the certainty of our privileges in Christ, so for the commendation and excellency of them. An oath is not lawful but in weighty matters; it must be taken in judgment, as well as in righteousness and truth (Jer. iv. 2). 2. The advantages we have by God's oath. What greater assurance can we have? (1) Consider the sacredness of an oath in general. Perjured persons are the scorn of men, and they have forfeited the privilege of humanity. Well, then, if the oath of man be so sacred and valuable, how much more is the oath of God? It is impossible for God to lie. He can do all things which argue power, but nothing which argueth impotency and weakness, for this were to deny Himself. (2) This oath is so sacred, because the name of God is invoked in it. It is the name of God that giveth credit to all other oaths. (3) This advantage faith hath by God's oath, it is a pledge of His love and goodwill, that He would condescend so far to give us His oath for our assurance and satisfaction. (4) God's oath is an argument that He delighteth in our comfort and assurance. He would deliver us not only from hurt, but from fear. (5) Consider the special nature of God's oath. God appeals to the reverence and confidence we put in His holiness, excellency, and power; nay, and there is somewhat that answers the imprecation and execration, and all His excellency is laid at pawn, and exposed, as it were, to forfeiture, if He doth not make good His word. Application:—1. We see the greatness of the condescension of God. 2. What reason we have to bind ourselves to God. There was no need on God's part why God should bind Himself to us, but great need on our part why we should bind ourselves to God. We start aside like a deceitful bow, and therefore we should solemnly bind ourselves to God (Psa. cxix. 106). 3. You see the great wrong you do to God in giving so little credit to His promises. You make God a liar (1 John v. 10). 4. To press us to improve these two immutable grounds, that we may grow up into a greater certainty. His saying is as immutable as His swearing; God's word is valuable enough of itself, but only because we count an oath more sacred. God hath added it over and above. Men are slight in speech, but serious in an oath. Well, then, since you have a double holdfast on God, make use of it in prayer and in meditation; in prayer, when you speak to God; in meditation, when you discourse with yourselves. (*T. Manton, D.D.*) **Impossible for God to lie.**—*Inferences from the impossibility of God to lie*:—1. The impossibility of God to lie is a great aggravation of the heinousness of unbelief. For he that believeth not God, hath made Him a liar (1 John v. 10), which is in effect to make God no God. 2. This is a strong motive to believe: a greater cannot be given; for as there is no will, so neither power in God to lie. 3. This should make ministers who speak in God's name to be sure of the truth of that which they deliver for God's word, else they make God a liar, for their word is taken for God's (Col. ii. 13). They are God's ambassadors. An ambassador's failing is counted his master's failing. 4. Though we cannot attain to such a high pitch of truth, yet every one ought to endeavour to be like God herein, namely, in avoiding lying. Lying is a sin unbeseeming any man: but most unbeseeming a professor of the true religion. General arguments against lying are these:—1. Lying is condemned by those who were led by no other light than the light of nature: as philosophers, orators, poets. 2. Every man's conscience condemns lying. If one be not impudent, he will blush when he tells a lie; and infinite shifts are ordinarily made to cloak a lie, which show that he is ashamed thereof, and that his conscience checketh him for it. 3. No man can endure to be accounted a liar. 4. Lying overthrows all society. 5. A man taken tripping herein will be suspected in all his words and actions. He that is not true in his words can hardly be thought to deal honestly in his deeds. Arguments against lying in professors of the Christian religion are these:—1. Lying is expressly forbidden in God's word (Lev. xix. 11; Eph. iv. 25; Col. iii. 9). 2. It is against knowledge and conscience. 3. It is a filthy rag of the old man, and one of the most disgraceful; and therefore first set down in the particular exemplification of those filthy rags (Eph. iv. 22-25). 4. It is most directly opposite to God, who is Truth itself, and concerning whom we heard that it was impossible that He should lie. 5. Nothing makes men more like the devil, "for he is a liar and the father thereof" (John viii. 44). A lying spirit is a diabolical spirit. 6. As a lie is hateful to God, so it makes the practisers thereof abominable (Prov. vi. 16, 17; xii. 22). 7. Lying causeth heavy vengeance. In general, it is said, the Lord will destroy them that speak lies (Psa. v. 6). Memorable was the judgment on Gehazi (2 Kings v. 27). And on Ananias and Sapphira (Acts v. 5-10). (*W. Gouge.*) **Strong consolation.**—*Strong consolation*:—I. Who are THE FAVOURED PEOPLE OF GOD. 1.

Observe, then, that the favoured children of God are first described as "the heirs of promise," by which at once most solemnly are excluded all those who are relying upon their own merits. Dost thou confess that thou hast nothing of thine own wherein to boast, and dost thou hope alone in the mercy of God in Christ Jesus? Then let me hope thou art one of the heirs of promise. "Heirs of promise," again. Then this excludes those who are heirs according to their own will, who scoff at the mighty work of grace, and believe that their own free choice has saved them. One more thought: "Heirs of promise," then heirs, not according to the power of the flesh, but according to the energy of grace. 2. A plainer description of the favoured people follows in the eighteenth verse. "Who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." Then all the people of God were once in danger. II. Let us look to the ways and dealings of OUR CONDESCENDING GOD to these favoured people. Notice each word, "God willing." Whenever God does anything in a way of grace, He does it as we say *con amore*, He does it in the highest sense willingly. It is not the will of God that sinners should perish; but when He reveals Himself to His saints, He doeth it with a sacred alacrity, a Divine cheerfulness. It is an occupation divinely suitable to His generous nature. "Willing more abundantly." Do notice that expression. It has in the Greek the sense of more than is necessary, and is secretly meant to answer the objection concerning the Lord's taking an oath. God is willing to reveal Himself to His people, and He is willing to do that "more abundantly," up to the measure of their need. He would let them know that His counsel is immutable, and He would not only give them enough evidence to prove it, He would give them overwhelming evidence, evidence more than would be or could be possibly required by the case itself, so that their unbelief may have no chance to live, and their faith may be of the strongest kind. The word "to show" is remarkable; it is the very word used in the Greek when our Lord showed His disciples His hands and His side, as if the word would say that God would lay bare the immutability of His nature, would as it were strip His eternal purposes, and let His people look upon them, handle them, and see their reality, their truth and certainty. "God is willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel." Oftentimes a man will not give further assurance of the truth of what he states, when he believes he has already given assurance enough. Observe with wonder that our ever gracious God never standeth on His dignity in this style at all, but He looketh not so much at the dignity of His own person as at the weakness of His people, and therefore being willing more abundantly to show unto His poor, feeble, trembling people the immutability of His counsel, He not only gives one promise, but he adds another and another and another, till to count the promises were almost as difficult as to count the stars or number the sands on the sea shore. Yea, and when He has done all this, He comes in with a master clap to crown it all, and confirms every promise by an oath, that by not one immutable thing, but by two, the promise and the oath, in both of which it is impossible for Jehovah to lie, His people might never dare to doubt again, but might have strong consolation. 1. The first immutable thing upon which our faith is to stay itself, is the promise. Oh, what consolation is this, then, our refuge is secure, our confidence is firm! Look ye here, ye people of God. This promise of God was not made in a hurry. A man makes a promise on a sudden, and he cannot keep it afterwards; but through the everlasting ages the promise was on Jehovah's heart before He spoke it with His lips. Men sometimes make promises that they cannot fulfil, they are in circumstances which do not permit them. But can God ever be in a difficulty? Men sometimes make promises which it would be unwise to keep, and perhaps it is better to break them; but the Lord cannot be unwise, His is infinite wisdom as well as infinite strength. The promise, then, because of its wisdom, will surely stand. Beside, the promise He has made is to His own honour. It redounds to His glory to show mercy to the unworthy. Moreover, His promise is made to His own Son, and His love to Him is interwoven with His promise. He could not break His word to one of us without breaking it to His dear Son, since we are in Him, and trust in Him. The Divine promise must stand good. 2. But it is added that God, in order to prevent our unbelief effectually, has taken an oath. God has with an oath sworn by Himself that all the heirs of promise shall be blessed for ever, saying, "Surely blessing, I will bless thee." Now, who among us dare doubt this? Where is the hardy sinner who dares come forward and say, "I impugn the oath of God"? III. But I must note THE STRONG CONSOLATION WHICH FLOWS OUT OF ALL THIS. There is strong consolation, says the text, for the heirs of grace, which implies that the children of God must

expect to have trouble. All the followers of the great Cross-bearer are cross-bearers too; but then there is the strong consolation for the strong tribulation. What is strong consolation? 1. I think strong consolation is that which does not depend upon bodily health. What a cowardly old enemy the devil is! When we are vigorous in body, it is very seldom that he will tempt us to doubt and fear, but if we have been racked with hours of pain and sleepless nights, and are getting to feel faint and weary, then he comes in with his horrible insinuations: "God will forsake you. His promise will fail!" He is vile enough to put his black paws on the brightest truth in the Bible, ay, upon even the very existence of God Himself, and turn the boldest believer into the most terrible doubter, so that we seem to have gone bodily over to the army of Satan, and to be doubting every good thing that is in the Word of God. Strong consolation, even at such times, enables us still to rejoice in the Lord though every nerve should twinge, and every bone should seem melted with pain. 2. Strong consolation is that which is not dependent upon the excitement of public services and Christian fellowship. We feel very happy on a Sunday here when we almost sing ourselves away to everlasting bliss, and when the sweet name of Jesus is like ointment poured forth, so that the virgins love it. But when you are in colder regions, how is it? Perhaps you are called to emigrate, or go into the country to a barren ministry where there is nothing to feed the soul. Ah, then, if you have not got good ground for your soul to grow in, what will ye do? 3. The strong consolation which God gives His people is such as no mere reasoning can shake. You might as well reason me out of the toothache, or convince me that I do not exist, as reason me out of my consciousness that I love Christ, and that I am saved in Him. They cannot touch the essentials of vital godliness, and this is a strong consolation which reasoning no more woundeth than men come at leviathan with spears and swords, for he laugheth at them, and accounteth their spears as rotten wood. 4. Strong consolation, again, because it will bear up under conscience, and that is a harder pressure than mere reasoning can ever bring. 5. Ay, and we can deal with Satan with his horrible insinuations and blasphemies, and still can say, "I will trust in the Lord and not be afraid." To rejoice then, and say, "Though these things be not with me as I would have them, yet hath He made with me an everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure"; this is strong consolation. 6. And it will be proved to be so by and by with some of us, when we shall be in the solemn article of death. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Consolation the fruit of assurance:—That the fruit of this certainty and assurance which we have by God's Word and oath is strong consolation. I. WHAT IS MEANT BY STRONG CONSOLATION? Consolation. There are three words by which the fruits of assurance are expressed, which imply so many degrees of it. There is peace, comfort, and joy. 1. Peace. That we have as a fruit of justification (Rom. v. 1). 2. Then there is consolation which notes an habitual persuasion of God's love; there is an habitual serenity and cheerfulness of mind. Though there be not high tides of comfort, there is support, though not ravishment. It is called "everlasting consolation" (2 Thess. ii. 16, 17). 3. Then there is joy, or an high and sensible comfort (Rom. xv. 13). The next term is "strong consolation." Why is it so called? 1. It is called so either in opposition to worldly comforts, which are weak and vanishing 2. Or else it is called "strong consolation" in comparison with itself, with respect to less or more imperfect degrees of comfort. There is a latitude in comfort, some have more and some less; some have only weak glimmerings and drops, others have strong consolation, "joy unspeakable, and full of glory" (1 Pet. i. 8). Now a Christian should aim at the highest degree; the stronger your consolation, the better is Christ pleased with it (John xv. 11). 3. It may likewise be called strong in regard of its effects. (1) It marreth carnal joy, it puts the soul quite out of taste with other things. Men used acorns till they found out the use of bread. (2) It is stronger than the evil which it opposeth; it swalloweth up all our sorrows, whatever they be. II. HOW THIS STRONG CONSOLATION ARISETH FROM ASSURANCE AND CERTAINTY. To establish joy and comfort, two things are necessary—excellency and propriety. The thing in which I rejoice, it must be good, and it must be mine. Suitably here in the text there is an assurance of excellent privileges; and then there is a qualification annexed that we may understand our own interest. God by His oath assures us of excellent privileges in Christ, and that is a ground of strong consolation. Then He requireth a duty of us, that we fly for refuge to take hold of the hope set before us. 1. For the excellency of our privileges. You know that which will minister solid comfort to the soul it had need be excellent. A small matter, though never so sure, will not

occasion a strong consolation; the joy is according to the object. Now, whether a Christian look backward or forward, there is matter of rejoicing to the heirs of promise. Backward, there is the immutability of His counsel; forward, there is a hope set before us. From one eternity to another may a believer walk and still find cause of rejoicing in God. 2. Another cause of strong comfort is interest and propriety. Besides the excellency of the privilege, there must be the clearness of our interest. The object of joy is not only good in common, but our good. It doth not enrich a man to hear there are pearls and diamonds in the world, and mines of gold in the Indies, unless he had them in his own possession; so it doth not fill us with comfort and joy to hear there are unchangeable purposes of grace, and that there was an eternal treaty between God and Christ about the salvation of sinners, and that there is a possible salvation, but when we understand this is made over to us. III. How it is dispensed on God's part, and how far it is required on ours; because every heir of promise cannot speak of these lively comforts, those sweet and strong consolations of the Spirit. First, on God's part. There is a great deal of difference between Christians in respect of God's dispensations. 1. Consider Christ, though He loved all His disciples, yet He did not use them all alike familiarly; some were more intimate with Him, and were more in His bosom. So though all the elect are dear to Christ, yet there are the elect of the elect, some chosen out above others, with whom God will be more intimate and familiar. 2. Though God deals here with great difference, yet it is usual with the Lord to give most comfort to three sorts of persons. (1) To the poor in spirit. A broken vessel is fitter to hold the oil of gladness than a full one, I mean such who are empty and broken, and possessed with a sense of their own wants. (2) Though God is at liberty, yet usually He fills those which are exercised with hard and long conflicts with their corruptions. Comfort is Christ's entertainment for those that return from victory over their lusts (Rev. ii. 17). (3) Those that are called forth to great employments and trials are seldom without comfort, and this strong consolation, that they may behave themselves worthy of their trial. Look, as men victual a castle when it is in danger to be besieged, so God layeth in comfort aforehand when we are like to be assaulted. This we have in the example of our Lord Himself. Just before Christ was tempted He had a solemn testimony from heaven (Matt. iv. 1). Secondly, on our part. It is not absolutely required that we should enjoy it, but only to seek after it; and if we want it, to submit to God's pleasure. Comfort is seldom withheld when it is long sought and highly prized. I cannot say he is no child of God that hath not a feeling of this strong consolation, but he is none that doth not seek after it, and that hath low and cheap thoughts of the consolations of God (Job xv. 11). (*T. Manton, D.D.*) *Strong consolation for the Lord's refuges*:—I. We have "fled for refuge." 1. The man-slayer, the moment he had in the heat of passion killed a man, became an apt representative of an awakened sinner who discovers himself to be in an evil case. It is the work of the Spirit of God to convince men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment to come, and it is well when the soul begins to fear, for then it begins to live. 2. The alarmed man-slayer would next, if he could calm himself at all, consider what he could do, and he would soon come to the conclusion that he could neither defy, nor escape, nor endure the doom which threatened him. Thus in the days of our conviction no hope was discovered to natural reason, and our dread increased till fear took hold upon us there, for we saw what we had done, but we knew not what we could do to escape from the consequences thereof. 3. Then there came to our ear what perhaps we had heard before, but had heard so indifferently as never to have really understood it—we heard of a divinely provided way of escape. When under a sense of sin men value Christ Jesus. How wonderful is the system of grace! Here it is: that as in Adam we die through Adam's sin, so if we be in Christ we live through Christ's righteousness. 4. The text, however, not only implies that we need the refuge and have heard of it, but that we have fled to it. To flee away from self to the provided refuge is a main act of faith. II. But we have come to "lay hold." Here we have a change of figure, unless we recall the case of Joab, who fled for refuge to the temple and laid hold upon the horns of the altar. Justification by faith in Jesus is set before us. What are we to do according to the text? We have to "lay hold" upon it. You are drowning; there is a rope thrown to you; what have you to do? "Lay hold." You are not to look at your hands to see whether they are clean enough. No, lay hold, dirty hand or clean hand. "But my hand is weak." Lay hold, brother, as best you can, weak hand

or not, for while you are laying hold of Christ God is laying hold of you; you may rest assured of that. If you have the faintest grip of Christ, Christ has a firm grip of you such as never shall be relaxed. Your business is at this moment to lay hold and keep hold. What is to be done in order to lay hold? 1. Well, we must believe the gospel to be true. Do you believe it to be true that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them? Yes, I know you believe that God has sent His Son to be a propitiation for sin. So far, so good. The next thing is to apprehend for yourselves this truth. Christ justifies believers; He is worthy of trust; trust Him, and He has justified you. "I do not feel it," says one. You do not need to feel it. It is a matter of believing. Believe in Jesus, and because you are a believer be assured that you are saved. 2. While a man lays hold upon a thing he goes no further, but continues to cling to it. We have fled for refuge, but we flee no further than the hope which we now lay hold upon, namely, eternal life in Christ Jesus. We never wish to get beyond God's promise in Christ Jesus to believers, the promise of salvation to faith. We are satisfied with that, and there we rest. 3. Did you notice that the apostle speaks of laying hold upon a hope? This does not mean that we are to lay hold by imagination upon something which we hope to obtain in the dim future, for the next verse goes on to say "which hope we have." We have our hope now, it is not a shadowy idea that possibly when we come to die we may be saved. We know that we at this moment are safe in our refuge, and we lay hold on our confidence as a present joy. Yet that which we lay hold upon is full of hope, there is more in it than we can now see or enjoy. What is the hope? The hope of final perseverance, the hope of ultimate perfection, the hope of eternal glory, the hope of being with our Lord where He is that we may behold His glory for ever—a hope purifying, elevating, and full of glory; a hope which cheers and delights us as often as we think of it. III. This is our last point, WE ENJOY "STRONG CONSOLATION." We call that liquor strong of which a very few drops will flavour all into which it falls. How wonderfully the consolation of Christ has affected our entire lives! There is such potency in it that it sweetens everything about us. It is so strong that it masters all our fears, and slays all our scepticisms. 1. What I want you to note is that the consolation of the Christian lies wholly in his God, because the ground of it is that God has sworn, and that God has promised. Never look, therefore, to yourselves for any consolation; it would be a vain search. 2. Remember, too, that your consolation must come from what God has spoken and not from His providence. Outward providences change, but the oath never changes, hold you on to that. Your comfort must not even depend upon sensible realisations of God's favour, nor on sweet communions and delights. No, but upon —He has said it and He has sworn it—those are the two strong pillars upon which your comfort must rest. 3. Remember, however, that the power of the strong consolation derived from the oath of God must in your personal enjoyment depend very much upon your faith. What is the consolation of a promise if you do not believe it, and what is the comfort of an oath if you doubt it? (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Strong encouragement*:—When stars, first created, start forth upon their vast circuits, not knowing their way, if they were conscious and sentient, they might feel hopeless of maintaining their revolutions and orbits, and despair in the face of coming ages. But, without hands or arms, the sun holds them. Without cords or bands the solar king drives them, unharnessed, on their mighty rounds without a single misstep, and will bring them, in the end, to their bound, without a wanderer. Now, if the sun can do this, the sun, which is but a thing itself, driven and held, shall not He who created the heavens, and gave the sun his power, be able to hold us by the attraction of His heart, the strength of His hands, and the omnipotence of His affectionate will? (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Strong consolation*:—It is impossible, wrote Dr. Doddridge, after an illness, to express the comfort God gave me on my sick bed. His promises were my continual feast; they seemed, as it were, to be all united in one stream of glory. When I thought of dying, it sometimes made my very heart to leap within me, to think that I was going home to my Father and my Saviour. (*Tinling's Illustrations.*) **Who have fled for refuge.**—*The city of refuge*:—I. THE VIEW GIVEN OF THE SAVIOUR IN THE TEXT. He is called "the hope set before us." In the Scriptures we read of hope that is in us, hope that is laid up for us, and hope that is set before us. The happiness of heaven—heaven itself—its light and glory, its songs, and its blessedness—this is the hope laid up for us: that good work of the Holy Spirit's operation on the heart, here and now, whereby

we look for the former, and for the earnest of it, is the hope that is in us; and our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, the only foundation and hope, for sinner or for saint, for pardon or for holiness, is the hope set before us. II. THE CONDUCT OF THE MAN DESCRIBED IN THE TEXT IN REFERENCE TO THIS BLESSED OBJECT. He is said to "flee for refuge," and to "lay hold upon it." In this there is an allusion to the flight of the man-slayer to the city of refuge. Methinks I descry the man-slayer looking behind him; he sees the avenger of blood; he sees the horrible burning frown upon his brow, he hears the dismal tramp of his feet, and away he flies; he stops not, turns not out of his course, but presses on and on with accelerated speed, until at length, all panting and breathless, he enters the hallowed gates of the city of refuge, and enters into peace. Such is the flight of the sinner's soul to the arms of Christ Jesus. This representation sets before us the case of a man struck with a conviction of guilt, smitten with an apprehension of danger, despairing of relieving himself, coming out of himself, and trusting to another. The very name of Jesus, which was before an insipid sound, is now to him like music. His soul leaps within him to know that "God is in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing to men their trespasses"; his heart dances for joy when he finds that "it is a faithful saying that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." But observe: his conviction of guilt, and danger, and ruin, being now no longer superficial, but pervading, individual, and thorough, he is not satisfied with this merely general representation of the matter. It is not now enough for him to know in so many general terms that God is merciful, and that Christ is a Saviour; he now narrowly pries into the whole affair, into the authority and commission of Christ to save, into His ability and His qualifications to save, into His willingness and readiness to save. III. THE PRIVILEGE AND HAPPINESS OF THOSE WHO HAVE THUS FLED TO CHRIST JESUS FOR REFUGE. "By two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie," they have "a strong consolation." What is consolation? It is the relief of the mind under any trouble or pain; or the presence and enjoyment of a good which is able to prevent altogether, or else carry away and bear down before it, as in a full tide or flowing stream, all evil felt or feared. Two things would occur to the mind of the man-slayer in connection with his flight to the city of refuge. One would be: "Is it true—is it really, incontrovertibly true, that if I get to the city of refuge, the avenger dares not, must not touch me?" The other would be: "Suppose I get to the city, and am secure against the stroke of the avenger, what kind of accommodation and provision shall I find within that city?" These two things would occur to him on his way to, or on his arrival at the city of refuge; and if he had had any uncertainty as to the one or the other, he would have been overwhelmed with confusion and dismay. But he had no doubt; he knew, he was quite sure, that if he got to the city of refuge, the avenger could not touch him, that he would be as safe in the city as if he were in heaven. He also knew that, if he got to that city, and should remain in it, all his wants would be supplied, everything necessary for his accommodation and support would be provided for him. Thus he had consolation. Now apply these two things as an illustration of the nature of the happiness of believing in Christ. "There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." "They that believe enter into rest." "Who is he that shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth." What is it you are afraid of? Is it the justice of God? I know the justice of God has the impenitent sinner by the throat, and says, "Pay me that thou owest!" But I know also that the hand of the penitent sinner lays hold on the hope set before him, and justice takes his hand off. It must be so; otherwise God were unrighteous in demanding two payments for one debt. "He that believes shall be saved." "There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." What are you afraid of? Is it of the fiery law? The law is not roaring after you if you have got into the city of refuge; it is not muttering its tremendous maledictions against you if you have laid hold of the hope set before you. If you hear anything at all of the demands of the law, it is the echoes of those demands dying away amid the battlements of the city wall; for he to whom you have fled, and on whom you have laid hold, has "magnified the law and made it honourable." Then what is it you are afraid of? Is it of the roaring lion of hell? He is indeed "going about seeking whom he may devour"; but your faith in Christ is a shield wherewith you may quench the fiery darts of the wicked one. Then what is it you have to fear? Is it death? You may give up that fear along with all the other fears; for Jesus, to whom you have come, on whom you have laid hold, has put down

death, abolished it, and buried it in His own grave; and has brought life and immortality to light. This is consolation, but that is not the whole of it. I said that the consolation of the man-slayer on reaching the city of refuge would also include an assurance that he should be provided for, while there, with everything necessary for his accommodation and support. This answers to the other half—the happiness of believing in Christ—which consists in the infinite assurance that God has given the believer that he never shall want any manner of thing that is really good, and that he never shall be in inextricable danger. "The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger"; and well they may; "but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing." Can that man want water who lives on the brinks of an everlasting spring? Can that man want light who lives in the centre of the eternal sun? Now look at the grounds on which this consolation rests. We have it, says the apostle, "by two immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lie." What are these immutable things? Where are they to be met with? We cannot write the word immutable on the rock; it is constantly wearing away: nor on the sun; the sun himself shall grow old and dull. But there are two immutable things—the word of promise and the oath of God. These are called the "counsel of God," to intimate that His promise is the declaration of His counsel. Promises very often are the result of anything but counsel; but the promise of God is the counsel of God, the manifestation and publication of His counsel. The promises of God—what are they like? Whereunto shall I compare them? They are like so many silver cords let down from heaven, hanging out from the pavilion of infinite clemency, I had almost said, sent down from the heart of God itself, for the hand of faith to lay hold on. The promise of God is an immutable thing; and by that we have our consolation. But there is another ground of this happiness. God, knowing the million ills of human life, the million jealousies of the human heart, knowing the backwardness of your mind, and the slowness of your heart to believe His own eternal word of promise, hath condescended to superadd to that His solemn oath. What is that oath like? Is it not as if Jehovah was laying all the perfections of His nature, staking the very glory of the Godhead, on the truth of His promise previously made? These are the two immutable things by which we have our consolation. Finally, let me mention the quality of this happiness. It is called in the text a "strong consolation"; a consolation amongst the most substantial, the most abundant and efficient; a consolation available for every exigency of life, for the solemnity of death, for the crisis of the judgment day. How strong is this consolation? It is stronger than the afflictions of life. It turns the dungeon into a gate of heaven, the place of stocks into the vestibule of glory. If, like the Hebrews, to whom the language was originally addressed, you were called to bear the spoiling of your goods for Christ's sake; with this consolation you would bear it joyfully. Soaring on the wings of grace, you may defy the power of affliction, calamity, sickness, and change. He, whose word of promise and solemn oath you have, has said He will be with you "in six troubles; yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee." Strong consolation! How strong? Stronger than the dread of wrath. Oh, what a mountain is gone when the fear of hell is gone! Oh, what a load is removed from the human spirit when the dread of the wrath to come is removed! And it is removed from the man who has fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before him. Strong consolation! How strong? It is not only stronger than all the afflictions of life, and stronger than the dread of the wrath to come, but stronger than the fear of death. "The wicked is driven away in his wickedness; but the righteous hath hope in his death." Go and see the righteous die. Death has come in at the window; laying his hand upon the heart; freezing up the life-blood of the fountain. Death is there; but Christ is there also. Death, the last enemy, is there; but Christ, the Lord of life and glory, is there too. Death is there as the servant; Christ as the Master. "I heard a voice from heaven saying, Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord." Strong consolation! How strong? Stronger than all the terrors of the final judgment, than the desolations of universal nature. (*J. Beaumont, D.D.*) *Flying for refuge*:—The true heirs of promise, with whom God hath pawned His word and oath to do them good eternally, are such as have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before them. In the description there are two parts, "flying for refuge," and "taking hold of the hope set before them." The one relates to their justification, or their first acceptation with God in Christ, "Flying for refuge"; the other relates to their carriage after justification, "To take hold of the hope set before them." I. For the

first branch—"Flying for refuge." It is an allusion to the cities of refuge spoken of under the law. 1. That Christ is a believer's city of refuge, or the alone sanctuary for distressed souls. 2. It is the property of believers to fly to Christ for refuge. This flying may be explained with analogy to the two terms of every motion, which are *terminus a quo* and *ad quem*, from what we fly, and to what; and so we have the perfect method which the Spirit observeth in bringing home souls to God. In this flying to Christ as a city of refuge there is a driving and a drawing work; the first belongs to the law, the second to the gospel. The law driveth us out of ourselves, and the gospel draweth us, and bringeth us home to God. (1) Let us speak of the *terminus a quo*, the term from which we come, or the driving work; it is comprised in these two things—a sense of sin, and a sense of the wrath of God pursuing for sin. (2) Let us come to the *terminus ad quem*, from what we come to what; they run to Christ as their city of refuge. (*a*) It implies earnestness, as in a case of life and death. A dilatory trifling spirit shows we are not touched at heart. (*b*) Running to the city of refuge implieth avoiding all byways. A soul that is rightly affected cannot be satisfied with any other thing; another place would not secure the man, nothing but the city of refuge. (*c*) This running implies an unwearied diligence. The man was running still till he was gotten into the city of refuge, for it was for his life; so we are unwearied until we meet with Christ (Cant. iii. 2). (*d*) When they are got into their city of refuge, they stay there; having once taken hold of Christ, they will not quit their holdfast for all the world. II. For the second branch, "To lay hold upon the hope that is set before us," and you must repeat the word "flying" or "running" again. 1. What is this hope? Hope is put for the thing hoped for, heaven with all the glory thereof; for it is a hope "that lies within the veil" (ver. 19), or a hope "laid up for us in heaven" (Col. i. 5). Mark the double end of him that cometh unto Christ, refuge and salvation; for in Christ there is not only deliverance from pursuing wrath, but eternal life to be found; first we fly from deserved wrath, then we take hold of undeserved glory. This is more easy of the two (Rom. v. 10, 11). 2. Why is this hope said to be set before us? (1) To note the divine institution of this reward; it is not devised by ourselves, but appointed by God. (2) It is proposed and set before us for our encouragement. As it is said of Christ (chap. xii. 2). (3) What is it to run to take hold of the hope set before us? Sometimes it implieth a challenging it as ours; as 1 Tim. vi. 19: "That they may lay hold on eternal life." Here it signifies holding fast, never to let this hope go. It implieth diligence of pursuit, perseverance to the end, and all this upon Christian encouragement. (*a*) Diligence in pursuit of eternal life in the heirs of promise. It is expressed by working out our salvation, making it our business (Phil. ii. 12). When we will not be put off with anything else, but have heaven or nothing, this is to seek heaven in good earnest. (*b*) This flying to take hold of the hope set before us importeth perseverance in well-doing, notwithstanding the difficulties in the way to heaven. (*c*) All this upon Christian encouragements, for the hope that is before them. A man may know much of his spirit by what bears him up, and what is the comfort and solace of his soul (Titus ii. 13). Application—1. Comfort to those that can apply it, even to those who are thus qualified, that are driven and drawn to Christ, and then go on cheerfully with the work of obedience, waiting for their inheritance in heaven. 2. Conviction. It showeth the hardness of their hearts who have neither felt the law work nor the gospel work, but remain like the smith's anvil, softened neither with hammer nor with oil; neither driven by the threatenings of the law, nor drawn with the glad tidings of salvation; neither John nor Jesus worketh on them. Of such Christ speaketh (Matt. xi. 17). 3. To persuade you to this temper. Three sorts of people usually we speak to—(1) The carnal secure. (2) Those that are affected with their condition. (3) Those that esteem Christ, and embrace Him, that own Him as ready and willing to save sinners. (*T. Manton, D.D.*) *Christ typified by the cities of refuge*:—I. EVERY SINNER IS JUSTLY EXPOSED TO DEATH. Pursued by the righteous avenger of blood, who will cast the wicked into hell, with all the nations that forget God. II. GOD HATH APPOINTED JESUS AS THE REFUGE FOR CONDEMNED SINNERS. He came that men might not perish, but have everlasting life. He came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them. Now in this He was strikingly typified by the cities of refuge. 1. In their number we are reminded of the sufficiency of Christ. There were six of these cities. Doubtless amply sufficient for the cases which might require them. Jesus is the sufficient Saviour of all men. In Him is room for the whole world. Merit, mercy, and willing-

ness, for every child of man. 2. In their diversified localities we see the accessibility of Christ. These cities were placed in various parts of the land, so as to be near to every quarter, and accessible to the inhabitants throughout. Here we see at once pointed out to us the nearness of Christ to every portion of the family of Adam. 3. In the spacious well-directed roads to the cities of refuge, we are reminded of the free, full, and plain declarations of the gospel of Christ. 4. In the signification of the names of the cities we also perceive the glorious excellency of Christ. One of these cities was called "Kadesh," which signifies "Holy." Jesus is the Holy One of God. He redeems and saves men to holiness. Another was called "Shechem," which signifies "Shoulder," representing Christ as bearing the sins and burdens of the sinner. Another was called "Hebron," signifying "Fellowship." Thus Christ is the medium and ground of fellowship between God and men, and between the whole body of believers. In Christ we become the sons of God and members one of another. Another was called "Bezer," which signifies a "Stronghold." Christ is often thus described. He is our refuge, our fortress, and a stronghold in the day of trouble. In Him we are more secure than if surrounded by a munition of rocks. Another of the cities was called "Ramoth," which signifies "Exaltation." Jesus is the exalted Son of God. The Prince of life. The Lord of glory. The name of the last city of refuge was "Golan," which signifies "Exultation," or "Joy." Christ is the joy and rejoicing of His people. His gospel is the message of joy. His kingdom is not only righteousness and peace, but joy in the Holy Ghost. 5. In the deliverance of the man-slayer we see typified the salvation which is in Christ Jesus. Within the city he was safe. Now, by believing repentance, the sinner flees to Christ, and becomes interested in His all-extensive merit and saving benefits. But he must be in Christ. And he must abide in Him (John xv. 1–7). Thus he shall be delivered from present condemnation, and from eternal death. In Christ is ample provision for his comfort, safety, and well-being. Application: 1. We see the awful misery and peril of the careless sinner. 2. The absolute necessity of repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And how necessary that this should be prompt and immediate. 3. How urgently should ministers make known the terrors of the Lord and persuade men. 4. How happy are those who are delivered from the power of Satan, and have been brought to enjoy the forgiving love of God. Within the city of refuge all their interests are secure both for time and eternity. (*J. Burns, D.D.*) *Laying hold of the hope:*—It is said that a traveller by night fell into a dry well. His cry for help attracted a neighbour, who let down a rope and attempted to draw him up, but did not succeed because the rope kept slipping through the fallen man's hands. At length the rescuer, suspecting that the fallen man's grip was feeble because of his having something in his hand besides the rope, called out to him, "Have you something in your hands?" "Yes," replied the man at the bottom, "I have a few precious parcels which I should like to save as well as myself." When at last he became willing to drop his parcels, there was muscular power enough in his arms to hold fast the rope till he was delivered. Are you seeking purity of heart, and still finding yourself, day after day, in the horrible pit of impurity, though the golden chain of salvation is lowered to you from above; have you not something in your hands? How about those precious parcels? Have you dropped them all? Then lay hold on the hope that is set before thee, and keep hold till thy feet are on the rock, and songs of deliverance burst forth from thy lips, and thy goings are henceforth established in the highway of holiness. Is that last parcel too precious to be dropped? Well, say then, "I will not give up my idol," and no longer dishonour God by saying, "I cannot believe." *Can you be safe too soon?*—Can you be safe too soon? Can you be happy too soon? Certainly, you cannot be out of danger of hell too soon; and therefore why should not your closing with Christ upon His own terms be your very next work? If the main business of every man's life be to flee from the wrath to come, as indeed it is (Matt. iii. 9), and to flee for refuge to Jesus Christ, as indeed it is (Heb. vi. 18), then all delays are highly dangerous. The man-slayer, when fleeing to the city of refuge before the avenger of blood, did not think he could reach the city too soon. Set your reason to work upon this matter; put the case as it really is: I am fleeing from wrath to come; the justice of God and the curses of the law are closely pursuing me; is it reasonable that I should sit down in the way to gather flowers, or play with trifles? for such are all other concerns in this world, compared with our soul's salvation. (*J. Flavel.*) *The only refuge:*—"I have no hope in what I have been or done," said Dr. Doddridge, on his dying bed, "yet I am full of

confidence; and this is my confidence: there is a hope set before me. I have fled, I still fly, for refuge to that hope. In Him I trust, in Him I have strong consolation, and shall assuredly be accepted in this beloved of my soul." **Which hope we have.**—*The Christian hope:*—I. "WHICH HOPE WE HAVE." 1. A living hope. 2. A blessed hope. 3. A good hope. 4. A sustaining hope; taken hold of it; we feel it. Our faith seizes it. Our hearts experience it. II. WHAT THIS HOPE IS TO THOSE WHO HAVE TAKEN HOLD OF IT. 1. It holds the soul, as an anchor holds the ship, from drifting before the wind and currents of human opinions, personal doubts, &c. 2. It holds the soul from sinking in despair, in the midst of its sorrows, tribulations, and conflicts. 3. It is, therefore, a comfort to the soul to have this hope in times of trial and sorrow. 4. It is "sure and steadfast." Nothing can destroy it. III. THE OBJECT OF THIS HOPE. It is not anchored in the uncertain and shifting things of time and of earth, but takes hold of the eternal and heavenly. 1. Of the crown of righteousness which "fadeth not away." 2. Of the many mansions which Christ has gone to prepare for us. 3. Of the inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, &c. 4. And in due time this hope shall realize its respective objects. CONCLUSION: 1. Rejoice in this hope. 2. Cherish this hope. 3. Cast it not away on any account. (*Local Preacher's Treasury.*) *Christian hope:*—Hope is one of the noblest of the natural instincts. It is, as the poets say, the sunshine of the mind. Like the old sun-dial of Saint Mark's at Venice, it marks only the cloudless hours. It has a lifting power which raises and carries life on. The boy hopes to be a man, and you see, in his thoughtful moments, the dignity and energy of a man, so that you say, "He will be a credit to his family. He will conquer Silesia." The man looks through the years, bearing up under their burdens, to the honours and rest of old age. Old age, stript of all else, ought at least not to live on the past, as is often said, but to be waiting in joyful expectation of something better that is beyond. There is this quality of hope in us which is the spring of our courage and of the capacity of recovery from disappointment and defeat. Prince Eugene was always more terrible in defeat than in victory. Hope, "the nerve of life," as Thackeray calls hope, without which man would lose half his happiness and power, and power of growth, making him "a man of hope and forward-looking mind even to the last," is that which gives life its impetus; but which native quality, strong though it be, ends in human nature and what it can do and compass. It is, like human nature itself, a thing of earthly uncertainty whose grounds are ever shifting; while the hope which is spoken of in the New Testament, or that which may be called Christian hope—even if it use the beautiful natural instinct while transforming it into something spiritual—is a more enduring principle, partaking of the eternal state of being. If we look at the reasons why Christian hope, as distinguished from the natural or instinctive quality, is likened to an anchor that enters into the veil and is sure and steadfast, the chief reason of it we will find to be that it is a hope which is fixed upon God and His truth, where alone is stability. God's being is that which "is," not that which "becomes." Nothing can add to or take from the perfect One in whom all fulness dwells: though let us fairly understand that God is not unchangeable in the sense that His nature is one of immovable hardness like a rock; for His heart is touched by the most delicate emotions that the purest spirit is capable of feeling; but He is unchangeable in the immutability of those moral qualities which form His character and upon which the government of the world rests secure. If we see the proofs of God's firmness in the unalterable operations of His physical laws—a principle on which all science is founded—so we may believe that the blessed promises of God will come true, and that He who brings forth the spring violets from under the snows of winter, rejoices to bring out from the most rugged and unpropitious circumstances the blossoming of every hidden seed of hope; and the rugged circumstances form a factor in the Divine plan. In God's wisdom misfortune is a blessing, and compels men to use their powers boldly, and to do things that they could not possibly have done in prosperous times. And God does not desert a soul in misfortune. When we seem to be entirely hemmed in He makes a way of escape for the soul. In the drear immensity of the Arabian desert where nothing else grows you will find minute sand-flowers too small even for fragrance, and yet that cheer the wanderer and say, "Up, heart, there is hope for thee!" Another reason why Christian hope has in it the principle of stability is because it has a source of strength in the perfect character of the spiritual work which Jesus Christ has done for and in the soul. Not only the Divine, but even the human part of Christ's work, from His birth to His resurrection, gives no signs of failure or imperfection.

Christ became true man that He might redeem man, and His human nature was that of one "made perfect through suffering," approaching the cross with slow and steady step. Christ went through what man goes through, or can go through, touching every human part, relation, and need, preserving His obedience to the end, doing all the will of the Father, and righteously triumphing for and in weak humanity, and then, stretched on the shameful tree, as He was about to yield His spirit, could He cry with a loud voice, "It is finished!" An offering for human sin was made by that strong and tender love, and nothing was incomplete. As even the clothes in the sepulchre were rolled up and laid by themselves when Christ arose, nothing was left undone. The resurrection of Jesus from the dead is the confirmation, and, as it were, celestial touch, or crown, put on Christian hope, that carries it across the confines of death into the worlds beyond. Christian hope may be seen to be something sure and stable in its nature, lastly, because as a matter of experience there is a strong and indestructible expectation, the fruit of the spirit of Christ, which is awaked in the Christian soul and the Christian church, and has always been so in every age and every believing mind. There is nothing more inspiring in the study of history than to trace the beginnings of this new hope in Christian civilisation, and its ennobling influence in public morals, law, and government, the treatment of oppressed classes, the social elevation of woman, the higher uses of property, in art, science, literature, politics, and every phase of human life, forming the spring of progress, and having in it a certain faculty of prophecy, in which, as a German writer says, "the longing heart goes forth to meet beforehand great and new creations and hastens to anticipate the mighty future"; above all, making the soul invincible to evil, come in whatever shape it may, in poverty, old age, sickness, prison, wreck, war, the contempt of the world and the violence of active persecution; or whether it come in the more hidden trials and struggles of the spirit. There can be no delusion here. There is a hope which comes into the mind, however inexplicable, which was not there before—a new instinct of a new nature. It is, as the Scriptures call it, "a living hope,"—an active principle working by love and purifying the heart. "He that believeth hath the witness in himself;" for it is faith in eternal things which is at the bottom of this hope, and it is the outcome of a new spiritual life within. He who has this hope enjoys a communion with the Divine. He wins the blessed unity which is in God. A "new marvellous light" arises in him and spreads through his being. There is a letting in of the love of God to the soul which expels its gloom and selfishness; and selfishness must be pressed out of true hope. Such pleasure experienced here in God, such openings of the soul into His love, must look forward at some time to a blissful enjoyment of Him—to the great vision of God and His eternal peace. It is this simple fact which makes Christianity, notwithstanding its solemn truths, a cheerful religion, and which gives it a quality of joy that fills it with a perpetual sunshine. In the apostolic church this awoke the voice of song and brought to the world the life of a new blossoming springtime rich in its promise of great things—its true golden age, not past but present and to come. This hope of the Christian, then, is a great hope, a bright, clear, and steady hope, surpassing all the vague desires of the natural heart, beautiful as the poetry of the heart sometimes makes these to appear—yet earthly and evanescent, like the painted clouds that pile up in the western sky of a summer's sunset turning ashy and deathly pale when the light fades out of them. But the "things hoped for" are too fair, too high, too pure, even to be conceived. The prayer, indeed, of this hope is not for a life without trials, but, with the apostle, the believer would fight that he might win; he would endure self-denial that he might rise above the sensual into the spiritual; and while the hope sustains and cheers, he would also "know Christ" and the fellowship of His sufferings, and sound the depths of Christ's holy life and perfect victory. Is your hope thus well-grounded? When the storm comes, does the anchor hold? When a strong and unexpected temptation falls like a sudden blast on you, does the anchor hold? In the face of real affliction—of death—would it hold? Does your hope take hold of the unchangeable love of God? If so, when tempted, "rejoice, and show the same diligence, with the full assurance of hope unto the end." Armed with a hope which has in it this sure promise, go forth to a life of goodness. Expect to achieve great things. (*J. M. Hoppin.*) *Christian hope:*—I. WHAT IS ITS OBJECT? On what is this hope supremely fixed? "Upon that which is within the veil." Yes, it is attracted by the glory which is afterwards to be revealed by the fulness of grace, which is to come unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ, the "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," which eye hath

not seen," but which will burst upon our enraptured souls when we awake up in the Divine likeness at the resurrection morn. O what a sublime anticipation!—The perfection of the soul in happiness, which in this world is so limited and interrupted—the perfection of the soul in purity, which is now only attained in part, because "the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and we cannot do the things that we would"—the perfection of the soul in knowledge, which here is so contracted, intercepted, acquired with so much difficulty, and so soon forgotten by the weakness of memory and the infirmities of age—the perfection of the soul in holy love, which on earth is so faint, cold, and weak—the unveiled vision of God and the Lamb—intimate and everlasting communion with the Great Jehovah. Again, we say, what a sublime anticipation! How elevating—how expanding—how purifying—how cheering—how attractive! Compare it with the hope of the worldling, whose portion is only in this life, and consists of houses and lands, silver and gold, titles and emoluments—compare it with the hope of the sensualist, who fares sumptuously every day, and cries, "What shall we eat, what shall we drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed?" whilst his soul is unfed by the bread of life, untaught by the Spirit of God. Compare it with the hope of the ambitious, whose great object is to rise upon the scale of popularity. II. WHAT IS YOUR AUTHORITY FOR CHERISHING THIS PLEASING ANTICIPATION? ON WHAT DOES YOUR HOPE REST? Not upon your own merits, however amiable your temper, moral your conduct, charitable your actions, and just and uniform your dealings; nor is it founded upon the mercy of God unconnected with the doctrine of the Atonement, and the work of the Holy Spirit upon the heart. The believer's hope rests exclusively and entirely, as you will find in the context, upon "the two immutable things," the oath and promise of God relating to the sufferings and death of His beloved Son, as the only sacrifice for sin, and the strong consolation which is derivable from a humble dependence upon His merits and love. 1. The word and covenant of God are the charter of our hopes, which we are permitted to plead, saying, "Remember Thy word unto Thy servant upon which Thou hast caused me to hope"; recollecting that "whatsoever things were written aforetime, were for our instruction, that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope." 2. The finished work of Christ is the support and security of our hope; "as the law made nothing perfect, it was merely a shadow of good things to come, but the bringing in of a better hope did, by which we draw nigh unto God." 3. Our union with the Saviour, and the renewal of our soul by the converting grace of the Holy Ghost, are the evidence and the sanction of our hope, as "Christ is in us the hope of glory," and, by the witnessing of the Spirit, "we know what is the hope of our calling," and enjoy "the full assurance of hope unto the end." III. THE BENEFITS WHICH RESULT FROM THIS DESIRABLE STATE OF MIND. "IT IS LIKE AN ANCHOR TO THE SOUL, BOTH SURE AND STEADFAST." Here a state of trial and exposure is implied. The soul, by this nautical phraseology, is compared to a vessel floating upon the uncertain and perpetually-changing surface of the ocean, where an anchor is indispensable to its safety. On what does the hope of a newly-awakened sinner rest? On what is the anchor of a believing penitent cast? 1. On the free mercy of the blessed God "who desireth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he may turn from his wickedness and live." 2. It rests upon the efficacy of the Saviour's blood, which is unto all and upon all them that believe; which is the price of our redemption—the purchase of our acceptance—the ratification of our peace, and the balm of our consolation. 3. The invitations of the gospel are also the sanction of a penitent sinner's hope. These are the warblings of mercy's trumpet, the proclamation of redeeming love. 4. Nor can we omit to notice the encouragement which the pleasing change produced in the sinner's mind affords to the energies of evangelical hope. Thus assured of his safety, he spreads his sails—launches forth and speeds his way towards the promised land, the better country, favoured with the superintendence of the Saviour as his pilot, the Word of God as his chart and his compass, and hope as his anchor. At length after many a storm and struggle, the believer reaches the peaceful port of everlasting bliss. Then, again, his hope, as an anchor to the soul, is most valuable. He is now waiting for the signal to disembark and to land upon the better country. He therefore resembles Paul, who, having "fought a good fight," finished his course and kept the faith, said, "I am now ready to be offered up, and the time of my departure is at hand." "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep," &c. IV. THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS HOPE. 1. This will appear if you reflect on the insufficiency of all things here below to satisfy the immortal soul and render it happy. 2. Your peace and

comfort depend in a great degree upon the possession of an evangelical hope. 3. The possession of the blessing in question is indispensable from the uncertainty of life, only during the limited span of which can the hope of glory be obtained. 4. And, finally, the satisfaction and comfort of your friends who may survive you are involved in your possessing a good hope. (*W. B. Leach.*) *The hope of the believer—"sure and stedfast":*—I. THAT THE HOPE OF THE CHRISTIAN MAN IS A SPECIFIC AND WELL DEFINED HOPE—a hope about which he can give an answer—a hope which he can trace to its origin, and the operations of which he is able, in some measure, to explain. This may be seen by the use made of the word "which," in the passage before us. The idea seems to be that these men, when awakened by the power of the Holy Ghost to a sense of their personal danger, look about them for some place of deliverance to which they may run and be secure. And the apostle says that for men in that condition, there is a hope set before them in the gospel, that is accessible to them: and there is the voice of mercy bidding them fly from the wrath to come; and the men here spoken of have hearkened to that voice. They have availed themselves of that provision, they have run thereunto, and they are saved. II. THAT THIS HOPE, DERIVED FROM CHRIST, RELATES TO A CONDITION OF BLESSEDNESS—it entereth into that which is within the veil. Now who can tell us what there is within the veil? Who can conceive what it is to have Christ entered in amongst these things within the veil, as our Forerunner and Representative? Jesus Christ, as our Forerunner, has removed the obstacles out of our way, and made all the necessary preparations for our safe departure from that which is seen and temporal to that which is unseen and eternal. "I go," He says, "to prepare a place for you, but I come again to take you to Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." All this is going on at this moment. His heart is towards you, His occupation is about you, and thus it is from hour to hour. In the multitude of your thoughts, then, you may rejoice that you are raised up together with Christ, made to sit together in heavenly places with Christ; and that because He lives you live also. III. THAT THIS HOPE ACTS AS AN ANCHOR TO THE SOUL. It is not mere sentimentalism, but, as hinted in our text, a thing of the most powerful efficacy, without which men, in this world, could not live. It is called the "anchor of the soul." This leads us to think of the sea, of storms and tempests, and of some gallant vessel which, in order to be saved from the storm, must have all the appliances of deliverance, safety, and defence. Have you never seen such a vessel when suddenly a storm has come down upon her, and she has been unable to get out to sea? They then let go the anchor, as the only hope, the sole remaining chance of escape. Suppose the anchor drags, what then? Suppose it parts from the cable which unites it to the ship? Suppose the anchor breaks? The doom of the ship is sealed; for the anchor is everything; and this hope, which is so beautifully compared to the anchor, is everything to the Christian. Your trials and perplexities are not only like a storm, but as a storm from which you cannot get away. You cannot run before it. You cannot take advantage of a wider berth by getting out to sea. There is no alternative; you must "ride it out." What would you do under such circumstances but for your hope that you have an interest in the great salvation? What could you do without it? I do not wonder that the Bible calls it a "living," "blessed," and "glorious hope." How often have you and I been saved from making shipwreck, thus far, of our profession and consistency by reverting yet once more to the everlasting covenant which "is ordered in all things and sure!" IV. THAT THIS ANCHOR TO YOUR SOUL WILL NEVER FAIL. It is "sure and stedfast." Look at these two words: the word "sure" refers to hope itself, and the word "stedfast" to that which the hope relates to. Hence, then, we have the anchor, and the anchorage. The hope of the good man, in itself considered, is sure; no matter what the strain upon it, it is strong and infrangible. It was originated by the "God of Hope"; it is sustained and guarded by Him; and therefore it cannot be broken. It is a sure thing. We have heard men say, "What shall we do in an extremity like this?" But the answer is explicit enough—"My grace is sufficient for thee"; and the hope which is of God's own implantation, is a hope which will never fail. It is, in itself considered, inviolable and indestructible. God created it, and He will take care that it shall never be destroyed; we will therefore rejoice in it. But, moreover, it is not only "sure," it is also "stedfast." The former, as I have said, referred to the anchor itself, this latter related to the anchorage. "Steadfast," *i.e.*, it has laid hold of that which will not let go. This seems to have been the apostle's thought. An anchor, you know, although it may not break, may drag. Its material and construction may be the very best, still

there may be nothing like a tenacious bottom in which to embed itself. There may be none of the "bars of the earth," as Jonah calls them, upon which it may get hold; and therefore in the extremity—at the very crisis—their doom is sealed for want of anchorage! Now the anchorage of your hope will never let the anchor drag. If I were asked what this anchorage is I should say it has laid hold of the "exceeding great and precious promises, which are all yea and amen in Christ Jesus." It has laid hold of the everlasting covenant which "is ordered in all things and sure." It has laid hold of the Rock of Ages. It has laid hold of the "two immutable things by which God sware and cannot lie." It has laid hold of the foundation of God which standeth "sure," and against which "the gates of hell shall not prevail." It has entered into that which is within the veil, and embedded itself deep down into the Divine purposes, and enwrapped itself around the Divine all-sufficiency, and taken hold—with its firm, broad, seven-fold gigantic grasp—of the great high throne, which is from everlasting—the throne of God and of the Lamb, and that throne itself must drag ere your anchor will come home! (*W. Brock.*) *Hope something more than faith*:—Faith accepts and credits testimony; hope anticipates. Faith says the fruit is good; hope picks and eats. Faith is bud; hope blossom. Faith presents the cheque; hope lays out the amount received. And such hope is the anchor of the soul. The comparison between hope and an anchor is familiar even to heathen writers, and it is easy to see how fit it is. It steadies the soul. Take an illustration from common life: A young man pledges his troth to a poor but noble girl. He is draughted for foreign service, and says farewell for long years. Meanwhile she is left to do as well as she can to maintain herself. Work is scanty, wages low, she is sometimes severely tempted and tried. But, amidst all, she is kept true to her absent lover, and to her nobler self, by the little strand of hope which links her to a happy and united future. So, when suffering, or tempted, or discouraged, our hope goes forward into the blessed future, depicted on the page of Scripture in glowing colours, and promised by the word of Him who cannot lie; and the anticipation of it fills the soul with courage and patience, so as to endure the trials of time, in view of the certain blessedness of eternity. (*F. B. Meyer, B.A.*) **An anchor of the soul.**—*Our anchor within the veil*:—I. Our hope, we are here told, is "AS AN ANCHOR OF THE SOUL." To the imagination of the writer, life is a sea, the soul is a ship, and hope is the anchor of the soul. It was not the first time that this emblem had been thus poetically applied. He had seen it in the Hebrew writings which he had read at the feet of Gamaliel; in the course of his Greek studies, he had possibly met with the sayings of Socrates—"To ground hope on a false supposition is like trusting to a weak anchor." "A ship ought not to trust to one anchor, nor life to one hope." He had heard the Romans, in proverbial phrase, call a man's last desperate hope, *Anchora sacra*. Finding this metaphor in the service of common life, he baptized it, quickened it with a new meaning, and pressed it into the service of God, employing it to show the superiority of the Christian's hope to the hope of any other man. II. Our hope, it is further said, ENTERETH INTO THAT WITHIN THE VEIL." The idea appears to be this:—A ship shattered with "the battle and the breeze," at length gets near the port; but owing to the shallow waters, or the sweeping tempest, or the temporary prohibition of the authorities on shore, she is not permitted at once to enter the harbour. The sailors then heave out the sheet-anchor, and by means of the boat it is carried within the royal dock; and though the ship cannot herself get in, she is thus prevented from being drifted away into the deep sea. To enter into that within the veil, is to enter within the harbour of eternal repose—this may not at present be permitted, but we may cast our anchor there, and meanwhile wait in safety here. To convey the whole of the idea which the apostle has in view, two images are combined. Let us forget the nautical allusion, and think only on the image which is borrowed from the Temple. "The veil" is that which divides earth and heaven; and our anchor "entereth into that which is within the veil." 1. The words "within the veil" suggest the mysteriousness of heaven to the inhabitants of earth. It is natural that those who are on their way to the heavenly country should make it the frequent theme of conjectural thought. But, after all, heaven will be a secret to us until we die. "My chief conception of heaven," said Robert Hall to Wilberforce, "is rest." "Mine," replied Wilberforce, "is love." Perhaps both conceptions are true, and union of perfect love with perfect rest conveys our best idea of heaven, considered simply as a state. But what is the manner of existence there, and what is the true physical theory of another life? How shall we see without these eyes, hear without these ears, act without this material instrument of being?

What are the visions, the emotions, the specific employments of heaven? Where and what is the region itself? Is it a star? Is it a sun? These questions are unanswered and unanswerable. The gospel is sent to show the way to glory, and not what that glory is. "The Holy Spirit teacheth how we may reach heaven, and not how heaven moves." In answer to all our questions respecting its nature, the Saviour replies, "What is that to thee? follow thou Me." 2. The nearness of heaven is suggested by the epithet "veil." Christians, there is only a veil between us and heaven! A veil is the thinnest and frailest of all conceivable partitions. The veil that conceals heaven is only our embodied existence, and though fearfully and wonderfully made, it is only wrought out of our frail mortality. So slight is it, that the puncture of a thorn, the touch of an insect's sting, the breath of an infected atmosphere, may make it shake and fall. 3. The glory of heaven is suggested by the expression "within the veil." What was within the veil of the Hebrew Temple? Not the ark, not the censer, not the rod that budded, not one of these things apart, nor all combined, made the glory of the place, but its true glory was the mystic light that shone above the mercy-seat, and symbolised the presence of "the Great King." In like manner, the manifested presence of God, and that alone, is the true glory of heaven. 4. The holiness of heaven is here suggested. Within the inner veil was the "Holiest of all." All the Temple was holy, but this was "the Holy of Holies." It was a perpetual memorial of the fact that heaven is a place of exquisite and awful purity. III. Our hope, entering within the veil, depends on the life of Jesus there. "WHITHER THE FORERUNNER IS FOR US ENTERED, EVEN JESUS." The forerunner of the ancient ship was the *Anchorarius*, the man who had charge of the anchor, and who carried it within the harbour, when there was not yet water sufficient to float the ship into it. In a spiritual sense, the forerunner of the worshipping Israelites was the high priest, who, taking with him the symbols of sacrifice, entered within the veil on their behalf. The forerunner of a band of pilgrims is one who precedes them to the place of destination, to give notice of their approach, to take possession in their name, and to prepare for their arrival. 1. The sense in which Christ sustains the office of forerunner in relation to the millions who are hastening to the world of light within the veil. He is the Sovereign Proprietor of heaven; He is the very glory of the place; yet He is there leading "not a life of glory only, but a life of office." His perpetual presence there is the perpetual argument for our salvation. He is there to complete the removal of every impediment to the entrance of His followers; there as the sublime guarantee that we shall be there. 2. You are also taught by these metaphors to see how entirely your hope is identified with faith. Many a person will tell you that he hopes, only because he does not venture to say that he believes. Hope is thought to be something less decisive than faith; to imply a lower grade of Christian attainment, a weaker tone of spiritual life, or perhaps an uncertainty as to whether we feel even the first stirs and the faintest indications of that life. But hope, instead of involving less grace than faith, does, in reality, involve more. Faith—healthy faith—faith with a keen eye, a strong hand, and an unfaltering voice; faith that can say, "I know whom I have believed, and who has the charge of my anchor"; such faith as this must be in existence before you can have "a hope that maketh not ashamed." IV. Our hope is an anchor of the soul which has peculiar recommendations. It is "BOTH SURE AND STEADFAST." 1. The term "sure" seems to refer to the reliable nature of the anchor itself. It is not constructed of doubtful materials; its cable will not snap in the tempest; no stress or strain upon it, and no resisting force will drag it from its anchorage. The term "steadfast" seems to refer to the use of the anchor. An anchor is that which keeps the ship steadfast. While waiting on this fluctuating sea of life, a hope in Christ will keep you safe amidst all peril, and fixed amidst all change. 2. You will be steadfast in the calms of life. Amidst all brightness here, hope for something brighter there; amidst all earthly good, hope for a better and enduring substance; "set your affections on things above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God"; and through the powers of the world to come, earth will be disenchanted, the spirit will be kept upon its guard, and your faith will be "steadfast" to the end. 3. You will be steadfast amidst the storms of life. There are storms of care, storms of conscience, storms of temptation; and all thoughtful natures know that the wildest storms that ever rage are those which are felt within, to which there are no human witnesses, and which sometimes spend their fury when all without seems placid and delightful. What deep Christian thinker has not sometime been nearly overwhelmed in waves of mental perplexity? What lonely wrestler in prayer is there who has not some-

times cried, "Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of Thy waterspouts: all Thy waves and billows are gone over me?" But if in such hours of dark tempest we can retain the conviction, however faint, that He who presides amidst the glories of heaven is our own Redeemer, that He still holds us with His mighty power and will not let us go, we shall survive the crisis; our ship, shattered though it be, will never founder; in the very rush and agony of waters we shall patiently hope on. (*C. Stanford, D.D.*) *The anchor:*—I. First, let me call your attention to THE DESIGN OF THE ANCHOR of which our text speaks. The design of an anchor, of course, is to hold the vessel firmly to one place when winds and currents would otherwise remove it. God has given us certain truths, which are intended to hold our minds fast to truth, holiness, perseverance—in a word, to hold us to Himself. But why hold the vessel? 1. The first answer which would suggest itself would be, To keep it from being wrecked. If every wind of doctrine whirled you about at its will you would soon be drifted far away from the truth as it is in Jesus, and concerning it you would make shipwreck; but you cost your Lord too dear for Him to lose you, to see you broken to pieces on the rocks; therefore He has provided for you a glorious holdfast, that when Satan's temptations, your own corruptions, and the trials of the world assail you, hope may be the anchor of your soul, both sure and steadfast. 2. An anchor is also wanted to keep a vessel from discomfort, for even if it be not wrecked it would be a wretched thing to be driven hither and thither, to the north and then to the south, as winds may shift. There are solid and sure truths infallibly certified to us, which operate powerfully upon the mind so as to prevent its being harassed and dismayed. The text speaks of "strong consolation." Is not that a glorious word—we have not merely consolation which will hold us fast and bear us up against the tempest in times of trouble, but strong consolation so that when affliction bursts forth with unusual strength, like a furious tornado, the strong consolation, like a sheet-anchor, may be more than a match for the strong temptation, and may enable us to triumph over all. Very restful is that man who is very believing. 3. An anchor is wanted, too, to preserve us from losing the headway which we have made. Those who know anything experimentally about Divine things have cast their anchor down, and as they heard the chain running out, they joyfully said, "This I know, and have believed. In this truth I stand fast and immovable. Blow, winds, you will never move me from this anchorage; whatsoever I have attained by the teaching of the Spirit, I will hold fast as long as I live." 4. Moreover, the anchor is needed that we may possess constancy and usefulness. The man who is easily moved, and believeth this to-day and that to-morrow, is a fickle creature. Who knows where to find him? II. Secondly, I invite you to consider THE MAKE OF THE ANCHOR—"That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation." Anchor-making is very important work. The anchor-smith has a very responsible business, for if he makes his anchor badly, or of weak material, woe to the shipmaster when the storm comes on. If anything in this world should be strong it should be an anchor, for upon it safety and life often depend. What is our anchor? It is made of two Divine things. The one is God's promise, a sure and stable thing indeed. To this sure word is added another Divine thing, namely, God's oath. Conceive the majesty, the awe, the certainty of this! Here, then, are two Divine assurances, which, like the flukes of the anchor, hold us fast. We have for our anchor two things, which, in addition to their being Divine, are expressly said to be immutable—that is, two things which cannot change. When the Lord utters a promise He never runs back from it—"the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." Notice next of these two things that it is said—"Wherein it is impossible for God to lie." It is inconsistent with the very idea and thought of God that He should be a liar. A lying God would be a solecism in language, a self-evident contradiction. But now, what is this promise, and what is this oath? The promise is the promise given to Abraham that his seed should be blessed, and in this seed should all nations of the earth be blessed also. To whom was this promise made? Who are the "seed"? To Christ Himself, and to all who are in Christ, is the covenant made sure, that the Lord will bless them for ever and make them blessings. And what is the oath? That may refer to the oath which the Lord sware to Abraham after the patriarch had offered up his son, for which see the twenty-second chapter of Genesis: but I think you will agree with me if I say it more probably refers to the oath recorded in the one hundred and tenth Psalm, which I would have you notice very carefully—"The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."

I think this is referred to, because the twentieth verse of our text goes on to say, "Whither the Forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an High Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek." Now I want you to see this anchor. Here is one of its holdfasts—God has promised to bless the faithful, He has declared that the seed of Abraham, namely, believers, shall be blessed, and made a blessing. Then comes the other arm of the anchor, which is equally strong to hold the soul, namely, the oath of the priesthood, by which the Lord Jesus is declared to be a priest for ever on our behalf; not an ordinary priest after the manner of Aaron, beginning and ending a temporary priesthood, but without beginning of days or end of years, living on for ever; a priest who has finished his sacrificial work, has gone in within the veil, and sits down for ever at the right hand of God, because His work is complete, and His priesthood abides in its eternal efficacy. What better anchor could the Comforter Himself devise for His people? What stronger consolation can the heirs of promise desire? III. OUR HOLD OF THE ANCHOR. It would be of no use for us to have an anchor, however good, unless we had a hold of it. The anchor may be sure, and may have a steadfast grip, but there must be a strong cable to connect the anchor with the ship. Formerly it was very general to use a hempen cable, but large vessels are not content to run the risk of breakage, and therefore they use a chain cable for the anchor. It is a grand thing to have a solid substantial connection between your soul and your hope; to have a confidence which is surely your own, from which you can never be separated. Our text speaks plainly about this laying hold of the anchor in the end of the 18th verse—"That we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." We must personally lay hold on the hope; there is the hope, but we are bound to grasp it and hold it fast. As with an anchor, the cable must pass through the ring, and so be bound to it, so must faith lay hold upon the hope of eternal life. "Well," saith one, "but may we lay hold upon it?" My answer is, the text says it is "set before us,"—to "lay hold of the hope set before us." You may grasp it, for it is set before you. Now, notice that our hold on the anchor should be a present thing and a conscious matter, for we read, "which hope we have." We are conscious that we have it. No one among us has any right to be at peace if he does not know that he has obtained a good hope through grace. May you all be able to say, "which hope we have." As it is well to have a cable made of the same metal as the anchor, so it is a blessed thing when our faith is of the same Divine character as the truth upon which it lays hold: it needs a God-given hope on our part to seize the God-given promise of which our hope is made. The right mode of procedure is to grasp God's promise with a God-created confidence: then you see that right away down from the vessel to the anchor the holdfast is all of a piece, so that at every point it is equally adapted to bear the strain. IV. Fourthly, let us speak of THE ANCHOR'S HOLD OF US. A ship has hold upon her anchor by her chain cable, but at the same time the most important thing is that the anchor keeps its hold upon the ship; and so, because it has entered into the ground of the sea bottom, holds the vessel hard and fast. Do you know anything about your hope holding you? It will hold you if it is a good hope; you will not be able to get away from it, but under temptation and depression of spirit, and under trial and affliction, you will not only hold your hope—that is your duty, but your hope will hold you—that is your privilege. How is it that our Divine anchor holds so fast? It is because it is in its own nature sure—"Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast." It is in itself sure as to its nature. The gospel is no cunningly devised fable: God has spoken it, it is a mass of fact, it is pure, unalloyed truth, with the broad seal of God Himself set upon it. Then, too, this anchor is "steadfast" as to its hold, it never moves from its lodgment. It is sure in its nature, and steadfast when in use, and thus it is practically safe. The result of the use of this anchor will be very comfortable to you. "Which hope ye have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast." I may say to every believer in Jesus, that his condition is very like that of the landsman on board ship when the sea was rather rough, and he said, "Captain, we are in great danger, are we not?" As an answer did not come, he said, "Captain, don't you see great fear?" Then the old seaman gruffly replied, "Yes, I see plenty of fear, but not a bit of danger." It is often so with us; when the winds are out and the storms are raging there is plenty of fear, but there is no danger. We may be much tossed, but we are quite safe, for we have an anchor of the soul both sure and steadfast, which will not start. One blessed thing is that our hope has such a grip of us that we know it. In a vessel you feel the pull of the anchor, and the

more the wind rages the more you feel that the anchor holds you. Like the boy with his kite; the kite is up in the clouds, where he cannot see it, but he knows it is there, for he feels it pull; so our good hope has gone up to heaven, and it is pulling and drawing us towards itself. V. And now, lastly, and best of all, THE ANCHOR'S UNSEEN GRIP, "which entereth into that within the veil." Our anchor is like every other, when it is of any use it is out of sight. When a man sees the anchor it is doing nothing, unless it happen to be some small stream anchor or grapnel in shallow water. When the anchor is of use it is gone: there it went overboard with a splash; far down there, all among the fish, lies the iron holdfast, quite out of sight. Where is your hope, brother? Do you believe because you can see? That is not believing at all. Do you believe because you can feel? That is feeling, it is not believing. But "Blessed is he that hath not seen and yet hath believed." Albeit our anchor is gone out of sight, yet thank God it has taken a very firm grip, and "entered into that which is within the veil." What hold can be equal to that which a man hath upon his God when he can cry, "Thou hast promised, therefore do as Thou hast said"? Note next, that when an anchor has a good grip down below, the more the ship drags the tighter its hold becomes. At first, when the anchor goes down, perhaps, it drops upon a hard rock, and there it cannot bite, but by and by it slips off from the rock and enters into the bottom of the sea; it digs into the soil, and, as the cable draws it on, the fluke goes deeper and deeper till the anchor almost buries itself, and the more it is pulled upon the deeper it descends. The anchor gets such a hold at last that it seems to say, "Now, Boreas, blow away, you must tear up the floor of the sea before the vessel shall be let go." Times of trouble send our hope deep down into fundamental truths. The text concludes with this very sweet reflection, that though our hope is out of sight we have a friend in the unseen land where our hope has found its hold. In anxious moments a sailor might almost wish that he could go with his anchor and fix it firmly. That he cannot do, but we have a friend who has gone to see to everything for us. Our anchor is within the veil, it is where we cannot see it, but Jesus is there, and our hope is inseparably connected with His person and work. Our Lord Jesus by His intercession is drawing us to heaven, and we have only to wait a little while and we shall be with Him where He is. He pleads for our home-bringing, and it will come to pass ere long. No sailor likes his anchor to come home, for if it does so in a storm matters look very ugly; our anchor will never come home, but it is drawing us home; it is drawing us to itself, not downwards beneath devouring waves, but upwards to ecstatic joys. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

The anchor of the soul:—In many respects the world, and human life on it, are like the sea. Itself restless, it cannot permit to rest any of the pilgrims that tread its heaving, shifting surface. At some times, and in some places, great tempests rise; but even in its ordinary condition it is always and everywhere uncertain, deceptive, dangerous. Currents of air and currents of ocean intermingle with and cross each other in endless and unknown complications, bringing even the most skilful mariner to his wits' end—making him afraid either to stand still or to advance. On this heaving sea we must all lie. The soul is tossed by many temptations; but the anchor of the soul is sure and steadfast within the veil. Without are fightings, within are fears, all these are against us; but one thing will overbalance and overcome them, "Our life is hid with Christ in God." Hope sometimes signifies the act of a human spirit laying hold of an unseen object, and sometimes the object unseen whereon the human spirit in its need lays hold. These two significations may be combined together: they are so combined here. "The hope set us" is Christ entered for us now within the veil; and the hope that "we have" is the exercise of a believing soul when it trusts in the risen Redeemer. These two cannot be separated. The one is the grasp which a believing soul takes of Christ, and the other is the Christ whom a believing soul is grasping. The anchor must not be cast on anything that floats on the water, however large and solid it may seem. The largest thing that floats is an iceberg. But although an iceberg does not shake like a ship, but seems to receive the waves and permit them to break on its sides as they break on the shore, it would be ruin to anchor the ship to it. The larger and the less would drift the same way and perish together. Ah, this stately Church, this high-seeming ecclesiastical organisation, woe to the human spirit that is tempted in the tossing to make fast to that great imposing mass! It is not sure and steadfast. It is floating: it moves with the current of the world: it moves to an awful shore. Not there, not there! Your hope, when you stretch it out and up for eternal life, must enter "into that within the veil, whither the Forerunner is for us

entered." Nor will it avail a drifting ship to fix its anchor on itself. Hope must go out for a hold, even as the ship's anchor must be flung away from the ship. The eye is made for looking with, not for looking at. Away from all in ourselves, and out through all that floats like ourselves on this shifting sea, we must throw the anchor of the soul through the shifting waters into Him who holds them in the hollow of His hand. Mark, further, that hope in Christ is specifically the anchor of the soul. There is no anchor that will make our temporal possessions fast. Wealth and friends, and even life, may drift away any day on the flood, and no power on earth can arrest the movement. These bodily things may or may not abide with a Christian, but his anchor does not hold them. It is only an anchor of the soul, not an anchor of the body. We must not expect from the Lord what He never promised. There are contrivances not a few in our day for fixing material property, so that it shall not drift away in the currents of time. The system of assurances both on life and property has reached an enormous magnitude. Taking up the obvious analogy employed in this scripture, one of the insurance societies has adopted the anchor as its name. But the action of these anchors is limited to things seen and temporal. They cannot be constructed so as to catch and keep any spiritual thing. They may hold fast a wife's fortune, when the life of the bread-winner falls in, but they cannot maintain joy in her heart, or kindle light in her eye. Far less can they insure against the shipwreck of the soul. Only one anchor can grasp and hold the better part of man—and that is the hope which enters into the heavens and fastens there in Jesus. The anchor—in so far as it indicates the object which hope grasps—the anchor is "sure and steadfast." The expressions are exact and full; the words are tried words; they are given in order that we might have strong consolation who have fled for refuge to the hope set before us. There are two cases in which one's hope may be disappointed: the support you lean on may be unwilling or unable to sustain you; in the one case it is deception, in the other weakness. A Christian's hope is not exposed to either flaw; it is both "sure and steadfast," that is, the Redeemer who holds them is willing and able. He will not falsely let you go, nor feebly faint beneath your weight. He is true and strong; for these are the words; He both will and can keep that which we commit to Him against that day. Take now a series of practical lessons: 1. The ship that is kept by an anchor, although safe, is not at ease. It does not on the one hand dread destruction, but neither on the other hand does it enjoy rest. "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you"; "in the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer: I have overcome the world." 2. But further, the ship that is held by an anchor is not only tossed in the tempest like other ships, it is tossed more than other ships. The ship that rides at anchor experiences rackings and heavings that ships which drift with the tide do not know. So, souls who have no hold of Christ seem to lie softer on the surface of a heaving world than souls that are anchored on His power and love. The drifting ship, before she strikes, is more smooth and more comfortable than the anchored one; but when she strikes, the smoothness is all over. The pleasures of sin are sweet to those who taste them; but the sweetness is only for a season. 3. When the anchor has been cast into a good ground, the heavier the strain that comes on it, the deeper and firmer grows its hold. It is thus with a trusting soul: temptations, instead of driving him away from his Saviour, only fix his affections firmer on the Rock of Ages. 4. The ship that is anchored is sensitive to every change of wind or tide, and ever turns sharply round to meet and resist the stream, from what direction soever it may flow. A ship is safest with her head to the sea and the tempest. Watch from a height any group of ships that may be lying in an open roadstead. At night when you retire they all point westward; in the morning they are all looking to the east. Each ship has infallibly felt the first veering of the wind or water, and instantly veered in the requisite direction, so that neither wind nor wave has ever been able to strike her on the broadside. Thereby hangs the safety of the ship. Ships not at anchor do not turn and face the foe. The ship that is left loose will be caught by a gust on her side and easily thrown over. As with ships, so with souls: those that are anchored feel sensitively the direction and strength of the temptation, and instantly turn to meet and to overcome it: whereas those that are not anchored are suddenly overcome, and their iniquities, like the wind, carry them away. "We are saved by hope"—saved not only from being outcast in the end, but from yielding to temptation now. 5. When the ship is anchored, and the sea is running high, there is great commotion at her bows. The waves in rapid succes-

sion come on and strike. When they strike they are broken, and leap, white and angry, high up on the vessel's sides. This tumult is by no means agreeable in itself, but the mariner on board would not like to want it, for it is the sign of safety. If, while wind and waves continue to rage, he should observe that this commotion had suddenly ceased, he would not rejoice. He would look eagerly over the bulwarks, and seeing the water blue on her bows, instead of the hissing, roaring spray, he would utter a scream of terror. The smoothness at her bows indicates to him that her anchor is dragging. The ship is drifting with wind and water to the shore. Such, too, is the experience of a soul. If you are fixed, a great flood is rushing by, and it must needs cause a commotion round you. An impetuous tide of worldliness will dash disagreeably against you from time to time. Do not be too anxious to make all smooth; peace may be bought too dear. When the mighty stream of vanity on which you float produces no ruffling at the point of contact—when it is not disagreeable to you, and you not disagreeable to it—suspect that your anchor is dragging, that it has lost its hold, and that you are drifting into danger. Cast in the anchor while the sea is calm; you will need it to lean on when the last strain comes on. (*W. Arnot.*) *The anchor of hope*:—I. Let us first of all note THE ANCHOR. It is necessary to have a very clear idea as to what the Holy Ghost means by this word "hope." Look at the previous verse, and you will see that we have the word "hope" there, "That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us"; then he adds, "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul." Now, I believe that the two hopes do not mean precisely the same thing. In the eighteenth verse it is a hope that is set before us; in that verse I have God's promise. God's promise is the basis of my hope, Christ Himself is the object of my hope. But, then, having that promise, there comes into my heart the grace of hope. That which the apostle means here is something far more than the common notion that we attach to the word "hope." I don't think I shall be going too far when I say that nothing is more adverse to the scriptural idea of the word "hope" than the meaning we generally intend by it. In our ordinary conversation hope is something less than faith, in Scripture it is something more—it is faith developed into a full assurance. So when the apostle speaks of hope it is not of that kind which says, "Well, I hope I may get to heaven, but I don't much think I shall," but it is of the kind which says, "I know that I am safe; I know that my Forerunner has entered within the veil for me; I know that God's promise and God's oath together do ensure my eternal salvation; and this hope is the anchor that is hung at the bows of my ship." Now, the anchor must be made of the right stuff. One writer has said that "anchor-making is very important work." I should imagine it was, and I should say woe to the anchor-smith who tampered with the material of the anchor. Why is it of infinite importance that the anchor should be right in its material? Because there are times when the lives of captain, mates, crew, passengers will all depend upon whether the anchor is made of the right stuff or not. Cast-iron anchors won't do; they must be made of the best material, well wrought and welded; and I think I am correct in saying that in all our naval establishments there is an arrangement for testing every anchor; and when it is proven it receives the Government mark. I know that the anchor of which we are speaking is true, because there is heaven's own brand upon it—"sure and steadfast." Better have no hope at all than have a bad one; better be without hope than place confidence in a false one. Do any of you say, "What should our anchor of hope be made of?" I will tell you. Go and get a whole number of "Thus saith the Lord" and weld them together, for the only anchor that is worth anything is that anchor of hope, the very material of which is "God has said." I believe the best smithy for making an anchor is the empty sepulchre just outside Jerusalem. Go into that sepulchre where once the body of Christ lay; it is empty now; there fashion thy anchor, "begotten unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." Now, with the anchor goes the chain, and I cannot separate between the two. I know that some have said that hope is the anchor and faith is the cable; well, it may be so, but you cannot really separate between faith and hope. Faith culminates in hope, and if faith does not lead to hope it is not worth anything; and, on the other hand, I cannot imagine a hope that is worth anything that does not come from faith, so I take cable and anchor as one. And I remark here that the anchor must have its cable, and the cable to be worth anything must have an anchor. I think that in my time I have come across some who had a chain, but there was no

anchor at the end of it. They did believe—at least they said so; and who are we that we should dare to question their veracity? They do believe, for if they believe nothing else they believe they have some doubts; and I have seen them always paying out the cable, and saying, "I believe, I believe," and yet somehow they have nothing at the end to grip. There is the chain, but it will drag over a hundred promises without laying hold of a solitary one. They have faith, so they say, but somehow or other it is not the faith that ever grips the Word of God sufficiently to bring their vessel round. The Lord save us from that sort of faith which is like a cable without any anchor at the end. But, on the other hand, I don't think the anchor would be very much use unless there was a cable attached to it. What would you think if in time of storm the captain said, "Overboard with the anchor," and overboard it goes; there is an end of it; there is no connection whatever between the anchor and the ship. An anchor thrown overboard without a cable is about as much use as a cable thrown over without an anchor. II. Now I want you to see THE ANCHOR LET GO. Our hope, like other anchors, is of no use as long as we can see it, as long as the anchor is slung at the bows it is doing nothing. You would think that man a lunatic who should say, "I always feel so safe when I see the anchor." You would think that captain an imbecile who should say. "I always think my ship is safe when I have my anchor on deck." The real worth of the anchor begins when it is thrown overboard. The ocean bed holds the anchor, and the anchor holds you. Now you will observe, if you look into the text, my anchor enters into that within the veil. I wish I had the power for a moment to give you a glimpse within the veil and see where the anchor is. If you were to have passed through the veil of the Tabernacle you would have seen an oblong chest—that was all; and on the top of that oblong chest a slab of gold exactly covering it. If you had looked inside that chest you would have found two tables of stone containing the law, written by the finger of God. That was called the mercy-seat. There, you will see, was mercy based on justice; peace reposing on righteousness; a Divine salvation resting on the pedestal of accomplished law—that was all that was within the veil; and, says Paul in our text, "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul which entereth"—now, I always find that nine people out of ten quote this text wrongly; they say, "which entereth within the veil," but it is, "which entereth into that within the veil"; in other words, the mercy-seat—God's mercy based on righteousness, or, if you like to put it so, Christ Himself. Now, for a moment note this. Am I not right in saying that the more the ship drags at the cable the more fixed becomes the anchor? Ah! when first my soul trusted Christ and I dropped my anchor, I don't think it had a very firm hold, but every strain on it has driven it deeper. It is always so, for if you look in Romans v. you will see that experience leads to hope. The more a man trusts God the better he knows God, and the better he knows God the more he trusts Him. He learns to sing, "My heart is fixed to God, my heart is fixed." III. I have tried to show you the anchorage; now look at THE SHIP RIDING AT ANCHOR. One thing I observe is that, though she is anchored, she does not necessarily escape rolling, nor her passengers avoid sickness. There may be considerable discomfort while there is no danger. Many souls as well as ships are anchored in the "downs"! I notice, too, that when a ship is at anchor she always faces the tide. I was travelling recently on the Chatham and Dover Railway, and just as we approached Whitstable we obtained a glimpse of the sea, and I said to a fellow-passenger, "The tide is coming in." "How can you know that?" he asked. "Why," I replied, "it's the simplest thing in the world; look at the boats that are anchored there, and see which way they face; anchored craft always face the tide." Ay, and so will it be with you; if you know what it is to have your anchor gripping that which is within the veil you won't be a man who is afraid to look the world in the face. The ship swings round with the tide and seems to say, "I am not to be caught, whichever way you come you will meet my bow." These are the sort of Christians we want at the present time—men who are so anchored on to God, who are so filled with His spirit, and who have so bright a hope within them that they must face the run of the tide of this world. A dying sailor was near his end, and the death sweat stood upon his brow. A friend said, "Well, mate, how is it with you now?" The dying man, with a smile, made answer, "The anchor holds, the anchor holds." God grant that ever one of you may be able to say this, for His name's sake. (*A. G. Brown.*)

Sure anchoring:—I. FIRST, THE STAY OR ANCHORAGE OF THE SOUL DURING THE VOYAGE OF LIFE IS CHRIST WITHIN THE VEIL, CHRIST IN THE HOLY OF HOLIES,

CHRIST IN THE HEAVENLY HAVEN. UPON HIM IN HIS EXALTED GLORY THE SOUL STAYS ITSELF AND IS SECURE. 1. In the first place, He is the living Christ of intercession, not the dead Christ of sacrifice. 2. Secondly, although within the veil, the living Christ has a vital interest in us who are yet without. His entrance into the heavenly place has not broken off His connection with our earthly lives and interests. The same redeeming purposes, the same tender human sympathies, the same great mediatorial solicitudes fill His Divine heart. 3. The use of the term "Forerunner" conveys to us an additional idea not included in that of the priesthood. The high priest was not a forerunner; no one was to follow him into the holy place; but Christ is strictly a forerunner. "Where He is, there His servant is to be also"—where He is, and as He is, for we are to be "like Him when we see Him as He is." At present He is our interceding Priest, but the consummation of His intercession is our reception into the heavenly place with Him. As the Forerunner He enters the holy place, not alone, but only first. "I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there shall My servant be also." Very great and very precious are the assurances thus conveyed to us. First, that in virtue of His entrance to the heavenly place we shall surely enter also. He has "opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers"; by His own blood He appears in the presence of God, and secures our appearance also. "Whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life." He prepares the place for us in the sense of making a place for us certain. But more than this is meant. As the Forerunner He secures our entrance under the same conditions; we enter as He has entered; our humanity glorified as His is glorified. We shall enter as He has entered, with a proper resurrection body; with all the marks of personal identity that distinguish us here, that are the means of intelligent communion and friendship. II. IN THE SECOND PLACE, THE ANCHOR WHICH HOLDS THE SOUL STEADFAST TO THE LIVING FORERUNNER WHO IS WITHIN THE VEIL IS HOPE; HOPE MOORS THE STORM-TOSSED SOUL TO THAT WHICH WILL SECURE IT. Our hope must be "a good hope through grace"; our anchor must have length of cable sufficient, and must rest only upon Christ. Hope is so far more than faith. That which is seen is not hope. Hope is that trust in the future and the unseen which calculates probabilities, which hits the mean between possible failure and certain security. We feel uncertainty enough to make it hope, and assurance enough to make the hope strong and animating. We "give all diligence to make our calling and election sure." We cast out the anchor of our hope with cable enough, so to speak, to fasten it upon the unseen Christ. A great and blessed hope, the hope of being with Christ, and of realising the exceeding great and eternal weight of glory. A good hope, warranted by accumulated evidence—by God's wonderful revelation—by His assured and unchangeable promises; a hope warranted by His words, by His resurrection, by His entrance into the holy place as our Forerunner, who hath "brought life and immortality to light," and who is Himself "the Resurrection and the Life." We are "begotten again to this lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." III. OBSERVE, IN THE THIRD PLACE, HOW HOPE FIXED UPON CHRIST MAKES THE SOUL STEADFAST AND SECURE. Unregenerate men are described as "having no hope"; they are "without God and without hope in the world"; that is, they have no hope that is not delusive, that will not fail them in the testing hour, and make them ashamed. "The God of hope" is not their hope; they hope in something else, they do not know the hope that comes "through patience and comfort of the Scriptures." There can be no hope for a man who has not fled for refuge to Christ, "the Lord Jesus Christ, who is our hope." To Christ, then, the redeemed man has come; he has fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before him, and this hope is the anchor that keeps his soul firm. It is a thing of practical, powerful efficacy, that secures both our present steadfastness and our ultimate salvation. It is "an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast." 1. The first suggestion of the metaphor is of a tempestuous and perilous sea, which our ship of life has to navigate, and that we are in danger of "making shipwreck of faith and a good conscience." What image could give a more vivid representation of our spiritual condition?—of the rough sea upon which we ride?—the hurricane above us, and the sunken rocks and quicksands around us. 2. How beautifully in this representation are both worlds brought together! Our ship sails upon the ocean of this life, has to bear its tempests, navigate its perils, but she finds her sure anchorage within the veil—the anchor of her hope is fixed in the glorified Christ. The ship rides upon the sea of time; its anchor is fixed in eternity. Here there is

no sure anchorage—hence the anchor is "hope," the expectation of things not seen. The immortal soul can fix securely only upon an immortal stay; and when after vain hopes in other things she has fixed her anchor upon Christ, it is as though she had laid hold upon the bases of the everlasting hills, as though with sevenfold strength she had grasped "the bars of the earth." (*H. Allon, D.D.*) *The soul's anchor*:—I. The soul, like a vessel, is in quest of a desired haven. Mind is made to look into the future, live by hope, and are sailing in expectation of peace. But the expectation of some reaches no further and gets no higher than earth, while the spiritual anchor in the calm depths of the Eternal Presence, and the solid moorings of eternity. II. Hope of heaven, like an anchor, preserves the soul in its passage. Some sail without a ripple or a swell, under propitious gales which fill their sails and press them homeward. Others, like Paul in the Adriatic, wrestle with the billows, "exceedingly tossed with a tempest," with neither sun nor stars in sight. But the soul is preserved, and outrides the storm. "He bringeth them to their desired haven." III. This hope is sure and steadfast. Sure—will not disappoint us—a good hope through grace. Steadfast in its nature, taking good hold, unchangeable in its promise and purpose, "a lively (living) hope which maketh not ashamed." Lay hold upon this "hope set before you in the gospel." (*The Study.*) *The voyage of life*:—I. THE VOYAGE OF LIFE EVEN TO THE GOOD IS TUMULTUOUS. Because of—1. Physical infirmities. 2. Secular anxieties. 3. Social afflictions. 4. Spiritual conflicts. II. THE GOSPEL PROVISIONS ARE EQUAL TO THE EMERGENCIES OF THE VOYAGE OF LIFE. 1. It has an anchor—Hope. 2. It has a refuge. III. THE EFFICACY OF THE GOSPEL PROVISIONS FOR THE VOYAGE OF LIFE IS IMMUTABLY GUARANTEED. 1. God has an "immutable counsel" concerning the safety of His people. 2. God desires to demonstrate to His people the immutability of His counsels in relation to their safety. 3. God furnishes this demonstration by some most solemn declarations. 4. God's declaration cannot but be true. (*Homilist.*) *Hope the anchor of the soul*:—I. THE NATURE OF CHRISTIAN HOPE. 1. The object of hope is always really or imaginarily good enjoyment of God—of His favour, smiles, and blessings to end of life, and of His presence for ever. 2. The object of hope must be future good. What God has laid up for them that love Him. 3. The object of hope must be attainable. "God will withhold no good thing from them that walk uprightly." II. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THIS HOPE. 1. The anchor is essential to secure the vessel in time of storm and peril. 2. The anchor is only of service when connected with a good cable. 3. The anchor must be employed. 4. The anchor must be cast on good ground. III. THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS HOPE. 1. It is of importance to our Christian character. It is as indispensable to the believing soul as the anchor is to the vessel. 2. It is of importance to our labours. All must be done in hope. We must sow in hope; pray and wrestle in hope. 3. It is of importance to our happiness. IV. THE CERTAINTY OF THIS HOPE. "Both sure and steadfast." The Christian's hope cannot fail, unless—1. The Divine veracity fails. 2. Christ's precious blood should lose its saving efficacy. 3. Christ's presence in heaven and intercession should be unavailing. APPLICATION. 1. Let the believer increase in hope, rejoice in hope, until its enrapturing anticipations shall terminate in glorious fruition. 2. Let the hopeless come to the blessed Saviour, who will, by the gracious manifestation of Himself, banish darkness from the mind, and despondency and sorrow from the heart. There is, in the gospel, ample ground of hope to all who receive the record God has given of His Son. (*J. Burns, D.D.*) *Our anchor*:—One of the sights in Rome is the "Gallery of Inscriptions" in the Vatican. Inscriptions from old heathen tombs cover the one side, and inscriptions from the early Christian tombs cover the other. There is a heaven-wide difference between the two. On the heathen side there is one long wail of despair—the shriek of friends as the dying were hurried from them into the hateful abyss. But the Christian side breathes only peace and hope. The names of the departed are mixed up with the name of Christ, and some rudely carved symbol of the faith is usually added. The ship and the anchor are the greatest favourites. At the side of the anchor the Christians often carved the words, "Hope in Christ," or "Hope in God," thus uniting and explaining, as our text does, the word and the image. I. OUR ANCHOR. "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul." The hope of the Bible is not like the hope of the world. The old fable says that Pandora shut up all the miseries of men along with hope in a box. The box was offered to Prometheus, or Forethought, who would not have it; and then to Epimetheus, or Afterwit, who took it. Rashly opening it, all the

miseries flew abroad, and when he hastily closed the lid, only hope remained in the box. And so, they said, every one has hope. You hope to be rich some day, but your hopes won't make you rich unless you take the right way. What a poor, broken, hopeless thing our hope often is! Hugh Miller tells that when his father was drowned at sea, he was a boy five years old. Long after every one else had ceased to hope, the little fellow used to climb, day after day, a grassy knoll, and look wistfully out over the Moray Firth for the sloop with the two stripes of white and the two square topsails. But months and years passed by, and the white stripes and square topsails he never saw. That poor boy looking seaward is a true parable of mankind. Here is a wicked man, who hopes to be saved a last. You hope so and I hope so; but his hopes, and yours, and mine won't help him, unless he leave off his sins and come to the Saviour. The hope of the soul is often the most uncertain thing in the world, for many are content with a hope they dare not examine. But the Christian's hope is sure, and never disappoints; for it is just saving faith with its eye full upon a glorious future. The anchor here (including cable and all) stands for everything that links a Christian to Christ, everything that gives heaven a hold on him, and him a hold on heaven. Our anchor is "sure and steadfast." God says and swears by Himself, that if you trust in Christ, you shall never perish. But remember you must trust in the living Saviour, not in some dead thing belonging to Him. Our Greek schoolbooks introduce us to the simpleton at sea in a storm. A sailor found him grasping the anchor on deck. The simpleton explained that the anchor was the sign of hope, and that, as he had it in his arms, there was no fear of his drowning. You are no wiser than he if you trust in any sign, or mere hope, or dead word. Hope was not crucified for you, nor were ye baptised in the name of Hope. The hope of our text means the thing hoped for, just as a "will" means not the parchment but the bequest. II. THE FAR END OF THE ANCHOR IN HEAVEN. The sailor casts out his anchor, which rushes through the sea to the bottom, out of sight. The source of his safety is hidden from his eyes. And so the Christian casts his anchor up through the unseen, even to the very heart of heaven, the holy of holies in the Temple above. The sailor in a storm seeks a safe anchorage. Some of our sheltered bays, with a stiff clayey bottom, are crowded with vessels in squally weather. As doves to their windows, the sailors "flee for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before" them by their charts: they cast anchor and smile at the storm. It is plain that your hope must anchor in something outside of yourself. Two fishermen at sea were once talking about heavenly things. The one was busied with his frames and feelings, always looking into his own heart, and not unto Christ. His comrade replied, "Ah, John, you are for anchoring in the hull; you must throw your anchor out." Well spoken; for no refuge or safety can we find in self. And further, earth has no safe anchorage for the soul. Not within, not around, but above lies the firm ground in which you must sink your anchor. "Hast thou hope?" they asked John Knox, as he lay a-dying. He spoke nothing, but raised his finger and pointed upwards, and so died. Yes, our anchor finds holding-ground only in heaven. But heaven is a large place, and there are many things in it, you may say. True, but our hope is fixed not on the things, but on the Person in heaven. III. THIS END OF THE ANCHOR. "Which hope we have," or hold, "as an anchor," or anchor-cable. The hope is set before us that we may lay hold upon it. Think here of a boat at anchor, and a boy in it holding the anchor-rope. If he lets go his hold he drifts out to sea. "Hold on," you cry to him, and "hold on" is the apostle's appeal to the Hebrews. Look now at that comrade of which Paul, though a sickly man of books, and no seaman, is really the captain and the saviour—showing us that the Christian should always be of men the most manly, and of heroes the most heroic. There he stands, calm and erect; tossed, but not drowned. Such is the Christian soul, tranquil amid the wild waves. All the storms of life come to him as they come to other men, but his Christian hope steadies his soul. (*James Wells, M.A.*) *The anchor of the soul*:—There is a certain hope which Christian people have: a hope set before us: which is like an anchor: an anchor which has caught firm hold, and which is holding on, somewhere within this veil. The meaning seems to be that the cable from that anchor reaches to us; and we hold on to it. The soul "lays hold upon the hope set before us": and then this hope does for the soul what an anchor does for the ship that keeps an unbroken hold of its anchor. This is what the imagery, the comparison in the text means. Well, is it true? I do not ask now, True to our own experience? Put that away just at present. But is it true as a general principle? That is, If a man had "laid hold of the hope set before us," would it be like an anchor of the

soul? Yes, plainly it would be. The hope of eternal life, of happiness with Christ and all we love in heaven, is well fitted to keep the soul steadfast amid the waves and storms of this world—that is, to do to the soul the anchor's part. It will keep the soul from drifting away, or being driven away, by gales or currents, or upon rocks and quicksands near. Think of sorrow: sorrow in its widest sense, including all that makes us sad and unhappy—losses, privations, disappointments, bereavements, pain, sickness, death—the instinctive feeling of our race has discerned in all these the storms and tempests of the world within. "Not a wave of trouble"; pleasant the prospect, apt the similitude! You remember good Juxon's words, as the ill-fated king knelt to the block: "One last stage, somewhat turbulent and troublesome, but still a very short one": life's last brief storm must be gone through. We take the good hope with all that comes with it, and from which it cannot be separated. We take it with the conviction, amid all sorrows, that this is the right way; that it was Christ that led us into them and will lead us through them; that for all this there is a need-be; that it is all for our best good—our sanctification, our weaning from sense and time; that it is educating us for higher and better things than we ever could be fit for without it. Think now of temptation: temptation in the largest sense: everything from within and without that would lead us into sin—that would seek to make us make shipwreck of our souls. Here, too, the hope of heaven, and all that is bound up along with the hope of heaven, will hold up against all these. And here there is something especially fit in the similitude of an anchor. For the special business of the anchor is to keep the ship from drifting away. Now there are temptations which come like a sudden blast or squall upon the anchored ship; and there are other temptations which are like an insensible current, drifting away and away. But whether temptation addresses us as the strong single impulse, or as the gently and perpetually gliding current, it is plain that in either case we must have something to hold us up against it: something which shall be to the soul as the anchor that keeps the ship from driving or drifting, and makes it hold its ground. There is but one thing that can be that: only grace from above; the good hope through grace—and all that is implied in having that good hope; the faith, resting simply on a crucified Saviour; the sight of sin, as it is seen in the light from Gethsemane and Calvary: the realising anticipation of all the rest and joy and purity above, which permitted sin would fling away. In discourses founded upon my text, it is a common thing to point out that the good hope which comes of a firm faith is as an anchor of the soul in that it is what will hold up the soul against doctrinal error. St. Paul likens the man, ready to catch up every new idea or crotchet, if attractively put, to one "tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine": and the comparison is apt. Now, in these shifting days, no doubt a real personal interest in vital Christian truth—a personal hope through that—is the great anchor that shall keep us in the good old ways, and save us from making shipwreck of our faith. Just a word now of the assurance the text gives us that the anchored hope which is to preserve us steadfast amid the storms of life must have its hold "within the veil." That is, to really do us any good, our great daily hope must be of something beyond this life and this world. The hope must take hold "within the veil"; realise, in some measure, the substantiality of the possessions there which seem so vague and far away to mere sense. Only thus can it serve as an anchor, amid the failing of earthly stays and hopes. And a further thought is suggested by the text. The anchor is not holding on where you might sometimes have uneasy doubts of its holding securely; not amid the waves and storms of this uncertain world; but in the calm within the veil, where our Redeemer, our Forerunner, He who walked first the way which it is appointed that we should walk, has entered in; for us entered in; entered in our never-failing Intercessor, and abides the Remembrancer of His one great atoning sacrifice, our High Priest upon the throne. If He be not with us here, visible King of His Church, ready to resolve many weary questions about it with which we would wish to go to Him, it is because it is better for us He should be there; and meanwhile He has sent the Blessed Spirit to more than fill His place; and His Church is left to pray that it may more and more "know Him, and the power of His Resurrection"! (*A. K. H. Boyd, D.D.*) *Hope the anchor of the soul:*—I. I call your attention, in the first place, to THAT WITHIN THE VEIL, WHICH IS AT ONCE THE GROUND AND THE OBJECT OF THE BELIEVING HOPE OF EVERY TRUE CHRISTIAN. 1. A manifestation of God under the new and evangelical relation of God reconciled to His offending creatures. 2. The priesthood of our Saviour. 3. "All spiritual

blessings in heavenly places in Christ." This refers more particularly to the gift of the Holy Spirit, and the communication of spiritual blessings through Him. 4. In a verse which follows the text there is an expression of great emphasis. "Whither," says the apostle, "the Forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus." Well, then, if Christ is the Forerunner, others have followed Him, and have entered within the veil; all the apostles have passed within the veil; all the first disciples, who followed Him through the reproaches and persecutions of the first ages; all, in fact, from that time to the present, who have died in the faith, have gone within the veil of our great Forerunner. Here, indeed, is a scene for hope to fix her steady gaze upon; and when we thus behold the multitude which no man can number, who keep their eternal Sabbath in that sanctuary above, shall we not be cheered with the songs sung there, and which we hope ourselves one day to learn, and encouraged to pass through the various troubles and exercises of this present state, seeing that the way into the holiest of all is indeed made manifest, and that we may follow those who have entered the veil, and are now in the presence of God? II. There are PRACTICAL LESSONS which we may learn from this subject. 1. And the first is, the necessity of fleeing for refuge, as the apostle expresses it, to lay hold on the hope thus set before you. 2. Let those who have thus fled for refuge, to lay hold on the hope set before them, feel the duty they owe to others who are still exposed to the danger which themselves have happily escaped. 3. Let those who have entered into this port, and have cast their anchor there, be prepared for storms. (*R. Watson.*) *Hope the soul's anchor*:—This comparison of hope with an anchor is opposed to common modes of thought and expression. The more natural figure to most minds would be that of a buoy. I apprehend that, where that of the anchor is employed, in nine cases out of ten it is quoted from the Bible without any definite meaning. Yet I do not believe that it was used at haphazard in our text; but it seems to me one of the numerous cases in which a profound wealth of spiritual significance is condensed into a single word of Scripture. All hope is not anchor-like; or, if it be, there are many hopes which are anchors with cables too short to reach the bottom, and which therefore only expose the vessel to quicker, more irregular, and more violent pitches and plunges in the storm-lifted deep. The anchor needs a length of cable sufficient, but not too great; adequate weight; and the adjustment of stock, shank, and flukes, which will most effectually hold the ship to her moorings. These characteristics applied to spiritual things would give us adequate remoteness, vastness, and certainty as the requisite properties of a hope that shall be an anchor to the soul. I. ADEQUATE REMOTENESS. Remote in point of time we cannot, indeed, pronounce the objects of the Christian hope; for there may be at any moment but a step between us and death. Yet the due effect of distance is produced in part by the indefiniteness of our term of life here, and in part by our imperfect knowledge of the details of our future condition. The hopeful Christian sees heaven near enough to furnish every possible motive for virtue, fidelity, and spiritual affections, yet not near enough to detach him from the relations in which God would have him conscientiously faithful—from the field of duty of which the Master says, "Occupy till I come." II. Our Christian anchor is of SUFFICIENT WEIGHT. Time presents no attractions that can vie with the promises of eternity. Our conceptions of heaven are enough to more than fill the soul with their fulness, and to outshine all things else by their Divine radiance. The imagery of the New Testament carries fancy on to its utmost limits and up till its pinions can soar no higher. In these boundless and infinite prospects we have more than a counterpoise for whatever might beguile our souls from their high calling and destiny. III. Our Christian anchor has ITS FIRM HOLD OF CERTAIN AND IMMOVABLE EVIDENCE. Little as we know where or what heaven is, no law of our being is made more sure to us than our immortality. Its evidence is not intuition, surmise, speculation, or longing, but fact which cannot be gainsaid unless we pronounce the whole past a dream and all history a fable. We have the same proof that the dead have risen which we have that countless multitudes have sunk into the death-slumber. The resurrection of Christ is not even an isolated fact of authentic history, but a fact which has left surer traces of its reality, deeper channels of its influence, than any other event that has occurred since the creation of man. It was the initial cause, and the only possible cause, of a series of events and experiences that have been developing themselves for eighteen hundred years. In thus laying intense stress on the historical argument, I forget not the intimations of immortality, the hopeful analogies, he onward pointings, of which nature and life are full. The spring flowers that

bloom around the sepulchre of Jesus never wither. Again, there are times when our souls seem almost conscious of immortality, spring forth into a higher sphere, behold their celestial birthright, and read the words of eternal life in capacities which they have no room to develop here, in longings which earth cannot satisfy, in aspirations that transcend all created good. But weariness, care, or sorrow comes; and then the wings of the spirit droop, its heaven is clouded over, and to him who depends on his own clear intuition all looks dark and desolate. But the Christian thus bowed down stoops to look into the place where the Lord lay, hears the voice of the resurrection angel, and sees, through a cleft in the clouds, the shining path of the ascending Redeemer. We have, then, a hope fitted to be an anchor of the soul, and we need it to give us stability equally among the temptations, the duties, and the trials of life. 1. Among its temptations. How close their pressure! How intense their disturbing force! Like the swell of a storm-lifted ocean, they break upon our youth, dash against the strength of our maturer years, and burst over the hoary head. Appetite and passion, pride and gain, ease and indolence, how do they essay by turns their single and their combined power upon every soul of man! How do they toss and dash from breaker to breaker, and from shallow to shallow, every unanchored spirit! And their hold upon us is as unanchored spirits—through our intense desire of immediate gratification and our detachment from the unseen future. But let me only behold in faith my risen Saviour, and hear from Him those Divine words, "Because I live, ye shall live also," then I can cast away the withe ing wreath from the earthly vine for the amaranthine crown. I can dash from me the cup of sensual gratification, for the water which I may drink and thirst no more for ever. I can tread the rough and steep path, while at every step the celestial city rises clearer and brighter to my view. 2. But we no less need this anchor when we have escaped the temptations which assail the lower nature, and find ourselves on the shoreless sea of duty. Here again the waves lift up their voice. How vast the extent, how complex the demands, how imperative the claims, how earnest the calls of spiritual obligation! How liable we are, even with a quick and tender conscience, to let some of these voices drown others—to select our easy or our favourite departments of duty instead of aiming at entire fidelity—to let waywardness modify principle, and convenience limit obligation! How does the random, erratic course of many who mean to do right and well, resemble that of a ship driven by the wind and tossed on the billows! And here our anchor comes into use, to keep us in the moorings where God has placed us. It is earthly breezes—human opinion, fear, and favour—that sway us hither and thither. The consciousness of our immortality alone can make us firm and resolute, with every real demand of duty before us in its relative claims and just proportions, with the work given us to do present to the inward vision, and with the whole power of the world to come making its strength perfect in our weakness. 3. We need our anchor among the trials and sorrows which are the lot of all. However calmly the sea of life may roll for a while there are times when the waves and the billows go over us, and the floods lift up their voices around us—times when, if in this life only we have hope, we are ready to pronounce ourselves of all men the most miserable. When the gains of a lifetime are swept away in an hour, and a prime spent in affluence sinks into a needy old age; when, agonised by violent disease, we pass at once from vigorous health into the very jaws of death, or, crippled by chronic infirmity, we drag our limbs after us as a prisoner his chain; when the light of our eyes is quenched, and the voices that made sweet melody in our hearts are silent in the grave: when, as with not a few among us, our dead outnumber our living, and the monuments in the cemetery are more than the olive-plants around our table—we then have encountered griefs beyond the reach of human comforters. They set adrift the soul that has no hold on heaven. They abandon it to empty regrets, fruitless complainings—often to a despondency which can find relief only in the self-forgetfulness of sensual indulgence. They are, in an earthly point of view, intense and unmitigated evils. Yet, with the anchor of an immortal hope, how serenely may the Christian outride these storms, and at the very acme of their violence hear the voice which ever says to the winds and to the waves, "Peace! be still!" (*A. P. Peabody.*)

A good anchor:—That the soul needs an anchor none will deny. There is scarcely a time in its experience when it does not feel its need of a stay. Even in the harbour the ship is safe only as she is securely moored; and at sea her only chance of safety frequently depends upon her possession of these essential safeguards. I. WE NEED AN ANCHOR IN PROPORTION TO THE SHIP. A small kedge will hold a smack, but the best bower is required for others; while some can do with nothing less than the

great sheet anchor. Other things being equal, the greater the ship, the larger must be the anchor which is to hold her. But with the utmost possible precaution many a ship has perished. One of Her Majesty's ships, the *Megæra*, was totally lost through the badness of her anchors. One by one, no less than three gave way, and they were obliged to let the vessel drive on to the beach. But if it be important that the ship should be provided with proportionate anchors, how much more important is it that the soul should be well supplied with that which will be adequate to its emergencies! And what will suffice to meet these emergencies? What is there that can meet the requirements of the priceless, never-dying soul? Formalism is wholly inadequate as an "anchor of the soul." It may do very well for fine weather, but it will not hold in a gale. There is but one good anchor. "A good hope through grace" alone can hold thee there, and, blessed be God, that is sufficient. But there are not a few who, to make assurance doubly sure, have gone to yet another quarter, whence they have hoped to obtain an anchor which, together with the first, would be more than sufficient to meet their case. They are hoping that, through their good works, they will be enabled to outride the dangers of death and the judgment. The place from whence this article comes is kept by old Legality. Anxious sinner, believe me, "It is of faith, that it might be by grace." It is "not of works, lest any man should boast." But there are some who, to these two, seek to add even yet another. Their idea seems to be that no one, nor even two anchors, are sufficient. They go off to feeling in order to strengthen the other two. If legality has slain its thousands, feeling has slain its ten thousands. People are foolish to imagine that because they can work themselves up to a certain pitch of religious feeling, that therefore they are saved. It is an anchor that will not hold; nay, it is an anchor that will not even sink. II. WE NEED AN ANCHORAGE IN PROPORTION TO THE ANCHOR. The best anchor in the world will not hold in a bad ground. We can easily imagine that a bad anchorage, like a bad anchor, may do very well for fine weather, but will fail in the storm. We had, I remember, an anchor that had held us well in any weather whenever we had cast it. But one day, being near the shore, we threw it over as usual, and went below to dinner. We had not been there many minutes, however, when the wind freshened, and a sudden squall with heavy rain came whistling through the shrouds. Of course, because our anchor had held us through weather worse than that, we listened with the greatest composure to the music of the storm, and were not a little entertained by it as we proceeded with our meal. But while we had not the least apprehension of danger, we were suddenly aroused by the lurching of the vessel as, dragging her anchor with her, she was being driven from her anchorage. It was no fault of the anchor; it was bad ground. We found our anchor, good as it was, could not get a hold on the indifferent anchorage into which we had cast it. It was well for us that the wind came off the land, for had it come the other way nothing could have saved us from being driven on the shore. As it was, we escaped with a drenching. I need not say that such a contingency can never happen in true spiritual navigation. The anchorage indicated in our text is equal to the anchor. It is "that within the veil." 1. The blood-sprinkled mercy-seat. Mercy through Christ is the one ground of the sinner's hope, and the blood-sprinkled mercy-seat is the only place at which he may draw near to God. 2. The sinner's Great Advocate. What a source of comfort to the convinced sinner! Look at it, anxious heart. Surely, when such an Advocate has undertaken your cause, you can leave it in His hands. Give it up to Him now. 3. The ark of Jehovah's covenant. What an anchorage! Are you conscious of daily shortcomings and oppressed continually with a sense of guilt? You may see here how, always, the "sin is covered" over, and how Jehovah Himself, as in His Shekinah glory He dwells between the cherubim, sees no spot upon you. As the broken law was hidden in the ark under the blood, so the believing sinner is hidden in Christ. This is our hope! Are you feeling your weakness? As you have to confront the dangers and difficulties of life, do you feel your need of help? The manna here reminds you of His faithfulness, whose name is still Jehovah-Jireh. You cannot look within that sacred ark, and not remember that He has said, "As thy days, so shall thy strength be," and "My grace is sufficient for thee." Are you in distress because of God's chastening hand? In the budding rod you may see the type of every sorrow that befalls the saint. It may be a rod, but it is a rod that buds and blossoms, and brings forth fruit. 4. And then, besides all this, we are reminded of the everlasting covenant. What a world of satisfaction we find there! "A world," did I say? What a heaven of height, and depth, and breadth, and length of infinite sufficiency is discovered to us there! III. WE NEED A CABLE IN

PROPORTION TO BOTH. It is not enough to know that you have a good anchorage and a good anchor: you must also be persuaded that you have the God-wrought cable of living faith: "By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." But though the anchors of feeling, and formality, and legality, and orthodoxy may be, and are, cast cableless into the sea, if you obtain the anchor "good hope," the cable of living faith is always possessed with it. For—1. These are ever connected. Faith is the blessed cable which holds the ship here, and the anchor there. As the one strong chain ever vibrates and keeps up a communication between the anchorage and the ship, so faith, while it dwells here in the heart, ever dwells there "within the veil." 2. These can never fail. It is quite possible for a man to have an anchor and a cable of the most genuine quality, and yet, through ignorance of their nature, to be all the time in jeopardy; and it is equally possible, through the same kind of ignorance, for a man having an anchor and a cable that are bad, to repose in a false confidence until he is awakened to a terrible discovery of his mistake. Sailors have often ridden out a gale with fear and trembling, expecting every moment to find themselves adrift, while others have been suddenly astonished to find that the anchor upon which they could have staked their lives has actually given out. And these represent two very large classes of people in the religious world. There are thousands who have a good hope, but who fear that it is bad; and there are millions who have a false hope, but who believe that it is good. To show either class their mistake is most difficult. If you try to remind the hypocrite that his hope "will perish," the sincere seeker immediately appropriates the warning as intended for himself; while if you endeavour to assure the broken-hearted that "the Lord is nigh unto them" to save them, the hypocrite will at once claim the comfort as his own. Believe me, sorrowing soul, if you are taking hold of "that within the veil"—if Christ, and Christ alone, is your trust—if His blood is your plea, and His advocacy is your daily joy, then you have the almighty anchor cast in the all-sufficient anchorage, and you are held by the omnipotent cable of living faith. With these you are safe; disaster is impossible. You must and will ride out every possible change. 3. These ever remain unchanged. It will be a blessed thing if we can always realise this. Let our hope be "sure and steadfast." The cable will sometimes be very much shaken; in all her changes it will rise and fall with the vessel; but, beloved friends, having taken, let hope keep its hold on that which is within the veil. The strongest cable will tremble, and so will the strongest faith; but the trembling cable holds a "sure and steadfast" anchor, and that anchor moves not though the chain may shake. (*W. H. Burton.*) *The anchor of the soul*:—There are many things which a sailor holds to be essential when he goes out to sea. The captain who should go out to sea without an anchor would be deemed a madman. Life is a restless, unquiet sea, full of trouble and danger. You are the ships that sail this sea, and are exposed to its changes and storms. Many of you are now just leaving the peaceful harbour of home with all its tender influences, and are putting forth upon the wide and open main. I remember hearing of an infidel who, when laid upon his last bed of sickness, was urged by his godless companions not to show the white feather, but to hold on. What do you think was the answer of the dying man? With a face full of hopeless dismay, he looked at them and said, "How can I hold on when I have nothing to hold by?" Ah! he felt the need of a spiritual grapnel, something "sure and steadfast" to which he could cling. But it is not only in the hour of death we require it; we need it all through life. Let us then have a little talk together about this "anchor of the soul." I. WHAT IS IT MADE OF? You all know what ordinary anchors are made of. In very early times there were no such things known; but large stones with a rope attached to them were used for the purpose. By and by the Greeks began to make them of iron, and their example has been followed by all maritime nations. If anything in the world needs to be robust and reliable it is an anchor, for on its strength hundreds of precious lives may depend. Well, what about our spiritual anchor? Ah! of how much more importance it is that it be durable, seeing the interests here at stake are everlasting. You cannot afford to run any risks with the soul, for it is more valuable than the whole world. Now, having seen what the anchor of the soul is made of, I want you to think of this question. II. WHY DO YOU NEED IT? Why does a ship need an anchor? To keep it steady, you say, and save it from being carried away by wind and tide. Oh, how many influences there are around us that put us in danger. Then an anchor is of great value in preventing a ship from drifting. Young converts will soon find themselves in danger of backsliding. When you get out into

the world you will find a strong current running dead against you; the influence of irreligious society, and of a spurious charity, will tempt you to abate your zeal, and to give up, one by one, holy practices and vital truths which once were dear to you as life, and you will glide unconsciously back into an easy-going formalism; and then, alas! for your spiritual and eternal interests! Therefore, as St. John says, "Look to yourselves, that ye lose not those things which ye have wrought, but that ye receive a full reward." Keep fast hold of your hope in Christ, and you will be able to maintain your ground. Never let go your spiritual anchor and you will successfully resist the strong currents around you. Now we come to the last point. III. WHERE ARE YOU TO CAST THIS ANCHOR? The same apostle speaks of it "entering into that within the veil"; and, perhaps, the expression strikes you as a very curious one. Undoubtedly it is not usual to cast anchors within curtains or veils. But when you think over it the meaning is clear and beautiful. The meaning of the word "veil" takes us back to the worship of the ancient Jewish sanctuary. Although the pious Jewish worshipper never entered within that curtain, never saw behind it, yet he knew perfectly what was there; he knew the blessed truth set forth by that mercy-seat, and all his spiritual hope was based upon it. The anchor of his soul entered into that within the veil and took hold of the blood-besprinkled mercy-seat of God. Ah! it won't do to throw out your soul's anchor upon the mere clemency or indulgence of an amiable God. The anchor must be fixed in the ground God has provided, and nowhere else. It must lay hold on covenant mercy, on nothing less than the finished work of Jesus. Ah! perhaps some of you have as yet got no anchor! You are going forth into the future, with its unknown dangers and storms, and are wholly unprepared! Oh! it is a sad thing to live "without God, and without hope in the world." Sir Humphrey Davy, a brilliant and successful man of science of last century, with almost everything that the world could give to make a man happy, once wrote to a friend, "There is but one person I envy upon earth, and that is the man who has a clear and fixed religious belief." Alas! how many all around us who will still lack this. Intelligent and amiable and with much to make them happy, but still dark within. "All at sea" in very deed as regards spiritual things, and with no anchor to cling to! What are you going to do in the coming storm? To-day the air may be calm and the sky serene; but the clouds are gathering for such a tempest and riot of elements as earth has never seen; and woe betide those who in that hour have no Saviour they can call their own! (*J. T. Davidson, D.D.*) *Importance of the anchor*:—During the short naval battle between the *Merrimac* and the *Congress and Cumberland*, the anchor of the former, being unprotected, was shot away. Ever afterwards the ironclad battle-ships were constructed so as to include an anchor-well, in which the anchor, when out of the water, might be stowed away in safety. (*H. O. Mackey.*) *A seaside sermon*:—I. LIFE IS A SEA. Two sorts of peril. 1. Drift—from routine, custom of society, currents of popular feeling, habits of commerce, &c. 2. Storms—to health, circumstances, faith, love. II. THE SOUL IS A SHIP. Not a rock, nor a waif, but a vessel—capable of progress, and under proper guidance able to reach a right haven. III. HOPES ARE ANCHORS. 1. Common. 2. Manifold. IV. CHRISTIAN HOPE IS THE ONLY SUFFICIENT ANCHOR. 1. Fixed on God through Christ. 2. Fastened by chains of faith and love vouchsafed through Christ. (*U. R. Thomas.*) *The soul's only sure refuge*:—Professor Maury, whose masterly work on the "Physical Geography of the Sea," and others of like value, have given him a reputation wherever learning is valued, was a devout, humble-minded Christian. In his youth he had paced the quarter-deck of a man-of-war, in the capacity of midshipman and long years after, in his dying hour, the scenes of early days came back. He fancied himself in the midst of a storm, when the goodly ship, holding by her anchors, seemed threatened with destruction, even under the shadow of the shore. Turning his languid eye upon his son, who nursed him, he asked, in the language of the ruling passion of his soul, "Do I seem to drag my anchors?" The answer, "They are sure and steadfast," gave him gratifying assurance. After he had been silent for some time, and was supposed to be speechless, a friend asked how he felt, when he promptly said, "All is well!" and forthwith left the shores of time for the fairer scenes of the eternal world. This only refuge for the soul is what we should prize above all things else; and the most important question to be settled is, whether, or not, we have sought and found it. (*J. N. Norton, D.D.*) *The anchor of the soul*:—The apostle had just been speaking of "laying hold on the hope set before us," by which he seems to denote the appropriation of those various blessings which have all been procured for us by Christ. And when the apostle

proceeds, in the words of our text, to describe this hope as an anchor of the soul' we are to understand him as declaring that the expectation of God's favour and of the glories of heaven, through the atonement and intercession of Christ, is exactly calculated to keep us steadfast and unmoved amid all the tempests of our earthly estate. 1. Now the idea which is immediately suggested by this metaphor of the anchor is that of our being exposed to great moral peril, tossed on rough waters, and in danger of making shipwreck of our faith. And we must be well aware, if at all acquainted with ourselves and our circumstances, that such idea is in every respect accurate, and that the imagery of a tempest-tossed ship, girt about by the rock and the quicksand, as well as beaten by the hurricane, gives no exaggerated picture of the believer in Christ, as opposition, under various forms, labours at his ruin. We first observe that there is great risk of our being carried about, as an apostle expresses it, "with every wind of doctrine"; and whatever, therefore, tends to the keeping us in the right faith, in spite of gusts of error, must deserve to be characterised as an anchor of the soul. But, we may unhesitatingly declare, that there is a power, the very strongest, in the hope of salvation through Christ, of enabling us to stand firm against the incursions of heresy. The hope presupposes faith in the Saviour; and faith has reasons for the persuasion that Jesus is God's Son, and "able to save to the uttermost"; and though the individual is ready enough to probe these reasons, and to bring them to any fitting criterion, it is evident, that where faith has once taken possession, and generated hope, he has so direct and overwhelming an interest in holding fast truth, that it must be more than a specious objection or a well-turned cavil which will prevail to the loosening his grasp. We observe, next, that the believer in Christ is in as much danger of being moved by the trials with which he meets as by attacks upon his faith. But he has a growing consciousness that "all things work together for good," and therefore an increasing submissiveness in the season of tribulation, or an ever-strengthening adherence to God as to a father. And that which contributes, perhaps more than aught besides, to the producing this adherence, is the hope on which the Christian lays hold. If you study the language of David when in trouble you will find that it was hope by which he was sustained. He describes himself in terms which accurately correspond to the imagery of our text. "Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of Thy waterspouts; all Thy waves and Thy billows are gone over me." But when the tempest was thus at its height, and everything seemed to conspire to overwhelm and destroy him, he could yet say, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul! and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God." It is hope, you observe, to which he turns, as the principle through which the soul might best brave the hurricane. And can we wonder that a hope, such as that of the believer in Christ, should so contribute to the steadfastness of its possessor that the winds may buffet him, and the floods beat against him, and yet he remains firm, like the well-anchored vessel? Is it the loss of property with which he is visited, and which threatens to shake his dependence upon God? Hope whispers that he has in heaven an enduring substance; and he takes joyfully the spoiling of his goods. Is it the loss of friends? He sorrows not "even as others which have no hope," but is comforted by the knowledge that "them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him." Is it sickness—is it the treachery of friends—is it the failure of cherished plans, which hangs the firmament with blackness, and works the waters into fury? None of these things move him; for hope assures him that his "light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Is it death which, advancing in its awfulness, would beat down his confidence, and snap his cordage, and send him adrift? His hope is a hope full of immortality: he knows "whom he hath believed, and is persuaded that He is able to keep that which he hath committed unto Him against that day." We go on to observe that the Christian is exposed to great varieties of temptation: the passions of an evil nature, and the enticements of a "world which lieth in wickedness," conspire to draw him aside from righteousness, and force him back to the habits and scenes which he has professedly abandoned. The danger of spiritual shipwreck would be comparatively small if the sea on which he voyages were swept by no storms but those of sorrow and persecution. The risk is far greater when he is assaulted by the solicitations of his own lusts, and the corrupt affections of his nature are plied with their correspondent objects. And though it too often happens that he is overcome by temptation, we are sure that if he kept hope in exercise he would not be moved by the pleadings

of the flesh and the world. Let hope be in vigour, and the Christian's mind is fixed on a portion which he can neither measure by his imagination nor be deprived of by his enemies. And now if, at a time such as this, when it may almost be said that he has entered the haven, that he breathes the fragrance, and gazes on the loveliness, and shares the delights of the Paradise of God—he be solicited to the indulgence of a lust, the sacrifice of a principle, or the pursuit of a bauble—can you think the likelihood to be great that he will be mastered by the temptation, that he will return, at the summons of some low passion, from his splendid excursion, and defile himself with the impurities of earth? We can be confident that if hope, the hope set before us in the gospel, be earnestly clung to, there will be no room in the grasp for the glittering toys with which Satan would bribe us to throw away our eternity. And therefore—to bring the matter again under the figure of our text—we can declare of hope that it ministers to Christian steadfastness, when the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil, combine to produce wavering and inconstancy. 2. Now, throughout these illustrations we have rather assumed than proved that Christian hope is of a nature widely different from that of any other. But it will be easily seen that we have claimed for it nothing beyond the truth if we examine, the apostle's statement in regard of a Christian's hope, that it "entereth into that within the veil." The allusion is undoubtedly to the veil, or curtain, which separated the holy place from the holy of holies in the Temple at Jerusalem. By the holy of holies was typified the scene of God's immediate presence, into which Christ entered when the days of His humiliation were ended. And hence we understand by the hope, or the anchor, entering within the veil, that, in believing upon Jesus, we fasten ourselves, as it were, to the realities of the invisible world. This throws new and great light on the simile of our text. It appears that the Christian, whilst tossing on a tempestuous sea, is fast bound to another scene of being, and that, whilst the vessel is on the waters of time, the anchor is on the rock of eternity. Within the veil are laid up joys and possessions which are more than commensurate with men's capacities for happiness when stretched to the utmost. Within the veil is a glory such as was never proposed by ambition in its most daring flight; and a wealth such as never passed before avarice in its most golden dreams; and delights such as imagination, when employed in delineating the most exquisite pleasures, hath never been able to array. And let hope fasten on this glory, this wealth, these delights, and presently the soul, as though she felt that the objects of desire were as ample as herself, acquires a fixedness of purpose, a steadiness of aim, a combination of energies, which contrast strangely with the inconstancy, the vacillation, the distraction, which have made her hitherto the sport of every wind and every wave. The object of hope being immeasurable, inexhaustible, hope clings to this object with a tenacity which it cannot manifest when grasping only the insignificant and unsubstantial; and thus the soul is bound, we might almost say indissolubly, to the unchangeable realities of the inheritance of the saints. And can you marvel if, with her anchor thus dropped within the veil, she is not to be driven from her course by the wildest of the storms which yet rage without? Besides, within the veil is an Intercessor whose pleadings insure that these objects of hope shall be finally attained. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) **Entereth into that within the veil.**—*Hope entering within the veil:*—I. LET US REGARD THE NECESSITY FOR THIS HOPE. We have to show here that there are difficulties which render Christian endurance an impossibility, apart from the sustaining power of a hope that enters within the veil. 1. There is a veil over the spiritual world. By the spiritual world I mean all the unseen realities which surround us now. He who is in the highest sense spiritual, feels the world to be a Divine temple, because he realises God in it—His infinite presence shining from the deep sky above, and His love revealed in every flower. To him Christ is everywhere, hallowing, as of old, the relationships of life, and colouring by His sympathy its struggles and its sorrows. He can reverence men, not because they are rich, or successful, or powerful, but because they are living and immortal spirits; and his standard of life is not the expedient, or the pleasurable, or the popular—but the righteousness, the truth, the love of the eternal world. Still, that world is veiled: only the eye of a strong faith can see its beauty. We are so encircled and enchained by the fleshly and material, that we can only clearly realise the eternal in moments of meditation or prayer; while the transient presses incessantly upon us, and by its strong glare absorbs us—while passion, with its coloured light, blinds the vision of the soul. Is it not evident, then, that to be faithful to the end demands a hope that enters within the folded

veil which hides from us the spiritual world? 2. There is a veil over the discipline of life. Indeed, the meaning of human life generally is profoundly veiled. Here we have often to sow in tears while the reaping is veiled—just as in the natural world we cast the seed into the ground in utter ignorance of the manner in which it will be quickened into life. The sowing is seen, the reaping may be believed in, but the connection between the two is concealed. The sower must trust to the dark laws of nature. He cannot see the marvellous forces that cause the seed to germinate; the mysterious influences of winter snows and summer rains; the silent electric currents by which the sowing is linked to the harvest that will wave in golden glory beneath the autumnal sky. So in spiritual life. We have to live for eternity. We have to work in faith. We feel the effort, realise the duty, see the thing to be done, but the laws which cause our toil to bear fruit are as hidden and mysterious as the laws of natural life. If, then, we could not rest on a hope which enters within the veil, and in its strength believe in the certainty of the harvest, how could we be steadfast to the end? 3. There is a veil over the heaven of the future. I know of course there is a veil over its employments, relationships, locality—which how earnestly we long to pierce! But here a great problem meets us. Taking the Scripture teaching that this life is the germ of the future life; that its present discipline is but the prelude to that "exceeding weight of glory"; that this is but the bud of which the future life will be the flower, how is this earthly life to develop into the blessed life of heaven? But here comes in the hope which "entereth within the veil." Just as in the natural world the inscrutable activities which darken the seed-time, and create the fear of the seed's failure, do yet mature its fruitage; so in the spiritual life the Divine law of growth is at work, though it may be hidden from us. Our life here must be imperfect, because we live for eternity, and God is causing our life and work to move on an eternal scale. We, in this "time world" see but the minute commencement of that which reaches on into the everlasting. Every true effort must have its completion. II. But the practical question meets us—HOW CAN THIS HOPE, AS A POWER IN LIFE, BE ATTAINED? The words following our text give us the reply—"Whither the Forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an High Priest for ever." They suggest—1. Faith in Christ our Priest. Without that we should tremble at the drawing aside of the veil. Like the high priest of old we must be sprinkled with atoning blood before our hope can enter within it. 2. We must have fellowship with Christ our Forerunner. Don't let this become a vague idea, it has a meaning for us which is intensely real. Remember that He is our example, inasmuch as He is a "High Priest who is touched with a feeling of our infirmities, having been tempted in all points even as we are." Remember how He struggled against temptation—how He met it by instant, unconquerable resistance, and then "angels came and ministered unto Him." So with us. After Christlike conflict we become "more than conquerors through Him that loved us," and are strengthened with angelic hopes. (*E. L. Hull, B.A.*) *Within the veil*:—There in the temple, in the day of the old Hebrew service, there hung the veil, heavy, gorgeous, mysterious itself, and in its fabrication concealing mystery; made and suspended "after the pattern given in the mount." Very glorious was the embroidery of that impressive symbol, "the purple, the blue, the scarlet, inwrought with the fine twined linen," and the forms of the golden cherubim spread over the richly coloured vesture (Exod. xxvi. 31, 32). Thus, behind the veil, lay enshrined all the gorgeous symbols and heraldries of the Jewish history and faiths; the veil concealed their splendours, and defended their beauty—it was a parable and a mystery. I. WHAT WAS THAT VEIL, AND WHAT DID IT SAY TO THOSE WHO BOWED PROSTRATE BEFORE IT, AND WHAT DOES IT SAY TO US NOW? When the Jew bowed there, and heard from behind the veil the sound of the bells upon the beautiful vestments of the priest, and heard the echo of feet moving to and fro, and saw the priest stepping in whither he could not follow, lifting that veil, entering that door; what think you were the feelings of the ancient Jew? what did it all say to him? This was what it said, "Separated, separated! cut off from holiness; cut off from God." That was what it said, and the echo within the heart of the Jew said, "Separated, separated." What do you feel, and what are you able to realise now? What is that veil to us? What says the apostle? "The veil, that is to say, His flesh." Behold that broken body, behold that pierced side; this is the world's great wonder, and the church's too. That is the true veil. It is sinful humanity which hangs between our happiness and God. It is our human nature which cannot go up into the holy of holies. Christ took up that infirm, sinful human nature, bore it, lived in it, died in it, and resumed

it after He had laid it down. He took it again, glorified it, and by it "broke down the middle wall of partition contained in ordinances, and by Himself made one new man, so making peace." I look down to my nature, laden with sin, and I despair; I look up to Christ's nature, and rejoice with "joy unspeakable, and full of glory, receiving the end of my faith, even the salvation of my soul." I look down to my nature, and I see my helplessness; I look up to Christ's nature, and see my hope. I look down to my nature, and see my sin; I look up to His, and see His holiness, and I know it is mine. That veil which separated me from God, becomes now the "fine linen which is the righteousness of the saints," in which I approach him, and say, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God, for He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, and with the garments of salvation." II. And now, WHAT IS WITHIN THE VEIL, WHAT DOES MY TEXT OR CONTEXT FIND? 1. And lift up thine heart, Christian; lift it up, for IT is there—the immutable and the unchangeable will. We need strong consolation, and the apostle fetches the strong consolation for the heirs of promise from behind the veil. Surely I need not detain you by so trite a remark as that we stand in the midst of mystery. "The day breaks, and the shadows flee away," where we understand the body of our Lord, where we pass through that sacred veil. There is a life not to be accounted for by human conditions, and time, and space. His will is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever," immutable! Hence, within the veil, is God's Divine map; there is the plan to Him all known, and clearly seen; infinite consciousness, and prescience, provision, and providence—this is the everlasting and unchangeable God. 2. Within the veil. Who is within the veil? He is there. Do you find it difficult to realise it? Do you find it difficult to send your heart to Him, and to see Him? But where is He but there? Where should He be but there? "Yet a little while," said He, "and the world seeth Me no more, but ye see Me, and because I live, ye shall live also." Dying saints have seen Him. Yes, He lived, He died, He rose to be revived, and He is there waiting till He shall come without sin unto salvation. 3. Within the veil. What is there? They are there, they are there. The loved but not the lost; why, then, their loss deplore? They are there, the holy, and the immortal, and the pure, and the true. They are there! Beyond the flesh. "Where should the dying members rest?" All mystery supposes a solution of the riddle; they are beyond the enigma. All is plain now within the veil. III. "SEEING, THEN, IT IS SO, WHAT MANNER OF PERSONS OUGHT WE TO BE?" Such is the plea of the apostle. All this veil must be dissolved. They can hear us and see us, even behind the curtain. Therefore believe, and wait, and rejoice, and aspire. Within the veil! Are not these comfortable words? Within the veil! Even now has not "the darkness passed"? Is it not true that "the true light now shineth" beyond the veil? Henry IV. was told of the king of Spain that he had great acquisitions, and was asked what he had to say to it? He replied, "I am king of France:" but he is king of Castile; "I am king of France": but he is king of Navarre; "I am king of France": but he is king of Portugal; "but I am king of France:" he is king of the Sicilies; "but I am king of France": he is king of the New Indies; "but I am king of France." To be king of France answered all questions, and was to him equal to all. So thou and I, oh, Christian, have an answer for all questions, and equal to all, "within the veil." Your church is imperfect and erring, and small in the world's esteem. Ah, but "within the veil"! You are yourself dark and cloudy, and desponding, and you cannot see the promised land or the Saviour. Yes, but "within the veil!" And as with the world, so with your family; death invades and breaks in on your household, and your household loves. True, but "within the veil." And sin accuses you, and conscience stings, and beyond is the judgment-seat. But "within the veil." (*E. P. Hood.*) *Anchored within the veil*:—I. WHAT is this "soul" of ours? Always like a barque, tossed about and sure to drift and drift, on shoals and on rocks. What a bitter picture is the history of this "soul" of ours! All unstable, and never continuing long in one strain; with no power of itself to help itself. II. And WHERE is it? In an ocean! And all the while that soul is so rich an argosy, laden with treasures which cannot be told; bought at the highest possible price, carrying in it an eternity into the very presence of God. III. WHAT, THEN, DO WE WANT? "An anchor." "An anchor" which is "sure" to be "steadfast." IV. Now look at SOME OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF THIS WONDERFUL CONNECTION OF THE "SOUL" WITH THAT "ANCHOR WITHIN THE VEIL." 1. And first, how perfectly safe that soul must be. God's eternal counsel, God's very being, and God's oath passing into Christ. A Christ unseen; wearing a body Himself in heaven; who

secures and seals your pardon. Your strength, your peace, your life, your glory. 2. Then how restful should your soul so "anchored" be! What mean all these doubts and fears? What though you be tossed about, you are held as by chains of adamant, and your soul shall never perish! You cannot be lost! There cannot be any shipwreck to a soul that is "anchored" "within the veil." 3. And by that token that you are "anchored," you cannot be very far from shore. You may not see the land of promise; you may not yet hear the songs of its inhabitants; but there is no anchorage out in the mid-sea, you must be near the coast, nearer perhaps than you guess now, in this dark night; but you will be surprised to find how close you are all the while when the morning breaks. Therefore you must make haste to be ready to go ashore, for the voyage may be nearly done, and you only wait the order to step out, and be at home. 4. Meanwhile, remember this, a ship always drops towards her anchor. And before you land you must be nearing and nearing Christ and heaven: your thoughts there, your focus there, your tastes and your desires there; and your "hope" must become more real and more perfect every day. There must be more realisation of the land you are about to touch; more affections there; more appreciation of its loveliness; more familiarity with its language, and love, and praise. You must be practising what you will have to do when you arrive. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *The nearness of heaven*:—The nearness of heaven is suggested by the epithet "veil." A veil is the thinnest and frailest of all conceivable partitions. It is but a fine tissue, a delicate fabric of embroidery. It waves in the wind; the touch of a child may stir it; an accident may rend it; the silent action of time will moulder it away. A mere cord breaking, a mere "socket of silver" starting from its place would have opened the veil of the temple. It was lifted up by the priest "once in the circuit of a year"; and at the crucifixion it was parted by an invisible hand. The veil that conceals heaven is only our embodied existence, and though fearfully and wonderfully made, it is only wrought out of our frail mortality. So slight is it that the puncture of a thorn, the touch of an insect's sting, the breath of an infected atmosphere, may make it shake and fall. In a bound, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, in the throb of a pulse, in the flash of a thought, we may start into disembodied spirits, glide unabashed into the company of great and mighty angels, pass into the light and amazement of eternity, know the great secret, gaze upon splendours which flesh and blood could not sustain, and which no words lawful for man to utter could describe! (*C. Stanford, D.D.*) **The Forerunner is for us entered.**—*The Forerunner*:—I. There is A PLACE referred to here. "Within the veil" is heaven, the shrine and dwelling-place of Deity. This is the goal of the believer's sanctified ambition, the very consummation of his best and holiest desires—to enter in within the veil, to gaze on the unclouded glories of Jehovah's face, and dwell forever with Him. II. There is THE PERSON who has entered within the veil, even Jesus, by whom an entrance has been effected. To tell one of any one of my fellow-men, who has passed from earth to heaven, does not that proclaim that a way has been opened up into the holiest of all; that there is no impassable gulf, no insuperable barrier in the way, but that an entrance may in like manner be ministered to a great multitude? How much more so, that it is Jesus who has entered in! For none ever loved us like Jesus; never heart glowed and yearned like the heart of Jesus; and we may well feel assured that wherever He is, He will never forget us; and that He will be found just as willing to help us in heaven as He showed Himself to be willing to help us on earth. III. There is THE CHARACTER HE SUSTAINS in thus entering; it is as a Forerunner for us. This character is not personal, but official and mediatorial; and therefore it exerts a pregnant influence upon all His people. 1. As a Forerunner He announces our future arrival in heaven. He makes it known that in coming up from this dim and distant region, where for a season He had dwelt, He comes as a pioneer on the march, —that His footsteps will be followed by myriads of the ransomed, so that from that day forward all heaven has been in an attitude of expectation. 2. As the Forerunner He takes possession of heaven on our behalf; for He enters in our nature and in our name. 3. As a Forerunner He bids His people welcome when they come, and presents them before His Father, and assigns them their position in the new Jerusalem. It is enough to insure to us no ordinary place in the affection and regard of the unfallen, to find that we are ushered in and welcomed there as friends of Jesus; to sustain a right relation to Jesus is to stand right with all the upper universe of God. Above all, what a gracious reception will it insure to us from God the Father! None so dear to God as Jesus, and next to Jesus none so

dear to Him as those who are His. (*Thos. Main, D.D.*) *Christ our Forerunner within the veil:*—The expression, "Forerunner," here made use of by the apostle, is a military one, and refers to the custom which obtains in days of warfare, of the victor in a hard-fought battle despatching a messenger to the seat of government with the news of the successful valour which the army had displayed, that at head-quarters the welcome intelligence might be proclaimed, and purposes formed, and plans executed, and honours awarded, that might be meet and congruous with the happy results which had been achieved. No doubt, on such an occasion, a forerunner is generally inferior to those who come after him, under whose skilful management the victorious prowess has been put forth; and he is so because he is a forerunner, and nothing more. Thus restricted, however, the term has no meaning when applied to Jesus Christ; for though He be the Forerunner of His people, yet the splendour of His character in this respect is to be traced to the circumstance that He is much more. Upon His shoulders was laid the conducting of that matter, on account of which He is now entered as a Precursor within the veil. He fought the battle; He slew the enmity; and He was Himself the Forerunner, because of the greatness of that which He had accomplished, and because it was not fit either that the enunciation, or the following of it up, should be committed to another. I. CHRIST IS OUR FORERUNNER ENTERED IN WITHIN THE VEIL. We have several notices given to us in Scripture that the scheme of human redemption did ever excite great interest among the heavenly inhabitants—that it is a subject on which their curiosity is awakened, and their emotions roused, and their inquiries set on foot—that its commencement, its progress, its consummation, are apprehended as important, and felt as attractive, and worthy of the most solicitous investigation. Now, this desire was gratified on Christ's visible departure out of the world, in the form of a literal ascent—on His entrance within the veil as the Forerunner of His people; and this is the first view that we may take of His character in this respect. He went into heaven proclaiming what He had done upon earth—that He had finished transgression—that He had made an end of sin—that He had brought in an everlasting righteousness—that He had sealed up the vision and the prophecy which did centre in Him—that, having sustained the pressure of avenging justice, He opened up a medium of access, a door even to the most rebellious—that, by virtue of His blood, He had obtained remission for sinners, paid the price of redemption for those who were captives, made reconciliation for enemies—that, in harmony with God's attributes, and even while He did conserve the sacredness of His law, He had redeemed, from the power of all who did hate her, the Church whom He had eternally chosen—that he had delivered her from the dominion of sin, from the final dominion of death, and made that which was the fruit and punishment of transgression the door through which she enters on the sanctuary of immortality. Such is the intelligence with which Christ, as our Forerunner, has entered into that within the veil. And the very act of His going up did presuppose and ratify to them the most important truths, that He led captivity captive, just because He had ascended up on high. But again, our Lord has entered as a Forerunner within the veil, and there He ever liveth. Now, there is a threefold life which Christ lives above. There is a life which He has as the Eternal Son of God, the life which belongs to His Divine nature; for as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself—given it to Him by eternal generation—given it to Him by communicating all His own attributes. There is also a life which belongs to Him, and which He doth live for Himself, in consequence of His having become man—a life of glory inconceivable in His nature as man. But, over and above these two different kinds of life which the Lord Jesus Christ doth enjoy, and which shall never come to an end, there is a life which He leads as Mediator in heaven, and in respect of which it is that He is a Forerunner within the veil. Though removed beyond the cognisance of the senses, He is still carrying on His great work in heaven, and is there the Prophet, Priest, and King of His Church as really and as effectively as when He dwelt upon earth. He died on our account, He liveth still on our account, and is entrusted with all power for the service of His Church; and though this life differs not essentially from that life of glory in His human nature which He liveth for Himself, it yet so far differs from it that it shall one day have an end. He will throughout eternity enjoy the life which He possesses as a Divine Being, He will throughout eternity enjoy the life which He possesses in His glorified human nature; but His life as Mediator, His life as a Forerunner, He shall cease to have when the work of His mediation shall have been finished, when the elect shall all have been gathered into

the fold of the Good Shepherd, and the kingdom delivered up to God, even the Father. And what is it that, in this view of His character as a Forerunner, He is not fitted to procure? Are we not to trace to it all the gifts which are bestowed on the Church in general, for common edification, and on each member of it singly, for His particular benefit? II. LESSONS in which this great truth is fitted to instruct us:—1. This view of Christ's character is a proof of the perfection of His atonement. Can it for one moment be imagined that He should in this manner have been taken up, had there been any defect in His redeeming work, had it come short in anything which the fitness of a righteous Government could require. 2. A forerunner, one who goes before, suggests the idea of some who are to follow after. (*John Paul.*) *The Forerunner*:—The forerunner of the ancient ship was the *Anchorarius*, the man who had charge of the anchor, and who carried it within the harbour, when there was not yet water sufficient to float the ship into it. (*C. Stanford, D.D.*) *Christ going before to heaven*:—1. Is Christ gone before to heaven? Then let us be willing to follow Him in the way of obedience, and in the way of suffering, as well as to meet Him in the end. 2. To make haste after Him. Did He fly as an eagle towards heaven, and shall we creep like a snail? Is not the bosom of Christ more desirable than the arms of our dearest friends? Shall we not enjoy all comforts in the enjoyment of our Comforter? 3. Let our hearts at present be with Him. Oh! where should our hearts be, but where our Head is? (*W. Burkitt, M.A.*) *Our Forerunner*:—I. Though parted from us, and taken up into heaven, we contemplate JESUS CHRIST AS THE HEAD OF THE GREAT SACRIFICIAL SYSTEM—AS THE ORIGINAL AND FINAL PRIEST—AND AS THE ALONE MEDIATOR BETWEEN GOD AND MEN. II. WE ARE TO CONTEMPLATE JESUS IN HIS REPRESENTATIVE CAPACITY. He is a public person. He is a federal head of all mankind. III. CHRIST'S PREPARATIVE RELATION. A representative takes the position of those who send him, and thereby excludes all others from the same place. It is not so with Christ; for He sustains an endearing relation to us, by virtue of which we are at the last to be with Him. This is indicated by the term "forerunner." His presence on high is not to the exclusion of His people, but as a preparation and intimation of their final reception there. He is "the first-born among many brethren;" and "He is not ashamed to call them brethren." (*R. M. Wilcox.*)

CHAPTER VII.

VERS. 1–10. **Melchisedec, king of Salem.**—*Melchisedec*:—I. MELCHISEDEC WAS "KING OF SALEM." 1. Salem was certainly in Canaan—the land where Melchisedec and Abraham met. (1) It is not a matter of course that Canaan was already wholly given up to idolatry and crime; and therefore Melchisedec may have been himself a Canaanite, and may also have found a body of worshippers of the true God among whom he could discharge his functions. (2) Even if Canaan was more idolatrous than we have sufficient reason to believe that it now was, Melchisedec, who was, perhaps, of the Japhetian stock, may have been raised up by Heaven as "a light in a dark place," and a harbinger and representative of the future ingathering of the Gentiles to Christ. 2. Two places of the name of Salem are mentioned in the Old Testament. The one is Salem in the land of Shechem (Gen. xxxiii. 18)—the same, perhaps, as John iii. 23. The other is Jerusalem itself (Psa. lxxvi. 1, 2). (1) The situation of the great metropolis of Palestine was one likely to be early fixed upon for a town in the colonisation of the land. (2) That point lay near to the route which Abraham may be supposed to have taken on his homeward way "from the slaughter of the kings." (3) If Jerusalem was the place of which Melchisedec was king, he was thus the more strikingly representative of Christ (Psa. ii. 6). 3. It is certainly in respect chiefly of the priesthood that Melchisedec is compared to Christ. But, considering the object and design of the present specification of particulars, it must be understood that the royalty of the former has a typical, or at least a figurative, application to the latter. With Salem, both in the literal and figurative application of the name, Christ as King has especially to do. It was through Jerusalem that, "in the days of His flesh," He rode in lowly, but royal stateliness" (Zech. ix. 9; Matt. xxi. 1–11). To Israel and her great metropolis was Messiah promised as a Sovereign Prince, ere ever the Magi came to welcome

the regal visitor; and as He was, in His birth, saluted as Israel's King (Matt. ii. 1-6), so, over His cross on the heights of Salem, the unchangeable inscription bore that He was "King of the Jews" (John xix. 19-22). And there is another Zion on which His throne is set—another Salem in which He reigns—the Zion, the Salem, of the Church. Amidst hostile arms and quaking dynasties, "let the children of Zion be joyful in their King." II. MELCHISEDEC WAS "PRIEST OF THE MOST HIGH GOD." 1. The phrase "of the most high God" serves two ends. (1) It contra-distinguishes Melchisedec and his priesthood from priests of "the gods many and lords many" of Paganism, and from the functions, often gross and cruel, which these performed. (2) It suggests the solemnity and importance of the sacerdotal work which Melchisedec performed, and the reverence and awe with which not only ministers, but private believers, should maintain intercourse with that glorious One into whose presence they are called to enter, and whose business they are called to do. 2. The priesthood of the King of Salem, in all probability, comprehended the two functions of sacrifice and intercession. III. MELCHISEDEC "MET ABRAHAM RETURNING FROM THE SLAUGHTER OF THE KINGS AND BLESSED HIM." To a spiritual warfare we have all been called; and while Christ is the Captain of the host, the better Abraham leading on His followers to battle and to victory, He, as the anointed Priest, the better Melchizedec, blesses His conquering, and even His struggling, troops. With His priestly hands extended, in generous benediction, over His first disciples, He left the world. In the same attitude, as it were, He still is standing, as He looks down from His heavenly throne on the earthly charge which He loves so well. The good which on their behalf He seeks, it is His own prerogative and office to bestow. Nor can it be withheld. What is wanted for the fight—wisdom, strength, courage, hope—He delights, when His soldier looks to Him in faith and earnestness, to give. At length comes victory. Nor is that promise obsolete (Rev. iii. 21). IV. TO MELCHISEDEC "ABRAHAM GAVE A TENTH PART OF ALL" THE SPOILS. The contribution of gold and treasures to the cause of the kingdom of Messiah is one of the facts recorded respecting Him in Hebrew prophecy (Psa. lxxii. 10, 15). Since the day when the Magi cast their gold, and frankincense, and myrrh at His blessed feet, thousands and tens of thousands have laid a like tribute on His altar. Christ deserves, and Christianity needs, it all. That, independently of any money of ours, He could work successfully is, of course, in some sense true. But, in unswerving wisdom and condescending mercy, He chooses to work by means; and among the appointed means is money. By ministers and missionaries, who are dependent on money for support—by Bibles and other practical and precious books, which must be printed and circulated at the cost of money—by places of worship, which it requires money to erect—and by other ordinances and institutions, which it is for money to establish and maintain—Christ upholds His cause and extends His kingdom. V. MELCHISEDEC WAS BY INTERPRETATION "KING OF RIGHTEOUSNESS AND KING OF PEACE." This statement refers to the import of the names Melchisedec and Salem. Melchi means, king; Sedec, righteousness; and Salem, peace. It is probable that Melchisedec was a righteous and pacific king. At any rate, the name he bore, and that of the city where he dwelt, involved the ideas of righteousness and peace. And it is here distinctly intimated that, in this respect, he was fitted to represent the character and government of Christ. Christ in very deed is "King of righteousness." His soul, how pure! His life, how undefiled! His laws, how just! His administration, how upright! The issues and outgoings of His sufferings and His glory, of His humiliation on the earth and His triumphs in the heavens, how suffused and fraught with righteousness! Nor is He less truly "King of peace." His personal ministry was neither the earthquake nor the thunder, but the "still, small voice." Peace He bequeathed to His disciples as a legacy of love (John xiv. 27). He "made peace through the blood of His cross" (Col. i. 20). His gospel breathes of peace. They who believe it enter into peace. Theirs is peace with God; theirs, too, is peace with man; and a "peace which passeth understanding" keeps their "hearts and minds by Christ Jesus." Under the sceptre of Messiah, the wars which so long have wrought desolations in the earth shall pass away. VI. MELCHISEDEC WAS "WITHOUT FATHER, WITHOUT MOTHER, WITHOUT DESCENT," &c. By the series of particulars it is manifestly meant to intimate that the parents, the ancestry, the birth, and the death, of this royal priest are all unrecorded in the sacred narrative—that, in this respect, there is a remarkable difference between him and the priests of the house of Levi—and that, in so far as the record is concerned, he comes before us as the priest of unlimited existence, who had no predecessor and no successor in the sacred line. He was thus, it is still further

intended to suggest, a meet representative of that "great high-priest" who, as God, had no mother—as man, had no human father—as Divine, never began to be, and never died—as Mediator, carries on His priesthood still, interceding for believers in the heavens, even as, on earth, He made atonement for their sins, and wrought out redemption for their souls. (*A. S. Patterson.*) *The parallel between Christ and Melchisedec*:—I. THE TITLE OF MELCHISEDEC, AS KING. "For this Melchisedec, king of Salem." It were idle to discuss here the various conjectures which have been started as to who this Melchisedec was—considered as he is by some to have been Enoch, by others to have been Shem, by others to have been an angel, by others to have been the Holy Spirit, by others to have been the Eternal Son of God Himself; it seems only needful to remark, that the nature of the apostle's argument throughout the chapter positively requires that Melchisedec should have been a man, and a man, too, living, and performing the functions here attributed to him, in the time of the patriarch Abraham. Melchisedec becomes a remarkable person, were it only from the singular conjunction of the two offices of king and priest—a conjunction which of itself would suggest his being a type of Christ. Thus he is a type of Christ even with regard to his kingship, and that both in his acts and in the titles by which he is distinguished. Even the first act recorded of him in Genesis we can hardly think was without some spiritual significance. You will observe, he is there represented as coming out to "the father of the faithful," bringing him a present of bread and wine, in order that his followers might be refreshed after the toils of conquest, and be sent on their way with lightened and rejoicing hearts. What is this but a picture of the way in which Christ, the true Melchisedec, rewards and refreshes all the followers of faithful Abraham? Are they wearied with the toils of their spiritual warfare? He is wont to say to them, "Come unto Me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will" refresh you. Are they tired out with the world's disappointing vanities, having "spent their money for that which is not bread, and their labour for that which satisfieth not"? His language is, "Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; yea, come ye, buy wine and milk, without money and without price." Nay, are they desirous of realising nearness of spiritual communion—of being brought more closely into the presence of their God and Saviour? Are they desiring to "see the King in His beauty," and to receive from Him tokens of reconciliation and peace and love? He comes forth like Melchisedec bringing "bread and wine," offering to believing hearts the blessed sacrament of His passion, that in the memorials of His body broken, and the blood of redemption shed, believers, like the faithful followers of Abraham, may go down to their homes in peace! Still more typical of the Redeemer's royalty are the titles here given to Melchisedec. You will observe it is said of him—"first being by interpretation, king of righteousness, and after that also king of Salem, which is, king of peace." These are the titles of the typical Melchisedec, and as applied to him may probably mean no more than that such names were given to him by the common consent of his subjects—as one who was distinguished for the righteousness which characterised his regal administration, for the integrity and uprightness of his judicial decisions, for the amicable relations which he maintained with all neighbouring states, and for the tranquillity which marked his government at home. But who sees not at once the application of these titles to Christ in the exercise of His spiritual royalty? He is a "King of righteousness." If He cannot satisfy every demand of a violated law, if He cannot meet all the conditions of unsullied holiness, if He cannot cancel every claim which Heaven may have against our souls, nay, if He cannot present my soul as unblameable—as pure from stain or blemish as His own—the ground of my confidence is gone. A mere king of compassions, a king of love and pity, will not suit me, He must be a "King of righteousness." "And after that also king of Salem, which is king of peace." This, again, is a beautiful type of Messiah's kingship. "Therefore being justified by faith"—(there is the righteousness)—"we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." II. THE PRIESTHOOD. "For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God." Now, that to which I would specially direct your attention here is, that Melchisedec is the first instance we have in the sacred record of a person specially set apart for the office of the priesthood. You will observe that he is not one of a line succeeding to the sacerdotal office in a certain family order; he is not one who has received that sacred appointment by the investiture of others, according to any prescribed order of ecclesiastical polity, but he is one who, long before the Levitical priesthood had been established, stands alone in a strange country, challenging homage from the greatest saint of antiquity as an ordained priest of the most high God. Now,

we see at once in this certain resembling features to Christ, the true Melchisedec. He is not descended of any line of human priesthood; there was no laying on of hands to designate Him to the sacred office; yet there rested on Him tokens of a Divine consecration. The opened heavens testified to the power of the Lord's anointing; "the Spirit of the Lord" was upon Him, and when He had "made His soul an offering for sin," when He had "borne the sin of many," when He had "poured out His spirit unto death," believing souls were drawn to His cross, and exercising faith in the great oblation hailed Him—"Thou art a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec." And then observe, that special office of the typical high priesthere mentioned by the apostle, namely, that of benediction, "who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him." Have we not here a close resemblance to Christ? Benediction, we know, seems never to have been off the lips of the holy Saviour. With streams of blessing did He open His first sermon on the mount; with hands of blessing He drew the little children to His embrace; with the uplifted voice of blessing He went up to the right hand of Power; blessed are the sleeping dead who die in His faith and fear; and when at last He shall separate the great congregation of risen dead, He shall first call to His redeemed ones, saying, "Come, ye blessed children of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world." Yes, blessing was the first act of our High Priest, after He had "returned to the Majesty on high": "Unto you first God having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you"; and never will He lay down that His special prerogative of mercy, until He hath blessed us "with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." But observe, another act of the typical Melchisedec noticed by the apostle is his receiving a portion of the spoils. "To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all." There can exist no question but that this act of the patriarch was a separation of a portion of his newly acquired wealth to the service of God. It was an offering to God through Melchizedec His appointed priest. Abraham had been prosperous; he had been honoured and eminently successful in the mission he had undertaken; how could he do otherwise than dedicate the firstfruits of his success to God? "What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits?" The passage plainly throws some light on the perpetual obligation of almsgiving, independently of all dispensations whatever; and seems to prescribe to us the minimum of our substance which we ought to set apart for God's service. If you have been prosperous in the work of your hands, if you are returning like Abraham with the spoils of conquered difficulties, if your spiritual Melchisedec has met you with tokens of acceptance, give unto Him a tenth part of all. Let one strength, one help, one hope, one outstretched arm be recognised in all your successes:—showing that on earth you will lay all your prosperity, even as in heaven you will lay all your crowns, at the feet of Him who was ordained a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. III. THE MYSTERY OF MELCHISEDEC'S ORIGIN. He is declared to be, in the third verse, "without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life." Melchisedec is a person of whose death or birth no record had been preserved, both of which would have been if he had ever had any accredited place in the Jewish polity. But this man has no record, has no genealogy; he starts up on the page of sacred history, exercising the mysterious functions of the priesthood, shrouding in a veil of impenetrable obscurity all the antecedents of his history, as well as all that relates to his "end of days." All this was especially meant to perfect the typical character of this Melchisedec. It was, in fact, to show to us that Christ Himself was not to succeed to His office in the order of any human priesthood—that He should not claim office in virtue of any transmitted rights, but that He should receive consecration direct from the hands of God: "a Priest" of the Most High God, "after the order of Melchisedec." And then see how we are to apply to Christ the last remarkable words applied to Melchisedec—to Christ, the true, the spiritual Melchisedec. He is said to be "without father"; is not this true of our Lord's human nature? He is said to be "without mother": is not this true of our Lord's Divine nature? He is said to be "without beginning of life, or end of days": must not this be true of Him whom prophecy describes as "the Ancient of days," as the Father of eternity, as One who throws out the challenge to every finite intelligence, "Who shall declare His generation?" nay, as One whom God Himself had solemnly designated and set apart. "Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." IV. THE INTRANSMISSIBLE CHARACTER OF MELCHISEDEC'S PRIESTHOOD. This is declared in the third verse: "He is made like"—namely, that He "abideth a Priest continually." Then turning to the twenty-fourth verse of

this chapter you read—"But this Man, because He continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood"—a passage which, on looking at the margin, you will find thus rendered, "a priesthood which passeth not from one to another." Now, to understand this, you must remember the stress of the apostle's argument. It was a new theology to the Jews to suppose that Messiah was to be "a Priest" at all; they thought of Him, they expected Him, only as the "Lord" Christ, as the King of righteousness and peace. But suppose Christ were to be a Priest, then the Jew would say, "He must be a Priest according to the order of Aaron." Then says the apostle, "Christ can have no claim in this behalf; for He sprang from the tribe of Judah, of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood." What, then, is the conclusion? Why, that the real type of Christ's priesthood is to be found, not in men having infirmity under the law, but in that remarkable personage expressly raised up of God in a particular age of the Church, in order that he might be a perfect, or, at least proximately perfect, type of Christ, as one who neither received his priesthood from any, nor yet transmitted his priesthood to any; and therefore, in so far as there was no delegation of the sacred functions, he might be said to "abide a priest continually." Herein he becomes a glorious and eminent type of Christ—the type of Him, who as He received His priesthood from none, so will He delegate it to none, not to human priesthoods, not to saints and angels, not to the ten thousand mediators of a corrupt and apostate church, but rather will continue, in all the might, in all the prevalency, in all the sovereign sufficiency of an unchangeable priesthood, "ever living to make intercession for us." (*D. Moore, M.A.*) *Our Melchisedec*:—The Jews were very fond of beautiful mysteries, which awakened the sense of wonder and the desire for deeper knowledge; and, as the Psalms and Proverbs show, they love to have truth in pairs or in halves. Their minds moved, as a railway engine moves, on parallel lines and with corresponding wheels; their piety soared as the lark soars on equal wings. As in this subject of Melchisedec, they often gained their idea of the whole truth, just as in geography you gain your idea of the whole earth by uniting the two half-spheres that are separated on the map. The mystery of Melchisedec is thus explained by four pairs of truths. I. HE WAS A MAN AND MORE THAN A MAN. Many things about him are "hard to be uttered" or explained (chap. v. 11). Here, I think, is the key that opens the difficulty:—there are two Melchisedecs: the one lived in Salem, and the other lives in this page. King Henry VIII., the queen-killer, was, as most people believe, a bad man; but Froude makes him a good man. There are thus two Henrys: the one lived at Windsor, the other lives in Froude's history. What Froude did for Henry by hero-worship, Moses did for Melchisedec by omission; but with this difference, that Moses keeps to exact truth. As we have Froude's Henry and the real Henry, so we have, as we may say, the Melchisedec of Abraham and the Melchisedec of Moses. Melchisedec was "made like unto the Son of God" (chap. vii. 3). He was not like Him, but was made like Him. I have watched an apprentice wood-carver. Before him was a tree, like any other tree. Beside him stood a life-size statue of Christ. Glancing now and again at the statue, and guided by his teacher, he hewed out a piece here and there, and soon the tree became a statue. He made it more by making it less, for he thus put a grand idea into it. As that carver elevated the tree into an image of Christ, so Moses, guided by God, fashioned or rounded off the Melchisedec of his story into an image of Christ. It was not an after-thought, but a fore-thought to liken Christ to Melchisedec; for Christ is the original and Melchisedec the copy, expressly "made" beforehand for New Testament teaching. What a man of mystery that Melchisedec of Moses is! He seems to have dropped down from heaven. He seems to be his own ancestor and his own heir; one sprung from himself, a cause uncaused; one ever living among the dead and dying. He stands quite apart, has not his fellow in the Bible, and is like himself only. Fix your eye upon this portrait drawn by the Divine hand, grasp it as it lies there, and the subject is delightfully simple. "This Melchisedec" on whom you and I gaze, not that whom Abraham gazed upon; this literary Melchisedec, not that literal one; "this Melchisedec" is an image of Him who was "without father" as to His human nature, and "without mother" as to His Divine; as God "having neither beginning of days nor end of life"; who in His office was "without descent" and without succession, and so "abideth a Priest continually." Melchisedec was a man, and seems more: Jesus is a man, and is more. II. CHRIST IS LIKE MELCHISEDEC, A PRIEST AND A KING. Pity belongs to Him as Priest, and power belongs to Him as King. His priestly pity and kingly power temper and sustain each other, and as two uniting streams roll along in one

full flood of communicated joy. He saves with all the power of a king; He rules with all the gentleness of a priest. His kingly power enables Him to do His priestly work right royally, with royal graciousness and munificence. He saves with sovereignty, with a sovereign's generosity. The rebel Themistocles appealed for pardon to the Persian king Xerxes. The king pardoned him in his sovereignty; not as one who had to study petty economics, whose grace was a miser's hoard; for he gave Themistocles the country of Magnesia for bread (about £12,000 a year); Myus for condiments, and Lampsacus for wine. That is how a sovereign pardons, and illustrates one part of what we mean by the sovereignty of God. Our great High Priest has a royal right and a royal power to save, as He makes one thing of Priesthood and Kinghood. The golden sceptre of grace is ever in His hand; and whosoever will may touch it and live, shielded by the whole power of His kingdom. What can sin, death, and hell do against those who have Him as their ally? III. MELCHISEDEC IS A TYPE OF CHRIST BECAUSE HE UNITES RIGHTEOUSNESS AND PEACE. His name means "king of righteousness," and he was king of Salem, or peace. He was, no doubt, a righteous man and king, doing all he could to right the world's wrongs. But much more than that is meant here. For he was a priest, and no priest was he unless he represented God to man and man to God, and so provided righteousness for the unrighteous. They for whom he acted should have had righteousness, but had it not; and it was the part of their priest to gain for them the "abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness." To us, at least, priestly righteousness means all that. The righteousness our High Priest has to do with is held out as a free gift to the most unrighteous among us; and it is thine for the taking. Melchisedec was also king of Salem. A dense mass of meaning lies for us in this title also. Salem, like the salaam given to-day in the East, means peace. A King of Peace! Earth's kings are war-makers; ours is a Peacemaker. Earth's great cities have often been Aceldamas, streaming fields of blood; our mother-city is peace. And what a union of contraries is here! Let the bare idea of God's righteousness enter the heart of a man in sin, and lo! his peace is gone, and he is the prey of remorse. But Christ brings us a peace founded upon eternal righteousness. IV. MELCHISEDEC IS A TYPE OF CHRIST, BECAUSE HE UNITES JEW AND GENTILE. Aaron, the priest, was only for the Jews; but Melchisedec, who was out of Aaron's line and above it, was a Gentile, and he was a priest for Abraham the Jew, and for the Gentiles dwelling in Salem. He was a world-wide priest, opening his arms to all the races of humankind, and his city was meant to be the mother-city of all the earth, emblem of the heavenly Jerusalem into which people of all nations shall be gathered. Thus Christ is a Priest, not after the order of Aaron, who was for Jews only, but He is "a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec"; and any sinner under heaven may receive the blessings He brings. (*James Wells, M.A.*)

King of righteousness.—*Righteousness first, then peace:*—I. A HIEROGLYPHIC OF CHRIST'S RECONCILING WORK.—First, King of Righteousness, afterwards King of Peace. There is no peace with God possible, except on the basis of righteousness. It is a true gospel, howsoever harsh it sounds, which proclaims "Thou art not a God that hast pleasure in iniquity, neither shall the wicked dwell in Thy sight." This is the dictate of conscience; this is the dictate of what people call "natural religion." This, the necessity of righteousness for friendship with God, is the message of the old covenant; and this, the absolute need of purity of life and heart for all true enjoyment of the Divine favour, is Christ's message as truly. Nay, further, the first thing which the gospel—which Christ, who is the gospel—does when He comes into a man's heart is to emphasise two facts, the absolute need for righteousness in order to friendship with God, and the want of it in the heart to which He has come. And so the conflict is intensified, the sense of discord is kindled, the alienation between man and God is made conscious on the first entrance of Christ into the spirit. The oil comes after the arrow, the bandage after the wound. II. A SUMMARY OF CHRIST'S OPERATIONS IN THE INDIVIDUAL SOUL. There is no inward harmony, no peace of heart and quietness of nature except on condition of being good and righteous men. The real root of all our agitations is our sinfulness; and wherever there creeps over a heart the love of evil, there comes, like some subtle sea-born mist stealing up over the country and blotting out all its features, a poisonous obscuration which shrouds all the spirit in its doleful folds. Disturbance comes not so much from outward causes as from an inward alienation towards that which is pure and good. Peace within comes from righteousness within, and no man is righteous unless he has Christ's righteousness for the very spring and strength of his life. III. THE PROGRAMME OF CHRIST'S OPERATIONS IN THE

WORLD. The herald angels sang "on earth peace." Nineteen centuries have passed, and Christianity is still a disturbing element wherever it comes, and the promise seems to linger, and the great words that declared "Unto us a Child" should "be born," . . . and His name shall be . . . "the Prince of Peace," seem as far away from fulfilment as ever they were. Yes, because He is first of all King of Righteousness, and must destroy the evil that is in the world before He can manifest Himself as King of Peace. If we are the followers of the Prince of Peace, who is, first of all, King of Righteousness, we are called to be His faithful servants and soldiers. For all the social evils that swarm round about us to-day, intemperance, impurity, commercial dishonesty, follies of fashionable and of social life and the like, for all teachings that dim and darken the face of His great counsel and purpose of mercy, we are to cherish an undying hatred and war against them an unceasing warfare. IV. A PROPHECY OF THE END. The true Salem, the city of peace, is not here. One more conflict every soldier of the Cross, ere he treads its pavement, has to wage with the last enemy who is to be destroyed by Jesus Christ, but only at the end. For us and for the world the assurance stands firm—the King who Himself is Righteousness is the King whose city is peace. And that city will come. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *First king of righteousness, and after that king of peace* :—I. ADMIRE THIS KING. 1. Melchisedec is such a king as God is. He is according to Divine model. At the fall God first set up a Judgment-seat, and right speedily a Mercy-seat. Righteousness must ever lead the van. All along in the history of God's dealings with men, He kept to this unvarying rule. 2. He was such a king as Christ is. Christ preached no peace apart from purity. He never made little of vice or error; He was the deadly foe of all evil. He said, "I came not to bring peace, but a sword." 3. Note, next, that He is such a King as right-hearted minds desire. My heart rejoices in a sin-killing King, and then a peace-bestowing King, sweeping out the buyers and the sellers from the temple, and then manifesting Himself there in all His majesty to His waiting people. 4. Melchisedec is such a king as Jesus must be to every one of you who have not yet known Him, if you are ever to receive Him as your Saviour. Righteousness must hold the sceptre, or peace will not attend the court. 5. This is the kind of king that God would have every one of us to be. II. ENJOY THIS KING. 1. Our Lord is first King of Righteousness. (1) He who religiously obeys Mahomet may yet be doing grievous moral wrong; but it is never so with the disciples of Jesus: obedience to Jesus is holiness. (2) Notice, next, that if we trust this King of righteousness we are righteous in His merit. 2. And then, next, He is after that King of peace. I want you to enjoy the King of Salem, the King of peace. Do you know that at this moment, if you are a believer, you have peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord? (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Melchisedec, king of righteousness* :—The word "Melchisedec" leads our minds at once to that remarkable passage in the 23rd chapter of Jeremiah, where it is declared of Christ that this is His name, whereby He shall be called, "Jehovah Tsidkenu, The Lord our Righteousness." For Zedek and Tsidkenu being the same in their root, the only difference between the passages is that in the prophet He is the Lord of Righteousness, while here He is its King. Whether we look therefore into the pictures of Genesis, or the shadows of prophecy, or the originals of the gospel, righteousness and royalty meet together to make the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us endeavour to catch the meaning of that word "righteousness." Before God righteousness means justification. "There is none righteous, no not one"—this is literally true. No child of man has ever paid all his debt to God. No child of man has ever fulfilled all his relationships. Therefore no child of man is just. But that was a truer word than he who spake it thought of, when the centurion said, "Truly this was a righteous man." Christ was perfectly righteous; because what He undertook to do He did. He undertook to pay, and He fully paid, the whole human debt to God. He never swerved from His engagement. He kept, He beautified, every iota of the law. And what relative duty did He ever leave undone? But His righteousness being so exceeding, and being the righteousness of an infinite being, it was far above all that He needed as man for Himself, and left a treasury of righteousness available for every poor sinner. Very happy it is for us that of that righteousness—both the imparted and the inherent, both His and ours—which He so requires, He is also the king. For He can give, and He will give, it royally. A Melchisedec indeed He stands—Righteousness the habitation of His throne—His sceptre a sceptre of righteousness—Righteousness the girdle of His loins—Righteousness His breastplate—Righteousness the signet of His crown—and all for the sake of that one highest prerogative of His power—that one climax of His righteousness,

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) **King of peace.**—*Christ a Prince of peace*:—Two things there be which especially declare Him to be a King of peace. 1. That peace which He made betwixt the Creator and creatures. 2. That which He made among creatures themselves. God at first made all in perfect peace. There was a sweet harmony and consent. No discord, no dissension. Creatures by sin brought all out of frame. But Christ being made King, made up all these breaches. For—1. He satisfied God's justice, pacified His wrath, and reconciled man to God (Rom. iii. 25, and v. 8, 9, 10). 2. Christ took men and made them members of His mystical body: and having so united them to Himself, made angels to be at peace with them (Col. i. 20). 3. He communicateth His Spirit unto men, whereby all the powers of their souls and parts of their body are renewed and brought into a sweet harmony. 4. He brake down the partition wall betwixt Jew and Gentile (Eph. ii. 14), and made all one in Himself (Gal. iii. 28), and so alters their disposition as they may lovingly live together (Isa. xi. 6, &c.). (*W. Gouge.*) *The King of peace*:—There are many things which the world can give you—it can give you amusement; it can give you excitement; it can give you pleasure—but it can never give you peace of mind—no, not for an hour. Peace—all Salem—is Christ's exclusively—by legacy from His cross, by deed of gift from His throne. Need I say how incomparably peace is better than pleasure? If you want peace, you must look for it in Christ,—not in the evidences of your own soul—not in certain religious acts or feelings—not in ordinances—not in man—not in doctrines,—but in Christ—a personal, felt, loved, present, real, living Christ,—in His nature, in His attributes, in His work, in His glory, in His return—all peace lives there—it is Salem. The more peace you take, the better subject you are of that kingdom, which is called Salem. Every fear is a rebellion against its King. Nothing honours Christ like the peace of His people—peace is Salem's loyalty. The wars of nations make a discord in the works of God. Therefore never measure war, or talk of war, as the light world does; for it is, and it must be, a grief in Salem. But pray more earnestly to the Prince of Peace that prayer, "Give peace in our time, O Lord!" There will be no war and "no evil occurrent" presently when Christ comes; but this earth will be one holy Salem, its circuit commensurate with creation, "its walls salvation, and its gates praise." For that day the Church looks out; but, happy thought! Christ looks out for it more than the Church, and not one of us is as anxious for his Lord to appear, as that Lord is now longing to come. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) **Consider how great this man was.**—*Melchisedec a type of greatness*:—I. TRUE GREATNESS IS NOT HEREDITARY, BUT PERSONAL. II. TRUE GREATNESS IS NOT EXTERNAL, BUT IN THE SOUL. III. TRUE GREATNESS IS NOT THE CREATURE OF CIRCUMSTANCES, BUT ON THE CONTRARY CONTROLS THEM. IV. TRUE GREATNESS EXISTS AND FLOURISHES ONLY IN CLOSE RELATIONSHIP TO GOD. V. TRUE GREATNESS IS SEEN IN THE POSSESSION AND UNION OF RIGHTEOUSNESS AND PEACE. VI. TRUE GREATNESS MANIFESTS ITSELF IN MINISTRATION TO THE WELFARE OF OTHERS. VII. TRUE GREATNESS WILL RECEIVE ITS DUE REVERENCE, AND INCITE TO A KINDRED CHARACTER. VIII. TRUE GREATNESS REACHES ITS HIGHEST REALISATION IN JESUS CHRIST. (*B. Dale, M.A.*) *King and priest*:—I. THE HONOURS HE RECEIVED. One of the highest marks of greatness is to be had in honour by the good. We should not attach so much importance to a eulogy, as to the character of those by whom it is uttered. II. THE DUTIES HE DISCHARGED. 1. Those of a king. Living in peace; striving to bless his subjects, and honour his God. 2. Those of a patriarch. 3. Those of a priest. This is true greatness, when the spiritual is not neglected for the secular, nor the secular for the spiritual. III. THE TRAITS OF CHARACTER HE DISPLAYED. 1. Stability. Did not allow the idolatry around to influence either his heart or life. 2. Peacefulness and wisdom. Did not embroil himself in quarrels, or resent fancied grievances. 3. Tolerance. Did not go to war himself, but respected the valour of Abraham, believing he engaged in the conflict by command of God. 4. Cordiality. No gloomy ascetic, or lofty monarch. IV. THE FAME HE SECURED. He was great, because good; illustrious, because beloved of God. V. THE REWARD HE ENJOYS. Conclusion: 1. It is possible for us to be great after the manner of Melchisedec. Are not Christians made like unto the Son of God? 2. If we would be thus great, we must seek to be invested with the righteousness of Christ. (*R. A. Griffin.*) *The greatness of the Man Christ Jesus*:—I. LET ME EXHORT YOU TO CONSIDER HOW GREAT THIS MAN, THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, IS. 1. This subject claims your consideration. It is His right that you should consider His greatness. 2. Certainly the subject needs consideration; for we shall never

gain an idea of how great He is unless we do consider, and consider much. Here is a great deep, and it cannot be fathomed by the thoughtless. 3. I go a little further, and say that not only does my subject claim your consideration and need your consideration, but it solemnly commands it. The text is not a mere piece of advice; the apostle charges you to think of Melchisedec, but much more would he have you remember Melchisedec's Antitype. Oh, do not need to be pressed to this Divine study: love it, never cease from it. 4. Follow out this meditation, I pray you because there is an exceeding great reward for any man who will "consider how great this man was." I find for myself that the only possibility of my living is living in Christ and unto Christ. II. LET ME ASSIST YOU TO CONSIDER HOW GREAT THIS MAN WAS. 1. Lest the very use of the expression, "this man," should leave any body for a moment in doubt as to our faith in His Godhead, I bid you consider how great this man was in His relationship to God. For though He was man, He was not merely man. 2. You are not in doubt upon this vital matter; let me, therefore, ask you to consider "how great this man was" as to His relationship to men. Christ Jesus is the second man, the Lord from heaven. 3. Come a little closer, and reach forward to that which will delight your hearts far more; consider the relationship of Christ to His own people. Long before the heavens and the earth were made, God with prescient eye beheld the person of His Son as God in human nature, and He saw all His elect lying in Him. The Church is His body. "Consider how great this man was." He is so great that all the saints are blessed in Him. III. THE PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT of the whole subject. Consider how great this man was, and as you consider, believe in His infinite power to bless men. He is full of blessing as the sun is full of light, that He may shine upon His needy creatures. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Human greatness*:—There are various relations in which human greatness is a fit object of consideration. 1. It is to be considered in relation to the providence of God. All real greatness—intellectual, moral, and circumstantial—is intimately associated with the sovereignty of Heaven. In certain recorded instances, the connection of God with the attainment of such greatness is very distinctly indicated. It is so in the instances of Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Saul, David, and many other Scripture-characters. In these, the direct interference of the Divine Being is, at certain points, definitely marked; and the thoughtful reader of the narrative is thus prepared to acknowledge His hand throughout the whole tissue of the events that led the individual on to greatness. But the Scriptural doctrine of God's universal providence involves the fact that, even in more ordinary cases, His superintending care and administrative wisdom are employed (1 Chron. xxix. 11, 12). Now, it is reasonable, and fitted to be practically useful, to trace the Divine sovereignty and the Divine wisdom in the production of personal and national greatness, and, when such greatness flashes on the eye, to see and feel that the hand of Jehovah has been there. 2. Human greatness is to be considered in relation to the ravages of death and time. "All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass" (1 Pet. i. 24). "Riches take to themselves wings and fly away" (Prov. xxiii. 5). Power waxes weak as infancy. Even Fame's green garland is wont to wither on the brow (Eccl. viii. 8). How important, by the consideration of earthly greatness as, like other earthly objects, frail and fleeting, to be disabused of vain ambition, and to learn the lesson (Isa. ii. 22). 3. Human greatness is to be considered in relation to the example and encouragement which, in certain cases, it is fitted to afford. Some men have been greatly good. Their moral aims have been lofty, their moral enterprises vast, and their moral attainments bright. And independently of their importance as models, the consideration of them is fitted to inspire the soul with a moral enthusiasm both honourable and useful. 4. Human greatness is to be considered in relation to the typical character which certain great ones of the world possessed. If God has assigned such a character to some of the principle personages of the Bible, and given us the means of tracing it, surely it would be unreasonable and sinful to neglect to do so. By the consideration of those elements of greatness wherein patriarchs, princes, priests, and prophets represented Christ, distinct and vivid views may be obtained of Christ Himself. Thus, too, may be clearly apprehended the intimate relation subsisting among the various moral economies of God, and the anticipative and Messianic character of God's providence from the very birth of time. (*A. S. Patterson.*) *The greatness of character*:—Wherein lay his greatness? He was not in the priestly line. Neither do we read that he was appointed of God. Yet no man taketh this honour unto himself. God had made him king and priest by conferring upon him the gift of innate spiritual greatness. He was one of

nature's kings, born to rule, not because he was his father's son, but because he had a great soul. He became a priest in virtue of what he was as man. His authority as king sprang from character. Such men appear on earth now and again. But they are never accounted for. All we can say of them is that they have neither father nor mother nor genealogy. They resemble those who are born of the spirit, of whom we know neither whence they come nor whither they go. It is only from the greatest One among these kings and priests of men that the veil is lifted. In Him we see the Son of God. Such priests remain priests for ever. They live on by the vitality of their priesthood. They have no beginning of days or end of life. They have never been set apart with outward ritual to an official distinction, marked by days and years. Their acts are not ceremonial, and wait not on the calendar. They bless men, and the blessing abides. They pray, and the prayer dies not. If their prayer lives for ever, can we suppose that they themselves pass away? The king-priest is heir of immortality, whoever else may perish. He at least has the power of an endless life. If he dies in the flesh, he lives on in the spirit. An eternal heaven must be found or made for such men with God. (*T. C. Edwards, D.D.*)

Vers. 11–13. **A change also of the law.**—*Change in the law:*—It is modified in these circumstances: 1. In regard of justification (Acts xiii. 39). The law was first given to justify the observers thereof; but now in regard of man's corruption that is impossible (Rom. viii. 3; Gal. iii. 11). God therefore now hath appointed another means for that end, which is Christ and faith in Him (Acts xiii. 39; Rom. iii. 28). 2. In regard of the rigour thereof. The law accepteth no duty but that which is every way perfect. This much is implied (Rom. x. 5). This, therefore, is the doom of the law (Gal. iii. 10). Yet there is a righteousness (though not framed according to this exact rule) which is accepted of God. This is the righteousness of faith, whereby laying hold on Christ's righteousness to be justified (Acts xxiv. 16). 3. In regard of an accidental power which the law, through man's corruption, hath to increase sin, and to make it out of measure sinful (Rom. vii. 13). For the very forbidding of a sin by the law maketh the corrupt heart of man more eagerly pursue it: as a stubborn child will do a thing the more, because it is forbidden. There is a secret antipathy in our corrupt nature to God's pure law. But by the Spirit of Christ that antipathy is taken away, and another disposition wrought in true believers: namely, a true desire and faithful endeavour to avoid what the law forbiddeth; and to do that which it requireth. In this respect, saith the apostle, "I delight in the law of God concerning the inward man" (Rom. vii. 27). 4. In regard of the curse of the law. Yet the law peremptorily denounceth a curse against every transgressor and transgression (Deut. xxvii. 26; Gal. iii. 10). The law admits no surety, nor accepts any repentance. Thus, "all men having sinned, come short of the glory of God" (Rom. iii. 23). Yet this curse doth not light on all (Gal. iii. 13). In this respect, "there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. viii. 1). Though the moral law be altered in the forementioned respects, yet still it remains to be of use for instruction and direction. 1. For instruction, it demonstrateth these points following: (1) What God Himself is (Exod. xx. 2). (2) What His holy will is (Psa. xl. 8). (3) What our duty is to God and man (Matt. xxii. 37–39). (4) What sin is (1 John iii. 4; Rom. iii. 20). (5) What are the kinds of sin (James ii. 11; Rom. vii. 7). (6) What the pravity of our nature is (Rom. vii. 14). (7) What the sinfulness of our lives is (Rom. vii. 19). (8) God's approbation of obedience (Exod. xx. 6, 12). (9) God's detestation of transgressors (Exod. xx. 5, 7). (10) The fearful doom of sinners (Gal. iii. 10). (11) Man's disability to keep the law (Rom. viii. 3). (12) The necessity of another means of salvation (Rom. iii. 20, 21). 2. For direction. The law is of use to these points following: (1) To convince men of sin. (2) To humble them for the same. (3) To work an hatred of sin. (4) To restrain them from it. (5) To work self-denial. (6) To drive men to Christ. (7) To put them on to endeavour after as near a conformity to the law as they can. (8) To make them fearful of pulling upon their souls a more fearful doom than the curse of the law: which is by despising the gospel. (9) To make impenitents the more inexcusable. (10) To make believers more thankful for Christ's active and passive obedience; whereby as a surety He hath done for them what they could not, and endured that curse which they deserved, to free them from the same. (*W. Gouge.*) *Divine institutions abrogated:*—I. NOTWITHSTANDING THE GREAT PROVOCATIONS OF THEM BY WHOM IT WAS EXERCISED AND DISCHARGED, YET GOD TOOK IT NOT AWAY, UNTIL IT HAD ACCOMPLISHED

THE END WHEREUNTO IT WAS DESIGNED. 1. Neither the wickedness of the people nor of the priests themselves could provoke the Lord to revoke His institution until the appointed end of it was come. 2. God took it not away till He brought in that which was more excellent, and advantageous unto the Church, namely, the Priesthood of Christ. And if this be not received through their unbelief, they alone are the cause of their being losers by this alteration. 3. In abundant patience and condescension, with respect unto that interest which it had in the consciences of men from His institution, God did not utterly lay it aside in a day, after which it should be absolutely unlawful to comply with it. But God took it away by degrees. II. THE EFFICACY OF ALL ORDINANCES OR INSTITUTIONS OF WORSHIP DEPENDS ON THE WILL OF GOD ALONE. Whilst it was His will that the priesthood should abide in the family of Levi, it was useful and effectual unto all the ends whereunto it was designed. But when He would make an alteration therein, it was in vain for any to look for either benefit or advantage by it. And although we are not now to expect any change in the institutions of Divine worship, yet all our expectations from them are to be resolved into the will of God. III. DIVINE INSTITUTIONS CEASE NOT WITHOUT AN EXPRESS DIVINE ABROGATION. Where they are once granted by the authority of God, they can never cease without an express act of the same authority taking of them away. IV. GOD WILL NEVER ABROGATE OR TAKE AWAY ANY INSTITUTION OR ORDINANCE OF WORSHIP UNTO THE LOSS OR DISADVANTAGE OF THE CHURCH. He would not remove or abolish the priesthood of Levi, until that which was incomparably more excellent was introduced and established. V. GOD IN HIS WISDOM SO ORDERED ALL THINGS, THAT THE TAKING AWAY OF THE PRIESTHOOD OF THE LAW, GAVE IT ITS GREATEST GLORY. For it ceased not before it had fully accomplished the end whereunto it was designed, which is the perfection of any ordinance: even the mediation of Christ Himself shall cease when all the ends of it are fulfilled. And this end of the priesthood was most glorious; namely, the bringing in that of Christ, and therein of the eternal salvation of the Church. VI. IT IS A FRUIT OF THE MANIFOLD WISDOM OF GOD, THAT IT WAS A GREAT MERCY TO GIVE THE LAW, AND THE GREATER TO TAKE IT AWAY. VII. If under the law the whole worship of God did so depend on the priesthood, and that failing or being taken away, the whole worship of itself was to cease, as being no more acceptable before God; HOW MUCH MORE IS ALL WORSHIP UNDER THE NEW TESTAMENT REJECTED BY HIM, IF THERE BE NOT A DUE REGARD THEREIN UNTO THE LORD CHRIST, as the only High Priest of the Church, and to the efficacy of His discharge of that office. VIII. It is the highest vanity to pretend use or continuance in the Church, FROM POSSESSION OR PRESCRIPTION, OR PRETENDED BENEFIT, BEAUTY, ORDER, OR ADVANTAGE, WHEN ONCE THE MIND OF GOD IS DECLARED AGAINST IT. The pleas of this kind for the old priesthood and law excelled all that can be insisted on with respect unto any other things for which any pretend a veneration in Divine worship; yet were they of no validity or efficacy. (*John Owen, D.D.*)

Vers. 14–24. **Our Lord sprang out of Juda.**—*A new priesthood:*—1. Jesus sprang from the royal tribe of Judah, not from the sacerdotal tribe of Levi. The apostle intentionally uses a term that glances at Zechariah's prediction (chap. vii. 14) concerning Him who shall arise as the dawn, and be a Priest upon His throne. We shall therefore entitle Him "Lord," and say that "our Lord" has risen out of Judah. He is Lord and King by right of birth. But this circumstance, that He belongs to the tribe of Judah, hints, to say the least, at a transference of the priesthood. For Moses said nothing of this tribe in reference to priests, however great it became in its kings. The kingship of our Lord is foreshadowed in Melchizedec. 2. It is still more evident that the Aaronic priesthood has been set aside if we recall another feature in the allegory of Melchisedec. For Jesus is like Melchisedec as Priest, not as King only. The priesthood of Melchisedec sprang from the man's inherent greatness. How much more is it true of Jesus Christ that His greatness is personal! He became what He is, not by force of law, which could create only an external, carnal commandment, but by innate power, in virtue of which He will live on and His life will be indestructible. The commandment that constituted Aaron priest has not indeed been violently abrogated; but it was thrust aside in consequence of its own inner feebleness and uselessness. It has been lost, like the light of a star, in the spreading "dawn" of day. The sun of that eternal day is the infinitely great personality of Jesus Christ, born a crownless King; crowned at His death, but with thorns. Yet what mighty power He has wielded! The Galilæan has conquered. Since He has passed through the heavens

from the eyes of men, thousands in every age have been ready to die for Him. Untouched by the downfall of kingdoms, and the revolutions of thought, such a King will sit upon His moral throne from age to age, yesterday and to-day the same, and for ever. 3. The entire system or covenant based on the Aaronic priesthood has passed away and given place to a better covenant, better in proportion to the firmer foundation on which the priesthood of Jesus rests. Beyond question, the promises of God were steadfast. But men could not realise the glorious hope of their fulfilment, and that for two reasons. First, difficult conditions were imposed on fallible men. The worshipper might transgress in many points of ritual. His mediator, the priest, might err where error would be fatal to the result. Worshipper and priest, if they were thoughtful and pious men, would be haunted with the dread of having done wrong they knew not how or where, and be filled with dark forebodings. Confidence, especially full assurance, was not to be thought of. Second, Christ found it necessary to urge His disciples to believe in God. The misery of distrusting God Himself exists. Men think that He is such as they are; and, as they do not believe in themselves, their faith in God is a reed shaken by the wind. These wants were not adequately met by the old covenant. The conditions imposed perplexed men, and the revelation of God's moral character and Fatherhood was not sufficiently clear to remove distrust. The apostle directs attention to the strange absence of any swearing of an oath on the part of God when He instituted the Aaronic priesthood, or on the part of the priest at his consecration. Yet the kingship was confirmed by oath to David. In the new covenant, on the other hand, all such fears may be dismissed. For the only condition imposed is faith. In order to make faith easy and inspire men with courage, God appoints a surety for Himself. He offers His Son as Hostage, and thus guarantees the fulfilment of His promise. (*T. C. Edwards, D.D.*) *Incentive to Christians to promote the spiritual welfare of the Jews*:—Our Lord sprang not from the tribe of Levi, but from the tribe of Judah. That tribe, originally one of the twelve, was in an early period of the history of Israel the most distinguished by its numbers, its power, its talents, and the many favours and honours conferred upon it by God. Upon the unhappy and criminal apostasy of the ten tribes in the reign of Rehoboam, the tribe of Judah remained faithful to the royal house of David, and it was preserved and became a great nation after the whole of the others were swept away and lost for ever. In the fulness of time God sent forth His Son—the Lord of glory becoming incarnate—of the tribe of Judah; and among the honourable names which He condescends to wear, He is called, "The Lion of the tribe of Judah"—the Lion for His majesty and power, but never forgetful of His parentage and descent. Does not this contain a fact, then, which appeals to the judgments and to the hearts of serious Christians in relation to the claims which the descendants of Judah, and consequently the kinsmen after the flesh of our Lord, prefer on Christian piety and exertion? I would endeavour to place before you two plain considerations, with the view of increasing this sentiment in your minds. I. It receives an increase FROM THE NATURAL FEELING WHICH WE ALL HAVE BY ASSOCIATION, FROM ANY CIRCUMSTANCES, WITH A BELOVED NAME, AND BELOVED PERSONS. Who, for example, can go to Runnymede, who can go through the aisles of the Abbey at Westminister, without having the most lively feelings awakened in his heart, from associations connected with our national history? Now, in reading that our Lord sprang out of Judah have we any affection, any gratitude of soul at the thought of Him who loved us and gave Himself for us? The fact that our Saviour, our life, our hope, our righteousness, sprang out of Judah—oh how it should endear to us the helpless race of Judah! We see in them the countrymen of our blessed Redeemer, we see in them His relations according to the flesh, and ought not this to work in our minds some strong sentiment of concern, and pity, and desire that they may be brought out of the gulf of darkness and ruin in which they are placed? II. This feeling of human nature receives an increase of power and tenderness WHEN THERE IS A MELANCHOLY DEGENERACY IN ANY TO WHOM SUCH AN ASSOCIATION ENDEARS US. Have none of us known the pain of such a feeling? When we see the child of an honoured friend sunk in circumstances, broken in character, cast down from the station of respectability and dignity in society in which their honoured parents moved—such facts as these are exceedingly painful; and in proportion as the eminent merits, the usefulness, or the Christian godliness of the progenitors may be inscribed in our affection, in that proportion should we bitterly lament when their prosperity have their honours laid low in the dust. This is a feeling which applies in the present case, "Our Lord sprang out of Judah," but what has since happened to Judah? The

Prince of life deigned to take our nature, to be born of the tribe of Judah, but that tribe and the other branches of the nation of Israel who were connected with it are now in a state of dispersion. See the tribe from which our Lord sprung trampled down under foot, the sport of cruelty and oppression. It is no excuse for Christians that the descendants of the tribe of Judah have rejected the glory of their tribe; this in the sight of God is infinitely criminal, but this will not be remedied by adding insult and cruelty to their condition. And when, triumphant over death and hell, Christ rose and sent forth His servants to go into all the world, and preach in His name repentance and remission of sins to mankind universally, He said, "Begin at Jerusalem." Are we then the servants of the Lord Jesus? Then we must be animated with His temper and spirit. The unbelief and opposition of the Jewish nation, taken in general, against the Lord Jesus, so far from being a reason why we should be insensible to their spiritual condition, and leave them to perish in unbelief, affords the highest of all reasons why we should do all that we can to remove the evil from their eyes. (*Dr. J. P. Smith.*) **After the power of an endless life.**—*The power of Christ's endless life*:—This endless life is not the eternity He had with the Father before worlds began; it is His endless life as Mediator. The words mean an indissoluble or indestructible life, safe against the assault of all enemies, and secure from all decay, or possibility of diminution. It may be said, But is not this, after all, the same, for none but the eternal Son of God could become the endless Mediator? Yet, granting this, it leads us to a different point of view for contemplating the work of Christ. Do we not feel that in His incarnation, as God manifest in the flesh, we can have thoughts about God which we could never have gained from the study of the Divine nature in its absolute essence? And so, in considering the endless life of Christ, we may rise to conceptions and feelings about the world to come, and our share in it, which we could not receive from any attempt to grasp the idea of Christ's original and eternal nature. I. The first thought is the power which this endless life has of COMMUNICATING ITSELF. The very idea of such a life brings with it an inspiration of hope. That we should be able to think of a life like our own, but free from all the impurity which attaches to us, going forward, age after age, without a break and without a check, rising and widening, a joy to itself and a source of joy to others: is this not something to make us hopeful about the soul of man? There is no creature around us that has such a power, and may we not then cherish the expectation of something corresponding to it in reality? But if, moreover, we can come to the reasonable conclusion that such a life really exists; that One of the race has risen above the power of death; that He gave such evidence of it to those who were about Him as made them willing to endure any extremity, even to death, for this conviction; if He has been giving proofs of it since, by new spiritual life in the men, and new moral life in the nations, that have come into contact with Him, must there not be power in the faith of such an endless life? But the power of Christ's endless life does more than communicate the hope of it to others, it gives the possession. When the original well of life had been tainted and poisoned by sin, He came to open up a new and pure fountain. He secures for us a pardon consistent with righteousness, without which it could have brought no real life. He begins a new life in the soul, which has hard and manifold struggles with the fierce reluctance of the old nature. He encourages, strengthens, renews it, and at last makes it victorious. All this He does, not merely by presenting knowledge, but by an act of creation through the Holy Spirit. He gives, not the perception or hope, but the possession of it. "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish." Now we may begin to see what power there is in the endless life of Christ. It belongs to Him, not to reserve it for Himself, but to bestow it on all who will take it from His hand, who do not shut their eyes and steel their hearts against the gracious influences that are visiting the world through His death on earth and His life in heaven. But in order to this He must have a continued life. Had it been merely an example, a system of doctrine, He might have died and left it to itself, but for a power He must live, and live onward. Men are being born who need Him, and they will be born while this world exists, men who have sins, sorrows, temptations, death; nothing can help them—none but Christ Himself, and so He must have the power of an endless life. And even when all are gathered in from earth, when time in its present form is closed, and another kind of time, an eternal time, begins, He will be needed. He will be the Mediator between the unseen God and man for ever, through whom they see God, and know Him, and have fellowship with Him. II. This thought, which we have been trying to express, contains the germ of all

we can say, but we may attempt to unfold it in some of its applications. Let us think then of the power Christ has in His endless life of CONVEYING KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE. Death is the one great barrier between man and growth. What secrets might the man of science wring from the bosom of nature, if he had countless years in which to put his questions, and mark the answers! What wisdom might philosophers gain if they could watch for ages the course of thought and the currents of emotion! But what wrecks lie scattered around us of plans scarcely begun, and what noble thoughts have passed away without an utterance! We do not say that there are no compensations for these short earthly lives, and no sufficient reasons for this sad check to our fallen nature in the pursuit of knowledge. Sometimes, when we are disappointed and weary, we get reconciled to the pause, and are glad to think of rest. But when the soul is strong and wisdom sweet, the conception of endless progress in knowledge answers to something very profound in human nature. We recoil from death, not merely as the animal recoils, but because it cuts us off from answers to the greatest questions the spirit can raise. How fitting it would be that beside the tree of knowledge there should be the tree of life! And this want is met when we think of One in our nature with the power of an endless life, who can be our Leader in all the paths of nature and providence and grace, by which souls can advance in the wisdom of God. All the experience which He gained in His own earthly life is carried up into the higher life, and with it all the experience of all the ages since, in His contact, through the Holy Spirit, with doubt and struggle and grief in the lives of men. Thus Christ is full of endless, fresh life in His Word, so that we find it deeper and higher, and need to grow up to it. And when we pass in thought from this side of death to those who have entered into the immediate presence of Christ, we can see that the endless life of Christ has its relations to them. What we have in the word of God, they have in the living Christ. III. We may think, next, of the SENSE OF UNITY IN CHRIST'S PLAN, which we may derive from the "power of His endless life." There are two things secured for the unity of Christians by Christ's unending life. 1. The first is a oneness of heart and sympathy. He became the centre of a common affection, not a dead abstraction, but as a living person who draws them all to Himself, and infuses into them common feelings, not at one time or in one place, but through all time and in all places; and so the apostle, speaking of the unity of the Spirit, puts first the one Lord, and then the one God and Father. They are scattered through many generations and many lands, but the thought of an abiding, living Christ makes them brethren of the same family, puts into their heart the same life-blood, and prepares them for dwelling at last in the same house. 2. The other unity secured by this endless life of Christ is that of action. The Christian Church grows up under the hands of innumerable labourers. They come and go, and "are not suffered to continue by reason of death"; they have their own views and temperaments, and portions of the building bear the marks of it. There are chasms in the walls, raising and removing of scaffolding in dust and noise, to the perplexing of our brief lives. In the midst of all this there are minds eager for unity, and ready to take whatever seems to promise it. It is not to be found in any ecclesiastical despotism, nor even in the outward gathering of faithful men under one discipline, good though this may be in its place. It is to be sought in the one heart of which we have spoken, going toward Christ, and then in the overruling plan which He carries out through all their work. IV. Think, moreover, how the power of Christ's endless life may fill us with THE SPIRIT OF PATIENCE. Many of the evil schemes of the world come from the impatience that belongs to short lives. Even good men take ill-advised ways, because they are anxious for speedy results. They wish for something they can see, "Let Thy work appear unto Thy servants." But he who has the power of an endless life will not only choose no ways that are unrighteous, he will not be hurried into any that are premature. A subject that causes doubt with many is the slow progress of justice and mercy in the world. See how sanguinary wars, iniquitous acts of oppression, great national vices and follies, run the weary round. There is progress; yes, there is progress; Christianity is slowly forming a moral opinion which compels men to have some pretext of right for war, and it is sending its messengers of healing to help friend and foe alike. But how tardy in its approach is the reign of righteousness and peace! The endless life of Christ is a source of comfort to us. He could very soon check the symptoms, but the disease would remain. The great problem is to put down sin not merely because it is opposed to the will of God, but because it is also opposed to the happiness of His universe; it is not simply a contention of power,

but of goodness, and this needs time. The endless life of Christ gives Him patience in working for it, bringing His moral and spiritual motives to bear, and using His power at last for those whom no motives could persuade. V. The last remark we make is that the power of Christ's endless life opens THE PROSPECT OF ABIDING JOY. There is a philosophy of the present day called Pessimism, which holds that life is so entirely wretched, and the universe so tainted with misery, that the only resource possible is utter extinction. It proposes in various ways the question, Is life worth living? and after weighing its short pleasures against its long suffering, it concludes that non-existence for men, and, if it could be, for the universe, is the desirable goal. If those who put such questions would only be led to widen their inquiry, they might find that there are other balances than theirs in which the pains and pleasures of life are to be weighed. When we come to the emotions of the soul, the measure is not by quantity but by quality. There are moments of joy which outbalance years of toil and pain. The first glimpse of the New World to Columbus, the tremulous delight which seized Newton when he was in sight of the new law of gravitation, and which made him unable to finish the last figures of the calculation —these led them to forget as nothing sleepless nights and long anxieties and depressing fears. And there are greater things than these. The joy of self-sacrifice for the cause of truth and righteousness has been to some men more to be chosen than crowns and palaces, and has made flames unfelt as if He who walked in the furnace of Nebuchadnezzar were with them in the fire. This is the joy of souls, and Jesus Christ is the Lord of that kingdom where its home is fixed. (*J. Ker, D.D.*) *The power of an endless life*:—This word "after" is a word of correspondence, and implies two subjects brought into comparison. That Christ has the power of an endless life in His own person is certainly true; but to say that He is made a priest after this power, subjective in Himself, is awkward even to a degree that violates the natural grammar of speech. The word translated power in the text, is the original of our word dynamic, denoting a certain impetus, momentum, or causative force, which is cumulative, growing stronger and more impelling as it goes. And this is the nature of life or vital force universally—it is a force cumulative as long as it continues. It enters into matter as a building, organising, lifting power, and knows not how to stop till death stops it. We use the word "grow" to describe its action, and it does not even know how to subsist without growth. In which growth it lays hold continually of new material, expands in volume, and fills a larger sphere of body with its power. And yet we have, in the power thus developed, nothing more than a mere hint or initial sign of what is to be the real stature of his personality in the process of his everlasting development. We exist here only in the small, that God may have us in a state of flexibility, and bend or fashion us, at the best advantage, to the model of His own great life and character. What Christ, in His eternal priesthood, has done; or the fitness and practical necessity of it, as related to the stupendous exigency of our redemption. The great impediment which the gospel of Christ encounters in our world, that which most fatally hinders its reception or embrace, is that it is too great a work. It transcends our belief—it wears a look of extravagance. We are beings too insignificant and low to engage any such interest on the part of God, or justify any such expenditure. The preparations made, and the parts acted, are not in the proportions of reason, and the very terms of the great salvation have, to our dull ears, a declamatory sound. How can we really think that the eternal God has set these more than epic machineries at work for such a creature as man? Christ therefore comes not as a problem given to our reason, but as a salvation offered to our faith. His passion reaches a deeper point in us than we can definitely think, and His Eternal Spirit is a healing priesthood for us, in the lowest and profoundest roots of our great immortality, those which we have never seen ourselves. (*H. Bushnell, D.D.*) *Heaven —an endless life*:—Such is the nature of that life which Christ came to secure for the children of men. It is life, and life in its noblest sense—glorious, divine, eternal—in comparison with which all we have known of existence in this world is but a dream. The power of such a life! Life endless, unchangeable, save only from accumulating glory; perpetual in its freshness and boundless in its infinitude for ever and ever! It is this glory which is held out for our attainment. We who are here even in the death of trespasses and sins, are invited to seek it. It was to secure for us such a life, and to redeem us from the cause of death, that Christ came. He was made, not after the law of a carnal commandment—that is to say, one that had merely to do with the body and with time. He was consti-

tuted, not for any temporary purpose, but in accordance with the plan of an eternal salvation. "The power of an endless life"—what is it? 1. It is a perfect life. They who enter upon it are without fault before the throne of God. There is no sin, no defilement, no spot, nor wrinkle, nor fear of evil. 2. This endless life is a social life. All the communicative and companionable tendencies of our nature and powers of our being will be exercised in an enjoyment intensified by being shared with the beatific experience of others. The sight of others in glory will be infinite joy, a study of salvation, a rapture of delight. There will be the good and the holy of all ages and all worlds to love and rejoice with. There will be communion with Christ, sweeter than on the way to Emmaus, more frank and more loving than it hath entered the heart of man to imagine. There will be revealed to all the principalities and powers the manifold wisdom of God in the salvation of man. There will be mutual study, nothing solitary, nothing exclusive, no need of guardian forms of courtesies, nor any distant or reserved civilities—no sense either of superiority or inferiority—all pride, jealousy, distrust, and envy, can find no entrance there. Divine love is the atmosphere of heaven; its blessed inhabitants dwell in love, for they dwell in God, and God is love; and in sweet forgetfulness of self, the happiness of others is as dear and delightful to each as their own. 3. It is a progressive life. The power of an endless life! The idea is truly magnificent. The idea of a life of an antediluvian—a life of a thousand years—is grand and imposing. What an accumulation of impulse and of power from generation to generation! But a thousand years are as one day in the arithmetic of an endless life. Our plans on earth are contracted, fragmentary, broken, and incomplete; but in the infinitude of eternal existence there will be nothing to prevent the execution of schemes encompassing all ages and all worlds. The understanding will be divinely illumined, the memory retentive and capacious. (1) There will be progression in holiness—we mean in the power of holy habit. Perfect in the righteousness of Christ, there can be no improvement in the legal qualification for heaven; but as star differeth from star in glory, so in the reflection of that glory, which will be brighter and brighter as the soul knows more and more of the holiness and character of God. (2) There will be progression in knowledge. For this there will be boundless room throughout eternity. What heart can conceive, what mind can measure, even in imagination, the infinite riches of the Creator's wisdom and love! And thus the power of an endless life will progress in delight, in joy, in happiness unutterable, inconceivable. For ever increasing with the increase of the knowledge of God in Christ, ages on ages shall witness an undiminished freshness and novelty in the glory still to be revealed, a capacity of bliss for ever enlarging, and a volume of pleasure for ever accumulating. The joy arising from a sense of the love of God can have no limit—nay, must be, in the nature of things, positively and eternally progressive. The experience of a dying servant of God, recorded not long since, was in these words: "This is heaven begun. I have done with darkness for ever. Satan is vanquished. Nothing now remains but salvation with glory—eternal glory." This was of God. It is His smile, His presence, His love, that cheers the pilgrim through the valley. (*G. B. Cheever.*) *The indestructibility of Christ*:—In what way had the Jewish priests been appointed? "According to the law of a carnal commandment," or ordinance, which was descent from Aaron. But this involved no certainty of their endowment with the true priestly helpfulness; they might or might not possess the gifts which distinguished their illustrious progenitor. Nay, it was rather a presumption against their endowment with these; for eminent qualities of mind and soul are not usually transmitted thus from generation to generation in the same family. Well, now, the apostle claims for Jesus that He was a Priest infinitely transcending them, and destined to set them aside, to banish them from the scene. And why? Because He was "made not after the law of a carnal ordinance, but after the power of an endless life." He held the position undeniably. Multitudes of all classes and in many lands were looking up to Him and leaning on Him in spiritual matters; were turning confidingly to Him for spiritual guidance and succour; were calling Him, with eager reverence, Lord and Master. And how had He gained such position? Not by any appointment from without, nor by any recognised social rank into which He had been born, but by the might of what He was in Himself. He had been raised to it by no external edict or arrangement, but by an inward force—the force of the life with which He throbbed and overflowed. But it was the power of "endless life" which made Christ a Priest, says the apostle, of life indissoluble, indestructible; by which He meant, I fancy, the irresistible strength and energy of the life in Him as distin-

guished from the dead perfunctoriness of the hereditary priests; that being life, and not death, it could not be suppressed or baffled, but was bound to thrust itself out and make itself felt, in spite of all difficulties and hindrances. How irresistibly strong and energetic the living spirit in Jesus, the force of His spiritual vitality, did prove itself! All the hostile circumstances and influences by which He was surrounded were unable to suppress it or prevent its triumph. They raged at Him, and eventually trampled Him to death. Nevertheless, He rose, and survived, and impressed Himself deeply on the world, became the acknowledged High Priest of millions, and the hereditary priesthood of Judea melted away before Him. But this is what I want to ask you: Is there not in Jesus a power of life indissoluble, indestructible—a power of life that withstands victoriously the wear of time, the shakings and convulsions wrought by the progress of knowledge, by the march of ideas, and the severest assaults of hostile criticism? Reiterated attempts have been made to resolve Him into mist or to reduce Him to clay. They have never succeeded; He has always reappeared; has always shone out afresh, with lustre undimmed, after each attempt; has been found looking down on us from above when the smoke of the attack has cleared away, with the same calm eyes and commanding aspect as before, like an angel in the sun. And, morally and spiritually, does not He remain the ideal, unsurpassed and unsurpassable—the ideal which gathers up and collects within it all the finest elements, all the best features of the various ideals represented by religions or nursed in the breasts of individuals—an ideal which we have never yet improved upon or advanced beyond? Yea, and after all our experiences and experiments in society, after all our projects and panaceas, who will not admit that the religion of Christ, generally embraced and practised, would be the life of the world—that nothing could bring us nearer to some realisation of the dream of the Golden Age than a general diffusion of His ethical ideas? After the lapse of nearly two thousand years, are we not learning to feel more than ever that if a new heaven and a new earth are to be reached, it must be by our uniting to follow these ethical ideas; that the way thither lies enfolded for us in His spirit and principles; that the penetration of society with Him would be the redemption of society. (*S. A. Tipple.*) *The incomparable priesthood:*—I. CHRIST'S PRIESTHOOD IS NOT AN ARBITRARY ORDINANCE, BUT A NECESSARY FACT. 1. Christ is a priest by the necessity of His own nature—God-man. 2. Christ is a priest by the necessity of depraved souls. II. HIS PRIESTHOOD IS NOT A TEMPORARY ORDINANCE, BUT AN ENDLESS POWER. 1. His priesthood was not for the mere temporal interests of mankind. 2. His priesthood was not merely for the spiritual interest of the soul in time. (*Homilist.*) *The power of an endless life:*—There is a deep, mystic sense in which the life that Christ lived in this world—its infancy, its development, its temptations, its solitude, its conflicts, its sufferings, its joys, its holiness, its love, its dying, its rising—all is enacted over and over again in the soul and in the experience of every individual that lives in time, nay, beyond time into eternity. Who has not sometimes traced within himself the antitype to the type of Christ's life that He lived upon this earth? What a view that gives us of the endlessness of that life which Jesus lived from Bethlehem to Bethany. And what a force there is in the fact; with what a power it must have invested, to the mind of Christ, every act, every deed, every word He spoke, as He walked His path of thirty years and three. But, apart from this mystic sense, in which the Holy Spirit re-casts in every Christian's soul every feature of his Master's life, see it more simply. Christ taught many things, and when He had taught them He passed away; but every word He said, as a precept, or a doctrine, or a promise, lives for the Church always. It stands now, and shall stand for ever, for evidence of faith or comfort to every one who is ever received into the Church's pale. Or see Christ's prayers—what were they? The first voices of that eternal intercession which goes up within the veil—beginnings of petitions for His people's sake, that will never cease—spoken here, this side the horizon, for this very end, that we might all know and realise how He is praying beyond it. And Christ, with His own hands, laid the foundation of the Church. And there it stood in its safeness, its gatherings, its order, its discipline, its unity, and its mission; and it is that same Church which He laid then, which is to outlive the universe, and "the gates of hell shall never prevail against it." And Christ offered up, once for all, the sacrifice of Himself, to be the propitiation for the sins of the whole world; but once though it be for all, do not we know that there is a sense—a sense, oh! how true to the eye of faith!—in which that blood is always flowing. Wherever there is a stain of

guilt felt, is it not there ready to be poured out again to wash that stain away? But the efficacy of the "power" of Christ's "endless life" does not stop here. It is the marvel of His grace that whatever is united to Christ by that union, shares His power; and hence it is not only His prerogative, it is yours and mine—"the power of an endless life." You say a word—the word flies, and is lost, and never can be traced. But where is that word? It lives, and must live. It will meet you again. It, and all its effects—effects, it may be, multiplying themselves into thousands and thousands, on and on, for ever and for ever. You think a thought—you receive an impression—you are conscious of a feeling. That thought, that feeling, that impression goes to make character, moral being; and that moral being is eternal; and in that eternity of being will be found again that thought, that impression, that feeling, which scarcely filled a space or occupied a moment. You do an act. It makes its little way, and that way gets marked; and so another way and another mark, in circles which have one centre, but no shore. You said a prayer, and there is no answer to it. But the prayer is recorded, and the record is imperishable, at the throne of God; and that prayer will live when you are dead. And who shall limit the answers, down to all generations of people? You form habits—you are always forming habits—every separate thing goes to habit—and these are to be your habits—your habits of mind and being to millions of ages. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*)

After the order of Melchisedec.—*The resemblance of Melchisedec to Christ:*—There is something very solemn in the thought that a man shall be lifted above his generation, moulded distinct from all his contemporaries, and thus stand out, not in respect of his own interest, but with a reference to some personage of a remote futurity—a pledge that he shall arise, a portraiture of his character and a specimen of his history. These instances are but few, and only appear in relation to Him who was to come, and to the purposes of His mission. Prophet does not announce and foreshadow prophet. Christ only is thus predicted and prefigured. It is very important, in all these examinations, to hold fast as a first principle that the correspondence which is supposed is not of the Messiah to any earlier personages, but of them to Him. He is the Prototype. Theirs only is the conformity. Like the morning planet that announces and catches the first light of the sun, these herald and reflect Him to whom they are so mysteriously bound. I. WE SEE IN THE OFFICE OF PRIESTHOOD AN IDEA AND A PRINCIPLE WHICH EXCLUSIVELY BEAR UPON THE INCARNATE MANIFESTATION AND REDEEMING WORK OF JESUS CHRIST. From the beginning, the function of offering sacrifice was known and practised. The individual might act it for himself. It soon became vicarious. It grew into a service and a dignity. It widely, if not universally, obtained. 1. It was religious. All adoration and piety were founded upon it. 2. It was representative. He who was invested with it was "ordained for men in things pertaining to God." But this was not all: he was rather appointed between heaven and the people than between the people and heaven. 3. It was divinely conferred. "No man taketh this honour unto himself; but he that is called of God." 4. It was imparted by solemn induction. The candidate must pass through many ceremonials the most solemn and impressive. It resolved itself into invariable duties. 1. To offer sacrifice. "Every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices." "Gifts" were oblations of a votive and eucharistic kind; "sacrifices" were the infliction of death upon a victim, with confession of sin and hope of expiation. The flowers which grew just on the border of Eden might suffice for the one; the firstlings of the earliest folded flock were demanded for the other. The Messiah is the Antitype. "He has come a high priest of good things to come." His temple was His own Body. His altar was His own Divinity. His ephod was His own authority. Yet in abasement and economic subordination, "He glorified not Himself to be made a high priest." The blood of His sacrifice realises the twofold use of the emblem; it is the blood of sprinkling—toward the Divine throne for its honour and vindication, for its exercises of justice and mercy—toward the penitent sinner for his relief and hope, for his obedience of faith and love. 2. To present intercession. The priests, the ministers of the Lord, might weep between the porch and the altar; but our attention is turned to an advocacy more efficacious and direct. The high priest went alone into the holiest once every year. "We have such a High Priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens." His sacrifice is single and complete. It cannot be repeated. But it is continually presented. "He now appeareth in the presence of God for us." 3. To pronounce benediction. "The Lord separated the tribe of Levi to bless in His name." "Aaron lifted up his hand toward the people, and blessed them."

The language is preserved (Num. vi. 23, &c.). It seems the outline of Christian formula. But it was not to be given until the sacrifice had bled and until the incense was kindled. The more painful and anxious ministrations were first to be accomplished. Our Lord, clothed in the days of His flesh with poverty and humiliation, seen in the form of a servant and the fashion of a man, having laid aside the ensigns of His glory, has now gone into heaven. His array on earth was for abasement, for sacrifice. "Many were astonished at Him." He is now within the veil, and the heaven has closed upon Him as the curtain hid the most holy place. His intercession there is the cause and source of all spiritual blessings. Perfect analogies we cannot expect in relations like these. The law was the "shadow," but not the "perfect image." In the priesthood of our Saviour there must be peculiarities which cannot be reflected nor transferred. (1) It is real. The title is not allusively conferred upon Him because it is common and known. Whatever is common and known in the title is only derived from His office. (2) It is founded on His actual death. He was at the same time Victim and Priest. He was "made perfect," or consecrated to His work, "by sufferings." (3) It is strictly meritorious. There could be no congruity between the hecatomb and the effacement of human guilt. But in the death of Christ is a moral strength and right which the Scripture most emphatically describes. (4) It is most tender in its design. "For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." (5) It is associated with all other necessary offices. His suretyship of the new covenant involves these relations. He is Priest, Prophet, and King. Melchisedec was a priest and a king, but not a prophet; Samuel was a prophet and a priest, but not a king; David was a king and a prophet, but not a priest. All these high trusts and duties unite in Him who is the Prophet raised up unto us, the High Priest of our profession, and the King set upon the holy hill of Zion. The eternal perpetuity of His priesthood, which the text affirms, must, as a fact, embrace certain consequences which may be readily defined. It is not the exaggeration or poetry of truth, but a simple statement of it. What does it involve? 1. The influence of the atonement and intercession of Jesus Christ is supposed in the one idea of mediation. Merit and moral power are its effects. To this we owe all that justifies and cleanses the soul. We must ascribe to the same source the blessing of eternal life. Such an office can never cease to operate. 2. The union of the Divine and human natures in the person of Immanuel, as necessary to His priesthood, cannot, if that priesthood be eternal, admit of termination. 3. Whatever be the honours and rewards of His priesthood, they shall be eternal. His robe of light shall not decay. His tiara shall not dim. We may look deeper into this truth. There shall be a manifestation of principles, arising out of His incarnate and mediatorial work, which can only gather strength and clearness through all duration. He will be glorified in their exhibition and influence. There has also been brought by Him to His heavenly kingdom a countless multitude of redeemed sinners of our race. These were once enemies; all of them were alienated from the favour and the service of God. By His priesthood He has reconciled them to both. They have access to the Divine presence and sympathy with the Divine will. They stand forth before Him. He shall see His seed. They have become a holy nation—a royal priesthood, priests of God and of Christ. They offer themselves a living sacrifice. They offer to God the sacrifice of praise continually. II. WE PROCEED TO CONSIDER THAT PARTICULAR RULE OR ARRANGEMENT IN WHICH THE HIGH-PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST IS CONSTITUTED AND DECLARED. It is necessary to collect, if we would form a proper and consistent judgment, whatever is recorded of Melchisedec, from his first appearance in sacred history, until he is made in far later inspired Scripture the subject of allusion and illustration. 1. It seems probable, though we would lay upon it no undue stress, that the fragmentary history of Melchisedec was not destitute of design. A sort of ambiguity belongs to it, not inherent in it as a whole, but because it is so singularly told. The curtain arises, there passes before us the suddenly apparelled actor; but ere we can discern his intent, it drops. The stranger crosses our path, but as we would inquire his anxious errand, he disappears. The star shoots along the firmament, and all again is dark. Advantage seems taken of this sudden emergence, this undeveloped character, to give greater depth of resemblance to that Prototype whom it respects. "Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after My name?" "No one knoweth who the Son is." "As the Father knoweth Me, even so know I the Father." "He hath a name written, that no one knoweth but He

Himself." 2. "The order" of this priesthood was doubtless primæval. There is no disproof from chronology that Melchisedec might be Shem, "the father of all the children of Eber." He lived five hundred years after the flood. We know that in him is the direct genealogy of Christ. But this is unimportant to our argument. It was assimilated to patriarchal service. It was that religion. Long before the Levitical ritual was given, the same "pattern" prevailed. The Aaronic rule was defective, a temporary relief, a mere substitute: Christ shall not be "called of God a high priest" in subjection to it. The Melchisedaican class was unchanging, germinant, comprehensive, initial; it is according to its perfect idea of pontificate that Christ shall be installed. 3. The resemblance is much promoted when we observe in type and counterpart the union of the regal and sacerdotal dignities. Censer and sceptre are in his hand; crown and mitre are on his head. He passes from temple to palace, from palace to temple; from throne to altar, from altar to throne. His personal name and puissant style are significant. He is king of righteousness and king of peace. His capital, notwithstanding a thousand revolutions, still endures. He was not "the mighty hunter before the Lord," the bloody tyrant, the desolating scourge; his reign was that of blameless justice and of benignant concord. The king is not lost in the priest. It is a sanctified alliance. Now our Lord is a priest for ever after this order. 4. The priesthood of Salem knew no separating demarcation. It regarded man with perfect impartiality. The high altar of Calvary is covered with the "propitiation for the sins of the whole world." The breast-plate of our High Priest is inscribed with all peoples. There is henceforth no middle wall of partition. Rival distinctions of speech, climate, and complexion are abolished. Nor is this anomalous. It is but a reverting to principles older than Judaism. 5. This order of priesthood involves an entireness and self-independence. It is pronounced by the historian that "he was the priest of the most high God." The inspired commentator dilates upon this ministry in words confessedly remarkable: "Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life: he abideth a priest continually," or uninterruptedly. We may premise from language so strong as this, that his office was immediately conferred, and that it could not possibly be alienated. 6. The oath which confirms the Saviour's "order" is calculated to give it the deepest impression. "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent." How much of interest must be contained in this order of priesthood! How should it awaken our study! The Lord doth not lift up His hand to heaven and swear by Himself, but for that which is great and dread and glorious! He will not afford this sanction to any dispensation and its priesthood which is temporary, national, interstitial; but seizing the purest conception of atonement which earth could afford—the least diverted, admixed, corrupted by any taint of earth—the truest idea, the simplest abstract, the surest pledge of priesthood—as when God pitched the awful tent at the east of Eden and wrought for the guilty, naked fugitives garments from their sacrifices—honouring all this in the person and vocation of His servant Melchisedec—"the Lord said unto my Lord—the Lord sware and will not repent—Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec!" 7. Nor is another descriptive feature of this early priesthood to be depreciated. That strangeness which surrounds it simply arises from the broken and incomplete character of the narrative. It is not in any sense even the biographic sketch. It is but a segment, a single section, without reference to the extremes of human being. Nothing is guessed. That bare and abrupt account is made the basis of every reasoning. All we have to do with him is contained in that account. There consists all his typic importance. Not a single extraneous point is pressed. And this is not without its lesson. The everlasting priesthood of our Lord Jesus Christ is wholly a revelation. Any idea that illustrates it, in cypher and image, is wisdom from above. 8. The symbols which this royal priest brought forth in meeting Abraham are not to be overlooked. They were the signs of oblation. The bread was for a perpetual offering in the ancient temple, and the wine was a libation poured continually upon the ancient altar. And when we hear that Christ is after this "order," is it vain imagination to think of Him "who took bread and brake it, who took the cup and gave it"? Was it but accident that bread and wine were before Him? Were they not Paschal relics? Is their appropriation arbitrary? Is it not conformable to sacrificial law? Did not these aliments always signify the flesh and blood of sacrifice? And in our Christian feast, that feast on sacrifice, we behold them dedicate to one commemoration—Christ's offered, though sinless, humanity! (*R. W. Hamilton, D.D.*)

Christ a Priest after the similitude of Melchisedec:—I. THE PRIESTHOOD OF MEL-

CHISEDEC COMBINED WITH IT REGAL AUTHORITY. II. THE PRIESTHOOD OF MELCHISEDEC WAS FOR MANKIND RATHER THAN FOR A CLASS. III. THE PRIESTHOOD OF MELCHISEDEC WAS MORALLY INFLUENTIAL. It touched the heart of Abraham, so that he "gave the tenth of the spoils." 1. Christ's priestly blessings, wherever truly received, will awaken gratitude. 2. Gratitude awakened will prompt generous contributions. 3. Such contributions are the only legitimate secular instrumentality for promoting the gospel. IV. THE PRIESTHOOD OF MELCHISEDEC HAD NO HUMAN ANCESTRY. V. THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST REMAINS FOR EVER WITHOUT A SUCCESSOR. (*Homilist.*) *Christ —a Priest and King:*—As a Priest, He relieves us from the curse and the guilt of sin; as a King, He relieves us from the power and the dominion of sin. By His sacrifice as a Priest He restores us to the Divine favour; by His sceptre as a King He creates within us the Divine image. If Jesus were not our Priest, we should lie under the curse; if Jesus were not our King, we should lie under the power and dominion of sin. By His priestly office we are pardoned; by His kingly office we are sanctified. In the first we have a title to heaven; in the last we have a fitness for heaven. It is as necessary that we should be made fit for the enjoyments of the blessed, as that we should have a title and a right to enter on the privileges of the blessed. And hence we believe in Christ, not only as our great High Priest, but also as our great and Almighty King. (*J. Cumming.*) *A priest after the order of Melchisedec:*—Two orders of priesthood are referred to in the Scriptures—that of Melchisedec and that of Aaron. Certain functions were common to both, such as sacrifice, intercession, and blessing. The text implies peculiarities in the order of Melchisedec, and that it was in some respects superior to that of Aaron. These were—1. That it was a royal order. Melchisedec was both king and priest, which was never the case in the Mosaic economy. He was arrayed with double honour—a king of righteousness and a priest of the Most High God; He received tribute from Abraham, and conferred his blessing upon him. In these respects he typified Christ, who was the Head of His Church, and thus their King; while He was also Saviour of the Church, which is His body, and so their Priest. 2. Its universality. The Levitical order was national and limited in its scope, and its honours and privileges were for the Jew alone. In Melchisedec's day there were no Jews. No nation had yet been chosen as the peculiar people of God. Humanity was one, and Melchisedec was a priest of humanity. The shadow of his mitre extended as far as the shadow of his crown, and the incense of his intercession covered all that his sceptre swayed. Christ was a Priest of this higher order. He never once called Himself the Son of Judah, but on sixty-three occasions the Son of Man. The intercession of the high priest was limited to those for whom he offered sacrifice, and no sacrifice was offered for Gentiles on the Great Day of Atonement. The extent of Christ's intercession was evidenced by three little words: All, every, the whole. "Christ died for all." "He tasted death for every man"; "for the sins of the whole world." 3. It was intransmissible. Melchisedec's priesthood began and ended with himself, and thus differed from the Levitical, which was strictly dependent on an unbroken pedigree, on both father's and mother's side. Melchisedec was selected as one specially qualified for the office. The Levitical priests were officially, but not always personally, holy. Christ, too, fulfilled this requirement. 4. It was a perpetual priesthood. Under the Levitical law the priest could hold his office only between the ages of thirty and fifty. In Melchisedec's day no such law obtained. The Levitical priest died out of his office, Christ in the exercise of His office. In the grave of Joseph He was still a Priest. That was His robing-room, where He was preparing for His everlasting work of intercession, putting off mortality that He might put on immortality. The golden bells on the hem of the high priest's robe rang when he sprinkled the blood of the covenant upon and below the mercy-seat, and thus conveyed the assurance to the silent multitude without that their priest still lived, and that their sacrifice was accepted. These golden bells were paralleled by the declarations of the Word of God, such as "He is consecrated a Priest for evermore"; "I am He that liveth and was dead," &c. Then there was the great bell of God's oath, "The Lord hath sworn and will not repent; Thou art a Priest for ever," &c. (*R. Roberts.*) **The law made nothing perfect.**—*The old and new dispensations:*—The text tells us plainly that "the law made nothing perfect." Now what are we to understand by this? It is not said that the law did not perfect everything, but that "the law made nothing perfect." Are we, then, to say that it was useless? The law in this passage means the dispensation of Moses, and are we at liberty to say that, since it "made nothing perfect," that dispensation was in

every point of view utterly useless? But of what is the apostle speaking when he says that "the law made nothing perfect"? Does he mean that it did no good to the Jews? Does he mean that it made no perfect, consistent, definite discoveries to them? This were to make it useless indeed. But the apostle means no such thing; he is speaking of the salvation of the world, and when he speaks of the law as "making nothing perfect," he means to say that, with regard to the spiritual salvation of the world, it made nothing perfect. It did not touch that salvation at all; it did nothing for the spiritual salvation of the Jews; it did nothing for the spiritual salvation of the Gentiles; it could do nothing, it was intended to do nothing, for either. When we speak of the law as making nothing perfect with regard to spiritual salvation, it may be asked whether the Jews then had no salvation revealed to them. We answer that they had, but not in the law of Moses. You are not to take the whole of the Old Testament as belonging to the dispensation of Moses because it was delivered under that dispensation. Isaiah, Jeremiah, and many of the prophets often discourse about the spiritual condition and character of the people, but there is nothing of that kind in the law of Moses. Here are discoveries made while the Jewish dispensation yet continued, but they are no part of the ancient economy. We must not receive any portion of the Old Testament which does not belong to the law of Moses as a part of that law. Looking at the subject, then, as leading us to a division between the parts of the Old Testament—the one part including the economy of Moses, the other the instructions of the prophets, of John the Baptist, and of the Saviour Himself—we shall find that the Jews had spiritual discoveries made to them beyond and irrespective of the discoveries of the law of Moses. The law of Moses was not intended to teach them this spiritual department; it made nothing perfect there, though it made everything perfect within its own province. It provided a perfect division of the tribes; it provided a perfect appropriation of the land; it provided a perfect arrangement for rites and ceremonies; it provided a perfect arrangement for distinguishing between the Jews and Gentiles; it provided a perfect provision for the prevention of idolatry and of the practice of idolatrous rites; it provided, moreover, a perfect system of civil legislation for the management of affairs between man and man amongst the Jewish people. All these arrangements were perfect, and in all these respects, instead of making nothing, the law made everything perfect. If its perfect commandments were not obeyed, that did not make them the less perfect in themselves. The imperfection rested in that case with the disobedient. So far as the provisions of the law of Moses were concerned, they came from a perfect God, and they were perfect provisions. 1. In the first place, the Jewish dispensation was temporal, while the Christian is spiritual. Look through the whole of the law of Moses, examine every precept which it contains, and you will not find one enactment connected with spiritual and eternal salvation. Hence with regard to this you see at once that it "made nothing perfect." It was intended to form a nation; it was intended to preserve that nation from mixing with the idolatrous nations of the earth; and hence you will find that all its rites and sacrifices were meant and adapted to remind the people of their transgressions, and to prevent them from going after other lords and other gods; whilst other peculiar provisions of their economy were intended to keep up the middle wall of partition between them and the Gentiles, lest the idolatry of the one should overwhelm the worship of the true God offered by the other. The altar, however, was a national altar; the sacrifices were national sacrifices; they all had reference to present things, to the present world, to the state of the Jewish people in the present world; and there is not, within the whole range of them, one single allusion to the world to come. Hence you will find that the priests and the Levites were instructors of the people, not instructors of the people in their eternal salvation. Prophets were raised up from time to time for this purpose, sometimes from the priesthood and sometimes from the sheepfold; not official characters described by the law of Moses, but characters raised up by Divine Providence to treat of the spiritual and eternal salvation of the people. You see, therefore, how the Jews might receive knowledge of the way of salvation, though they did not receive it through the law of Moses, and yet the law of Moses was necessary to prevent them from being lost amidst the idolatrous nations around them. We have said that the New Testament dispensation is spiritual as contrasted with the old economy, which we have shown you was temporal and worldly. Now, when we come to look at the New Testament dispensation, we not only find that it was spiritual, but we find that it was nothing else. As the economy of Moses was temporal, and temporal only, so the economy of

Christ is spiritual, and spiritual only. It sets up no class of men clothed with worldly authority; it gives to no kingdom on earth worldly power. It deals with its disciples as persons having immortal souls that are to be trained by holy consistency in time into meetness for the glory of immortality. 2. The Jewish economy was limited in its extent, while the Christian economy is universal. The Jewish economy, as you are aware, was to be confined to the Jewish nation. They were to have only one place of sacrifice, and that a place which God should choose. To this place they were to go up three times a year, at least all the males in Israel, to celebrate the feasts; and as there was a prohibition against carrying out the law in any place except Judæa, the one place appointed for that purpose, it is quite clear that the Jewish economy was to be an economy of limited range with regard to territorial extent. It is very true that there might be Gentile proselytes, proselyted to the Jewish economy, and acknowledging the one living and true God, and if they were in Palestine they might, in that part of it which was appointed for that purpose, present their offerings; but it was only in Palestine, and in that one spot which God had chosen, that the Jewish economy could be fully acted upon. Thus it is evident that the Jewish economy was to be of limited extent as to territory. But this was not the case with the Christian dispensation. The Christian economy, as you are aware, was intended to spread from the rivers to the ends of the earth, and from the rising to the setting of the sun. 3. The Jewish dispensation was temporary and intended to be temporary, while the Christian is intended to be perpetual. That a dispensation should be confined to one country, and yet be intended to be perpetual, would imply that God had doomed all other countries to everlasting darkness and everlasting alienation. This was far from being His intention. It was His intention to enlarge the range of territory over which His religion should spread; it was His intention to remove and abolish the temporary system by which the territory of true religion had long been limited. The whole of the Epistle to the Hebrews proceeds upon this principle; it shows that the Jewish dispensation was temporary, and the Christian perpetual, in duration; and it contrasts the one with the other. It shows that Aaron and his descendants were priests only for a time, but that Christ is a Priest for ever. Looking, then, at the Jewish dispensation as thus contrasted with the Christian economy, the perpetuity of which we need not dwell upon because it is admitted by all, I think we may clearly see the characteristic distinctions between the two. And if we look at one as worldly and the other as spiritual; if we look at one as limited in the range of its observances and the other as universal; if we look at one as temporary in its duration and the other as perpetual, we must see that we have no right at any time to blend the two dispensations of the Word of God; the distinction between them is clear if we will but keep it; and if we lose sight of it, away with everything like sound principles of interpretation in reference to the New Testament. We defy any one to make a correct interpretation of the New Testament if there is to be a blending of the two dispensations. 4. But, finally, to show you that it is of great importance to distinguish between the Old Testament dispensation and the new, and that a serious evil is likely to result from blending them, we have now to notice two steps in the abolition of the ancient economy. The first step is the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. When the Saviour expired, the vail of the temple was rent in twain from top to bottom. This was heaven's own intimation—that heaven's own economy had now passed away. It had done its work; it was required no more; and henceforth any person that would blend it with the new dispensation would be acting against the intimation which God had given of its abolition when He rent the vail of the temple. But there was another step in the abolition of the law of Moses. The Jews did not attend to this intimation. They maintained the perpetuity of the law; they refused to yield. The sacrifices at Jerusalem were still continued. The rites and ceremonies of Moses were still observed. But did this perseverance in keeping up the Jewish dispensation succeed? It was under the hands of God destined for the powerful arms of Titus to do what the Jews refused to do, and those arms scattered their temple, and their altar, and their city, and themselves to the winds of heaven. There was the abolition of the Jewish dispensation by an event of Divine providence. The people refused to abolish it themselves, but henceforth it was impossible to observe the law of Moses, because the place which God had chosen was taken by the arms of Rome, and belonged no more to the ancient people of God. How strikingly does this bring the abolition of the Old Testament dispensation before us! (*John Burnet.*) *The impotence of the law*:—Man is naturally a legalist. He desires to be justified by

his own character and his own works, and dislikes the thought of being accepted upon the ground of another's merits. All confidence in personal virtue, all appeals to civil integrity, all attendance upon the ordinances of the Christian religion without the exercise of the Christian's penitence and faith, is, in reality, an exhibition of that same legal unevangelic spirit which in its extreme form inflated the Pharisee, and led him to tithe mint, anise, and cummin. Still, think and act as men may, the method of God in the gospel is the only method. God knows that, however anxiously a transgressor may strive to pacify his conscience and prepare it for the judgment day, its deep remorse can be removed only by the blood of incarnate Deity; that, however sedulously he may attempt to obey the law, he will utterly fail, unless he is inwardly renewed and strengthened by the Holy Ghost. He knows that mere bare law can make no sinner perfect again, but that only the bringing in of a "better hope" can, a hope by the which we draw nigh to God. The text leads us to inquire, Why cannot the moral law make fallen man perfect? Or, in other words, "Why cannot the ten commandments save a sinner?" That we may answer this question, we must first understand what is meant by a perfect man. It is one in whom there is no defect or fault of any kind—one, therefore, who has no perturbation in his conscience, and no sin in his heart; who is entirely at peace with himself and with God, and whose affections are in perfect conformity with the Divine law. But fallen man, man as we find him universally, is characterised by both a remorseful conscience and an evil heart. He lacks perfection, therefore, in two particulars: first, in respect to acquittal at the bar of justice; and secondly, in respect to inward purity. That, therefore, which proposes to make him perfect again must quiet the sense of guilt upon valid grounds, and must produce a holy character. If the method fails in either of these two respects, it fails altogether in making a perfect man. But how can the moral law, or the ceremonial law, or both united, produce within the human soul the cheerful, liberating sense of acquittal and reconciliation with God's justice? Why, the very function and work of law, in all its forms, is to condemn and terrify the transgressor; how, then, can it calm and soothe him? Or, is there anything in the performance of duty, in the act of obeying law, that is adapted to produce this result by taking away guilt? Plainly not. For there is nothing compensatory, nothing cancelling, nothing of the nature of a satisfaction of justice, in the best obedience that was ever rendered to moral law by saint, angel, or seraph. Because the creature owes the whole. Whoever attempts the discharge of duties for the purpose of atoning for his sins takes a direct method of increasing the pains and perturbations which he seeks to remove. The more he thinks of law, and the more he endeavours to obey it for the purpose of purchasing the pardon of past transgression, the more wretched does he become. Shall the ten commandments of Sinai, in any of their forms or uses, send a cooling and calming virtue through the hot conscience? With these kindling flashes in his guilt-stricken spirit, shall he run into the very identical fire that kindled them? Let us fix it, then, as a fact, that the feeling of culpability and unreconciliation can never be removed so long as we do not look entirely away from our own character and works to the mere pure mercy of God in the blood of Christ. The other requisite, in order that fallen man may become perfect again, is a holy heart and will. Can the moral law originate this? That we may rightly answer the question, let us remember that a holy will is one that keeps the law of God spontaneously, and that a perfect heart is one that sends forth holy affections and pure thoughts as naturally as the sinful heart sends forth unholy affections and impure thoughts. And now we ask, Can the law generate all this excellence within the human soul? In order to answer this question we must consider the nature of law and the manner of its operation. The law, as antithetic to the gospel, and as the word is employed in the text, is in its nature mandatory and minatory. It commands, and it threatens. This is the style of its operation. Can a perfect heart be originated in a sinner by these two methods? Is he moulded by it? Does it congenially sway and incline him? On the contrary, is he not excited to opposition by it? When the commandment "comes," loaded down with menace and damnation, does not sin "revive," as the apostle affirms? (Rom. vii. 9–12). Arrest the transgressor in the very act of disobedience, and ring in his ears the "Thou shalt not" of the Decalogue, and does he find that the law has the power to alter his inclination, to overcome his carnal mind, and make him perfect in holiness? On the contrary, the more you ply him with the stern command, and the more you emphasise the awful threatening, the more do you make him conscious of inward sin and awaken his depravity. There is no more touching

poem in all literature than that one in which the pensive and moral Schiller portrays the struggle of an ingenious youth who would find the source of moral purification in the moral law; who would seek the power that can transform him in the mere imperatives of his conscience and the mere strugglings and spasms of his own will. He represents him as endeavouring earnestly and long to feel the force of obligation, and as toiling sedulously to school himself into virtue by the bare power, by the dead lift, of duty. But the longer he tries, the more he loathes the restraints of law. Virtue, instead of growing lovely to him, becomes more and more severe, austere, and repellent. His life, as the Scripture phrases it, is "under law," and not under love. There is nothing spontaneous, nothing willing, nothing genial in his religion. He does not enjoy religion, but he endures religion. Conscience does not, in the least, renovate his will, but merely checks it, or goads it. He becomes wearied and worn, and conscious that after all his self-schooling he is the same creature at heart, in his disposition and affections, that he was at the commencement of the effort, he cries out, "Oh! Virtue, take back thy crown and let me sin." The tired and disgusted soul would once more do a spontaneous thing. Was, then, that which is good made death unto this youth by a Divine arrangement? Is this the original and necessary relation which law sustains to the will and affections of an accountable creature? Must the pure and holy law of God, from the very nature of things, be a weariness and a curse? God forbid! But sin that it might appear sin, working death in the sinner by that which is good—that sin by the commandment might become, might be seen to be, exceeding sinful. The law is like a chemical test. It eats into sin enough to show what sin is, and there it stops. Of what use, then, is the law to a fallen man? some one will ask. Why is the commandment enunciated in the Scriptures, and why is the Christian ministry perpetually preaching it to men dead in trespasses and sins? If the law can subdue no man's obstinate will, and can renovate no man's corrupt heart—if it can make nothing perfect in human character—then, "wherefore serveth the law?" "It was added because of transgressions" (Gal. iii. 19). It is preached and forced home in order to detect sin, but not to remove it; to bring men to a consciousness of the evil of their hearts, but not to change their hearts. It is easy to see, by a moment's reflection, that, from the nature of the case, the moral law cannot be a source of spiritual life and sanctification to a soul that has lost these. For law primarily supposes life, supposes an obedient inclination, and therefore does not produce it. God made man upright, and in this state he could and did keep the commands of God perfectly. If, therefore, by any subsequent action upon their part, mankind have gone out of the primary relationship in which they stood to law, and have by their apostasy lost all holy sympathy with it, and all affectionate disposition to obey it, it only remains for the law, not to change along with them, but to continue immutably the same pure and righteous thing, and to say, "Obey perfectly, and thou shalt live; disobey in a single instance, and thou shalt die." But the text teaches us that, although the law can make no sinful man perfect, either upon the side of justification or of sanctification, "the bringing in of a better hope" can. This hope is the evangelic hope—the yearning desire, and the humble trust—to be forgiven through the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to be sanctified by the indwelling power of the Holy Ghost. A simple, but a most powerful thing! Does the law, in its abrupt and terrible operation in my conscience, start out the feeling of guiltiness until I throb with anguish and moral fear? I hope, I trust, I ask, to be pardoned through the blood of the Eternal Son of God, my Redeemer. I will answer all these accusations of law and conscience by pleading what my Lord has done. Again, does the law search me, and probe me, and elicit me, and reveal me, until I would shrink out of the sight of God and of myself? I hope, I trust, I ask, to be made pure as the angels, spotless as the seraphim, by the transforming grace of the Holy Spirit. 1. The unfolding of this text of Scripture shows, in the first place, the importance of having a distinct and discriminating conception of law, and especially of its proper function in reference to a sinful being. 2. In the second place, the unfolding of this text shows the importance of using the law faithfully and fearlessly within its own limits, and in accordance with its proper function. It is frequently asked what the sinner shall do in the work of salvation. The answer is nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart. Be continually applying the law of God to your personal character and conduct. Keep an active and a searching conscience within your sinful soul. Use the high, broad, and strict commandment of God as an instrumentality by which all ease and all indifference in sin shall be banished from the breast. Employ all this apparatus of torture, as

perhaps it may seem to you in some sorrowful hours, and break up that moral lethargy which is ruining so many souls. And then cease this work the instant you have experimentally found out that the law reaches a limit beyond which it cannot go—that it forgives none of the sins which it detects, produces no change in the heart whose vileness it reveals, and makes no lost sinner perfect again. Having used the law legitimately for purposes of illumination and conviction merely, leave it for ever as a source of justification and sanctification, and seek these in Christ's atonement and the Holy Spirit's gracious operation in the heart. Then sin shall not have dominion over you, for you shall not be under law, but under grace. (*W. G. T. Shedd, D.D.*) *The inefficiency of law*:—1. That the law could not justify or sanctify any person, or make him perfect, by reconciling him to God and procuring salvation for him. 2. That believers of old, who lived under the law, did not live upon the law, but upon the hope of Christ, or Christ hoped for. Could justification and salvation have been had any other way or by any other means, Christ's coming had been needless, and His death in vain. 3. That the introduction of a better hope by the gospel, after a sufficient discovery made of the weakness and insufficiency of the law, did make all things perfect, or bring the Church to that state of consummation which was designed unto it. 4. That, when all mankind were at an inconceivable distance from God, it was infinite condescension of grace to appoint His own Son, who was the blessed hope of the saints under the Old Testament, to be the only way and means of our approaching unto Him. (*W. Burkitt, M.A.*) *The law cannot cleanse*:—The law is a looking-glass, which my lady holds up to her face that she may see if there be any spot in it; but she cannot wash her face with the looking-glass. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The law cannot heal*:—The law forces out the disease that is spreading under the skin. Such is its task. But healing it does not bring. (*Harless.*) **The bringing in of a better hope.**—*The better hope*:—I. THAN WHAT THIS HOPE IS BETTER. It is not so much the law which it transcends, for the law is holy, just, and good—both the law and the hope are from God, each as He appoints—but we may say that this hope is far better than all other hopes, whether for the present world or for the world to come. II. IN WHAT SENSE IT IS BETTER. 1. In the sense of theoretical as well as practical life, in the sense of satisfying and exalting the mind, of informing and sanctifying human nature, in the sense of development and culture, in the sense of current progress and of final destiny. 2. Because of its animating principle, Divine love in the form of mercy, manifested grace. 3. Because of its foundation, standing on the great remedial system of the one atonement, Christ offered, all claims satisfied, all parties approving. 4. In its securities, for it abides in the everlasting purpose, above every disturbing element. It cannot be hindered or thwarted. 5. In its design and adaptation, for it secures in man and for him what nothing else can secure. It makes him a noble character, conformed to truth and justice, and produces this assimilation by means at once manifold and mysterious, but most effectual and most satisfactory. 6. In its aspirations, for it looks up into eternity, unlimited by the narrow bounds of time. It takes hold upon the existence which lies beyond, and counts the longest, brightest, most emblazoned life on earth as nothing to the dawning of the day which breaks beyond the tomb—a moment of fleeting twilight before the eternal splendour flows. 7. In its influence and effect. He that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself. III. TO WHOM IT IS BETTER. 1. For the poor. They have little to hope for here. Their crust is dry; their cup bitter; their friends few; their days are wearisome and their nights desolate; life one desert; experience one blank; to them fortune is misfortune; time a burden; care a mill-stone about the neck; distress everywhere; relief nowhere. But when the better hope comes to them, oh, how changed they are! What a light springs up for their feet! what a joy is born in their heart! 2. For those who are toiling to build up the kingdom of Christ in this world. It has been the prop of God's ministers in all ages. The prophets had it, and the apostles, and all the heralds of the cross that ever went forth, as they will have it who go forth to the latest time. 3. For all the afflicted. You say, How is it? I cannot tell. It is a mystery—God's greatest mystery of love! Many a mourner has tried it, and many a widow and many an orphan child, and it never failed. 4. For the tempted in all the walks of life. It is better than all the contingencies, than all the dreams of earth. If you doubt this, try for yourself and see. No man was ever confounded in it; one hour's experience of its value is worth all abstract theory or speculation. 5. For the dying. Sooner or later we must each lie down. And what does a man want then? The friends, riches, honours, titles of this world,

what can they do for him then? Surely he wants the better hope, the perfecting, saving hope of the believer; the hope that carries him bravely through the struggle, over the river, on before the throne, and plants him there a king and priest for ever unto God! We know this Christian hope can do it. It is no spider's web, no expectation of the wicked hypocrite or deceiver. It springs from the broken body and the falling blood of Jesus, gendered in His wounds—a river of life shooting from the decays of death; its garlands being abroad in heaven, its strong fibres take hold of the beams of the habitation of the Eternal God! (*B. Sunderland, D.D.*) *The better hope*:—I. A HOPE FOR HOLINESS, NOT SALVATION. II. A HOPE THAT IS CERTAIN, NOT ILLUSORY. Moral goodness is attainable for all. III. A HOPE THAT IS EXPANDING, NOT NARROWING. Directed to a common good—a good that cannot be monopolised—a good that is infinite as God. IV. A HOPE THAT IS OPERATIVE, NOT INACTIVE. It works benevolently, devoutly, unremittingly; works to purify and to bless. (*Homilist.*) *Two kinds of hope*:—Hope may be a flatterer; it may be a true friend. It may be a light unto my path, or it may be an *ignis fatuus* to lure my feet to death. Many have been saved by hope, many have been lost by hope. When an Ohio river steamboat was burned, a passenger was drowned by a defect in his life-preserver. The first thing I do on entering the state-room of a steamer or ship is to examine my life-preserver. I once found one with the strings so insecure that if I had trusted to it, it would have betrayed me. How dreadful to trust hope, to follow hope, to be lost by hope! It is not apt to be so with that hope which comes of trial, which grows out of discipline, which has its door in the "valley of Achor." The trouble with joy-born hope, nurtured in sunshine and luxury and ease—the trouble with such hope is that it is conceited. It looks to self and not to God. It is based upon a continuance of prosperity. These cannot always continue. All of its joy has come from the quiet and comfort of its own narrow life. Such hope is doomed to sure disaster. It is like the spider spinning his silken web out of his own bowels, and laying his beautiful geometrical plans, when one sudden sweep from a counter plan brushes the graceful spinner and his work into one black ball of dirt, in which we find his hopes have become his winding-sheet. (*R. S. Barrett.*) *A better hope*:—"The law"—given by Moses—was a law as complete and "perfect" as was ever made. See how St. Paul speaks of it: "The law is holy, and the commandment is holy, and just, and good." "If there had been a law given which could have given life," that is, if any law could have given us life, "verily righteousness should have been by the law." It was perfect. Then why that strange conclusion, "The law made nothing perfect." Was it for the badness which is in man? a badness with which no law can cope, or was it from any necessary, inherent insufficiency in that law, and in all law? I believe that we should be right to say both, but that the truest answer lies in the second. But first, What is perfection? What constitutes anything morally perfect? I should say a right action with a right motive. The motive will not do without the action, and the action will not do without the motive. But "law" can never in itself make a perfect motive. "Law," by itself, strictly speaking, has little or nothing to do with motives. Now the Christian religion, on the other hand, meets man as a sinner, and immediately sets before him a field of "hope." It tells him, "The debt you have incurred to God has been all paid. The punishment you deserve another has borne it for you. Your past is all cut off and obliterated. You may make an entirely new start, unshackled by anything that lies behind. A new power will enter into you, which will enable you to make changes which of yourself you could not make. You will be able to give up your sin, and to conquer it. You will have new affections, and new happinesses, and new aims in life. God loves you. He loves you now. You will soon feel His love. And He will be unto you a Father, a Guide, a Friend; and you will lead a good, happy, honourable, useful life. You will find what you have never yet found in the world—satisfaction. You will have peace of mind. Your friends will be God's friends. And God will use you in His blessed service." Now, do not you see that just such "a better hope" as that will immediately awake in that man's soul, if he receives it, very different feelings from any he ever had before? Will not that "better hope" soften him, purify him, assimilate him? Will it not begin to make love? So the true motive is being introduced into that man's mind—love. He can scarcely help but love. And "love makes perfect." (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) **We draw nigh unto God.**—*The banished restored*:—There are two forms in which men need to "draw nigh," and in which believers do "draw nigh" "unto God." By nature and wicked works, men are "far from God." They are banished rebels,

they are prodigal children who have wandered to a foreign land. In conversion and by faith the banished is restored, the wanderer comes home. This is one way of "drawing nigh unto God." But another is specified (chap. x. 22). That passage obviously relates to devotional intercourse with God. All spiritual worship, indeed, is a drawing nigh of the soul to the Father-Spirit of the universe. Much that is called worship, it is true, by no means realises this description. A man may regularly enter the house of prayer, a man may, with apparent reverence, fall upon his knees, and yet never "draw nigh to God." But every pious soul, by prayer, and thanksgiving, and meditation, engages in this sublime and sacred exercise. And how? "By the better hope." As by Christ and Christianity the sinner returns to God, so by Christ and Christianity the believer holds sweet and profitable fellowship with Heaven. A privilege—oh, how precious! A duty—oh, how urgent! Very thankful should we be for the Economy by which it may be realised; and very earnestly should we use that system for the fulfilment of the high design. (*A. S. Patterson.*) **Not without an oath.**—*The priest ordained by the oath of God*:—I. Men should believe in Jesus Christ with their whole heart, and rely upon Him with unstaggering confidence: first, because of OUR LORD'S SPECIAL ORDINATION TO THE PRIESTHOOD. The Lord Jesus Christ was ordained to the priesthood, according to the 110th Psalm, in a manner distinct from all others. His ordination was unique, for neither Aaron, nor his sons, nor any of the priests of the tribe of Levi were ever ordained by an oath. But why an oath for Jesus and none for other priests? 1. Because of the greater dignity of Christ above all other priests that ever were, for He is the Son of the Highest, as they were not. They were men that had infirmity, but He is sinless. They lived and died, and so were changed, but "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." 2. Another reason is found in the eternal character of His work. The priesthood of Aaron and his successors was intended to be temporary. They were candles for the darkness, but the sun was to rise, and then they would not be needed; they were pictorial representations, but when the substance was come they would not be required. He allowed their priesthood to be one of imperfect men, because He intended by and by to supersede it by a perfect and enduring priesthood; hence no oath of God attended the ordination of the sons of Aaron. But our Lord Jesus Christ's priesthood, and all the economy which He has ushered in, was intended by God to be perpetual, therefore doth He confirm it with an oath. 3. By an oath also was our Lord set apart, because of the reality of His priesthood, and the substance that dwelt in His sacrifice. 4. But perhaps to usward the main reason of Christ's being installed in the priesthood by an oath of God is this, for the strengthening of our faith. II. We ought to believe on the Lord Jesus because of THE SPECIAL CHARACTER OF HIS PRIESTHOOD. This is seen in the tenour of the Divine oath, which runs thus: "Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." 1. Our Lord is of the order of Melchisedec as surpassing and superseding all other priests. 2. It was a priesthood which united with itself the dignity of kingship. We ought to trust implicitly in one whose royal omnipotence supports His sacred merit. Double faith should be bestowed on him who exercises the double office of the kingdom and the priesthood. 3. Our faith should also rest on the fact that our Lord was, like Melchisedec, "without father, without mother." Of His order there was none before Him—He is the only Priest of His line: none stood side by side with Him, for He needed none, and none can be compared with Him. By His one sacrifice He hath perfected all who accept His priesthood, and what more is needed? None can follow our Lord in His office. How can there be any successor to Him, since He hath an endless life, and in the power of that endless life ever liveth to make intercession for us? 4. This great Priest of ours is Master of all, for as Melchisedec received homage from Abraham in the form of tithes, so doth our blessed Lord receive the reverence of all who believe. 5. Perhaps one of the main points about Melchisedec is that he is represented as bestowing blessing. Our Lord Jesus blesses all that trust Him; blesses them with the riches of heaven and earth, with the eternal Word which sustains their souls, and with supplies for this mortal life so that they live and praise Him. 6. Christ is never to be changed or superseded. He is a Priest for ever. As we read nothing of Melchisedec's having given up the priesthood, so depend upon it Christ never will lay down His office while there remains a single man to be saved. III. Notice that our text speaks of THE SUPERIORITY OF THE COVENANT UNDER WHICH OUR LORD OFFICIATES, in which, also, we shall find abundant argument for believing in Jesus. 1. The first covenant was conditional, and therefore liable to failure. There is no "if" in the covenant of

grace. 2. The first covenant was typical and shadowy; it was but a school lesson for children. Christ is no surety of a mere model or pattern of things in the heavens, but of a covenant which deals with the heavenly things themselves, with real blessings, with true boons from God. 3. The first covenant was temporary: it was meant to be so. It was meant in part to teach the coming covenant, and in part to show the weakness of man and the necessity of Divine grace, but it was never meant to stand. This covenant of which Christ is the Surety standeth for ever and ever. 4. The old covenant was one in which there were imperfections (chap. viii. 7–9). In the economy of grace, of which our Lord is the Surety, no fault can be found, and in it there is no fuel for decay to feed upon. IV. Now, of such a covenant or testament has Jesus Christ become the Priest and Surety, and with that we shall close, dwelling upon THE RELATIONSHIP IN WHICH HE STANDS TO THAT COVENANT. Testaments do not need sureties, therefore the passage should be read "covenant." But why did He turn from the idea of priesthood to that of suretyship? How is our Lord Jesus a Surety? 1. He is so because we are absolutely certain that the covenant of grace will stand because the Redeemer has come into the world and has died for us. The covenant now reads as a legacy, or a will, the will of God, the New Testament of the Most High. Christ has made it so, and the very fact that there is such a person as Jesus Christ, the Son of Man, living, bleeding, dying, risen, reigning, is the proof that this covenant stands secure though earth's old columns bow. 2. But next, Christ is a Surety on God's part. "Look," says the Father, "have you ever doubted Me? Believe My Son. Have I not given Him to you? Is He not one with you in your nature? Has He not died for you? Surely, if I seem too great, and therefore too terrible for the grip of your faith, you may lay hold on the Well-beloved, your friend and kinsman; and you may see that I give Him to be for Me the pledge that I intend to keep the covenant of grace." 3. But then mainly He is a Surety of the new covenant on our behalf. Adam entered into a covenant with God for us, but that covenant went to pieces in a very short time. Then the second Adam became our covenant head and surety, and represented us before God. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

A surety of a better testament.—*The surety of a better testament*:—Observe here—1. The title given the gospel covenant, it is here called a better testament: better, not for substance, but for clearness; for substance, the old covenant dispensation and the new are the same: but the latter is made more clear, more free, more full, more surely ratified, by the death of Christ, and accompanied with a more weighty operation of the Spirit of God. 2. The title here given to Christ—He is the surety of a better testament. Our surety, because our sacrifice. The Socinians own Christ to be the surety of the covenant in respect of His holy life and exemplary death, sealing it as a testimony by His blood, but deny Him to be a surety in respect of His satisfaction, merit, and intercession. But alas! as our sinful condition requires a mediator of redemption, so our changeable condition requires a mediator of intercession; and blessed be God, He has appointed one for both, even His own and only Son, who is a surety of a better testament. Learn thence that the Lord Jesus was not only made a surety on God's part to us, to assure us that the promise of the covenant on His part should be performed, but was also a surety on our part, to furnish us with that grace and assistance which shall enable us to do, answer, and perform all that is required on our part, that we may enjoy the benefit of the covenant, grace here, and glory hereafter. Christ has undertaken, as surety of the covenant, first, to satisfy for sin, by offering Himself a propitiatory sacrifice; and next to furnish forth a sufficiency of grace to enable for the fulfilling the conditions of the gospel covenant. (*W. Burkitt, M.A.*)

Not suffered to continue, by reason of death.—*Death terminating the pursuits of life*:—Thus it still fares with men, with ministers, with all. A simple lesson, but often poorly learned! That ultimately we shall "not be suffered to continue by reason of death" is oftentimes forgotten—sometimes, apparently, almost disbelieved. And even, alas! when the fact is remembered and acknowledged, how frequent is it to overlook what death involves—the separation of body and soul; the source from which it emanates—sin; and the issues to which it leads—eternity, judgment, heaven, hell! In the very circumstance that death removes us from this terrestrial scene of things, and brings the professional pursuits of life to a termination, there is what should arrest and solemnise the mind. What a serious consideration this for worldly-minded and wicked men! What a pensive one even for the saints! "I must part with my library," writes Richard Baxter in prospect of his death, "and shall turn over the pages of my pleasant books no more." With

death before them, well may men be cautious as to what temporal pursuits they choose. With death before them, how reasonable that ministers, and private Christians, should diligently ply the work of their sacred calling! A joyful thing it is to know that the faithful, in bidding the professional business of life farewell, shall pass to a nobler sphere of being, and a more illustrious kind of work. And amidst the funerals of the great and good, what a ground of hope and confidence is He—far greater and better than the best and greatest of them all—the High Priest who "continueth ever, and hath an unchangeable priesthood!" (*A. S. Patterson.*) **An unchangeable priesthood.**—*The heavenly priesthood of our Lord*:—1. It is one and unchangeable (chap. vii. 23, 24). It was a weakness of the legal priesthood that, held by mortal men, the office had to be continually surrendered at the call of death. At the moment when "old experience" best fitted him for the discharge of his varied and often difficult duties, the priest of Aaron's line with his long gathered fitness was borne to the grave. At the moment when he had succeeded most completely in inspiring with confidence those who received the benefit of his priestly ministrations, his eyes closed upon their necessities and his ears to their cry. But it is not so with the Heavenly High Priest. In Him the thought of "many" is fulfilled in that of one, the thought of the changing in that of the unchanging, the thought of a past to be cherished by the memory in that of the same living and abiding presence—"Jesus Christ, the same yesterday and to-day, yea and for ever" (chap. xiii. 7, 8). The worshipper under the better covenant might thus recall every instance of consolation given to the mourner, or guidance to the perplexed, or strength to the weak, known either to himself or learned from the history of others, and might feel that the same fountain of grace was open in all the fulness of its blessings to himself. In a spirit of unchanging trust he might build upon an unchanging Rock of Ages. 2. It is spiritual On this point the Levitical system had failed to satisfy the conscience (chap. ix. 9, 10) For a time it had served an important purpose. While the Jewish people were educating from the outward to the inward, from the carnal to the spiritual, while they were as yet unable to comprehend the true nature of God and of the worship which He required, it had inspired powerful, though still imperfect, notions of the disastrous consequences of forsaking, and of the glorious results of serving, Him. But the state of things then instituted could not continue. The education of men must advance, God must be better known, and the idea of sin be deepened. Thus the whole Judaic system would necessarily break down. "The blood of bulls and of goats cannot take away sin," and a spiritual answer must be given to a spiritual need. That answer is given in the priesthood and in the priestly office of Christ. Identified with His spiritual offering, the offering of the will, believers offer up their wills to the Father of their spirits, and in His perfect offering they are accepted. By His offering they that are sanctified, or rather they that are being sanctified, are perfected for ever. 3. It is universal. The blessings of the Levitical system were confined to Israel. No stranger, unless first naturalised, might be partaker of its benefits. Human feeling was kept in the isolation of a narrow groove. In the High Priesthood of Christ all distinctions between man and man fall away. He is not like Aaron the son of Israel. He is like Melchisedec a Son of man. In Him "there can be neither Jew nor Greek," &c. (Gal. iii. 28). Not, indeed, that such distinctions as lie in nature and providence are in themselves obliterated. But beneath them there is the common bond of a common love, in which all learn to feel for, to sympathise with, and to help, one another, for all are "one man in Christ Jesus." 4. It is everlasting. The priests of Aaron's line were made "after the law of a carnal commandment." The High Priest of the Christian faith is made "after the power of an endless life" (chap. vii. 16). God Himself hath sworn to him, "Thou art a priest for ever." His Priesthood endures through all the rolling years or ages of the Christian economy. Nay, it endures throughout eternity. It might be thought that, at last, when the end of life's pilgrimage is reached and the number of the elect is gathered in to the safe protection of their heavenly home, there would be no need of a priesthood or a priest. But such is not the teaching of the New Testament. Rather are we taught that in Him, as Priest, must we always stand accepted before God. Throughout eternity the love of the Father must flow forth to us "in His name." Therefore in the visions of the Revelation of St. John He is clad in priestly robes; and, in similar robes, in garments washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb, His redeemed there either stand singing their song of grateful thanksgiving, or are guided by Him unto fountains of waters of life (chap. vii.). (*W. Milligan, D.D.*) *The ever-*

living priest :—Our Lord is ordained unto an unchangeable priesthood; or rather, as the margin hath it, to a priesthood "which passeth not from one to another." His office cannot be taken up by a successor: it is not transferable, but belongs to Himself alone, seeing He ever liveth to carry it out in His own person. We have only one Priest, and that one Priest we have for ever. In this we are not like Israel of old. I can conceive that to many Jewish believers the death of a priest was a great affliction. I could imagine an Israelite saying, "And so he is dead: that good man, that tender-spirited minister, that gentle and affectionate shepherd. I have told him all my heart, and now he is taken from me. I went to him in my youth in deep distress of conscience: he offered a sacrifice for me when I was unclean, and brought me near to the holy place. Since then I have gone to him when I have needed guidance; he has consulted the oracle on my behalf, and my way has been made plain. He knows the secrets of my family; he knows those delicate griefs which I have never dared to tell to anybody else. Alas! he is dead, and half my heart has perished. What a gap is made in my life by his decease!" The mourner would be told that his son had become his successor; but I think I hear him say, "Yes, I am aware of it: but the young man does not know what his father knew about me; and I could never again lay bare my heart. The son can never be in entire sympathy with all my sorrows as his good old father was. No doubt he is a good man, but he is not the same person: I reverenced every hair in the grey beard of the old high priest. I have grown up with him, and he has helped me so many, many times; it is so sad that I shall see his face no more." There would always be the feeling in some minds that the next high priest might not be quite so acceptable with God, or so tender towards the congregation, as he who had passed away. He might be a man superior in education, but inferior in affection: he might be more austere and less tender, he might have greater gifts and less fatherliness. At any rate, it would seem like having to begin again when one went for the first time to the new priest: it would be a break in the continuity of one's comfort. The quiet flow of life would be marred, as when a river comes to its rapids, and an impassable fall causes a break in the navigation, and a necessary unloading of the vessel and a laborious portage instead of an easy passage down a gently flowing stream. "Oh," says one good Israelite, "the venerable high priest who has just fallen asleep was my friend; we took sweet counsel together, and walked to the house of God in company." Beloved, here is our comfort: we have only *one* Priest, and He ever liveth. He had no predecessor and He will have no successor, because He ever liveth personally to exercise the office of High Priest on our behalf. My soul reposes in the faith of His one sacrifice, offered once and no more. There is but one presenter of that one sacrifice, and never can there be another, since the One is all-sufficient, and He never dies. Jesus reads my heart, and has always read it since it began to beat: He knows my griefs and has carried my sorrows from of old, and He will bear both them and me when old age shall shrivel up my strength. When I myself shall fall asleep in death He will not die, but will be ready to receive me into His own undying blessedness. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The benefits of an unchanging priesthood* :—A question suggests itself. Why is the endless life of one high priest more effective than a succession, conceivably an endless succession, of high priests? The eternal priesthood involves two distinct, but mutually dependent, conceptions —power to save and intercession. In the case of any man, to live for ever means power. Even the body of our humiliation will be raised in power. Can the spirit, therefore, in the risen life, its own native home, be subject to weakness? What, then, shall we say of the risen and glorified Christ? The difference between Him and the high priests of earth is like the difference between the body that is raised and the body that dies. In Aaron priesthood is sown in corruption, dishonour, weakness; in Christ priesthood is raised in incorruption, in glory, in power. In Aaron it is sown a natural priesthood; in Christ it is raised a spiritual priesthood. It must be that the High Priest in heaven has power to save continually and completely. Whenever help is needed, He is living. But He ever lives that He may intercede. Apart from intercession on behalf of men, His power is not moral. It has no greatness, or joy, or meaning. Intercession is the moral content of His powerful existence. Whenever help is needed, He is living, and is mighty to save from sin, to rescue from death, to deliver from its fear. (*T. C. Edwards, D.D.*)

Ver. 25. **Able also to save them to the uttermost.**—*Christ the Saviour of sinners* :—I. THE ABILITY OF CHRIST TO SAVE TO THE UTTERMOST. That Christ is able to save,

may be argued from His appointment to that work by the Father, whose infinite wisdom could employ no means inadequate to the purpose they were designed to accomplish. That He is able to save, may be argued from the dignity of His person, and His possession as God and as man of every qualification necessary in a Saviour. That He is able to save, may be argued from the unequivocal testimony to that ability borne by all the subjects of His grace, both in earth and in heaven. That He is able to save, may be argued from the tokens of His Father's approbation, by bringing Him forth from the prison of the grave, to which He was consigned by our sins, and investing Him with universal dominion for the Church's weal. But we limit ourselves to the proof of His power to save to the uttermost, derived from the fact mentioned in our text, "that He ever liveth to make intercession." To understand this, let us remember that in this chapter the apostle is setting forth, in various points, the superiority of the High Priest of our profession to the high priests of the legal dispensation. II. SOME PARTICULAR POINTS IN WHICH THAT UNLIMITED POWER TO SAVE IS APPARENT. 1. His ability to save reaches to the uttermost depths of guilt and depravity; the greatest sinners may be pardoned, sanctified, and glorified through His power and grace. 2. He can save to the uttermost verge of life and time. "Though late repentance is seldom true, true repentance is never too late." Let not the impenitence of sixty or seventy years tempt the aged man to cast his soul away. Long as the hardening process has gone on in his heart, a look to Christ on the cross may yet dissolve it in tears of deepest penitence. It is only when unmoved to the last that we can say, "The sinner, being an hundred years old, shall be accursed." As Christ is thus able to save to the close of life, so He is not less able to save till time shall terminate. So long as there shall be guilty and perishing men, He can stretch forth His hand for their deliverance. 3. Christ can save to the uttermost extent of His people's need. Salvation consists of innumerable benefits, all of which Christ is mighty to impart; but this topic being so extensive, we shall illustrate our statement by showing that He can save both body and soul, and save to eternity. III. THE PERSONS ON WHOM THE POWER OF CHRIST TO SAVE SHALL BE EXERCISED: "all who come unto God through Him." Without Him none can be saved; with Him none can be lost. (*James Kirkwood, M.A.*) *Salvation to the uttermost*:—I. JESUS CHRIST CAME INTO THE WORLD FOR THE PURPOSE OF MAN'S SALVATION. The pride of the evil heart is hardly willing to confess that it really needed a Saviour. The duty, then, of the preacher is to insist that Christ is the Saviour, and the only Saviour, of mankind. Sin had cast you down headlong to such an infinite depth that, bruised and bleeding by the fall, you could not climb up the steep ascents from darkness into light, from the power of Satan unto God. You were ruined, and you were helpless in your ruin; and to save you, to snatch you from perdition, Christ Jesus came into the world. II. THE CHARACTER OF THIS SALVATION WHICH IS BY CHRIST. 1. His salvation covers the whole race of mankind. 2. It is salvation to the uttermost as regards the completeness and perfection of the means provided for the work. 3. In respect to its perfect consummation. III. AS TO THOSE WHO SHALL BE PARTAKERS OF THIS SALVATION. 1. Christ can only save in one accepted way, and that way is through Himself. 2. The atonement of Christ is made effectual for us by the exercise of sincere and loving faith. 3. If wisdom or amiability or any natural morality could save us, then Christ's salvation would not be "salvation to the uttermost." If what we can do is necessary to fill up the measure of demanded sacrifice, then Christ's sacrifice is not infinite after all. And if Christ's sacrifice is not infinite, then Christ Himself is not infinite. But if, on the other hand, Christ be infinite, if, therefore, His sacrifice be infinite, then the possibility of our coming acceptably to God in any other way is in the nature of things impossible. 4. Nay, more, it is an insult to Christ. Would it not be a grievous detraction from His glory who is worthy of all honour and praise if, after He had opened a new and living way for us through His flesh, God should accept the sinner coming to Him in any other way? IV. IMPORTANT CONSEQUENCES FLOWING FROM THESE TRUTHS. 1. What a debt of gratitude is imposed upon us by the preparation for us and the offering to us of this perfect salvation through Jesus Christ! 2. The perfection of Christ's salvation is an inducement to an immediate acceptance of it. 3. A lesson of comfort and hope. In this world, even the best of men are continually obliged to struggle with sin. What a light, then, of consolation and hope is kindled for us in the text. He will save to the uttermost. The weak shall yet be strong; the impure shall yet be pure; the struggling, weary heart shall yet rest in perfection and peace beneath the smile of God. (*W. Rudder, D.D.*) *Salvation to the uttermost*:—I. THE PEOPLE WHO ARE TO BE SAVED. 1. Where

these people come to. "Unto God." 2. How they come. By Jesus Christ. 3. What they come for. Salvation. 4. In what style they come. Not with the pompous pride of the Pharisee, not with the cant of the good man who thinks he deserves salvation, but with the sincere cry of a penitent, with the earnest desire of a thirsty soul after living water. As my God who sits in heaven liveth, if you have not come to God in this fashion, you have not come to God at all; but if you have thus come to God, here is the glorious word for you—"He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him." II. WHAT IS THE MEASURE OF THE SAVIOUR'S ABILITY? 1. Sinner! Christ is "able to save to the uttermost"; by which we understand that the uttermost extent of guilt is not beyond the power of the Saviour. Can any one tell what is the uttermost amount to which a man might sin? 2. To the uttermost of rejection. There are a thousand prayers on which you have trampled, there are a hundred sermons all wasted on you, there are thousands of Sabbaths which you have thrown away; you have rejected Christ, you have despised His Spirit; but still He ceases not to cry, "Return! return!" He is "able to save thee to the uttermost," if thou comest unto God by Him. 3. There is another case which demands my particular attention: it is that of the man who has gone to the uttermost of despair. Let me whisper to him words of consolation. Despairing soul! hope yet, for Christ "is able to save to the uttermost"; and though thou art put in the lowest dungeon of the castle of despair, though key after key hath been turned upon thee, and the iron grating of thy window forbids all filing, and the height of thy prison wall is so awful that thou couldst not expect to escape, yet let me tell thee, there is one at the gate who can break every bolt, and undo every lock; there is one who can lead thee out to God's free air, and save thee yet, for though the worst may come to the worst, He "is able to save thee to the uttermost." 4. And now a word to the saint, to comfort him; for this text is his also. Christ is able to save thee to the uttermost. Art thou brought very low by distress? hast thou lost house and home, friend and property? Remember, thou hast not come "to the uttermost" yet. Badly off as thou art, thou mightest be worse. He is able to save thee; and suppose it should come to this, that thou hadst not a rag left, nor a crust, nor a drop of water, still He would be able to save thee, for "He is able to save to the uttermost." So with temptation. If thou shouldst have the sharpest temptation with which mortal was ever tried, He is able to save thee. If thou shouldst be brought into such a predicament that the foot of the devil should be upon thy neck, and the fiend should say, "Now I will make an end of thee," God would be able to save thee then. Aye, and in the uttermost infirmity shouldst thou live for many a year, till thou art leaning on thy staff, and tottering along thy weary life, if thou shouldst outlive Methuselah, thou couldst not live beyond the uttermost, and He would save thee then. Yea, and when thy little bark is launched by death upon the unknown sea of eternity, He will be with thee; and though thick vapours of gloomy darkness gather round thee, and thou canst not see into the dim future, though thy thoughts tell thee that thou wilt be destroyed, yet God will be "able to save thee to the uttermost." III. Now, in the last place, WHY IS IT THAT JESUS CHRIST IS "ABLE TO SAVE TO THE UTTERMOST"? The answer is, that He "ever liveth to make intercession for them." This implies that He died, which is indeed the great source of His saving power. Oh! how sweet it is to reflect upon the great and wondrous works which Christ hath done, whereby He hath become "the High Priest of our profession," able to save us! That Man who once died on the cross is alive; that Jesus who was buried in the tomb is alive. If you ask me what He is doing, I bid you listen. "O My Father! forgive ——!" Why, He mentioned your own name! "O My Father, forgive him; he knew not what he did. It is true he sinned against light, and knowledge, and warnings; sinned wilfully and woefully; but, Father, forgive him!" Penitent, if thou canst listen, thou wilt hear Him praying for thee. And that is why He is able to save. A warning and a question, and I have done. First, a warning. Remember, there is a limit to God's mercy. I have told you from the Scriptures that "He is able to save to the uttermost"; but there is a limit to His purpose to save. If I read the Bible rightly, there is one sin which can never be forgiven. It is the sin against the Holy Ghost. Tremble, unpardoned sinners, lest ye should commit that. And now, lastly, the question. Christ has done so much for you: what have you ever done for Him? Oh! there are some of you that will loathe yourselves when you know Christ because you did not treat Him better. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *A great Saviour*:—Jesus is above all praise. As the stars disappear when the sun rises, so all subjects fade away when we think of Christ. He is spoken of elsewhere as a Friend, Teacher,

Light, Redeemer, Ransom, Physician, and here as a Great Saviour. I. How JESUS SAVES. 1. Kindly. It is often said, "He was moved with compassion" (John xi. 35). 2. Quickly. Sometimes accidents are long before they are healed. Christ heals and forgives "straightway." 3. Fully. "From their sins." From pride, anger, hate, wrong words, evil thoughts. From death and hell to heaven. II. WHOM HE SAVES. 1. "Them that come." Christ is a Spring. If we thirst we must come. Bread of Life, Burden-bearer, Physician. 2. *All* who come. "To the uttermost." Some children are much worse than others. They know more, and yet sin against God. But Christ can save the worst among us. III. A GREAT ENCOURAGEMENT. Jesus still lives. The priests died. Our friends die. Jesus never dies. Let us come to Him to-day, and receive His great salvation. (*R. Brewin.*) *Christ's salvation*:—I. WHOM DOES CHRIST SAVE? "Them that come unto God by Him." II. THE WAY IN WHICH HE SAVES THEM. "He ever liveth to make intercession for them." Christ stands for them, not they for themselves. He answers for their sins, He gives virtue to their services, He obtains supply for their wants. 1. The intercession of Christ is to us the source of safety. 2. The intercession of Christ is to us the source of acceptance for our services. 3. Christ's intercession procures the supply of all our wants. III. THE COMPLETENESS AND PERFECTION OF THE SALVATION OFFERED IN CHRIST. "He is able to save to the uttermost those who come unto God through Him." 1. He is able to save them to the uttermost from their guilt. 2. He is able to save them to the uttermost from their sins. 3. He is able to save to the uttermost through every obstacle. (*G. Innes, M.A.*) *Soul restoration*:—I. THE SALVATION of man is THE MORAL COMING OF THE SOUL TO ITS GOD. 1. In love. 2. In likeness. 3. In fellowship. II. The true coming of the soul to its God is THROUGH THE MEDIATORSHIP OF JESUS CHRIST. By bringing man back to God. 1. By demonstrating God's love. 2. By revealing God's character. 3. By manifesting God's presence. III. The mediatorship of Christ for the purpose is PERMANENTLY AVAILABLE. 1. The saving virtues of His system are permanently available. 2. The saving agency of His Spirit is permanently available. IV. The permanent availableness of His mediation RENDERS SALVATION POSSIBLE TO ALL. (*Homilist.*) *A Saviour to the uttermost*:—I. THIS COMING TO GOD BEGINS IN REPENTANCE. The pinch of hunger makes the prodigal cry out, "I am perishing with hunger." This leads him to reflect on the past, and lays on his conscience the sense of guilt. "I will arise and go unto my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned." That is his errand. Thus, want creates desire; desire expresses itself in prayer; faith sustains prayer; God's promises and perfections sustain faith. Hence the universal law, "He that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." But though, in the Word, and through His works, God is revealed infinite in wisdom and in power, "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask, or even think," though He is here revealed as condescending to our lowliness, pitying our weakness, merciful to our transgression; yet He is the Infinite Spirituality. Our senses cannot reach Him. No thought of ours can grasp His greatness. He is ineffably exalted, infinitely glorious, eternally true, inflexibly just, spotlessly pure—a moral glory, the blaze of which would entirely consume us if we got directly confronted with it. The reflecting man then asks, "How can I think of Him, of approaching Him, of speaking to Him?" You hope to be accepted. There is an intercessor—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. That intercessor has revealed His Father's love, inviting us to go on. He has met every claim; He pleads our cause. Believing it, the mind enters into rest; the heart grows calm; there is a conscious approach to the Most High. II. But, secondly, WE WILL GLANCE AT THE WORK OF CHRIST. "He ever liveth to make intercession." An intercessor is a third person coming betwixt two others. He stands related to both, and is accepted by both. Thus it is said that the Holy Spirit intercedes. On the other hand, and God-ward, we say, "He that searcheth the heart knoweth what is the mind of the spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." The Divine Spirit dwells in the Divine mind, and all His impulses must be in perfect harmony with the Divine will. And, on the other hand, and in view of man, we say, "We know not what to pray for as we ought." "The Spirit helpeth our infirmities, and maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered." We are sometimes so ignorant or so troubled that we can only groan out our desires; but as He prompts them, He fills them with meaning and secures their acceptance. Thus, too, the Divine Redeemer exalted in heaven is said to intercede, and to intercede on behalf of all those who offer prayer to God. III. In the third place, we glance AT THE PRACTICAL RESULT OF

THIS ABIDING INTERCESSION. By virtue thereof He saves. He is "able to save." He is "able to save to the uttermost." Oh, priceless words? Is there one sin-burdened, beclouded mind, one needing a Saviour and conscious of it, one who feels that God is supreme good—that away from Him happiness and rest will be impossible, yet conscious of much to keep Him away—afraid? Oh! think of the Intercessor and the result of His intercession. He can save. "His name shall be called Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins." This is the brief and yet full exposition of the message of the great and blessed Saviour, for concerning Him it is, to the end of time, "a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," even the very chief. All the divinely illuminated have seen that Saviour. Their language is, "Mine eyes have seen Thy salvation." They have welcomed Jesus, and they have Him in their hearts, and they have heard the words, "This day has salvation come to this house." There is nothing of the kind anywhere else. I have read of all the systems of philosophy and religion, from the earliest days, and all over the world until now; but I know of nothing that pretends to bring this salvation but the glorious gospel. "Neither is there salvation in any other. There is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we can be saved." But this is enough. "He is able to save to the uttermost all them that come unto God by Him." Now, He not only saves, but He has power distinctively, for He is "able to save." The old predictions and invitations proclaim this. "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is none else." This, therefore, is the position in which the whole thing is presented to our minds in the New Testament. "Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." This, therefore, is our Lord's special claim. Doubting, troubled soul, weary with the burden of thy sin, and anxious for rest, this is our Lord's special claim. What He said to the blind man He says to you—"Believe ye that I am able to do this?" He honours faith, faith honours Him. "Be it unto you according to your faith." One of the most familiar similitudes to represent the salvation of the soul is the deliverance of captives—men who have been made prisoners in war. These are lost men—lost to country, to kindred, to liberty, to honour, to hope; bound in chains, cast into dungeons, to suffer without pity, to toil without recompense, to weep, to groan, to die—no friend but death, no shelter but the grave. One comes to deliver. With strong hand He smites down the captor, and sets the captive free. In doing that He lost His life. He knew that He should, but He did it, notwithstanding — nay, with that very end in view. As the captives move away, gladly they say, "He died for me! He died for me!" "He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." "Ever liveth," and therefore "able to save to the uttermost." In the margin the word is "for evermore." "To the uttermost"—perfectly, in every sense, and for every object. "To the uttermost." Oh, sinking soul, the hand is strong; the hand is loving. Take hold of it. (*John Aldis.*)

Christ able to save:—What is salvation? We cannot fully answer this question unless we knew the extreme evil and demerit of sin; unless we understood the worth of the soul, the duration of eternity, and the felicity of heaven. This we know, salvation is deliverance from sin and all its consequences; freedom from the curse of a broken law, and from the wrath of an offended God; the possession of pardon, peace, and growing purity in this life; and the full fruition of holiness, happiness, and glory in the life which is to come. Salvation includes whatever constitutes the perfection of our immortal nature, its highest enjoyment; and this enjoyment perpetuated to the countless ages of eternity. Christ is "able to save." We notice—I. HIS NATURAL ABILITY. His ability of nature, irrespective of any office He fills, or engagement He has made: in plain words, His ability as God. II. HIS OFFICIAL ABILITY. His ability of office, in virtue of which it is His right, His prerogative, to save. The Son of God undertook the cause of ruined man: He became Mediator. This was the office He condescended to sustain; and in pursuance of this office He saves. III. HIS MORAL ABILITY. His ability of mind, if it may be so expressed; His inclination: in one word, His willingness to save. And how does this appear? How is it proved? Consider—1. What He hath said. He hath given the strongest assurances of His ability, His resolution, to save; and shall we not believe Him? 2. What He hath done. He hath saved sinners, the greatest sinners; and facts are decisive. 3. What He is now doing is farther proof of the ability, the willingness, of the Saviour. I refer not to His intercession in heaven, though this is decisive; but to the grace which He bestows on earth, the

saving power which He now exerts among the sons of men. (*T. Kidd.*) *Christ saves fully and evermore*:—The Greek term includes two things: to save fully, and to save evermore—both are included. They are put in the text, to save to the uttermost; they put into the margin, very properly, the other term, evermore; and both are included. The Lord Jesus saves to the uttermost from all the power of sin. He will give you power to conquer every evil—the yoke of iniquity will be removed—the chain by nature taken away, snapped asunder—and your souls enter into liberty through the blood of the covenant. He is able to save to the uttermost from all past guilt. He is able to save to the uttermost from all pollution. To cleanse the polluted heart—to destroy everything contrary to the Divine nature—to raise the soul to bear the stamp divine of the lovely image of our Lord. The marginal reading (evermore) is also to be included. "He is able to save evermore." Oh, how common is the fear with many that if they were to enter into the heavenly way, and that if they were to connect themselves with the people of God, that they should very soon fall from grace, and make shipwreck of faith and of a good conscience. Cannot Jesus keep you? Will not His grace prove sufficient for you? Will He not save you in your dying hour? Is He not an almighty Saviour? We may often reflect on that subject when you and I stand on the verge of eternity. But whom will Jesus save? "All them that come unto God by Him." We can only come to God through His atoning blood; there is no other way. (*G. Marsden.*) *Christ's power to save sinners*:—I. THE POWER OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST TO SAVE SINNERS. 1. The perfection of His atoning sacrifice. (1) The appointment of the Father. (2) Immaculate purity. (3) Voluntary substitution of Himself. (4) The infinite majesty of His person. 2. The duration of His life, and the perpetuity of His office. 3. The prevalence of His never-ceasing intercession. II. THE CHARACTER OF THOSE WHO ARE INTERESTED IN HIS INTERCESSION. 1. The expression, "to come to God by Him," implies a practical conviction of the existence of the one true God, in opposition to the polytheism and idolatry of the heathen nations. 2. It implies a conviction of guilt and ruin, and a simple dependence on Him for acceptance before God. 3. It implies an ardent attachment to those ordinances which God, through this High Priest, has in mercy appointed. It is in His ordinances that He has promised to bless. 4. It implies a consecration to Jehovah. III. THE VAST EXTENT TO WHICH HIS SAVING POWER REACHES. 1. He is able to save to the utmost limit of this world's duration. 2. He is able to save from the lowest gulf of guilt and ruin. 3. He is able to save from the lowest depths of defection and apostacy. 4. He is able to save at the last moment. Lessons: 1. The vast importance of the doctrine of the Atonement. 2. The vast importance of the essential deity of Christ. 3. The necessity of a personal application of the blood of the Atonement. 4. The encouragement which this doctrine affords to the weeping, broken-hearted penitent. 5. The most astonishing display of the love of God to man. (*W. Thorpe.*) *The suitableness of Christ as a Saviour to all who believe in Him*:—I. THE GLORIOUS TRUTH DECLARED. "He is able to save to the uttermost." 1. The extent of His atonement. (1) Infinite in merit. (2) God has promised to pardon the sins of those who believe in His only begotten Son. (3) The invitations of Scripture to believe in Christ are universal—without regard to persons. (4) All men are directly or indirectly commanded to believe in Christ, or encouraged to do so. (5) The Scriptures evidently assert that unbelief is a sin, and a sin which is threatened with endless punishment. 2. He is able to save to the uttermost as it regards the perfection of the work. The work of salvation by Christ will be perfect in the highest degree. And this will appear more glorious when you consider the lengths to which some have gone in a sinful course towards misery before they were arrested by the power of sovereign grace. 3. He saves to the uttermost as it regards the duration of the work. And this may be considered in two respects. (1) As it regards the work in this world. To the progress of Divine grace in the heart, there is often much opposition made by temptations, trials, and the remaining corruptions of a sinful heart of unbelief: but through all, Jesus Christ, as our faithful High Priest, is engaged to carry on the work to perfection, even in the weakest and the humblest of His people. (2) His saving to the uttermost, with regard to the duration of it, may be considered in reference to the world that is to come. This salvation will be eternal. II. THE MANNER IN WHICH THIS SALVATION IS OBTAINED. "Them that come unto God by Him." 1. Christ as a Mediator is the only way of worship. 2. This implies faith in Him as our great High Priest, whereby we become interested in His saving power Faith in Him

enables the believer to feel and say (Heb. x. 19–22). As He is the Legislator of the New Testament dispensation, as well as the only Priest, we must worship God in the way of His appointment. We are to come unto the Father in His name, seeking the influence of the Holy Spirit to help our infirmities. We must also come with affiance in His mediatorial office, as to the acceptance of every act of worship and obedience. Without this simple reliance and humble confidence we can have no saving interest in the blessings of redemption through Him (John xv. 6). 3. This will enable us to judge whether we are among the number of those who are saved through Him. If we are, we know what it is to plead His all-sufficient atonement before the mercy-seat as the only ground of our acceptance with God. III. The REASON which the apostle assigns in confirmation of this truth: "Seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for us." This shows us—1. That the mediatorial work of Christ, while on earth, was accepted of God. 2. He lives to carry on the work of redemption. Though exalted at the right hand of the Majesty on high, yet He remembers His people below, and makes intercession for them above. (*N. M. Harry.*) *The almighty Saviour*:—I. First, let us look at THE OBJECT OF THE REDEEMER'S WORK. It is "to save." What is it "to save"? To save implies much. It implies that it was the design of God that poor fallen man should be raised higher in felicity than he had sunk low in misery: "Who hath saved us, and called us, not according to our works, but according to His purpose and grace, which were in Christ Jesus, before the world began." Then it implies that there is a Saviour; and who is that Saviour? And what is His name? And where does He dwell? If I turn to fallen man, he says, "Oh! He is not among us; I have not even righteousness enough to save myself." If I turn to angels, they say, "He is not amongst us; we have no righteousness to spare." If I turn to the sea, it says, "It is not in me." If I turn to the earth, it brings me nothing but shame, and poverty, and want. And while I am musing and turning hither and thither, lo, a voice from the heavenly world arrests my attention, and says, "Behold My servant whom I uphold, Mine elect in whom My soul delighteth; I will put My Spirit upon Him, and He shall show salvation unto the Gentiles, His name shall be called Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins." And it includes, as well as implies, mark you, what it is to save. To save is to deliver an individual from the curse and condemnation of sin, from the rule and slavery of sin, from the consequences and dismal end of sin. II. But you say to me, "Yes, it is true that this is the salvation that I should desire to enjoy; BUT HOW CAN I BE SURE THAT CHRIST WILL SAVE ME?" Well, that matter is quite settled; but, just to bring it before you a little, let me illustrate it. There are three things that make this sure in the ability which He has to secure this object. First, it is ensured by the dignity of His person; secondly, it is ensured by the perfection of His work; thirdly, it is ensured by His never-failing success. III. Then here are THE PEOPLE WHOM HE WILL SAVE: "them that come unto God by Him." Mark the phraseology, for it is peculiar. "Them that come to God." Ah! here is a change; all the man's life was going from God; now he is coming to God. Here is the prodigal coming home; here is the criminal coming to God for mercy. But how can a poor, wretched, lost, guilty, undone criminal expect to find mercy of God? "Coming to God by Him." Ah! that explains the difficulty, and removes it out of the way. O Lord! I have no name to come in, but I come in the name of Thy Son; I have no righteousness to offer before Thee, but I come in the robe of Thy Son; I have no merit, but I come in the merit of Him who hung upon the tree. IV. Finally, here is THE REASON WHY THIS SALVATION IS TO BE EXERCISED UPON THESE PERSONS. "Seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." And an important reason this is. The comparison is drawn here between the priests under the law and Himself. They died; and they had to make atonement for themselves, as well as for the people. He had none to make for Himself; and He "ever liveth." Oh! what a mercy for me that I have a living Saviour; that He is not dead, but that He lives, and lives to plead for me; that His voice is heard in heaven—"whom the Father heareth always!"—and heard for me! What an encouragement it is to know that you have some one who will introduce you into the presence of the King, who will speak well for you, and is not accustomed to be refused! And here is one that "ever lives to make intercession"! You recollect that about the throne of glory there are certain vials, and these are the "prayers of the saints." So precious are these prayers, poor and imperfect as you think them, that they are put into vials to keep them; and so high is the estimation of them that they are put into golden vials, and God Himself says they are used as odours in the heavenly

world. And if the prayers of my father, and my mother, and my sister, and my brother are so precious in God's estimation, what must my Saviour's intercession be? (*James Sherman.*) *The ability of Jesus Christ to save to the uttermost:*— In the text two things engage us: first, the character of the persons to whom it relates, "Those that come to God by Jesus Christ"; and, secondly, the ability of Jesus Christ to save such, and the extent of that ability, "He is able to save such to the uttermost." I. THE CHARACTER IS THAT OF THOSE WHO COME TO GOD BY JESUS CHRIST. The grand assumption of Christianity consists of two parts: first, that we stand in a natural relation to God; and, secondly, that we have violated this relation. The idea of coming to God seems to be taken from the practice of the Israelites as coming to the temple in their local worship: it is no longer now a local approach, it is a mental approach, a movement of the mind, a turning of the heart to God. This coming may be regarded under two aspects: we must come as subjects to obey God, and come as suppliants to enjoy God. Whoever so comes is the character that has the comfort of the text, has a share in the redemption of Jesus Christ. But all that come to God must come by Jesus Christ. II. THE ABILITY OF JESUS CHRIST TO SAVE SUCH, AND ITS EXTENT, "TO THE UTTERMOST." 1. His ability. (1) He alone is appointed by God: "Him hath God the Father sealed" to dispense the bread of life to dying sinners. (2) He actually shed His blood as an atonement for sin. (3) It is a clear evidence of His ability to save that God has raised Him up to sit at His own right hand. (4) Since "He ever liveth in heaven to make intercession for them," therefore He must be able to save believers. Whether His intercession is actual or merely virtual, literal or merely figurative, we may not be able to determine: probably it is the former; probably, as He interceded on earth for His followers, so He does in heaven; He continues the priesthood which commenced from His sacrifice and ascension: this seems implied in His words, "I will pray the Father." He stands as a High Priest before the throne of God. 2. His ability to save extends "to the uttermost." (1) Every kind and degree of guilt is here included. The sins of men are very various; every man's conscience reads a different history to him, peculiar to himself; every one that knows the plague of his heart is apt to suppose that he must be a greater sinner than all beside; must be, as the apostle considered himself, "the chief of sinners"; though this can be strictly true of only one: so many aggravations of sin present themselves to his view, so many checks and resolutions broken, so much light and grace resisted, so many mercies despised; surely no other offender ever equalled himself! But let these aggravations be what they may, the blood of Jesus Christ is adequate. And Jesus Christ saves "to the uttermost," not only in regard to the first conversion of the sinner: there remains much yet to be effected after his conversion, and Jesus Christ effects it. (2) The extent of His ability through all duration is everywhere asserted. His blood, so to speak, is just as warm and fresh as when it was first shed; it has an undecaying virtue. (*R. Hall, M.A.*) *The power of Christ to save:*—I. As to the ability of Christ to save—this is considered under two different aspects: as to its extent or range, and as to its intrinsic efficacy. IT EXTENDS TO ALL THOSE WHO COME TO GOD BY HIM. For though the word "all" does not occur in the passage, it is of course implied. The phrase is precisely analogous to our Lord's own words: "Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out," which is equivalent to saying, "Every one that cometh to Me shall certainly be received." And this is a source of absolute and unqualified encouragement. For if you wish to come to God at all, how are you to come unless it be by Christ? His interposition as a third person is not the introduction of a barrier that arrests or impedes your approach. On the contrary, as it is the aim of this Epistle to show, it is the one thing that makes that approach possible, and prevents it from being vain. For you cannot come to God in Himself just as you are. He is a remote impalpable presence, who retires in proportion as you advance, and who evades and eludes the embrace of the human heart. He may be a bright vision or an awful presence, but He will always remain above and beyond you, a Being with whom you can have no fellowship, and who renders you no conscious help in the hour of temptation or the article of death. Besides, you are sinful, and the more earnestly you try to reach Him, the clearer to your own consciousness becomes the gulf between you, and the strength of the power that holds you back. You must either renounce the hope of reaching God at all, and suffer Him gradually to vanish from your sight; or you must become content with a vague sentiment which will never quicken or sustain the heart, though it may invest your life with a certain measure of mystery and reverence. "No man

cometh unto the Father but by Me." Now this definite knowledge of God, which otherwise we lack, and this restraint which is exercised by the power of our sin, is precisely what the intervention of Christ on the one hand provides, and on the other removes. In Him God becomes manifest in such a way as to be present clearly and powerfully to our thoughts. He is no longer an assemblage of qualities such as holiness, justice, goodness, and truth, which we painfully try to group together and cement into some sort of cohesion in our own mind. But in Christ all these receive their highest and purest conceivable expression, and are combined into the unity of a living Person, whose history lives before us in the pages of the Evangelists, and is impressed with an individuality at once most definite, unique, and indelible. Indeed, if you choose, you can know Christ better than those who are nearest to you on earth, and can have a much greater certainty as to His will. Moreover, in Him the mercy of God towards sinners, of which we have otherwise no assurance, works out for itself a perfectly free and unambiguous channel. In His sacrifice the claims of justice are satisfied, and satisfied by a love that willingly submits to the last extremity to achieve its beneficent end. His atonement opens His arms to the whole world, and presents Him in the attitude of an inviting and pitiful Saviour. Not to strike is His hand reached forth, but to help. Not to avenge is His arm uplifted, but to bring salvation, and beckon the weary and heavy laden to His rest. As One who will without fail bring you to God, as One who can forgive all your iniquities, and heal all your diseases, He calls you to Himself. When He cries it is God's mercy that cries, a mercy that is boundless because it rests on a propitiation for the whole world. And if you wish to come to God there is nothing to hinder and everything to help you. Christ does not block the way, but opens it. "I am the door." No one is met with a refusal, for every possible ground of refusal He has Himself abolished. None have failed of salvation because Christ could not save them. No one has come to Him and found that while He could bring every one else to God there was something in his case that baffled His power, or made him an exception to the free and universal offer of His help. But Christ's ability to save not only meets us at the threshold, as it were, of our approach to God, and assures us of its sufficiency to bring us into His fellowship, it also assures us of His power to complete the process which He thus begins. He is able to save to the uttermost. This does not mean to the end of life, or up to the time of the Second Advent, though that is no doubt involved in the words. Nor does it mean that Christ's power extends so far as to reach and include those that have gone even to the farthest verge or extremity of wickedness, for that has already been implied in the words we have just considered. The idea rather is that His power is adequate to secure the perfect salvation of all who come to Him, so that nothing shall be required for its completeness which He is unable to supply. And this is the assurance that we need. The smouldering fires of half-extinguished passion flicker up on the slightest provocation and strive to resume their old ascendancy. Evil habits reassert themselves at times, and seem as stubborn and unyielding as they ever were. Subtle currents of envy and malice betray their presence in the most humiliating ways, and a deep-seated pride and self-righteousness refuses to acknowledge the power of the Cross. Not only so, winds of doctrine carry you about, spectres of doubt start up to trouble you. A dull indifference to Divine things, a sullen reluctance to rise to higher heights of holiness or consecration to God, baffles you and holds you down as with a dead weight. Indeed, there is so much in you that is opposed to God, and that seems to resist the influence and supremacy of grace, a perfect salvation seems to you an almost impossible consummation. Now the successful issue of the process of salvation depends on what Christ is able to provide and to do. If there is any limit to His power, or any defect attaching to it, there will be a corresponding risk. If in any respect He is incompetent, then you may anticipate disaster. But in Him dwells all the fulness of Divine grace. Everything that we lack and require to have we find in Him and in its infinite perfection. There is no weakness which He cannot develop into strength, no spiritual emptiness which He cannot fill, no darkness which He cannot enlighten. There are no hindrances so determined that He cannot carry you triumphantly over them, no temptations so insidious or strong but that He can make a way of escape so that you shall be able to bear them. II. This saving ability of Christ rests upon THE FACT OF HIS EVER LIVING TO MAKE INTERCESSION. In this respect He presents a contrast to the Levitical priesthood. It passed from one to another as death removed the successive occupants of the office. But Christ abideth for ever, and there is no interruption to the continuity of His mediation. At no point

does it cease even for a moment so that those He represents can possibly have their interests imperilled. Unbroken, it prolongs itself from age to age, unchanging in its character, and unintermittent in duration. For He is made a priest, not "after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life." It is not, then, on the fact of a past atonement, but on the power of a living Saviour your safety depends. That Christ died would be of no use to us if He were not alive now, and alive, so to speak, more mightily than He ever was before. Other men death removes from their intercourse with the world. It brings their direct influence and agency to an end. But death did not so affect Him. It produced no change in His activity, except to widen its range and intensify its energy. And now the whole of His priestly functions are taken up and absorbed in this one attitude or act of intercession. How it proceeds it is difficult for us to say, and it is not necessary that we should know. But He has left us an illustration in the prayer which He offered in the days of His flesh of how it was accomplished then, "and translating this into the modes of heavenly communion so far as we can imagine them we may perhaps form some conception of its character." Of this at least we are assured—that it embraces and takes into account the whole sum of our necessities, and provides effectually for their supply. Our strongest and most earnest prayers, our confused and importunate petitions, our dumb and mute appeals, when the weight and pressure of life lie too heavily upon us, and we groan being burdened—all receive their pure, articulate, and prevailing expression in Him who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and knows the frailty of our frame. Again, we may gather that the power of Christ's intercession springs from His atonement. This is, so to speak, the basis on which it proceeds, the great argument which makes it conclusive. And what can make it more so? It is true our sins cry out for vengeance, but Christ's blood cries still louder for mercy. And its cry continues sustained, penetrating through all obstructions, resistless, clear, never failing to enter into the ears of God. (*C. Moinet, M.A.*) *Christ's saving ability:*—I. CHRIST'S SAVING ABILITY. 1. The nature of this ability. Jesus possesses—(1) Meritorious ability. (2) Official ability. (3) Efficient ability. (4) Gracious ability. He is as willing as able. 2. The extent of Christ's saving ability. He is able to save "to the uttermost"—(1) From all the present and future consequences of sin. (2) Into all the positive enjoyments of the Divine favour. (3) From the lowest depths of sin and misery. (4) At the last extremity of life. (5) From the beginning to the end of our world's duration. (6) All and every man within our world's circumference. (7) Into all the inconceivable glories of eternal life. II. THE CHARACTERS WHOM THIS SALVATION EMBRACES. Those who come unto God by Christ. This implies—1. Our distance from God. And in coming to God we must be sensible of it, feel it, deplore it, &c. 2. The movement of the heart towards Him. 3. The reception of God's favour through Jesus Christ. Application: Here see—1. The greatness of the salvation of the gospel. 2. Supreme dignity and power of the Redeemer. 3. The only way to obtain eternal life. (*J. Burns, D.D.*) *Why not be saved?*—"Man's extremity is God's opportunity." To convert the youthful soul which has never yet yielded to the fascination of sinful indulgence is a great work of God; but to save the man who knows the pleasures of sin and whose chief delight is to drink from its cup so that he shall loathe it as an abominable thing, is a greater miracle than the creation of the world. Now, the gospel is specially addressed to those who have given up all hope of being able to save themselves. Its chief statement is very startling, namely, that God loves the sinner. Let any man believe this fact, and salvation is half done already. I. ALL MEN NEED SALVATION FROM SIN. You may exclaim, "Am I not as God made me?" You are not. He made you in His own image; but you have defaced that likeness by your own doing. Men give evidence against each other in the witness-box at the court of justice, but God is in each heart witnessing there to the sinner himself. God's witness is true. We sometimes think it is our own better nature which warns us to avoid sin, but it is the voice of the Holy Spirit of God. A minister was preaching one day about the certainty of judgment, and said, "I have warned you faithfully and earnestly, but if you do not hear my words, there is another voice which shall summon you to judgment." At that moment a soldier jumped up, crying, "Oh, sir, stop! do not go any further." The Lord was speaking in that soldier's soul, and showing him the vileness of his sins until he could sit still no longer. He thought the minister was speaking specially to him, and he cried out for fear of his sins. If there be sorrow for sin in your heart, let me repeat that it is caused by the Spirit of God. You say, "But I feel such an

awful sinner!" I tell you in reply that it is the Lord who gives you the knowledge which makes you feel you are so wicked. Is it not an evidence of His love? You may be saved to-day. But, perhaps, you may tell me that you never have done anything wicked enough to send you to hell. In reply, I ask you to look at the record of your life. Does not that show you have done things of which you would be utterly ashamed if I were to mention them in your ear? If you have not done wickedly, why try so carefully to hide it from others? The Lord, through me, is now reminding you of sins which He saw you do. Likewise, God cannot allow you to enjoy any peace until you have confessed your sins to Him. Why have you continued in sin so long? Is it not because you think you can continue to hide it? It is often the greatest kindness God can do us when men discover and punish us for our sin. A few weeks ago, walking down Lower King Street, I saw one of our detectives place his hand upon the shoulder of a man who was looking into a shop window. When the thief turned his face and saw who had touched him, he was so startled as to jump in fear. The thief knew that he had broken the law, and he was afraid of the discovery. But you have sinned against God, and His Word is now the spiritual detective which lays hold of you. You tremble, but, remember, God lays hold of you to save you. He does not come to punish you, but to bless you. Instead of taking you to the prison of hell, He leads you to the Cross of Jesus to receive a full and everlasting pardon. Then He gives you grace to sin no more. But, others may tell us that they have never done any wickedness either in secret or in public. You have indeed much for which to be thankful. I should like to have you for my master or for my servant. But if you have done nothing that you think is wicked, have you not forgotten to attend to the wants of your suffering neighbour? If you have loved God with all your heart and your neighbour as yourself, you do not need any Saviour. But have you not been selfish? Let me exhort you to cry to God for salvation to-night. You do not intend always to be wicked and selfish. Then, why not seek for salvation at once? Why delay? Will you not cry to God for pardon and mercy at once? We say sometimes, "It is a long lane that has no turning." Stop! Cry for mercy! A friend of mine some time ago, through the carelessness of one of his men had a serious accident at his works through the bursting of a boiler. I said to him, "I suppose you will not employ the same man again." He replied, "Oh yes, because he will always take good care in the future; and we shall not have another explosion." No doubt that man would be careful. But in your case, you have not only sinned once and twice, but your life has been a continual fall. Ought not God to give you up? Surely He will be weary of trying to save you. But no, the Lord answers, "How can I give him up for whom I died?" Confess your sins to God. Say to Him, "Father, I am an unsaved wretch; I am Thy wicked child who begs for mercy!" Behold, the Lord calls you to come to Him for mercy, for pardon, and for peace. Come and trust Him. II. CHRIST IS ABLE TO SAVE ALL WHO COME UNTO GOD BY HIM. 1. The words and teaching of Christ tell us the truth. If we believe the word of Christ concerning God to be the truth we cannot help but love God. He tells us that God is our Father. Christ tells us that God has compassion on the penitent, and this makes us glad to come to Him. If He really loves us, why stay away? 2. The death of Jesus is the way by which God saves us from the penalty of sin. He is the Good Shepherd who layeth down His life for the sheep. Behold Him bearing our sins in His own body on the Cross! Behold the Lamb of God on the Cross and you shall be saved. 3. He ever liveth to intercede for us. The body of Jesus Christ is somewhere in the universe an evidence of God's willingness to save sinners. Where is He? Is He not speaking to you and saying, "I died for thee"? Our Father needs no persuasion to look upon us with compassion. But there is one thing that is necessary —it is that God should come to you and persuade you to be saved. To-night, the Lord is not afar off, but near to all of us, and if you will read the words of Jesus you will clearly perceive that there is salvation to the very uttermost. (*W. Birch.*) *"To the uttermost"*:—I was once reading to a blind and aged Christian the verse in chap. vii.: "Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them," and he stopped me with the remark: "I like that word uttermost; it seems to me to have in it everything that a poor sinner can want." (*Sir E. Bayley, B.D.*) *God offers a whole salvation*:—He comes to us with a whole salvation, with healing, cleansing, vivifying grace, which will grow in us, and develop us into perfectness. It is not the finger of direction, but the hand

of help He gives us. (*A. Raleigh, D.D.*) *God's illimitable power to save*:—There is no limit to the power of the grace of God, save that which is imposed by ourselves. (*Bp. Thorold.*) *Salvation to the uttermost*:—Suppose I were drowning, and you drew me out of the deepest water, just in time to save my life, but then left me wet and shivering and exhausted on the bank, to run the more than risk of wretched after-effects of cold and rheumatism, from which I might never entirely recover! That would not be saving "to the uttermost" in this sense of the word. But if you did the thing completely,—carrying me home, and doing everything necessary to restore me and avert evil effects, and that effectually; never relaxing in care and effort, nor letting me go, till you had me safe and well, however long and difficult it might be, then you would have saved me "to the uttermost," in the true meaning of it. This is what Jesus is able to do for you. Having saved you from destruction, His very name is the guarantee that He will not leave you to struggle helplessly with your sins, much less to "continue" in them, but that He shall save you from them. You will find it a daily continual salvation, by which He will keep you by the power of God through faith, unto the consummated salvation of body and soul, "ready to be revealed in the last time." (*F. R. Havergal.*) *Christ's saving power*:—The Emperor Theodosius, having on a great occasion opened all the prisons, and released his prisoners, is reported to have said, "And now, would to God I could open all the tombs, and give life to the dead!" But there is no limit to the mighty power and royal grace of Jesus. He opens the prisons of justice and the prisons of death with equal and infinite ease: He redeems not the soul only, but the body. (*C. Stanford.*) *Salvation in Christ*:—Our salvation is in Christ and with Him, but not apart from Him. When a bank note or a gold coin is put into my hands, my money is in that, not apart from it. When a deed is signed, sealed, recorded, and delivered to me, my title is in my deed, and not apart from it. My bank note or gold coin will pay my debt and pay my journeying expenses. My deed will ensure me my farm. Even so in Christ I have my debt cancelled, my journeying support, and my heavenly inheritance all secure. (*W. E. Boardman.*) *A tested remedy*:—It is related that Bishop Kavanagh was one day walking when he met a prominent physician, who offered him a seat in his carriage. The physician was an infidel, and the conversation turned upon religion. "I am surprised," said the doctor, "that such an intelligent man as you should believe such an old fable as that." The Bishop said, "Doctor, suppose years ago some one had recommended to you a prescription for pulmonary consumption, and you had procured the prescription and taken it according to order, and had been cured of that terrible disease, what would you say of the man who would not try your prescription?" "I should say he was a fool." "Twenty-five years ago," said Kavanagh, "I tried the power of God's grace. It made a different man of me. All these years I have preached salvation, and wherever accepted have never known it to fail." What could a doctor say to such a testimony as that? And such testimonies are what men need to turn them from the error of their ways, to the personal experience of the saving power of the Lord Jesus Christ. "How would you prove the Divinity of Christ?" said some ministers to a young backwoods preacher whom they were examining. "What?" said he, puzzled by their question. "How would you prove the Divinity of Christ?" "Why, He saved my soul," was the triumphant reply. But to give this answer one must be saved, and know it in his heart, and show it in his life, and he then becomes a living epistle known and read of all men. *Salvation to the uttermost*:—Mr. Carl Steinman, who in 1846 made a trip to Iceland, thus describes a visit to the crater of Mount Hecla. On the brink he was prostrated by an eruption of the crater, and held a prisoner by the lava surrounding him. He says, "Oh, the horrors of that awful realisation! There, over the mouth of a black and heated abyss, I was held suspended, a helpless and conscious prisoner, to be hurled downward by the next great throe of trembling Nature. 'Help! help! help! for the love of God, help!' I shrieked in the very agony of my despair. I had nothing to rely upon but the mercy of Heaven, and I prayed to God as I never prayed before, to blot out my sins, and not let them follow me to judgment. All at once I heard a shout; and looking around, I beheld, with feelings that cannot be described, my faithful guide hastening down the side of the crater to my relief. 'I warned you!' he said. 'You did!' cried I, 'but forgive and save me, for I am perishing.' He reached out his hand and took me, and set my feet on solid ground. I was free, but still on the very verge of the awful pit." Reader, is the lava of hell beginning to flow about you? are your feet already being entangled?

Oh! make haste to reach out your hand to your Saviour and Guide, who is able to set your feet on the solid rock, and to stablish your ways. Oh! that you could see your danger, and seek refuge before it is too late. (*C. W. Bibb.*)

That come unto God by Him.—*Coming to God*:—A friend of one of the Imperial Cæsars came to him with sad face and murmuring voice on account of the many troubles that oppressed him, but the Emperor replied, "Do not complain of thy misfortune so long as thou hast Cæsar for thy friend." Though most of us know what it is to suffer pain and grief, and often are overwhelmed by seas of trouble, yet we do not complain so long as we have the great King of kings for our friend. His kindly eye beholds every movement of our daily lives, and His sympathising mind numbers the very hairs of our head; His strong arm holds us in the narrow path of righteousness, and when we are weary His loving heart seeks to draw us to the pillow of His breast. Having God for our Friend, none need despair. I. THE TEXT IMPLIES A SEPARATION FROM GOD. This separation is not of the body, but rather of the spirit within us, which directs our thoughts and actions. 1. It is a want of sympathy with God. Like a Christian father who has a wayward son. How near the two bodies are when the father grasps his son's hand! Alas, what a distance there is between their souls! 2. It is a separation from communion with God. There has been a time in your life when, kneeling in your chamber, you have communed with God in prayer; you have sought a blessing and have obtained it; and your daily life was a continual walking with God. But sin, like a mighty ocean, has separated you from the companionship of your Heavenly Father. 3. It is also a rebellion of heart. Oh, sinner, remember that though you have ceased to love your God, He still yearns over you, and even as a mother always keeps the image of her erring son in her heart, so your God never forgets you. II. THE TEXT SPEAKS OF COMING TO GOD. III. THE TEXT DIRECTS US HOW TO COME TO GOD. 1. We come to God, by Christ, as our Saviour. We, therefore, have full liberty to come to God, seeing that Jesus has saved us from the penalty due to us on account of our transgressions of the law. 2. Jesus is to us as our Priest bringing us nigh to God. He did not seek the blood of an angel to present it to God for us; but He, the Lamb of God, presented Himself as a sacrifice for us. 3. Christ also is our Deliverer; breaking the fetters of sin and opening the door, so that we may come to God. IV. THIS TEXT COMFORTS US WITH A SWEET FACT. "He ever liveth to intercede for us." Christ's work is not yet done. We sometimes say, "It is finished." True, His sufferings for you are finished; but His work is not yet completed until He has saved you from your sins. 'Tis a great work to create a world, but 'tis a greater to make you a holy child of God. Well, we are comforted by the assurance that "He ever liveth for us." (*W. Birch.*) *All who come*:—I. UNLIMITED SALVATION. "All"—whole human race, without respect to nationality, attainments, or character. II. NECESSARY ACTION. "Come." Sitting still will not save. III. GLORIOUS ANTICIPATION. Salvation—safety, satisfaction, joy. IV. IMPORTANT RESPONSIBILITY. We may be left behind. How needful to regard the warning! (*T. Heath.*)

He ever liveth to make intercession for them.—*A living Saviour, therefore a complete salvation*:—The long interval between the fall of man and the Redeemer's advent showed the hopelessness of men without Him. Through those four thousand years all they could desire and do to rise to a higher state was tried in vain, till it is not too much to say that they were fast settling into despair. But when the hope of saving themselves was dying out, there appeared One who lived, and taught, and died, and rose again to heaven, of whom it was affirmed with utmost emphasis in the words before us, "He is able to save." And this His ability is because "He ever liveth to make intercession." Our Lord liveth. We cannot dwell too much on the glorious truth that "Christ died for our sins," but we can dwell too little on the truth which is even beyond that, "He rose again for our justification," aye, and for our sanctification too. Salvation will be to us what it might be in proportion as we look for it, not to the Cross, but to Him who, once crucified, is now living—living for evermore, to continue in heaven the work begun on earth. I. Then, in the first place, the text reveals OUR LORD AS LIVING TO SAVE. In our jealousy of the truth of the sufficiency of His atonement we may think of it to our great impoverishment as though there were nothing more for Him to do. But the atonement does not include the whole work of salvation, as Saviour Christ never rests, He ascended to carry on His work to further developments, and we need for His praise and our own comfort to train ourselves to think of Him as living to make redemption complete. Certainly this is true of Him, for—1. Nothing less reaches the perfection of grace. A Saviour that died for us were much, how much!

but a Saviour who then goes on to live for us is more, and we can believe even that possible. Then it is true. We cannot think God greater than He is, His grace must be beyond our thought, and that we can imagine grace like this is in itself the assurance that Christ liveth to save. 2. Without this His work on earth were unavailing. His death alone would not avail for redemption. Christ for us once was not enough; the world were lost, the cross were useless, were that all; we need Christ for us still—by His life making it possible for us to accept the salvation He secured by His death. 3. Only this explains our continued spiritual enrichment. We have visible assurances of many an unseen cause. Behind the works of nature we see the unseen God; only God, we say, could work thus! So the history of the church is an assurance of a living Redeemer. If she has passed unharmed through ages of fiery trial it can only be because a Divine hand, never withdrawn, followed her with an encircling shield. If her light through storms of opposition has not been quenched, it can only be because a Divine hand, with ceaseless care, has supplied the lamp with oil. And the history of each of her members points to the same fact; notwithstanding the corruptions of their nature and their helplessness against the adversary, and their tendency to neglect what is spiritual, notwithstanding their slowness to learn and trust and obey, their spiritual life has been maintained—maintained in spite of sin and of Satan, and of the world, and even of themselves. II. THE METHOD BY WHICH OUR LORD CARRIES ON HIS SAVING WORK IN HEAVEN IS THAT OF CEASELESS INTERCESSION. Christ Himself is the great plea; His presence in heaven is the prayer for His people than which none could avail more. And that is necessary. Divine redemption must accord with the requirements of Divine law; hence we read of our being "justified," that is, acquitted—a legal term; so "Intercession," "Mediation," "Advocate"—they are all due to the necessarily legal aspect of redemption; God cannot gratify His fatherly love but by simultaneously satisfying His kingly rights; He must deal with us as sinners though He receive us as sons; He can grant no blessing save through the atonement. Hence our Lord intercedes, presenting His atonement for us. 1. This intercession is for those that come unto God by Him. And what it is to come unto God is shown by the prodigal son: "he arose and came to his father." But there are different ways of coming. We may come making light of sin, or trusting our own righteousness—"God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men!" to such there is no promise here. But suppose we come relying on Christ, sensible of unworthiness, looking to be received only for His sake; the promise is to such; Christ intercedes "for them." 2. And this secures for them everything He asks. We know that from the merit of His sacrifice. On earth He said, "Father, Thou hearest Me always!" He, the well-beloved, cannot ask in vain. But, say you, that is when He asks for Himself. It is equally true when He asks for His people, since He presents the plea of the cross. Do we realise that we are to receive all that the Cross deserves, and that He ever presents its claim? 3. But let us carefully mark that this intercession includes all possible good. We are assured of that by His love. Jesus never tires, never forgets, never leaves off. III. Then THIS INTERCESSION ENABLES HIM TO SAVE TO THE UTTERMOST. "To the uttermost." What "uttermost"? Every "uttermost." 1. To the uttermost depth of depravity. I am too great a sinner to be saved, one thinks. That cannot be. Could we stand at God's throne and look on men in their varied distances from Him, some not far off, others by increased hardness of heart and wicked works further and yet further and further still away, somewhere in the dark, dark distance, we should see one further from the Father than any other of Adam's sons—some one at the extreme limit of alienation. Now, can Christ save that one? Well, the "uttermost" is the "uttermost," and if "He is able to save to the uttermost" He can save that man. He is able because of the sacrifice of infinite merit which He presents for the sinner. 2. To the uttermost limit of time. I am saved to-day, but what if I be ultimately lost! We ought to be ashamed to think that the salvation Christ purchased by His blood can be so poor as that. No doubt if we must depend on ourselves we must have that fear, but have we not learnt that we are not saved partly by Christ and partly by self, but altogether by Him, that we are in the keeping of One who, having died for us, lives for us, and that from His mighty tender hands we cannot slip! 3. To the uttermost measure of perfection. And I pray you not to think of that only in connection with the other world. There is a perfect Christian life for earth. He is able to save to the uttermost of God's requirements and purposes, the "uttermost" of what He would give to us and do for us on earth developing into the "uttermost" of heaven. Wonderful salvation! The length, the breadth, the height of

it are equal; it is "uttermost" everywhere. Then why is the salvation of some of us so poor; why, if He is able to grant it, is ours not of the "uttermost" kind; why are some of us Christians only partly saved? Because of our unbelief, because we only trust Him partly, because our obedience and confidence do not look to Him for it or expect it of Him. (*C. New.*) *The intercession of Christ, a demonstration of His capacity to save:*—I. WHAT ARE WE TO UNDERSTAND BY CHRIST BEING "ABLE TO SAVE TO THE UTTERMOST"? 1. The danger and calamity of those to whom He is proposed as a Saviour (2 Cor. v. 14; Rom. v. 12). 2. A power working out complete deliverance for His people. (1) From the curse of the law (Isa. xlii. 21; Gal. iii. 13; Acts xiii. 39). (2) From the pollution of sin (Rom. viii. 2). (3) From all the artifice and power of the prince of darkness (Col. i. 13). (4) To support His people in death, and receive their spirits to a world of glory (Psa. lxxiii. 26; 2 Tim. i. 12; Psa. xxiii. 4). (5) To raise their bodies from the dissolution of the grave, and conduct their complete persons to the regions of eternal felicity (John xi. 25, 44; Phil. iii. 21). (6) The efficacy of His saving grace continueth the same throughout all succeeding ages. His energy wrought from the date of the first promise (Gen. iii. 15). By faith in Him the "elders obtained a good report" (chap. xi. 2). His victorious energy still continueth the same (chap. xiii. 8). II. WHAT EVIDENCE WE HAVE THAT HE IS REALLY SO. 1. He was commissioned by the Father for this great work (1 John v. 11). 2. He appears in His person and character, eminently fitted for the work. 3. He has done and borne all that we can imagine necessary to effect it (2 Cor. viii. 9; Phil. ii. 7, 8; chap. ix. 24). 4. He has been approved by the Father, as having completely answered this glorious design (Rom. i. 4; Matt. xxviii. 18–20). 5. He has made such gracious promises of salvation, as imply a full power of accomplishing it (Titus ii. 11; 1 Tim. i. 15, 16, iv. 10; Rom. v. 18). 6. He has already begun and carried on the salvation of a multitude of souls (1 Cor. vi. 11; Rev. vii. 13, 14). III. THE PARTICULAR ARGUMENT FOR IT. "He ever liveth to make intercession for them." 1. The foundation of it. His atonement (chap. ix. 12). 2. The extent of it. The intercession of Christ is not merely His appearance before God in the body in which He suffered; but it is attended with a constant and ardent desire that His death may be effectual to the purposes designed, in bringing many sons and daughters to God (chap. ii. 10). 3. The perpetuity of it: "He ever liveth." Even at this moment Christ appeareth in heaven for us (Isa. xl. 28). IV. THE CHARACTER OF THE PERSONS WHO ARE ENCOURAGED TO EXPECT SALVATION IN HIM. Such as "come unto God by Him." 1. A sinner must come to God through Christ. His coming to God implieth—(1) A firm persuasion of His being and attributes (chap. xi. 6). (2) An earnest desire to secure His favour (Job x. 12; Psa. iv. 6, xxx. 5). (3) A readiness to forsake whatever cometh in competition with Him (Isa. xxvi. 13). (4) A willing subjection to His service (Luke x. 27; Rom. vi. 13; Psa. cxix. 16–127). (5) A keeping up a constant correspondence with Him (Psa. lxxiii. 23; 1 John i. 3). 2. His coming to God through Christ implieth—(1) A deep sense of his need of a Mediator, in order to a comfortable intercourse with God. Christianity is the religion of sinners; self must be humbled, that Christ may be exalted (1 Pet. v. 6). Christ is our day's-man. (2) A full persuasion of His saving power (Mark ix. 24; Matt. viii. 2). (3) A cheerful confidence in the grace of Christ (John vi. 37, vii. 37; Matt. ix. 13, xii. 20). (4) A cordial approbation of the method in which He bestows salvation (Acts xx. 21; Rom. i. 17). (5) A constant care to maintain proper regards to Christ in the whole course of our walking with God (Eph. ii. 18; Gal. ii. 20; 1 Pet. ii. 5). Reflections: 1. How great is that salvation which the Lord Jesus Christ hath wrought out for us (chap. ii. 3; Isa. xliii. 11). 2. How important is it that we all seriously inquire after this great salvation (2 Pet. i. 10). 3. How great is the danger and misery of those who reject and affront such an Almighty Saviour (Rev. vi. 15–17). 4. How admirable and amiable doth the blessed Jesus appear, when considered as the great Intercessor of His people (Cant. v. 16). 5. With what holy boldness may the sinner draw near to God, in dependence on such an Intercessor (chap. iv. 14–16, x. 19–22). 6. Let us adore the Divine goodness, that such a salvation is offered us in so reasonable, so easy, and so gracious a way (Rom. x. 3; Luke xix. 40). 7. Let us seriously examine whether we come to God by Christ (Acts xiii. 26). 8. Let those who have come in this manner be thankful and courageous; let them go on till the God of peace bruise Satan under their feet, give them victory over death, and finally crown them with eternal life. (*J. Hannam.*) *Of Christ's making intercession:*—For this intercession of Christ there is all sorts of evidence in Scripture, by types, prophecies, and plain assertions. That was typified

under the law, by what the high priest is appointed to do on the day of expiation (Lev. xvi. 11–15). It is foretold by the prophet (Isa. liii. 12). It is plainly asserted in the New Testament (Rom. viii. 34; chap. ix. 24); how, and in what capacity he appears for us (1 John ii. 1, 2). 1. For the nature of it. In general, it is Christ's appearance in heaven in behalf of His people, as having on earth satisfied for them, done and suffered all things which were requisite on His part to be there accomplished for their salvation, both for the removing of what might hinder it, and purchasing what might perfect it, and make it complete; or a presenting of Himself, as having finished what was necessary on earth, for the saving of them to the utmost. More particularly, it includes these severals:—(1) He appears in our nature, not only as God, but as man (1 Tim. ii. 5). He appears as one concerned for us, as one who is bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. (2) He appears as our advocate, to present us and our cause unto God. (3) He presents His death as suffered in our stead, His blood as shed for us. (4) He presents His will and desire that His people may have all the purchase of His blood. The will of the Divine nature as He is God, the desires of His human nature as He is man. Thus He is said to intercede for us, in that the Father understands that it is His will and desire, as He is God and man, that His people may be possessed of all the effects, and receive all the advantage of His obedience and sufferings for them; so that His intercession is in effect His praying for us in heaven. 2. For the efficacy of it. (1) The intercession of Christ is grounded upon merit, and therefore must prevail in point of justice. (2) The efficacy of it appears in the acceptableness of all included in Christ's intercession unto God the Father, and His readiness to comply with the motions which it imports. (3) By virtue of His intercession all that He purchased by His obedience and sufferings is actually conferred. (4) Christ's intercession was effectual before He was actually an intercessor. By virtue of this all believers from the beginning of the world were pardoned and saved. 3. As to the continuance of this intercession, it is perpetual. The text is express for this, "He ever lives," &c. He intercedes while He lives, and He ever lives; He intercedes always. (1) Without intermission. (2) Without end. It is represented as the end why He lives, and the end of His life He pursues every moment. Use 1. This leads us to admire the loving-kindness of Christ to lost sinners, in that He lives ever to make intercession for them. His affection to His people, His condescension for them, appears herein every way admirable and astonishing. There are four severals held forth in the text, which may render this for ever wonderful in our eyes. (1) That this should be one end of His life. That He should live for us; live, to make intercession for us; live, that this should be an end and design of His life, to free us from misery, to promote our happiness and secure it; that the Son of God, infinitely happy and glorious without us, should make the concerns of men, inconceivably below Him, the design of His life; and declare that He lives for this reason, and will live upon this account, to appear on their behalf. (2) That He should live again for us; live more than once, more than one life for us. He had already lived one life for us, and had already lost one life for us; and when a new life was restored to Him, He would live that life for us too. As though He had not thought it enough to live one life for us on earth, He lives another for us in heaven. (3) That He lives in our nature, and appears for us, not only as God, but as man, as one of us, as nearly allied to us; as our kinsman (Job xix. 25), our brother (chap. ii. 11, 12). It was a wonderful condescension, that He would take our nature, and unite it with the nature of God in one person; for what is man to Him but a worm? It is more worthy of admiration than if the greatest monarch should take upon him the form, and live in the likeness of a worm. This was greater love and honour than He would show the angels (chap. ii. 16). (4) That He lives thus evermore (Rev. i. 18). And for what end He evermore lives, He expresses here by the apostle. This second life He lives for us is not like the first, a life of some certain years, but an endless life. He ever lives in our nature; He is never weary, never ashamed of it, how mean and vile soever it be, as it is ours. Use 2. This teaches us to live for Christ. This highly, strongly engages us to it. Shall He live for us again and again, and live eternally for us; and will not we live once, live a little while for Him? But how? Why, after His example and method He shows us. His living for us in the text succeeded His dying for us; He was made a sacrifice before He lived to intercede for us. There is something we must die to before we can live for Him. We must sacrifice our worldly, carnal, and selfish interest; carnal and earthly designs, and affections, and inclinations, and actings, must be crucified.

And then positively, to live for Him is to make it the chief end and constant design of our lives, to please Him and be serviceable to Him; to conform in all to His will, and employ all for His honour and interest. Use 3. Here is great encouragement to faith and hope. Firm ground to believe and expect salvation to the uttermost, for those that come unto God by Christ, *i.e.*, to those that repent and believe; those that abandon sin in heart and life, *i.e.*, in sincerity, resolution, and endeavour, and fly unto Christ for refuge, betaking themselves to Him, to be ruled and saved by Him. Such may have strong consolation from the intercession of Christ (chap. vi. 18–20). (*D. Clarkson.*) *Christ interceding in heaven for His people*:—I. IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND WHAT THE INTERCESSION OF CHRIST IS, AND WHAT IS IMPLIED IN IT, WE MUST CONSIDER AND COMPARE THOSE PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE WHERE IT IS SPOKEN OF. The two principal passages of Scripture where it is directly spoken of are the text and Rom. viii. 34, in which the same word is used as in the text. The word which in these two passages is translated "to make intercession," just means to plead with—to use entreaties and importunities (in order to obtain something we desire) with reference to another person. There is another passage of Scripture which refers to one branch at least of Christ's intercession, and casts additional light upon it, viz., 1 John ii. 1. The idea which this statement is intended to bring before our minds is substantially this—that whenever a believer commits a sin, and that sin comes up before the throne of God, pleading for punishment against the offender, upon the ground that "cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them," Christ steps forward as his Advocate and Intercessor, to avert the threatened danger—takes the sin on His own shoulders—and pleads, in order to its remission, the perfect sacrifice He once offered up of Himself to satisfy Divine justice, and to purchase for Himself a peculiar people. That His sacrifice is the foundation of His advocacy or intercession with reference to the sins of believers, is implied in the statement which immediately succeeds, viz., in the second verse. He has expiated or atoned for our sins by shedding His precious blood, and is therefore well entitled to appear as our Advocate, when we are accused, and to prevail on our behalf. The apostle goes on to state that this privilege of having with the Father an Advocate who had expiated their sins, was not peculiar to them, that is, to those of whom, and in whose name, he was then speaking—in other words, to those who had already believed on Christ Jesus;—but that it extended to the whole world—to all who should afterwards believe on Him, without distinction of period or country. Finally, in illustration of the nature of our Saviour's intercession, we have what is commonly called His intercessory prayer, as recorded in John xvii. We have another instance of intercessory prayer on our Saviour's part, in a particular case, when He prayed for Peter, that his faith should not fail, notwithstanding the peculiar violence of Satan's temptation. We are assured, then, that Chrst ever liveth to make intercession for His people—that He is continually employed at the right hand of God pleading on their behalf—pleading what He Himself has done and suffered for them—presenting, in their name and for their sakes, the punishment He has endured, that they might be delivered from guilt and danger—the merit which He has wrought out, that they might be accepted, and blessed, and rewarded. Christ is continually presenting before His Father His wishes with regard to what His people should enjoy and suffer; and their enjoyments and their sufferings, their trials and their supplies of grace, are just what He sees to be best for them—what He in consequence wishes and pleads for in their behalf—and what they therefore certainly receive. This is what is implied in Christ's intercession. We are told that "Him the Father heareth always"; and no wonder, when He pleads the efficacy of that sacrifice which has fully satisfied Divine justice, and which is commensurate in efficacy with the exceeding sinfulness of sin;—when He pleads the worth of that meritorious obedience which has fully satisfied the Divine law, and which is commensurate in value with an eternal and exceeding weight of glory. All true believers, then, should have perfect confidence in Christ's willingness and ability to work out their complete salvation—to finish the good work that He had begun in them—to overrule everything in their temporal circumstances for their eternal welfare—and at last to make them more than conquerors. II. WE SHALL NOW ENDEAVOUR TO ILLUSTRATE THE PRACTICAL PURPOSES TO WHICH THIS GREAT DOCTRINE WE HAVE ATTEMPTED TO EXPLAIN, TO ILLUSTRATE, AND TO ESTABLISH, MAY MOST OBVIOUSLY BE APPLIED. 1. Let us consider the practical application of this doctrine, with regard to the sins of believers. The knowledge that we have an Advocate or Intercessor—ready at all times to take the burden of our guilt

upon Himself, and to free us from its painful consequences—while it tends greatly to comfort and encourage us, and is indeed indispensable to our serving God acceptably—has no tendency, when rightly viewed and seen in its proper connections, to encourage us in sin, or to lead us to think lightly of guilt. Everything connected with the history and work of Christ—with His incarnation, and humiliation, and suffering, and death—is fitted to lead us to regard sin as exceeding sinful. 2. Let us consider the intercession of Christ with reference to the outward circumstances and worldly condition of believers. The truth which in this view it presents to our mind is this, that the outward circumstances of believers, except in so far as they are the necessary results—according to the ordinary laws of nature and providence—of the sins they have committed, are just, at any one time, precisely what their kind and compassionate Saviour wishes them to be;—and that they are wholly the result of His wishes and prayers, presented before the throne of His Father—and because they are His, carried into complete effect. 3. Let us consider the doctrine of our Saviour's intercession with reference to the believer's prayers. We are to pray at all times in Christ's name—relying entirely upon Him and His work for the acceptance of our services, and the answering our petitions. But His intercession implies something more than this, or rather it gives a distinct and palpable form to this idea. It implies that our prayers are heard and answered only in so far as Christ takes them and presents them in His own name, and on the ground of His own merit, before the throne of His Father. 4. Let us consider the intercession of Christ in its reference to the believer's prospects and ultimate condition. The very object of Christ's intercession for His people, then, is that He may thereby secure their final deliverance from sin and all its consequences—their restoration to God's image—and their admission to dwell for ever in His presence. All this it is admirably adapted to effect; and all this, therefore, it will assuredly accomplish. To have Christ interceding for us at God's right hand is all that we can need, and all that we should desire, as appertaining to life or to godliness. It secures deliverance, full and final, from every real evil—the possession, complete and eternal, of every genuine source of happiness. (*W. Cunningham, D.D.*) *Christ's intercession*:—The knowledge of Christ as the Mediator is essential to the spiritual life. There is no truth within the range of the Christian system of richer interest and of higher worth. Like the orb of day, it is the source of the light, life, and joy of religion. It is the one foundation on which rest man's acceptance with the Judge, and his dearest hopes of the future. It is a treasure of mercy to the guilty, and of consolation to the believer. It proves the perfection of Christianity as the system of salvation, and establishes its claim to be the religion of the world. I. ITS NATURE. A priest resembles one who seeks to reconcile parties at variance, and has the probability of success from being their mutual friend. In the Bible it is generally understood to denote a holy person, presenting sacrifices to God, as a propitiation for sin in the behalf of others. The priestly dignity of the Lord Jesus is not to be considered as a mere figurative expression. His is a true and real priesthood. He was called of God, in those ineffably mysterious transactions of the Godhead in the pre-distant eternity, when the Son was designated and "made an high priest"; by the impressive solemnity of an oath, when "the Lord sware, Thou art a priest for ever"; and by His sublime consecration, when being "obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross"; He was baptized with blood, as was Aaron, and was made "perfect through suffering." Will He not then be heard in your behalf? Will the Father ever reject Him? Should not this banish your fear and doubt, and minister "strong consolation" when you flee to Him as your refuge? 1. To make oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the people was the first act of the priesthood. "Beneath our curse He bowed His head"; this was the true and perfect atonement making full reconciliation; this was the only plea God could accept, and it is the basis of the whole mediation of Christ, giving to it its efficacy and prevalence. It is the all-sufficient reason and motive for the exercise of His mercy in restoring holiness and happiness to man's guilty race; possessing such fulness of merit as to entitle the believer to a salvation replete with blessings; and retaining an everlasting efficacy, amidst the changes of time, until the consummation of all things. 2. Intercession was a necessary duty of the priesthood. Aaron fulfilled it by signs upon the annual day of expiation, passing through the courts of the sanctuary, and appearing before the awful symbols of Jehovah's presence, he sprinkled the mercy-seat with the sacrificial blood, and presented the fragrant incense. The sprinkling of the blood was the perpetuation and completion of its being shed as a sacrifice. There was the same necessity that the Victim

of Calvary should appear in the highest heavens for us. Had He remained in the sepulchre, you could not participate in the benefits of His death, its everlasting efficacy as an atonement would cease. Why should He reappear in glory with His crucified body, bearing the symbols of its humiliation unto death? Might He not have left it in the sepulchre, and clothed Himself with a new body, pure as the firmament? This would be easy, but it would destroy His purposes of grace. The Jewish priest came before the God of Israel with the same blood which the victim had shed, thus appealing to it as "the atonement." So likewise does the Mediator present Himself to God in the same nature which bore the curse, and whose precious blood was the ransom price. Thus "His presence in heaven" is virtually a continuation of His bodily passion, and a continued presentation of the sacrifice; it is a testimony to its fulness and perfection, to its permanent validity and efficacy. 3. To bless the people was another prominent duty of the high priest. This was the sequel to the intercession. To give full exhibition of this glory of the Lord Jesus, the illustrious Melchisedec was chosen as a type, and special notice is taken of his blessing Abraham, by virtue of his authority as "Priest of the Most High God." This was the "joy" desired by Jesus when He endured His Cross: the reward that was set before Him. Even the right to confer the infinite and everlasting blessings of redemption on a world of sinful and lost beings. II. THE TEXT SUGGESTS SOME OF THE EMINENT PECULIARITIES OF THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST. 1. It is unchangeable. This is its excellence, its perfection. It is Jesus still, and will be always so. The office cannot be transferred. He is the great High Priest, supreme in dignity and power, without an equal, rival, or successor. There needs no change. "Death hath no more dominion over Him." "I am He that liveth and was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore." 2. His priesthood is eternal. He "is consecrated for evermore." It is not "endless" absolutely, but only while the mediatorial dispensation abides. The period will come when the Son shall deliver up the kingdom to God; no more shall the cry of blood be heard, intercession shall cease, and the Triune God in His glory and felicity shall "be all in all" to the myriads of pure spirits. Then the triumphant church can no more need a Mediator. 3. The priesthood of Jesus possesses a peculiar perpetuity. "He ever lives," or He lives to be ever interceding. The infirmities of earth cannot exist in glory to mar the beauty and perfection of His mediatorial work. His love is not subject to the uncertain fluctuation of human passions. His mediation is not formal or official, it is the labour of His heart. His intercessions too are uninterrupted by external causes. Though the care of the universe reposes on Him, yet His mind is never absorbed with its anxieties, nor withdrawn from the high purposes of His intercession. III. THE BENEFITS DERIVED THROUGH THE INTERCESSIONS OF CHRIST. "He ever liveth to make intercession for them." For whom? The angels need it not; the devils are "reserved in everlasting chains under darkness," and no purgatory has received the lost of mankind, from which masses or intercession can release them; the shadows of eternal night settle over their doom. Nor, on the other hand, are the benefits of the intercession limited to believers only, though they share most largely His affections. He prays for all who believe in His name. Yea, He intercedes for the world, for sinners of every age, every country, every shade of guilt. A right to the Tree of Life is the boon of every sinner. Who needs despair of mercy? Why will ye perish? The list of blessings descending to you through Him is infinite. Thence come all the mercies of "the life that now is," riches, honour, and length of days. You little consider how it affects the choice of your inheritance, your trade, your fields, your life, your health, your family, your "all things"! The range of spiritual blessings is still more extensive. There is your preservation from a merited punishment. Review the follies of youth, the sins and backslidings of riper years, and you will confess "'Tis just, the sentence should take place." But what an impressive consideration, that you are now kept from "the everlasting burnings," only through His merciful intercessions! Here also is the pledge of pardon to the penitent. Would a guilty creature dare to utter a cry for mercy before a throne of "justice and judgment," clothed with majesty and terror, and guarded by the flaming sword of wrath? Trembling soul! that flaming sword of the cherubim is gone, that throne is a mercy-seat through "the blood of sprinkling," bending over it is the covenant sign of peace, the radiant bow of mercy. The presence of the Intercessor there is the testimony that "God is reconciled," and it proclaims to you a free salvation through faith in His name. Here is your hope of the universal spread of the gospel. It is for this He ever lives in glory, that He may secure the consummation of His own plans of love, and

rejoice over a recovered world, prostrate at His feet, glorifying Him in endless praise. (*George F. White.*) *The great Intercessor*:—1. THE NECESSITY AND NATURE OF THIS INTERCESSION. 1. It was necessary. As necessary as every other part of the work of our salvation. His incarnation was necessary to His obedience, His obedience to His death, and His death to His intercession. His object in obeying and dying was to intercede on behalf of transgressors, for whom He made an atonement. His atonement would be of no avail without His intercession. (chap. ix. 7, 8; Rom. viii. 34). 2. Its nature. Appearing in the court of heaven as our Advocate and Mediator (chap. ix. 24). Appearing in human nature to represent us (Acts vii. 55, 56). Presenting His wounds as a plea to be heard (Rev. v. 6). Presenting our prayers perfumed with the incense of His merit (Rev. viii. 3, 4). Answering all accusations preferred against us (Zech. iii. 1, 2). Pleading with God for all covenant blessings (John xvii. 24). 3. The manner of Christ's intercession. He admits our guilt, confirms and establishes the law, and pleads His own obedience and death for our acquittal (Rom. iii. 21-23). II. THE QUALIFICATION OF THE INTERCESSOR, AND THE DESIGN OF HIS INTERCESSION. 1. His qualification as Intercessor. He is one with God, and therefore can enter into the mind of God; the anointed Mediator, and therefore has authority in the court of heaven. He is perfectly holy, and has free access to the throne; He has done all that was required of us, and therefore has a claim, and cannot be denied the privilege of representing our cause. He is omniscient, and knows all our wants; faithful, and will not forget or deceive us; true to His engagement, and will fulfil all His promises; full of sympathy, and can well feel for us. 2. The end and design of His intercession. For the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, for the pardon of sin, reconciliation with God, access to God, and acceptance with Him; our preservation from sin, perseverance in holiness; our sanctification and glorification, and also for the establishment of His kingdom in the world. III. THE PREVALENCY AND PERPETUITY OF HIS INTERCESSION. 1. Its prevalency. The dignity of His person secures it; God will not refuse His Son. The perfection of His work; God is well pleased in Him. The wisdom of His request; it is in accordance with the will of God. His ability to save all who come to Him; the many instances in which He has already saved. He is always ready to undertake our cause, and has never pleaded in vain. Believers in every age are receiving blessings from Him. 2. Its perpetuity. There will be no change in His priesthood as there was in Aaron's (chap. vii. 11-25). He continues for ever. He is always before the throne, pleading our cause. This day, this hour, while we are assembled to worship, he is representing our cause in the court of heaven. Lessons:—1. Learn not to trust any other intercessor but Christ. 2. There is no case He will refuse. 3. In all our approaches to God we must look by faith to Him. 4. How great is the privilege of having an Advocate in heaven. 5. The awful state of those who do not seek an interest in His atonement and intercession. (*The Evangelical Preacher.*) *The intercession of Christ*:—I. ITS REALITY (chap. ix. 24; 1 John ii. 1; Rom. viii. 34). II. ITS NATURE. On earth He offered the necessary sacrifice for sin, and now, in heaven, He pleads it. III. ITS DESIGN, OR END. To secure to His disciples the actual possession of all those inestimable privileges which it was the object of His obedience and sufferings to procure on their behalf. 1. The pardon of their daily sins. 2. The acceptance of their worship. 3. Victory over their enemies, consolations under their trials, a spirit of affectionate union among themselves, increasing sanctification, and preservation from the evil of the world. 4. Grace to persevere to the end. 5. Final acceptance, and certain admittance into heaven. III. THE PECULIAR EXCELLENCIES OF CHRIST AS AN INTERCESSOR. In Him exists every moral quality that is suited to inspire the profoundest reverence, to call forth the warmest affection, and to justify the most unbounded confidence. 1. He is a wise Intercessor. He knows what blessings to seek for us, what pleas to offer, and how best to enforce them in order to ensure success. 2. He is a faithful Intercessor. 3. He is a merciful and sympathising Intercessor. He is capable of conducting the cause of many at once, and yet of attending minutely to the case of each individual. 4. He is a successful Intercessor. 5. He is an ever-living Intercessor. 6. He is the only Intercessor. Lessons:—1. The unchangeable nature of the Saviour's love. 2. How great the obligations of every Christian! 3. How deplorable is the situation of those who have no Advocate in heaven! (*Essex Congregational Remembrancer.*) *The Saviour interceding*:—I. There are THREE OFFICES which Christ sustains in reference to the salvation of men, prophetical, sacerdotal, and regal. These comprehend all that He has done, is doing, and will do, in reference to our salvation, until

the mediatorial kingdom be given up. Intercession is part of the sacerdotal office. II. THE PURPOSES for which He sustains the office of mediation and intercession. 1. For the suspension of merited punishment and the extension of our probationary existence. 2. For the continuance of the economy of grace in the Church, and the supply of spiritual influence to the minds of men. This is necessary to help in improving our extended probation. 3. For the pardon and salvation of the most reprobate and guilty. So Isaiah tells us in that admirable prophecy of the mediatorial work of Christ with which the whole of his fifty-third chapter is engrossed. "He made intercession for the transgressors." 4. That our persons and services may be acceptable to God. "Through Him we have access by one Spirit unto the Father." 5. The intercession of Christ embraces in a very special manner the interests of His people. Lessons:—1. The majesty and holiness of God the Father. 2. The love of Christ. (1) Its constancy. (2) Its comprehensiveness. 3. The necessity of availing ourselves of the advocacy of Christ. 4. The necessity of cultivating a continual sense of dependence on Christ. (*J. Summerfield, M.A.*) *The two Intercessors* (with Rom. viii. 27):—One of the ways in which the enemy of souls destroys men is by joining together what God has separated. Hence the alliance between the world and religion. Another mode by which he destroys is to separate what God has joined together: such as principle and practice; doctrine and duty; pardoning mercy and renewing grace. That man is not yet truly awakened and enlightened from above who does not see and feel his equal need of—the Saviour and the Sanctifier—the Son of God and the Spirit of God—the work of the one *for* him, and of the other *in* him. To such a connection I am going to lead you. For, be it remembered, every Christian has two Advocates, two Intercessors; and they should be viewed relatively to each other. "Jesus ever liveth to make intercession for them. The Spirit itself maketh intercession for us." (See Rom. viii. 27.) I. Let us consider THE INTERCESSION OF CHRIST. Dr. Owen long ago complained, and there is much truth in the remark, that we do not dwell enough, in our thoughts, on the present life of Christ: for He is living, not a life of glory only—though even this should delight those that love Him—but a life of office. When our Saviour left our world He ascended up far above all heavens; and frailty might have feared that His concern for us would have ceased with His residence among us. But, says Paul, though Jesus the Son of God be passed into the heavens, "we have not an high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities." The ligature which unites us remains, and is all sensibility and life. "He ever liveth to make intercession for us." Volumes might be written on the subject; but we must be brief. It has been questioned whether this intercession be vocal. Why should it not? He is "clothed in a body like our own." But, not to intrude into things which we have not seen, it is enough for us to know—1. That His intercession is real. It consists in His personal appearance; in the presentation of His sacrifice, and claiming the benefits arising from it. Æschylus was strongly accused, and likely to be condemned. His brother Amyntas engaged to be his advocate. Amyntas had done much for the commonwealth; and, in a certain action, in their service, had lost a hand. He came into the court. The court was uncommonly crowded; and all were eager to hear him plead on so interesting an occasion. But he said nothing—he only held up his dismembered arm! The audience and the judges were so moved as immediately to order his brother's release. It does not appear that the high priest said anything when he entered the holy place: but what he did spake loud enough. He wore the names of the twelve tribes of Israel on his breastplate; he took the blood of the slaughtered victim in a basin, and sprinkled the mercy-seat, and burned incense before the golden altar, and then came forth and blessed the people. Abel's blood spake to God from the ground; that is, it demanded vengeance: the blood of Jesus is equally vocal; but it speaketh better things than that of Abel—it calls for mercy. How did John see Him in the vision? As a lamb that had been slain; that is, with the wound in the neck, and the blood on the wool. Without a figure—He retains in His glorified body the marks of His sufferings and death. 2. It extends to all our important interests. We may look upon His prayer for His disciples, on the night in which He was betrayed (John xvii.), as a specimen of His continued intercession before the throne. And for what does He not there plead? Is it their preservation (ver. 15)? Is it their renovation (ver. 17)? Is it their union (vers. 21–23)? Is it their glorification (ver. 24)? 3. It is successful. "I know," says He, "that Thou hearest Me always." This conclusion is derivable from the grandeur of His character, and His nearness to God. II. Let us examine THE

INTERCESSION OF THE SPIRIT: for the Spirit "itself maketh intercession for us." In entering on this, it is necessary to observe, that, subjectively and instrumentally considered, religion is our own work: we run the race set before us; and fight the good fight of faith: we believe, and repent, and pray; but, owing to our natural ignorance, and weakness, depravity, and aversion, it is God that worketh in us to will and to do of His good pleasure. To His Spirit, therefore, all our renovation is ascribed: we are said to be "born of the Spirit"; to be "led by the Spirit"; to "live in the Spirit"; to "walk in the Spirit"; and to "worship God in the Spirit." Let us see, then, how this Divine agency brings the sinner upon his knees, and keeps him there. 1. The Spirit leads us to an acquaintance with ourselves. He removes the veil of ignorance and delusion that concealed our state, our wants, and our desert; and the man who once said, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing, now sees that he is wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. 2. The Spirit fixes upon the mind a concern to be delivered and relieved, too great to be shaken off. His sin is ever before him. Neither business, nor company, nor amusement, can ease the anguish of his broken heart, or divert him from the inquiry, "What must I do to be saved?" 3. The Spirit enables us to apprehend and believe the mercy and grace revealed in the gospel. Hence arises a hope that maketh not ashamed. This hope enters the soul, as the sun does a garden in spring, calling forth, by a genial influence, the leaves and the buds, after the dreariness of winter. 4. The Spirit renews our souls, removes our alienation from the life of God, and produces in us those principles and dispositions which cause us to delight in approaching Him, and even to give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness. Thus our duty is converted into a privilege; and we find it too good to draw near to God ever again to restrain prayer before Him. III. View them IN THEIR RELATION TO EACH OTHER. It is easy to distinguish these Intercessors. The one makes intercession above; the other below: one in the court of heaven; the other in the conscience. The one makes intercession for us, the other in us. But there is a connection between them; and it is threefold. 1. A connection of derivation. The one flows from the other. 2. A connection of dependence. The one needs the other. 3. A connection of evidence. The one proves the other. As to some of you, how long have you been praying, "Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation. Show me a token for good, that I may rejoice in thee"? What happy beings would you go away at the end of this exercise, if you could ascertain one thing; namely, that the Redeemer thinks upon you for good—and appears in the presence of God for you! Well, the proof does not lie far off—it is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart. It is prayer—not fine prayer—not well-arranged language. The proof does not require language at all. No—but a broken heart: a contrite spirit; tears; sighs; groanings—groanings which cannot be uttered. Of this therefore rest assured, that if the Spirit itself is thus making intercession in you, Jesus is ever living to make intercession for you. (*W. Jay.*) *The Saviour's intercession*:—"He ever liveth to make intercession for us" is the noble description of Christ's mission in heaven, and as though to complete the idea of unceasing and perpetual vitality it is added that the work is carried on according to "the power of an endless life." In these days of freedom and independence we scarcely realise the force of a word like "intercession." How strange it seems to us to read, in the prefaces of their books, the most earnest entreaties for patronage and aid from great authors to persons now utterly forgotten, though once powerful. It is not easy to conceive how dependent was genius and worth upon the influence of those in power. Or in still worse days, such as those of war and violence, the weak and helpless were utterly neglected, and even for mere justice were dependent on the good offices of the influential and powerful. What a state of society is shown by the old German proverbs, supposed to have originated amidst the terrible hardships of the peasant and the poor man during "the thirty years' war." Such sayings as "Favour is better than right," or "A handful of might is better than a sackful of right," tell of days of bitter oppression and injustice, and in such times the good steward who would intercede for the starving peasant, or the kind countess who would plead for the oppressed, or the benevolent bishop who advocated the poor man's rights before greedy monarchs and servile councils, made the office of a mediator and an intercessor well understood. Let us picture to ourselves such a scene as may often have occurred. The father of a little family has been compelled to follow his feudal lord to the field, and fallen in battle. A covetous neighbour grasps their little farm, and the unfeeling overbailiff pays no heed to their complaints. At length, driven from their home, the poor widow, with the ragged little children, begs her way to the palace of the king.

Oh, if only she could lay her troubles before him, surely his kind heart would feel for her; doubtless his authority could redress her wrongs. But now, as she stands before the royal palace, she perceives that the gate is guarded by watchful sentinels, who forbid all entrance. She gazes wistfully through the gilded railings, she sees the splendour within—the towers and colonnades, and ranges of windows glistening in the sunlight; she beholds the smooth lawns, and the parterres gay with bright flowers, and wonders if those who enjoy all this magnificence know how hard and miserable are the lives of many others! But at this moment a lithe young figure advances along the broad gravelled walk. He is richly clad, a white plume adorns his cap, a noble hound gambols by his side, two attendants follow at a respectful distance. It is the king's only son. And now his keen young eye has caught sight of the wretched group that are peering through the iron bars. He notes their hungry looks, and bare feet, sore and blood-stained with long travelling, and their poor rags and emaciated frames. His heart is filled with pity for their sufferings. Drawing near he asks their history, what they seek, what they need. He listens patiently to the mother's long narrative, he helps her to explain herself by encouraging questions, and at last, finding that her great desire was that she could have her cause brought before the notice of the king, and that she had none to plead for her, he bids the sentries admit her, and taking the poor woman by the hand he leads her up to the palace door, and then, entering within its gilded portals, he himself lays the statement of her helplessness and misery before the throne, and asks in his own name for her petition to be granted! This is what intercession means, and the Christian rejoices as he kneels to utter the name of Jesus, to pour out his heart before Him, and realises with joy that the cause of the poor trembling, sin-stained mortal is pleaded on high by the ascended Lord—that wondrous Mediator, who is Man to feel with us, but likewise Divine in His nature, and endued with "the power of an endless life." (*J. W. Hardman, LL.D.*) *Christ as Intercessor*:—I ought to study Christ as an Intercessor. He prayed most for Peter who was to be most tempted. I am on His breastplate. If I could hear Christ praying for me in the next room, I would not fear a million of enemies. Yet the distance makes no difference; He is praying for me. (*R. M. McCheyne.*) *Intercession*:—Intercession is a law term borrowed from courts of judicature, and signifies the action of a proxy or attorney, either in suing out the rights of his client, or answering the cavils and objections brought against him by the plaintiff. This Christ does for believers. (*Sunday School Chronicle.*) *Christ's prevailing intercession*:—To the uttermost! Oh, my friends, these are precious words to a ruined world. Where is the individual whom He cannot save? Is it the man who to the treachery of Judas adds the persecuting ferocity of Saul? He intercedes, and the lion in a moment is changed into a lamb. Is it the man who is backsliding as Peter, or steeped in wickedness as Manasseh? He intercedes, and a conversion is accomplished. Is it the man who with the hypocrisy of the Pharisee combines the daring profanity of the infidel? He intercedes, and heaven is filled with gladness at the man's salvation. Is it, in short, the man whose whole life has been spent in insulting the name and breaking the law, and trampling on the grace of God? Even for him there is mercy. The High Priest intercedes, and the repentant prodigal is saved. You cannot name a sin which He is unable to forgive. You cannot think of a sinner whom He is incompetent to save. Tell us not of limitations. Talk not to us of exceptions. An infinitely valuable sacrifice recognises not the one—mercy admits not the idea of the other. Every attribute of God disowns—the whole covenant of redemption repels such an unworthy notion as ruinous at once to the scheme of grace and to the hopes of man. No matter how deeply dyed with pollution my bygone history may have been; no matter what may have been the amount or enormity of the transgressions which I have committed, if I have come unto God through Christ, I am so sure of the efficacy of Christ's intercession in my behalf, that I can confidently join with the apostle in his exulting exclamation (Rom. viii. 33, 34). (*James Jeffrey.*) *Intercessor and Mediator*:—To mediate and intercede are both conciliatory acts; the intercessor and mediator are equals or even inferiors; one intercedes or interposes for the removal of evil; one mediates for the attainment of good. Christ is our Intercessor, to avert from us the consequences of our guilt; He is our Mediator, to obtain for us the blessings of grace and salvation. An intercessor only pleads; a mediator guarantees; he takes upon himself a responsibility. Christ is our Intercessor by virtue of His relationship with the Father; He is our Mediator by virtue of His atonement, by which act He takes upon Himself the sins of all who are truly penitent. (*G. Crabb.*)

Vers. 26–28. **Such an High Priest became us.**—*The priest whom we need:*—I. WE ALL NEED A PRIEST, AND WE HAVE THE PRIEST WE NEED IN JESUS CHRIST. In fair weather, when the summer seas are sunny and smooth, and all the winds are sleeping in their caves, the life-belts on the deck of a steamer may be thought to be unnecessary, but when she strikes on the black-toothed rocks, and all about is a hell of noise and despair, then the meaning of them is understood. When you are amongst the breakers you will need a life-buoy. When the flames are flickering round you, you will understand the use and worth of a fire-escape, and when you have learned what sort of a man you are, and what that involves in regard of your relations to God, then the mysteries which surround the thought of the High Priesthood and sacrifice of Jesus Christ will be accepted as mysteries, and left where they are, and the fact will be grasped with all the tendrils of your soul as the one hope for you in life and in death. II. WE NEED FOR A PRIEST A PERFECT MAN, AND WE HAVE THE PERFECT PRIEST WHOM WE NEED IN JESUS CHRIST. The writer goes on to enumerate a series of qualities by which our Lord is constituted the priest we need. Of these five qualities which follow in my text, the three former are those to which I now refer. "He is holy, harmless, undefiled." Taken generally, these three characteristics refer to the priest's relation to God, to other men, and to the law of purity. "He is holy"; that is to say, not so much morally free from guilt as standing in a certain relation to God. The word here used for "holy" has a special meaning. It is the representative of an Old Testament word, which seems to mean "devoted to God in love." Such is the first qualification for a priest, that he shall be knit to God by loving devotion, and have a heart throbbing in unison with the Divine heart in all its tenderness of pity, and in all its nobleness and loftiness of purity. And, besides being thus the earthly echo and representative of the whole sweetness of the Divine nature, so, in the next place, the priest we need must, in relation to men, be harmless—without malice, guile, unkindness; a Lamb of God, with neither horns to butt, nor teeth to tear, nor claws to wound, but gentle and gracious, sweet and compassionate; or, as we read in another place in this same letter, "a merciful High Priest in things pertaining to God." And the priest that we need, to bridge over the gulf between us sinful and alienated men and God, must be one "undefiled," on whose white garments there shall be no speck, on the virgin purity of whose nature there shall be no stain; who shall stand above us, though He be one of us, and whilst "it behoves Him to be made in all points like unto His brethren," shall yet be "without blemish and without spot." I pass on just to notice, in a word, how this assemblage of qualifications which, taken together, make up the idea of a perfect man, is found in Jesus Christ for a certain purpose, and a purpose beyond that which some of you, I am afraid, are accustomed to regard. Why this innocence; this God-devotedness; this blamelessness; this absence of all selfish antagonism? Why this life, so sweet, so pure, so gentle, so running over with untainted and ungrudging compassion, so conscious of unbroken and perfect communion and sympathy with God? Why? That He might, "through the Eternal Spirit, offer Himself without spot unto God"; and that by His one offering He might perfect for ever all them that put their trust in Him. III. WE NEED A PRIEST IN THE HEAVENS, AND WE HAVE IN CHRIST THE HEAVENLY PRIEST WHOM WE NEED. The two last qualifications for the priestly office included in my text are, "separate from sinners; made higher than the heavens." Now, the "separation" intended is not, as I suppose, Christ's moral distance from evildoers, but has what I may call a kind of half-local signification, and is explained by the next clause. He is "separate from sinners," not because He is pure and they foul, but because having offered His sacrifice He has ascended up on high. He is "made higher than the heavens." Scripture sometimes speaks of the living Christ as at present in the heavens, and at others as having "passed through" and being "high above all heavens"; in the former case simply giving the more general idea of exaltation, in the latter the thought that He is lifted, in His manhood and as our Priest, above the bounds of the material and visible creation, and "set at the right hand of the Majesty on high." Such a priest we need. His elevation and separation from us upon earth is essential to that great and continual work of His which we call, for want of any more definite name, His intercession. The High Priest in the heavens presents His sacrifice there for ever. We need no other; we do need Him. Oh, friend! are you resting on that sacrifice? Have you given your cause into His hands to plead? (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*)

Sinlessness of Jesus:—He was without sin, as a child, as a youth, as a man. In the synagogue, when they were singing psalms, with tears on their cheeks, I won-

how He felt, and what He did. He would have liked to join them, but He could not. He knew nothing of the remorse and misery of the young men and grey heads coming up with the week's sin on their heads. He knew the sin was there: He saw it in every eye, saw it in the workshop and in the street, in the malice and ill-will that made riots there; but He did not feel it in Himself. (*A. Whyte, D.D.*) *The unstained life of Jesus*:—His life resembled a polished mirror, which the foulest breath cannot stain, nor dim, beyond a passing moment. (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) *Christ undefiled*:—Christ walked through the midst of sinners undefiled. Like a beam of light piercing into a foul dungeon, or like a river purifying and fertilising, itself untainted, so did Christ pass through this world. (*R. M. McCheyne.*) *The sinless High Priest*:—A priest who could be charged with the slightest infraction of the law would have been no Saviour. The hopeless debtor can never be a surety for a debtor; the helpless slave never liberates his companion slave; nor the fallen lift the fallen from the dust. So that all our religion, with its perfection of righteousness and infirmity of consolation, depends upon the single fact that Christ is the Holy One of God. (*C. Stanford, D.D.*) *The excellence of Jesus*:—According to Renan, the excellence of Jesus was due to the climate and soil of Palestine! But he forgets to ask how it is that the climate and soil of Palestine have never produced such another! (*C. Clemance, D.D.*) **Holy.**—*The holiness of Christ*:—I. THE REALITY of our Lord's holiness is most clearly and strongly declared in Scripture. 1. We are told that He came into our world with a holy nature. 2. His life, too, was holy. II. THE PECULIARITY of His holiness. 1. It was holiness amidst sin and temptation, perfect holiness amidst abounding sin and the utmost possible temptation. 2. His was holiness also amidst weakness and suffering. III. Let us come now to THE IMPORTANCE of Christ's holiness. The character He had to sustain, and the work He had to perform, required it. 1. It was necessary in order to constitute Him a real manifestation of God. 2. It was needful to make Him an effectual sacrifice for our sins. 3. But our Lord's office as our great Redeemer was not to end with His life on earth, He was to go into the eternal heavens in the same character that He bore here, and to carry on there, though in a different manner, the same work. We sometimes think of Him as simply entering there into His glory and joy, but He is intent on our salvation in the midst of His glory and joy; as much engaged in it on His throne as He was on His cross. The apostle accordingly represents Him in this passage as our High Priest in the heavens, "ever living to make intercession for us"; and tells us that it became Him to be holy in order to qualify Him for this heavenly office and work. 4. As the pattern and example to which all His people are to be conformed, it was needful that our Lord should be holy. We want a perfection like His, the perfection of holiness, and earthbound as our affections sometimes are—nothing below this will satisfy us. But now there is this perfection in the holy Jesus, a sinless perfection. We cannot look higher. He is purity itself, the Divine purity embodied. To be made like unto Him comprehends in it all that is blissful and glorious. We feel that we shall indeed be satisfied when we awake with His likeness. Lessons: 1. Let us rejoice in His holiness, and admire and adore Him for it. 2. Let us seek for ourselves a share in this holiness of Christ. 3. And let us banish from our minds for ever the thought, that though living ungodly lives, we may yet be followers of this holy Saviour. (*C. Bradley, M.A.*) *The doctrine of the Incarnation*:—While the sacred writers inform us that "Jesus Christ the Righteous" came into the world to save sinners, and to take upon Him our infirmities, they are most careful to tell us that He Himself was without sin. Ever since order and beauty arose out of chaos, only two who might properly be termed perfect beings have appeared in our world. The first Adam was of the earth, earthy. The other the Lord from heaven, produced not out of nothing, or of the dust, but conceived in a supernatural and miraculous manner by the direct power and overshadowing of the Holy Ghost. That in every point He might be like us, with the exception of sin, He was born a babe, underwent all the weaknesses peculiar to our infantine years, and passed in progression through the very steps that we do from youth to manhood. Now, He behoved to be thus like us in advancing to maturity; yet His whole thoughts, sayings, and doings, through all the progression to which He submitted, were in entire conformity to the Divine will and commands. Had the Lord our righteousness been man, of a sinful nature, that He must have proved for us an unsuccessful representative is but too evident, when we reflect that the trial of Christ Jesus was of a severer nature than that endured by Adam; for whilst our first progenitor had merely one object placed before his eyes as a trial of obedience, the man of sorrows

had a continued conflict of sufferings, from the manger to His crowning act of obedience in Gethsemane and on the cross. If sin had been interwoven in His nature, it would have manifested something of its existence; and surely in His interesting history, there were not wanting occasions awfully trying, when betrayed by a follower, deserted by friends, assailed by the powers of wickedness, and suffering an eclipse by the hidings of His Father's countenance in the hour and power of darkness. But here let us consider how it became requisite for this Divine personage to assume the nature of man, and to take upon Him the likeness of sinful flesh. As it was man who had transgressed, it was necessary that the penalty should be paid by man—not that the punishment should be endured by a nature different from that which had fallen. Accordingly, that our iniquities might be all put to His account, and expiated by Him, He took to Himself a true body, and a reasonable soul, and died, the just for the unjust. Probably, had He interposed on behalf of intelligences of a higher order, instead of us who had sunk so low in the mire of sin, He would have assumed the nature of those intelligences. Between the person of Christ and His blessed work, between the inherent splendour and excellency of His character, and the exalted dignity of His station, there is therefore an intimate and beautiful connection. The being who would redeem another from misery and ruin by yielding a vicarious righteousness, must be one who is not himself under any obligations to obey, or to endure the penalty of the law on his own behalf. Apply this principle in reference to Christ Jesus, who undertook our cause, and you will see that He could not be chargeable with presumption or disaffection to the Divine government, by His laying claim to the character of independence and self-existence; for He was "in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God." No exactions of a personal kind could have been required of Him who, of His own free choice, was made under the law, and who magnified it and made it honourable. Could this perfect and unchangeable law have been fulfilled if the second Adam had not been altogether independent, holy, and Divine, and thus placed in the most favourable circumstances to ensure our salvation? But we are to remember that Christ not only required to be independent and self-existent, to make an atonement at all, but also to be a person of the highest worth, in consequence of the demerit of sin as an offence against all the glorious perfections of infinite and unblemished purity, whose name is holy, and who is altogether glorious in holiness; and this being an unchangeable perfection of His nature, it would seem that a Redeemer was required, equal in dignity and worth to the Mighty Being offended, and to the extent of the evil committed. But who in heaven or earth could be fit for the undertaking but the incarnate God, the Man that was Jehovah's fellow? (*G. Mitchell, M.A.*) **Separate from sinners.**—*Christ's detachment from sinners:*—Look at Christ's detachment from sinners—I. AS A DEEP FEELING IN THE MIND OF HIS CONTEMPORARIES. (Luke iv. 14–27; Matt. viii. 5–13; xxi. 12; John viii. 1–11.) 1. This feeling of distance which they had in relation to Him cannot be accounted for on the ground of—(1) Miraculous manifestations; (2) His social superiority; (3) His non-sociality. 2. It was purely moral. His incorruptible truthfulness, exquisite sensibilities, calm reverence, overflowing benevolence, unconquerable love of eternal right, invested Him with that Godlike air and bearing which made them feel that He stood at an unapproachable moral distance. II. AS AN UNDOUBTED FACT REALISED BY HIMSELF. This is seen in—1. His frequent personal withdrawal from men in order to hold fellowship with His Father. 2. Much of the language He addressed to men, "Ye are from beneath; I am from above." "I and My Father are one." III. AS AN ESSENTIAL POWER IN HIS REDEMPTIVE UNDERTAKING. 1. It was just that power which rendered His services as a Redeemer acceptable to God. 2. It was just that power that rendered His services as a Redeemer efficacious to man. (*Homilist.*) *Christ as separate from the world:*—With us of to-day it is the commendation of Jesus that He is so profoundly humbled, identified so affectingly with our human state. But the power He had with the men of His time moved in exactly the opposite direction, being the impression He made of His remoteness and separateness from men, when He was, in fact, only a man, as they supposed, under all human conditions. With us it is the wonder that He is brought so low. With them that He could seem to rise so high, for they knew nothing as yet of His person, considered as the incarnate Word of the Father. What I propose, then, for my present subject is—The separateness of Jesus from men; the immense power it had and must ever have on their feeling and character. I do not mean by this that Christ was separated as being at all withdrawn, but only that, in drawing Himself most closely to them, He

was felt by them never as being on their level of life and character, but as being parted from them by an immense chasm of distance. These impressions were not due, as I have said, to any distinct conceptions they had of Him as being a higher nature incarnate, for not even His disciples took up any such definite conceptions of His nature till after His death and ascension. It was guessed, indeed, that He might be Elias, or some one of the old prophets, but we are only to see, in such struggles of conjecture, how powerfully He has already impressed the sense of His distinction or separateness of character, for such guesses or conjectures were even absurd, unless they were instigated by previous impressions of something very peculiar in His unearthly manner requiring to be accounted for. His miracles had undoubtedly something to do with the impression of His separateness from ordinary men, but a great many others, who were strictly human, have wrought miracles without creating any such gulf between them and mankind as we discover here. It is probably true also that the rumour of His being the Messiah—the great, long-expected Prince and Deliverer—had something to do in raising the impressions of men concerning Him. But their views of the Messiah to come had prepared them to look only for some great hero and deliverer, and a kind of political millennium under His kingdom. There was nothing in their expectation that should separate Him specially from mankind as being a more than humanly superlative character. I. Pursuing, then, our inquiry, let us notice, in the first place, HOW THE PERSONS MOST REMOTE AND OPPOSITE, EVEN THEY THAT FINALLY CONSPIRED HIS DEATH, WERE IMPRESSED OR AFFECTED BY HIM. They deny His Messiahship; they charge that only Beelzebub could help Him to do His miracles; they are scandalised by His familiarity with publicans and sinners and other low people; they arraign His doctrine as a heresy against many of the most sacred laws of their religion; they charge Him with the crime of breaking their Sabbath, and even with excess in eating and drinking; and yet we can easily see that there is growing up, in their minds, a most peculiar awe of His person. And it appears to be excited more by His manners and doctrine and a certain indescribable originality and sanctity in both, than by anything else. II. TURN NOW, SECONDLY, TO THE DISCIPLES, AND OBSERVE HOW THEY WERE IMPRESSED OR AFFECTED BY THE MANNER AND SPIRIT OF JESUS. And here the remarkable thing is, that they appear to be more and more impressed with the distance between Him and themselves the longer they know Him, and the more intimate and familiar their acquaintance with Him. III. WHAT NOW IS THE SOLUTION OF THIS PROFOUND IMPRESSION OF SEPARATENESS MADE BY CHRIST ON THE WORLD? That His miracles and the repute of His Messiahship do not wholly account for it we have already observed. It may be imagined by some that He produced this impression artificially, by means of certain scenes and observances designed to widen out the distance between Him and the race; for how could He otherwise obtain that power over them which He was properly entitled to have by His own real eminence, unless He took some pains to set them in attitudes in which His eminence might be felt. In other words, if He is to have more than a man's power, He must somehow be more than a man. Thus, when He says to His mother, "Woman, what have I to do with thee? My hour is not yet come"; or when, being notified that His mother and brethren are standing without waiting to see Him, He asks, "Who, then, is My mother, and who are My brethren?" it will be imagined that He is purposely suggesting His higher derivation and His more transcendent affinities. But, even if it were so, it must be understood only that He is speaking out of His spiritual consciousness, claiming thus affinity with God, and with those who shall embrace Him in the eternal brotherhood of faith; not as boasting the height of His natural Sonship. The remarkable separation, therefore, of Christ from the sinners of mankind, and the impression He awakened in them of that separation, was made, not by scenes, nor by words of assertion, nor by anything designed for that purpose, but it grew out of His life and character—His unworldliness, holiness, purity, truth, love; the dignity of His feeling, the transcendent wisdom and grace of His conduct. He was manifestly one that stood apart from the world in His profoundest human sympathy with it. He often spent His nights in solitary prayer, closeted with God in the recesses of the mountains. He was plainly not under the world, or any fashions of human opinion. He was able to be singular, without apparently desiring it, and by the simple force of His superiority. 1. How great a thing now is it that such a Being has come into our world and lived in it—a Being above mortality while in it—a Being separate from sinners, bringing unto sinners by a fellow-nature what is transcendent and even deific in the Divine holiness and love. Yes, we have had a visitor among us, living

out, in the moulds of human conduct and feeling, the perfections of God! What an importation of glory and truth! Who that lives a man can ever, after this, think it a low and common thing to fill these spheres, walk in these ranges of life, and do these works of duty which have been raised so high by the life of Jesus in the flesh? The world is no more the same that it was. All its main ideas and ideals are raised. A kind of sacred glory invests even our humblest spheres and most common concerns. 2 Consider, again, as one of the points deducible from the truth we have been considering, how little reason is given us, in the mission of Christ, for the hope that God, who has such love to man, will not allow us to fail of salvation by reason of any mere defect or neglect of application to Christ. What, then, does this peculiar separateness of Christ signify? Coming into the world to save it—taking on Him our nature that He may draw Himself as close to us as possible—what is growing all the while to be more and more felt in men's bosoms but a sense of ever-widening, ever-deepening, and, in some sense, incommunicable separateness from Him? And this, you will observe, is the separateness, not of condition, but of character. Nay, it grows out of His very love to us in part and His profound oneness with us, for it is a love so pure and gentle—so patient, so disinterested, so self-sacrificing—that it parts Him from us in the very act of embrace, and makes us think of Him even with awe! How, then, will it be when He is met in the condition of His glory, and the guise of His humanity is laid off? There is nothing then to put Him at one with us or us at one with Him, but just that incommunicable and separate character which fills us even here with dread. If He was separate before, how inevitably, insupportably separate now. 3. Consider, also, and accurately distinguish, as here we may easily do, what is meant by holiness, and what especially is its power, or the law of its power. Holiness is not what we may do or become in mere self-activity or self-culture, but it is the sense of a separated quality in one who lives on a footing of intimacy and oneness with God. 4. But the great and principal lesson derivable from this subject is, that Christianity is a regenerative power upon the world only as it comes into the world in a separated character—as a revelation or sacred importation of holiness. This brings me to speak of what is now the great and desolating error of our times. I mean the general conformity of the followers of Christ to the manners and ways, and, consequently, in a great degree, to the spirit of the world. Christ had His power, as we have seen, in the fact that He carried the impression of His separateness from it and His superiority to it. He was no ascetic, His separation no contrived and prescribed separation, but was only the more real and radical that it was the very instinct or freest impulse of His character. A true Christian, one who is deep enough in the godly life to have his affinities with God, will infallibly become a separated being. The instinct of holiness will draw him apart into a singular, superior, hidden life with God. And this is the true Christian power, besides which there is no other. And when this fails everything goes with it. Neither let us be deceived in this matter by our merely notional wisdoms, or deliberative judgments, for it is not a matter to be decided by any consideration of results—the question never is, what is really harmful, and so wrong, but what will meet the living and free instinct of a life of prayer and true godliness? There is no greater mistake, as regards the true manner of impression on the world, than that we impress it being homogeneous with it. If in our dress we show the same extravagance, if our amusements are theirs without a distinction, if we follow after their shows, copy their manners, busy ourselves in their worldly objects, emulate their fashions, what are we different from them? It seems quite plausible to fancy the great honour we shall put on religion, when we are able to set it on a footing with all most worldly things, and show that we can be Christians in that plausible way. This we call a liberal piety. It is such as can excel in all high tastes, and make up a figure of beauty that must needs be a great commendation, we think, to religion. It may be a little better than to be openly apostate; but alas! there is how little power in such a kind of life! If we are to impress the world we must be separate from sinners, even as Christ our Master was, or at least according to our human degree, as being in His Spirit. Oh, that we could take our lesson here, and plan our life, order our pursuits, choose our relaxations, prepare our families, so as to be truly with Christ, and so, in fact, that we ourselves can say, each for himself, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me." And this exactly is our communion with Jesus; we propose to be one with Him in it. In it we connect with a Power transcendent, the Son of Man in glory, whose image we aspire to, and whose mission, as the Crucified on earth, was the revelation of the Father's love

and holiness. We ask to be separated with Him and set apart to the same great life. (*H. Bushnell, D.D.*) *Christ separate from sinners*:—There are certain senses in which Jesus was not "separate from sinners." 1. He was not separate from them in respect of nature. It was a true, though immaculate, humanity which He assumed, and in which He tabernacled in the midst of men. 2. He was not "separate from sinners" in respect of residence. He lived on earth. He laboured in Galilee; and Galilee was proverbially bad. He preached, and suffered, and died in Jerusalem; and the voice of Jerusalem's crimes "entered into the ears of the Lord God of Sabaoth." 3. He was not "separate from sinners" in respect of society. As one who came, "not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance," He held intercourse with wicked men. The Physician was found beside the sick-bed. The Deliverer of guilty and ruined souls "ate and drank with publicans and sinners." 4. He was not "separate from sinners" in respect of His personal experience at the hands of men, or even at the hands of God. He shared in the ordinary trials incident to sinful man. He was the object of harsh reproach and contumelious scorn. He was judicially condemned to a tremendous kind of death. And it was, literally, in the midst of malefactors that He died. What, then, is meant by the statement that Christ was "separate from sinners"? Plainly, that in respect of character He was altogether different from them. Partaker of the same humanity as they, in Him, characteristically and exclusively, it was immaculate; and thus, even while He moved in the midst of sinners, and was come to "seek and to save that which was lost," His Spirit, in some sense, dwelt apart. Christ was morally perfect in all the parts of His constitution. His intellect was filled with pure and lofty thoughts. His conscience was true to the dictates of eternal rectitude—quick to discern the right, and bold and strong to choose and follow it. His heart was the home, alike of the mild, and the majestic, forms of feeling. His ears were ever wont to hearken to the plaint of sorrow. With a simplicity to which ostentation and art were strangers, His eyes were bedewed with tears for human wretchedness and sin, and anon lifted up in prayer to Heaven. His hands—how busy were they in the cause of goodness and of God! And even as, in the ark, the stony tablets of the law were kept, so in the soul of Jesus that good and righteous law found a habitation and a home. Every class of virtues was nobly realised in Christ. 1. In Him the devotional virtues were perfect and complete. Prayer was His recreation and delight. Even when "it pleased the Lord to bruise Him," He gave Jehovah thanks (Luke xxii. 17, 19). And "truly," His "fellowship was with the Father." 2. In Him, too, the active virtues were gloriously displayed. The exclamation of His boyhood might serve as a general motto for His earthly history:—"Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" His aims were high, His heart was earnest, and His hand was busy. "The work of Him that sent Him" was His regular, His uniform pursuit. He "went about doing good" (Acts x. 38). 3. And in the passive virtues, how pre-eminently great was Jesus! How "meek and lowly in heart"! How calmly did He bear the abuse of man! How patiently did He submit to the hand of God! "Abba, Father, not My will, but Thine be done," "The cup which My Father giveth Me, shall I not drink it?" were not only the memorable expressions of His tongue, but also the genuine spirit of His soul. It is indeed a glorious character, the character of Christ—fitter for a seraphic harp than for a human pen to celebrate. In His gentleness He was great, in His greatness He was gentle. Truly, He was "the Lamb of God," and yet "the Lion of the tribe of Judah" (John i. 29; Rev. v. 5). The moral glory of Divinity, and the perfect virtue of an unsullied human nature, met in Him. (*A. S. Patterson.*) **Made higher than the heavens.**—*The transcendent majesty of Christ*:—In what sense is Christ higher than the heavens? I. In a MATERIAL sense. Is not the painter greater than his painting; the engineer than his machine; the architect than his building; the author than his book? So Christ is higher than the heavens, because He created them. II. In a MORAL sense. The untold myriads of unfallen and redeemed spirits that populate those heavens are very good, very affluent in holy thoughts and Divine aspirations; but Christ, in goodness, is higher than them all. 1. Their goodness is derived. Christ's is original—His is the primal fount whence theirs flows; His the sun whence their radiance beams. 2. Their goodness is measurable. "The Spirit is not given to Him by measure." 3. Their goodness is contingent. Christ's is absolute. III. In a POSITIONAL sense. He is in the midst of the throne. He is to all what the sun is to the planets—the centre round which they all revolve, and from which they all derive their life, strength, beauty radiance, joy. (*Homilist.*)

He offered up Himself.—*The only offering for sin:*—I. THE OFFERING AND THE OFFERER. "He offered up Himself." I never knew any other priest do that. Priests under the law offer costly things; but they plunder the people for them. They do not even offer their own property, much less offer themselves. But here is the gracious, glorious High Priest of our profession who, because no other offering could be found suitable, and acceptable, and sufficient, offered Himself—"the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Oh, pause a moment over this precious offering, and note the voluntary manner in which it was offered—an offering adequate to the purpose for which it was intended. The other priests offered offerings, first for their own sins and then for the sins of the people—this glorious Priest found in the one offering of His own precious body and soul an adequate amount of merit for all the sins of all the election of grace, and presented it as such to God the Father. Pass on to mark that this offering, so valuable and perfect and acceptable to God the Father, is administered to the faith of God's elect by the Holy Ghost. It is expressly His work to plant faith in the heart of a poor, ruined sinner; which faith is to bring nothing, to find nothing in the creature, to come empty-handed, just to receive the application of blood Divine, by the Holy Ghost administered to personal experience; so that in the offering itself is found all that is adequate for the sinner's salvation, and redemption of the Church of God, in the Father's acceptance of it, a receipt in full of all demands for the whole Church, and in the Holy Spirit's ministry, the application of it to the hearts of all the election of grace. Now look at the offerer—"He offered Himself." It is the business of a priest to offer a sacrifice. He goes forth as our Priest, after the order of Melchisedec, to offer Himself a sacrifice acceptable unto God. 1. Here is, first of all, affection. He so loved the Church that He gave Himself for it. The Father sends the Son, and the Son comes voluntarily. 2. Moreover there was affinity. Christ loved His Church as the apostle exhorts husbands to love their wives; as Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself for it, that He might wash it, and cleanse it, and present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. 3. For one moment glance at the agony which this voluntary act involved. The whole amount of Divine wrath poured out like a cataract upon His soul—all the vengeance of stern justice waiting with its sword to smite Jehovah's fellow was felt when He bowed His head and died—all the curse of the law, like barbed arrows, penetrated His very soul. He endured all this for His Church. Go a little further, and you find Him typified under the Old Testament dispensation, and becoming Himself the fulfilment of all its types. Time would fail me here to enter largely upon them, but I will just mention the morning and evening lamb. Ages of offerings of the blood of animals never blotted out one sin—they only pointed to Christ—but the six hours of a precious Christ on the cross carried back a flood of atoning blood to Adam's day, and it rolled its tide forward to the end of time, that the whole election of grace might be for ever exonerated by that one offering. "He hath obtained eternal redemption for us," saith the apostle. I dwell upon that phrase with peculiar delight. "Eternal." Can you put a termination to it? It runs backward to the first transgressor, and it runs forward to the end of time, and then into eternity with its blessings. "Eternal redemption." "Aye," say you, "that little word 'us,' I dare not claim it." Why not? "Having obtained eternal redemption for us." Who was it for? I want the appropriation put forth by you and me upon simple principles. How do you know that some poor slave, under a foreign yoke of tyranny, was redeemed? How would he know it himself? Why, in the first place, he would be thoroughly sick and tired of his chains; in the next place, he would know that the price has been paid for his ransom; and, in the third place, he would be set free; and when a man is set free he will not stay under the yoke of the tyrant any longer, he will be off to his own country. Now you and I may know it in the same manner. "Having obtained eternal redemption for us." Lay hold of it by faith, if God enables you, and go and plead it at the throne, and never fear losing it—it includes all the blessings of the gospel for time, all the fulness of the covenant for enriching the Church, and all the glories of heaven for everlasting possession. Well, this He did officially, relatively, not as a common-place sufferer, but under appointment, and, consequently, under responsibility. This He did as the covenant Head, in the name and on behalf of His whole Church; and He did it openly in His life and death, before all worlds. II. THE ILLUSTRIOUS TRIUMPHS OF THIS ONE OFFERING. The apostle, in addressing the Colossians, tells them concerning these illustrious triumphs, that He spoiled principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly on His cross, triumphing over them in it. The

triumphs are vast and extensive, and they shall never be subdued. The first feature of these triumphs we see in new covenant terms of salvation met and fulfilled. Terms? say you. Yes, terms—not made with man, though, nor left to man. If they were, woe to the whole race of Adam. Away with all conditions and terms only as they belong to Christ. Still, there are terms of salvation, and let me mark what they are. Why Jehovah says He will by no means clear the guilty; then if a man be saved at all his guilt must be cleared away, or there is no salvation for him, for God says He will by no means clear the guilty. Jesus met the terms, allowed the whole mass of guilt and transgression which pertained to His Church to be laid upon Him, and the Father Himself did it. "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." Go on to mark that in these New Testament terms which are met there is another condition—"without holiness no man shall see the Lord." What a mercy that this is not left to you or me! Our glorious High Priest, who offered Himself, imparts His own life, His own nature and will, sends down His Holy Spirit, to take possession of the souls of all for whom He bled, that they may stand complete in the holiness of God. Moreover, if I may mention a third term, I would say it is the being clad in a spotless, perfect, sinless righteousness for justification. Where is the man to get it? Hear what Jehovah, by His prophet Isaiah, says. The prophet was directed to set it down, that everything pertaining to the creature should wear out as a garment, and that the moth should eat up all creature excellencies; but, says God, "My righteousness shall be for ever, and My salvation shall not be abolished." That is an everlasting righteousness. Paul perfectly understood it, and blessedly appropriated it, when he said, "That I might be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but the righteousness which is of God by faith." Again, His enemies are all vanquished, and an expiation accomplished in behalf of all His Church. "O death, I will be thy plague; O grave, I will be thy destruction," said He. "He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet." The conquest of the heart is one of Jesu's triumphs. Moreover, the expiation coupled with it includes the whole Church of God. "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world." Oh, the prospect is bright while Jesus is kept in view. Only let the Sun of Righteousness shine upon us, and our prospects for eternity must be brightened. Just pass on to observe that this glorious High Priest of our profession has opened His new and living way unto the throne of God for all that the Father gives into His hands, and will infallibly bring them all home to everlasting glory. III. THE SINFULNESS OF EITHER REJECTING OR MOCKING THIS ONE OFFERING FOR SIN. I cannot possibly look for merit in the creature without believing that the merit of Christ is not sufficient—without announcing, in that very act, that I am not satisfied that Christ spoke the truth when He said, "It is finished." If it is finished, an eternal redemption is obtained; any pretension to add to it is nothing less than a blasphemous insult to Christ. Negotiation with the Father is not attainable by any human power, but in and by this offering. "No man cometh to the Father but by Me." Go to the footstool of Divine mercy, guilt-burdened sinner, and name the blood and righteousness of Christ. Go and point the Father to His sufferings in Gethsemane and on Calvary. Go and tell what Christ has done—perfected for ever them that are sanctified, and dare assert, under all the load of your guilt, "Lord, I believe in the efficacy and power of that offering"; and go on till you are enabled to say, "I believe it was offered for me." Then begins your peace and happiness. I pray you to mark, once more, that all our negotiations must be successful when the name, and merit, and righteousness of Jesus are pleaded. This leads me to the last thought, that the trust and confidence of all the elect of God will be found placed there. (*J. Irons.*) *Our Lord's offering*:—Our fundamental conception of the offering of Him who ascended the cross of Calvary to die must be, that it was an offering of life, not of death. It began with the cross, with the moment when He was lifted on high out of the earth; and when, separated from all that was material, local, or limited, He was able to enter upon a spiritual, universal, and everlasting priesthood. Then, as One bearing the sins of all who had committed, or should afterwards commit, themselves to Him in faith, He yielded up His own life, and theirs in His, as the penalty due to sin. For Himself and for the members of His body He accepted the sentence, "The soul that sinneth shall die"; while at the same time He bowed Himself in submission to the law so mysteriously linked with that sentence, that, as things are in a present world, it is only through death that we can conquer death and find the path to life. On the cross He gave Himself for us, the just for the unjust; so that when we think of Him as the Victim

upon which our help is laid, and identify ourselves with Him by faith, we may see that in Him our sins are expiated, and that they no longer bar our admission to the Divine presence and favour. All this, however, was no more than the first stage of the offering made for us by our heavenly High Priest; and the mistake of many is to think that, as the offering was begun, so also it was finished on the cross. In reality, only the initial step was taken when Jesus died. As the blood, or in other words the life, of an animal sacrificed under the law was liberated in death, not merely that the offering might be completed, but that the true offering might be made by the sprinkling; so the blood, or in other words the life, of Christ was liberated on the cross, that His true offering might be made by the surrender of that life to God in a perpetual service of love, obedience, and praise. 1. The conception of Christ's priesthood as a heavenly priesthood, and of the life that He now leads in heaven as the consummation of His offering, alone gives us the accomplishment, and that too in their appropriate order, of everything that was involved in the separate offerings of the law. In the life now offered to the Father and before the Father's throne we see, not only the perfected Sin and Trespass, but the perfected Burnt- and Peace-offerings. There the life won through death is surrendered into the Father's hands. There it burns in the never-ceasing devotion of love and praise. There it is passed in the enjoyment of a fellowship with God undisturbed and glorified. And thence it descends to all the members of the body, so that they find, in Him who gave and still gives Himself for them, reconciliation, union, nourishment for a heavenly service, and the comfort and joy of a heavenly feast. 2. As an offering of life Christ's offering is complete, embracing in its efficacy the whole life of man. In this respect the offerings of the law were necessarily incomplete, and so also must be the offering presented in any single act of the life of Christ. But when, as our High Priest and Representative, Jesus offers His life to God, that life covers every stage or department of our life. There is no part of our life in which, by the very fact that He lived a human life, the Redeemer of the world did not share. Must we labour? He laboured. Must we suffer? He suffered. Must we be tempted? He was tempted. Must we have at one time solitary hours, at another move in social circles? He spent hours alone upon the mountain top, and He mingled with His disciples as companions and friends. Must we die? He died. Must we rise from the grave? He rose from it on the third morning. Must we appear before the Judge of all? He appeared before Him who sent Him with the record of all that He had accomplished. Must we enter into eternity? Eternity is now passing over Him. More even than this has to be said; for our High Priest not only moved in every one of these scenes, He has also consecrated them all, and made them all a part of His offering in heaven. In each He was a conqueror, and the fruits of His conquest in each are made ours. 3. As an offering of life Christ's offering is everlasting. His life is presented continually to God; and in it the children of God, whose own it is made by faith, are kept consecrated for evermore. The efficacy of the legal offerings lasted for a time. This offering never ceases, and its efficacy never fails. 4. As an offering of life Christ's offering is made once for all, and cannot be repeated. It is simply impossible to repeat it, for we cannot repeat what has not been first brought to an end; and since the offering on the part of the eternal Son is His life, it follows that His offering must be as eternal as Himself. That offering of our Lord, then, which is the leading function of His priesthood, was only begun, and not completed, on the cross. It is going on still, and it will go on for ever, as the Divine and perfect sacrifice in which our great Representative and we in Him attain the end of all religion, whether natural or revealed, as that sacrifice in which we are made one with His Father and our Father, with His God and our God. (*W. Milligan, D.D.*)

The Son, who is consecrated for evermore.—He giveth a special reason why it beseemeth not us under the gospel to have a sinful man for our priest, because this is the very difference betwixt the law and the gospel. 1. The law maketh men which have infirmities high priests; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, and none but the Son, who is consecrated for evermore. 2. He maketh the difference of the law and the gospel to stand amongst other things in the difference of priests, so as the gospel cannot admit such priests as the law admitted. 3. The differences, as the apostle setteth them down here, are—(1) The course taken about priests under the law was alterable, they were made without an oath, the lawgiver declaring it to be his will to change that course when he saw fit; but the course taken about the priests of the New Testament is with an oath, and so cannot be changed. (2) The next difference he maketh this: The law admitteth

men in the plural number, a plurality of priests; but the gospel admitteth no plurality of priests, but the Son only to be priest. Melchisedec's order in the type hath no priest but one in it, without a suffragan or substituted priest. Therefore Christ, the true Melchisedec, is alone in His priesthood, without partner or deputy or suffragan. Then, to make plurality of priests in the gospel is to alter the order of Melchisedec, and to renounce the mark set betwixt the law and the gospel. 3. The third difference: The law maketh men priests; but the evangelical oath maketh the Son of God priest for the gospel. Then, to make a man priest now is to mar the Son of God's privilege, to whom the privilege only belongeth. 4. The fourth difference: The law maketh such priests as have infirmity; that is, sinful men. But the evangelical oath maketh the Son, who is able to save to the uttermost all that come to God, through Him. Then to make a sinful and weak man a priest now is to weaken the priesthood of the gospel, and make it like the law. 5. The fifth difference: The law maketh men priests which have infirmities over whom death had power, that they could not be consecrated but for their short lifetime. But the evangelical oath maketh the Son, whom the sorrows of death could not hold, and hath consecrated Him for evermore. Then as long as Christ's consecration lasteth, none must meddle with His office. 6. The last difference: The law instituting priests was not God's last will, but might suffer addition. But the evangelical oath is since the law, and God's last and unchangeable will. Therefore to add unto it and bring in as many priests now as did serve in the temple of old, is to provoke God to add as many plagues as are written in God's book upon themselves and their priests also. (*D. Dickson, M.A.*)

CHAPTER VIII.

VER. 1. **We have such an High Priest.** *Our great High Priest*:—You can hardly fail to observe the tone of triumph of St. Paul in giving his summary; in announcing it as an established fact, that we have such an High Priest, a High Priest such as had been described—"holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." He speaks as though nothing more could be needed, nothing more wished. Now then, as a preliminary view of this summary of the apostle, you will all admit that in speaking of our High Priest, St. Paul is evidently to be understood as speaking of a mighty Friend or Supporter. He is manifestly anxious to magnify this High Priest, that he may possess us with an exalted opinion of His greatness and His goodness. Yet we are not for a moment to think it implied that salvation is not a difficult thing, requiring effort, exertion, and sacrifice. In a preceding chapter St. Paul had said: "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession." Though he here describes the same blessed truths, as in the summary of our text, he evidently indicates that we are in danger of letting go our profession through the greatness of the struggle needed for maintaining it. Thus you should set before yourselves the privilege of the Christian in that his cause has been undertaken by a Being "who is able to save to the uttermost": and at the same time the duty of the Christian, in that he must labour with all his might at a task which is both difficult and dangerous. And we are to labour at this difficult and dangerous task on the very account that "we have such an High Priest," that our cause, that is, is in hands which are certain to make it prevail. Without a Mediator, repentance, even if it might have been genuine, must have been unavailing; whereas, with a Mediator, repentance wrought in us by God's Spirit, may be made the condition of our admission into God's kingdom. Without a Mediator prayer, even if from the heart, could have brought down no blessing from above; whereas with a Mediator prayer has only to be the prayer of faith, and it will prevail with our Father in heaven. Without a Mediator the effort to keep God's commandments, even if made with all diligence and sincerity, could have done nothing towards removing us from under the curse; whereas with a Mediator, our imperfect obedience, though void of any merit whatsoever, can be graciously accepted as a proof and token of faith, and noted by God, who out of His exuberant mercy designs to "reward every man according to his works." He that in any measure or sense trusts in his own strength, or leans

on his own righteousness, as truly depends on a broken reed, now that Christ hath died for him, as though no Mediator had risen to make atonement; but Christ, as we have already said, puts us into a new state or condition, not a state in which we may be saved without labour, but a state in which labour may end in our being saved. He "opened to us the kingdom of heaven," that kingdom which without Him would have remained for ever closed against the fallen and the feeble; but to open the kingdom, is not the same thing as to put us into the kingdom without any effort of our own. It is rather to encourage us to exertion, which, manifestly of no avail while the everlasting doors are firmly barred against us, may be graciously crowned with success when the bars have been removed by the Redeemer. Therefore, the whole power of the gospel, so far as motive is concerned, is against indolence and indifference, and on the side of energy and endeavour. Seeing that Christ hath been crucified, let us crucify ourselves; it would be of no avail striving to mortify the flesh whilst hell yawned for us and could not be escaped. Seeing that Christ hath died for sin, let us labour to die to sin. It is not a useless labour now, but it was till heaven had been opened, for which holiness makes fitness. Seeing that Christ pleads for us, let us be fervent in pleading for ourselves. Prayer can now be heard and answered, though it could not have been except as presented through an all-powerful Intercessor. Now, hitherto we have only treated the apostle's summary as bearing generally on the fact, that the scheme of the gospel is so constructed as to urge us to endeavour, rather than to encourage us in inactivity. We will now, however, take a different view of the case. We will consider it as addressed simply to believers, constructed for the comfort and encouragement of those, who, in the midst of a troubled and sinful world, may be tempted to let go their Christian profession, despairing of being able to persevere to the end. There are two great points, or facts, upon which the apostle fastens as making up the sum of all that he had advanced. First, "we have such an High Priest"; such an one as had been described in the foregoing chapter—"holy, harmless, and undefiled, separate from sinners, who being made perfect, became the Author of eternal salvation to all them that obey." The apostle speaks of Christ as still being a High Priest. He uses the present tense, and thus he reminds us that the priestly office was not completed or laid aside when the Mediator had offered up Himself, but that it still continues to be discharged, and will be so while the church is in any danger of letting go her profession. And this is a truth which is full of comfort to the Christian. There is an unlimited difference to him between "we have had an High Priest," and "we have an High Priest." What more of encouragement can we desire, what more of assurance of final victory, now that we are able to wind up all discussion upon the Christian scheme, in the words of our text—"Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have," not we have had, but we have —we still "have such an High Priest." Now we turn to the second point adduced by the apostle, and this relates to the present residence of the High Priest, who, according to St. Paul, is "set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens." And the tone, as we before said, in which he gives his summary would seem to indicate that the fact of Christ having passed into heaven is one which should fill us with gladness and confidence. If that residence in the heavens prove to me that Christ prevailed in the great work which He undertook, and that because He thus prevailed all power has been given unto Him in heaven and in earth, what better reason can I have for adherence to Christianity? It is no "cunningly devised fable" which I follow, if indeed the Redeemer be thus "on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens." It is on no doubtful aid that I rely, it is no uncertain Advocate with whom I trust my cause, if He who died upon the cross hath been exalted to the throne. What want can there be for which He has not a supply? what sorrow for which He has not a solace? what sin for which He has not an expiation? what temptation which He cannot enable me to resist? or what enemy which He cannot strengthen me to overcome? Shall we, then, let go our profession? Shall we shrink at the approach of danger? Shall we play the coward and the recreant, because of persecution, distress, contumely, and difficulty? Nay, this were to desert a Leader, of whom we have every possible assurance, that no friend can trust Him and not be finally more than a conqueror—no foe resist Him, and not be finally crushed. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *The great possession*:—I. THE REALITY OF THE FACT. "We have such an High Priest." It is not a matter of useless desire or of future hope, but of present accomplished possession. The truth exists indeed in the unseen world, and is not at present visible to sight, as it will be hereafter. Hereafter the very eyes shall take cognisance of the fact, when forth

from the holy of holies, the immediate presence of God, the great High Priest shall come to be manifested before the eyes of an astonished world. But why is that time delayed? Why lingers the great High Priest within the heavenly sanctuary? The answer is, that He waits till the number of the elect shall be completed, and the intercession which He for ever lives to make for His people shall be no longer necessary, when, His people being gathered safely in, the last veil shall be for ever removed from between them and the full sight of God. Our High Priest still ministers for us till then. II. THE SINGLENESS OF THE PERSON, AND OF THE OFFICE HE FULFILS. "We have such an High Priest"—not many, but one—one, and only one, so absolutely alone, that it is blasphemy to arrogate any part of His work. But will Christ be Priest for ever? This the apostle notices. Yes, for He liveth in "the power of an endless life," and needs no successor. III. THE PERFECTION OF THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST, AND THE PERFECTION OF HIM WHO FULFILS IT. "We have such an High Priest." Turn back to the preceding chapter, and you will find that the apostle enumerates beauty after beauty in Christ, as if he were gathering together a cluster of jewels to deck His crown of glory. It is singular, when we read the passage carefully, how we find it crowded with insignia of honour. In human priests, if the most extravagant claims were admitted, it would yet be true that the dignity is only in the office, and not in the men. But when we turn to the true High Priest, how different it is! Here is not only the glory of the office, but the glory of the Person, infinitely qualified in His Deity, to stand between the justice of God and the whole human race. He is no mere dying man like an earthly priest, but clothed with "the power of an endless life." He was not made after the law of a carnal commandment, but made after the oath of God Himself, "a High Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec." He has not entered into the "tabernacle made with hands, with the blood of bulls and goats," but with "His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." He is not one among many, like earthly priests, but is alone in His own single and unequalled majesty, "the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." He does not fill a delegated office, like earthly priests, but fulfils His own office, and that so perfectly that He "is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him." He needs not daily, as earthly priests, to seek forgiveness for His own sins, but is "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." He does not minister afar off from God, like earthly priests, but is already "made higher than the heavens," and at the right hand of His Father pleads evermore for us. He needs not to repeat His daily offerings, as earthly priests, but has made atonement once, "when He offered up Himself." And, lastly, He has no infirmity, like earthly priests, but is the Son of God, Himself God, blessed for evermore—omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, infinite! Who perfect as He? and what wonder that, thus perfect, He should govern as well as atone?—not only Priest, but King,—nay, bearing on His head the triple crown of glory—Prophet, Priest, King. (*E. Garbett, M.A.*) *The enthroned servant Christ*:—We have here two strikingly different representations of our Lord's heavenly state. In the one He is regarded as seated "on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty." In the other He is regarded as being, notwithstanding that session, "a minister of the sanctuary"; performing priestly functions there. Reigning He serves; serving He reigns. I. THE SEATED CHRIST. "We have a High Priest who"—to translate a little more closely—"has taken His seat on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens." If we translate the symbol into colder words, it means that deep repose, which, like the Divine rest after creation, is not for recuperation of exhausted powers, but is the sign of an accomplished purpose and achieved task, a share in the sovereignty of heaven, and the wielding of the energies of Deity—rest, royalty, and power belong now to the Man sitting at the right hand of the throne of God. II. THE SERVANT CHRIST. "A minister of the sanctuary," says my text. The glorified Christ is a ministering Christ. In us, on us, for us He works, in all the activities of His exalted repose, as truly and more mightily than He did when here He helped the weaknesses and healed the sicknesses, and soothed the sorrows and supplied the wants, and washed the feet of a handful of poor men. He has gone up on high, but in His rest He works. He is on the throne, but in His royalty He serves. III. THE PRACTICAL LESSONS OF SUCH THOUGHTS AS THESE. They have a bearing on the three categories of past, present, future. 1. For the past a seal. For what can be greater, what can afford a firmer foundation for us sinful men to rest our confidence upon than the death of which the recompense was that the Man who died sits on the throne of the universe? 2. A strength for the present.

I know of nothing that is mighty enough to draw men's desires and fix solid reasonable thought and love upon that awful future, except the belief that Christ is there. But with Christ in the heavens the heavens become the home of our hearts. See Christ, and He interprets, dwindles, and yet ennobles the world and life. 3. A prophecy for the future. There is the measure of the possibilities of human nature. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The crowning point: Christ the High Priest in heaven*:—The Lord Jesus is our High Priest in heaven. These simple but majestic and weighty words sum up the teaching of the first eight chapters of our epistle. This is the crowning-point of the apostle's profound and massive argument, Jesus, who suffered and died, is consecrated the priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec, after the power of an endless life. He is the minister of the heavenly sanctuary and the true tabernacle. In no other portion of the new covenant Scriptures is the High Priesthood of the Lord Jesus explained. Hence in this precious and most essential epistle, more than in any other book, stress is laid upon the ascension rather than the resurrection, and upon the fact that Jesus is in heaven. The object of this epistle was to comfort and also to exhort the Jews, whose faith was sorely tried because they were excluded from the services of the temple in Jerusalem; to confirm unto them the great truth, that they had the reality of those things which were only temporary and signs, and that the real sanctuary was not upon earth but high in the heavens, and that Jesus had gone to be the minister of the holy things, and of the true and substantial tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man. It is because the Son of man, who came down from heaven, hath ascended up into heaven, it is because Jesus is at the right hand of God, that He is the true and perfect mediator between God and man. From His throne in heaven He gives repentance and the remission of sins; from thence He gives unto His Church all needful gifts, even as He at first sent forth the Holy Ghost, because He had been exalted by the right hand of God. From heaven He shall descend and gather His saints, changing their vile bodies, that they may be fashioned like unto His glorious body; from heaven He worketh now, and will work, until He hath subdued all things unto Himself. If Christ is in heaven, we must lift up our eyes and hearts to heaven. There are things above. The things above are the spiritual blessings in heavenly places. "Seek those things which are above"; faith and love, hope and patience, meekness, righteousness, and strength. The things above are also the future things for which we wait, seeing that our inheritance is not here upon earth. All that is pertaining unto the inheritance "incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away," belongs unto those things which Christ has now to minister in the tabernacle which God has made, and not man. Our transfigured body, our perfectly enlightened mind, our soul entirely filled with the love of God, all the strength and gifts for government (for we shall be called to reign with Christ upon the earth), all those powers and blessings which we have now only by faith and in germ, are in the heavenly places with Christ, who shall bring them to us when He comes again at the command of the Father. (*A. Saphir.*)

Ver. 2. **The true tabernacle.**—*The true tabernacle.*—I. IT HAS A DIVINE RESIDENT. The soul is in the body, animating and controlling it, and revealing itself in it; so God is in the good—the true Church. II. IT HAS A DIVINE ARCHITECT. 1. He formed the plan, and a wonderful plan it is, stretching over ages, and involving the agencies of heaven, earth, and hell. 2. He laid the foundations (Isa. xxviii. 16). 3. He prepares the materials. Digs each stone out of the quarry of depravity, hews it, polishes, makes it suitable for a place in the building. 4. He builds the materials together. III. IT HAS A DIVINE MINISTER. 1. A Deliverer. 2. A Leader. 3. An Educator. (*Homilist.*) *The true tabernacle*:—Here the contrast is not so much that of law and gospel, of grace and works, as in other epistles; the contrast is between the earthly and temporary and the heavenly and eternal. While the temple was still in existence, it was difficult for the Hebrews to understand the heavenly character of their calling and worship. The apostle shows that Jesus is High Priest in heaven, and that therefore ours is a heavenly sanctuary, where all is substance, and possessed of an eternal vitality and glory He is the minister of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man. This tabernacle is contrasted with the tabernacle in the wilderness. It is "true," in the sense in which Jesus says, "I am the true vine"; that is, the real and substantial vine, of which the outward and visible vines are merely emblems. In the second place, this tabernacle was made, not with hands, and not through the mediation of human beings, as was the tabernacle in the wilderness; but it was made by God Himself.

And, in the third place, this tabernacle is not a tent in the wilderness, but it is an abiding place in the heavenlies, there to be for ever. The tabernacle is one of the most important and instructive types. 1. In the first place, the tabernacle is a type, a visible illustration, of that heavenly place in which God has His dwelling. 2. In the second place, the tabernacle is a type of Jesus Christ, who is the meeting-place between God and man. 3. And, in the third place, the tabernacle is a type of Christ in the Church—of the communion of Jesus with all believers. The tabernacle presented wonderful truths to Israel. In the sacrifices and ordinances of the tabernacle God declared unto His people the forgiveness of their sins; He brought them near unto Himself through expiation and mediation; He healed their diseases and comforted their hearts. But the ultimate object in all this was to reveal Himself, to manifest His Divine perfection, to show forth His glory. Everywhere the twofold object was accomplished, the need of sinful, guilty, and failing man was supplied, and in this very grace the character and glory of Jehovah was revealed. Thus, as in Christ crucified we possess all we need, and behold all the thoughts and purposes of God, so in the tabernacle the believing Israelite, receiving pardon and help, was taught to exclaim, "Who is a God like unto Thee?" The tabernacle was a symbol of God's dwelling. There is a sanctuary, wherein is the especial residence and manifestation of the glorious presence of God. The throne, from which He issues His royal law and the declaration of His sovereign grace, is between the cherubim, a symbol of the heavenly throne of Divine majesty. "The temple of Thy holiness," is the name both of the earthly and heavenly sanctuary. God, who dwells in heaven, and from His heavenly throne dispenses all blessings, manifests Himself on earth and holds communion with His people, and the place or sanctuary chosen for this purpose is a symbol of heaven, and there subsists a real connection between the celestial archetype and the earthly image. When Jacob awoke out of his sleep, in which the Lord appeared unto him, he said, "This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." In the sublime prayer of dedication, Solomon constantly expresses the same thought. But the tabernacle is, secondly, a type of the Lord Jesus Himself. For it is in Him that God dwells with us; in Him dwells the fulness of Godhead bodily, that we dwelling in Him should have communion with the Father. See the fulfilment of the type in the first place in the Incarnation. "A body hast Thou prepared for Me." He dwelt in the midst of us even as the tabernacle was in the midst of the people. And as that tent, although it was made of materials which were common and earthly, was irradiated and sanctified by the indwelling glory of the Lord, so although He was born of the Virgin Mary, and was in every respect like unto His brethren, and was found in fashion as a man, yet is the humanity of Jesus called that holy thing, for it is the tabernacle in which was beheld the glory of the Only-begotten. It was by a gradual development that Jesus became the true tabernacle. First, by His Incarnation. The tabernacle was pitched of God, and not of man. The Holy Ghost came upon the Virgin Mary, and the power of the Highest overshadowed her. Then Jesus, in His holy humanity, in His perfect walk of obedience, in His words and works, manifested the Father: God was with Him: the Father was in Him; the glory of the Only-begotten shone through His body of humiliation. Then, by His death on the cross, the holy place became, as it were, the holy of holies; the veil being rent, all that separated God from sinners was removed according to righteousness. Then, by His resurrection and ascension, He actually entered in—as our representative—for us, and, so to say, with us. It is difficult to combine all the aspects of Christ, who is Sanctuary, Priest, Sacrifice; but the more we dwell on Him as the One who is all, the more fully are our hearts established. Behold Him, then, as the tabernacle where all sacred things are laid up. All that was in the tabernacle is in Him. He is the true Light, the true Bread of the countenance, the true Incense of intercession, with which our prayers and offerings come before God. All spiritual blessings in heavenly places are in Christ. But the tabernacle has yet a third aspect. There God and His people meet. God now dwells in His saints by His Spirit, whereby they become an holy temple unto Him. We are builded together in Him (Christ) for an habitation of God through the Spirit. We are, according to the testimony of another apostle, a spiritual house, in which sacrifices and offerings of thanksgiving and obedience are continually brought unto God. In this chosen Temple God has His rest and His joy. This is the glorious gospel: God in Christ, we in Christ, Christ in us. Thus we have seen that the tabernacle was a picture of heaven, a type of Christ Jesus, and of Christ Jesus in the saints. And therefore, when Jesus Christ comes again with His saints, it will be said, "Lo,

the tabernacle of God with men." True, there is a locality where Christ and His saints have their abode. But the glory and substance of that heavenly place is the Lord Jesus, one with the saints. (*A Saphir.*)

Ver. 3. **To offer gifts and sacrifices.**—*Sacrifices*:—I. GOD'S ORDINATION OR APPOINTMENT GIVES RULES, MEASURES, AND ENDS UNTO ALL SACRED OFFICES AND EMPLOYMENTS. Whoever undertakes anything in religion or divine worship, without it, besides it, beyond it, is a transgressor, and therein worshippeth God in vain. II. THERE IS NO APPROACH UNTO GOD WITHOUT CONTINUAL RESPECT UNTO SACRIFICE AND ATONEMENT. The principal end of sacrifices was to make atonement for sin. And so necessary was this to be done, that the office of the priesthood was appointed for it. III. THERE WAS NO SALVATION TO BE HAD FOR US, NO NOT BY JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF, WITHOUT HIS SACRIFICE AND OBLATION. It was of necessity that He should have somewhat to offer, as well as those priests had of old according to the law. IV. AS GOD DESIGNED UNTO THE LORD CHRIST, THE WORK WHICH HE HAD TO DO, SO HE PROVIDED FOR HIM, AND FURNISHED HIM WITH, WHATEVER WAS NECESSARY THEREUNTO. V. THE LORD JESUS CHRIST BEING TO SAVE THE CHURCH IN THE WAY OF OFFICE, HE WAS NOT TO BE SPARED IN ANYTHING NECESSARY THEREUNTO. VI. WHATEVER STATE OR CONDITION WE ARE CALLED UNTO, WHAT IS NECESSARY UNTO THAT STATE IS INDISPENSABLY REQUIRED OF US. So is holiness and obedience required unto a state of reconciliation and peace with God. (*John Owen, D.D.*) **Somewhat to offer.** *The great Offering*:—"Somewhat to offer" is a very happy rendering. What He offers is not meantime of importance, He has an offering. Neither is there any reference to the time when He offers, though the word perhaps implies that the offering is one that is made once for all. But of course it is implied by the connection that the place of the offering is in the true tabernacle, for this is just the gist of the whole passage. The author's chief point is that the Melchisedec high priest is a ministering high priest in the heavenly sanctuary, and to support this point by saying that this priest must have an offering which he offers somewhere else would be peculiar reasoning. No doubt the high priest is described generally as appointed "to offer gifts and sacrifices," but that "offering" of the high priest to which Christ's corresponds is expressly defined to be "blood which he offered for himself and for the errors of the people" in the most holy place (ix. 7). The "somewhat to offer" which Christ has is somewhat which He offers in the sanctuary on high. (*A. B. Davidson, LL.D.*)

Ver. 3. **If He were on earth, He should not be a priest.**—*Jesus' limitations, His power and glory*:—The fact which the writer of the Epistle here cites, bears witness to the truth that there will be earthly aspects of limitation to the character of Christ, and tells us how they are to be looked at, so as to lead to His ultimate elevation. Jesus is always falling short of men's ideal. There arose the ideal of the ascetic: that was the holiest, the best, the noblest life, to men's minds; and that man whose life was open to all the influences of His fellow-men, that man who was reproached by the malicious distortions of enemies as a glutton and winebibber, could no more fit that character than He could that of the sacrificing priest of the ancient temple. The time of chivalry and of crusades exalted the warrior; and He who sent forth His disciples without sword, and healed the ear of Malchus, was no figure to vie with the bold knights in their valorous reputations, any more than the plain garments of the humble Galilean could shine beside the imposing vestments of Jewish priests. Or, come down to modern days, and take the standards of any class in life to-day. The scientific thinker asks for facts, for analysis, for knowledge of the structure of earth and heaven: and those beautiful parables and wonderful miracles enter into no such details; and Jesus in a scientific assembly to-day would be as completely out of place as He would have been beside the high priest in the holy of holies. And the business, the commercial, ideal of life, does not look for its leader to Him who said, "Lend, hoping for nothing again," and "Take no thought for the morrow," any more than priest and Levite consulted Christ as to the best mode of offering sacrifices. Politics and society would find it equally impossible to discover their ideal in Him who originated no new system of Government, and associated always with the lowly. The words of Isaiah's prophecy have a real meaning: "And when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him." All this causes difficulty. We need not inveigh against the earnestness of pursuits which have erected such ideals, any more than this writer found it necessary to heap reproaches on the Jewish system of priest-

hood because it found no place for Christ within it. Would Jesus lead the life of the modern clergyman to-day? is the taunt which, from the outsider, may be thrown at the preaching of His gospel. Better than to answer it by asking whether He would find it possible to lead the life of the modern merchant, or statesman, or scholar, better is it for all of us to recognise that He would lead the life of no one of us. No forms or modes of action, which we find it necessary to observe, could hold the power of Divine life, any more than the life of an ordinary Jewish priest, God-ordained as he was, could be the measure of the life of the Saviour of the world. And as we say that, we reach the ground of the solution which is given to this difficulty. Jesus was not a priest of the old covenant, because He was the Mediator of a new and better covenant, He was not a priest in descent from Aaron, because He was a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. The limitations of Jesus are His glory; the fact that He does not claim any of these ideals of earthly greatness is because He sets up a greater ideal, to which they all belong. We can find an illustration in our common life. A king steps down among his people; he mingles with them, and sees them at their work. And there is not one of those workmen that cannot do something better than he can. If they should bring their difficulties of work to him, he could not answer one of them; he fulfils the ideal of no one of their positions. And yet all those interests are his, and are strong and healthy through his power and character. His kingly character remains untouched by the superiority of any one of those who are eminent in their departments, and the carelessness and scorn of some man who thinks a man no king who does not know his secrets, never moves his mien of royal dignity. The lifting-up of every one of those subjects to the higher conception of the nation over which he rules, is a work truly his, as no mechanical knowledge or minute practice can ever be. Such was Christ's position as king; and so He stands far above, though never apart from, every standard of human attainment. He helps every one of them, as He brings them all into connection with the very centre of life. He set forth for ever the truth, that the life of the lower is to be found in the higher. Low and compromised mortal life comes from narrow views; from fixing our minds on some immediate object, and making that the measure of all our existence. He who sees such an object only as a part of something greater is the man who will cease sacrificing nobleness of character and purity of life, which are treasures that will last to eternity, for ends that must be limited and transient. Is not that precisely the kind of assistance which we need? We men must be priests in our own temples, and we are made to aspire to the highest places in the region of life where God has placed us. That earnestness, as it limits our sight, may be destroying our character and hope of eternal life. We plead as an excuse that we are doing our best, and cannot be expected to see the full Divine meaning of all our work. But when that is showed to us, when, through such a life as that of Jesus, we see that our little pursuit is not the end of our being, then with that revelation goodness stands forth as a real power in life, and we hold to it in spite of every sacrifice for which it may call, in the name and spirit of Him who has thus consecrated it for us. Our pursuit shall still be vigorous and successful; but, by connection with Him, character, too, shall be purified and elevated by it. That is one advantage of Christ's position outside of our special pursuits. We find another in the way in which it draws us all together. He is for all, because no special pursuit causes Him to belong specially to any. Is not the way that Christian worship calls us together, men, women, and children, without distinction, a part of Christ's greatest blessing in telling us of our manhood which is beneath all our pursuits and greater than them all? We all come from our different pursuits; but it is the same tale of mingled joy and sorrow, success and discouragement, struggle and triumph, sin and holiness, which we bring. It is the same word of love, forgiveness, hope, and strength that we want to hear. The bands of life are strengthened in the presence of Him who belongs to us all. We feel the influence in deepened friendship, widened sympathy, enriched family feeling. It will be harder for our variety of pursuits to separate us when in truth we recognise our relation to Him who is the common Lord and Saviour of us all. (*Arthur Brooks.*)

Ver. 5. **According to the pattern shewed to thee.**—*Plan and pattern and purpose:*—Moses, when he went down from God on Sinai, knew what he was going to build, and how he was going to build it. The thought of a thing, the conception of it, is its first and largest half. It is easier to pour in the molten iron than to make in the sand the mould into which it is to be poured. I want, first, to

say something generally about plan and pattern and purpose. As I look through Scripture I discover that the men who did the best work and the most of it first wrought out in thought what they were afterwards going to work out in act and word. The Creator Himself wrought out first His creative designs. In that sense the world is as old as God. When at the end of the first week He said "All very good," He meant that things had now become in fact what they had first and for ever been in idea. Nothing, perhaps, comes nearer God's workmanship in this respect than art; hence our habit of speaking of the *creations* of art. The modern architect, like the one on Sinai, sees the building he is going to construct before the timber has been cut or the ground broken. Gerard von Rile, six hundred years ago, saw the cathedral which has just been completed at Cologne. Slowly since the year 1200, German artisans have been copying into stone Von Rile's thought, working from his plan, and the cathedral is perfect to-day because it was perfect then. All that God does is in prosecution of a plan, an eternal idea come to utterance. The tree ripens to the grade of a purpose that was ripe before the tree, and before the third day. It is all one whether we say that the plan is deposited in the seed, or that God builds the plant each moment against the pattern of His thought, as the mason lays bricks close to the plumb-line. It all sums up into the same result. With such examples of pattern and purpose before us, I want to go on and say that there are at least three advantages that come from having a plan in our life and work, and working and living from that plan. 1. One is, that in an open field and with a long prospect our purposes will lay themselves out in a larger and wiser proportion than when framed at close quarters and at the dictation of momentary impulse. The captain brings his ship to Liverpool in less time by having the whole course settled at the outset than by settling a little of it every day. A man's longest purposes will be his best purposes. Immediate results are meagre results. The men who are doing most for their own day are such as are working toward an aim that is a score or a century of years away. In the days of American slavery the poor fugitive reached liberty by walking towards the stars. 2. Not only shall we think wiser and grander purposes when we mature them in advance; there is also a solidifying and invigorating power in a long purpose clearly defined. You can generally tell from a man's gait whether he has a purpose. Plan intensifies. Pursuance of a purpose makes our life solid and consecutive. Plan concentrates energies as a burning-glass does sunbeams. We cannot do to-morrow's work to-day, but we can have to-day's work shaped and buttressed by what we are intending to do to-morrow. In a life which has meaning in it, past and future sustain each other. 3. Then, in the next place, knowing with definiteness what we are attempting to do is a moral safeguard. Purposelessness is the fruitful mother of crime. When men live only in conference with circumstances lying next them, they lose their bearings. A drifting boat always drifts down-stream. Young aimlessness is the seminary of old iniquity. Out of 904 convicts received at the Michigan State prison in the three years ending 1880, 822 (91 per cent.) were unskilled labourers—had never been taught how to work. Such facts challenge the attention of the Church as well as of the political economists. Character, purpose, and apprenticeship will never get far apart from each other, whether among immigrants or native population. But Moses not only approached his work with a purpose and a pattern, but brought down his pattern from on high. This teaches that there are celestial ways of doing earthly things, and that human success consists in getting into the secrecies of God's mind and working in the direction of His method. Human success is a quotation from overhead. Men are enriched with presentiments of the way God would work if placed in our stead. These presentiments we call ideals. We discover, not invent, them. "In the mount" we reach after them and ascend to them. They are a continuous firmament that overarches us, but a clouded firmament that yields itself to us only in broken hints. (*C. H. Parkhurst, D.D.*) *Character-building according to pattern*:—All of us are builders—builders for time and for eternity. The building of the sacred edifice of character, which is to be a holy temple for God to dwell in; the raising of the stately structure of a life-work which shall be enduring as the years of God; the laying of secure foundations for that heavenly home in which we all hope to dwell—these are the high and heaven-appointed employments of our earthly years. I. THE DIVINE PATTERN IS GIVEN TO US ALL. Not blindly nor ignorantly do we pursue our life vocation. Up into the mount of privilege God calls each of us, and there reveals the heavenly pattern of our life-work. The yearning of all true hearts to hear the voice of God and to know His thought and will concerning us is fully met in these Divine

revealings. What are these holy heights where God reveals to you the heavenly plan according to which you are to build? 1. The mount of Divine illumination, where conscience sits enthroned, and utters her authoritative voice as she summons you to her tribunal. That voice of warning and restraint, of persuasion and guidance, is often heard above the Babel of earthly voices that press their urgent pleas. That voice, sanctioning the right, condemning the wrong, is God's own call to a life of fidelity to Him. 2. There is also the mount of Divine revelation through the inspired word. In the pages of Homer and Virgil, of Shakespeare and Milton, you are invited to the mount of communion with these illustrious men. Great, indeed, is that privilege. You live in their immediate presence; you breathe the atmosphere which surrounded them; you listen to their voices; you think their thoughts, and learn the priceless lessons garnered from their lives. In the Bible you are permitted to commune with the eternal God, to hear His voice as certainly as Moses heard it on the quaking mount. And here God reveals to each of us His own plan for all our earthly building and work. The plan revealed is set before us with sufficient distinctness, completeness, and fulness of detail. It is given to us not only in doctrine and in precept, but it is clearly illustrated in the histories and biographies with which the sacred book abound, and which, as their subjects follow or disregard the Divine direction, always secure or miss life's highest good; and thus, in a peculiar sense, they serve as "guides" or "guards" to us who are favoured with the inspired record of their successes and failures. 3. But in a pre-eminent sense is the pattern revealed to us on the mount of Divine manifestation. Moses saw only in vision the plan of the tabernacle which he was to build, but we, more privileged than was he, are permitted to behold the glorious pattern which we are to follow, clothed in concrete and tangible form, taking on our own humanity, standing before our ravished eyes incarnated in the person of Jesus Christ. Looking at this incarnation of truth, purity, duty, sacrifice, and love, we hear the heavenly voice calling to us, "See that thou make all things according to" this "pattern showed to thee" in this most sacred mount of Divine manifestation. 4. There are also given to us all seasons of special revelation, times when the height to which we are lifted is greater, and earth with its blinding atmosphere seems farther removed—its strife and clamour more faint and ineffectual—while God's voice sounds clearer, and the heavenly vision is brighter. There are times when the soul seems more susceptible of good influences, and the powers of evil relax their grasp, and tender memories steal in upon the mind, and the thoughts of a mother's love, and a father's prayers, and a teacher's counsels, and a Saviour's sympathy, and the Spirit's gentle wooings, hold the entire being for one supreme hour under their hallowing spell. Cherish these favoured seasons. As travellers in mountainous regions, climbing to some high eminence where the glories of the entrancing view ravish the soul, carry the glorious vision with them, through all the future years of life; so take with you these clearest visions of the heavenly pattern, these best thoughts and holiest purposes and lofty ideals, down into the lowest valley of temptation and strife. II. THE DIVINE PATTERN MUST BE FOLLOWED IN ORDER TO A TRUE AND SUCCESSFUL LIFE. 1. Let it be kept in mind that this is God's plan for your life-work—God's ideal life for you. Whether a life-pattern coming to us from such a source is worth our acceptance, whether it can be rejected or neglected without wreck of all worthy hopes, none but a madman can ever pause to question. Once let the thought that God's ideal of your life has been really revealed to you actually possess the mind, with all its legitimate force, and nothing can prevent your yielding to its sway. Henceforth, your life has a significance in it which belongs to nothing merely human; it is a Divine thing; it is God's purpose and God's thought taking on a human form incarnated in you. You think God's thoughts, you utter His words, you crystallize His will into actual deeds; you project into this needy and sinful world of humanity a life that is heaven-planned and heaven-inspired, the copy of a Divine ideal given to you by the Almighty World-Builder. 2. All the lessons from analogy teach us the majesty of Divine law—the penalty of violating, and the profit of obeying, its behests. See everywhere in nature a perfect adjustment of part to complementary part, an adaptation of means to ends. Everything shows purpose and plan. Law reigns; order and harmony are the universal resultants. Attempt to disregard one of the laws which God has ordained, and you pay the penalty. Despise or forget the law of gravitation; step from the roof of a house or the edge of a precipice as though the air were like the solid pavement for your feet, and, quickly dashed to the ground below, your mutilated body attests the foolhardiness of your lawless act. What

have you done but violated God's order—set aside His laws? Can you, then, disregard no single part of His plan, in nature, without peril, and yet expect to set at naught His entire plan for the government of your life with immunity from evil consequences? 3. And this Divine pattern must be followed in its completeness and comprehensiveness, with all its particularity of detail. Three perils lie in ambush, even for those who, with more or less strength of purpose, regard themselves as accepting the revealed plan for their life-building. The first is the peril of accepting it in part, but not in its completeness; the second is that of accepting it theoretically, but rejecting it practically; the third is the peril of accepting it for a time, but abandoning it before the life-work is completed. (*C. H. Payne, D.D.*) *Our hours of vision*:—I. There comes to us all TIMES OF EXCEPTIONAL INSIGHT, of moral elevation, yes, of inspiration, when in a special way our spirits are touched by the spirit of truth and goodness—times when we are, so to speak, upon the mount, and see heavenly things clearly, and a higher pattern of life is shown to us. These hours of vision may be associated with the utmost variety of circumstances giving occasion to them. It may be simply interruption of our ordinary work. We have been going on from day to day in the regular customary routine. Each day has been so filled with its multiplicity of engagements, its interests, its distractions, its pleasures, its annoyances, as to leave little leisure and less inclination for that quiet and serious thought in which we seek to see life steadily, and see it whole. We need to stand a little back from it, as an artist has to do to judge of the effect of the picture he is painting. And sometimes God compels a man to stand aside and look upon his life and his work from a little distance. He takes him apart from the multitude that He may open his ears to voices that cannot be heard amid the bustle of the crowd. In the confinement of his chamber his spirit chafes at first as he thinks of the great tide of men with eager interests which flows every morning citywards and ebbs at evening, and of all the busy life from which he is excluded; by-and-by a change has come over his spirit—the roar of that loud stunning tide sounds faint and far off; his interest in it has become strangely weakened; other visions are opening out before his mind; he is seeing deeper than the surface stir and bustle of life, its ambitions and its rivalries, into the meaning of life itself, its possibilities and its purposes. He is learning to see things in their true proportions, and is waking up to the discovery that he has been exaggerating terribly certain aspects of them. A diviner pattern of life is being shown to him—an ideal higher in its aims, its methods, and its motives; and when he comes back to take up again among men his daily tasks, surely it is with an earnest purpose to make all things according to the nobler pattern that has been shown him. But there are experiences tending towards similar results that enter much more frequently into life than such as that. To all men, and most of all to those who have youth and hope on their side, a period of leisure and recreation and contact with nature is not more a rest than an inspiration, a time of sanguine and earnest forecasting of the future, a time of forming of plans and contemplating ideals, of storing up impulse and stimulus, of girding up the loins of the mind with strenuous self-denying purpose. There are other times—sadder times—which have worked to the same effect: hours, not of elevation, but of deep depression, when we saw things after the pattern of the heavenly. It may have been an hour of stern self-rebuke, of humiliation and shame, when conscience justly scourged and spared not, or when you felt yourself baffled and helpless in the presence of a great perplexity; or the day you came back from standing beside a new-filled grave, and realised that the world was emptier and poorer than it had been a week before. Men looking up from deep places, it is said, see stars at noonday; and sometimes it is when it is sighing its *De Profundis* that the soul catches its vision of God. There are countless hours of vision which we need not stay to classify. We wake up one day to feel as if all our previous knowledge of God had been but hearsay: we feel, "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ears, but now mine eye seeth Thee." Life seems to begin anew from times like that. We have accepted truth upon the authority of others; the time comes when we say, "We see." The entrance of God's Word gives light, and so certifies itself. Our own hold of truth is never satisfactory until we thus see. The man who is to influence others must first himself see heavenly things upon the mount. II. These times of vision leave behind them RESPONSIBILITIES. We cannot command those higher moments—at least not directly—not otherwise than by habitual obedience to the laws of Christ's spiritual kingdom. "To him that hath shall be given." The seeing may be special times; the acting out what

we have seen belongs to our common life. That is the only possible way of keeping the vision clear—of retaining it as our lasting possession. For

> "'Tis the most difficult of tasks to keep
> Heights which the soul is competent to gain."

It is so very easy to be a seer as well as a hearer, and not a doer, to be like the man who beholdeth his natural face in a glass, to whom there comes a bright perception of truth, which reveals him to himself, with all his blots and stains and flaws, and who assents to it, and goeth his way, and forgetteth what manner of man he is. It is possible to do even worse: to use that kind of experience—even visions and revelations of the Lord—for our own self-deception. It is one of the great dangers of what may be called the religious temperament, to care a great deal more about what it can see and feel upon the mount than about faithfulness in commonplace duty on the ordinary levels of life. It is a frequent temptation after we have been touched by admiration for some aspects of duty, and made to thrill at the thought of seeing ourselves doing it—especially if we have been led to speak warmly about it—to indulge in a soft, self-complacent feeling, as if we had really done it or were doing it, although we may not have touched it with one of our fingers. Is not this the difference between the man of mere emotion and the man of principle—between the man of feeling and the man of faith—that the one can be thrilled with high ideals, and can proceed to work them out while the glow is upon him, and continue only so long as the excitement or emotion lasts; while the other, who has hid in his heart that which he has seen, will toil on steadily along the dull, flat levels, keeping to the path of duty when the brightness has faded from the sky? It is a great thing, an unspeakable privilege, to have so seen the beauty of the Lord that our heart and conscience have said to Jesus, "My Lord and my God"; and yet it is His word, "Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord! shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven"—not he that seeth and even prophesieth in My name, but he that maketh his life according to the pattern that hath been showed to him. (*A. O. Johnston, M.A.*)

The pattern in the mount:—As the old Tabernacle, before it was built, existed in the mind of God, so all the unborn things of life, the things which are to make the future, are already living in their perfect ideas in Him, and when the future comes, its task will be to match those Divine ideas with their material realities, to translate into the visible and tangible shapes of terrestrial life the facts which already have existence in the perfect mind. Surely in the very statement of such a thought of life there is something which ennobles and dignifies our living. A child is born into the world this morning. Its lessons are unlearned, its tasks untried, its discoveries unmade, its loves unloved, its growth entirely ungrown, as the little new-born problem lies unsolved on this the first day of its life. Is that all? Is there nowhere in the universe any picture of what that child's life ought to be, and may be? Surely there is. If God is that child's Father, then in the Father's mind, in God's mind, there must surely be a picture of what that child with his peculiar faculties and nature may become in the completeness of his life. Years hence, when that baby of to-day has grown to be the man of forty, the real question of his life will be, what? Not the questions which his fellow-citizens of that remote day will be asking, What reputation has he won? What money has he earned? Not even, What learning has he gained? But, How far has he been able to translate into the visible and tangible realities of a life that idea which was in God's mind on that day in the old year when he was born? How does the tabernacle which he has built correspond with the pattern which is in the mount? All this is true not merely of a whole life as a whole, but of each single act or enterprise of life. We have not thought richly or deeply enough about any undertaking unless we have thought of it as an attempt to put into the form of action that which already has existence in the idea of God. You start upon your profession, and your professional career in its perfect conception shines already in God's sight. You set yourself down to some hard struggle with temptation, and already in the fields of God's knowledge you are walking as possible victor, clothed in white and with the crown of victory upon your head. You build your house, and found your home. It is an attempt to realise the picture of purity, domestic peace, mutual inspiration and mutual comfort, which God sees already. The distinction between ideas and forms is one which all men need to know, which many men so often seem to miss. The idea takes shape in the form, the form expresses the idea. The form, without

the idea behind it, is thin and hard. The form, continually conscious of its idea, becomes rich, deep, and elastic. If all that I have said be true, then it would seem as if there ought to be in the world three kinds of men—the men of forms; the men of limited ideals, or of ideals which are not the highest; and the men of unlimited ideals, or the highest ideals, which are the ideals of God. And three such kinds of men there are, very distinct and easy of discovery. First, there are the men of forms, the men who, in all their self-questionings about what they ought to do, and in all their judgments about what they have done, never get beyond the purely formal standards which proceed either from the necessity of their conditions or from the accepted precedents of other people. They never get into the regions of ideas at all. How many such men there are! To them the question of their business life never comes up so high as to mean, "What is the best and loftiest way in which it is possible for this business of mine to be done?" It never gets higher than to mean, "How can I best support myself by my business?" or else, "What are the ways and rules of business which are most accepted in the business world?" To such men the question of religion never becomes: "What are the intrinsic and eternal relations between the Father God and man the child?" but only, "By what religious observances can a man get into heaven?" or else, "What is the most current religion of my fellow-men?" It would be sad, indeed, to think that there is any man here to-day who has not at least sometimes in his life got a glimpse into a richer and fuller and more interesting sort of life than this. There is a second sort of man who does distinctly ask himself whether his deed is what it ought to be. He is not satisfied with asking whether it works its visible result or not, whether other men praise it or not. There is another question still, Does it conform to what he knew before he undertook it that it ought to be? If it does not, however it may seem successful, however men may praise it, the doer of the deed turns off from it in discontent. If it does, no matter how it seems to fail, no matter how men blame it, he thanks God for it and is glad. Here is a true idealism; here is a man with an unseen pattern and standard for his work. He lives a loftier, and likewise a more unquiet life. He goes his way with his vision before his eyes. "I know something of what this piece of work ought to have been," he says, "therefore I cannot be satisfied with it as it is." What is the defect of such an idealism as that? It is, that as yet the idea comes only from the man's own self. Therefore, although it lies farther back than the mere form, it does not lie entirely at the back of everything. It is not final; it shares the incompleteness of the man from whom it springs. Therefore it is that something more is needed, and that only the third man's life is wholly satisfactory. Literally and truly he believes that the life he is to live, the act he is to do, lies now, a true reality, already existent and present, in the mind of God; and his object, his privilege, is not simply to see how he can live his life in the way which will look best or produce the most brilliant visible result, not simply to see how he can best carry out his own personal idea of what is highest and best, but how he can most truly reproduce on earth that image of this special life or action which is in the perfect mind. This is the way in which he is to make all things according to the pattern which is in the mount. What quiet independence, what healthy humility, what confident hope there must be in this man who thus goes up to God to get the pattern of his living. To-morrow morning to that man there comes a great overwhelming sorrow. What shall he do, what shall he be in this new terrible life, terrible not least because of its awful newness, which has burst upon him? Where shall he find the pattern for his new necessity? Of course he may look about and copy the forms with which the world at large greets and denotes its sorrow, the decent dreadful conventionalities of grief. That does not satisfy him. The world acknowledges that he has borne his grief most properly, but he is not satisfied. Then, behind all that, he may reason it over with himself, think out what death means, make his philosophy, decide how a man ought to behave in the terrible shipwreck of his hopes. That is a better thing by all means than the other. But this man does something more. The pattern of his new life is not in the world. It is not in himself. It is in God. To get up, then, into God, and find that image of his grieved and sorrowing life, and then come back and shape his life after it patiently and cheerfully, that is the struggle of the Christian idealist in his sorrow, of the man who tries to make all things according to the pattern which is in the mount. Can we not see what quiet independence, what healthy humility, what confident hope there must be in that man's struggle to live out through his sorrow the new life which his sorrow has made possible? But now it is quite time for us to ask another question. Suppose

that all which we have said is true; suppose that there is such a pattern of the truest life, and of each truest act of every man lying in God's mind, how shall the man know what that pattern is? Is not Christ the mountain up into which the believer goes, and in which he finds the Divine ideal of himself? As a mountain seems to be the meeting-place of earth and heaven, the place where the bending skies meet the aspiring planet, the place where the sunshine and the cloud keep closest company with the granite and the grass: so Christ is the meeting-place of divinity and humanity; He is at once the condescension of divinity and the exaltation of humanity; and man wanting to know God's idea of man, any man wanting to know God's idea of him, must go up into Christ, and he will find it there. All kinds of men have found their ideals in Jesus. Entering into Him, the timid soul has seen a vision of itself all clothed in bravery, and known in an instant that to be brave and not to be cowardly was its proper life. The missionary toiling in the savage island, and thinking his whole life a failure, has gone apart some night into his hut and climbed up into Christ, and seen with perfect sureness, though with most complete amazement, that God counted his life a great success, and so has gone out once more singing to his glorious work. Martyrs on the night before their agony; reformers hesitating at their tasks; scholars wondering whether the long self-denial would be worth their while; fathers and mothers, teachers and preachers whose work had grown monotonous and wearisome, all of these going to Christ have found themselves in Him, have seen the nobleness and privilege of their hard lives, and have come out from their communion with Him to live their lives as they had seen those lives in Him, glorious with the perpetual sense of the privilege of duty, and worthy of the best and most faithful work which they could give. This, then, is the great truth of Christ. The treasury of life, your life and mine, the life of every man and every woman, however different they are from one another, they are all in Him. In Him there is the perfectness of every occupation: the perfect trading, the perfect housekeeping, the perfect handicraft, the perfect school teaching, they are all in Him. To go to Him and get the perfect idea of life, and of every action of life, and then to go forth, and by His strength fulfil it, that is the New Testament conception of a strong successful life. How simple and glorious it is! We are like Moses, then—only our privilege is so much more than his. We are like a Moses who at any moment, whenever the building of the tabernacle flagged and hesitated, was able to turn and go up into the mountain and look once more the pattern in the face, and come down strong, ambitious for the best, and full of hope. (*Bp. Phillips Brooks.*) *Heavenly visions*:—As we read the story with which this passage has to deal, we feel how great are the tasks which are committed to great souls. None but a great soul could have moulded a horde of slaves into a nation, could have inspired them with national ideals, or could have kept the ideal of their future clear and bright before his own soul. Never was heavier task committed to man; and broad must have been the heart and constant the fidelity which sustained the load through the greater part of a hundred years. Great tasks like these are either easy or impossible—easy, while the doer is sustained by the inspiration which pricked and goaded his heart to perform it; impossible, when he labours in his native strength, or leans for support upon anything short of the Eternal. The Divine power which called Moses to this work, and which originated in him the genius to conceive it, must sustain him in every turn and juncture of its execution. All great ideas like his widen and expand with the expanding visions of the growing soul. The grand outlines of such a vision, indeed, come to the soul in a flash of inspiration, but the details are filled in as the soul broods over the great revelation. Hence the world's great teachers, its prophets and seers, have been ever given to solitude, to self-communion, and to prayer, that in silence they might hear that Voice which speaks only to the listening ear. "On a certain day," says Plato, in one of his deepest books, "all the gods mount to the topmost heaven, and gaze upon the realms of pure truth, and all noble souls that can do so follow in their train and gaze upon the fair outlook; then they sink to earth, and all the worthiest part of their lives thenceforward is but the endeavour to reproduce what they have seen: their highest moral achievements are wrought by the power of remembered truth." This wonderful passage is an intuition of one of the foundational truths of our highest life, and one of the greatest truths of revelation. Once or twice only does Moses gain an insight into the "life of things," and then only when his eyes are purged of their grossness; but these rare occasions are sufficient to inspire him, and his noblest work is wrought out in obedience to his vision. As he moved about the camp, or when consulted by cap-

tains and artificers as to the manner of their labour, daily he would hear the Divine imperative admonishing him to shape it thus and thus; to remember what he had seen; to make his vision take actual shape in gold, or precious stones, or carved work. For him, too, there would be shining the "seven lamps of architecture"—the lamp of sacrifice and the lamp of truth, of power, beauty, life, and obedience, and, not the least, the lamp of memory. Great tasks, we say, are committed to great souls; but is it not true that great tasks are committed to us also, whether we be small or great? Is not the shaping of our scattered and sundered life into a habitation for God to dwell in a task as sacred and as imperative as that which was committed to Moses? And do we not see that the first thing which we need for this work is that which Moses had—a great ideal? Do we not know by experience what a difference there is between living and working with such a pattern and without one? There are no Mount Sinais now, we say, scaling which we might gain such a vision as Moses had to equip him for his work. We have no Mount Sinai, but there still stands Mount Calvary, from which a brighter glory streams and a rarer loveliness, and from which, too, a Voice still reaches us, saying: "See that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount." That utterly surrendered life gives us indeed the pattern which we need, the ideal to which our own life should be conformed. We know how flawless it was, and how significant; how He did those things which He had seen with His Father. This was the secret of the perfect unity of His life, of His patience, dignity, and peace. Shall we not confess, then, that we, too, have received our heavenly vision? We have, indeed, confessed it to be most beautiful and Divine, but we have allowed it to fade from our memory. Yes, and the finer our sensibility and the quicker our imagination, the greater will be the temptation to allow it to fade out into mist, for all strong emotion avenges itself by exhaustion. Thus Moses, before he had well reached the camp, descending the rugged slopes of Sinai, half-blinded by the splendours he had gazed upon, dashed down in anger the tables of stone written by the finger of God. So a man may cast away in sorrowful anger the very records which he has received with fear and trembling. Sometimes in anger and sometimes in disgust, when surrounded by a herd of howling idolaters who do not enter into his thought, or through indolence, or the pressure of sordid care, a man is tempted to let his vision go, and account it but as such stuff as dreams are made of. It is a temptation especially besetting men who work in the things of the imagination and the things of the Spirit. Many men lower their ideal—as they will tell you frankly—for the sake of their wives and children. How bitter it will be hereafter if these same children grow up to be sweet, and pure, and unworldly, and despise the crooked means which have been employed for their elevation, and to be filled with sad pity for the founder of their fortune, who, like Lot, chose the well-watered country, and for the sake of it disowned every noble ambition! Thus, are we severally tempted to disobey the admonishing Voice which bids us make all things according to the pattern which has been revealed to us. But who will be left to rear God's tabernacle if they fail who have had vision of its ideal beauty and hope of its foundation among men? It is in such an hour of temptation that we need to renew the old impressions, to revive the faded tints of the picture, and to trace the lost meaning of the vanishing lines of the pattern of heavenly things, once so clear to us. And do we ask, How can our lost impressions be renewed? Then the story before us supplies us with the suggestion. "And the Lord said unto Moses, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first, and I will write upon these tables the words that were in the first tables which thou breakest." Yes; He who first gave us the great conception of noble life can renew it when it fades away if with all our hearts we truly seek Him; it may not be with all the early glow of our first inspiration, nor with such glad announcements of its coming to our bosoms: but what we gain the second time more painfully may be cherished more religiously, watched over more prayerfully, and kept with diligence even to the end. (*G. Littlemore.*) *The pattern in the mount:*—I shall consider, in the first place, the fact that all men have ideals—have some kind of spiritual conceptions; and in the second place, I shall urge the results of consistent action upon those conceptions. I. Consider, for a moment, and you will see that this is the great characteristic of the man—THAT HE IS THE CONSTRUCTOR OF THINGS FASHIONED AFTER AN INWARD IDEAL OR PATTERN, and thus he transforms the outward world according to his mental and spiritual conceptions. Here, on one part, stands vast, unshapen matter—rock, wood, stream, fluent air: on the other part is the human agent who is to work upon this world of matter. You may say that the beaver or the bee works upon matter. The one

proceeds with the utmost accuracy to build its nest, and the other to construct its dam; but there is a point at which each of them stops. They do not go a jot beyond the line of instinct; they do nothing more wonderful, nothing different from what has been done for six thousand years. But see, out of this same world of matter, man makes houses, weapons, ships, printing presses, steam engines, and telegraphs. He makes implements, and produces combinations that did not exist in nature, but that stood first as shadows on the horizon of his own thought—patterns that were shown him in the mount of intellectual and spiritual elevation. But if this power which man has of working from inward conceptions is expressed in the ways in which he pours his thought into matter, it is still more apparent in the ways in which his thought, so to speak, overrides matter—as he appears not merely in inventions, but in creations. The work of art, for instance—the great work of genius—whence comes that? Something that you do not see in nature, something that can not be interpreted as a mere combination of matter—a mere putting together of the elements of the physical world; but something that has flowed out of the ideal springs of a man's own soul, until we have the splendours of the sunset sky woven in the fibres of the canvas, and the stones of the quarry heaved up in an architectural anthem of grandeur and aspiration. But the main conclusion to which I would lead your thought is this: that almost every man has conceptions higher and better than he realises, or than he even endeavours to make real. Before every man there hovers a high conception—or one more or less high—certainly above the level of his present conduct—of virtue, of moral action, of duty, of righteousness, of truth; and the more he looks at that, the more vivid it becomes to him. Although he may, at the same time, not move a jot or a hair toward it, nor even endeavour, for a single instant, to come up to it, yet it stands before him, and he sees it clear and bright, kindling upon his thought, and ready to move his heart. And you see this fact revealed in this remarkable manner by every man. If he does ever so bad an act, he tries to justify it in some way—tries to reconcile it to some ideal of virtue. So that from his own showing, his own confession, there is an ideal standard in his mind higher than that from which he has acted. What better advice, then, could be given to any man than just this? Work out your highest conceptions—the noblest standard of truth and duty that comes to you. It may not be the highest possible, nor the highest conceivable by other men, but that which seems to you the highest possible or conceivable, work up to, and live up to, and endeavour to make it the rule. And so especially it is in regard to the matter of faith about which many are much troubled and perplexed. They say they cannot believe that the Bible is divinely inspired; they are not fully convinced about the immortality of the soul, and they even sometimes incline to doubt the existence of a God. What then are you to do, my fellow-men? To throw aside all faith and live outside of its circle, merely as an animal, in a coarse, material existence? No—no; some shred of faith you have. Every man has some. Some conceptions of spiritual things dawn upon every mind; live up to the faith you have. Have you a faith that it is good to do good? Live up to that. Have you a faith that charity is a blessed thing? Live up to that. Work out to the extreme limit of your conception here, and just so sure as you do it, the wider will your circle open before you. II. In the next place, let us proceed to see WHAT WILL RESULT IF A MAN ACTUALLY ATTEMPTS THUS TO WORK UP TO HIS HIGHEST AND BEST SPIRITUAL CONCEPTIONS. In the first place, I think he will acquire some comprehension of the worth and certainty of spiritual being, and of the reality of his own soul. Let a man think, when he endeavours to carry out the best conception of duty, how much that is all-controlling and supreme in his life, let him think that the highest claim in his life is from within; let him think how mind will after all control and master the body. The moment you think of this power to control and master material things, you fall back upon the consciousness that you have a soul, and that there is more evidence than you have supposed of its existence. In fact, there is more proof of a soul than of a body. When a man asks me what proof I have of a soul, I reply by asking him, What proof have you of a body? You have more logical difficulty to prove an outward world than a soul. Spiritual consciousness, mounting aspiration, ideal influences have controlled you all through life. But more than this; not only will a man, as he begins to work from his best spiritual conceptions upward, begin to comprehend the worth of spiritual things and of the soul, but he will begin to acquire right standards of action. I hardly need say that in the calculations of men, very generally they do not start from the ground of the soul. If you look at a great many of the social fallacies of our time, at a great many of the social faults and

errors of men in business, in politics, and in life generally, you will find that the fallacy or error consists in the fact that they do not start from the ground of the soul as a standard, but from outward things. They estimate all outward things by their bulk or glitter. Let a man take up the subject of immortality—of the spirit of man enshrined in time, and working through sense, as destined to live beyond the stars, when banks and warehouses, cities and continents, shall have melted with fervent heat, and crumbled to ashes; when this world shall be dashed from its orbit as a speck of dust from a flying wheel—let him take the grand calculus of the immortality of the soul, and start with that, and then worldly good and gain will take their proper attitude, temporary expediency will sink down, and right will assert its proper place; then he will have a true standard by which to estimate all things. In the next place, if a man really endeavours to work according to his highest and best inward conception, he will come to perceive the need of Christ and the worth of Christianity. Working from his best and highest, he gains a better and a higher still, until at length he will come to feel that spiritual aspirations are boundless. And when, from the yearnings of his educated soul, he wants a perfect ideal, he will ask, Where is the excellence that will answer my highest ideal? where is that which will begin to fill up this boundless thirst of the soul, which has only been increased by drinking from narrow cisterns? And Jesus Christ comes out upon the horizon of history, and stands before him in the gospel, and answers that inquiry. He says virtually to man, "I am the ideal for which you aspire; in Me behold a perfect reflection of that which you now must seek; in Me behold that which continually fills up your yearning want, and makes that want the deeper, that it may fill it with more." Here stands man on one side, with a sense of imperfection and sin, asking, What is there that will help me in, what is there that will deliver me from the power of sin? No mere man, no mere teacher, like Plato or Seneca, can do it. Man needs some spirit of Divine goodness to enter into him, to cure him of his sin, and Jesus Christ embodies that Divine spirit. He comes before man to assure him of mercy, with the encouragement that the vilest sin may be cast off, and that man may throw himself upon the Divine mercy which He represents, and be lightened of his load. And here, on the other hand, are limitless wants and desires; and how does Jesus Christ gratify them? By exhibiting a perfect Father; by showing an ideal to us that we never can compass, but can always aspire to. (*E. H. Chapin, D.D.*) *Of the right manner of doing duty*:—1. The same Lord who enjoins the matter, prescribes the manner. 2. As great respect is manifested to God in the manner of doing what He requires, as in matter. In this was David commended (2 Kings iii. 6). This was it that Hezekiah pleaded before God (2 Kings xx. 3). 3. Herein lieth a main difference between the upright and the hypocrite, instance the difference between Abel's and Cain's offering (Gen. iv. 4, 5). 4. That which is good is altered and perverted by failing in the manner. Good is thereby turned into evil, and duty into sin. 5. Failing in the manner makes God reject that which in the matter He requireth (Isa. i. 11). 6. God detests things commanded by Himself when they are done in an ill manner (Isa. lxvi. 3). 7. In this case he that doth the work of the Lord is accursed (Jer. xlviii. 10). 1. This giveth just cause of examining ourselves even about the good things that we do. This use is the rather to be observed because every one best knoweth his own failings in the manner of what he doth (1 Cor. ii. 11). 2. Upon due examination we cannot but be deeply humbled ever for our failings in the manner of doing good things. The glory of our reading, hearing, praying, singing, partaking of the sacrament, alms-deeds, and other duties, is hereby taken away, which if profane men knew, they would insult over professors. 3. This giveth just occasion of abnegation, and of renouncing all confidence even in our best works, for we must fail therein (1 Sam. iii. 2). Did justiciaries well understand this, it would make them cast down their gay peacock's feathers. They would not be so conceited of themselves, as the proud Pharisee, but rather as the humble publican (Luke xviii. 11–13). There is nothing of such force to work in us this lesson of denying ourselves as a consideration of the manner of doing the good things we do. This consideration would soon put an end to all conceits of fulfilling the law, of meriting, of doing works of supererogation, and sundry other proud apprehensions. 4. Upon the aforesaid ground be exhorted to learn as well as to do, what we enterprise, as what we do. God loves adverbs. We were as good be ignorant of the duty itself as of the manner of performing it. To know what ought to be done, and not to know how it ought to be done, will be a great aggravation of sin. 5. For well-doing that which is good observe these few rules;—(1) Exercise thyself in God's Word, diligently read it,

hear it, and meditate upon it. This is an excellent help, and the best that I can prescribe. For God's Word doth expressly and distinctly declare both what is to be done and how it is to be done (Psa. cxix. 105). (2) Think on duty beforehand, and endeavour to prepare thyself thereto. Sudden, rash, unprepared enterprising a sacred duty is one occasion of failing in the manner of doing it (Eccles. v. 2). (3) Consider with whom thou hast to do in all things; even with Him who is the searcher of the heart. This will make thee circumspect in every circumstance. Conceits that we have to do with man alone, make us look only to the outward duty (2 Cor. ii. 17). (4) In penitent confessions, acknowledge thy failing in the manner of doing duty. (5) Pray for ability even about the manner of doing duty (2 Cor. iii. 5). The work of the Spirit is herein specially manifested; we know not what we should pray for as we ought. But none can do good in a right manner except the regenerating Spirit be in him and help him. 6. For comfort in this case we must have our eye upon our Surety in whom was no failing at all (Heb. vi. 26). (*W. Gouge.*)

Ver. 6. **Mediator of a better covenant.**—*The covenant of grace opened and explained:*—I. THE GOSPEL-DISPENSATION UNDER WHICH WE LIVE IS PROPERLY A COVENANT. 1. What we are to understand by a covenant in general. 2. What by the covenant of grace in particular. 3. Illustrate two or three particular points which have created some doubts and difficulties in this subject. 4. Consider some of the peculiar titles and distinguishing properties of this covenant. II. JESUS CHRIST IS THE MEDIATOR OF THIS COVENANT. 1. The proper office of a mediator. 2. Christ's peculiar qualification for this high office of Mediator between God and man. 3. His accomplishment of it. 4. How admirably this constitution is founded in the Divine grace and wisdom. 5. What regards are due to Christ under this character of Mediator. (1) Does He not deserve and most justly claim all our love, our superlative and most ardent esteem? (2) What exalted honour, adoration, and praise are due from us to Him, who was so wonderfully qualified for this high office by the hypostatical or personal union of the Divine and human natures. (3) As Mediator of the new covenant, let us readily trust Him with all our spiritual and everlasting interests. (4) As our Mediator, we are humbly to seek to Him for that grace, which must make us meet for His salvation; for His awakening grace, to make us more sensible of our guilt and need of Him; for His quickening grace, to encourage, direct, and strengthen us in the way to eternal life. (5) As our Mediator, we are to perform every part of religious worship in His name. He is our way to the Father. III. THE GOSPEL DISPENSATION IS A BETTER COVENANT THAN THAT UNDER WHICH THE JEWS LIVED. 1. Because it contains better terms. Repentance, faith, and sincere obedience are called the terms of the covenant, not only because they are the requisites on which the promised blessings of the covenant are suspended, but because they are of themselves essentially necessary to qualify us to partake of them. 2. Because it affords better helps or assistances. (1) The method of worship under the gospel is more easy, rational, and spiritual. (2) The revelation we enjoy is more plain, full, and extensive. (3) The Divine aids offered to us are more particular, ample, and effectual. 3. Because it is founded on better promises. (1) Because they are the promises of better things; or the subjects of them are more excellent, sublime, and glorious. (2) The promises of the gospel are more plain, clear, and explicit than those of the legal covenant. (3) The promises of the gospel are not only more clear, but more numerous and extensive than those of the Jewish dispensation. (4) Another thing which gives the pre-eminence to the promises of our covenant, is that they are all ratified and confirmed to us in Christ, the Mediator of it. (*John Mason, M.A.*) *The excellency of the Christian dispensation:*—I. The Christian dispensation, or the New Testament, though it be a rich discovery of grace, YET IT CONTAINS THE FAIREST AND FULLEST REPRESENTATION OF THE MORAL LAW. That law, which is of eternal obligation upon all mankind, is more particularly explained here than in any of the former dispensations. II. In the Christian dispensation THE GOSPEL OR COVENANT OF GRACE IS REVEALED MORE PERFECTLY AND PLAINLY THAN EVER BEFORE; not in obscure expressions, in types, and carnal metaphors, but in its own proper form and language, *i.e.*, as a covenant relating to things spiritual and eternal. III. THE RITES AND CEREMONIES which are superadded to the covenant of grace, in the Christian dispensation of it, ARE MUCH PREFERABLE TO THOSE IN FORMER TIMES, and that in three respects; they are fewer, they are clearer, and they are much more easy. IV. THE SON OF GOD, WHO WAS THE REAL MEDIATOR OF THE COVENANT OF GRACE THROUGH ALL FORMER DISPENSATIONS,

HAS CONDESCENDED TO BECOME THE VISIBLE MEDIATOR OF THIS DISPENSATION. V. THIS DISPENSATION OF THE GOSPEL is not confined to one family, or to one nation, or to a few ages of men, but it SPREADS THROUGH ALL THE NATIONS OF THE EARTH, AND REACHES TO THE END OF TIME. VI. I might add here some OTHER CHARACTERS OF THE CHRISTIAN DISPENSATION, which the apostle gives it in 2 Cor. iii., whereby he exalts it above all the religion of the Jews, and especially far above the Sinai covenant. VII. THE ENCOURAGEMENTS AND PERSUASIVE HELPS WHICH CHRISTIANITY GIVES US TO FULFIL THE DUTIES OF THE COVENANT ARE MUCH SUPERIOR TO THOSE WHICH WERE ENJOYED UNDER ANY OF THE FORMER DISPENSATIONS. Now these consist chiefly in examples and motives. 1. Do examples invite us to our duty, and by a soft and secret influence encourage and lead us on to the performance of it? Such indeed were the names of Abraham and David, each in their day a happy pattern to their several ages; but in my opinion all the praises which are due to David and Abraham fall far short of the labours and sufferings, the zeal and patience, the holiness and the love of St. Paul. And not one of them is to be compared with the more excellent and perfect pattern of Jesus Christ. 2. Let us next consider our various motives to duty under the New Testament. Are the motives of love and gratitude powerful principles to encourage and persuade us to every active service? Such indeed were the blessings and gifts which God bestowed on men under former dispensations. But what were all those gifts and blessings in comparison of the unspeakable gift of His own Son, to die as a sacrifice in our stead, which is one of the chief themes and glories of the Christian revelation? Are the promises and threatenings of God another set of motives to duty? Do the awful glories and terrors of a future and eternal world work upon all the springs of our activity and diligence by hope and fear? Yes, certainly, in a high degree. But the former dispensations had but few of these eternal terrors and glories, these threatenings and promises relating to an invisible state. (*Isaac Watts, D.D.*) *The better covenant*:—I. THE GENERAL NOTION OF A COVENANT OF GOD WITH MAN. By a covenant among men we understand an agreement or compact, by which the parties bind themselves, and each the other, to the fulfilment of certain conditions. Now, when we speak of a covenant of God with men, one important difference is to be observed. In this case there is no natural equality between the parties. God wills, and man must obey. But this revealed mind and purpose of God is called a covenant, because—1. As respects God, He who has no rule of action but His own will is pleased hereby to bind Himself, in His dealings with men, to the observance of certain specified terms. 2. As respects men, they are bound to fulfil the conditions herein prescribed to them, under pain of forfeiting the offered benefits, and incurring the attendant penalties. The covenant under which all men are born, as children of Adam, is that of works. It must be evident to every one, that if he be tried according to the letter of this covenant, there remains no hope for him before God, for he is a transgressor of it from the womb. And thus the Scriptures everywhere testify. We are led then to the inquiry: is there any other covenant or dispensation of God for His creatures, whereby (letting go the first, and laying hold on this) we may have that eternal life and blessedness which we have irrecoverably forfeited by the first? Such a covenant there is. The terms of it are fully made known to us in the gospel of Jesus Christ, the "glad tidings of great joy." II. The particular features of this "BETTER COVENANT, which was established upon better promises." 1. Whereas in the old covenant something is required on the part of man, as a title to its privileges, this contemplates in him nothing but sins and unrighteousness, and lays the basis of all covenant good vouchsafed to him in the sovereign grace of God, a promise as large and unlimited as language can express of the free removal of sins, and that for ever. Herein is summed up all the grace of the covenant, that it supposes guilt of every kind and degree, in the objects of it, and meets them with this cheering assurance, I will be merciful to it, I will remember it no more. But has God, then, deserted His justice, in showing mercy to a sinner, and dishonoured His law by suffering the violation of it with impunity? God forbid! The condition of life under the new covenant is precisely that of the old—perfect obedience. But under the gospel this obedience is rendered for the sinner by his surety, and the life which is its due becomes his, not by working, but by believing. Christ has fulfilled the law for us. Mercy, therefore, to man is the just reward of merit in Christ. 2. Mark another feature, no less distinguishing the gospel as a "ministration of glory." This is the exceeding fulness of its promised blessings (Rom. xv. 29). (1) Divine renewal; (2) Divine relationship; (3) Divine illumination. 3. Its security. The effectual provision which

God has made in it for the sure enjoyment of its rich benefits. 4. Its everlasting continuance. Hence it is expressly called "the everlasting covenant" (Heb. xiii. 20). Lessons: 1. The overwhelming motives afforded us, by this covenant of grace, to walk before God in all holiness and godliness of living. 2. The grievous sin of those who carelessly neglect this covenant of grace, or obstinately refuse to close with it. 3. The abundant encouragement which this covenant holds out to the most guilty and desponding sinner to return to God and be at peace. 4. Lastly, let the established believer recognise in this covenant the charter of all his privileges. Ever rejoice, my Christian brethren, in your entire deliverance from the law of works as a means of obtaining life. Life is yours by free gift, covenant gift of God, through faith in Christ Jesus. Having the Son, you have life. Only abide, then, in Him, your Covenant Head, and walk worthy of your exalted privileges, in all holy and happy obedience. (*Francis Goode, M.A.*) *Christ the Mediator of the better covenant*:—The covenant of grace is, strictly speaking, made between God and Christ; and, in this view, is part of that great covenant of redemption, ordered from eternity between the persons of the Godhead. Man is a party to it only in the second instance, as he is viewed in Christ, coming in for the blessings of it by his surety's fulfilment of its terms. To Him we are indebted for its grace; and through Him alone it has all its efficacy in the experience of redeemed sinners. I. Consider it AS IT BEGAN IN ETERNITY. As there never was a moment in which God was not, so never was there a moment in which this grace to man was not the determinate counsel and object of delight of the Eternal mind. The purpose of redemption was not (as many unworthily think of it) a purpose conceived only when man fell, to remedy a mischief never contemplated till then. "Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world." Rather, the whole mystery of grace in the gospel, yea, creation itself, with all its consequences, is a result of the purpose of God to make, in the person of Christ, the most illustrious display, before all intelligent creatures, of the glories of the Divine nature, by man's redemption. II. AS IT WAS CARRIED ON UPON EARTH. With His incarnation commenced that active ministry of which the apostle is here speaking as "more excellent" than that of Aaron, above which it is one great object of this Epistle to exalt it. The main intention of this earthly ministry of Christ was to make atonement. 1. It was the life of a sinless Being, and so was altogether unforfeited; it was that which He had to give to God, in exchange for His people, who are therefore called "the purchased possession" (Eph. i. 14); the law of God had no claim upon it, except as He voluntarily subjected Himself to its curse for us. 2. While it was human life, it was life taken into union with Deity; and so it was not only of infinite value, but this Priest as well as Victim possessed in Himself infinite ability both to lay it down and to take it again. 3. But let us look at the effect of this atonement which Christ, as our High Priest, made for the sins of men, in reference to the covenant of which we are treating. The blood of Jesus Christ is represented by Himself, and throughout this Epistle, as the ratification of the covenant. III. AS IT IS COMPLETED IN HEAVEN (Heb. vi. 20). 1. His intercession above gives efficacy to His offering of Himself on earth. 2. His mediatorial dominion. He holds the reign of universal empire. Heaven, earth, and hell—all things in all worlds — obey His sovereign will. (*Ibid.*) *Argument from analogy for Mediator*:—The whole analogy of nature removes all imagined presumption against the notion of a "Mediator between God and man." For we find all living creatures are brought into the world, and that life in infancy is preserved, by the instrumentality of others, and every satisfaction of it, some way or other, is bestowed by the like means. (*Bp. Butler.*) *Covenant*:—The general meaning of the word διαθήκη, covenant, is a Divine institution for man; it is not συνθήκη, or compact between two parties. God has the ordering of all, and therefore covenant and dispensation are really the same. (*W. B. Pope, D.D.*) **Established upon better promises.**—*Better promises*:—In the promises there are these two things, the matter and the manner. As for matter and substance, the promises were all one in the Old and New Testament, that is Christ, and eternal salvation by Him. But ours in respect of the manner are better and excel theirs. 1. Their promises were included within the narrow compass of Judea; our promises are blazed all the world over. 2. Their promises were published by men, by the patriarchs, prophets, which were but servants; ours by Christ the Son of God. 3. They according to God's promise had the graces of the Spirit as we have, yet not in such abundant measure as they be now poured out in the time of the gospel. 4. Their promises were dark and obscure, covered under the veil of many ceremonies,

and shadowed out by temporal things; our promises are more clear and evident. 5. Theirs were at the delivery of the law with a condition, "Do this and live. Cursed be he that continueth not in all things," &c. Ours "Believe and live." 6. The sacraments, whereby the promises were confirmed unto them, were more hard and difficult: the cutting off the foreskin, the preparing of a lamb for every house; ours are more easy and familiar: the sprinkling of a little water, or the dipping in the water, the procuring of bread and wine. 7. Their promises were of things to come: there should come a Lamb that should take away the sins of the world; ours are of things already come and exhibited. This Lamb is come, and hath offered up Himself on the altar of the cross for us. (*W. Jones, D.D.*) *Stability of the Divine promises*:—Every promise is built upon four pillars: God's justice and holiness, which will not suffer Him to deceive; His grace or goodness, which will not suffer Him to forget; His truth, which will not suffer Him to change; His power, which makes Him able to accomplish. (*H. G. Salter.*) *Fulness of the Divine promises*:—The promises which God hath made are a full storehouse of all kind of blessings; they include in them both the upper and nether springs, the mercies of this life and of that which is to come: there is no good that can present itself as an object to our desires or thoughts, of which the promises are not a ground for faith to believe and hope to expect the enjoyment of. (*H. Spurstowe.*)

Ver. 7. **If that first covenant had been faultless.**—*The imperfection of the first covenant*:—Observe here—1. What is charged on the first covenant, and that is faultiness, by which we are not to understand any sinful faultiness, but defectiveness and imperfection only; for it was not faulty in the matter and substance of it, as it was instituted and ordained by God, but therefore called faulty because it was obscure, was not so surely ratified, and not attended with that virtue, power, and efficacy which the new covenant is accompanied with. 2. Wherein consisteth that defectiveness and imperfection of the first covenant which is here complained of. (1) In its ability to justify and save us, because of our inability, through the weakness of the flesh, to answer the demands of it (Rom. viii. 3). The law was not properly weak to us, but we were weak to that. (2) The legal covenant required exact obedience, but afforded no spiritual assistance for the performance of what is required: but the covenant of grace, the new covenant, is called a ministration of the Spirit; and under the gospel we are said not to serve in the oldness of the letter, but in the newness of the Spirit. Now, says the apostle (ver. 8), Almighty God finding fault with the Jews for the breach of the former covenant, declared by the prophet Jeremiah (chap. xxxi. 31), that the covenant He would make with all true Israelites for time to come should not be like that which He made with their fathers in Egypt, which they continued not in the observation of (wanting those assistances from the Holy Spirit to enable them thereunto, which are procured for us by Christ); accordingly "I regarded them not, saith the Lord," but gave them up for their sins into the hands of their enemies. 3. How Almighty God makes the imperfection of the old covenant, and the Israelites' instability therein, the reason of His making a new covenant with us, in which grace and assistance is offered to enable us to obey and persevere in obedience. From the whole note—1. That the grace and glory of the new covenant are much set off and manifested by comparing it with the old. 2. That nothing but effectual grace from Christ will secure our covenant obedience one moment: what greater motives or stronger outward obligations to obedience could any people under heaven have than the Israelites had? But they quickly turned out of the way; therefore, in the new covenant, is this grace promised in a peculiar manner. (*W. Burkitt, M.A.*) *The two covenants*:—A covenant is properly an agreement between two parties, who bind themselves by certain conditions with the view of attaining some object. A covenant may be between equals, as that between Abraham and Abimelech (Gen. xxi. 32), or between parties of whom one is superior to the other, as that between Joshua and the Gibeonites (Josh. ix.). The covenant relation between God and men is of the latter kind, for God imposes the covenant (chap. viii. 8–10). None the less both parties lay themselves under obligations and contemplate an object by the covenant. A covenant between God and men cannot possibly have any other meaning than that He will be their God and they His people (viii. 10). The Epistle contemplates religion or the relation of God and men under this aspect of a covenant. It distinguishes two covenants, that made at Sinai (chap. viii. 9), and that made through Christ (chap. ix. 15). The former is

called the first covenant (chaps. viii. 7, ix. 1, 18); it is not named the "old" covenant, although it is said that God, in announcing a new covenant, has made the first old (chap. viii. 13). The latter is called a second (chap. viii. 7), a better (chaps. vii. 22, viii. 6), a new as having different contents (chaps. viii. 8, ix. 15), and also new as being recent (chap. xii. 24), and an eternal covenant (chap. xiii. 20, comp. vii. 22). The first covenant was not faultless—so mildly does the author express Himself (chap. viii. 7); the second is enacted upon better promises (chap. viii. 6, 10–12). The Epistle does not speak of a covenant with Abraham, as the Pauline epistles do (Gal. iii. 15, 17); it knows of promises to Abraham (chaps. vi. 13, vii. 6), which the first covenant was ineffectual to realise (chap. xi. 39), which, however, are realised through the second (chap. ix. 15). The covenant relation is not its own end. It is rather a relation within which the people are being matured for that final blessedness which God has destined for them. No doubt this maturing of them always more fully realises the covenant relation, and this of itself is a great and blessed end. But it is chiefly regarded as the means to that which lies beyond, which is the bringing of the people to a sphere of existence that shall fully correspond to their capacities and needs. This end is variously described: it is inheriting the promises (chap. vi. 12), or receiving the promise of the eternal inheritance (chap. ix. 15); reaching the heavenly country (chap. xi. 16), or the city that hath the foundations (chap. xi. 10); or, receiving the kingdom that cannot be shaken (chap. xii. 28); or entering into the rest of God (chap. iii. 4); or, having the world to come put into subjection to them (chap. ii. 5, &c.). The covenants are means adopted for realising promises and gracious purposes, the announcement of which was prior to both of them. The new covenant is only a more effectual means of accomplishing the same object pursued in the first. A covenant between God and men is a state of relation in which He is their God and they His people. By being His people is meant that they are dedicated to His service (chap. ix. 14), that they are His worshipping people. And the means by which they are translated into this relation of fit worshippers is important. The term that expresses this change is "sanctify" (chaps. ii. 11, x. 10, 29, xiii. 12). Having a conscience defiled by sin, they felt debarred from free access to God so as to serve Him (chaps. ix. 9, 14, x. 2, 22), and for the same reason of their defilement God could not permit Himself to be approached. This defilement of sin is purified away by sacrifice, the blood of which is the blood of the covenant (chaps. ix. 14, 18, x. 29, xiii. 20), and thus the people are sanctified for the service of God. As the end had in view and the covenant itself, which is the means towards it, are alike due to the grace of God (chap. ii. 9), the sacrifice which effects the sanctification of the people is no less an institution of His provision. Though within the covenant, the people are not supposed to be sinless. They err and are out of the way; they are compassed with infirmity and labour under various "ignorances" (chaps. v. 2, vii. 28, ix. 7: comp. chap. iv. 15). Such errors, though sins and transgressions (chap. ix. 15), and interruptions of the covenant relation, are not absolutely incompatible with its maintenance, provided they are taken away. A means of removing such sins of infirmity was provided in the sacrificial system. This is the meaning of this system. It was appointed of God for removing sins committed within the covenant. The Epistle does not speculate how it is that men in covenant still continue to sin; it accepts the fact without referring it to any principle such as "the flesh" of St. Paul. Its distinction of sins of infirmity and "wilful" sins is unknown to the latter apostle, to whom all sins are deadly and infer the curse (Gal. iii. 10). This is involved in His mode of regarding the law as a commandment of works to be obeyed in order to justification. Any transgression of it is its breach in principle, and makes an end of all pretensions on man's part to be righteous before God. The condition of the continuance of the covenant was the keeping of the law. But here a double defect manifested itself in the first covenant. On the one hand, the people abode not in it (chap. viii. 9), and on the other hand, its institutions could not remove the transgressions done under it (chaps. ix. 15, x. 4). In the new covenant God promises to write His law on the people's heart (chap. viii. 10), as on the other hand the death of Christ redeems the transgressions under the first covenant (chap. ix. 15), and God remembers them no more (chap. x. 17). Though in the new covenant the law be written on the people's heart, their wills are still practically regarded as mutable; they may sin wilfully (chap. x. 26), and fall away from the living God (chap. iii. 12), and they need all the safeguards which their own patient endurance (chap. vi. 12), the example of those who have gone before (chaps. vi. 12, xii. 1, xiii. 7), mutual exhor-

tation (chaps. iii. 13, x. 24), memory of past attainments (chap. x. 32, &c.), and the "throne of grace" (chaps. ii. 18, iv. 14, vii. 23–25) can afford, to enable them to hold fast the beginning of their confidence firm unto the end. Thus the first covenant failed, and God caused to arise upon the people the light of the promise of a new covenant. The first covenant indeed was conscious of its own imperfection; hence it gave forth from within itself the promise of "another priest" (Psa. cx. 4; chap. vii. 14), of a "better sacrifice" (Psa. xl. 7; chaps. ix. 23, x. 9), and even of a "new covenant" (Jer. xxxi. 31; chap. viii. 8). The structure of the Tabernacle was a perpetual witness to the inability of its ministry to open the way for the worshippers into the presence of God, a witness borne by the Holy Ghost (chap. ix. 8). And the very continual repetition of the sacrifices year by year was a constant remembrance of sin, and proclamation of their inefficacy to take it away (chap. x. 3). The Epistle is a detailed contrast between the two covenants, showing that in all those points where the first failed the second realises the purpose of the covenant. That which gives eternal validity or absoluteness to the new covenant is the person, the Son of God, who in all points carries it through—who reveals, mediates, and sustains it. As initiating the covenant through His blood (chaps. ix. 20, x. 29), He is the mediator of a new covenant (chap. ix. 15); and as sitting at the right hand of God, before His face, for ever, as high-priestly representative of the people, He is the surety of it (chap. vii. 22). The Old Testament holy places and all the vessels of the ministry were made according to the pattern showed in the mount (chap. viii. 5), and are thus the copies of the things in the heavens (chap. ix. 23). Again, the law had a shadow of the good things that were to come (chaps. x. 1, ix. 11). Thus the first covenant lay, as a sphere of dim representation, between two regions filled with realities—heaven, the region of the true things themselves, on the one side, and the new covenant, realising the very image of the good things that were to come, on the other. These two regions correspond to one another (chap. xii. 22). Yet the first covenant having a shadow of the good things that were to come was in truth the introduction of the new covenant, though in a shadowy form. Hence the second covenant, though called new, is new only in a modified sense. The promises on which it was enacted are virtually nothing more than the promise truly to realise the great objects aimed at in the first covenant (see chap. viii. 6). It contemplates the same end with the first, the bringing of men into the rest of God and the promised inheritance (chaps. ix. 15, iv. 3). And it was made with the same persons as the first. These are the people (chaps. ii. 17, xiii. 12), the people of God (chap. iv. 9, comp. vii. 27), or, the seed of Abraham (chap. ii. 16). It is by no means easy to understand what is said in the Epistle in regard to the relations of the two covenants. Two points may be alluded to. 1. The author speaks in a very disparaging way of the Old Testament sacrifices, saying that they could never take away sins (chap. x. 11), nor perfect those offering them as to the conscience (chaps. ix. 9, x. 1, 2), and that they were carnal ordinances and useless (chap. vii. 18). His language implies that Old Testament saints were burdened with a conscience of sin (chaps. ix. 9, 14, x. 2, 22), consequently that they were oppressed by the sense of the inefficacy of their sacrifices to remove sin, from which it seems to follow that they had no clear light as to any connection of these sacrifices with another the virtue of which they conveyed. To the same effect is the view that the transgressions under the first covenant were left outstanding and only removed by the sacrifice of Christ (chap. ix. 15). All this, however, bears directly only on the question before him of the value of the Old Testament sacrifices in themselves, and whether they effected a true objective atonement. Old Testament saints felt they could not do so, and hence they were burdened with a sense of sin which, among other things, manifested itself in a bondage from the fear of death (chap. ii. 15). 2. Again, when the author says that blood of bulls could never take away sins (chap. x. 4), and on the other hand that it sanctified in reference to the purity of the flesh (chap. ix. 13), it is certainly very far from being his intention to draw a distinction between one class of offences called "sins" to which the Old Testament sacrifices were inapplicable, and another class that might be named ceremonial defilements which they did remove, and so to erect a general theory of the Old Testament constitution to the effect that it consisted of two spheres, one of ceremonial observances and external government, within which sacrifices had a real validity, and another the sphere of true spiritual relations to God, within which they had no force. The sacrifices were offered for sins (chaps. v. 1, 3, ix. 7, x. 8, 11), and if they could have effected the purpose for which they were offered, the worshipper would have had no more conscience of

sins (chap. x. 2), a condition which the offering of Christ brings about (chaps. ix. 14, x. 17). The Old Testament sacrifices could not go further than to purify the flesh. (*A. B. Davidson, LL.D.*)

Ver. 8. **Finding fault with them.**—*God complaining of the Church*:—I. GOD HATH OFTTIMES JUST CAUSE TO COMPLAIN OF HIS PEOPLE WHEN YET HE WILL NOT UTTERLY CAST THEM OFF. II. IT IS THE DUTY OF THE CHURCH TO TAKE DEEP NOTICE OF GOD'S COMPLAINTS OF THEM. Want hereof is that which hath laid most churches in the world under a fatal security. Hence they carry themselves as though they were "rich and increased in goods, and had need of nothing," when indeed "they are wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." To consider what God blames, and to affect our souls with a sense of guilt, is that trembling at His word which He so approves of. And to guide them herein they ought carefully to consider—1. The times and seasons that are passing over them. For in a due observance of the times and seasons, and an application of ourselves to the duties of them, consists that testimony which we are to give to God and the gospel in our generation. That Church which considers not its especial duty in the days wherein we live is fast asleep, and it may be doubted whether, when it is awaked, it will find oil in its vessel or not. 2. The temptations which are prevalent, and which unavoidably we are exposed unto. Every age and time hath its especial temptations. And it is the will of God that the Church should be exercised with them and by them; and it were easy to manifest that the darkness and ignorance of men, in not discerning the especial temptations of the age wherein they have lived, or neglecting of them, have been always the great causes and means of the apostasy of the Church. III. GOD OFTEN SURPRISETH THE CHURCH WITH PROMISES OF GRACE AND MERCY (Isa. vii. 13, 14, xliii. 22–25). And this He will do—1. That He may glorify the riches and freedom of His grace. 2. That none who have the least remainder of sincerity, and desire to fear the name of God, may utterly faint and despond at any time, under the greatest confluence of discouragements. (*John Owen, D.D.*) **I will make a new covenant.**—I. GOD'S COVENANT WITH MAN INSTRUCTETH US IN TWO ESPECIAL POINTS. 1. In God's condescension to man. 2. In the sure prop that man hath to rest on God for happiness. 1. God's condescension to man is manifested four ways. (1) In that God being the most high supreme Sovereign over all, vouchsafeth to enter into covenant with His servants. (2) In that God being a Lord hath power to command what He pleaseth, so as He need not covenant or capitulate with them, saying, Do this and I will do that; yet doth He enter into covenant. (3) In that being most free, and wholly depending upon Himself, He need not bind Himself to any (Job ix. 12, xxxiv. 19; Dan. iv. 35), yet by covenant He binds Himself to man. (4) In that God being the Lord God of truth (Psa. xxxi. 5) He binds Himself to perform His promise, as if there might be some fear of His failing therein (chap. vi. 17, 18). 2. The sure prop that man hath to rest on God for happiness by reason of His covenant is manifested two ways. (1) In that God who is good and doeth good (Psa. cxix. 68) doth covenant to make man happy. God is as a deep, full, open, overflowing, everflowing fountain, so as that might seem sufficient to make us go to Him for everything that may tend to blessedness. But the covenant which God maketh to bring us unto happiness doth much more embolden us to go to Him, and make us confident of receiving from Him what He hath covenanted to give. (2) By covenant God hath caused a special relation to pass betwixt Him and us. He and we are confederates. This is a sure prop. As God is faithful in Himself, so His covenant is most sure. It is a covenant of salt for ever (Numb. xviii. 19). God's confederates may thereupon have strong consolation and confidence (Deut. vii. 9; Heb. vi. 18). II. THE COVENANT OF GOD WITH MAN DOTH DIRECT US IN FOUR SPECIAL POINTS. 1. To know what God expects of us; namely, whatsoever is in the covenant to be performed on our part, which we must be careful to observe as we do desire to receive any benefit from the covenant. 2. To understand what we may expect from God; namely, whatsoever on God's part is covenanted. 3. To acquaint ourselves with the covenant of God, that thereby we may know what privileges and blessings belong unto us. A wise heir will search after such evidences as give him a right to his lands and goods. 4. To be careful in observing our own undertakings, and as conscionable in performing the covenant on our part, as we are desirous to partake of the benefit of the covenant on God's part. This is laid down as a ground of Levi's blessing, that they kept God's covenant (Deut. xxxiii. 9). This God expressly requireth (Exod. xix. 5). We cannot expect that

God should keep covenant with us unless we be careful to keep covenant with Him (Psa. xxv. 10). Great is that loss which followeth upon breach of covenant, yet that is not all, God's wrath and vengeance will also follow thereupon. Sore vengeance hath been executed on breach of covenant with man (2 Kings xvii. 4, &c.; Ezek. xvii. 15). How much sorer vengeance may be feared on breach of covenant with God (Jer. xxii. 6, 9, xxxiv. 18–20; Hosea viii. 1; 1 Kings xi. 11). (*W. Gouge.*) *The blessings of the new covenant:*—New, as contrasted with old, means in Scripture that which is perfect and abiding. The old vanishes, the new remains. God gives us a new heart that we may love and praise Him for ever. The old covenant was temporary and imperfect. God findeth fault with it; for although the law was holy, just, and good, yet by reason of Israel's sin neither righteousness nor life could come through it. And as the purposes of Divine love could not be attained by the old covenant, so the character of God, as the God of grace, could not be fully revealed therein. Hence the promise of a new covenant, which in itself proves the imperfection and insufficiency of the old; and this new covenant is represented as a contrast, unlike the old; it is new, that is, perfect, everlasting. God is pleased with it because it shows forth the glory of Jehovah as the God of salvation. How great is the contrast between the old and the new covenant! In the one God demands of sinful man: "Thou shalt." In the other God promises: "I will." The one is conditional; the other is the manifestation of God's free grace, and of God's unlimited power. In the one the promise is neutralised by the disobedience of man; in the other all the promises of God are yea in Christ, and amen in Christ. In the new covenant Christ is all; He is the Alpha and Omega; all things are of God, and all things are sure and steadfast. The blessings of the new covenaut are all based upon the forgiveness of sin. God promises to put His laws into our minds, and write them in our hearts, and to be to us a God, because He is merciful to our unrighteousness, and will remember our sins and iniquities no more. The forgiveness of sin is not merely the beginning, but it is the foundation, the source; it is, so to say, the mother of all Divine blessings. For so long as sin is upon the conscience, and man is not able to draw near unto God, he is separated from the only source of life and blessedness. In the forgiveness of sin God gives Himself, and all things that pertain to life and godliness. To know God is the sum and substance of all blessings, both in this life and in that which is to come. Now, although the law manifests to a certain extent the holiness and truth, the justice and unchangeableness, the goodness and bounty of God, the law does not reveal God Himself, the depth of His sovereign and eternal love, the purpose which He purposed in Himself before the foundation of the world was laid. When in Christ we receive the forgiveness of sin, we behold God. Here is also the source and the commencement, the root and strength of our love to God. "We love Him, because He first loved us." We love much, because much is forgiven unto us. The new obedience, the spiritual worship, the fight and victory of faith, the knowledge and fear and love of God, have their starting-point in the pardon of sin. And this is the new covenant blessing. True, the servants of God always knew this blessing. Of the Divine righteousness both the law and the prophets testify. David describeth this blessedness. The sacrifices typified, faith looked forward to the great atonement. But now that Christ has come, and that He died once for all, we receive forgiveness in a full and perfect manner: there is no more remembrance of sins; no repetition of sacrifice is needed; no yearly recurrence of the day of atonement; in Christ we have redemption in His blood, even the forgiveness of sins. It is in giving this perfect pardon that God renews the heart, and writes in it His laws. We must needs contrast law and gospel. Yet let us not forget that the law from the very outset showed its temporary and negative character, pointed beyond and away from itself; sighed, as it were, after Him, who by fulfilling would take it away, and by taking it away would fulfil it in us, raise us to the still greater height of the new love! All spiritual life flows from Jesus as our Saviour. When we believe in Jesus we are not in the flesh but in the Spirit. His precious blood is not merely our peace, but our strength; and our strength because it is our peace. Justification and sanctification emanate from this one source. When Israel is brought in repentance and faith to the Lord, then shall be fulfilled the gracious purpose of God, which under the law was frustrated through Israel's sin and disobedience. Although God was a husband unto them, they brake His covenant. But now, forgiven and renewed, Israel will be in actual reality, and not merely in position, God's people, and Jehovah will be their God. And because He is God to them, source of light and life, they are His people. Not

merely chosen and appointed; not merely called and treated collectively as God's people; but in reality, according to truth, according to their individual character and experience, the people in whom God's name is revealed, who show forth His praise, who walk in His ways and obey His will. For then each one individually shall know the Lord. "God is known in Judah," said the Psalmist. In their marvellous history, in the Divine messages sent by Moses and the prophets, in the types and ordinances, in the Judges and Kings, God had revealed unto His people His name, His character and will, and His great desire was that they should know Him. How touching is the complaint of Jehovah, that after all the signs which they had seen, and after all His mighty works of redeeming and guiding love, and after all the words of light and of grace which He had sent them, His people did not know Him! So long had He been with them, and, erring in their hearts, they did not know His ways! What could be more grievous to the fatherly heart of God, yearning to be known, trusted, and loved? But when the Holy Ghost shall be poured out upon them they shall all know Jehovah, from the least to the greatest; though one shall encourage and exhort the other, yet they shall not need to teach and to say to their neighbour, Know the Lord. In the Church this promise is already fulfilled. From Jesus, the anointed, all Christians receive the Holy Ghost; they have, according to their name, the unction from above. Hence they possess the teacher who guides into all truth. Knowledge is within them. There is within them a well of living water. They are not dependent on external instruction. There is given unto them the Paraclete, who always reveals the things that are freely given unto us of God. The spiritual man knows all things—all the things of the Spirit, all that pertains to life and godliness. True, he does not know all things actually, or in any given moment; but he knows them potentially. There is within him the light which can see, the mind which can receive all truth. (*A. Saphir.*) *The difference betwixt the two covenants of works and grace:*—The covenants of works and grace do differ in the particulars following. 1. In the different consideration of the Author of the one and the other, which are in the first God's supreme sovereignty, and in the latter His rich mercy. 2. In the procuring cause of them, which was of the former God's mere will and pleasure, of the latter pity and compassion. 3. In the manner of making the one and the other. The former was without a mediator; the latter with one. 4. In the time: the former was made before man had sinned; the latter after his transgression. 5. In the occasion of making the one and the other. The occasion of the former was to try man's faithfulness in that integrity wherein God made him. The occasion of the latter was to show the necessity of man's continual dependence on God. 6. In the confederates or parties with whom the one and the other was made. The former was made with all mankind; the latter with the elect only. 7. In the particular good that was promised. In the former a reward was promised upon fulfilling the condition by man himself (Rom. x. 15). In the latter was afforded—(1) A Surety for man (chap. vii. 22). (2) Ability to do what God would accept (Ezek. xxxvi. 27). (3) A better reward in man's communion with Christ (John xiv. 3; xvii. 23, 24). 8. In the duties required by the one and the other. Perfect obedience was required by the former; faith and repentance by the latter. 9. In the order of God's accepting. In the former God accepted the person for the work; which is thus expressed, "If thou do well, shalt thou not be accepted?" (Gen. iv. 7). In the latter the work is accepted in reference to the person. 10. In the ratification. The former was ratified by word, promise, and seals. The latter was further ratified by oath (chap. vii. 20) and blood (chap. ix. 16, 17). 11. In the issue of the one and the other. The former was violable. It might be forfeited, and was forfeited. The latter is inviolable and shall never be broken (Jer. xxxiii. 20, 21). 12. In the matter of the one and the other. These two covenants do so far differ in the very matter and substance of them as they can no more stand together than the ark of God and Dagon (1 Sam. v. 3, 4). The apostle doth so far oppose works and grace in the case of justification and salvation as they cannot stand together (Rom. xi. 6). This difference betwixt the covenant of works and grace giveth evidence of God's wisdom in working by contraries and bringing light out of darkness (2 Cor. iv. 6) and good out of evil, as He brought "meat out of the eater" (Judg. iv. 14). For man's sin and misery that fell thereupon caused this better covenant. This is an especial instance to prove that "all things work together for good" (Rom. viii. 28). (*W. Gouge.*) *The agreement betwixt the covenant of grace as it is styled old and new:*—The covenant of grace hath continued from Adam's fall, and shall continue to the end of the world. In this respect it is styled an everlasting covenant.

But it hath been variously dispensed in the several ages of the world. The greatest difference in the dispensation thereof hath been manifested in the times that passed before and since Christ was exhibited. This difference is so great, as the covenant of grace, though always one and the same in substance, hath been distinguished into an old and new covenant (ver. 13). The latitude of the covenant of grace will more clearly be discerned if we duly consider the agreement and difference, as it is called old and new. The agreement is manifested—1. In their Author, and that considered in the same respect: namely, as He is our Creator and Lord, and as He is our Redeemer and Father, for so was God of old called and acknowledged (Deut. xxxii. 6). 2. In the procuring cause, which was the free grace and rich mercy of God (Luke i. 54, 55, 72, 78). 3. In the same ground and meritorious cause of both, which is Jesus Christ (Heb. xiii. 8; Rev. xiii. 8). 4. In the same promises, which are remission of sins, reconciliation with God, and everlasting happiness (Exod. xxxiv. 7; Lev. viii. 15; Psa. xci. 16). 5. In the same duties required, which are faith (Gen. xv. 6) and repentance (Ezek. xxxiii. 11). 6. In the same ground of stability, which is the continual abode and operation of the Spirit in God's confederates (Psa. li. 11, 12). 7. In the same general end, which is the praise of the free grace of God (Exod. xxxiii. 18, 19; xxxiv. 6). 8. In the same persons with whom the covenants are made, which are sinners by nature but elect of God (Psa. xxxiii. 12; lxxxix. 3). 9. In the same word of faith, whereby the one and other covenant is revealed (Gal. iii. 8; Heb. iv. 2). 10. In the same substance of sacraments and the same spiritual food (1 Cor. x. 3, 4). (*Ibid.*) *The difference between the covenant of grace as it is styled old and new:*—The difference betwixt the old and new covenant is—1. In the time. The old was before Christ, the new since (chap. i. 1, 2). 2. In the manner of delivering. The old was more obscurely delivered under types and prophecies, the new more clearly (2 Cor. iii. 13, 14). 3. In the extent. The old was restrained to a select people (Psa. cxlvii. 19, 20); the new is extended to all nations (Matt. xxviii. 19). 4. In the mediator. Moses, a mere man, was made the mediator of the old (Gal. iii. 19); but Jesus Christ, God-man, the Mediator of the new (ver. 6). 5. In the ratification. The old was ratified by the blood of beasts (Exod. xxiv. 8); the new by the blood of the Son of God (chap. ix. 12). 6. In the efficacy. The old comparatively was a ministration of death, the new a ministration of the Spirit (2 Cor. iii. 7, 8). 7. In the kind of confederates. Under the old God's confederates were in their non-age, as children under tutors and governors (Gal. iv. 5, 7). 8. In the kind of seals or sacraments. Under the old they were more in number, more various in rites, more difficult, more obscure, more earthly. By comparing the sacraments of the one and the other together, this will evidently appear. 9. In the manner of setting forth the promise of God. In the old it was set forth more meanly under temporal blessings (Deut xxviii. 2); under the new, more directly under spiritual and celestial blessings (Matt. v. 3, &c.). 10. In the yoke that is laid on the confederates by the one and the other. By the old a heavy yoke was laid (Acts xv. 10); by the new, an easy and light yoke (Matt. xi. 30). So great a difference there is betwixt the new covenant and all other covenants, as it is styled a better covenant. (*Ibid.*) *The two dispensations are one:*—The new covenant deals with the same fundamental conceptions which dominated the former one. These are the moral law, knowledge of God, and forgiveness of sin. So far the two dispensations are one. Because these great conceptions lie at the root of all human goodness, religion is essentially the same thing under both covenants. There is a sense in which St. Augustine was right in speaking of the saints under the Old Testament as "Christians before Christ." Judaism and Christianity stand shoulder to shoulder over against the religious ideas and practices of all the heathen nations of the world. But in Judaism these sublime conceptions are undeveloped. Nationalism dwarfs their growth. They are like seeds falling on the thorns, and the thorns grow up and choke them. God, therefore, spoke unto the Jews in parables, in types and shadows. Seeing, they saw not; and hearing, they heard not, neither did they understand. Because the former covenant was a national one, the conceptions of the moral law, of God, of sin and its forgiveness, would be narrow and external. The moral law would be embedded in the national code. God would be revealed in the history of the nation. Sin would consist either in faults of ignorance and inadvertence or in national apostasy from the theocratic king. In these three respects the new covenant excels—in respect, that is, of the moral law, knowledge of God, and forgiveness of sin, which yet may be justly regarded as the three sides of the revelation given under the former covenant. (*T. C. Edwards, D.D.*)

Vers. 10–12. **I will put My laws into their mind.**—*God's covenant with the New Testament Church*:—I. WHAT IS IMPORTED GENERALLY IN THE WORDS. 1. That a covenant shall be made, and a covenant-relation shall subsist, between God and every member of the New Testament Church. 2. That both parties, so related to one another, shall behave in a due and becoming manner, agreeable to the relation in which they stand. 3. That the relation itself and the due behaviour of the relatives on both sides shall be wholly the work of God. II. WHAT IS MORE PARTICULARLY IMPORTED IN GOD'S PROMISING TO BE OUR GOD. 1. That God will graciously bring us to have a real and saving interest in Him as our God. Now, in order to our having such an interest in God, two things are necessary; both which are secured by this promise and both are accomplished in behalf of every one who is brought within the bond of this covenant. (1) That God make a gracious grant and offer of Himself to us, declaring us welcome to claim an interest in Him, and to look for the rest and happiness of our souls in the enjoyment of Him. Without such an offer it would be impossible that ever we should be interested in Him as our God. Such a happiness is incapable of being purchased by any creature. (2) It is likewise necessary that He enable us to accept this gracious offer, and really to choose Him as our God and Portion. There can be no covenant without the consent of both parties. 2. This part of the promise imports that God will do all that for us that any people has reason to expect or usually does expect from their God. He would be ashamed to be called our God, if He were not to act up to the character. And His allowing us to claim Him in that character may be viewed as an engagement that He will do for us whatever corresponds unto it. (1) He will set you free from all spiritual bondage, oppression, and misery of every kind, and put you in ample possession of the glorious liberty of the sons of God. (2) He will guide and conduct you through this weary wilderness in every step of your journey towards the land of promise. (3) He will lead you forth against all your enemies, and make you completely victorious over them in due time. (4) In a word, He will bring you home in the event to the possession of a plentiful and pleasant inheritance. III. WHAT IS IMPORTED IN OUR BEING TO GOD FOR A PEOPLE. 1. That God would gather into one all the members of the New Testament Church; so that in whatever place of the world they should have their residence, from whatever nation they should spring, whatever should be their kindred, tongue, or language, they should all be closely united one to another and constituted one body mystical. 2. That this dignified people, and every particular person among them, shall, in due time, be enabled to dedicate themselves unto God, and cheerfully to acknowledge themselves to be His property. 3. That having made such a dedication of themselves to God, the Church and her members shall be preserved from ever attempting to alienate what they have devoted. 4. That God will graciously accept the dedication that we make of ourselves to Him and all those evangelical services which we perform in consequence thereof. Lessons: 1. From what has been said, we may see one very remarkable difference between the covenant of grace as it is exhibited in the gospel and actually made with every Christian in the day of believing, a difference, I say, between this and all other covenants. In all covenants there are mutual engagements entered into by both parties respectively; and something which they become bound to perform one to another on both sides. So far this covenant agrees with all others. But the amazing difference between this and every other covenant lies in this, that here one party binds Himself for the performance of the engagements of both. 2. We may see that all true Christians are really covenanters with God, however little relish some of them may have for the name. 3. From hence we may see that neither faith, nor repentance, nor sincere obedience, nor anything else wrought in us or done by us, can be the condition of the covenant of grace. 4. We may see from this subject that real Christians are the only happy persons in the world. All the things that men value or esteem, and in which they look for happiness, riches, honours, power, pleasure, they possess in a supereminent degree. They are the only persons who deserve to be called rich, having an interest in God Himself, an infinite and inexhaustible good as their portion and inheritance. (*John Young, D.D.*) *The religious relations of the intellect*:—That there is mind, and that it is superior to matter, I assume, and I have a right so to do: for assumption is not illogical where the demonstration of the thing assumed can be instantaneous and popular—that is, within the range of ordinary understandings. That our bodies are but the organs of our minds, and therefore inferior to them, and totally distinct from them, is seen in this: that the one can be destroyed, while the other remains intact. The surgeon can cut both legs of a man off near the

trunk, and then he can cut both arms off at the shoulder, until a full half of his body as represented by bulk has been destroyed, and still the energies of the man's mind are in no way affected. The symmetry of the body is gone, but the symmetry of the undestroyed and the indestructible mind remains. The mind and the saw have not touched it; they cannot. Now, holding that mind is immortal, I would point out to you some of its religious relations, to the end that we may all apprehend how natural to the mind itself are those states, moods, and natures which the Bible enjoins. For religion is only nature corrected—nature perfected. When man stands in his natural powers, with all his adjustments correct, with all his instincts just, and with all his aspirations holy, he has in him the same mind that was in Christ; for in Him all religion existed organically. Reverence, obedience, affection, humility, truthfulness, and whatever other element piety includes, lived incarnate in Him. He embodied them. Hence, imitation of Him is piety in its highest phase. Hence, His life is the light of men, morally. Hence, Christian studentship is a studentship of His character. 1. Well, the first characteristic of the mind, religiously considered, is activity. Mind is motion, mind is impulse, mind is vibration, mind is only God's thought; and His thought keeps for ever thinking. Mind, therefore, in its religious connections, must be for ever active. Be not afraid, therefore, to think, young men. Let your minds go forth continually in search of facts. Knock at the door of every phenomenon; press against the door until the fastenings of it yield to your pressure, and, passing in, you stand eye to eye in presence of its long-pent mystery. Wherever there is darkness, creep into it; and when you have entered within its gloom, kindle the torch of investigation and look around you, to discover the hidden wonder. Explorations, spiritually, are for ever in order. The proof of God is found, beyond all else, in your thinking; and the thinkers of the world are the perpetual evidences of the truth of the Bible when it declares that God made man in His own image. The human intellect is the offspring of the Supreme Intelligence. No less cause than this can be assigned as able to produce such a result. There was but one orb that could throw out such a beam. The primal relation of the human mind to the Deity was filial. Of this there can be no doubt. Nature alone is sufficient evidence. And what, pray, is the peculiar characteristic of filial connection? What is the initial attitude of the child's mind into which it grows continually as it advances in years? 2. There is but one answer: the attitude is that of reverence. Well, what shall we say, then, touching the proper attitude of the human mind to its Creator, if not this, that its attitude should be reverential? This conclusion we reach, you observe, not by following the line of any dogma, but by following the line of nature. Nature alone constitutes a perfect bible from which to read the commandment of duty. Your minds are the offspring of that Supreme Intelligence which they resemble. And if your minds are not in a reverential attitude toward God, they are in a state of transgression; not as touching any verbal statute, but as touching the great ineradicable principle of natural relationship. This reverence on the part of the human mind touching God refers not only to Him as to His nature, but to Him equally as to His creations and surroundings. The mind that rightly apprehends its relationship to the Divine Being reverences not only Him, but all that He has made. It apprehends Him in His divergence, in His distributiveness, in the varieties of His expression. Like the Hebrew, it apprehends Him in the beauty of the firmament. Like the Egyptian, it sees Him in the patience, the usefulness, and the cunning of animal life. Like the Greek, it admires the divinity as seen in the symmetry of outline and the loveliness of the human figure. Like the historian, it beholds Him in the progress of events and in the succession of forces, as they have been evolved from the various attempts at government. Nor does such a mind fail to see the evidence of its Master's presence in little things. In grasses, in flowers, in shrubs, in trees, in whatever there is of growth round about, the mind which is properly constituted reverentially apprehends Deity. 3. The third characteristic of mind that has a special religious relation is humility, and the exceeding excellence of this trait will be more clearly apprehended when it is set in contrast with its opposite, arrogance. This arrogance of intellect is as old as studentship, and as offensive as human pride. Its results are beyond expression deplorable. Its tendency is to make men self-opinionated, domineering, and insulting. It has been the mother of oppression. It has dictated persecutions beyond number. It has driven the sword of war even to its hilt into the white bosom of peace, and often made the Church, which is by nature a dispenser of the mercies of God, an engine of the devil. Its

culmination is seen in the assertion of infallibility. He who lays claim to such powers of judgment advertises himself as the colossal arrogance of the world. The worst phase met with to-day is the arrogance of what is known as Radicalism. There is a class of men whose whole philosophy is that of negation. Their wisdom consists in denial. They deny the existence of God, they deny the exaltation of Christ, they deny the truth of the gospel, they deny the intelligence of piety, they deny everything that faith credits or the converted soul believes. Their sole object seems to be to undermine and pull down every structure which Christian faith and hope have builded. A more self-conceited and arrogant set of men never lived. They fulminate their scepticism as if they spoke with the authority of a god. A scientific supposition is made to subserve the purpose of a fact. Their speculations are announced as if they were demonstrations. They are all kindred in the fashion of their behaviour. Their utterances are monotonous. He who has heard one of them lecture has heard all. He who has read one volume has mastered their entire system, if such vagaries of thought can be called a system. Bring them all together, strip them of their various names and their personality, lump them in one embodiment, and they represent a solid mass of self-conceit. That such men can have any lasting influence on the thought and morals of the race is preposterous. They are simply an accident of the times. They simply represent human eccentricity. I have now discussed the relations which mental activity, the quality of reverence, and the quality of humility hold to religious development. If you desire religious growth, you must keep your bodily organs thoroughly healthy, your mind active, reverential, and humble. One more thing alone remains to be said. 4. And this one thing which we need, we need beyond everything else: it is the love of the truth. Truth is the soul of form. It is the spirit which lurks in all substance. It is the genius which lives in law. It is the inspiration of love. It is the crown and glory of man's noblest effort. In seeking it men have passed their lives. To behold the brightness of its face, men have walked bravely into the darkness of death. In order to know truth you must first desire it—desire it with your whole heart, desire it for its own sweet sake. In order to find it you must free your mind from all prejudice, from all vanity, from all pride. You will look for it on a throne, and you will find it in a manger. You will look for it in honour, and you will find it in shame. You will look for it among the wise, and you will find it among the ignorant. You will look for it under the royalty of a crown, and you will find it on a cross. You will search the letter, and you will find that the letter does not include it. You will search for it in creeds, and after forty years of belief, you will discover that your creed does not contain it. You cannot stamp it on the pages of a pamphlet any more than you can tie the wind to the tree tops. But he who searches for it actively, reverently, humbly, and because his soul loveth it, will, somewhere, sometime, find it; not all at once, nor in the way he expected, but little by little, and in the way of surprise. As he finds it, so shall he find delight. It will be sweet to his soul. Peace, too, shall come with it —the peace which passeth understanding—the peace that makes man a marvel unto himself. (*W. H. H. Murray.*) *The highest literature of Christianity:*—I. TRUTH THUS WRITTEN IS MOST LEGIBLE. Those who know not the alphabet—children and heathens—can read characters. These life-commentaries on the Bible we want. II. TRUTH THUS WRITTEN IS MOST INCORRUPTIBLE. Man may write his interpolations in connection with God's truth on paper or parchment, but not on souls. III. TRUTH THUS WRITTEN IS MOST CONVINCING. The arguments of Butler, Paley, &c., are powerless compared with the argument of a true life. IV. TRUTH THUS WRITTEN IS MOST LASTING. Paper, marble, and brass will decay, but not souls. (*Homilist.*) *Divine renewal:*—I. THE PROPER CHARACTER OF SANCTIFICATION. This, as it is an act of God upon the human soul, consists in the establishment in it of a divine principle of holiness, expressed, here, as the putting God's laws into the mind and writing them in the heart. This is begun in regeneration. The law of God, the principle of true holiness, is re-established in the inward parts; the man is brought into habitual conformity to it, in all its spirituality, as the one governing principle of his life. This is the proper character of sanctification, as it is a grace of the true Christian. II. THE SEAT OF SANCTIFICATION. This is, in general, the soul of man: the mind and heart. In both these this blessed principle has its throne, and exerts its paramount, though not undisputed, dominion over the whole man. The body of the believer, itself, experiences the benefit of the sanctification (Rom. vi. 13; xii. 1). Divine grace, in the renewed mind, is a pervading principle, that, like leaven, to which it is compared, never ceases its operation, till it have

assimilated to itself all with which it comes in contact. It attacks not one vice, and spares another; corrects not one evil habit, and tolerates the rest. The law of the new creation is nothing less than God's law; and whatever in thought, word, or deed, whatever in tempers, habits, and dispositions, consists not with perfect love to God and man (which is "the fulfilling of the law"), that the renewed man instantly detects, by a kind of spiritual instinct before unknown; an antipathy of nature, as true to itself, as uniform in its actings, as that of water to fire, or of darkness to light. The two cannot exist together in peace. The man now hates sin; strives against it in all its shapes—against corrupt reason and passion both. Satan and his allies in man—the lusts of the flesh and of the mind—are driven into corners; they cannot tyrannise as before; but they yield not easily. The words of the promise lead us to distinguish two parts in this great work, the sanctification of the human soul. 1. The enlightening of the understanding, expressed by putting God's laws into the mind. 2. The engagement of the affections, expressed by writing them in the heart. Both these go together when the man is born again of the Spirit. The soul is sweetly but powerfully drawn to choose what the judgment has been taught to approve. There is given, not the rule only of obedience, but the spirit of obedience; there is a taking away the stony heart out of the flesh, and giving a heart of flesh. III. THE AUTHOR OF SANCTIFICATION. "I will put . . . I will write." God, then, is Himself the agent in the establishment of His law in the hearts and minds of His people. None beneath Himself is equal to this great work. The outward means which He uses as preparatory and auxiliary to this great work, are endlessly diversified. 1. The mercy which distinguishes one man from another is not the result of holiness foreseen in the subjects of it. The terms of the covenant of grace run directly counter to such a notion. Sanctification is promised in it to sinners, as a free gift. 2. Holiness is connected with mercy, as the effect with its cause. The revelation of mercy to unrighteousness is God's great means for winning the sinner from his enmity, to love and delight in Him. I will sanctify, saith He, for I will be merciful. These two can never be disjoined. 3. Sanctification is never perfect while the believer is in the body. The conflict between the flesh and the spirit continues to the end, with various success; but, upon the whole, the actings of corruption get weaker, and the habit of grace strengthens in the soul. Still, the spark of evil is not extinguished. Satan lives, and, if permitted, can easily re-kindle it into a flame. 4. The law of the Ten Commandments is still the rule of life to the believer. From the law, as a covenant, we are eternally delivered, through Christ. As a means, therefore, of meriting life, we have nothing whatever to do with the terms of it. Eternal life is given us in Christ (1 John v. 11). But we are therefore "delivered from the law," "that the righteousness of the law may be fulfilled in us, who walk, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. viii. 2, 4, compare Rom. vii. 6). The law of Christ is indeed a law of love; but still this "new commandment" is "the old commandment which ye had from the beginning" (1 John ii. 7). 5. The security of the believer in Jesus. God has put His hand to the work, and who shall let it? (*Francis Goode, M.A.*) *God's law written in the heart*:—I. THE THINGS TO BE WRITTEN ARE THE LAWS OF GOD. But what laws these are may be doubted. For some will have them to be the Decalogue. Yet these are said to be written in the heart of the very heathens (Rom. ii. 15). Yet suppose they be already in their hearts, yet the writing of them there is very imperfect; for both the knowledge of them and the power to keep them are very imperfect, so that the love of God and our neighbour may be imprinted there more perfectly. Yet the word termed Laws signifies in the Hebrew, Doctrines. And these are the doctrines of the gospel concerning Christ's person, nature, offices, and the work of redemption; the doctrines of repentance, faith, justification, and eternal life; and these either presuppose or include the moral law. Further, they are doctrines concerning Christ, glorified, reigning, and officiating in heaven. II. THE BOOK OR TABLES WHEREIN THEY MUST BE WRITTEN ARE THE MIND AND HEART OF MAN. There is the spring and original of all rational and moral operations, of all thoughts, affections, and inward motions. There is the directive counsel and imperial commanding power. There is the prime mover of all humane actions as such. This is the subject fit to receive not only natural but supernatural truths, and doctrines, and all laws. There divine characters may be imprinted, and made legible to the soul itself. This is the most noble and excellent book that any can write in. III. THE SCRIBE OR PEN-MAN IS GOD; FOR IT IS SAID, I WILL GIVE OR PUT, I WILL WRITE. He that said so was the Lord. And it must be He, because the work is so curious and excellent that it is

far above the sphere of created activity. He alone can immediately work upon the immortal soul to inform it, move it, alter it, and mould it anew. IV. THE ACT AND WORK OF THIS PENMAN IS TO WRITE, AND WRITE THESE LAWS AND WRITE THEM IN THE HEART. How He doth it we know not. That He doth it is clear enough. His preparations, illuminations, impulsions, inspirations, are strange and wonderful, of great and mighty force. For in this work He doth not only represent divine objects in a clearer light, and propose high motives to incline and turn the heart, but also gives a divine perceptive and appetitive power, whereby the soul more easily and clearly apprehends, and more effectually affects heavenly things. The effect of this writing is a divine knowledge of God's laws, and a ready and willing heart to obey them, and conform unto them, a power to know and do the word of God. This is that work of the Spirit which is called vocation, renovation, regeneration, conversion actively taken, without which man cannot repent, believe, obey, and turn to God. 1. The laws. The laws of God are written in the heart, not the inventions, fancies of men, nor natural, nor mathematical, nor moral philosophy; much less the errors and blasphemies of seducers and false prophets. 2. The heart of man is by nature a very untoward and indisposed subject, and not capable of these heavenly doctrines. It is blind and perverse, and there is an antipathy between it and these laws. As it hath no true notions of the greatest good, so it hath no mind to use the means, which conduce to the attaining thereof. This defacement of so noble a substance is the work of the devil and sin. 3. Concerning God's writing His laws in the heart of man, you must know—(1) That they are not written there by nature. If they were, what need God write that which is already written? (2) He writes nothing in this heart but His laws and His saving truths. Therefore that which is not written without in the Scripture He doth not promise to write within the heart, and whosoever shall fancy any doctrine received in his heart to be written by the hand of Heaven, and yet cannot find it in the gospel, is deceived and deluded. (3) Before these divine doctrines can be written in the heart, all errors, lusts, false opinions, must be rased and rooted out of the soul, and it must be made like blank paper. (4) God doth not write His laws in our hearts by enthusiasm, rapture, and inspiration, as He wrote His word in the hearts of the prophets and apostles; but He makes use of the word, and the ministers of the gospel, and the instructions of man, as also of the outward senses, as of the eye and ear, and also of the inward, and of reason, and of all the powers He hath given man to do anything in this work. And whosoever will not use these means and exercise this power by reading, hearing, meditation, conference, prayer, let him never expect or think that God will write these things in his heart. (5) The effect of this writing of God is not only knowledge, but also a love of the truth, light, and integrity, power and dominion over sin, and the powerful sanctifications and consolations of the Spirit. And whosoever doth not find these in his heart, let him not think that God hath written His laws in his heart. For He writes with power, and leaves a permanent tincture of holiness, and a constant habitual inclination to that which is good, just, and right. (6) God doth not write these laws perfectly and fully in man's heart whilst he is in the flesh; for He proceeds in this work by degrees. Therefore seeing God hath ordained means, and commanded them to be used, no man must neglect them whilst this mortal life continues, for these truths are not written in any of our hearts further than we use these means, which were given not only for the first inscription of these laws, but for the increase and perfection of our Divine knowledge. (*G. Lawson*). *The law in the heart*:—It was a choice tribute that was lately rendered to a noble Christian woman, that "her natural life was so completely Christian, that her Christian life became completely natural." (*Sarah F. Smiley.*) *The miracle of miracles*:—The miracle of miracles is this—"A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you." To put the law in the inward parts, and to write it on the heart, is more than to fill the firmament with stars. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *Commandments, not burdensome*:—Cicero questions whether that can properly be called a burden which one carries with delight and pleasure. If a man carries a bag of money given him, it is heavy; but the delight takes off the burden. When God gives inward joy, that makes the commandments delightful. Joy is like oil to the wheels, which makes a Christian run in the way of God's commandments, so that it is not burdensome. (*T. Watson.*) *Obedience from love*:—The son of a poor man, that hath not a penny to give or leave him, yields his father obedience as cheerfully as the son of a rich man that looks for a great inheritance. It is, indeed, love to the father, not wages from the father, that is the ground of a good child's obedience.

If there were no heaven, God's children would obey Him; and though there was no hell, yet would they do their duty; so powerfully doth the love of the Father constrain them. (*J. Spencer.*) *Two conversions needed:*—We all need two conversions. First of all, we need to be converted from the natural man to the spiritual man, and in the second place, we need to be converted from the spiritual man to the natural man, until the spiritual man becomes a natural life, and the burden is opportunity and the bondage is delight. (*Theodore Monod.*) *Inner devotion:*—If those who are in the employ of others do but meet the outward and visible engagements into which they have entered with their masters, the latter are satisfied. Let but the proper hours be kept and the day fully and diligently filled up, let but the books be accurately posted, and the articles of merchandise which are being manufactured be put together in a workmanlike way; and the wages are cheerfully and promptly paid. The majority of masters do not concern themselves with the motives of their men. The latter might profess to like other masters better than they do their own, yet if they but fulfil their tasks their employers are content. The preferences and motives of their servants most masters regard as being no concern of theirs. In this respect there exists a striking contrast between the claims of God and those of men. The Almighty will accept of no service which is not a service of love. The heart must first be given before the service is accepted. The connection subsisting between God and those employed by Him resembles rather the services rendered to each other by the members of a loving and united household. (*T. Thompson, M.A.*) *The law in the heart:*—Just as each plant in its growth spontaneously obeys the law put into its inmost parts by God, so the believer who accepts the new covenant promise in its fulness, walks in the power of that inner law. The spirit within frees from the law without. (*Andrew Murray.*) *Attraction:*—Just as the water naturally follows the channels which are constructed to conduct it from the mountains to the sea, so the holy heart follows the channels of Divine law, marked out by Divine law, not through compulsion, but through the power of attraction. *The grand morality:*—A noted secular paper once prophesied concerning Moody and Sankey that Professor Tyndall would do more to purify London than "these men!" Professor Tyndall may help us to purify the atmosphere of our houses and streets, but what word has he ever dropped that would purify a human heart! He may discourse eloquently of "duty," but Plato could have done that; Aristotle did that. But who has not found out before he has had many years' experience in dealing with men, that what is needed is not so much to show men their duty as to get them to do it? To show men their duty you want light, to get them to do it you want power, and the only adequate power is love. God's clearest light, God's mightiest power is in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ! (*C. Clemance, D.D.*) **I will be to them a God.**—*Divine relationship:*—I. A MUTUAL RELATION OF GOD AND MEN. "I will be to them a God." In other words, Whatever I am in Myself, that I will be to them; of that they shall have the free use and blessed experience: all My perfections will I exert for their present and everlasting welfare. How greatly do we need the increase of faith, to receive this amazing promise! to embrace it, to the comfort and joy of our souls. We shrink from appropriating it; we try to live on something less for happiness. But He who knows the souls that He has made, knows that nothing beneath Himself can ever fill their boundless desires. No gifts of nature, no, nor even the largest gifts of grace itself, can supply the place of Him who is the Author of them all. God, then, makes Himself a God to His people, communicates Himself to them by indwelling. "I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God." Two things are necessary for your enjoyment of this promise. 1. Realize God as your God. Claim the relation of a child; live as if you were one; and God will so own the relation that you can hesitate no longer. 2. Live on God as a God to you—and this in two ways. (1) Live on Him for all your need. (2) Live on Him for all your happiness. Under this twofold aspect God revealed Himself to Abraham (Gen. xii. 1) for the encouragement of His faith, in the long-continued trial of it. (*Francis Goode, M.A.*) **They shall be to Me a people.**—*Divine relationship:*—I. This relation of redeemed sinners to their GOD. "They shall be to Me a people." 1. His people owning God as theirs. (1) They yield themselves to His authority. (2) They separate themselves from an evil world. (3) They devote themselves to His service. (4) They live on Him for protection and happiness. 2. God owning them as His people. Consider the terms of endearment under which He speaks of them. He calls them His children; the sheep of His pasture, for whom the Shepherd bled. Such is the

preciousness of His purchased people in His eyes. (1) How infatuated are the enemies of God's people! How great is the folly (to say nothing of the wickedness) of hating those whom God loves! (2) How glorious is the character, how exalted the privileges, of the saints! II. God's own engagement to establish this RELATION BETWEEN US AND HIM. "They shall be to Me a people." These words clearly express a resolve of God in this matter. He Has so ordered the covenant of grace, that it is a sure covenant to all who have once embraced it. "They shall be to Me a people." His word is passed for the effectual accomplishment of His grace; and, therefore, His own Divine character and glory are involved in it. If God be able to do what He has resolved to do, this relation cannot fail to be made good between Him and them. This doctrine is a precious cordial for the fainting soldier in the day of battle. It strengthens his weak hands; confirms his feeble knees; animates him under all the terribleness of conflict. (*Ibid.*) **All shall know Me.**—*Divine knowledge*:—I. A knowledge of God covenanted under the GOSPEL. "They shall know Me." This is a knowledge little thought of, or valued, by men in general; and, which is stranger still, it is that of which all men in Christian countries think they are in possession. But to know God indeed, according to the true sense of the term, is to have such an apprehension of His infinite majesty and holiness as shall lay us low before Him, and to bow with deepest submission to His will. It is to have such a knowledge of His glorious goodness as shall fill us with holy delight in Him, intense desire after communion with Him, and enjoyment of His favour. Further, it is so to behold His glory, as to be ourselves transformed into the same image of holiness and goodness; to be ourselves "partakers of the Divine nature" (2 Pet. i. 4). This knowledge of God, which is matter of promise to His covenant people, we may consider under two heads. It consists in saving acquaintance with God—(1) As He is in Himself, in His revealed nature and character. (2) As He is to us, in His purposes towards us, and the interest which we have in Him. II. The universality of this knowledge of God BY HIS COVENANT PEOPLE. "All shall know Me, from the least to the greatest." There is not one true child of God under the gospel but has his measure of it. He discerns the perfections of God, as they are displayed in the work of redemption; that "mystery which, in other ages, was not made known to the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His apostles and prophets (and by them to the Church) through the Spirit." The "least" of God's covenant people, as well as the greatest, has now a satisfying, soul-quieting acquaintance with God; such an understanding of the method of peace with God, through Christ, as even prophets, and righteous men of old, the most spiritual of their day, desired in vain. Yea, often the poor and ignorant and weak in intellect of this world are, in the sovereignty of Divine grace, pre-eminently "rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which God hath promised to them that love Him." III. A SUPER-HUMAN SOURCE OF THIS KNOWLEDGE. "They shall not teach," &c. This is certainly not said to disparage God's appointed ordinance of public preaching, or mutual exhortation. It was under this very gospel covenant that He first gave the command, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." But the believer does not so learn of man as that He receives the truth in that uncertainty, or sense of possible error, which attaches to every mere word of man. There is a revelation of God to His children, a knowledge of Himself by His Spirit, that is, like light, its own witness. The man who has it is sure that he has it, and that it is of God. Lessons: 1. Do we possess such superior light and knowledge of God to any which the saints of old enjoyed? O, then, let the superior effects of this knowledge be clearly discernible in our conduct. To see God indeed is to be like God. 2. Be satisfied with no knowledge of God to which you have yet attained. Though, like Paul, you had been caught up into the third heaven, yet should your prayer be, with Paul, "That I may know Him"; yet should your language be, as his was, "Not as though I had already attained." Still have you reason to say, "Now I know in part." 3. Learn to live on God in the use of ordinances. This is a very different thing from that pernicious conceit of living above ordinances. That is the privilege of heaven alone. God can indeed supply the place of means, and, in particular cases, He does so; acts independent of them; to teach us to trust in Him, in the dearth of them. But, ordinarily, it is otherwise. 4. This promise of the covenant, like the preceding, has its complete fulfilment only in an eternal world. The knowledge of God which the believer now has is real and delightful; all the things that can be desired are not to be compared unto it. But the sweetest part of its enjoyment is, that it is an earnest of what shall be. (*Ibid.*) *The knowledge of God*:—I. In the first place, WHAT IS INTENDED IN THE TEXT BY THE

KNOWLEDGE OF GOD. "All shall know Me." It cannot be a mere knowledge of the existence of God, for the devils believe that God is. It cannot be a mere partial acquaintance with the character of God; because we cannot for a moment doubt that the Jews were partially acquainted with God's character, and yet our Lord said to them, "Ye neither know Me nor My Father." Neither can it be a dry, uninfluential, notional knowledge of God, however accurate (2 Peter ii. 20, 21). To know God includes far more than this. It implies a real, personal, experimental, sanctifying acquaintance with God. 1. It especially regards Him as a reconciled God in Christ. 2. But more than this; the knowledge of God implies a knowledge of Him as our God in covenant; a God who has pledged His very perfections to bring His people safe to glory; who will not have them to judge Him by their feelings, nor by their providences. Who can unfold the knowledge of God which springs from the consideration of Him as a pitying Father? "He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust." To know God implies a knowledge of Him as a God all-sufficient. My brethren, how long you and I have been learning this lesson, and how little we know of it after all! II. Observe, in the second place, here is a positive word of certainty THAT ALL GOD'S PEOPLE SHALL KNOW HIM, "from the least to the greatest." This was no small part of the work of our adorable Immanuel. It is sweet and pleasant to look at Him as bearing the very name of the Word of God, because He is the revealer of God. He does indeed tell us the secrets of God's heart; He brings to light those perfections in Deity which we could never conceive to have existed but for His work. The work of Jesus is glorious throughout, and there is no part of His work which ought more to endear Him to our hearts than this, inasmuch as He disclosed more of the Father, and brings us into more intimate acquaintance with the character of God, than could have been devised by any other means. But it is not this that secures the infallible teaching of all God's Israel; it was the covenant "ordered in all things and sure." But there is a point connected with this that I would not overlook, and that is, the way by which the Holy Spirit (for it is His especial work), brings the knowledge of God into the soul. "I will give them a heart that they may know Me, saith the Lord." It is not, "I will give them knowledge," but "I will give them a heart." Now this was communicated in regeneration. Oh the wonders of redeeming love, flowing out from the heart of God by Christ Jesus! Oh what a beam of light is that which the Holy Spirit brings into the conscience, developing God our Saviour in Christ Jesus! III. But observe, WHAT ARE THE BLESSINGS OF THIS KNOWLEDGE OF GOD. I hardly know where to begin or where to end. It is true wisdom: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; and the knowledge of Him is understanding." Here lies also the secret of peace, "They that know Thy name will put their trust in Thee." Whence is it that the careworn brow marks thy countenance? If thou wert only conversant with the great secret, "Casting thy care upon Him that careth for thee," thou wouldst find out the blessed lesson, of living above the region of disappointment, and finding peace in believing, "Acquaint thyself with Him, and be at peace." In a word, this true knowledge of God has in it the material of all holiness. Whatever there is of love, whatever there is of hope, whatever there is of obedience, whatever there is of careful walking, whatever there is of watchfulness unto prayer, whatever there is of making a conscience of one's deeds, whatever there is of walking secretly with God as in the sight of God—it is all involved in one truth, a true, real, personal, experimental knowledge of God in Christ. 1. Be thankful, then, for the least measure you have of the true knowledge of God. 2. Covet earnestly the most. The true secret for a heavenly walk with God is a real acquaintance with Him. 3. Do not quarrel with the way by which God makes Himself known to thee. I remember the expression of a child of God who, feeling her heart too much attached to some earthly object, prayed that God would take away the idol, whatever the idol might be. In the course of a week He took away her husband. (*J. H. Evans, M.A.*) *The universal diffusion of Scriptural knowledge*:—These words, quoted from Jer. XXXI. 34, are here applied to New Testament times. They plainly teach, that these times shall be greatly superior to all that preceded them, in the general diffusion of that knowledge which is essentially necessary to the everlasting salvation of the soul. This blessing, which is of infinite importance, belongs to a new economy, different from the ancient covenant which God made with Israel, the peculiar privileges of which were of an earthly character, were shadowy or emblematical, and were chiefly confined to one nation. But the privileges of the new economy were to be of a spiritual character, and were to extend to men of all ranks, and of all nations, on

the face of the earth. I. THE CHARACTER OF THAT KNOWLEDGE WHICH SHALL EMINENTLY DISTINGUISH THIS PERIOD. 1. It is the knowledge of God, of things divine, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures. 2. This knowledge is communicated to the ignorant as the fulfilment of a gracious promise by the agency of the Divine Spirit (Isa. liv. 13). 3. This knowledge of the Lord, by which the period referred to in the text shall be eminently distinguished, shall be very generally diffused among all ranks and descriptions of men. II. THE MEANS WHICH OUGHT TO BE USED BY US FOR HASTENING THIS PERIOD. It is said in the text, that when this happy era is come, they shall not teach, or, as it is expressed in the prophecy, they shall teach no more, every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, "Know the Lord"; which seems plainly to intimate, that certain means, which are now very properly used for advancing this period, shall then become unnecessary. (*Wm. Schaw.*) *Coming of the millenium*:—The world is preparing day by day for the millenium, but you do not see it. Every season forms itself a year in advance. The coming summer lays out her work during the autumn, and buds and roots are forespoken. Ten million roots are pumping in the streets; do you hear them? Ten million buds are forming in the axils of the leaves; do you hear the sound of the saw or the hammer? All next summer is at work in the world; but it is unseen by us. And so "the kingdom of God cometh not with observation." (*H. W. Beecher.*) **I will be merciful to their unrighteousness.**—*Mercy to unrighteousness*:—I. THE PERSONS TO WHOM THIS GRACE IS COVENANTED. Is it I, will each of us inquire, whom God means to include in a promise so cheering, so all-sufficient? II. THE CONDITION IN WHICH IT SUPPOSES THEM TO BE. Throughout this covenant no mention is made of anything in man but guilt and ruin. The promise in my text obviously assumes such to be his condition. Man is in himself all unrighteousness, as it is written, "there is none righteous, no, not one" (Rom. iii. 10). Surely there is nothing more suited to inspire hope in the breast of an awakened sinner than the consideration of this truth. My sins, such an one may say, are exceeding great; but, thanks be to God, He who best knows them speaks to me of mercy! But it is long, in general, before an awakened sinner, though again and again God discover to him the vanity of all attempts to bring any deservings of his own, can be persuaded to go quite without hope or plea of any kind but this—Lord, I am a sinner, and Thou art a free Saviour. We dare not believe that grace is indeed so free, so unbounded, to those who will go to God in Christ. III. GOD'S ENGAGEMENTS RELATIVE TO THIS CONDITION. "I will be merciful . . . I will remember no more." In these words God promises the removal of all kinds and degrees of sin. 1. Freely. "I will be merciful." This is both the reason with God for blessing, and the method by which He works upon the souls of His people; winning them from their natural enmity and distrust of Himself, by the effectual revelation of His mercy to them. 2. Eternally. "I will remember no more." Guilt makes the soul of the sinner fearful; he is ever recurring to the memory of his past sins, and he fears God does the same. He has had some momentary glimpses of mercy; but when the present sense of it is gone, conscience is afraid again; he is ready to suspect God of yet harbouring some latent feeling of resentment; fears the reconciliation has been partial, and that wrath, so deeply deserved, is ready to break out afresh on fresh provocation. But oh, blessed be God, this is indeed the way of men; but His ways are not our ways, nor His thoughts our thoughts. Those whom He forgives freely, He forgives entirely, forgives eternally. (*Francis Goode, M.A.*) *Forgiving mercy*:—Many years ago in Russia a regiment of troops mutinied. They were at some distance from the capital, and were so furious that they murdered their officers, and resolved never to submit to discipline; but the emperor, who was an exceedingly wise and sagacious man, no sooner heard of it than, all alone and unattended, he went into the barracks where the men were drawn up, and addressing them sternly, he said to them, "Soldiers! you have committed such offences against the law that every one of you deserves to be put to death. There is no hope of any mercy for one of you unless you lay down your arms immediately, and surrender at discretion to me, your emperor." They did so, there and then. The emperor said at once, "Men, I pardon you; you will be the bravest troops I ever had." And so they were. Now, this is just what God does with the sinner. The sinner has dared to rebel against God, and God says, "Now, sinner, you have done that which deserves My wrath. Ground you weapons of rebellion. I will not talk with you until you submit at discretion to My sovereign authority." And then He says, "Believe in My Son; accept Him as your Saviour. This done, you are forgiven,

and henceforth you will be the most loving subjects that My hands have made." (*W. R. Bradlaugh.*) *A glorious position* :—Mr. Lyford, a Puritan divine, a few days previous to his dissolution, being desired by his friends to give them some account of his hopes and comforts, he replied, "I will let you know how it is with me, and on what ground I stand. Here is the grave, the wrath of God, and devouring flames, 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. For I find the Spirit which is promised, bestowed upon me, in the blessed effects of it upon my soul, as the pledge of God's eternal love. By this I know my interest in Christ, who is the foundation of the covenant, and therefore my sins being laid on Him, shall never be charged on me." (*K. Arvine.*) *Justice and mercy* :—The Jews have a saying that Michael, the angel of God's justice, has but one wing and he comes slowly; but Gabriel, the angel of Divine mercy, has two wings, and is made to fly swiftly. (*H. R. Burton.*) **Their sins . . . will I remember no more.**—*The new covenant—its promises* :—It will be observed that the last-named promise is pardon. But though the last mentioned, it is the first bestowed, as indicated by the conjunction for, by which it is introduced. Pardon is not only promised, but is here represented as the reason for the preceding blessings. It is evident that the author, in his enumeration of these blessings of the better covenant, presents them in the inverse order of their realisation. In them he traces the Divine process of salvation, but starts at a point where that salvation has reached its highest fruition on its moral side, that grand moral achievement, the complete surrender of the soul to the Divine will, indicated by the writing of the law in the heart, and descends by the several steps of the process to the initiatory one, the pardoning of sins. It follows, then, that in order to understand duly these truths of overwhelming interest, we must deal with them according to their logical sequence. I. THE PARDON. 1. Its source. This is indicated by the expression, "I will be merciful to their unrighteousness." The source, then, of the promised pardon is the mercifulness of God. We mean, of course, its moral source, for its legal source is the atonement of Jesus Christ. 2. We have also the fulness of this act of mercy indicated in the expression, "their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." This oblivion of transgression is a feature of the Divine pardon much emphasised in the Scriptures, with a view, no doubt, of duly impressing men with the fact of its absolute entirety. Nothing can be more emphatic than the prophet's declaration regarding God's dealings with the sins of Israel—"And Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea" (Micah vii. 19). Absolute oblivion is the prominent idea of this graphic figure. That which is cast into the depths of the sea cannot be commemorated. An incident in connection with the laying of the Atlantic cable furnishes a striking illustration of the insuperable difficulty of marking spots in mid-ocean. When the first Atlantic cable was being laid it broke in mid-ocean, and the severed pieces dropped into the bottom, and the vessel was compelled to return to England to procure the means of recovering the broken end. Before, however, leaving the spot, means were adopted to mark the place, so that on their return the lost end might be found. So a suitable buoy was constructed, and every precaution taken to render its foundering or drifting impossible, as they supposed. But on the vessel's return the buoy laid down with such care was found, but, as careful astronomical observations showed, it had drifted over five hundred miles away from the spot where it had been originally moored. The broken end of the cable was never recovered. Thus is strikingly illustrated the impossibility of erecting memorials in mid-sea. God, therefore, by representing Himself as casting our sins there, would tell us how completely He forgets them, and how certain it is that He will never charge us with them again. II. THE INTUITIONAL KNOWLEDGE OF GOD ASSURED BY THE BETTER COVENANT. The knowledge of God forms a very important part in the Divine redemption. It is, so to speak, the Alpha of the whole process. Our Lord represents it so—"And this is eternal life, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent" (John xvii. 3). The knowledge, however, referred to here, is introductory to the blessings of salvation, whereas that of the text is the outcome of the blessing realised. We come to the blessing through the knowledge in the one case, but in the other we come to the knowledge through the blessing. In the first instance the knowledge is our schoolmaster to the blessing; in the second the

blessing becomes our schoolmaster to the knowledge. The knowledge of God obtained through experience of His pardon is the grandest of all knowledge of Him. It is also the only infallible knowledge. An eminent minister, recently addressing a number of young ministers starting for the mission-field, said, "You will never lack a theme, for your mission is to tell of Him whom you know better than you know any one else besides." Never was uttered profounder thought or one more true. Those who know God know Him better than any one beside, better than they know their most intimate friends, better than husband knows his wife, or wife her husband, better than children know their parents, or parents their children. We may be deceived in our nearest and most intimate friends and relations, much as we may know respecting them. But God cannot deceive us. The nearest friend may fail us, but God cannot fail us. III. THE DIVINE KINSHIP ASSURED BY THE NEW COVENANT. The relation to His people indicated by this expression I take to imply fatherhood. When God promises to be our God, He promises to be our Father, and the pardoned soul apprehends Him in this light. In short, it is the pardoning act that reveals God to the soul first in this light. In this transaction he discovers God becoming his God as a father, for this act of pardon is, above all, a fatherly act. Our Lord has shown us this in that inimitable parable of the prodigal son. In nothing is God so intensely a father as when He forgives. And the child never understands his own father, never has the fatherly attribute so deeply revealed to his heart, as when he has had occasion to experience the joy of his father's forgiveness. Again, this relationship is in itself a guarantee of the fullest and most devoted service on their behalf. If the statement, "I will be to them a God," is equivalent to the statement, "I will be a Father unto them," then we know what it must mean as regards undertaking and acting for them. Some light is thrown upon this by the words already quoted—"God is not ashamed to be called their God." To this is added, "for He has prepared a city for them." This preparing of a city for them is given as a proof that He is not ashamed to own Himself as their God. As if it should be said, "He is not ashamed to avow Himself their God, for behold on how grand a scale He discharges the obligations of that relationship." We have no need to be told what the title "father" signified to the child: care, love, guidance, support, and all without stint. IV. THE ASSURANCE WHICH THE BETTER COVENANT GIVES OF A LOVING, CHILDLIKE SUBJECTION TO THE DIVINE WILL. Parental government is by means of laws wrought in the heart; magisterial, by laws without. The parental relationship of God, fully and deeply realised by the believer, quickens the filial disposition, inducing such a humble, yet cordial, assimilation to the Divine will, comparable only to the "putting of the Divine laws into the mind and writing them upon the heart." Let us try and get at the meaning of these peculiar expressions regarding the law, "the putting it into the mind" and "the writing it in the heart." Now, the mind and the heart represents two sides of our nature, the intellectual and the emotional. Here, then, we have guaranteed to us the fact that the law, the sanctifying principle, shall take possession of these two ruling sides of our moral nature, exerting upon them an influence both subduing and formative. (*A. J. Parry.*) *The new covenant—the superiority of its promises:*—I. THE QUALITY OF THE BLESSINGS. 1. The greater excellence of the Christian pardon. The Jewish religion had its pardon, or something that passed for pardon; the superiority, however, of the pardon held forth by the gospel is indicated by the expression, "and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." Contrast this statement with what is said respecting the method of dealing with sins under the old covenant—"But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance of sins every year" (chap. x. 3). In the one case we have the forgetting of sins, in the other the remembrance of them. The ancient pardon, then, was not really such, but only a kind of reprieve annually renewed, a kind of suspension of the sentence, not the removal or abrogation of it. It was in the nature of a "ticket-of-leave" transaction. 2. The greater excellence of the knowledge of God assured by the new covenant. The knowledge of God acquired under the old covenant was preceptive knowledge, and, like all such knowledge, it needed constant prompting, it needed that every man should say to his neighbour, and every man to his brother, "Know the Lord," for they resembled boys learning a lesson, they continually forgot it. A prophet would arise, saying to the people, "Know the Lord," and they would learn the lesson; but no sooner did the prophet's voice cease than the people forgot the lesson, and wandered after false gods. Then another prophet would arise, and repeat the oft-taught lesson, "Know the Lord." But the more excellent knowledge of the better promise needs

no such prompting. In the case of this knowledge, "they shall not teach every man his neighbour," &c., it is a knowledge in the heart, not in the memory, for the memory may fail, but the heart never. 3. The greater excellence of the relationship between God and His people. It is better in this, that it is individual and spiritual, whereas the corresponding promise of the old covenant was national and temporal. The promise as it related to Israel is given very graphically in Deut. xxvi. 17–19. There is something inexpressibly grand in the abounding sweep of this promise. If we consider it in the light of the history of God's dealings with the ancient people, we shall obtain some notion of its meaning. But rich and abounding as its meaning may be, it embraces only the nation, and that in relation to temporal things. The greater excellence of the corresponding promise of the new covenant is that it realises these blessings in a spiritual sense, and to every individual in the wide world that comes within the scope of its conditions. 4. Next, we notice the greater excellence of the formative principle of the new covenant. The superiority claimed here consists in this—that the laws are "put into the mind" and "written in the heart." There is an implied contrast with the corresponding provision of the old covenant. The latter had its laws, but they were inscribed, not in hearts, but on tables of stone. The other consists of an inward principle or motive, the subject of it animated by love, yielding willing obedience from a heart glowing with loving, grateful enthusiasm. This difference in the spheres of their respective laws involves a wide difference in their respective effects upon the course of the lives affected by them. There is a great difference between the sailing vessel and the steam-boat. The one is propelled by influences external to itself, and is, therefore, dependent upon them for the progress it makes; the other is propelled by a principle working within, and is, therefore, independent of external influences, moves without them, and often against, yea, in spite of them. The latter illustrates the method adopted in the new covenant. Hence its greater excellence. It implants the principle of action, the motive power, within, so preventing its subject from becoming a creature of circumstances, and his obedience a mechanical routine, making it rather a thing of the heart and of the affections. The gospel, in this respect, works according to the analogy of nature. In nature, the formative law of everything is within it. II. THE SUPERIOR CERTAINTY OF THE PROMISES OF THE NEW COVENANT. The utmost assurance that these promises will be fully realised in the experience of every one who accepts Christ's salvation is given us in the fact that they are called by the term "covenant." In verse 6 the promises and the covenant are referred to separately; in verse 10 there is but one word "covenant." The term promise is merged in the term covenant. This substitution of covenant for promise indicates the element of certainty belonging to the latter. But it may be asked, were not the promises of the ancient religion established upon a covenant? Certainly, they were, but those of Christianity upon "a better covenant." The promises of the ancient religion were ratified by the blood of goats and calves, but Christ ratified the better promises of the "new covenant" by the sacrifice of Himself. His own declaration on this point is, "This cup is the New Testament in my blood," that is, the new covenant ratified by the shedding of My blood. In short, we have the promises of the gospel resting upon the atonement of Christ. (*Ibid.*) *God's non-remembrance of sin*:—I. THERE IS FORGIVENESS. 1. This appears, first, in the treatment of sinners by God, inasmuch as He spares their forfeited lives. 2. Why did God institute the ceremonial law if there were no ways of pardoning transgression? Does not a type imply the existence of that which is typified? 3. If there were no forgiveness of sin why has the Lord given to sinful men exhortations to repent? 4. If you will think of it you will see that there must be pardons in the hand of God, or why the institution of religious worship among us to this day? 5. Furthermore, why did Christ institute the Christian ministry, and send forth His servants to proclaim His gospel? For what is the gospel but a declaration that Christ is exalted on high to give repentance unto Israel and remission of sins? 6. Now, you do not want any more arguments, but if you did I would venture to offer this. Why are we taught in that blessed model of prayer which our Saviour has left us, to say, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors," or, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us"? It is evident that God means us to give a real, true, and hearty absolution to all who have offended us. If, then, our forgiveness is real, so is His; if ours be sincere, so is His; if ours be complete, so is His; only much more so, inasmuch as the great God of all is so much more gracious than we poor, fallen creatures ever can be. 7. The best of all arguments

is this: God has actually forgiven multitudes of sinners. We have read in Holy Scripture of men who walked with God and had this testimony, that they pleased God; but they could not have pleased God if their sins still provoked Him to wrath; therefore He must have put their sins away. II. THIS FORGIVENESS IS TANTAMOUNT TO FORGETTING SIN. This is a wonder to me, a wonder of wonders, that God should say that He will do what in some sense He cannot do; and yet that it should be strictly true as He intends it. God's pardon of sin is so complete that He Himself describes it as not remembering our iniquity and transgression. He wishes us to know that His pardon is so true and deep that it amounts to an absolute oblivion, a total forgetting of all the wrong-doing of the pardoned ones. 1. You know what we do when we exercise memory. To speak popularly, a man lays up a thing in his mind: but when sin is forgiven it is not laid up in God's mind. 2. In remembering, men also consider and meditate on things; but the Lord will not think over the sins of His people. The record of our iniquity is taken away, and the judge has no judicial memory of it. 3. Sometimes you have almost forgotten a thing, and it is quite gone out of your mind; but an event happens which recalls it so vividly that it seems as if it were perpetrated but yesterday. God will not recall the sin of the pardoned. "Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." "No more!" Let those words go echoing through the chambers of despair: "No more!" Is there not music in the two syllables? God will never have His memory refreshed. The transgressions of His people are dead and buried with Christ, and they shall never have a resurrection. 4. Furthermore, this not remembering, means that God will never seek any further atonement. The apostle saith: "Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin." The one sacrifice of Jesus has made an end of sin. 5. Again, when it is said that God forgets our sins it signifies that He will never punish us for them. How can He when He has forgotten them? 6. He will never upbraid us with them—"He giveth liberally and upbraideth not." How can He upbraid us with what He has forgotten? He will not even lay them to our charge. 7. Once more, when the Lord says, "I will not remember their sins," what does it mean but this—that He will not treat us any the less generously on account of our having been great sinners. III. FORGIVENESS IS TO BE HAD. 1. Through the atoning blood. Why does God forget our sin? It is not on this wise?—He looks upon His Son Jesus bearing that sin. 2. Next remember that this forgetfulness of God is caused by overflowing mercy. God is love: "His mercy endureth for ever"; and He desired vent for His love. 3. How does God forget sin? Well, it is through His everlasting love. He loved His people before they fell; and He loved His people when they fell. "I have loved thee," saith He, "with an everlasting love"; and when that great love of His had led Him to give His Son Jesus for His people's ransom, it made him also forget His people's sins. 4. Again, God forgets His people's sins because of the complacency He has in them as renewed and sanctified creatures. When He hears their cries of repentance, when He hears their declarations of faith, when He sees the love which His Spirit has wrought in them, when He beholds them growing more and more like His dear Son, He delights in them. His joy is fulfilled in them. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Divine forgiveness*:—I. EXPLAIN THE DOCTRINE OF DIVINE FORGIVENESS. 1. The object of Divine forgiveness, denoted by the following terms—"unrighteousness, sins, and iniquities." 2. Notice the manner in which the forgiveness of sins is here expressed, or the cause to which it is ascribed; and this is said to consist in the Lord's being "merciful" to our unrighteousness. Even our best services and most spiritual dispositions, fall so short of the Divine requirements, that they need much mercy to cover their defects; how much more our unrighteousness, sins, and iniquities. (1) The mercy of God is the origin of our forgiveness, and it is according to His abundant mercy that He saves us. (2) Divine grace extends to sin of every description and degree, and to all unrighteousness. (3) This mercy is exercised in a way perfectly consistent with the claims of justice, and the rights of moral government. There is a meritorious as well as an efficient cause of forgiveness: the former is the complete satisfaction made for sin by the death of the Redeemer, the latter the free grace of God through Him. 3. Divine forgiveness is farther expressed, by "remembering our sins and iniquities no more." The pardon of sin is not only full and free, but final and irreversible. (1) God does not remember our sins, so as to aggravate or mark them with severity; for if Thou, Lord, markest iniquity, who shall stand? On the contrary, if there be any extenuating circumstances, He kindly notices them. He knoweth our frame, and remembereth that we are dust. (2) He does not remember our sins, so as to suffer His wrath to kindle

against them. Anger there may be and must be towards sin, but not against the penitent believer. (3) He will not remember sin so as to punish for it, but will deal so mercifully with us, that it shall be as if He had utterly forgotten it. This is not a denial of His omniscience, but an expression of His unbounded goodness. II. INQUIRE WHO ARE INTERESTED IN THE BLESSING OF FORGIVENESS. 1. Those and those only who have a sorrowful remembrance of sin themselves. The more sin grieves us, the less likely it is to ruin us; and that sorrow for sin which follows upon the discoveries of pardoning mercy, is the best evidence of a renewed state. 2. Those who so repent of sin as not to allow themselves in any known evil; and to whom the remembrance of sin is so bitter, that it becomes their first wish to be delivered from it. (*B. Beddome, M.A.*) *Divine pardon*:—God neither looks to anything in the creature to wish Him to show kindness, nor yet anything in the creature to debar Him; it is neither righteousness in man that persuades God to pardon sin, nor unrighteousness in man that hinders Him from giving this pardon, and acquitting men from their transgressions. It is only and simply for His own sake that He pardons. (*Bp. Huntington.*) *A happy memory*:—Of our Henry VI. it is storied that he was of that happy memory that he never forgot anything but injury. (*J. Trapp.*) *Complete forgiveness*:—God never pardons one sin but He pardons all; and we dishonour Him more by not trusting in Him for complete forgiveness than we did by sinning against Him. Christ took up all our sins and bore them in His own body on the cross; and God cannot punish twice, or demand a second satisfaction to His justice. "Nothing can pacify an offended conscience but that which satisfied an offended God," says Henry; and well may that which satisfied an offended God pacify an offended conscience. (*T. Adams.*)

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